

## **The Impact of Informative and Narrative Texts on Arabic Language Comprehension in Islamic Education**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the impact of narrative and informative texts on Arabic reading comprehension in the context of Islamic education. Arabic proficiency is crucial for understanding Islamic teachings, yet the differential effects of narrative and informative texts on comprehension have not been extensively explored. While narrative texts engage students through storytelling, fostering emotional connections and intuitive understanding, informative texts provide factual knowledge, supporting analytical thinking and academic comprehension. The gap in literature lies in the comparative analysis of these two types of texts in Arabic language learning within Islamic education. The primary objective of this study was to evaluate how narrative and informative texts affect Arabic comprehension in 12th-grade students. A comparative methodology was employed, using pre- and post-test assessments to measure reading comprehension after exposure to both text types. Statistical analysis was applied to determine the significance of differences in comprehension scores between narrative and informative texts. The results indicated a significant

difference in students' comprehension scores, with narrative texts yielding higher mean scores (87.81) compared to informative texts (73.77), suggesting that narrative texts may be more engaging for students. However, no significant correlation was found between the two text types and overall comprehension, highlighting the influence of factors such as teaching methods and student engagement. The study's limitation includes its small sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the results. The originality of this study lies in its focus on Arabic language learning in Islamic education, providing insights into how different text types can enhance reading comprehension and support language development in this specific educational context.

**Keywords:** Arabic language; Islamic education; reading comprehension; narrative; text types

## Introduction

The ability to comprehend Arabic texts is a critical skill in Islamic education, particularly in higher education, where students are expected to engage with diverse forms of texts ranging from classical religious manuscripts to modern academic materials. Learning a foreign language, such as Arabic, necessitates a comprehensive approach that includes language theory, teaching strategies, and an interactive environment (Mumford & Dikilitaş, 2020). In today's educational context, developments such as public pedagogy (Abourehab & Azaz, 2023), the use of social media, and action research have emerged as innovative ways to enhance language learning and intercultural competence (Shohamy & Pennycook, 2022; Abdelhadi et al., 2020). However, gaps persist in how effectively these strategies are applied to the study of Arabic, particularly in the context of higher Islamic education in Indonesia.

One notable challenge in Arabic language education is the difference between traditional and modern pedagogical approaches, especially regarding the use of textbooks (Uzum et al., 2021). Traditional Islamic schools often rely on classical texts (Munifah & Purwaningrum, 2022), while modern Islamic institutions integrate more contemporary materials (Mamadaliyev et.al, 2020). These differences influence teaching strategies, with significant implications for students' comprehension skills (Bogaerds-Hazenbergh, et.al, 2021). Research has identified three primary methods in Arabic instruction in Indonesia: the grammatical method, the direct method, and the mixed method (Retnawati et al., 2020). While these methods provide a framework for instruction, the role of textbooks as a medium of interaction between teachers and students remains underexplored, especially concerning the impact of text types—narrative versus informative—on reading comprehension.

Textbooks play a pivotal role in language acquisition, acting as both instructional tools and sources of linguistic input. However, existing research highlights the need to expand textbook analysis by incorporating new theoretical and analytical perspectives, including communication and interpretation within sociopolitical, cultural, and ideological contexts (Canale, 2021). While earlier studies have focused on the general effectiveness of textbooks, the nuanced impact of specific text types on Arabic reading comprehension, particularly within the framework of Islamic education, has yet to be adequately examined.

Narrative and informative texts represent two dominant categories of Arabic textbooks used in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia (Hamad, 2023; Aparicio et.al, 2022). Narrative texts, characterized by storytelling and sequential events, are often perceived as more engaging and easier for learners to understand (Dávila & Elovich, 2022). In contrast, informative texts, which emphasize factual content, require a different set of cognitive skills for comprehension. Preliminary findings suggest that students who learn Arabic through narrative texts demonstrate faster language acquisition compared to those using informative texts

(Liebfreund, 2021). This disparity raises important questions about how text type influences comprehension and the broader implications for curriculum design in Islamic education.

