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A Comparative Study of the 2013 Curriculum and Merdeka Curriculum in Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah / Studi Perbandingan Kurikulum 2013 dan Kurikulum Merdeka dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di Madrasah

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Abstract: This study compares the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum in Arabic language learning in Madrasah, particularly at the senior secondary level (Madrasah Aliyah). The 2013 Curriculum systematically develops language skills through communicative, functional, and contextual approaches, while the Merdeka Curriculum is more flexible, emphasizing global communication and understanding of Islam from authentic sources. This qualitative research is through the analysis of official curriculum policy documents from Madrasahs. The findings show that the Merdeka Curriculum provides greater freedom to students in diverse communication contexts, while the 2013 Curriculum is more structured in building basic competencies. The text-based approach in the Merdeka Curriculum improves students' critical and analytical thinking skills, but its implementation requires well-prepared teachers and adequate learning materials. This research highlights the need for flexible teaching strategies that are tailored to the needs of students and reinforces the use of skills-based assessments for more comprehensive evaluation. Further research is recommended on the effectiveness of text-based learning, teachers' readiness to adopt these methods, and the integration of technology in Arabic language education to improve student learning outcomes.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini membandingkan Kurikulum 2013 dan Kurikulum Merdeka dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Madrasah, khususnya pada jenjang sekolah menengah atas (Madrasah Aliyah). Kurikulum 2013 secara sistematis mengembangkan keterampilan berbahasa melalui pendekatan komunikatif, fungsional, dan kontekstual, sedangkan Kurikulum Merdeka lebih fleksibel, menekankan komunikasi global dan pemahaman Islam dari sumber-sumber otentik. Penelitian kualitatif ini melalui analisis dokumen kebijakan kurikulum resmi dari Madrasah. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kurikulum Merdeka memberikan kebebasan yang lebih besar kepada peserta didik dalam konteks komunikasi yang beragam, sedangkan Kurikulum 2013 lebih terstruktur dalam membangun kompetensi dasar. Pendekatan berbasis teks dalam Kurikulum Merdeka meningkatkan keterampilan berpikir kritis dan analitis peserta didik, tetapi implementasinya membutuhkan guru yang siap dan materi pembelajaran yang memadai. Penelitian ini menyoroti perlunya strategi pengajaran yang fleksibel yang disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan peserta didik dan memperkuat penggunaan penilaian berbasis keterampilan untuk evaluasi yang lebih komprehensif. Penelitian lebih lanjut direkomendasikan mengenai efektivitas pembelajaran berbasis teks, kesiapan guru untuk mengadopsi metode ini, dan integrasi teknologi dalam pendidikan bahasa Arab untuk meningkatkan hasil belajar siswa.



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Introduction

Education is a fundamental process to improve the quality of individuals and create superior human resources. In achieving optimal learning, it is necessary to consider various factors, such as curriculum, learning methods, educational facilities, and educator competencies¹. Arabic language learning in madrassas has a strategic position in the Islamic education system in Indonesia. Arabic is a core subject because it serves as the main language in the Qur'an, hadith, and various classical Islamic literature. Therefore, mastery of Arabic is not only important to improve language skills, but also to deepen religious understanding, enrich Islamic cultural insights, and access authentic Islamic knowledge. Learning It aims to develop students' language skills which include aspects of listening, speaking, reading, and writing². However, the effectiveness of Arabic language learning is greatly influenced by changes in the applied curriculum.

In recent years, Indonesia has implemented two main curricula in the field of education, namely the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum was introduced as a form of education policy reform. This curriculum aims to provide a wider space for education units and teachers in designing learning that is in accordance with the characteristics of students and the local context. In addition, the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the importance of student-centered learning, character development, and learning independence through a more flexible and differentiating approach. The 2013 curriculum emphasizes a scientific approach with an emphasis on activity-based learning, authentic assessment, and students' active involvement in the learning process³. On the other hand, the Merdeka Curriculum provides more flexibility for educational units to adjust learning according to the needs of students and the surrounding environmental conditions⁴. In the context of Arabic language learning, the different approaches of these two curricula raise questions about the effectiveness of each

¹ Fahmi Syaefudin Yusuf Muhtarom, Suharsono Suharsono, "Analysis Of Arabic Textbook Material For Rabbi Radiyyah Rejang Lebong Integrated Junior High School," *Lahjah Arabiyah: Journal of Arabic Language and Arabic Language Education* 3, no. 1 (2022): 55–61.

