



P-ISSN 2355-2794
E-ISSN 2461-0275

Preserving the Jawi Script in Aceh: Assessing Literacy, Cultural Heritage, and Modern Paradigm Challenges

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Abstract

The use of Jawi, or the Arabic script that uses the Malay language, in the archipelago is gradually declining due to a paradigm shift. Increased Latin script use has diminished the Jawi script literacy, resulting in its perception as inferior. Research on this script as a cultural heritage in the province of Aceh, Indonesia, well-known as the Veranda of Mecca, is necessary, in line with the mandate of the National Education System Law, Qanun No. 11 of 2014 concerning the Implementation of Education, and the UUPA of 2016. This study aimed to explore the understanding of the Jawi script. It employed a descriptive-qualitative approach and the instruments used were a set of test questions and questionnaires. The samples were 100 randomly selected respondents from Langsa City, Aceh. The findings showed that 63 respondents successfully understood the conversion from the Jawi to Latin script, while only 22 could understand the conversion from Latin to the Jawi script. The results further indicated that the majority supported teaching the Jawi script in educational institutions as a means of preserving the cultural heritage of the Acehnese people. Furthermore, the participants' ability to read the Jawi script was significantly better than their ability to write it. Hence, this study provides information on the Acehnese linguistic capabilities related to the Jawi script preservation, focusing on its maintenance, use, and literacy role in multilingual contexts. It contributes to the understanding of traditional writing system transmission and perception, enhancing our understanding of language practices in post-colonial societies.

Keywords: Aceh, cultural heritage, Jawi script, reading, writing.

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Citation in APA style: Bania, A. S., & Akob, B. (2025). Preserving the Jawi script in Aceh: Assessing literacy, cultural heritage, and modern paradigm challenges. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 12(1), 457-470.

Received February 6, 2024; Revised April 1, 2024; Accepted December 20, 2024; Published Online January 31, 2025

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v12i1.36629>

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the development of Islam in Indonesia, the use of Arabic script using the local language has developed, which is an intellectual treasure spread across several regions with monumental works, which are not only the works of scholars of Arab descent but also indigenous works, so that the uniqueness of this culture is a pride of Muslims in Indonesia (Auni & Hermanto, 2020; Ghufon, 2020; Hizbullah et al., 2019). Manuscripts that use Arabic script in the Malay language are called *Jawi*, while Arabic script with the Malay language in manuscripts is called *Pegon* (Daneshgar, 2021; Jamalín & Rahman, 2021; Kalsum et al., 2023; Samad, 2018). Here, we focus on the Malay language with the Arabic script, namely, the Jawi script. Some of the Jawi books used in learning in Aceh are the *Tajwid*, *Bustanusslatain*, *Masaailal Muhtadi*, *Dhammon*, *Jam'u Jawāmi*, *Sabilal Muhtadi* and *Sirussālikin* (Abubakar, 2016; Asroni, 2022; Dhuhri, 2017; Ramala, 2020; Zulkhairi, 2019).

The fading use of the Jawi script is observed throughout Indonesia. Difficulties in reading and writing the script are reported among elementary and junior high students (Karimah, 2022), and university students studying Islamic history show a decline in their engagement with it (Maulana, 2024). The decline in the Jawi script usage is due to a shift towards the Latin alphabet, resulting in a widespread inability to read and write it, general unfamiliarity with the script, and a perception of it as inferior (Inayatussalihah, 2017). The shift from the Arabic-Malay to the Roman alphabet has further created difficulties in accessing resources in various disciplines written in the traditional script and has affected Quranic reading and religious comprehension (Dewi et al., 2023). Other inhibiting factors for learning the Jawi script are the limited availability of its literature and students with knowledge, such as those who do not have the historical schemata of Arabic-Malay (Risdiawati et al., 2016).

