

## **TEXTBOOK TECHNICAL PRESENTATION VS. READABILITY: AN ANALYSIS OF KBD FORM FOUR ARABIC TEXTBOOKS IN MALAYSIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background and Purpose:** Efforts to improve the teaching of the Arabic language as a subject have the potential to strengthen the Integrated Dini Curriculum (KBD) in Malaysia. Thus, it is appropriate and necessary to examine the relevance of textbook technical presentation in terms of text readability. Therefore, this study aims to identify the relationship between the technical presentation of the Arabic textbook (*al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'asirah*) in the Form Four Integrated Dini Curriculum in Government-Aided Religious Schools (SABK) and the readability of textbooks.

**Methodology:** This study was designed as survey research. 694 respondents Form Four SABK were recruited in this study, selected using a proportionate stratified random sampling method. The questionnaire items were administered to the respondents after they were tested for validity and reliability. Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. This included frequency, percentages, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation tests.

**Findings:** Results showed that the technical presentation of KBD Form Four Arabic textbooks is of a high level. However, the readability of the textbook overall was unsatisfactory. It was also shown that there was a weak significant positive relationship between the textbook technical presentation and the readability of Arabic textbooks for SABK students.

**Contributions:** The findings of this study have implications on textbook writers to improve textbook readability, especially for language learners. The findings also may contribute to the Ministry of

education, course designers, as well school administrators to be vigilant before making any decisions on textbooks used for educational purposes.

**Keywords:** *al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'asirah*, government-aided religious school students, Integrated Dini Curriculum, readability, textbook technical presentation.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Reading a text in a foreign language will present readers with lots of challenges, such as unfamiliar meanings and usage of particular vocabulary, unknown syntactic features, and unacquainted topics (Zhang, 2021; Hu, Gao, & Qiu, 2021). Readability can be viewed as an active interaction between the reading material and readers and the most important aspect that will influence the difficulties of comprehension passages (Al-Shaye & Al-Dhefeiri, 2021; Dubai, 2004). Jawarnah (2008) stated that high levels of text readability will ensure higher levels of students' engagement in the taught reading texts, thus leading to the ultimate success of communicative interaction between readers and reading texts. Many scholars agree that readability is the most necessary issue in selecting an appropriate textbook for a course (Burton, 2014; Rezaee & Norouzi, 2011), to achieve benefits from the textbook. Yong (2010) states that a common problem faced by language learners is the lack of language proficiency. Rollnick (1999, as cited in Yong, 2010) further states that many learners are confronted with the difficulty of learning the content, as well as learning the new language in school.

Readability issues are a common phenomenon in Malaysia. It was claimed that too little effort has been made to measure the level of readability of reading materials used as subject texts (Ghani, 2011; Husaini, Zaini, Mohamad, & Elias, 2016). Another issue in readability is the lack of comprehension of reading materials for local school students, which is caused by the low cognitive level of these students (Arifin, Halim, Sham, & Shukry, 2013; Ghani, 2011; Husaini et al., 2016; Sjahrony, 2014). Therefore, text readability also needs to be adapted to technical presentations that will attract students' interest. Based on this, Mohamad (2009) stated that text comprehension that is frustrating may affect students' ability to read.

Furthermore, Bansiong (2019) commented that the readability and comprehensibility of a textbook are dependent on the language spoken by the prospective users. Besides, efforts

to improve the teaching of the Arabic language as a subject have the potential to strengthen the Integrated Dini Curriculum (KBD) in Malaysia. The Integrated Dini Curriculum or called KBD, introduced by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, is a combined version of the existing National Curriculum that has been implemented since 2015. This curriculum is based on the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013-2025, which states that the MOE is committed to providing high-quality religious education to students, complemented with the relevant knowledge and skills to succeed in the job market that is based on strong Islamic values and Islamic philosophy. In addition, this plan also strengthens the implementation of the national curriculum in religious schools by enhancing the Dini and Tahfiz curriculum as part of the national curriculum, as well as incorporating religious elements into the curriculum (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013).

