

Critique of the Ideology of the Arabic Language Curriculum in Indonesia: A Philosophical Analysis and Its Relevance to the Merdeka Curriculum

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Abstract

This study aims to critically examine the ideological foundations of the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia and its relevance within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The research employs a qualitative approach using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) combined with a philosophical perspective. Data were collected through document analysis of curriculum texts, textbooks, and educational policies. The findings reveal that the Arabic curriculum is still dominated by a traditional paradigm emphasizing grammatical and textual aspects, which limits the development of communicative competence and critical thinking skills. Philosophically, the curriculum reflects essentialist and perennialist orientations that are not fully aligned with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, curriculum reconstruction is necessary to promote a more adaptive, communicative, and competency-based approach to meet the demands of 21st-century learning.

Keywords: Curriculum ideology, Arabic language, critical discourse analysis, Merdeka Curriculum, critical pedagogy

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara kritis ideologi yang mendasari kurikulum Bahasa Arab di Indonesia serta relevansinya dalam konteks Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) yang dipadukan dengan pendekatan filosofis. Data diperoleh melalui studi dokumentasi terhadap kurikulum, buku ajar, dan kebijakan pendidikan terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kurikulum Bahasa Arab masih didominasi oleh paradigma tradisional yang berorientasi pada aspek gramatikal dan tekstual, sehingga kurang mendukung pengembangan kompetensi komunikatif dan berpikir kritis peserta didik. Secara filosofis, kurikulum mencerminkan paradigma esensialisme dan perenialisme yang belum sepenuhnya selaras dengan prinsip Kurikulum Merdeka. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan rekonstruksi kurikulum yang lebih adaptif, komunikatif, dan berbasis kompetensi untuk menjawab tuntutan pembelajaran abad ke-21.

Kata-kata kunci: ideologi kurikulum, Bahasa Arab, analisis wacana kritis, Kurikulum Merdeka, pedagogi kritis

INTRODUCTION

An Arabic language curriculum should be designed as a holistic, integrative, and competency-based pedagogical system that not only emphasizes mastery of linguistic structures but also fosters learners' communicative, cognitive, and cultural competencies. An ideal curriculum encompasses several essential components, namely: (1) clearly defined, competency-oriented learning objectives; (2) a systematically organized content structure covering the four language skills—listening (*istimā'*), speaking (*kalām*), reading (*qirā'ah*), and writing (*kitābah*); (3) communicative and activity-based instructional strategies; (4) adaptive learning media and technologies; (5) authentic, performance-based assessment systems; and (6) the reinforcement of cultural values alongside the social context of language use. Furthermore, the curriculum should be learner-centered and socially responsive, while also integrating technological approaches and global demands to ensure its relevance in an ever-evolving educational landscape.¹

This ideal condition aligns with modern curriculum development theories that emphasize the importance of coherence among learning objectives, content, instructional processes, and assessment, as originally articulated by Tyler (1949) in the principle of the objective-based curriculum and further developed within the framework of competency-based curriculum approaches.² In the context of language learning, the theory of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), popularized by Hymes (1972) and further developed by Canale and Swain (1980), emphasizes that the success of language learning is determined by communicative competence rather than mere mastery of grammatical structures.³ Moreover, the constructivist approach proposed by Vygotsky emphasizes that language is most effectively learned through social interaction and contextualized experiences.⁴ Therefore, an ideal Arabic language curriculum should integrate communicative, constructivist, and competency-based approaches in order to effectively address the challenges of language learning in the global era.

The reality of the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia reveals various ideological and practical challenges. The curriculum remains largely oriented toward traditional approaches, such as an emphasis on grammar and rote memorization, and has not fully supported communicative and contextualized language learning. Moreover, many educational institutions face implementation constraints, including limited instructional time, students' insufficient foundational proficiency in Arabic, and suboptimal curriculum administration.⁵ Furthermore, it has been found that certain aspects of the curriculum are not yet able to effectively support the learning process, as they are not aligned with learners' needs and the

¹ Mohammad Syah, "Desain Kurikulum Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Kontemporer," *Indonesian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2023): 37–54.

² John Biggs and John Biggs, "Constructive Alignment in University Teaching," *Medical Education* 33, no. 8 (1999): 624–625.

