



## **Application of The Independent Learning Curriculum in Indonesian Language Subjects for Class VIII SMPN 1 Pakong**

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### **Abstract:**

This research is motivated by the author's interest in the implementation of the latest curriculum issued by the government, in this research it is more directed at the junior high school level. The independent learning curriculum is a curriculum that frees teachers to create learning that is educational and enjoyable. Current pedagogical competence also requires teachers to be able to model and implement the learning process. This research uses a descriptive qualitative research approach with field research type. The data source in this research comes from SMPN 1 Pakong and the data collection techniques used are observation, interviews and documentation. Its validity was checked using extended researcher presence in the field, deeper observations and triangulation. The research results show that: 1) Pre-learning or before teaching and learning activities take place, teachers must prepare learning tools such as: learning objective flow (ATP), learning objectives (TP), learning outcomes (CP) and teaching modules. 2) The learning that takes place at SMPN 1 Pakong is going well, where the school also implements differentiated learning, and the learning flow is in accordance with the teaching modules previously designed by the teacher. 3) In post-learning, some students felt happy and some found it difficult to implement this independent curriculum. However, as an educator, the Indonesian language teacher at the school continues to protect and guide students who have difficulty implementing learning that is very different from before.

### **Keywords:**

Independent Curriculum; Application; Indonesian

### **Abstrak:**

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh ketertarikan penulis terhadap penerapan kurikulum terbaru yang dikeluarkan oleh pemerintah, dalam penelitian ini lebih mengarah ke jenjang SMP. Kurikulum merdeka belajar merupakan kurikulum yang membebaskan guru agar dapat menciptakan pembelajaran yang mendidik dan menyenangkan. Kompetensi pedagogis saat ini juga menuntut guru untuk mampu memodelkan dan melaksanakan proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini bersumber dari SMPN 1 Pakong dan teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan yaitu observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Ditekankan keabsahannya dengan menggunakan perpanjangan kehadiran peneliti di lapangan, observasi yang diperdalam dan triangulasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: 1) Prapembelajaran atau sebelum kegiatan belajar mengajar berlangsung, Guru harus mempersiapkan perangkat pembelajaran seperti: alur tujuan pembelajaran (ATP), tujuan pembelajaran (TP), capaian pembelajaran (CP) dan modul ajar. 2) Pembelajaran yang berlangsung di SMPN 1 Pakong berlangsung dengan baik, yang mana di sekolah tersebut juga menerapkan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, serta alur pembelajaran sesuai dengan modul ajar yang dirancang sebelumnya oleh Guru. 3) Pada pascapembelajaran, siswa ada yang merasa senang dan ada yang merasa kesulitan dalam penerapan kurikulum merdeka ini. Namun, sebagai tenaga pendidik Guru mata pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di sekolah tersebut tetap mengayomi dan membimbing siswa yang kesulitan dalam menerapkan pembelajaran yang sangat berbeda

dari sebelumnya.

**Kata Kunci:**

Kurikulum Merdeka; Penerapan ; Bahasa Indonesia

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## INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, the development of science and technology is very rapid, of course this has a big influence on the development of a nation. Success here requires society to develop in all fields, especially in the field of education which must continually improve its competence, because good education will produce good and quality students. The increasingly rapid development of the times or what is now known as the modern era means that science and technology are also developing rapidly, which has a big influence on the development of a nation. Success here requires society to develop in all fields, especially in the field of education which must continually improve its competence, because education will have a positive impact on society which will in turn produce quality students.

Essentially, education can be understood as a process to develop positive things in humans until the formation of a quality personality. This is done by continuing to develop positive abilities, which include physical and spiritual aspects, so as to create a happy and fortunate life both in this world and in the afterlife (Masykur, 2019).

Education that has a positive impact, of course, has positive goals too. We can see this in the younger generation who are seriously pursuing education. This is done in order to produce a higher quality generation for themselves, for other people, or for the nation and state. Because, a generation of quality, intelligence and good character will have a very influential impact on the development of a nation (Dela Khoirul Ainia, 2020).