The Government-Aided Religious School or called SABK students have previously used the Al-Azhari religious curriculum, a curriculum that is not the same as the KBD, in their Islamic education and the Arabic language components. There are various problems that have arisen with the implementation of the al-Azhar curriculum, especially for teachers. They do not understand the curriculum taught, difficulties in understanding the contents of the syllabus and textbooks used, and do not receive continuous training from the MOE (Abdullah, 2000; Daud & Kamel, 2003; Tamuri, Ismail, & Jasmi, 2012). KBD has become an alternative to this curriculum that offers continuity. Its implementation has been conducted in stages from Form 1 to Form 5 since 2015 (Salleh, Fadzir, & Ghani, 2017). The MOE is also aware of the need to maintain the quality of education in religious schools by expanding the implementation of the KBD, while continuing to support SABK in the form of funding, curriculum, training, and staff.

As KBD enters its seventh year of implementation, more research still needs to be conducted on this curriculum to improve students' ability to read Arabic reading materials. This is coupled with the issue of the grievances of students who face difficulties understanding the content of Arabic texts, due to this new curriculum (Alias & Lubis, 2018). This emerging problem has prompted the need to examine the technical presentation factors of textbooks and their relationship with the readability of KBD Form Four Arabic textbooks; therefore, the objectives of this study were to:

1. Identify the level of technical presentation of KBD Form Four Arabic textbooks.
2. Identify the level of readability of KBD Form Four Arabic textbooks.
3. Identify the relationship between textbook technical presentation and readability of KBD Form Four Arabic textbooks.

To achieve the third objective, the null hypothesis was created as below:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the textbook technical presentation and the readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Textbook Technical Presentation**

A comprehensive textbook policy includes all elements of the textbook chain, which are linking general education policy, curriculum framework, subject syllabuses, and the development, financing, production, distribution, management, and use of textbooks (Smart & Jagannathan, 2018). As stated by the Textbook Committee, Education Bureau (2016) the desirable features of a good textbook include interactivity, the ability to arouse the interest of students, and the capacity to actively engage and involve them in the learning process. According to Alderson (2000) and Chall (1974), the textbook technical presentation is a secondary source that has a role and function in measuring readability. Meanwhile, Ghani (2010) defines textbook technical presentation as the technical elements of printing in a reading text presentation that include aspects of organization, text, typography, illustration, color, graphic materials, and layout.

In addition, Lee (2009) mentions several factors that make a textbook, including a type of reading material, easy to read, interesting, and comprehensible. They further include appearance, size, line length, title, page pattern (including page edge pattern), writing, paper (including color), paper texture, typographic relationships, and content appropriateness. Based on this, certain features of a quality textbook have been detailed, namely, it should be a type of reading material that can convey information about knowledge, concepts, ideas, facts, and principles to students. It should also contain assessment elements such as activities and practice questions, and use attractive, relevant, and functional graphic materials to support the constructed text (Textbook Division, School Department, 2008).

Evaluating the quality of textbooks is important. This includes assessing the use of language, illustrations, design, and questions in training. These can affect the text's readability

because the textbook itself is the main reference source that is recognized by the MOE and used in teaching and learning (Ismail & Othman, 2012). Textbook writers must also take into account good technical presentation in a textbook as this can contribute to, and affect, the level of readability (Chall, 1974; Harrison, 1980; Huckin, 1983). Therefore, the quality of the technical presentation of a textbook is closely related to the level of text readability.

Irwin and Davis (1980) suggested that the organizational structure of the text can be used as one aspect of a checklist to measure the level of text readability. To explain the necessary features of text organization, Harrison (1980) detailed the three features of the text, which are the format (the paragraph division and subheadings), the use of introductory paragraphs in the text that give the reader a brief overview of the content of the text to be read, and the use of questions in addition to text, as part of an effort to promote learning and comprehension. The rhetoric and clarity of the presentation of a text are important because they involve the writing structure of the reading material, which has a clear impact on the reader (Carrell, 1984; Day, 1994; Yusoff, 1999).

