
The Role Of Islamic Religion Teachers In Pegon Arabic Learning At Chongraksat Wittaya School Pattani-Thailand

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in teaching the Arabic Pegon script at Chongraksat Wittaya School, located in Pattani, Southern Thailand. The Pegon script holds significant value as both a cultural heritage and a marker of Islamic identity among the Pattani Malay community. The objectives of this research are twofold: to describe the teachers' roles in Pegon instruction and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors associated with it. A descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman framework, which consists of data condensation, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The findings reveal three primary roles of PAI teachers: as educators, facilitators, and motivators. Supporting factors include a conducive sociocultural environment, teacher motivation and background, as well as family and community support. Conversely, inhibiting factors involve linguistic challenges and the growing detachment of younger generations from the Malay language tradition. The study concludes that although PAI teachers at Chongraksat Wittaya School play an active role in preserving the Pegon script, there remains a need to strengthen more adaptive teaching methods.

Keywords: *PAI teacher role; Arab Pegon learning; Chongraksat Wittaya; Islamic education in Thailand*

A. Introduction

The development of the Arabic writing system into Pegon Arabic occurred due to the need to adapt to sounds in the Malay language that are not present in the standard Arabic phonetic and writing system. Therefore, Arab Pegon can be interpreted as a script resulting from the adaptation and modification of the hijaiyah letters into the local language rules. The purpose of creating the Pegon Arabic script is primarily to facilitate the dissemination of Islamic teachings and knowledge among communities that do not use the Arabic language (Melinda et al., 2024).

One of the remnants of Islam in Thailand is the Pegon Arabic script, especially in the southern region such as Pattani. This script plays a very important role in the lives of the Muslim community in the region because it contains classical Malay language as well as various Islamic religious sciences such as tafsir, fiqh, and akhlak. Pegon Arabic script is not just a means of communication, but also a symbol of the cultural and Islamic identity of the Malay Pattani community that has been passed down thru generations. Thru this writing, religious values and

Islamic scholarly traditions are passed down from generation to generation, becoming an inseparable part of social life and education there.

In the context of education in the southern region of Thailand, particularly in Pattani, Islamic religious education plays a very important role. This is because the majority of the Pattani community is Muslim and considers religious education as the main foundation in their social and cultural life. Islamic schools in this region, including Chongkraksat Wittaya, strive to preserve and develop Islamic traditions thru the teaching of various religious aspects, one of which is the instruction of the Pegon Arabic script.

Islamic religious education does not occur instantly, but rather thru a long process that involves active interaction between teachers and students. The central goal of this process is to instill Islamic values while simultaneously shaping the character of the students. As stated by (Munawir et al., 2025), the uniqueness of this education lies in its holistic approach, which instills Islamic teachings encompassing the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual realms simultaneously, while prioritizing balance and harmony among the three.

Islamic religious education teachers serve as educators and guides for students in the implementation of the teaching and learning process. That role reflects the dynamic aspect of a position, namely the actions and behaviors performed by an individual in fulfilling their rights and obligations in accordance with the responsibilities of their position (Meisyaroh, N.D.) A PAI educator is not just a teacher, but also directly responsible to Allah Swt in shaping the Islamic personality of their students. As stated by (Pebriyanti, 2022), PAI teachers are educators who carry the special task and function of instilling noble behavior in their students by specializing in the delivery of Islamic teachings.

Based on the above description, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play an important role in fostering and enhancing students' ability to read Pegon Arabic script. Thru directed learning, PAI teachers can help students understand the structure of letters, pronunciation, and the meaning of texts that contain Islamic values (Sulistiani et al., 2023)

Arabic script began to be widely recognized and used in the Archipelago along with the rapid spread of Islam around the 13th to 14th centuries AD. The application of these Arabic letters is greatly influenced by the local context in each region. When Islam entered the Malay region, for example, the naming conventions, letter forms, and usage were not the same as those developed in Java, in the Malay region and its surroundings. The hijaiyah letters then adapted into what is known as the Jawi script. This script is the result of modifications to the Arabic letters used to write the Malay language, with additional pronunciation methods adapted to the characteristics of the Malay language itself (Roza, 2017)

However, amidst the progress of the times and technological advancements, the use of Pegon script has begun to decline. Many students are more accustomed to using Latin letters and modern Thai in their daily lives. This condition poses a challenge for the Islamic education system, particularly for Islamic religious education (PAI) teachers, to continuously strive to rekindle students' interest and skills in reading and understanding Pegon script texts to preserve the Malay language.