Although the Jawi script historically played a vital role in representing Malay sounds and adapting to linguistic variations (Jamalín & Rahman, 2021), its preservation is significantly challenged in contemporary Indonesia, especially in Aceh. Understanding the Jawi script among the Acehnese population requires investigation, given its status as a unique legacy of the region's ancestors. Aceh's strategic location on the northwestern tip of Sumatra, bordering the Strait of Malacca, facilitated early contact with Arab traders and the subsequent spread of Islam in Indonesia. This historical connection led to the integration of numerous Arabic loanwords and writing conventions, contributing to the development of the Jawi script, a symbol of Acehnese ethnic, social, and cultural identity (Akmal et al., 2022). Therefore, this research asks the following question:

1. What are the linguistic capabilities of the Acehnese people today in the Jawi script?

This research offers a novel examination of separate yet interrelated Jawi script reading and writing abilities among the Acehnese, a population where such research is scarce. By investigating these proficiencies individually, the study provides an understanding of Acehnese linguistic capabilities related to the cultural preservation of this script, specifically in language preservation, script usage, and literacy within multilingual contexts. This work contributes data on the maintenance, transmission, and perception of traditional writing systems, enhancing our understanding of language practices in post-colonial settings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Development of the Jawi Script

Indonesian has been Indonesia's official language since its 1945 independence and is a form of Malay (Soderberg & Olson, 2008; Paaúw, 2009). Nevertheless, in the beginning, before Islam developed in the archipelago, the language that previously became the language of unity in the archipelago was Kunlun under the rule of the Sriwijaya Kingdom, where this language was used as a language of science because it was used to write Buddhist religion (Mohamed, 2018). The Malay language then replaced the Kunlun language in the archipelago, which is currently

famous in regions such as Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Pattani in Thailand, and Mindanao in the Philippines. Malay's historical role as a lingua franca, especially in the Malacca Straits trading area, is well-established (Prentice, 1990). Jawi script was widely used in various media, including newspapers, advertisements, and even Malay-language Bibles, before significant Western colonial influence (Dewi et al., 2023; Kembaren et al., 2019).

Early writing materials of the Jawi script included palm leaves, bamboo, and bark (Gunawan, 2015). Paper as a writing medium in Southeast Asia was first recorded by the Spanish in 1512 AD as a gift to the Sultan of Brunei. Westerners, such as De Casparis, John, and even van Ronkel, put forward the theory that the use of the Jawi script to write manuscripts began in 1500 AD or 1600 AD. However, this has become a polemical topic because there is a manuscript entitled *Sharh al-'Awamil fi Bayan 'Ilm al-Nahw* which was written in the 13th century AD and is stored at the Universitätsbibliothek Marburg, Germany. Even further back in the 12th century AD, there was a written manuscript entitled *Bahr al-Lahut* which used the Malay language with Arabic scripts by Abdullah Arif, which was historically spread and studied in Peurlak (Yahaya, 2016). Becoming the dominant script after Islam's arrival, Jawi was instrumental in documenting history, culture, and knowledge (Harun et al., 2018), reaching its peak in the 19th century as an official script and marker of identity (Sulistiyo et al., 2023).

In Ramala (2020), the Jawi script adopts the *hijaiyah* letters (or the letters of the Arabic alphabet), and there are additional letters that are not derived from the original *hijaiyah*, such as 'ca' (چ), 'nga' (ڠ), 'pa' (پ), 'nya' (ښ), 'ga' (گ) and 'va' (ڤ). Then, the Jawi script does not use *harakat* (like vowels in written Arabic, indicate which vowel sounds to use) and *tasydid* (emphasizes a consonant, indicating that it should be pronounced twice as strongly or held longer) to maintain the rules of the writing system, which denotes sounds for Malays. The letter *alif* (ا) or witness letter, helps determine diphthong sounds, such as 'a' (ا), 'i' (ي), 'u' (و), 'e' (ي), and 'o' (و).

The subsequent introduction of the Latin alphabet in education, however, diminished Jawi's widespread use (Sulistiyo et al., 2023). This transition culminated in 1901 with the publication of the *Kitab Logat Melajoe*, the first Latin spelling guide for Malay in Indonesia, which marked the initial replacement of the Jawi script (Pramono, 2009). In religiously prominent regions like Aceh, the Jawi script persisted in daily use during the early Indonesian revolution (1945-1949). Its use gradually declined after independence, disappearing completely between 1948 and 1956. While the script was briefly used on currency in 1952 (for 'Indonesia' and 'Diponegoro'), by 1955, only the Latin script appeared. This shift reflected the widespread adoption of the Latin script, deeply built in Indonesian culture through the colonial education system (Gumilar, 2021). Overall, Malay was replaced by the Jawi script in the Roman alphabet in 1963 (Mansor, 2021), though its inherent flexibility allowed it to serve the diverse linguistic needs of the Malay world (Putten, 2019).