According to Trisnawati and Widiansyah, education functions as a means to educate the nation's life in the future. Therefore, the government continues to encourage various innovations in education, especially through the Ministry of Education. The success of education is influenced by all parties, so it is not just the responsibility of the education unit and teaching staff. However, educators have a major role in achieving educational goals (Trisnawati O and Widiansyah S, 2022).

Education has always been the center of attention of the government in Indonesia, this is proven by the government frequently issuing new policies regarding mandatory study. One of them is by issuing scholarships for children from lower middle class families. This has proven the government's attention to the importance of learning by

facilitating children who are economically disadvantaged, but have high enthusiasm to continue to a higher level of education. Apart from that, the government is also improving the quality of education with the latest curriculum which has only recently been implemented in a few schools, namely the independent learning curriculum.

The curriculum must be dynamic and develop to adapt to various changes occurring in international society, and the expected goals must be clearly defined. Currently, education in Indonesia continues to adapt the learning process to changes in the curriculum, with efforts to optimize the implementation of the new curriculum in each educational unit. The curriculum has a structure and design that functions as a guide to achieving success in the learning process. Curriculum changes continue to occur to adapt to current developments, as can be seen in the Merdeka Curriculum which is currently being intensively used. The Merdeka Curriculum aims to produce a Pancasila student profile (Hadi Wiyono, 2023).

According to Ramadhan and Warneri, as something that is very important in the teaching and learning process, the curriculum will of course be a support for producing students with character and quality in accordance with the curriculum they want to achieve. Not only that, the function of the curriculum is also as a reference in teaching and learning activities in the classroom from elementary school to tertiary level (Ramadhan and Warneri, 2023).

According to AGJ Nasution, the independent learning curriculum is the latest curriculum which is hoped to improve the education system which has so far felt monotonous (Hadi Wiyono, 2023). So, with this change in the curriculum, it is hoped that it will be able to improve the teaching and learning system which has so far seemed less attractive to students' enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, the development of creative and innovative thinking is really needed for teaching staff so that they can achieve their goals through the implementation of an independent curriculum.

In the context of the Independent Curriculum, teacher preparation includes their mental readiness and skills to implement this new learning system in order to provide an optimal learning experience for students. Therefore, teacher preparation can be interpreted as their willingness to be involved in the tasks of educating, teaching, guiding, training, advising and evaluating students (Regita Himas Yuniar and Nailariza Umami, 2023).

To ensure the successful implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum, it is important for teachers to have awareness, understanding, concern and a strong commitment to implementing the curriculum wholeheartedly in the learning process.

Changing the paradigm in curriculum settings aims to change the teacher's perspective and approach to student learning, in accordance with advances in science, technology, as well as changes in student characteristics and learning styles. Thus, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum learning approach is emphasized on students, with a focus on the learning process and assessment to improve learning outcomes, especially in Indonesian subjects (E Mulyasa, 2014). Therefore, Merdeka Curriculum learning is student-centered, using processes and assessments in order to improve learning outcomes, especially in Indonesian subjects.

Pakong 1 Middle School is the school chosen by researchers to be used as a research object, because this school has implemented an independent learning curriculum in its learning process. Especially in class VIII Indonesian language subjects at SMPN 1 Pakong.

The reason the researcher chose this title is because the Merdeka curriculum is the latest curriculum issued by the government and only a few schools implement this curriculum. In this case, SMPN 1 Pakong school is the school chosen by researchers to be used as the research object, because this school has implemented an independent learning curriculum in its learning process. Especially in class VIII Indonesian language subjects at SMPN 1 Pakong. This is proven by one of the learning tools that has undergone changes, namely that what was previously a lesson plan has now been turned into a teaching module.

Based on the above, researchers are interested in researching more deeply regarding the implementation of this independent learning curriculum. In this case, researchers will examine starting from before the implementation of the independent curriculum, activities implementing the independent curriculum, and after the implementation of the independent learning curriculum. This was done to find out how influential the application of the independent learning curriculum is in the teaching and learning process. The aim of this research is to describe the pre-activities, activities and post-activities of the independent learning curriculum in class VIII Indonesian language subjects at SMPN 1 Pakong.