In the implementation of teaching the Pegon Arabic script at Chongkraksat Wittaya in Thailand, the learning system is structured thru the classification of classes into four levels: Class A, B, C, and D. This classification is a deliberate learning strategy aimed at precisely aligning the teaching materials with the proficiency and readiness of each student.

Class D serves as the initial gateway for students who are completely new to the Pegon script. Here, the focus of learning is on introducing letter shapes, basic sounds, and the most

elementary writing techniques. Class A, as the pinnacle of this level, is dedicated to students who have comprehensively mastered Pegon literacy competencies. Students in this class are not only able to read and write fluently, but they also possess the ability to understand the meaning, context, and content of Pegon-scripted texts, whether they are religious, cultural, or literary.

This study involves two past research works that are deemed to be related in order to strengthen the implementation of the ongoing research. The research is as follows: first, "Introduction to Islamic Boarding Schools and Islamic Literacy thru Pegon Writing Training for TPQ Students in Made Village" (Hidayat et al., 2025) In this article, the researchers strive to preserve Arabic Pegon in this digital era where the younger generation's knowledge of Pegon script is increasingly declining. In fact, it is part of the cultural and Islamic literacy heritage of Indonesia. Based on the conducted review, several points of intersection and differences were found between the previous research and this study. The main similarity lies in the focus of the study, which both examine the education of Arab Pegon. Additionally, there are several other aspects that align, such as both being specific studies using "Santri TPQ Desa Made," while the researcher's study is conducted at "Sekolah Chongraksat Wittaya Thailand Pattani." Whereas the difference is: this research was conducted in Indonesia, while the research was conducted in Southern Thailand.

The second study is a research conducted by Hakimah et al. titled "Implementation of Learning the Jawi Malay Language Book in Prathomsuksa in Patani, Thailand" (Mayuso et al., 2024). The research discusses traditional Islamic education in Patani, Southern Thailand, using the yellow book in Jawi Malay (Arabic script for the Malay language) taught in mosques, balaisah, and pondok without following the government system. Over time, the use of Jawi Malay has decreased due to the dominance of the Thai (Siam) language in daily life, including among the younger generation. After studying various relevant references, the researcher sees that this study has a complex relationship with previous research, with similarities at some points and differences at others. The similarities are that both research studies focus on Islamic religious education and the preservation of Malay writing and culture. Another similarity is that both are specialized studies, specifically in the use of Prathomsuksa in Patani, Thailand, while the researcher's study is at Chongraksat Wittaya School in Pattani, Thailand.

This research generally aims to describe and analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and the use of Arab Pegon as a medium in shaping the Islamic and academic identity of Muslim students in the Chongraksat Wittaya school environment, Thailand. In line with that, this research formulates two questions. First, what is the role of PAI teachers in Arabic Pegon learning at Chongraksat Wittaya School, Pattani, Thailand? Second, what are the supporting and inhibiting factors for the success of the role of PAI teachers in Arabic Pegon learning at Chongraksat Wittaya School, Pattani, Thailand?

This research argues that the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers is very important in the learning of Arabic Pegon as an effort to preserve the Malay language, which is a cultural heritage of the Muslim community in Pattani, Thailand. Thru directed, creative, and relevant learning that meets students' needs, PAI teachers are expected to maintain the continuity of using Arabic Pegon as a local Islamic and cultural identity. Therefore, teachers need to develop a well-thought-out lesson plan, starting from the objectives, materials, methods, to the evaluation, so that the learning process can proceed more systematically and effectively. With proper planning, Arabic Pegon learning not only becomes a means of mastering the script but also a medium for preserving traditions and strengthening students' Islamic character.