² Een Tur'aeni, "Desain Pengembangan Kurikulum Bahasa Arab: Pendekatan Potensi Fitrah," *Al-Ibtikar* 8 (2019): 23–37.

³ Nailul Izzah Laila Faoziyah, "Analisis Buku Ajar Bahasa Arab Madrasah Aliyah Kelas XI Berdasarkan Kurikulum 2013," *Mantiqul Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 1, no. 2 (2021): 117–132.

⁴ Azharudin Adnan Firdaus, Adika Hary Hermawan, and Khuriyah, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Siswa Madrasah Aliyah Darul Ihsan Muhammadiyah Sragen," *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research* 4, no. 3 (2024): 1–9.

in improving students' language competencies in Madrasah Aliyah refers to the Islamic senior secondary school level in Indonesia.

Several previous studies have discussed the application of these two curricula in a variety of subjects, such as mathematics and early childhood education.⁵; ⁶. However, research that specifically compares the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum in Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah is still limited⁷. A lack of a deep understanding of the differences in structure, approach, and evaluation of these two curricula can cause difficulties for educators in designing appropriate learning strategies. This has the potential to negatively impact students' Arabic language acquisition, as well as their ability to understand religious literature, which is at the core of Islamic education in madrasas.

Based on this background, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the objectives of learning Arabic in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum?
2. What are the Arabic language learning materials in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum?
3. What are the methods of learning Arabic in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum?
4. How is the assessment of Arabic language learning in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum?

This research is important because: (1) The 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum are currently still being implemented in madrasas, so it is necessary to study their effectiveness in learning Arabic, (2) The fundamental differences between the two curricula can affect the learning strategies applied by teachers and student learning outcomes, and (3) There are still limited comparative studies that specifically discuss the implementation of the two curricula in Arabic Learning in Madrasah.

⁵ Afifah Zafirah et al., "Studi Perbandingan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Dan Kurikulum 2013 Pada Mata Pelajaran Matematika: Literature Review," *Jurnal Cendekia : Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika* 8, no. 1 (2024): 276–304.

⁶ E W Sugiharti, "Analisis Komparatif Kurikulum 2013 Dan Merdeka Pada Aspek Perkembangan Bahasa Tingkat Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (Paud)" (2022), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/56583>.

⁷ Hamzah Usaid Uzza, Uin Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta Dwi Setia Kurniawan, and Uin Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, "Studi Komparasi Kurikulum 2013 Dan Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Madrasah," *JIT: Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah* 2, no. 1 (2023): 91–108, <https://jurnal.stittangamus.ac.id/index.php/JIT/article/view/30>.

This study aims to comprehensively analyze the differences between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum in Arabic language learning, especially in the aspects of learning objectives, materials, methods, and assessment systems. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of more effective and adaptive learning strategies and provide input for Islamic education policy makers in developing Arabic curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the times. This study provides practical benefits, especially for Arabic teachers in choosing the right learning approach, designing curricula in designing appropriate content and structures, and Islamic education policymakers in disseminating the effectiveness of curriculum policies in a more holistic and field-based manner.

Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design with a qualitative content analysis approach in a comparative framework. This design aims to systematically compare the two curricula to find significant differences and similarities in the implementation of Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah⁸. The analysis is focused on the four main components of the curriculum, namely learning objectives, open materials, learning methods, and assessment systems. With this approach, it is hoped that a deep understanding of the differences and similarities of the two curricula can be obtained in the context of Arabic language learning. The main focus of this discussion is on the official documents of the curriculum that govern Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah, especially the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. This study did not involve human subjects, as the data used came from relevant curriculum documents and previous research results.

The document analysis procedure is carried out in several stages. First, the researcher chooses the main documents that are the official reference in the implementation of the curriculum in madrasahs, namely:

1. Keputusan Menteri Agama No.183 of 2019 (Curriculum 2013),
2. Peraturan Direktur Jendral No.3211 of 2022, and
3. Keputusan Menteri Agama No.347 of 2022 (Merdeka Curriculum).

⁸ R. G. Bolbakov, A. V. Sinitsyn, and V. Ya Tsvetkov, "Methods of Comparative Analysis," *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* 1679, no. 5 (2020).