## **METHOD**

The approach to this research is to use a qualitative method approach. Qualitative research method (Qualitative research) is research that is intended to describe and analyze phenomena experienced by research subjects, for example events, behavior, motivation, social activities, thoughts of a person individually or in groups. according to

Bogdan and Taylor quoted by Lexy J. Moelong, the definition of a qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data that produces written or spoken words from people and behavior that can be observed (Lexy J Moleong, 2008). This research was conducted from 04 to 06 April 2024 at SMPN 1 Pakong. There are two sources of data in this research, namely primary data sources (Indonesian Language Teachers at SMPN 1 Pakong) and secondary data sources (independent learning curriculum learning tools related to research, as well as library books that are relevant to research problems. The collection procedures are data include: observation, interviews and documentation (Sugiyono, 2017). Meanwhile, checking the validity of the data uses extended researcher presence in the field, in-depth observation and triangulation through sources (Zuchri Abdussamad, 2021).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Pre-learning Independent Learning Curriculum in Class VIII Indonesian Language Learning at SMPN 1 Pakong**

The curriculum is a set of settings and plans to achieve learning goals. In this case, educators and students are greatly helped by carrying out a structured teaching and learning process. As said by Yose Indarta et al, who said that the key to an educational institution producing quality graduates is the curriculum. Therefore, it is hoped that the existence of this independent learning curriculum will have a very good impact on an educational institution(Yose Indarta et al, 2022).

In the world of education, of course, the curriculum often changes and whether we like it or not, teaching staff have to accept it. Because the curriculum has an important role in education, so that learning can run well and be directed and goals will be very easy to achieve. This is because the curriculum becomes a guideline when carrying out teaching and learning activities, because everything that is done in the classroom will refer to the curriculum(Yose Indarta et al, 2022).

Just like SMPN 1 Pakong which is currently undergoing curriculum changes, of course there will be new things and new terms contained in it. The following are the results of research conducted by researchers regarding the pre-learning independent learning curriculum in Indonesian language learning at SMPN 1 Pakong.

"Curriculum changes are not an easy thing in learning, we as educators must understand it first before implementing it in learning. So in this case, if you want to apply any curriculum in learning, educators before carrying out the teaching and learning process must first make a learning plan referring to the curriculum being applied. "In this case, implementing an independent curriculum, of course, before teaching, educators prepare learning tools,

because when all learning tools are prepared before teaching, learning will automatically be structured, focused and it will be easier to achieve learning goals."

Based on the results of interviews, it is known that when a school experiences curriculum changes, teaching staff must understand it first before applying it to students. Because the curriculum here is a reference for educators when they want to make learning plans. Learning planning is very important in the learning process. By planning learning, it will make the implementation of learning easier because the learning process is well structured and directed. Therefore, teachers must carry out learning planning before carrying out the learning process.

He also said directly that every teacher must create learning tools before carrying out learning. Creating learning tools includes creating teaching modules, which determine the selection of learning strategies, methods and media that will be used. So that learning can be directed and it will be easier to achieve learning goals.

"Of course there are new terms or things that need to be known in implementing this independent curriculum. These include: Learning Outcomes or what is usually abbreviated as (CP), Learning Objectives Flow (ATP), Pancasila Student Profile, Learning Objectives (TP) and Teaching Modules. The ATP is a flow of learning objectives which is used as a reference in creating teaching modules, so what is contained in the ATP consists of CP, estimated number of hours, Pancasila student profile and so on. Meanwhile, CP is a learning achievement, so after learning, students must achieve the things that have become the goals of the learning."

Based on the conversation above, with the change to the new curriculum, of course there are also new terms in it. In this case, educators introduce new terms contained in the currently implemented curriculum, namely the independent curriculum. Not only introducing them, educators also explain new terms contained in the Merdeka curriculum.

CP and ATP are things explained by the educator, he said that CP is a learning achievement that must be achieved by students after the teaching and learning process is complete. Meanwhile, ATP is a flow of learning objectives that is used as a reference by educators in creating teaching modules.