2.2 The Origin of the Jawi script

The name of the Malay language that uses the Arabic script is *Jawi* because the origin of this terminology was pronounced by the Arabs to indicate Javanese frankincense, which is predominantly referred to on the islands of Java and Sumatra (Risdiawati et al., 2016). The origin of the name of the script with the word *Jawi* or *Javanese* for Arabic script which uses Malay has been denied. It does not refer to the name of the island of Java but comes from the Arabic word *Al-Jawah* to name the island of Sumatra in the 14th century AD by Ibn Battuta, Yaqut, and Abu Al-Fida. The Jawi script functions as a means of conveying feelings and thoughts in various aspects, not only regarding Islamic religious knowledge but also economics, arts and culture, technology, and diplomacy (Hendriani, 2017).

Abu Ishak Al Makarany is suspected of having created the Jawi script to spread news and information related to science using the Malay language. This presumption occurred because he was the author of a manuscript about the history of the Peureulak and Pasai Sultanates in Aceh, which is known as the Veranda of Mecca with the title *Idhharul Haq fi Mamlakatil Perlak wal Pasy* (Sakti, 2011). One of the earliest works from other Indigenous manuscripts is the *Hikayat*

Raja Pasai which originates from North Sumatra. It is a Malay language manuscript and is called Jawi when used as written text (Yahya & Jones, 2021). Istiqmatunnisak (2017) argues that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* does not originate from North Sumatra, which in the modern era is an area in North Sumatra Province with its capital Medan, but originates from Aceh Province with its capital Banda Aceh, which is currently known as the region with the name Veranda of Mecca. During the Sultanate era, the region saw the development of science, especially regarding the first Islamic religion in Southeast Asia. The knowledge contained in manuscripts written by the *ulama* (Muslim scholars) at that time used the Jawi script in Aceh (Nurlaili & Iqbal, 2021).

3. METHODS

3.1 Design of Research

This descriptive qualitative research provides an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Lester et al., 2020). It allows subjective problem examination and presents findings tied directly to initial research questions. Focusing on existing viewpoints establishes a basis for understanding new phenomena related to the what, why, where, and who of the research. This method analyzes research concerning individuals' lives, behaviors, organizations, narratives, interactions, and social movements. Relevance is ensured by gathering firsthand accounts within resource and time constraints (Bradshaw et al., 2017; Doyle et al., 2020; Marlina & Fachruddin, 2020; Tamayo et al., 2020).

3.2 Data Collection Method

The instruments used in this research were distributed test questions and questionnaires. Data collection consisted of test results, in the form of score evaluations, used to assess comprehension and response abilities (Milanowski, 2004). The tests and questionnaires were developed in consultation with Islamic religious leaders from the Bineh Blang Mushalla in Langsa City and *Tsanawiyah madrasa* (Islamic junior high school) teachers. Figure 1 provides an overview of the Jawi script test.

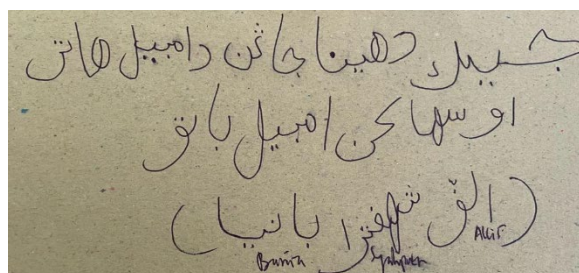


Figure 1. The Jawi script.

The Jawi script phrase in Figure 1, when transliterated to Malay Latin script, is “*Jika dihina jangan diambil hati. Usahakan ambil batu*”, meaning, “If you are insulted, do not take it to heart. Instead, grab a stone”. This proverb advises against dwelling on problems, which can lead to stress or depression, and instead encourages proactive solutions. As Mansor (2021) argues, such Jawi script comprehension tests are necessary due to the close association between the script and the Quran, a key guide for Muslims, particularly Malays. This necessitates understanding Arabic-related elements, including Jawi. Numerous Arabic terms have been integrated into Malay, reflecting intercultural exchange, for example, *adil* ‘rightful’, *ahli* ‘member’, *hasil* ‘result’, *ikhtiar* ‘resolve’, *iklan* ‘advertisement’, *jamin* ‘guarantee’, *khianat* ‘deception/betrayal’, *mahir* ‘skillful’, and *nafkah* ‘livelihood’.