In addition, Abdullah (2010) reported the efforts and innovations of the Textbook Division of MOE. Starting in the year 2011, the Textbook Division made reforms to streamline the physical form of textbooks, including reducing the size by up to 20 percent compared to the previous year, as well as making the content of the textbooks more attractive. This restructuring is considered important in the effort to produce textbooks that meet the current demand for reading material that has creative and innovative design features to facilitate readability and attract students to read it.

Four factors that may affect readability were explained by Gray and Leary in Dubay (2004). The first factor is the content of the text, which involves important aspects that need attention, namely purpose, order, and coherence can make it easier for the reader to understand the meaning of the reading text. The second factor is the style of language, which can predict the level of difficulty of a text. The third factor is the selection of design, including the text's typography, format, and illustrations which can help the reader to understand the text he reads. The last factor is the structure of the text, which considers structural elements such as chapters in the title, clues, and references in order to help readers to get the meaning of a text and avoid misunderstandings when reading.

According to some previous studies, the size of the writing is also an aspect that has received the attention of researchers. The role of writing size can affect the fluency, recognition, and comprehension of reading materials, as well as its role in attracting and motivating readers. As for the aspects of illustration, graphics, and color, these factors are more

likely to provide motivational value to weak readers especially (Harrison, 1980). Yusoff (1999) states that techniques of using graphic materials such as charts, pictures, graphs, tables, and diagrams should also be considered. A good layout in terms of graphic material can help readers read and understand the text better but if this is not managed effectively, it will also cause other difficulties. Thus, in the context of this study, the textbook technical presentation refers to the organizational elements and physical appearance of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook.

## **2.2 Readability**

Reading, according to Rumelhart (1977), is an interactive process involving the interaction of many factors, in which, from this point of view, the reader is considered an active person. While text readability refers to an individual's reading skills that enable the reader to appreciate and comprehend a text read depending on the way it is written, the percentage and frequency of difficult words are based on word combination in the text, the text length, and so on (Al-Tamimi, Jaradat, Al-Jarrah, & Ghanem, 2014). Ghani, Noh, and Yusoff (2017) also stated that readability is an interactive process between the characteristics of the reader and the text.

According to Chall (1974), three aspects are interrelated in the concept of readability, namely interest, ease to read and easy to understand. A study by Yusoff (1999) stated that readability involves ability and the level of difficulty of the reading material that is to be understood by the reader. Moreover, Ghani and Dahan (2009) stated that readability is the difficulty level of a text intended to be understood by certain readers who read the text for a certain purpose. The existing knowledge and experience of the reader can influence the level of readability. The level of text readability can also enhance a reader's reading ability level because the measurements of reading readability and text readability are carried out at the same time.

The level of readability of a text is inferred based on the level, type of text, characteristics, and description of the form of reading (Ghani, 2010; Gillet & Temple, 1994; Yusoff, 1999). For the independent reading level, the text type is considered easy or simple. Students at this level have excellent word recognition, comprehension, and accuracy, as well as a smooth reading rate, and they are likely to have few errors in all aspects. As for the level of teaching reading, the type of text is considered comfortable. Students at this level have a good comprehension of reading material, good word recognition accuracy, and a moderate reading fluency rate, but some words still need to be analyzed more carefully during reading activities. Frustrated level readers, on the other hand, are more likely to regard the text as too difficult. This means that students at this level have a poor level of comprehension in reading

and poor reading. Furthermore, they need to analyze too many words before the reading activity begins.

### **2.3 The Relationship between Textbook Technical Presentation and Readability**

Past studies measuring the relationship between textbook technical presentation and readability are limited. However, some relevant results can be used to support this research topic. Text readability needs to be analyzed to see the level of appropriateness of the reading material as well as stated by many researchers as they believe that reading difficulties are related to reading material (Yulianto, 2019). According to Harrison (1980), the factor of writing design, illustration, and color have relations to readability, where all of these factors affect the readability of materials. Among others, a study by Yusoff (1999) stated that the technique of using graphic materials such as charts, real pictures, graphs, tables, and diagrams should be emphasized the text readability, and allow students to understand the content of a complex text. Indirectly, this study shows a relationship between effective textbook technical presentation and readability.