Second, the content of the document is explained using qualitative content analysis with deductive coding techniques, based on four main categories in the curriculum structure according to the Tyler (1949) model, namely: 1). learning objectives, 2). open materials, 3). learning methods, and 4). assessment systems. Third, each document is reviewed and coded according to these categories, then compared between curricula to find patterns of similarities and differences. The results of the analysis were then carried out through triangulation of literature from relevant studies of the last five years to strengthen the validity of the findings. Therefore, data collection techniques are carried out through documentation studies and systematic literature reviews, as recommended in document analysis-based research⁹. This approach was chosen because it allows for the extraction of in-depth information about the curriculum structure, learning objectives, teaching materials, learning methods, and assessment systems implemented in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum.

The main data sources in this study consist of official documents of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum, such as "KMA Number 183 of 2019, which contains the curriculum structure, learning outcomes, and content of Arabic subjects in the 2013 Curriculum in madrasahs". "PERDIRJEN Number 3211 of 2022, which regulates the learning outcomes of Islamic Religious Education and Arabic Language in the Merdeka Curriculum". KMA Number 347 of 2022, which provides guidelines for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasahs, including revisions to competency standards, learning approaches, and assessments". In addition, supporting data was obtained from scientific journals, reference books, and previous research results published in the last five years. The criteria for selecting a data source refer to the currency level, relevance to the research topic, and the credibility of the publisher¹⁰.

In analyzing the data, this study uses content analysis techniques with a focus on comparing several main components of the curriculum, namely learning objectives, teaching materials, learning methods or strategies, and assessment systems. Content analysis is a widely used method in qualitative research to identify patterns and relationships in a text or document¹¹. To improve validity and clarity in the data analysis

⁹ Muhammad Rizki Dermawan Saragih, Faisal Faisal, and Neliwati Neliwati, "Manajemen Pengembangan Bahasa Arab Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah," *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 4, no. 1 (2022): 1307–1314.

¹⁰ Sugiharti, "Analisis Komparatif Kurikulum 2013 Dan Merdeka Pada Aspek Perkembangan Bahasa Tingkat Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (Paud)."

¹¹ Klaus Krippendorff, *SAGE Research Methods Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology Introduction*, 2019.

process, several verification strategies were carried out. First, the document is coded systematically and reviewed Merdeka by other researchers (peerchecking) to ensure consistency of interpretation. Second, the researcher also triangulates the findings with the results of relevant previous research, to ensure that the results of the analysis reflect patterns that are consistent with the empirical context in the field. In addition, expert input in the field of Arabic language education and curriculum is also requested to reflect on the appropriate analysis of the implementation of reality in madrasahs¹².

The steps taken in this study include several main stages. First, the researcher identified and conducted an in-depth review of the 2013 Merdeka Curriculum and Curriculum documents related to Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah. Second, the researcher explored various results of previous research relevant to this study to gain a broader understanding. Next, the researcher analyzed and compared various aspects of the two curricula, including learning objectives, teaching materials, learning methods, and assessment systems. Finally, based on the results of the analysis, the researcher draws conclusions about the differences and similarities contained in the two curricula and their impact on Arabic learning in madrasahs. With this systematic method, this study is expected to provide a deeper insight into the advantages and challenges of the implementation of the 2013 Merdeka Curriculum and Curriculum in Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah.

This study is limited to a document analysis approach, so it does not cover the dynamics of classroom learning practices directly. As a result, the results of this study cannot fully represent how the implementation is implemented in a real context by teachers and students in madrasahs. In addition, the official documents analyzed may contain normative biases, as they are prepared from a policy perspective, rather than from the practical experience of implementers in the field. Therefore, advanced field-based research is indispensable to complement and test the validity of these findings in the context of actual implementation.

¹² Firdaus, Hermawan, and Khuriyah, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Siswa Madrasah Aliyah Darul Ihsan Muhammadiyah Sragen."

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the main component documents of the Curriculum and Merdeka Curriculum 2013

Based on the analysis of the content of the 2013 Curriculum document regulated in the Decree of the Minister of Religion (KMA) Number 183 of 2019, and the Merdeka Curriculum document, which refers to the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 3211 of 2022 and the Decree of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number 347 of 2022, an understanding of the main components of the curriculum is obtained. This study found significant similarities and differences in several key components of the curriculum.