Despite these findings, research comparing the effectiveness of narrative and informative texts remains limited, especially in the context of higher Islamic education (Khaled & Anderson, 2024). Existing studies primarily focus on primary and secondary education or traditional boarding school settings (Firmansyah et.al, 2019), leaving a significant gap in understanding how these text types affect learners at the tertiary level. Furthermore, the interplay between text type, teaching methods, and students' cultural (Manshur, 2020) and educational backgrounds has not been sufficiently explored, indicating the need for a more holistic approach to textbook analysis. This study aims to address these gaps by analyzing the impact of narrative and informative text types on Arabic reading comprehension among students in Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia. By examining the strengths and limitations of each text type, this research seeks to provide insights into how textbooks can be optimized to support language acquisition. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to the ongoing discourse on language textbook (Weninger, 2021) development and offer practical recommendations for improving Arabic language education in Islamic contexts.

## Research method

This study employs a comparative quantitative research design (Lewkowycz, 2022) to evaluate the impact of narrative and informative texts on Arabic reading comprehension in Islamic education. A bibliometric analysis was conducted to identify recent trends and gaps in the field using "Publish or Perish" software (Heumüller et.al, 2020) to collect scholarly articles and "VOSviewer" software (Orduña-Malea & Costas, 2021) for visualization of research trends from the last decade. The experimental phase involved two student groups: Group A utilized informative texts, while Group B engaged with narrative texts. The design was structured around pre-tests, mid-tests, and post-tests using multiple-choice instruments. Statistical analysis, including paired t-tests, was conducted to assess comprehension differences. This approach allows for a structured comparison of the two text types, offering insights into their efficacy in language acquisition.

The study included 22 Grade 12 students from Cahaya Rancamaya IBS High School, who were purposively selected to ensure they had similar proficiency levels in Arabic. All participants experienced both types of instructional texts on different days to ensure uniform exposure. This within-subject design mitigated external variables, such as differences in teaching quality or learning environments, ensuring the reliability of the results. The relatively small sample size allowed for detailed observation and analysis, though it limits the generalizability of findings.

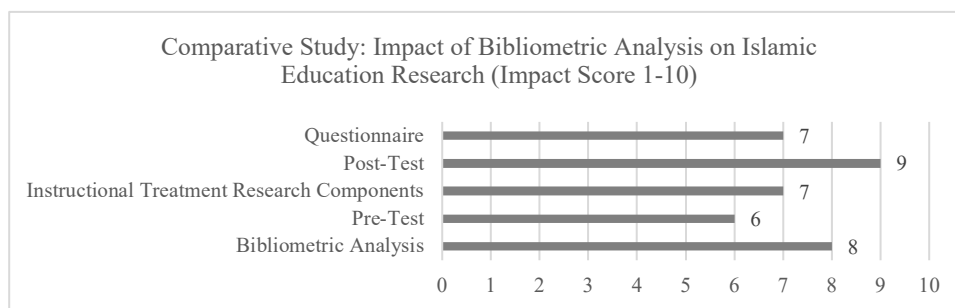


Figure 1. Ratio of instrument usage

The bar chart is showing the comparative impact of bibliometric analysis and various research components in Islamic education research. Each component, from bibliometric analysis to the questionnaire phase, is scored on a hypothetical scale of 1 to 10, highlighting their relative contributions to the study.

The research followed a systematic data collection process designed to evaluate the impact of narrative and informative texts on Arabic reading comprehension. Initially, a pre-test was conducted to assess participants' baseline reading abilities in both text types. This was followed by an instructional treatment phase where students were exposed to narrative and informative texts in separate sessions, ensuring equal exposure to each type. After the instructional sessions, a post-test was administered to measure the progress in reading comprehension. Additionally, a questionnaire was used to collect participants' subjective insights on their learning experiences. The Quizizz platform (Permana et.al, 2023) was utilized for administering tests, offering an interactive and engaging environment for students.