"In creating a teaching module, of course I have to discuss it with other teacher friends. This is to obtain suggestions and input from other teachers and to consider existing learning tools. "Considering that now in the modern era, learning tools will automatically continue to develop and of course this requires agreement from other teachers if, for example, you want to use learning tools that are not yet available at this school."

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, it can be concluded that before creating learning tools in the form of teaching modules, the Indonesian

Language subject teacher at SMPN 1 Pakong discussed with other teachers. This is done to consider the learning tools that will be applied, because constructive criticism and suggestions are very necessary to make the learning process a success. Because the teaching module is a reference when teaching and learning activities take place.

From the results of observations on April 4 2024 carried out by researchers, this is true. When the teacher carries out the teaching and learning process that takes place in the classroom, the teacher has created a learning tool in the form of a teaching module and carries out the learning according to the steps previously prepared in the teaching module, the learning process runs smoothly and the learning objectives are achieved. This is in line with Utami Maulida's opinion which states that teaching modules are learning tools or learning designs that are based on a curriculum that is applied with the aim of achieving the competency standards that have been implemented (Utami Maulida, 2022).

### **Independent Learning Curriculum Learning in Class VIII Indonesian Language Learning at SMPN 1 Pakong**

Merdeka Belajar curriculum learning activities in Indonesian language learning focus on providing rich, contextual and student-centered learning experiences. This allows them to better understand and appreciate Indonesian language and culture. Merdeka curriculum learning activities in language subjects aim to provide student-centered learning experiences, enabling them to explore and develop language skills creatively and critically. Through this flexible and contextual approach, students are expected to be able to master Indonesian language skills more deeply and relevantly to everyday life.

“Learning outcomes in reading include students' understanding of various information contained in texts, such as ideas, views, directions, or messages from various types of texts. Of course there are many texts, one of which is descriptive text, narrative, poetry, explanation and exposition. Students can also explore and evaluate various actual topics they read. Meanwhile, in writing, students are able to express their main ideas in the form of characters or written messages to see the extent of students' abilities for various logical purposes. Apart from that, it can also be formed creatively by choosing the right diction, namely in the form of poetry. They are also able to write research results using simple research methodology by citing trusted reference sources, thereby making the reader immersed in it.”

The data above is the learning achievements contained in the text of the observation report. In this case, the learning outcomes contained in the material are reading and writing. So in this case students do not just know the theory, but are assigned to practice directly by expressing ideas, thoughts, views or messages in

written form. This is to determine each student's ability to understand the material that has been studied.

Based on the above, it is certainly a good start for students in applying writing skills. Of course, in this case, when students apply it directly, it will automatically sharpen the students' way of thinking when creating an essay, because this will make students more active and skilled in developing thought patterns.

The implementation of teaching and learning activities in this independent curriculum will not be separated from learning planning which must be in accordance with the teaching modules. In the teaching module, there are several steps that must be taken by the teacher when learning takes place. In this case, Mrs. Verly said about learning steps. He said that, of course, the first learning step is saying hello, praying, taking attendance, motivating students to achieve competence and character in accordance with the Pancasila Student Profile, then self-apperception and seeing students' learning readiness. Once everything is ready, the teacher conveys the objectives and learning materials. After the teacher delivers the material, the teacher connects it to the students' understanding, here the students are free to give answers according to their abilities. And the last one is assignment and evaluation after the learning activities are completed.

This was strengthened by the results of observations on April 5 2024 when the researcher followed the teaching and learning process carried out by Mrs. Verly, who at that time was carrying out lessons in class VIII A. The first thing she did was say greetings, then opened the lesson by reading a prayer. After that, he conducted attendance and also motivated students to achieve competencies and character in accordance with the Pancasila Student Profile. Next, he prepares students to take part in the lessons. Before entering the learning material, Mrs. Verly gave an overview of the observation report text material by providing examples in the surrounding environment. After that, he delivered material about observation report texts starting from the meaning, characteristics, structure and examples of observation report texts. After that, he gave an assignment by inviting students to observe the surrounding environment to find information that would later be made into a report text on the results of the observations.