Written tests are a practical method for measuring respondents’ comprehension due to their ease of administration, low cost, and short duration. This research employed an essay test, where

questions were presented with contextual information, not just the questions alone. The resulting scores, representing respondents' performance, were combined and used for data analysis. Finally, these combined scores were classified using a rubric to assess respondent performance and the quality of the collected data (Kimball et al., 2004; Tangkin, 2019). Transliteration, the process of representing characters from one script in another, was used in the tests, specifically between the Jawi and Latin alphabets (Azwar et al., 2018; Mardiansyah et al., 2023; Masrin & Anwar, 2021; Nurwakit et al., 2020; Yusra et al., 2020). This can determine respondents' understanding and reading ability (Warni et al., 2022).

Table 1 presents the open-ended questionnaire administered to the participants.

Table 1. Open-ended questionnaire.

No.	Questions about the Jawi script
1	Do you know the Jawi script?
2	Can you read the Jawi script?
3	Can you write in the Jawi script?
4	Do you agree that the Jawi script should be preserved?
5	Do you agree that the Jawi script should be taught on campus?

Besides tests, questionnaires were distributed to respondents from the general public to gather data on their understanding of the Jawi script. It consisted of ten yes/no questions (Roopa & Rani, 2012). These questionnaires aimed to identify respondents' interests, attitudes, and habits related to the script. The questionnaires used a closed format, providing pre-determined answers for respondents to select from (Djajanegara, 2019).

3.3 Participants

A number of 100 respondents, aged 17-35, were randomly selected from Langsa City, Aceh, to complete tests and questionnaires. Langsa is a heterogeneous city with a strong family- and territory-based social system, populated by diverse ethnic groups, including Javanese transmigrants and economically active Chinese (Fatia & Taher, 2017), as well as Gayo, Tamiang, Minangkabau, Batak, and various Indian ethnicities. This multicultural diversity makes Langsa an ideal location for this research.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique employed in this research involved several stages. First, data reduction was performed by grouping the collected data based on pre-defined categories. These groups were then classified according to test and questionnaire results, distinguishing respondents who demonstrated an understanding of the Jawi script from those who did not. Next, the data were displayed, and organized to facilitate conclusions regarding respondents' understanding of the script. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring patterns, explaining the compiled test and questionnaire results coherently, and analyzing cause-and-effect relationships objectively and critically (Miles & Huberman, 1992; Rijali, 2018).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Jawi to Latin Transliteration Test

To assess respondent understanding, the Jawi script text was provided for transliteration into Latin script. Figure 2 displays the test results obtained from the transfer of the Jawi to the Latin scripts by the respondents. Figure 2 shows that 63 respondents correctly translated the Jawi script test questions into Latin script, while 37 failed to do so. This relatively small difference in success rates highlights the declining use of the Jawi script within the Acehnese community. This decline is likely due to the scarcity of the Jawi script instruction and resources in educational

settings, where it is often treated as supplemental knowledge rather than a core skill (Kratz, 2002). It further reflects the long-established dominance of the Latin script in Malay society, a trend that began during the colonial era.

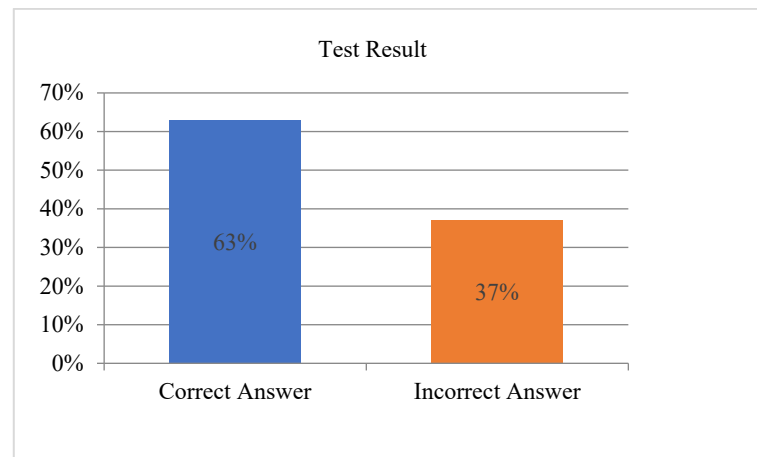


Figure 2. Test results from Jawi to Latin.