The study relied on multiple-choice tests as the primary instruments to evaluate comprehension. These tests focused on six key aspects: grammar, sentence completion, vocabulary, translation, reading comprehension, and simple sentence construction (Imaduddin et.al, 2022). The tests consisted of 20 questions for informative texts and 25 for narrative texts, designed in alignment with the curriculum and validated through pilot testing and expert reviews. This ensured the reliability and accuracy of the assessments, providing a comprehensive measure of the students' abilities and enabling detailed comparisons between the two text types.

The collected data were analyzed using a combination of statistical methods. Descriptive statistics summarized the mean, standard deviation, and distribution of scores for each text type. Correlation analysis using Pearson's product-moment method explored the relationship between comprehension levels in narrative and informative texts. Finally, paired samples t-tests were conducted at a significance level of  $p = 0.05$  to identify statistically significant differences in comprehension scores between the two text types. SPSS software facilitated these analyses, with results presented in tables and charts to clearly highlight the impact of narrative and informative texts on students' Arabic reading comprehension.

## Results

The findings from the study, *Impact of Informative and Narrative Texts on Arabic Comprehension in Islamic Education*, reveal significant insights into the role of text types in improving students' Arabic reading comprehension. Analysis of bibliometric data spanning 2014 to 2024 identified 983 publications in reputable journals indexed by Scopus and WoS, with a total of 322,362 citations. This demonstrates the growing academic interest and relevance of narrative and informative text theories in educational contexts, particularly in Arabic language learning. Narrative theory, which emphasizes structural and contextual understanding of stories, has been a focal point in these studies, highlighting the importance of narrative form in enhancing comprehension skills.

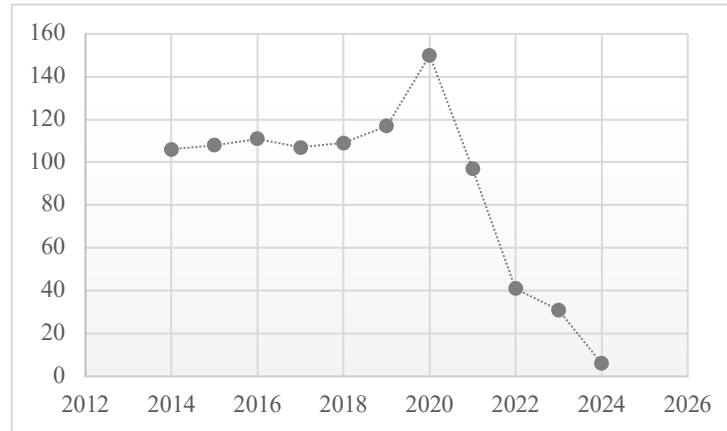


Figure 2. Number of publications in the last ten years

The bibliometric analysis of Islamic education research related to Arabic language learning reveals a fluctuating publication trend over the past decade, with a total of 983 publications from 2014 to 2024. Early in the period, the number of publications was relatively stable, with 106 papers in 2014, gradually increasing to a peak of 150 in 2020. This upward trend highlights a growing scholarly focus on Arabic language education, potentially fueled by the increasing adoption of modern pedagogical approaches and integration of innovative educational technologies. However, after 2020, there is a noticeable decline in the number of publications, with 97 in 2021, dropping significantly to just 6 in 2024. This reduction could reflect shifting research priorities, challenges in educational research during and post-pandemic periods, or a narrowing focus on niche topics within the field. Despite the recent decline, the consistent citation impact of these studies indicates sustained academic interest and influence, with the findings from earlier years continuing to shape educational practices and policies in Arabic language learning within Islamic education.

