



## Kurikulum Merdeka in Learning Indonesia Language: Study of High School Students' Perceptions

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### **Abstract**

This research is motivated by the presence of the Kurikulum Merdeka at every level of education, both primary, secondary and tertiary. This research aims to examine the extent to which the Kurikulum Merdeka is implemented at the secondary education level in driving schools. This research method uses qualitative descriptive analysis with a case study approach. The collection technique uses a closed questionnaire. The results of the research show that students at SMAN 1 Cibadak welcomed the presence of the Kurikulum Merdeka, students hoped that there would be novelty from the new curriculum, and students were very enthusiastic. In this way, the Kurikulum Merdeka implemented in Indonesia language subjects at SMAN 1 Cibadak can run and is believed to be better in the future.

**Keywords:** *Curriculum; Kurikulum Merdeka; Indonesia Language; Learning Indonesia Language; High School Student*

### **Introduction**

The Indonesia curriculum is continuously undergoing transformation. This aims to ensure that the resulting education is of high quality. Indonesia is one of the countries that takes part in international activities in the field of education, one of which is through PISA activities. The Program for International Student Assessment (hereinafter written as PISA) was initiated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Kemdikbudristek, 2023). Based on the PISA results, the literacy and numeracy scores of Indonesian children are in a position near the end. This is reinforced by the opinion of Suwandi (2019) that the PISA results which measure the ability of 15 year old children to use knowledge and skills in reading, mathematics and science are still low.

The discourse of implementing an Kurikulum Merdeka as a follow-up to the transformation in the world of education and as a follow-up to the PISA results is being increasingly discussed. This is reinforced by the opinion of Wahyuningsih & Lestari (2023) that the Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum that has been implemented for more than one year, namely starting in 2022. Then, the presence of the Kurikulum Merdeka cannot be separated from the mission to be achieved. The Kurikulum Merdeka aims to simplify the previous curriculum which seemed complicated and could not meet the competency achievements of students (Sitoningrum, 2023). In line with this, the Kurikulum Merdeka is a learning design that provides students with the opportunity to learn calmly, relaxed, fun, stress-free and pressure-free, to show their natural talents (Rahayu et al., 2022). It is also reinforced that the Kurikulum Merdeka

is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Kemdikbudristek, 2022). Based on these opinions, the Kurikulum Merdeka aims to target Indonesia which is advanced in the field of education.

In an effort to realize good Indonesian literacy and target high PISA scores, Indonesian language subjects have an important role in this matter. Moreover, Indonesian is one of the mandatory subjects that must be taught at every level of education, both primary education, secondary education and higher education. The Kurikulum Merdeka that is currently in effect does not change the position of Indonesia. Mahsun (2020) revealed that Indonesia is a source of knowledge. Indonesia language subjects teach four aspects of skills. This is in line with the opinion of Saddhono & Slamet (2014) that there are four basic language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Then, there is an interconnection between each language skill. This is in line with the opinion of Nurjamal, et al. (2011) who states that the four aspects of language skills are in fact closely related to each other.

Based on this background, the author will discuss the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Indonesia language subjects based on the student's perspective.

### **Method**

The research uses qualitative methods. According to Moleong (2017) qualitative methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the subjects being observed. In line with this, Creswell (2021) revealed that qualitative research is a type of research that explores and understands the meaning of individuals or groups of people who derive from social problems. The approach used in this qualitative research is a case study. This is in line with Yin (2021) opinion that case study research includes the study of a case in real life, in a contemporary context or setting.

It is hoped that the case study approach can provide a detailed and in-depth illustration of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Indonesia Language Learning from the perspective of students at SMAN 1 Cibadak, Indonesia. This research involved approximately 70 respondents from one of the schools in Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. The data collection technique uses a questionnaire. Data collection in this research was carried out through a semi-open questionnaire.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **A. Result**

This research focuses on the implementation of the independent curriculum based on the perspective of class X students at SMAN 1 Cibadak, Indonesia. Based on the results of the questionnaire collected, 70 respondents were found.