³ Elok Milhana Rohmatul 'Ula, Umar Faruq, and Ahmad Sholihuddin, "Penerapan Metode Imla' Mandzur Pada Pembelajaran Maharah Kitabah," *Al-Wasil* 1, no. 2 (2023): 85–91.

⁴ S A Nasution, "Perbedaan Kemampuan Pemecahan Masalah Matematis Antara Siswa Yang Diajar Dengan Strategi Pembelajaran Problem Based Learning (PBL) Dan Kooperatif ..." (2019), [http://repository.uinsu.ac.id/8035/%0Ahttp://repository.uinsu.ac.id/8035/1/Siti Aspiah nasution .pdf](http://repository.uinsu.ac.id/8035/%0Ahttp://repository.uinsu.ac.id/8035/1/Siti%20Aspiah%20nasution.pdf).

⁵ Inas Arifah Mujahidah et al., "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu Salsabila Baiturrahman Prambanan Klaten," *Ihtimam: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 07 (2024): 114–125.

demands of contemporary developments.⁶ This indicates a gap between the ideal conception of the curriculum and its implementation in practice.

A number of studies over the past five years have highlighted efforts to reform the Arabic language curriculum. First, research on curriculum trends in Indonesia emphasizes the importance of integrating technology and data-driven approaches in curriculum development.⁷ Second, studies on competency-based curriculum development in the era of Education 4.0 underline the need to strengthen communication skills, digital literacy, and critical and collaborative thinking.⁸ Third, research on comprehensive curriculum models based on multicultural perspectives and ACTFL standards demonstrates the significance of incorporating global perspectives and diversity into Arabic language learning.⁹ Nevertheless, these studies tend to remain technical and practical in nature, and have not yet deeply examined the ideological and philosophical dimensions underlying the Arabic language curriculum. Therefore, there is a need for renewed scholarly inquiry that critically examines curriculum ideology while situating it within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum.

In response to these challenges, innovation in the Arabic language curriculum is required through the adoption of a critical and transformative paradigm. The curriculum should be oriented toward integrating communicative approaches, digital technologies, and the development of 21st-century competencies (4C: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication). Furthermore, it is essential to develop curriculum models that are flexible, contextual, and project-based, in alignment with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. The integration of multicultural values, differentiated instruction, and the utilization of digital media such as e-learning, artificial intelligence, and interactive platforms also constitute important strategies to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of Arabic language learning in Indonesia.¹⁰

The Merdeka Curriculum provides significant opportunities to reconstruct the ideological foundations of the Arabic language curriculum to become more adaptive and responsive to learners' needs. Within this framework, Arabic language learning is no longer solely focused on religious aspects, but also positioned as a means of global communication and the development of life competencies. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes flexibility, project-based learning, and the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile, which includes critical, creative, and collaborative dimensions.¹¹ Therefore, the Arabic language curriculum needs to be reoriented in alignment with these principles, while still preserving its scholarly identity and Islamic values.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this article aims to critically examine the ideological foundations underlying the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia through a philosophical approach, as well as to analyze its relevance within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum.

⁶ Kabul Hidayah, "Desain Pengembangan Kurikulum Dan Implementasinya Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab," *Al-Wihdah* 1, no. 2 (2024): 104–113.

⁷ Muhammad Amin, "Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Di Indonesia 2020 – 2024 : Tinjauan Sistematis Terhadap Artikel Jurnal," *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 5, no. 4 (2025).

⁸ Dawi Yanti et al., "Pendidikan Di Revolusi Industri 4.0 : Studi Kasus Evaluasi Kurikulum Merdeka Di Indonesia," *Edu Cendikia: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan* (2024): 380–390.

⁹ Retisfa Khairanis and Muhammad Aldi, "Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Yang Komprehensif: Menyelaraskan Perspektif Multikultural, Integrasi Dan Actfl Untuk Generasi Global Comprehensive," *Jurnal indopedia* 2 (2024): 1040–1049.

¹⁰ Satrio, "Integrasi Artificial Intelligence Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab : Peluang , Tantangan , Dan Inovasi Pedagogis Di Era Digital," *Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business (RIGGS)* 4, no. 2 (2025): 5907–5914.

¹¹ Dwi Ayu Wulandari, "Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Untuk Kurikulum Merdeka," *Al-Muktamar As-Sanawi li Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyyah (MUSLA)* | (2024): 66–73.