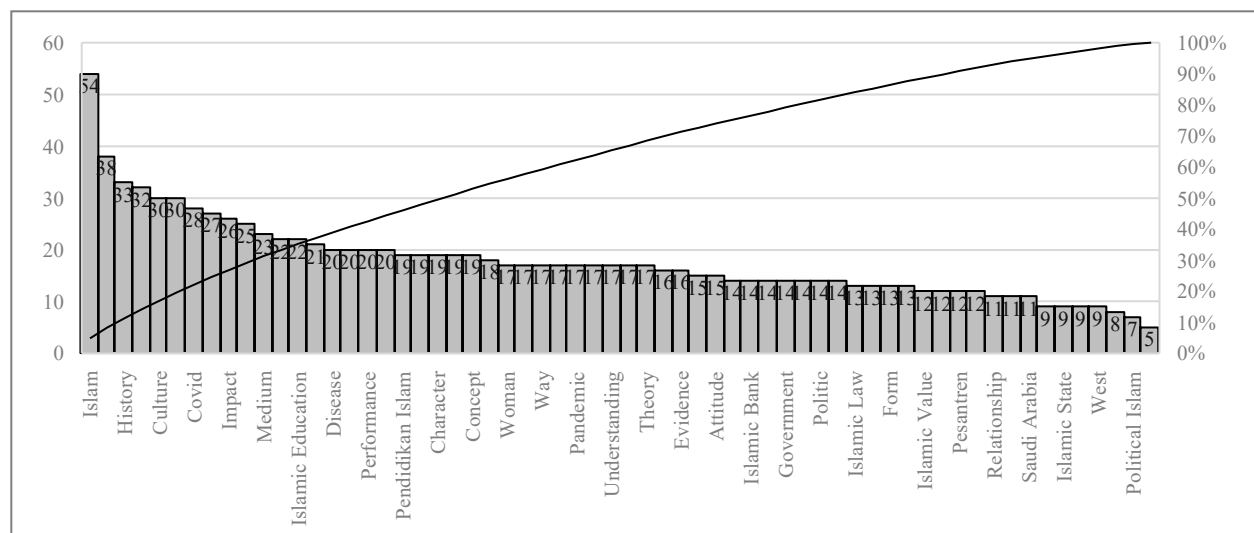


Figure 3. Frequently occurring terms

Based on the graph above, frequently occurring terms are revealed which highlight key focus areas in the field. The term "Islam" appears most frequently, with 399 occurrences,

reflecting the foundational context of the studies. "Covid" and related terms such as "Disease" (71 and 49 occurrences, respectively) indicate the significant impact of the pandemic on educational practices and research. "Learning" (62) and "Islamic Education" (55) emphasize the focus on pedagogical methods and curricula (Al-Ababneh, 2020). Other terms like "Country" (49), "History" (49), and "Medium" (45) suggest an interest in contextual and delivery aspects of education, while "Character Education" (43) and "Factor" (38) point to a focus on values-based learning and influences on educational outcomes. This terminology reflects diverse and dynamic research themes within Islamic education and Arabic language studies.

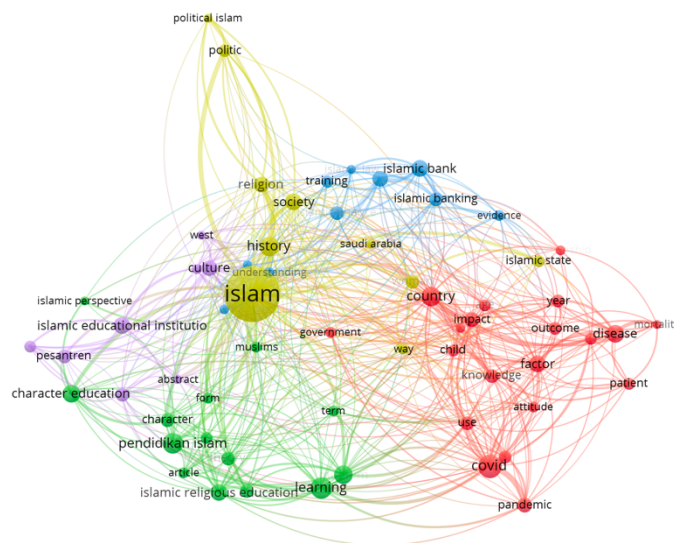


Figure 4. Visualization of Islamic education network related to arabic narrative texts