Moreover, readability is often associated with a strong relationship between the level of comprehension and the level of difficulty of a reading text (Ghani, 2011; Hassan, Yusoff, Ghani, & Ismail, 2012). In addition, Ramli and Mohamad (2015) explained that textbooks are important elements that are directly involved in determining the readability of textbooks. Thus, the technical presentation of an interesting and high-quality textbook can attract the interest of readers.

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study used a quantitative survey design to determine empirically the readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook (*al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'asirah*). In addition, a cross-sectional survey was selected, which involved the distribution of cloze tests and questionnaires to obtain information on the readability of textbooks. The study population consisted of form four students who took the KBD Arabic language subject at SABK which represented 694 students in five zones in Malaysia - northern, southern, eastern, eastern, and East Malaysia. These five zones are selected due to the different number of students in SABK for each zone. The study used a proportional strata random sampling technique and passed the validation and instrument reliability procedures.

### **3.2 Research Instruments**

This study used a set of questionnaires to explore the textbook technical presentation that contained 18 items, and which had been modified and adapted from the questionnaire designed by Ghani (2010). The textbook technical presentation questionnaire covered the organization and physical appearance of the textbook that was tested to determine its relevance to the readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook. The value of the reliability score in these items is 0.874 and it's higher than 0.80, which is suitable for use in actual studies as suggested by Kline (2011) and Pallant (2010). In measuring the readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook, the cloze test formulas for readability are used in this study. A cloze test is used to indicate the suitability of reading material to a person's level of reading ability, and is a more accurate procedure than the readability formula (Torres & Roig, 2005). This test gives an advantage as it determines the direct interaction between the measured reading material and the reader at one time (Rye, 1982; Yusoff, 1999). Only three-set texts of cloze test out of 14 reading texts in the KBD Arabic textbook were tested among Form Four SABK students. The data from this test provided a clearer picture of the actual overall readability level of the textbook, based on the ability of students to interact with the texts in the textbook. The value of the reliability score of the three-set text of the cloze test is between 0.81 to 0.91, and these high values indicate the test has internal consistency which is suitable for use in actual studies as suggested by Carey (1994) and Ebel (1979).

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The data in this study were analyzed by descriptive and inferential analyses. In detail, the descriptive analysis was used to analyze the instrument of textbook technical presentation and readability, which includes frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Inferential analysis is used to aim if there is no significant relationship between the textbook technical presentation and the Pearson correlation test. The Pearson correlation tests were used to look at the correlation between textbook technical presentation and text readability.

## **4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The following section presents the findings and discussion for each objective of the study, which was to measure the textbook's technical presentation and its relationship with the readability of KBD Form Four Arabic textbooks (*al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'asirah*).



#### **4.1 Level of Technical Presentation of KBD Form Four Arabic Textbook**

To answer the first question of the study involved the use of descriptive analysis. This was achieved by dividing the five points of a Likert scale into three categories, namely weak (W) (on the scale, 1 = none and 2 = weak), adequate (A) (on the scale, 3 = adequate), and good (G) (on the scale, 4 = good and 5 = very good). The level of each variable was measured based on Pallant's (2010) interpretation of the mean score, as follows:

Table 1: Interpretation of the mean score by Pallant (2010)

<b>Mean score</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
3.68-5.00	High
2.34-3.67	Moderate
1.00-2.33	Low

The discussion of the findings of the analysis is based on the details in Table 2.