This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Arabic language curriculum studies, while also offering practical recommendations for designing a more contextual, adaptive, and 21st-century-oriented curriculum.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

a. Curriculum Ideology and Critical Pedagogy in Language Learning

At its core, curriculum is not merely a technical instrument of education, but an ideological construct that reflects particular values, interests, and orientations within society.¹² From a philosophical perspective, curriculum represents a selection of knowledge that is inherently value-laden, thus requiring a critical approach to uncover the underlying ideologies that shape it.¹³ In this regard, the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia should be understood not only as a means of language instruction, but also as a medium for reproducing religious, cultural, and power-related values.

The framework of critical pedagogy provides an essential foundation for examining curriculum ideology. In its contemporary development, Freire emphasizes that education should be emancipatory and foster learners' critical consciousness.¹⁴ Educational practices that rely heavily on memorization and one-way knowledge transmission risk producing what is termed "banking education," a passive and non-reflective learning model. In the context of Arabic language learning, the dominance of grammatical and textual approaches reflects an ideological tendency to preserve tradition, yet offers limited space for social transformation and critical meaning-making.¹⁵

Furthermore, in language studies, curriculum ideology is also reflected in the choice of instructional approaches. A curriculum that treats language merely as a structural system tends to overlook its social and communicative functions. This condition indicates that the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia remains situated within a tension between traditional (preservative) and modern (communicative) paradigms.¹⁶ Therefore, ideological analysis is necessary to identify how the curriculum shapes perspectives on language and its learning processes.

In recent developments, studies on curriculum ideology highlight that the dominance of structural approaches affects not only pedagogical practices but also the construction of learners' linguistic identities. Language is no longer viewed solely as a system of symbols, but as a social practice embedded with meaning and power relations. Recent research suggests that language curricula lacking communicative and contextual dimensions may hinder the development of intercultural competence and global literacy among learners.¹⁷ In this context, the Arabic language curriculum

¹² Fatimah Stomo et al., "Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Di Indonesia: Analisis Literatur Tentang Tantangan, Inovasi, Dan Arah Pengembangan," *Jurnal Multidisiplin Inovatif* 9, no. 12 (2025): 10–14.

¹³ Zhalfariani Narsan et al., "Perspektif Filsafat Pendidikan Terhadap Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka," *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10 (2025).

¹⁴ Asep Eka Nugraha, Deki Wibowo, and Budi Hendrawan, "Paulo Freire 's Critical Pedagogy Analysis Of Educational Transformation," *Majority Science Journal (MSJ)* 2, no. 2 (2024): 220–228.

¹⁵ Erwin Simon Paulus Olak Wuwur et al., "Analisis Kesulitan Guru Sekolah Dasar Dalam Menerapkan Pembelajaran Tematik Berdasarkan Kurikulum 2013," *JlIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 11 (2022): 4672–4676.

¹⁶ Dinn Wahyudin et al., "Kajian Akademik Kurikulum Merdeka," *Kemendikbud* (2024): 1–143.

¹⁷ Anisah Firdausi Hasniah Niamillah, "Analisis Ideologi Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Di Indonesia: Tinjauan Filsafat Pendidikan," *Al-Fashahah* 5, no. 2 (2025).

in Indonesia needs to be reoriented, not only as a tool for understanding classical texts, but also as a medium for cross-cultural interaction relevant to global dynamics.

On the other hand, critical pedagogy in language education has been further strengthened in contemporary scholarship through the emphasis on *critical language awareness* and *transformative learning*. This approach encourages learners not only to understand language, but also to critically reflect on and question the social meanings embedded within it. Recent studies indicate that integrating critical pedagogy into language curricula can enhance learner engagement, social awareness, and reflective thinking skills.¹⁸ Therefore, the development of the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia should incorporate this approach as part of a broader effort to foster more emancipatory, contextual, and relevant learning in response to the demands of 21st-century education.

b. Modern Curriculum Theory and Language Learning in the Context of the Merdeka Curriculum

From the perspective of modern curriculum development, the quality of a curriculum is determined by the alignment among learning objectives, instructional processes, and assessment. The theory of *constructive alignment*, developed by Biggs, emphasizes that learning outcomes should serve as the central reference in designing learning activities and assessments. This approach aligns with competency-based curricula, which prioritize measurable, relevant, and applicable learning outcomes in real-life contexts. In language learning, such alignment is directed toward the development of communicative competence as the primary goal.¹⁹