A. Learning Objectives

The 2013 → curriculum emphasizes the development of four key skills in Arabic (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). In addition, this curriculum instills awareness that Arabic is a global communication tool and also the language of Islam in the Qur'an and hadith. This goal is designed systematically to build students' linguistic and cultural foundations in a structured manner.

The Merdeka Curriculum → main focus is on global communication and understanding of Islamic teachings from authentic sources. The curriculum is more flexible in learning methods, encouraging students to interact directly with Arabic texts used in religious (such as tafsir and hadith) and academic contexts. Thus, students not only learn language as a means of communication, but also as a means of understanding Islamic teachings in depth and relevant to daily life.

Interpretation: This difference shows that the 2013 Curriculum is more suitable for building basic skills gradually, while the Merdeka Curriculum provides room for personalization and deepening of meaning, but requires higher learning independence and literacy readiness of students.

Table 1. Comparison of Learning Objectives

Component	Curriculum 2013	Merdeka Curriculum
Learning Focus ,,	Balance of the four language skills	Global communication and understanding of

		Islamic teachings from authentic sources
Main objectives	Arabic as a means of Islamic and international communication	Arabic as a global communication tool

Source: KMA No.183 of 2019 and PERDIRJEN No.3211 of 2019

B. Learning Materials

Curriculum 2013 → Materials based on daily communication and Islamic insights.

The material in this curriculum consists of oral and written discourse in the form of presentations or dialogues that cover topics such as introduction, family life, hobbies, work, and health, as well as Islamic insights and stories. The material is designed to train four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, the communicative functions taught include various aspects such as introducing oneself, expressing desires, giving orders, asking for permission, asking about health conditions, expressing opinions, and giving wishes. With this approach, students can master Arabic in the context of daily life and understand the teachings of Islam better.

The Merdeka → Curriculum The material is broader, covering technology, Islamic civilization, and academic texts. This curriculum provides greater space for the exploration of material that is more contextual and in line with global needs. In addition to everyday communication, students are also introduced to academic texts, scientific articles in Arabic, as well as technological developments and Islamic civilization in the modern world. It is intended that learning Arabic is not only limited to verbal interaction, but also trains the ability to read and understand more complex literature.

Interpretation: The 2013 Curriculum is suitable for students with an early Arabic language background, while the Merdeka Curriculum encourages advanced textual exploration, which demands the support of authentic teaching materials and competent teachers in modern Arabic literature.

Table 2. Comparison of Learning Materials

Component	Curriculum 2013	Merdeka Curriculum
Material Type	Oral and written discourse, dialogue, Islamic insight	Texts, academic technology, Islamic civilization, contemporary issues
Text Source	National structured open books	Arabic articles, interpretations, authentic real-world texts
Material Approach	Based on daily communication functions	Contextual-global and critical literacy

Source: KMA No.183 of 2019 and PERDIRJEN No.3211 of 2019, KMA No.347 of 2022

C. Learning Methods

The 2013 curriculum → apply a communicative, functional, and contextual approach. The communicative approach emphasizes the interaction of language in real-life situations, while the functional approach focuses on the use of language in various communication functions. The contextual approach is intertwined with the student's experience and environment, so that Arabic is understood as a communication tool that is relevant to daily life.

The Merdeka Curriculum → uses a text-based approach, which emphasizes on understanding and analyzing authentic texts. This method develops critical thinking skills and broadens students' horizons through the exploration of different types of texts, including academic texts, Islamic literature, and contemporary issues.

Interpretation: The text-based approach encourages critical thinking and structural writing skills, but its implementation requires teacher training and the availability of authentic texts relevant to the student's level.

Table 3. Comparison of Learning Methods

Component	Curriculum 2013	Merdeka Curriculum
Pendekatan	Communicative, Functional, Contextual	Text-based approach
Focus	Contextual and interactive communication practices	Understanding and production of texts in a variety of communication situations

Source: KMA No.183 of 2019 and PERDIRJEN No.3211 of 2019

D. Learning Assessment

The 2013 curriculum → implement authentic and comprehensive assessments, covering various aspects of language skills. Authentic assessment is carried out by observing how students use Arabic in daily communication, both in oral and written form. In addition, the curriculum uses a comprehensive approach, which assesses not only the final learning outcomes but also the process of developing students' skills, such as through portfolios, observations, projects, and self-reflection.