Network visualization mapping of Figure 4, in the context of Islamic education research and Arabic Narrative Texts shows a close relationship between various key terms that often appear, such as Islam, Covid, Learning, Islamic Education, Country, Disease, History, Medium, Character Education, and Factor. This visualization illustrates how these terms are interconnected in a research ecosystem centered on Islamic value-based education. The term "Islam" is the main center, reflecting its fundamental role in framing the Arabic narrative Texts. Covid and Disease are connected to Learning and Medium, reflecting how the pandemic affects learning methods and technological innovations in Islamic education, including Arabic language learning. The terms History and Country are connected to Islamic Education, indicating a focus on historical and geographical contexts in developing the education system. In addition, the terms Character Education and Factor provide insight into the importance of value-based education in shaping the personality of learners and identifying factors that influence learning success. This map shows that the integrated Arabic narrative in Islamic education focuses not only on language skills but also on values, social contexts, and global dynamics such as the pandemic, which affect learning as a whole.

The experimental results underscore that text type significantly influences comprehension. Students exposed to narrative texts demonstrated greater improvements in reading comprehension compared to those using informative texts. This supports the notion that narrative texts, with their structured storytelling and relatable content, are more engaging and accessible for learners. Informative texts, while useful, require distinct strategies to be equally effective. These findings suggest that teachers should carefully consider text types to cater to

varied learning needs and improve student outcomes. Additionally, these insights provide curriculum designers with evidence to integrate narrative and informative texts strategically into Arabic education.

Moreover, this study contributes to the pedagogical field by offering practical recommendations for teaching Arabic in Islamic educational contexts. It emphasizes the necessity of tailored instructional strategies for each text type, suggesting that narrative texts be leveraged for their intuitive appeal and informative texts for their capacity to build critical thinking skills. The bibliometric analysis reinforces the importance of narrative forms in educational research and provides a robust foundation for future studies. This knowledge can guide the development of instructional materials and teaching methodologies, ultimately enhancing Arabic reading comprehension skills and learning outcomes across diverse educational settings.

Table 1. Data distribution of student reading comprehension skill

| <i>Skill</i>                    | <i>Percentage</i> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Mastering Reading               | 31.82%            |
| Mastering Grammar               | 13.64%            |
| Master both reading and grammar | 22.73%            |
| Not capable of both             | 31.82%            |

In this part the findings gathered from comparison of success scores of High school 12 grade Arabic Core class students related to comprehension level while reading narrative and informative text types. Table 1, below, represents the comparison of comprehension test scores of 12th-grade Arabic Core class students according to text types.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics results from comparison of reading comprehension test

| Paired Samples Statistics |                        |         |    |                |                 |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------|----|----------------|-----------------|
|                           |                        | Mean    | N  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Pair 1                    | Narrative text score   | 87.8182 | 22 | 7.35259        | 1.56758         |
|                           | Informative text score | 73.7727 | 22 | 17.34779       | 3.69856         |

According to Table 2 which compares the reading comprehension test scores of students while reading narrative and informative texts, there is a meaningful difference between reading comprehension scores of students. The mean score for understanding students' narrative texts (Mean = 87.81) is higher than the mean score for understanding informative texts (Mean = 73.77). Consequently, it makes sense that there are differences in the text reading comprehension ratings between narrative and informative texts.

Table 3. Pearson product-moment correlation result from comparison of reading comprehension

| Paired Samples Correlations |                                    |    |             |      |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----|-------------|------|
|                             |                                    | N  | Correlation | Sig. |
| Pair 1                      | Narrative & Informative text score | 22 | .254        | .255 |

According to Table 3, which compares students' comprehension test scores when reading narrative text and informative text, it is known that the value of Sig.  $0.255 > 0.05$  which means that the indication is no relationship between informative and narrative texts.