Table 2: Textbook technical presentation

No.	Textbook technical presentation	W	A (%)	G
1	I found illustrations (graphs, maps, and charts) can add text comprehension for key concepts.	7.0	28.2	92.5
2	I found illustrations (graphs, maps, and charts) to be relevant to key concepts.	5.9	27.5	91.8
3	I found the font size to be appropriate.	2.5	12.1	85.4
4	I found the size of the textbook to be appropriate.	3.3	12.1	84.6
5	I found the type of writing to be appropriate.	2.3	13.8	83.9
6	I found the visual image to have high aesthetic (beautiful) quality.	7.4	28.0	83.1
7	I found the front cover of the textbook interesting.	7.4	30.1	79.8
8	I found the weight of the textbook to be appropriate.	4.0	18.9	77.1
9	I found the written instructions clear.	6.7	20.6	72.6
10	I found the textbook design to be well organized.	4.6	22.9	72.5
11	I found the match between the graphics and text to be appropriate.	4.9	27.1	68.0
12	I found the quality of the textbook satisfactory.	6.6	25.9	67.4
13	I found the textbook design interesting to learn.	8.3	31.4	60.3
14	I found the textbook lesson content to be in line with my existing knowledge.	8.2	34.7	57.0
15	I found the sequence of titles in the textbook interesting to learn.	8.2	35.0	56.8
16	I found the descriptions of the examples in the textbook easy to understand.	10.4	33.4	56.2
17	I found the durability of the textbook satisfactory.	12.8	32.0	55.2
18	I found the activities in the textbook interesting to learn.	16.5	37.8	45.9
<b>Mean = 3.86; Standard Deviation = 0.57; Level = High</b>				

Table 2 shows the findings of the highest frequency and percentage of the 18 textbook technical presentation items. The overall mean score value of the textbook technical presentation was 3.86, with a standard deviation of 0.57. The findings of the study of the technical presentation of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook are at a high level, taking into account the suggested interpretation by Pallant (2010), as listed in Table 2. This high level also shows that students do not have problems using this textbook successfully. All the items measuring aspects of the textbook presentation showed the highest good agreement rates. This means that none of the highest values reported fell into the weak or inadequate scale categories. This illustrates that Form Four students in the five SABK zones believe that the technical presentation aspects of the textbook are good, appropriate, and meet the characteristics of the learning objectives in an integrated manner. On the other hand, Ghani's (2010) study found that the technical

presentation of Form Four Higher Arabic textbooks was at a moderate level, based on teacher assessments. The results, that is the inconsistent levels of interpretation between students and teachers, mean that an overall improvement is required in the aspects used to measure the textbook technical presentation and thus to meet the current needs and trends of the Arabic language learning system. This is because textbooks are an important feature that is directly involved in student learning, as suggested in the study of Ismail and Othman (2012). In the context of this study, the textbook technical presentation that meets the needs of students is very important because it contributes to text readability (Chall, 1974; Harrison, 1980; Huckin, 1983).

In detail, more than 80 percent of the SABK Form Four students were satisfied with the technical presentation of the *al-Lughah al-Arabiah al-Muasirah* textbook in terms of the illustrations. This refers to, for example, graphs, maps, and charts that can add text comprehension of key concepts. In addition, the size of the writing in the textbook was found to be suitable to facilitate the process of reading and understanding the content of the text. Writing size is also one feature that is used to get the attention of researchers. The writing size can affect the fluency, recognition, and comprehension of reading material, as well as its capacity to attract and motivate readers. The use of an appropriate writing size is highly important to the preparation of reading materials according to age, ability, and reading fluency. As for the aspects of illustration, graphics, and color, these factors also provide motivational value, especially among weak readers (Harrison, 1980). These findings have directly shown that illustrations such as appropriate graphs, maps, and charts in textbooks succeeded in attracting students' interest and deepening their understanding when reading Arabic textbooks. However, students' interest and motivation are dominated in terms of readability by the text's physical arrangement and illustrations, color, and graphic materials. This makes textbooks the most effective type of teaching tool, as shown in the findings of studies by Coleman (1962), Husaini et al. (2016), and Sopian (2017).

The analysis also found that 67 percent of the sample of SABK Form Four students were satisfied with the quality of the textbook. The textbook quality element is very important in determining the overall quality of the technical presentation of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook. Good quality textbooks can attract students to further their reading. This is in line with the view of Yusoff, Salleh, and Jamaludin (2005), who asserted that an assessment of the quality of a textbook should include measures of language use, illustration, design, and questions in training that can affect the reading ability of the students themselves. Therefore,

the quality of the textbook's technical presentation is closely related to the level of text readability.