B. Methods

This research focuses on the Arabic Pegon reading skills of students at Chongkraksat Wittaya Pattani School. The main focus of this study is to examine how religious teachers play a crucial role in improving Arabic Pegon reading skills at Chongkraksat Wittaya School. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach. The aim is to provide an in-depth description of the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in the process of learning the Pegon Arabic script at Chongkraksat Wittaya School in Pattani, Thailand.

This research uses the purposive sampling technique, which is determined with specific considerations. The informants determined in this study are the school principal, religious teachers, and several students who can read Arabic Pegon.

The data collection techniques used are semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In this research, the researcher functions as the main instrument in the data collection process. In a qualitative approach, the researcher plays a role in designing the research, conducting research activities, collecting data, interpreting findings, and compiling the final research report. In addition, the researcher also utilizes various supporting instruments such as documents, field notes, recording devices, and cameras tailored to the needs of the data collection techniques.

In this research, the process of data examination and analysis is carried out using the Miles and Huberman analysis pattern. This model includes the processes of data condensation, data reduction, data presentation, and verification or conclusion drawing. Data reduction is carried out to select, focus, and simplify the data that has been obtained. Next, the reduced data is presented in the form of a narrative description so that the relationships between the findings can be clearly seen. The final stage is verification and conclusion drawing, which is the process of interpreting the data as a whole to produce valid and accountable research findings. The technique for verifying data validity uses source triangulation (comparing data from various different sources, namely interviews with the school principal, Islamic education teachers, students, and my field observations).

C. Result and Discussion

Based on field findings, the researchers concluded that the role of Islamic religious education teachers in the Arabic Pegon learning at Chongkraksat Wittaya Pattani School, Thailand, is as educators, facilitators, and motivators. Supporting factors for the role of Islamic religious education teachers in Arabic Pegon learning at Chongkraksat Wittaya Pattani School, Thailand, include a conducive cultural context, motivation, and the teachers' background.

Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors are linguistic challenges and the younger generation starting to distance themselves from tradition thru structured learning processes. PAI teachers guide students to recognize letter forms, understand pronunciation, and interpret the meanings of religious texts that contain Islamic values. The success of the Arabic Pegon learning is supported by the dedication of teachers in preserving and maintaining the intellectual heritage of Malay Islam thru education.

1. The role of PAI teachers in learning Arabic Pegon at Chongkraksat Wittaya School, Pattani, Thailand. The role of PAI teachers in Arabic Pegon learning at Chongkraksat Wittaya School, Pattani, Thailand.

A teacher holds a key position as the main facilitator in the school; their duties extend beyond just teaching to also discovering talents, developing abilities, and optimizing the full

potential of the students. This process is aimed at shaping students' character to be ethical and capable of making real contributions as members of a civilized society (Arsini et al., 2023).

Teachers are a very important element in the entire educational process and cannot be separated from it. Without the presence of teachers, educational goals are difficult to achieve maximally, both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. This shows that teachers hold a strategic position in building and developing the quality of education thru teaching, guiding, and nurturing students to produce a generation of high quality. That role becomes even more significant in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. PAI teachers have the responsibility to improve the quality of learning to shape students with Islamic personalities. With proper guidance, the educational process not only touches on intellectual aspects but also nurtures the physical and spiritual dimensions of students, so that the goals of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can be fully realized (Rozi & Nabilah, 2023).