The approaches of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) have become dominant paradigms in contemporary language education. Both approaches emphasize that language is most effectively learned through authentic use, social interaction, and task-based activities. Therefore, ideal Arabic language learning should not be limited to the study of *nahwu* and *sharaf* (grammar), but should also focus on the ability to use the language communicatively and contextually in real-life situations.²⁰

Moreover, the theory of social constructivism, developed by Vygotsky and expanded in recent scholarship, asserts that learning is an active process constructed through social interaction and experience. The concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) highlights the crucial role of social environments in supporting learners' cognitive and linguistic development.²¹ Therefore, the Arabic language curriculum should be designed using collaborative, contextual, and experiential learning approaches.

In the Indonesian context, the Merdeka Curriculum introduces a new paradigm that emphasizes flexibility, differentiation, and learner-centered instruction. This curriculum is aligned with constructivist and humanistic approaches, providing

¹⁸ Muhammad Tareh Aziz et al., "Analisis Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Berbasis 4C (Critical Thinking , Communication , Collaboration , Creativity) Untuk Pengembangan Kompetensi Abad 21 Pada Siswa," *Daarus Tsaqofah* 2, no. 1 (2024): 216–222.

¹⁹ Nasution, "Perbedaan Kemampuan Pemecahan Masalah Matematis Antara Siswa Yang Diajar Dengan Strategi Pembelajaran Problem Based Learning (PBL) Dan Kooperatif"

²⁰ Matthew Kanwit and Megan Solon, "Communicative Competence in a Second Language: Theory, Method, and Applications," *Communicative Competence in a Second Language: Theory, Method, and Applications* (2022): 1–226.

²¹ Manal ObedAullah Alharbi and Mona Mohsen Alzahrani, "The Importance of Learning Through Play in Early Childhood Education: Reflection on The Bold Beginnings Report," *International Journal of the Whole Child* 5, no. 2 (2020): 9–17.

learners with opportunities to develop their potential optimally. The integration of 21st-century competencies and the values embodied in the Pancasila Student Profile indicates that the curriculum is not only oriented toward cognitive development but also toward character formation and life skills.²² Therefore, modern curriculum theories and contemporary language learning approaches serve as essential foundations for analyzing the relevance of the Arabic language curriculum within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) design combined with a philosophical perspective. This approach is selected because the study aims to uncover the underlying ideological dimensions embedded in the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia, as well as to reconstruct its relevance within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum.²³ CDA enables researchers to examine the relationship between language, power, and ideology as manifested in curriculum documents, instructional practices, and educational policy narratives.²⁴

Methodologically, this study adopts Norman Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis, which encompasses three main dimensions: (1) text analysis, (2) discursive practice, and (3) social practice. At the level of text analysis, the researcher examines linguistic structures, terminology, and meaning representations within Arabic curriculum documents. At the level of discursive practice, the study investigates how the curriculum is produced, distributed, and interpreted by stakeholders. Meanwhile, at the level of social practice, the analysis focuses on the broader social, cultural, and ideological contexts that shape the construction of the curriculum. A philosophical approach is employed to deepen the analysis by examining the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions underlying the Arabic language curriculum. Ontological analysis explores the nature of language and language learning as represented in the curriculum, whether viewed as a structural system or as a social practice. Epistemological analysis investigates the sources and construction of linguistic knowledge, including the dominance of traditional or modern paradigms. Axiological analysis, on the other hand, examines the values and objectives underlying Arabic language learning, whether in religious, academic, or social contexts.²⁵

The data sources in this study consist of official Arabic language curriculum documents in Indonesia, including madrasa curricula, syllabi, textbooks, and policy documents related to the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, secondary data are obtained from scholarly articles, previous research findings, and relevant literature on curriculum studies and Arabic language learning. Data collection techniques involve document analysis and literature review, focusing on recent and relevant sources. Data analysis is conducted using an interpretative-critical approach through stages of data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The researcher identifies discourse patterns that indicate ideological tendencies within the curriculum, such as the dominance of grammatical approaches, religious orientations, or the lack of communicative approaches. These findings are then

²² Khoirurrijal, *PENGEMBANGANN KURIKULUM MERDEKA*, vol. 17 (Malang: Literasi Nusantara Abadi, 2022).