After that, the teacher gives time to the students to really master the material he has explained. To really master it, the teacher invites students to observe the surrounding environment to find information which will later be made into a report text based on the results of their own observations. In the closing part he concluded the



lesson material with the students as well as evaluating the students' learning outcomes. After the learning process was complete, he asked the students to study again as lesson material at the next meeting and he closed the lesson by reading a prayer (Observation, 05 April 2024).

### **Post-learning Independent Learning Curriculum in Class VIII Indonesian Language Learning at SMPN 1 Pakong**

After implementing the Independent Learning curriculum in class VIII Indonesian language learning, it is important to evaluate and reflect on the learning process and results. After this lesson, we will assess the extent to which educational goals have been achieved, understand the challenges faced, and identify areas that require further improvement and development. In this way, we can ensure that the learning provided is not only effective in improving students' language skills, but also relevant and meaningful for their lives.

"Some are happy and some find it difficult if, for example, they are given a discussion task. Those who find it difficult are usually children who don't understand the material presented or it could be because they are embarrassed. In this case, I usually guide and provide good direction to the students concerned."

Based on the data above, with the implementation of this new curriculum, students are invited to be active by teachers, one of which is by discussing in front of the class. However, not all students can do this, because it is caused by various factors. In situations like that, Mrs. Verly tries to direct and guide her students so that everyone can do it and not feel afraid when asked to discuss in front of the class.

Based on the above, the steps taken by Mrs. Verly are quite useful for students who are still unable to be active in class, by specifically guiding students who are still having difficulties in the learning process. So this proves that when the teaching and learning process takes place he pays attention to all students and at the end of the lesson he tries to guide and direct students who are still having difficulties in learning. This is done so that the students concerned do not miss out on the lessons they have learned.

"At the end of the lesson there is a closing activity, in which case the things that are done include: First, students conclude the lesson, which later the teacher directs or brings together all the students' opinions, so that students' understanding is more focused. Second, reflecting on student achievement or formative assessment, as well as teacher reflection, this is done in order to find out the extent of students' understanding of the teaching and learning process that has been implemented. Third, tell students about the material that will be studied at the next meeting, so that students study and prepare themselves at home before studying at school. Fourth, the teacher closes the teaching and learning activities by

providing enthusiasm and motivation to the students, not forgetting to also provide a spiritual shower."

Based on the data above, at the end of the learning activity the teacher concludes the lesson by asking the students about the lessons they have learned. After that, the teacher reflects on the students. Of course, this is very important to do at the end of learning, to understand students' responses to learning. Apart from that, reflecting can also help teachers understand the weaknesses or shortcomings of the learning that has been implemented.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher also conveys the material that will be studied at the next meeting. This was done to remind students to study at home regarding the material they will study in the future. After that, before closing the lesson the teacher provides motivation for students to remain enthusiastic in learning. This is in line with Arianti's opinion which states that motivation plays an important role in the teaching and learning process for both teachers and students. Of course, this has a positive impact on both of them to increase their enthusiasm for learning (Arianti, 2018).

Based on the results of observations that the researcher carried out on April 5 2024, the researcher took part in classroom learning from start to finish in the Indonesian language subject with the text material of the observation report. In this case, the teaching and learning process carried out by educators is in accordance with the teaching modules that have been prepared previously, starting from preliminary activities, core activities and closing activities.

In the introductory activity, the teacher invites students to pray before learning begins. After that, the teacher conveys the learning objectives and takes attendance. Next, we move on to the core activities, which in this core activity are slightly different in the independent curriculum, namely before delivering the material, the teacher asks students questions regarding the LHO text. This was done in order to find out the extent of students' knowledge of the LHO text before the teacher explained the material. Based on the researcher's observations, in this case the students raised their hands to each other to express their respective opinions. But not all students, only a few students are active. After listening to several students' opinions regarding the LHO text, the teacher delivered the material. However, in this case the teacher does not explain at length to the students, but the teacher only explains the important points to the students. After that, the teacher forms a group and gives a worksheet containing the text of the observation report, in which case the teacher gives the students the task of studying the LHO text and the results of the study will then be presented in front of the

class. In this case, of course all students participate actively in learning. So that the class becomes lively or active and learning does not seem monotonous.