Based on the findings of the research, there is a role for PAI teachers in the Arabic Pegon learning at Chongraksat Wittaya School in Pattani, Thailand, among others:

a. Teacher as an educator

The role of the PAI teacher in teaching Arabic Pegon at Chongraksat Wittaya School in Pattani, Thailand, is as an educator. In carrying out their role, teachers do not only deliver PAI learning materials but also strive to guide students to understand and internalize the values contained within. A teacher has a role that goes far beyond just teaching; in the educational process, they are tasked with guiding behavior, nurturing personality, and instilling noble values so that students can internalize and apply them every day. On the other hand, teachers bear a significant responsibility to guide their students toward the agreed-upon educational targets (Rozi & Nabilah, 2023). The demands of this responsibility require teachers to be actively involved in shaping a future generation that is intelligent, ethical, and possesses good personal qualities.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at Chongraksat Wittaya School in Pattani, Thailand, play a strategic role in developing students' intellect. The efforts made include eradicating ignorance and honing the skills of the students by considering the personality, potential, interests, and unique capacities of each individual. In the learning of Arabic Pegon, PAI teachers implement adaptive learning strategies, including using the *فرينتيس بجان* book, increasing study time in the dormitory environment, and grouping students based on their ability levels. This strategy aims to enhance the effectiveness of learning and maximize the mastery of Arabic Pegon gradually and sustainably.

b. Teacher as facilitator

Researchers found that the role of PAI teachers in Arabic Pegon learning at Chongraksat Wittaya School in Thailand is as facilitators. Teachers who act as facilitators transition from being merely the primary source of knowledge to individuals who prepare various conveniences, learning resources, guidance, and encouragement so that students can engage actively, learn with their own initiative, and optimize their talents. With this role, educators create a supportive learning atmosphere, guide the course of dialog, provide stimuli for thinking, and lead students in the process of discovering and constructing their understanding personally (Mas, 2008)

The teacher at Chongraksat Wittaya Pattani Thailand plays the role of a facilitator in the learning of Arabic Pegon. This is evident from the teacher's readiness in preparing materials

and teaching aids, such as books and whiteboards, to create an active and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. In addition, the teacher also serves as the main reference in writing Arabic Pegon using Malay as the medium of instruction, making it easier for students to understand the material being taught.

c. Teacher as a motivator

Teachers who act as motivators hold an important position in the learning process, especially in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects. This task is not limited to delivering material but also includes planned efforts to foster, strengthen, and maintain students' learning enthusiasm. The PAI teacher, as a motivator, is obliged to create an atmosphere that can stimulate students' enthusiasm, whether thru personal approaches, providing encouragement and positive appreciation, or by creating a comfortable, supportive, and enjoyable learning environment (Kurniyadi & Fatimah, 2025).

Researchers found that teachers at Chongkraksat Wittaya Pattani Thailand play the role of motivators by implementing a class grouping system based on students' ability levels. This division encourages students to be more enthusiastic about learning and motivates them to improve their competencies so they can advance to a higher level. The class distribution is as follows:

- 1) Class D is the most basic level intended for children who are just starting to learn Arabic Pegon. Participants in this class generally do not yet have basic knowledge of Arabic letters, so the learning is focused on the stage of introducing hijaiyah letters and Arabic numbers. At this stage, the approach used is more visual and interactive to attract children's interest and make it easier for them to recognize the shapes of the letters and practice reading them correctly. Teaching in class D becomes an important foundation before students can advance to the next level, as the ability to read Arabic letters and numbers is a basic requirement to fully understand Pegon script. Therefore, special attention is given to students at this level so that they not only recognize the letters but also understand their functions and usage in the context of the Malay language written in Jawi script, along with the material in class D:

Start chapter 1 فلاجرا 3 فلاجران, recognizing letters and pronunciation when letters are connected with the letters اي و, example

Table 1. حرف-حرف جاوی

No.	Jawi Letters				
1	ا	ب	ت	ث	ج
2	چ	ح	خ	د	ذ
3	ر	ز	س	ش	ص
4	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ
5	ع	ف	ق	ك	
6	ك	ل	م	ن	و
7	ه	لا	ء	ي	ث

Table 2. بويي مغبكوۃ ۲ سقسى.