Table 4. Paired Samples T-Test

|           |                                          | Paired Samples Test |                   |                       |                                                 |          | t     | df | Sig.<br>(2-tailed) |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|----|--------------------|
|           |                                          | Paired Differences  |                   |                       |                                                 |          |       |    |                    |
|           |                                          | Mean                | Std.<br>Deviation | Std.<br>Error<br>Mean | 95% Confidence<br>Interval of the<br>Difference |          |       |    |                    |
|           |                                          |                     |                   |                       | Lower                                           | Upper    |       |    |                    |
| Pair<br>1 | Narrative &<br>Informative<br>text score | 14.04545            | 17.03911          | 3.63275               | 6.49074                                         | 21.60017 | 3.866 | 21 | .001               |

Based on Table 4, The paired samples test revealed a significant difference between the narrative and informative text scores, with a mean difference of 14.05 (SD = 17.04). The 95% confidence interval for the difference ranged from 6.49 to 21.60. The t-value was 3.87, with 21 degrees of freedom, and the result was statistically significant ( $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that the type of text significantly impacted students' scores.

## Discussion

In Islamic education, particularly in Arabic language learning, narrative and informative texts play significant roles in shaping how students acquire and deepen their understanding. Narrative texts, with their emphasis on storytelling and the sequential structure of events, engage students by immersing them in a structured tale, whether real or fictional. These texts highlight specific actions and conflicts that capture the reader's interest and enhance comprehension through plot-driven narratives (Wydrzynska, 2021). Informative texts, on the other hand, focus on delivering factual knowledge and analysis, often derived from research and historical contexts (McCarthy & McNamara, 2021). In Islamic education, these texts, such as the "yellow books" used in traditional Islamic boarding schools, provide students with knowledge about Islamic heritage and Arabic language through structured, fact-based learning (Sulton, 2022). Both types of texts are essential for the development of Arabic language skills, fostering literacy in different yet complementary ways.

Narrative texts in Arabic language learning are deeply rooted in the pedagogical methods of Islamic education. These texts are commonly used in direct language learning approaches, where students are immersed in the Arabic language without reliance on their native tongue. The method of instruction often incorporates visual aids and storytelling techniques, allowing learners to internalize vocabulary and grammatical structures (Mar, Nguyen, & Ta, 2021). The narrative approach is valued for its ability to engage students emotionally and intellectually, making it easier for them to remember and reproduce language patterns. In the context of Islamic education, this approach also serves to enrich students' understanding of Islamic history, morals, and religious teachings, often through allegorical stories or religious narratives.

In contrast, informative texts are more analytical and factual, often dealing with specific subjects like history, theology, and Islamic jurisprudence. These texts are foundational in Islamic education, particularly in the study of Arabic, as they encourage students to engage with complex ideas and expand their vocabulary in a structured manner (Alpizar-Chacon & Sosnovsky, 2021).

The informative approach is closely linked to traditional Islamic practices such as "sema'an" and "sorogan," where students engage with texts by listening and reciting them aloud under the guidance of a teacher. This method helps in developing reading comprehension (Bogaerds-Hazenberg, et.al, 2021), writing (Coxhead & Byrd, 2007), and speaking skills simultaneously (Nafiah, 2022). The use of informative texts in this manner enhances the students' ability to analyze, interpret, and discuss complex Arabic texts, aligning well with the pedagogical goals of Islamic education.

The advantages of learning Arabic through informative texts are evident in the development of comprehensive language skills. Through the sema'an method, for instance, students not only listen to the correct pronunciation of Arabic but also actively practice reading comprehension as they transcribe and interpret what they hear. Similarly, in the sorogan method, where students individually read aloud in front of the teacher, they improve their speaking, listening, and comprehension skills in real-time (Fadli, Sudrajat, & Amboro, 2021). These traditional methods, rooted in the study of informative texts like Islamic heritage books, ensure that students develop a holistic understanding of the language, which extends beyond basic communication skills to include critical thinking and analytical abilities.