While the Jawi script remains in use in Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, particularly in state schools where it is taught alongside the Latin alphabet, comprehension is declining across generations. Students find the script increasingly difficult to read, likely due to unengaging teaching materials, often consisting of plain, black-and-white posters or A4 sheets devoid of visual aids. The complexities of the vowel system further contribute to student confusion (Saxena, 2011).

Beyond Brunei Darussalam, Aceh, known as the “Veranda of Mecca”, also integrates the Jawi script instruction into both formal and non-formal education, primarily for religious purposes such as worship and Quranic recitation. Key texts used include *Jam’u Al-Jawāmi* and *Masāil Al-Muhtady Bidāyah Al-Hidāyah*. A significant disruption to the Jawi script learning occurred during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) when instruction in the script was restricted in favor of *katakana* (everyday script for Japanese, used for most common words and grammar) and *hiragana* (a special script used to highlight foreign words and names, making them stand out). To counteract this historical setback and preserve this cultural heritage, Qanun 2008 strongly recommends the Jawi script as a supplementary subject in Acehese formal schools (Rizki, 2020). Historically, this script, used to write Malay, served as a vital communication tool, enabling scholars and teachers to document their understanding of the world (Roza, 2017). More recently, efforts to preserve the script have extended to digital platforms. For example, Yusra et al. (2020) developed an Android application for script transliteration, converting between Jawi and Latin alphabets based on established Malay Arabic writing conventions, covering a broad range of characters including a’, a (*hamzah*), dh, dz, sh, ts, th, and zh.

4.2 Latin to Jawi Transliteration Test

The following is a test given with questions that are the opposite of the earlier test, namely, the content of the test is the transfer of the Latin script *Jika dihina jangan diambil hati. Usahakan ambil batu* to the Jawi script, the answer key of which is in Figure 1.

Figure 3 reveals a stark contrast to Figure 2, translating from Latin script to Jawi proved significantly more challenging than the reverse, despite using the same content. Only 22 respondents succeeded, while 78 failed. This difficulty persists even though all respondents, as Muslims, are familiar with the Arabic script used in the Quran. However, Quranic Arabic differs from conventional Jawi orthography (Wieringa, 2018). As Mukhamdanah et al. (2023) note, Jawi often omits vowel markers, relying on *alif*, *waw*, and *ya* to differentiate sounds. This can lead to ambiguity; for example, the word دفوج could be read in multiple ways. This characteristic of Jawi

explains the difficulties faced by the Acehnese in converting to it. The low success rate in translating to Jawi can be attributed to several factors, particularly among non-Malays: the perception of Jawi as an archaic script with limited practical value, its relegation to elective status in formal education, its association primarily with Islamic symbolism, rather than as a broader cultural script alongside other scripts like Chinese and Tamil, which could play a role in promoting positive inter-ethnic relations.

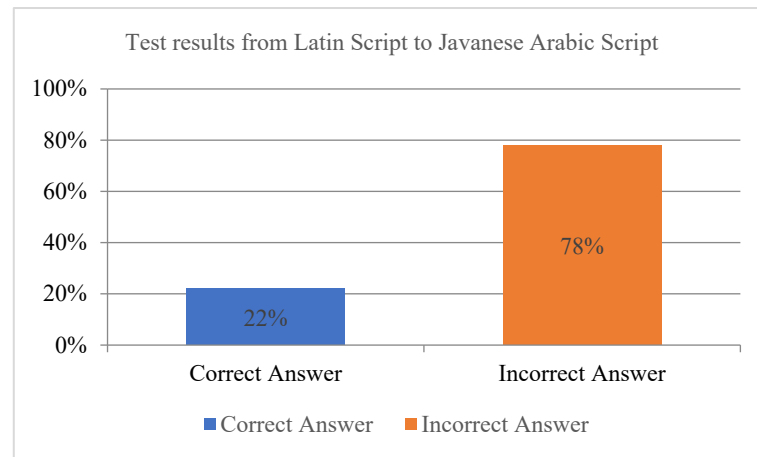


Figure 3. Test results from Latin to Jawi.