Table 1.1 Response to the Kurikulum Merdeka

<b>Num.</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Num.</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Very happy	36%	11	Just the same	7%
2	Exciting	9%	12	Just normal	15%
3	Easy to understand	3%	13	Happy & unhappy	1%
4	Very good	1%	14	Complicated/ difficult/ dizzying	9%
5	Quite good	1%	15	Less satisfied	3%

6	Like it	1%	16	depressed	1%
7	Very helpful	1%	17	Not really understand	1%
8	More enthusiastic	1%	18	Etc.	7%
9	Comfortable	1%			
10	Lots of positive things	1%			

(processed by researchers, 2023)

Table 1.1 shows students' responses to the independent curriculum in learning Indonesian. Based on this table, students have positive, neutral and negative tendencies. Numbers one to ten have a positive tendency, including: very happy, exciting, easy to understand, very good, quite good, like it, very helpful, more enthusiastic, comfortable, and lots of positive things. Numbers eleven to thirteen have a neutral tendency, namely: the same, normal, and happy & unhappy. Meanwhile, answers fourteen to eighteen show a tendency towards negative responses, namely: complicated/difficult/dizzy, less satisfied, depressed, not really understand, etc. (others are meant as a variant of negative answers).

Positive responses were dominated by the answer "very happy". Of the 76 students as respondents, there were at least 27 students who enjoyed learning Indonesia using the Kurikulum Merdeka. Several reasons The neutral response was dominated by "normal" answers as many as 11 students. The negative responses were dominated by the answers "complicated/difficult/dizzy" as many as 7 students. Here are some reasons why students are very happy (code A.1), just normal (code A.2), and complicated/difficult/dizzy (code A.3) as follows.

*"My skills have developed, my ability to speak in public has improved because I often make presentations in my studies (NN). It is easier to learn Indonesia in the Kurikulum Merdeka compared to the Kurikulum 2013 (FA) curriculum. The teacher is fun (MSA). \_A.1*

*"You both have a lot of assignments with the Kurikulum 2013 (RBR)." \_A.2*

*"Sometimes a lot of group work makes (SA) a little tired. I feel a bit dizzy because this curriculum has a lot of assignments and a lot of group assignments (FFH)." \_A.3*

Based on these reasons, the meaning of the pleasure that students feel is answered. Learning Indonesia always sharpens aspects of language skills, one of which is speaking. Learning Indonesia has become easier because some of the material in the Kurikulum Merdeka has been cut or eliminated so that previously you had to complete four chapters every semester, now there are only three chapters. The factor that students like teachers is one of the reasons why Indonesia is liked in the Kurikulum Merdeka. Apart from the positive things that emerged, some of them responded normally in facing the Kurikulum Merdeka. Some of them think that the tasks given by the teacher are still too many. This is closely related to the reasons for the negative comments that appear. Some of them consider group assignments and other assignments to be equally burdensome and difficult.

Table 1.2 Dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile

No.	Dimensions of the Pancasila Student	Implementation in Indonesia Language Learning Profile
1	Have faith, be devoted to God Almighty, and have noble character	Students do not set an example
2	Global diversity	Students do not set an example
3	Worked together	Group discussions and helping each other
4	Independent	Independent in completing tasks
5	Critical reasoning	Provide opinions regarding assignments or materials that have been received and completed
6	Creative	Explore answers with group friends

(processed by researchers, 2023)

Table 1.2 details the dimensions of the Pancasila student profile. There are six dimensions of the Pancasila student profile listed in the independent curriculum. Students are asked to provide examples of the application of the Pancasila student profile in learning. Of the six existing aspects, students can give examples of only four dimensions, namely 1) mutual cooperation, 2) independence, 3) critical reasoning, and 4) creativity. Apart from the four aspects given as examples, there are still two other aspects that can be conveyed. These aspects include 1) global diversity and 2) faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character. As for the four aspects mentioned, the reasons given by students can be seen as follows.

*"I can be independent in completing tasks, creative (SM). We are taught what is called working together, critical thinking, and this trains us to apply it in everyday life (DA). When learning begins, we start by praying. Then we were also given group assignments and independent assignments. Also, when we complete an assignment, we are given time to provide an opinion regarding the assignment or material that has been received and worked on (ZMU). In Indonesia lessons we are taught to be independent, cooperative and creative (NZ). We were given each other the opportunity to discuss and try to explore answers with group friends (FNA). Working together, for example group discussions and helping each other (AZ)."*

Based on these reasons, the dimensions of the Pancasila student profile are very closely related to Indonesia language learning. Indonesia has succeeded in integrating aspects of the Pancasila student profile in learning. This creates a bargaining position in learning because indirectly Indonesia is one of the subjects that is in accordance with the ideals stated in the Kurikulum Merdeka. Through Indonesia, students are educated to have a Pancasila spirit.