The Merdeka Curriculum → prioritize skill-based assessments and authentic assessments. This assessment focuses on measuring students' competence in using Arabic in various contexts, both academic and social. Skill-based assessments assess students' ability to listen, speak, read, and write through workable tasks that are relevant to real-world needs. While authentic assessments assess students' performance in completing tasks that reflect the functional use of the Arabic language, such as text analysis, oral presentations, and academic and non-academic discussions.

Interpretation: Assessments in the Merdeka Curriculum offer adjustments in the context of students, but require **careful planning and detailed assessment rubrics** to remain objective.

Table 4. Comparison of Learning Assessments or Assessments

Component	Curriculum 2013	Merdeka Curriculum
Assessment Type	Authentic and comprehensive	Skill-based and authentic
Assessment Strategy	Written tests, interviews, presentations	Simulations, interviews, text analysis
Assessment Focus	Learning process and outcomes	Task performance and language functional ability

Source: KMA No.183 of 2019 and KMA No.347 of 2022.

Discussion

The results of this study support the initial hypothesis that the fundamental difference between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum is in the aspects of objectives, materials, methods, and assessment of Arabic language learning. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Usaid Uzza et al. (2023) which states that The Merdeka Curriculum is a more flexible, contextual, and responsive approach to the needs of students. However, some aspects, such as the explicit integration of assessment skills in the Merdeka Curriculum, are not fully described operationally in the official document, as also mentioned by Irawan (2024) in his review of authentic assessment in the competency-based curriculum. This shows that policy implementation still faces challenges, especially in the aspects of assessment design and educator readiness¹³. Apart from the innovative design of the Merdeka Curriculum, the success of its implementation is highly dependent on the readiness and training of teachers, the availability of learning resources, and strong institutional support. Unfortunately, these factors are not evenly distributed throughout madrasas, so that a perception is created between the expectations of the curriculum and the implementation of actual teaching.

¹³ Natasya Lady Munaroh, "Asesmen Dalam Pendidikan : Memahami Konsep,Fungsi Dan Penerapannya," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Humaniora* 3, no. 3 (2024): 281–297.

Analysis of the documents shows that the Merdeka Curriculum tends to provide more similarities in the use of Arabic for the context of global and academic communication, compared to the 2013 Curriculum which is more oriented towards everyday communication. In the context of Arabic language learning in madrasas, the text-based approach adopted by the Merdeka Curriculum has the potential to encourage the understanding and production of texts in various tangible communications. Meanwhile, the 2013 Curriculum, through its communicative and functional approach, is still relevant in building students' basic communication skills systematically. Nonetheless, these findings are based on an analysis of the content of the document and have not been validated through empirical data, so their interpretation needs to be further tested through field-practice-based research.

Learning objectives in the curriculum have an important role in shaping student competencies. Nafisah Deviyanti (2024) states that learning objectives must be formulated in the form of specific, real, and measurable competencies. Based on the results of the research, the 2013 Curriculum emphasizes the four main language skills and Arabic language awareness as a means of communication and understanding of Islam. On the other hand, the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the use of Arabic in global communication and the understanding of Islamic teachings from authentic sources through sanad. This shows that the Merdeka Curriculum is more adaptive to the needs of the globalization era, while the 2013 Curriculum is more systematic in building basic Arabic language skills.

Learning materials are also a major part of the curriculum that reflects the learning content that students will receive¹⁴. The results of the study show that in the 2013 Curriculum, the material focuses more on oral and written discourse that trains the four language skills through the topic of daily life and Islamic insights with an emphasis on communicative functions. Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum teaches the same skills but with a greater emphasis on functional communication and understanding of Islamic teachings in a broader and contextual scope of the material. Research from¹⁵ supports these findings, stating that the text-based approach used in the Merdeka Curriculum is more effective in improving language understanding in various contexts.

¹⁴ Ubabuddin, "Hakikat Belajar Dan Pembelajaran Di Sekolah Dasar," *IAIS Sambas* 1, no. 1 (2019): 18–27.

¹⁵ Usaid Uzza, Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta Dwi Setia Kurniawan, and Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, "Studi Komparasi Kurikulum 2013 Dan Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Madrasah."