The end of the lesson is the closing activity, which in this case is based on the researcher's observations, the teacher concludes or straightens out the material presented by the students in front of the class. This is done so that students' understanding is further strengthened regarding the material that has been delivered or presented. After that, the teacher reflects on the students and teachers to find out the achievements of the learning process that has been implemented and make improvements regarding deficiencies that occurred during the learning process. Next, the teacher informs about the learning that will be carried out at the next meeting as well as providing motivation to students before the lesson closes, then reads a prayer and the teaching and learning activities end.

"In the assessment in this independent curriculum there is formative and summative. For formative assessments, I usually assess students more often in terms of how they discuss, how they present the material, or who is most active in asking questions during the learning process. Not only that, sometimes I also make short quizzes after discussing material, or by making direct observations in the field. In essence, the formative assessment that I give to students takes various forms, this is done so that students don't get bored with the assignments that I give. And for summative assessments, that includes assessments at the end of the learning period, right? "So the form of assessment that I give to students is of course in written form, namely choice questions or essays."

Based on the data above, there are two types of assessment, namely formative assessment and summative assessment. In this case, the summative assessment is carried out at the end of the lesson in discussing one material. The form of assessment is in the form of group discussions, quizzes, or direct observation in the field. Meanwhile, summative assessment is carried out at the end of the learning period, where the form of assessment is in the form of multiple choice questions or essay questions.

These two assessments complement each other in the educational process. This was done to determine the development of students' mastery during the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, summative assessment is carried out to determine the achievement of student learning outcomes in a lesson at the end of the period. In this case, Mrs. Verly gives a variety of assignments so that students don't get bored quickly during the learning process because she doesn't just do the learning in the classroom, but also practices it directly in the field, such as making observations.

The implementation of the Independent Learning curriculum in Indonesian language learning in class VIII of SMPN 1 Pakong is expected to be an effective implementation of the curriculum in improving four language skills, including listening,

speaking, reading and writing skills. Listening is receiving someone's messages, ideas, feelings and thoughts (Hafid Effendy, 2017).

According to Tarigan, speaking skills are the ability to pronounce articulatory sounds or words to express, say and convey thoughts, ideas and feelings (Tarigan and Henry Guntur, 1986). Meanwhile, reading is a simultaneous process of interacting, constructing and developing meaning during the process of interaction and involvement of a reader with written language (Hafid Effendy, 2017). And writing skills are a method used by someone to convey ideas, thoughts or feelings through graphic symbols (Hafid Effendy, 2017).

Before carrying out learning, teachers at SMPN 1 Pakong carry out learning planning, namely by formulating CP, creating a Learning Objective Flow (ATP) and Teaching Modules. Apart from that, educators must also choose strategies, methods, models and learning media that suit students' needs and abilities so that learning objectives can be achieved well.

Learning Outcomes (CP), Learning outcomes are the knowledge, skills and attitudes contained in it, which will later build complete competence for students in a lesson (Kemendikbud, 2021). Learning Objective Flow (ATP), The flow of learning objectives is to determine learning tools or materials that are appropriate to the material to be studied, as well as supporting facilities and infrastructure (Yulia Kusniawati, 2023). Teaching Module, Teaching modules are a structure of the teaching and learning process created by the teacher so that learning can be structured. In making this teaching module, SMPN 1 Pakong held discussions with other teachers.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of research in the field and data analysis, it can be concluded as follows. Pre-learning or before teaching and learning activities take place, teachers must prepare learning tools such as: learning objective flow (ATP), learning objectives (TP), learning outcomes (CP) and teaching modules. If all learning tools are prepared before teaching, learning will be more structured and it will be easier to achieve learning objectives, because they are a guideline when the teaching and learning process takes place in the classroom. The learning that takes place at SMPN 1 Pakong is going well, where the school also implements differentiated learning, and the learning flow is in accordance with the teaching modules previously designed by the teacher. In post-learning, some students felt happy and some found it difficult to implement this independent curriculum. However, as an educator, the Indonesian language teacher at

the school continues to protect and guide students who have difficulty implementing learning that is very different from before.

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