²³ Mohammad Andi, "CDA for Symbolic Violence Analysis : Constructing Theories of Symbolic Violence and Critical Discourse Analysis in the Study Of," *Briliant: Jurnal Riset dan Konseptual* 9, no. 3 (2024): 514–527.

²⁴ Tan Michael Chandra, "CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL By," *Premise: Journal of English Education and Applied Linguistics* 13 (2024): 579–608.

²⁵ Nurul Fajriati, "Analisis Tantangan Ontologis, Epistemologi, Dan Aksiologi Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Pancasila Di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Imiah Pendidikan Dasar (JIPDAS)* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1648–1655.

analyzed philosophically to uncover deeper meanings and their implications for Arabic language learning practices.²⁶

RESSULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Ideological Analysis of the Arabic Language Curriculum in Indonesia

The analysis of Arabic language curriculum documents reveals a strong ideological tendency in the orientation of instruction, particularly the dominance of a traditional paradigm that emphasizes grammatical aspects (*nahwu-sharaf*) and the comprehension of religious texts. Based on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework proposed by Fairclough, this tendency is reflected in the use of terminology, the structure of learning objectives, and the selection of materials that prioritize the reproduction of knowledge rather than the production of meaning.²⁷ At the level of text analysis, the curriculum frequently employs normative terms such as “understanding rules,” “memorizing,” and “translating,” which indicate a structural orientation.²⁸

At the level of discursive practice, the curriculum is produced within the framework of Islamic educational institutions that strongly emphasize the preservation of religious values. This results in Arabic language learning being positioned primarily as a tool for understanding religious texts rather than as a means of communication. Meanwhile, at the level of social practice, the curriculum reflects the tension between classical scholarly traditions and the demands of modernity, which are often not yet harmoniously integrated.²⁹

a.1 The Dominance of Structural Approaches and Its Implications

The dominance of structural approaches in the Arabic language curriculum has significant implications for learners’ communicative competence. This condition contradicts the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize the importance of using language in real-life contexts. The analysis indicates that most instructional materials remain focused on grammatical rules and translation, resulting in limited opportunities for students to develop speaking (*kalām*) and listening (*istimā’*) skills.³⁰

a.2 Representation of Learning Objectives in the Curriculum

The representation of learning objectives in the curriculum also reflects certain ideological tendencies. The objectives are predominantly oriented toward lower-order cognitive skills, such as remembering and understanding, rather than

²⁶ Rijal, “Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif,” *Humanika, Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum*, ISSN: 1412-1271 (p); 2579-4248 (e). Vol. 21. No. 1. (2021). pp. 33-54 doi: 10.21831/hum.v21i1. 38075. 33-54 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54.

²⁷ Nabila Zalfa Naurah and Rachmi Kurnia Siregar, “Wacana Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Keluarga Pada Film Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini : Analisis Wacana Kritis Norman Fairclough (Discourse in Gender Equality in the Family in the Film ‘ Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini ’: Critical Discourse Analysis Of,” *Jurnal Humaniora dan ilmu Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2023): 19–35.

²⁸ Muhammad Tareh Aziz and Ummi Sholehawati, “Pendekatan Struktural Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Pondok Pesantren Nurul Huda Surabaya,” *MUMTAZA : Journal of Arabic Teaching, Linguistic And Literature* 3, no. 1 (2023).

²⁹ Septinus Saa, “Merdeka Curriculum: Adaptation of Indonesian Education Policy in the Digital Era and Global Challenges,” *Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental* 18, no. 3 (2024): 1–24.

³⁰ Muhammad Fakhri Nurfaizan et al., “Pendekatan Teks Dan Konteks Dalam Perspektif Semantik Al-Jurjani, Firth Dan A. Teun van Dijk,” *Mauriduna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2025): 355–366.

higher-order thinking skills. This indicates that the curriculum has not fully adopted the principles of competency-based curriculum and constructive alignment.³¹

b. Evaluation of the Arabic Language Curriculum in the Perspective of the Merdeka Curriculum

Within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, learning is expected to be oriented toward the development of 21st-century competencies, flexibility, and student-centered approaches. However, the analysis reveals a gap between these principles and the current practices of the Arabic language curriculum.