The findings show that only 58 percent of SABK students were satisfied with the suitability of the graphics to match the text. Irwin and Davis (1980) suggested that the organizational structure of a text should be one of the aspects in a checklist measuring a level of text readability. In contrast, Harrison (1980) limited text organization to three features, namely text format (paragraph division and subheadings), the use of introductory paragraphs in the text that give the reader a brief overview of the content of the text to be read, and the use of questions in addition to text, as part of an effort to promote learning and comprehension. In addition, the use of appropriate colors is also important to attract interest, motivation, and recall. This is especially important when the material produced has a target readership based on the level of interest, age, style, ability, and purpose of reading (Harrison, 1980). Yet, to evaluate them is also difficult because subjective values are difficult to measure accurately. Attractive graphic materials should be adapted to the content of the activity, so it supports the reading text and makes it more student-friendly.

Meanwhile, this study recorded that only 57 percent of students were satisfied with the sequence of titles in the textbook that reportedly attracted their interest. This rate leaves a rate of 43 percent less satisfied with the sequence of titles in Arabic textbooks. Efforts to examine this by improving the selection and sequence of titles, based on the readability guidelines, were proposed by Huckin (1983). Among those emphasized was a statement of the purpose of a written text, the use of topics and subtopics in the correct and appropriate positions, and the use of techniques that take into account reading style and reader preferences. Moreover, Gray and Leary, in Dubay (2004), stated that text structure factors, such as chapters in titles, clues, and references, can help the reader to get the meaning of a text and avoid misunderstandings that occur during reading. It can be concluded that reading materials with good technical presentation rhetoric within the text can indirectly affect the increase in students' comprehension, motivation, and interest in the text, regardless of the diversity of their mastery levels.

The analysis also showed that only 55 percent of SABK students were satisfied with the durability of the textbook. Meanwhile, 46 percent of students were satisfied with the way the activities in textbooks attracted their interest in learning. More focus should be given to the preparation of appropriate textbooks, delivery of meaning, and activities that conform to the textbook content syllabus. This would increase students' interest in, and motivation to learn, the Arabic language as a subject (Din & Noruddin, 2011; Fulcher, 1997; Zaini, Husaini, Elias,

& Rahman, 2016). Indirectly, the preparation of KBD Form Four Arabic textbooks needs to be improved to fully meet the guidelines set by BBT (Textbook Division, School Department, 2008) for this reading materials to display the characteristics required by students. This means that assessment elements, such as the preparation of activities and training questions, must be appropriate according to the Arabic knowledge levels of SABK Form Four students.

Based on the above discussion, the results of the analysis of the technical presentation of Arabic textbooks in this study had influenced the level of readability of Arabic texts. The analyzed elements successfully measured (at a high level) the textbook technical presentation. This means that SABK students were satisfied with the condition of the existing KBD Form Four Arabic textbooks. This view is in line with Toeimah (1985), who stated that the presentation of a textbook is an important step toward the text's objective. Meanwhile, the neatness of the presentation of the book should be comparable to the beauty and purity of the objective for which it is drafted. Thus, the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook should be improved to match the suitability and needs of the students, regardless of their achievement background, so that they remain motivated to continue referring to the reading material in the textbook.

#### 4.2 The Level of Readability of KBD Form Four Arabic Textbook

The next discussion involves the level of readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook (*al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'asirah*), which is measured based on the readability score measurement table recommended by Rye (1982).

Table 3: A measure of readability scores by Rye (1982)

Answer score (%)	Readability level
90 – 100	Independent
75 – 89	Instructional
0 – 74	Frustration

The discussion of the level of readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook is based on the details in Table 4.

Table 4: Textbook readability level

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Text A	17.95	4.91
Text B	24.71	8.73
Text C	22.05	7.81
<b>Overall mean score</b>	<b>21.57</b>	<b>6.46</b>

Table 4 shows the level of readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook through three cloze test texts. Based on the table, the mean readability score of Text B was found to be higher than those of text C and text A, with a mean value of 24.71 or a 25% readability score. Text C showed a mean score value of 22.05, or a 22% readability score, while Text A only showed a mean score of 17.95, or an 18% readability score. The overall readability score of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook was 21.57, with a standard deviation of 6.46. Thus, the overall readability score was 22%, which means it is at a frustrating level.