No.	Jawi letters follow اي, و
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1	و	ي	ا	
2	بو	بي	با	ب
3	نو	ني	نا	ن
4	ثو	ثي	ثا	ث
5	جو	جي	جا	ج
6	چو	چي	چا	چ
7	حو	حي	حا	ح
8	خو	خي	خا	خ
9	دو	دي	دا	د
10	ذو	ذي	ذا	ذ
11	رو	ري	را	ر
12	زو	زي	زا	ز
13	سو	سي	سا	س
14	شو	شي	شا	ش
15	صو	صي	صا	ص
16	ضو	ضي	ضا	ض
17	طو	طي	طا	ط
18	ظو	ظي	ظا	ظ
19	عو	عي	عا	ع
20	غو	غي	غا	غ
21	غو	غي	غا	غ
22	قو	قي	قا	ق
23	فو	في	فا	ف
24	قو	قي	قا	ق
25	كو	كي	كا	ك
26	كو	كي	كا	ك
27	لو	لي	لا	ل
28	مو	مي	ما	م
29	نو	ني	نا	ن
30	وو	وي	وا	و
31	هو	هي	ها	ه
32	يو	يي	يا	ي
33	ثو	ثي	ثا	ث

- 2) Level C class is a continuation of level D and is filled with children who have successfully mastered the basics of Jawi script, such as the introduction of hijaiyah letters and Arabic numbers. In this class, students are guided to develop their ability to form letters into words and read simple words written in Jawi script. The focus of learning at this stage is to strengthen the phonetic understanding of Arabic letters in the context of the Malay language, so that students are not only able to recognize the letters individually but also understand how these letters connect and form meaning. To enrich vocabulary and improve reading skills, learning activities are often interspersed with exercises in writing the names of objects around, such as stationery, body parts, or household items, using

Jawi script. This method aims for students to connect writing with real objects, making the learning process feel more contextual and enjoyable. In addition, learning in class C also begins to encourage students to be more confident in reading and writing, as a first step to prepare them for more complex material at the next level, for example:

Table 3. Class C material

No.	Example Reading				
1	لا	غا	جالا	باوا	ا-ا
2	كي	في	تي	اي	ي-ي
3	لو	كو	سودو	بو	و-و
4	فا	كا	جاري	تالي	ا-ي
5	مالو	فاسو	داكو	باتو	ا-و
6	كودا	رودا	دوسا	بولا	و-ا
7	سيلا	كيلا	رييا	بيلا	ي-ا
8	چوري	كولي	دوري	تولي	و-ي
9	كيلا	سيكو	تيفو	بيرو	ي-و

- 3) Level B class is an advanced stage after students complete their learning in Level C. At this stage, children's reading skills begin to be directed to a higher level, which is reading complete sentences rather than just syllables or word by word. The material presented in this class is already in the form of simple sentences with complete meanings, so the children are starting to be trained to understand the content of the reading comprehensively. In addition to learning to read, students are also starting to be given assignments to create their own sentences, both orally and in writing, in order to practice language skills and foster creativity in sentence construction. The sentences used as teaching materials are also starting to be selected with more meaning, not just as reading exercises, but also containing elements of character education and religious values. For example, children can be asked to read sentences about the importance of prayer, honesty, or doing good to others, so that the process of learning to read also becomes a means of character building and understanding life values. With this method, it is hoped that children will not only become proficient in reading but also start learning to understand the content of the reading and apply it in their daily lives, for example:

Table 4. Example Reading

رومه

اين رومه سايا
 ساي تيغكل تيكي اورغ
 باف, امق, دان ساي
 تيف ۲ هاري ساي
 برسپهكن رومه
 هلامن رومه ساي سلالو
 برسپه
 بايق فوكو ۲ بوغا ساي تانم
 دهلامنث
 رومه ساي كچيل لاي
 برسپه