Learning methods are an important factor in the effectiveness of learning Arabic. Yusuf Wiwin Fachrudin (2023) emphasized that learning methods must be adjusted to the characteristics of students and the learning goals to be achieved. In the 2013 Curriculum, the approach used includes communicative, functional, and contextual approaches. The communicative approach aims to develop language competence through four main skills with an emphasis on the use of language in a real context¹⁶. Meanwhile, the functional approach allows learners to establish direct contact with native speakers, while the contextual approach connects learning materials with the real world.¹⁷¹⁸

In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum focuses more on a text-based approach (genre-based approach). Text-based learning aims to enable learners to understand and produce text, both oral and written, in a variety of communication situations. ¹⁹ reveals that text-based approaches are more effective in improving students' critical thinking skills and building more contextual communication competencies. Thus, the different approaches in these two curricula have a significant impact on learners' learning patterns and the effectiveness of Arabic language learning.

The assessment system is also part of what determines the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Assessment is not only used to measure student achievement but also to assess the effectiveness of a learning program²⁰. The results of the study show that in the 2013 Curriculum there are two main types of assessments, namely authentic and comprehensive assessments. Authentic assessments are conducted to measure learners' development in a real-world context²¹, while comprehensive assessments include aspects of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes²².

Overall, each component of the criteria, namely: objectives, materials, methods, and assessments in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum show fundamental differences, but cannot be separated from each other. Flexibility in learning objectives in the Merdeka Curriculum, for example, demands the availability of more contextual and

¹⁶ Idah Faridah Laily, "Pendekatan Komunikatif Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Di Sd/Mi," *Al Ibtida: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru MI* 2, no. 1 (2015): 1–17.

¹⁷ (Syarifah Hanum, 2020

¹⁸ Muhartini, Amril Mansour, (2023)

¹⁹ Firdaus, Hermawan, and Khuriyah, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Siswa Madrasah Aliyah Darul Ihsan Muhammadiyah Sragen."

²⁰ Natasya Lady Munaroh, "Asesmen Dalam Pendidikan : Memahami Konsep,Fungsi Dan Penerapannya."

²¹ Andri Irawan, "MODEL PENILAIAN AUTENTIK ARAH KURIKULUM MERDEKA," *Al-Mujaddid Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Agama* 6, no. 1 (2024): 9–20.

²² Anang Triyoso, "Asesmen Komprehensif Dalam Pembelajaran Sains," *Jurnal Pendidikan* 1, no. 1 (2013): 17–23.

diverse materials, as well as adaptive and reflective teaching methods. This directly impacts the complexity of the assessment system, which must be able to measure competency achievement in real and diverse contexts. In other words, the more open the design curriculum is, the higher the demands on teachers' competence in designing and integrating each element of the curriculum so that it remains meaningful, consistent, and measurable.

The overall findings show that the 2013 Curriculum and Merdeka are not necessarily contradictory, but can be seen as a continuation of pedagogical ideas with different focuses and approaches. The integration of positive elements of the two can strengthen the Arabic teaching strategy in madrasahs.

In summary, the 2013 Curriculum offers structured and systematic skills development, with a strong communicative and functional approach. On the contrary, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages learning autonomy, understanding of contextual texts, and integration between Arabic and real life, especially in the academic and Islamic realms.

Each of these curricula demands a different pedagogical strategy: the 2013 curriculum demands skills in guiding language activities gradually, while the Merdeka Curriculum demands teachers' creativity in compiling authentic materials, contextual assessments, and text-based learning. This synthesis emphasizes that effective curriculum implementation requires a thorough understanding of the relationship between objectives, materials, methods, and assessments, not just on each component separately.

The findings of this study have important implications both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the constructivist approach to language learning that is the importance of students' active involvement in constructing meaning through interaction with authentic contexts. In this regard, the Input Hypothesis from Krashen (1982) is also relevant, as it states that language acquisition occurs optimally when learners accept *comprehensible* input) slightly above their current level of competence. The text-based approach in the Merdeka Curriculum supports this principle, as students are encouraged to understand and produce original texts in a variety of communication situations, which stimulates the process of language acquisition naturally and progressively. Practically, these results can be the basis for a development policy curriculum, teacher training that focuses on a contextual approach, and provide open materials that are relevant and adaptive to the needs of the times and the reality of madrasahs.