The impact of both narrative and informative texts on reading comprehension skills has been studied through surveys and assessments in Islamic educational contexts. A study of 22 students revealed that the majority demonstrated a sufficient understanding of various texts after engaging with both narrative and informative learning materials. Students showed varying levels of improvement depending on the type of text they were exposed to. Narrative texts, with their engaging plots and emotionally resonant structures, helped students grasp vocabulary and grammar patterns more intuitively (Enayati & Gilakjani, 2020). In contrast, informative texts, through their factual and structured nature, improved students' analytical thinking and reading comprehension in more academic contexts. This dual approach reflects the need for varied instructional strategies to cater to different aspects of language acquisition, whether narrative storytelling or factual analysis.

These findings suggest that the integration of both text types in Arabic language instruction is crucial for developing well-rounded reading comprehension skills. Narrative texts offer a more accessible entry point for students, encouraging them to engage with language in a creative and emotional way. Informative texts, however, challenge students to engage with more complex, factual content, thereby refining their ability to understand and analyze academic texts. Therefore, both types of texts play complementary roles in enhancing students' overall language proficiency and comprehension in Arabic, which is essential for their academic and personal growth within Islamic education.

The comparison of students' comprehension test scores between narrative and informative texts highlights a clear distinction in their understanding. Table 2 shows that students performed better on narrative texts, with a mean score of 87.81, compared to 73.77 for informative texts. This finding suggests that narrative texts, which are typically structured in a story format, may be more engaging and easier for students to comprehend. Narrative texts often provide a more relatable and emotionally engaging context, allowing students to connect with the material more effectively. This aligns with the Islamic educational value of fostering a deep, meaningful connection with knowledge, as students are more likely to internalize and understand content that resonates with them.

However, Table 3 presents an interesting nuance, as the Sig. value of 0.255, which is greater than 0.05, suggests that there is no significant relationship between the two types of texts.

This indicates that while narrative texts may yield higher comprehension scores, the overall relationship between text type and comprehension is not as straightforward as initially perceived. The absence of a significant correlation may imply that factors such as instructional methods, students' prior knowledge, and personal engagement with the text could play a more significant role than the text type alone. This complexity can be tied to the Islamic educational value of holistic learning, where various elements such as critical thinking and personal reflection contribute to a deeper understanding.

The paired samples test results further reinforce the idea that text type significantly impacts comprehension scores. With a significant mean difference of 14.05, the narrative text shows a clear advantage in terms of student comprehension. This statistical finding supports the notion that narrative texts, which often align with Islamic storytelling traditions, may enhance students' ability to engage with and understand complex concepts. In the context of Islamic education, this reinforces the importance of integrating narrative approaches into teaching, as storytelling is not only a pedagogical tool but also a method to instill values, morals, and critical thinking in students. By connecting the Islamic educational values of storytelling with modern teaching strategies, educators can cultivate a more profound understanding of both language and moral teachings.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the comparison between narrative and informative texts in Arabic language learning shows that narrative texts are generally more engaging and easier for students to comprehend, as evidenced by higher mean scores in reading comprehension. This aligns with the Islamic educational value of fostering a deep emotional and intellectual connection with knowledge. Narrative texts allow students to internalize vocabulary and grammar patterns while engaging with the material on a deeper level, reflecting the holistic and value-driven learning encouraged in Islamic education. However, the study also indicates that factors such as teaching methods, students' prior knowledge, and individual learning preferences influence comprehension outcomes, highlighting the importance of individualized learning, a key value in Islamic education. Ultimately, both text types play complementary roles in Arabic instruction; narrative texts serve as an engaging entry point, while informative texts promote more analytical comprehension. By integrating both in teaching strategies, educators can offer a balanced approach that enhances students' language skills and moral development, fostering a well-rounded understanding of Arabic language and Islamic values.

## Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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