- 4) Class level A is the highest tier in the existing class structure. In this class, the material taught emphasizes intensive reading and writing practice. Children are trained to read longer and more complex sentences and start to get used to writing neatly and correctly according to language rules. In addition, students in class A are usually given additional responsibilities in the form of teaching practice to younger students, such as those in classes D, C, and B. Thru this activity, they not only hone their academic skills but also learn leadership, responsibility, and good communication. This teaching practice becomes a valuable asset that helps foster their self-confidence and social skills, while also reinforcing their understanding of the material they have previously learned, such as:

Table 5. Example Reading

سمبهيغ
اورغ اسلام مستي سانبهيغ, تيف ۲ هاري ساي سانبهيغ ليما وقتو, دوا وقتو فد سيغ هاري دان تيكي وقتو فد مالم هاري ايه دان امق ساي جوك سانبهيغ, كالو ايه دان امق ساي سانبهيغ ساي تيدق بواة بيسينغ, ساي سوک ايکوة ايه سانبهيغ هاري جمعة ساي فرکي سانبهيغ د مسجد
دکمفوغ ساي اد مسجد بارو, سمو اورغ دکمفوغ
ساي سانبهيغ د مسجد ايت

كاتبه "سيف ٢ تيغكل سمبهغ اكن ماسوق نراك"
سبب ايت ساي تيدق تيغكل سمبهغ

2. Supporting and inhibiting factors for the success of PAI teachers' roles in Arabic Pegon learning at Chongraksat Wittaya School, Pattani, Thailand.

a. Supporting factors are as follows:

1) A conducive socio-cultural context:

The social and cultural conditions at Chongraksat Wittaya Pattani, Thailand, provide significant support for the process of learning Arabic Pegon. The community environment, which is still deeply rooted in Islamic values and the use of the Malay language in daily life, becomes a supporting factor that facilitates students in understanding and learning the Pegon Arabic script. That cultural support creates a learning atmosphere that is harmonious between the school environment and the students' social life, making the learning process more effective and easily accepted by the students.

2) Teacher's motivation and background:

The background of an educator encompasses the entire academic journey undertaken, the work record, the teaching capacity mastered, as well as community and cultural experiences that shape their perspective and teaching methods. All these elements directly impact the determination of the teaching methods applied, the way they interact with students, and their ability to create a disciplined and effective classroom atmosphere (idris, 2017).

In the social and cultural context of Chongraksat Wittaya Pattani, Thailand, teachers demonstrate a high teaching spirit as a form of commitment to preserving the Malay language thru education, ensuring that the language remains maintained and developed within the school environment.

b. Inhibiting factor

1) Linguistic and language challenges

Researchers found that Arab Pegon is not pure Arabic, but rather Arabic script used to write the Malay language. Therefore, learning Arabic Pegon requires a good understanding of the basics of the Malay language, especially classical forms and religious vocabulary that are often used. If students do not have that foundation, they are likely to experience confusion in reading or understanding texts written in Arabic Pegon.

2) The younger generation that is starting to distance itself from Tradition:

The Pattani Malay language, which serves as the foundation for the use of Arabic Pegon, is currently experiencing a shift due to the dominance of the Thai language in daily communication, especially among the younger generation. This phenomenon has implications for the decreased intensity of Pattani Malay language use, which can affect students' ability to understand Arabic Pegon texts rooted in that language.

D. Conclusion and Recommendations/Implications

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that PAI teachers play an important role in supporting the continuity of Arab Pegon learning at Chongraksat Wittaya School Pattani-

Thailand. That role is not limited to delivering material, but also includes guidance, facilitation, and providing motivation to students in the learning process. The success of Pegon Arabic learning is influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors that shape the implementation of learning in the school environment.

In facing various existing challenges, teachers make several adaptive efforts to maintain the effectiveness of learning and enhance students' understanding of Arab Pegon. This research also shows that the contribution of PAI teachers in preserving and teaching Arab Pegon remains an important area for further development. Therefore, future researchers are expected to conduct broader and more in-depth studies on the role of PAI teachers in Arab Pegon learning in various other educational contexts.

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