However, this article has its advantages and limitations. The advantage lies in the document analysis approach, which provides a structural understanding of the direction and policy framework of Arabic language education. This approach is in line with the policy analysis model used to express the ideology and value structure in the document. However, limitations arise because empirical data from teachers or students are not involved, so the results of interpretation cannot fully describe the variation in learning practices in the field.

Therefore, further research is strongly recommended that includes field-based qualitative approaches, such as classroom observations and in-depth interviews. Methodological frameworks such as curriculum ethnography can be used to understand the context of curriculum implementation in actual practice. This approach will contribute to the validation of the findings and expand the generalization of the results of this study.

Overall, the results of this study provide insight into the advantages and challenges of the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum in Arabic language learning. It is hoped that further research can overcome these limitations by involving empirical data from teachers and students and testing the direct implementation in Arabic language learning in madrasas.

Theoretically, the results of this study show that the text-based approach in the Merdeka Curriculum is in line with the theory of constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of students' active involvement in building knowledge through interaction with real contexts. This supports language learning as a social and contextual process, not just information transfer. From a practical perspective, teachers in madrasas need to be trained and capacity building to effectively implement text-based learning methods and skills-based assessments. Education policies also need to encourage technology integration, the availability of contextual teaching materials, and administrative support so that the Merdeka Curriculum can truly be implemented optimally in Arabic language learning.

This analysis relies on official curriculum documents that may reflect ideal policies rather than actual implementation on the ground. Therefore, potential policy bias should be considered in interpreting the results. Terms such as 'text-based' or 'authentic assessment' in curriculum documents are sometimes used without clear operational boundaries, so their interpretation can vary between policy firms and implementers at the madrasah level. The difference in structure and approach between the two characteristics

is quite striking in substance, especially when it comes to learning and skill-based assessment, which has a major impact on teachers' teaching strategies in the classroom.

This study has limitations because it does not include empirical data in the form of observations or interviews with teachers and students as a direct sample. Therefore, the findings of this study only reflect the content and direction of the policy as stated in the official criteria document. Thus, the generalization of the results of this study is limited to the context of the document, and cannot fully describe the variation or complexity of the implementation of Arabic language learning in the various madrassas that are the target population. In addition, the implementation of the curriculum in the field can be influenced by factors such as teacher readiness, the availability of teaching materials, and policy support that is not yet uniform. This has the potential to cause a difference between curriculum design and actual implementation in madrasas. Therefore, further studies with a mixed or field-based approach are urgently needed to strengthen the validity of the findings.

Conclusion

This study compares the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum in Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah by reviewing aspects of learning objectives, materials, methods, and assessment systems. Based on the analysis of curriculum documents and related literature, several key findings were obtained as follows:

1. Learning Objectives

The 2013 curriculum aims to develop Arabic language skills in the context of everyday communication, with a focus on basic linguistic understanding and Islamic insights. On the contrary, the Merdeka Curriculum provides a broader purpose, aiming to develop global communication competencies and understanding of Islam from authentic sources, so that students are able to understand and produce texts in various academic and social contexts.

2. Learning Materials

The material in the 2013 Curriculum is more structured and based on simple oral and written discourse, which includes everyday conversations, Islamic stories, and Islamic insights. Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum carries broader and contextual material, covering various themes of social life, technology, Islamic

civilization, and academic communication, so that students have a wider exposure to Arabic in various fields.

3. Learning Methods

The 2013 curriculum applies a communicative, functional, and contextual approach, emphasizing interactive activities in the teaching of Arabic. In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum uses a text-based approach, which encourages learners to explore different types of texts and develop critical and analytical thinking skills in understanding Arabic.

4. Learning Assessment

The 2013 curriculum uses authentic and comprehensive assessments, which assess aspects of overall language skills, both in terms of cognitive and speaking skills. Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum implements skill-based assessments and authentic assessments, which are more flexible in measuring students' ability to understand and use Arabic in accordance with the broader context of communication.

This research shows that the Merdeka Curriculum offers greater freedom in learning exploration, while the 2013 Curriculum is more systematic in building basic skills. Therefore, the effectiveness of the implementation of these two criteria depends on teacher readiness, availability of learning materials, and ongoing policy support.

As a recommendation, further research can be conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of text-based learning in the Merdeka Curriculum, as well as to assess the readiness of educators to implement this approach. In addition, the integration of technology in learning Arabic is also an aspect that needs to be developed to improve the quality of learning in the digital era.

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