This illustrates that the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook has reached a level of difficulty that exceeds the students' ability to master and understand the reading material. Indirectly, the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook was found less suitable to be used as reading material for students. These findings are similar to the results of Halim (2012) and Husaini, Rahman, Ghazali, and Abdullah (2014) in their studies of the level of readability of Arabic textbooks. The results of the cloze test conducted in these two studies found that the overall level of readability remained at a disappointing level, although the values in their study are a little higher than the results of the current study.

The findings from this readability level analysis are in line with the interpretation given by Ghani (2010), Gillet and Temple (1994), and Yusoff (1999). Students at this level often found the KBD Form Four Arabic reading text, namely *al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'asirah*, too difficult. This means that students at this level have a poor standard of reading comprehension, are not fluent, and need to analyze too many words before the reading activity begins. In addition, students at this level are also said not to use reading appropriate to the learning task, or reading is done only for diagnosis and can only be done if the students themselves are at a high level and interested in the reading material.

### 4.3 The Relationship between Textbook Technical Presentation and Readability of KBD Form Four Arabic Textbook

In terms of the relationship of the textbook technical presentation to the readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook (*al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'asirah*), the interpretation of the correlation coefficient of the strength of the relationship between the variables is based on the suggestion by Cohen (1988), as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Interpretation of relationship strength correlation coefficients by Cohen (1988)

Correlation coefficient (r)	Strength of relationships
0.50 to 1.00	High
0.30 to 0.49	Moderate
±0.10 to 0.29	Weak

The results of the Pearson correlation for this finding are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: The relationship between textbook technical presentation and readability

Variable	r	Sig.	Strength of relationship
Textbook technical presentation	0.079	0.038	Weak

\*p<0.05 (2-tail)

Table 6 shows the results of the analysis of the relationship between the textbook technical presentation and the readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook. The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient obtained was  $r = 0.079$ , which indicates the existence of a weak positive relationship and the p-value is 0.038 and less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there was a significant weak relationship between the textbook's technical presentation and the readability of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook. However, the findings of this study are contrary to the study of Ghani (2010), who found no significant relationship between the textbook technical presentation and the readability of Higher Arabic textbooks, with  $r = 0.167$ ,  $p > 0.05$ .

Although there was a significant weak relationship between textbook technical presentation and Arabic text readability in this study, Ghani, Ismail, Mohamad, and Ramli (2015) suggested that the level of textbook readability should be appropriate to the student's reading ability and contain good content presentation to attract students' interest and retain their motivation. Next, Ramli and Mohamad (2015) also state that the technical presentation of interesting and high-quality textbooks can attract reading interest among students.

Thus, textbooks play an important role in determining the difficulty or ease of a reading text (Sjahrony, Lubis, & Yusoff, 2017). The significant weak relationship in this study explains the frustrating level of KBD Form Four Arabic textbook readability, even though the textbook technical presentation is at a high level. Indirectly, the level of readability in this study is a determinant factor for the effectiveness of the technical presentation of the KBD Form Four Arabic textbook.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Overall, readability is a very significant factor in determining students' interest in reading. The textbook technical presentation has served a major role in influencing the level of readability of textbooks even at a weak relationship. The production of quality Arabic textbooks mainly requires a modification of the textbook's technical presentation to make them more suitable to read, interesting, and of better quality. The authorities should establish the preparation of guidelines for the materials contained in Arabic textbooks to become more appealing and attractive to students, for them to continue reading and learning more actively. Besides, emphasis should be placed on a textbook's graphic design, attractive illustrations, appropriate language, selection of format including font size, and durability, as well as the selection of training activities and descriptions that can be understood by students. This study contributes to several parties. Future researchers should extend this study by focusing on other variables that may affect the readability of textbooks, such as gender, and textbook writers may improve the level of textbook readability, especially for language learners, in line with the requirements of the Integrated Dini Curriculum (KBD).

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