Table 1.3 Aspects of Language Skill

No.	Aspects of Language Skills	Activity
1	Listening	Providing materials Listen to the presentation Friends who express opinions
2	Speaking	Expression personal or group opinion Presentation Demonstrate Question and answer with the teacher or friend
3	Reading	Dig up information before the teacher explains Understand material or text reading books in the library
4	Writing	Write texts according to the material studied Carrying out note taking/resuming tasks Tells an experience or event Convey opinions in written form

(processed by researchers, 2023)

Table 1.3 shows the activities carried out in learning Indonesian. Based on table 1.3, there are four aspects of language skills that appear in learning. Students are able to name examples of the four aspects of language skills which include listening, speaking, reading and writing. The detailed reasons from students are as follows. The detailed reasons from students are as follows.

*"Yes, various aspects of language skills such as listening when the teacher gives material, speaking good and correct Indonesian during class time, reading material before the teacher explains, and writing various texts according to the material being studied (NN). Yes, I have obeyed that, listening when the teacher explains, speaking in front of the class reading anecdotal texts, reading and writing when given assignments (HI). For example, during presentations, there is always a question and answer session with the teacher if there is something you don't understand"*

*(DCA). It's been given. For example, we have to listen to a story about negotiations, then we give an opinion at the next meeting. We have to read a text or story about negotiations and at the final stage we have to write about an experience or an incident when we were negotiating (SAG). Yes, when a teacher or friend explains, we should listen. Speaking when making presentations, reading and writing material presented by the teacher (CRD). Yes, listening: listening when the teacher explains/explains the material, also when other friends present to the front. Speaking: presenting forward and answering questions Directly. Reading: reading books in the library. Writing: writing material and so on (NAK). Yes, for example writing poetry, presenting about negotiation texts with friends, writing parents' biographies, expressing opinions about biographies that have been read (SP). Already, students have the skills to learn Indonesian by learning to listen, speak, read and write (NEY). Yes, because every Indonesian language subject teacher has explained it, we students are asked to practice it (NNS). Yes, because I can speak in front of many people (NZ). For example, when learning is taking place we talk more and listen to what our supervisor explains, and we are given presentation assignments so that we can write, read, listen and speak (DA). Yes, students applied aspects of skills. Example: students listen when a friend is talking in front of (SM)."*

Based on these reasons, students are able to convey their opinions about aspects of language skills that they experience in learning Indonesia.

## **Discussion**

Kemdikbudristek (2021) stated that the Driving School program is an effort to realize the vision of Indonesia education in realizing an advanced Indonesia that is sovereign, independent and has personality through the creation of Pancasila Students. The presence of a driving school automatically provides an Kurikulum Merdeka. SMAN 1 Cibadak is one of the schools that has implemented an Kurikulum Merdeka and is included in the driving school category. The Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum applied at the primary and secondary education levels that is flexible, character-based, competency-based and creativity-based (Mulyasa, 2023). In the Kurikulum Merdeka, students are given the freedom to organize their own learning, so that they feel more responsible for their learning (Lestari et al., 2023). Wardani et al. (2023) stated that the Kurikulum Merdeka aims to produce quality education as an effort to overcome learning loss after the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on these opinions, the Kurikulum Merdeka in driving schools exists as an alternative solution and as a mission to improve education nationally.

Suwandi (2019) revealed that the emergence of a new curriculum certainly raises a number of consequences that must be borne. Suwandi (2019) continued, explaining that improving the curriculum has implications, both related to planning, implementation of learning, preparation of facilities and infrastructure, and assessment.

Indonesia language subjects are mandatory subjects that must be taught at various levels of education, one of which is senior high school (SMA) (Wahyudi et al., 2021). Indonesia language subjects are one of the language subjects that concentrate on applying four aspects of language skills. The four aspects of language skills in question are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In learning practice, the four aspects of language skills are integrated, including listening and reading, reading and writing, writing and speaking, or others that can be integrated, not just one or two skills. The ability to apply language rules to students is very important because insufficient mastery can become an obstacle in communication (Sumarwati et al., 2014). Based on these opinions, the integration of learning in four aspects of language skills is very important because in learning practice, each skill will go hand in hand. Integration activities in Indonesia language learning are important. This is an effort to optimize various skills, especially in terms of aspects of language skills

## Conclusion

Based on the results of a questionnaire given to 70 respondents, the results showed that the Indonesia language subject in the Kurikulum Merdeka held at SMAN 1 Cibadak, Sukabumi, West Java, Indonesia, was going well. Students can take part in learning activities which can be proven from the questionnaire answers which show that more than 50% of students are happy and welcome the presence of the new curriculum. In general, learning went smoothly as evidenced by student answers which were dominated by positive answers. Regarding the implementation of Indonesia language learning, in general the four aspects of language skills have been conveyed and students are able to convey the things they learn during learning. Thus, an Kurikulum Merdeka in Indonesia language learning is very suitable to be continued with revision and development.

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