The Jawi script, a historical legacy of the Malay archipelago dating back to the Sultanate era, deserves preservation, much like the Arabic script in Persian and Urdu, which remains in use today (Coluzzi, 2020). Historically, the Malay world was recognized for its unique script, originating in Aceh and used to disseminate both religious and secular knowledge across the region. However, the adoption of the Latin script, often associated with European colonialism, has led to a decline in Jawi literacy. Modern generations struggle to read and write Jawi due to limited learning opportunities, the presence of additional characters beyond the *hijaiyah*, and the absence of *harakat* vowel markers, which complicates pronunciation (Yahaz et al., 2022).

4.3 Results of Understanding the Jawi Script

Table 2 shows the results of the questionnaire completed by the respondents. It presents data on respondents' knowledge of the Jawi script. All respondents, without exception, reported familiarity with the script. This widespread knowledge likely stems from the Malay language and its orthography, a cultural heritage dating back to the Sultanate era. Jawi script has spread throughout the archipelago, serving as a symbol of identity across Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Pattani (Thailand), and even Mindanao (Philippines). Its strength lies in bridging dialectal differences within the Malay language, facilitating communication in palaces, markets, and religious schools since its inception (Coluzzi, 2020; Ghani et al., 2022; Kratz, 2002; Saimon & Takmad, 2023). The respondents in this study, residing in Aceh (the "Veranda of Mecca"), have maintained a continuous tradition of Jawi script study from the Samudera Pasai kingdom to the present day, integrating this cultural practice into their lives (Dewi et al., 2023; Zulkhairi & Hajar, 2023).

Table 2. Open-ended questionnaire results.

No.	Questions about the Jawi script	Yes	No
1.	Do you know the Jawi script?	100	0
2.	Can you read the Jawi script?	63	37
3.	Can you write in the Jawi script?	22	78
4.	Do you agree that the Jawi script should be preserved?	100	0
5.	Do you agree that the Jawi script should be taught on campus?	91	9

Regarding reading ability, 63 respondents reported proficiency in Jawi script, while 37 did not. This widespread reading ability is likely a consequence of Islam's prominence in the archipelago. This finding aligns with [Pangesa et al. \(2023\)](#), who found that 82.05% of their 39 tertiary student respondents demonstrated high Jawi script reading ability, suggesting that younger generations are actively engaged with the archipelago's intellectual heritage, Malay literary history, and cultural preservation. Thus, this research and previous studies corroborate the finding that a majority of respondents can read the Jawi script effectively. Similarly, [Hendrayani et al. \(2022\)](#) found that a majority of elementary school students could read the Jawi script proficiently.

Jawi script utilizes Indonesian grammar. Prior study of the *hijaiyah* letters in the Qur'an facilitates Jawi script comprehension due to letter similarities ([Rahmadi & Tanjung, 2020](#)). Jawi script includes additional letters not found in the *hijaiyah*: 'c' (*jim* with three dots), 'p' (*fa* with three dots), 'ny' (*nun* with three dots), 'ng' (*ain* with three dots), and 'g' (a small *kaf* with one dot) ([Aisyah, 2017](#)). Despite this familiarity with the script's existence, many, especially students, lack comprehensive reading skills ([Warni et al., 2022](#)). In regions with strong Islamic influence, such as Aceh, and Jawi script learning persists through recitations of Arabic-Malay books. Teachers lead these sessions, reading and explaining complex terms, while students follow along ([Zulkhairi, 2019](#)). Unlike purely Arabic texts, which often present translation challenges, Malay texts in Jawi script are more accessible to learners, facilitating knowledge transfer and practical application.