To clarify this difference, a comparison between the conventional Arabic curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum highlights a significant paradigm shift—from a grammatical and teacher-centered approach to a communicative and learner-centered one. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes authentic assessment, active student participation, and the development of communicative competence. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Arabic curriculum in Indonesia still largely reflects traditional paradigms³².

From a philosophical perspective, the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia can be examined through three dimensions. Ontologically, language is still viewed as a structural system rather than a social practice. Epistemologically, knowledge is transmitted in a one-way process rather than constructed through interaction. Axiologically, learning objectives are more oriented toward religious values than toward global communicative needs.³³ This analysis indicates that the curriculum remains dominated by essentialist and perennialist paradigms, which are less aligned with the demands of modern, progressive, and humanistic education.

c. Reconstruction of the Arabic Language Curriculum in the Context of the Merdeka Curriculum

Based on the findings, it is necessary to reconstruct the Arabic language curriculum to make it more adaptive and contextual. This reconstruction should integrate communicative, constructivist, and competency-based approaches. The curriculum should be oriented toward the use of language in real-life contexts through task-based learning approaches and the integration of digital technologies. This aligns with contemporary language learning theories that emphasize interaction and authentic contexts. Furthermore, Arabic language learning should incorporate 21st-century skills—critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (4C)—which can be implemented through project-based learning to provide meaningful learning experiences. In line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, instruction should also be tailored to learners' needs and characteristics, making differentiated learning a key strategy for enhancing effectiveness.³⁴

³¹ Mami Hajaroh, "High Order Thinking Skill Sebagai Landasan Dalam Pengembangan Asesmen Dan Evaluasi Pendidikan," *Foundasia* 12, no. 2 (2021): 59–74.

³² Angel Pratyca et al., "Analisis Perbedaan Kurikulum 2013 Dengan Kurikulum Merdeka," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sains dan Komputer* 3, no. 01 (2023): 58–64.

³³ Devitri Natalia and Muhammad Syukur, "Landasan Filosofis Dan Peran Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Meningkatkan Karakter Peserta Didik," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* Volume 8 N (2024): Halaman 47627-47636, <https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/22857>.

³⁴ Nigora Goyibova et al., "Differentiation Approach in Education: Tailoring Instruction for Diverse Learner Needs," *MethodsX* 14, no. January (2025): 103163, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2025.103163>.

Overall, the findings indicate that the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia continues to face complex ideological and pedagogical challenges. There remains a gap between the dominant traditional paradigm and the progressive, adaptive demands of the Merdeka Curriculum.³⁵ Therefore, curriculum reconstruction must go beyond technical adjustments and address philosophical and ideological dimensions to ensure that Arabic language learning becomes more relevant to the needs of 21st-century education. These findings provide the basis for formulating conclusions as answers to the research problems.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia still embodies strong ideological dimensions, particularly in the dominance of a traditional paradigm oriented toward grammatical and textual aspects. Through the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, it was found that the structure of the curriculum, the selection of materials, and the formulation of learning objectives tend to reproduce knowledge in a normative manner, thereby providing limited space for the development of learners' communicative competence and critical thinking skills. Philosophically, the curriculum remains dominated by essentialist and perennialist paradigms, which view language as a structural system, knowledge as something transmitted, and learning objectives as oriented toward religious values.

Within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, this condition indicates a gap between the current practices of the Arabic language curriculum and the demands of modern learning, which emphasize flexibility, student-centered approaches, and 21st-century competencies. Therefore, it is necessary to reconstruct the ideological foundations of the curriculum toward a more progressive and transformative direction through the integration of communicative, constructivist, and competency-based approaches. The Arabic language curriculum should be repositioned not only as a means of understanding religious texts but also as a tool for global communication that is contextual and adaptive, enabling it to respond to contemporary challenges while preserving its fundamental values.

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³⁵ Ashrafah Alaifi Aulia et al., “Tranformasi Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab : Menavigasi Tantangan Dan Peluang Di Indonesia Pada Era Digital Dan Bahasa Inggris . Bahasa Inggris Difaktori Oleh Bahasa Melekat Didalam Era Digital , Sedangkan Bahasa Arab Difaktori Oleh Mayoritas Indonesia Sebagai,” *persepektif:Jurnal Pendidikan dan Ilmu Bahasa* Volume. 2 (2024): 158–168.

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