Conversely, the majority of respondents (78 out of 100) reported an inability to write the Jawi script, with only 22 demonstrating this skill. This disparity likely relates to the test's use of Jawi script words containing more than two characters (Figure 1). [Mukhlis and Asnawi \(2018\)](#), found that students given multi-character Jawi script words often fall into the low-proficiency category (64.36%), as they struggle with complex orthographic rules and the production of appropriate "witnesses" for each word. [Dungeik and Bety \(2014\)](#) attribute this weakness to the relative obscurity of the Jawi script compared to Latin, inconsistencies in the Malay Arabic script's vowel system, and the challenges of using Jawi script on computer keyboards in the digital age. Jawi script, like Arabic, is written right to left and comprises 36 letter variants: 32 from the *hijaiyah* and 4 additional characters ([Afrianto et al., 2018](#)). Jawi was chosen as a unifying script in the Malay world due to its flexibility in representing various dialects and its omission of vowels, which circumvented pronunciation differences ([Hendriani, 2017](#)). While Jawi flourished under Islamic rulers, Dutch colonization brought discriminatory policies toward Islamic education, contributing to a decline in Jawi literacy ([Kusuma, 2015](#)).

All respondents agreed on the importance of preserving the Jawi script. They emphasized the need for Jawi script instruction in formal and non-formal education to safeguard this once-prominent lingua franca of the Malay Sultanate era. They recognize that the transition to the Roman script has religious implications, potentially isolating future generations from Islamic teachings, even though Jawi facilitates Islamic learning ([F. Abdullah et al., 2020](#); [Dewi et al., 2023](#); [Roza, 2017](#)). Research on Jawi script proficiency as a cultural heritage in Aceh is therefore crucial, aligning with the National Education System Law, Qanun 11 of 2014 (Aceh) concerning education implementation, and the 2016 UUPA, which guarantees Acehese citizens access to quality, Islamic education in line with scientific and technological advancements ([Samad, 2018](#)).

A number of 91 respondents agreed on the importance of Jawi script instruction in higher education, while nine disagreed. Given the respondents' Acehese background, such instruction in local universities is highly relevant. Efforts to improve Jawi script understanding, particularly among youth, should focus on enhanced learning methods, improved governance and management, and technology integration ([N. Abdullah & Rahmah, 2022](#)). Jawi script instruction is currently maintained in Islamic boarding schools. Crucially, this literacy strengthens knowledge of *nahwu* (grammar), which aids in understanding Indonesian and Arabic translations ([Damayulfi et al., 2023](#)). University lecturers can promote Jawi script preservation through community service activities, such as training in children's literature creation (poetry) or reading the Yellow Book and other ancient Malay manuscripts ([Doni & Abidin, 2022](#); [Hikmah, 2022](#);

Idawati et al., 2021). In the digital age, online project-based learning can supplement traditional, informal Jawi script instruction provided by religious teachers (Warni & Afria, 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

This study reveals a complex picture of Jawi script literacy in Aceh. While respondents overwhelmingly recognize the script's cultural significance and support its inclusion in education to preserve Acehnese heritage, a significant gap exists between knowledge and practical skill. A majority of the respondents (63 out of 100) could correctly translate text from Jawi to Latin script. However, the reverse translation, from Latin to Jawi, proved much more difficult, with only a small fraction (22 out of 100) demonstrating proficiency. This means that most respondents could translate from Jawi to Latin script, but far fewer could perform the reverse translation. This shows a decline in active Jawi literacy. This disparity between reading and writing proficiency emphasizes the urgent need for increased motivation and improved educational strategies to revitalize Jawi script use among younger generations. The findings confirm the script's endangered status and accentuate the importance of research into its maintenance, use, and role in multilingual Aceh, contributing to a broader understanding of traditional writing systems in post-colonial contexts.

This research is limited by the scarcity of basic acquisition data on the Jawi script, specifically within Aceh Province. Future research should focus on developing methods to sustain its use, increase interest, and facilitate easy, effective, and efficient instruction, both conventionally and digitally, in Aceh and beyond. This study's scope was limited to Langsa City, Aceh Province, restricting both the number of participants and the geographical area covered. Therefore, future research should expand its participant base and geographical reach, potentially nationwide, given the script's wider distribution across Indonesia. This broader scope will help identify needs and justify the development of appropriate solutions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was supported by LPPM Universitas Samudra in 2023 through contract agreement No. 592/UN54.6/PG/2023.

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