



Implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Arabic language learning

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ABSTRACT

Learning setbacks during the pandemic gave students the freedom to learn. With this, the teachers and principals paid attention to the needs and potential of students to compile, carry out learning and develop curricula at school. So to overcome this, an alternative curriculum is needed, namely Kurikulum Merdeka. This study aims to learn more about how Kurikulum Merdeka for learning Arabic is being implemented. This research was conducted to provide an overview of the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka in learning Arabic. The descriptive qualitative method was employed in this study, implementing Kurikulum Merdeka for learning Arabic as the study's object. Additionally, data is gathered through interviews and documentation. According to the study's findings, using a Kurikulum Merdeka to learn Arabic allows teachers to be more adaptable in their instruction and aware of their student's interests, talents, needs, and abilities. Students do not feel burdened with topics they are not interested in since they have the freedom to choose and develop their interests and skills, which improves the learning environment more fun.

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ABSTRAK

Kemunduran belajar selama masa pandemi memberikan kebebasan belajar pada siswa, dengan hal itu guru dan kepala sekolah memperhatikan kebutuhan dan potensi siswa untuk menyusun, melaksanakan pembelajaran dan mengembangkan kurikulum disekolah. Maka untuk mengatasi hal tersebut diperlukannya kurikulum alternatif yaitu kurikulum merdeka. Tujuan dari penelitian ini untuk memperoleh informasi terkait penerapan kurikulum merdeka pada pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk memberikan gambaran penerapan kurikulum merdeka belajar pada pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan objek kajian terkait dengan penerapan kurikulum merdeka pada pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan cara wawancara dan dokumentasi. Adapun hasil dari penelitian ini penerapan kurikulum merdeka pada pembelajaran bahasa Arab ini membuat guru lebih fleksibel dalam mengajar serta mengetahui minat, bakat, kebutuhan serta kemampuan siswa. Dengan adanya kebebasan dalam memilih dan mengembangkan minat dan kemampuan masing-masing siswa maka membuat suasana belajar lebih menyenangkan karena siswa tidak merasa terbebani dengan hal yang mereka tidak minati, karena setiap siswa memiliki bakat dan kecerdasannya masing-masing dalam bidangnya masing-masing.

Kata Kunci: Implementasi kurikulum; Kurikulum Merdeka; pembelajaran Bahasa Arab

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INTRODUCTION

One of the critical determinants of a country's progress and the caliber of its human resources is education. The school system has changed to adapt to the globalization that has taken place, along with the development of the times and an increasingly dynamic society. Ideas that are original and unique in the context of the times can be born through the educational process. The goal of education in Indonesia is outlined in *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*, which aims to help students realize their full potential as people who believe in and revere God Almighty, are capable, creative, independent, and have noble character. They also want to become citizens of a democratic and responsible nation. The curriculum is the necessary intermediate to accomplish these educational objectives (Vhalery et al., 2022). The learning process cannot function correctly without a curriculum; hence the curriculum is crucial in education because the curriculum is the heart of the educational system.

The spirit of education lies in the curriculum and can never be separated. The curriculum occupies a central position in all kinds of educational activities. In order to create educational goals, the curriculum must be able to improve its quality, where the curriculum must be able to adapt to the situation of each school well and pay attention to the needs and developmental stages of students, the need for national development while keeping in mind that national education stems from in national culture and national education based on Pancasila and the 1945 constitution (Hidayani, 2018). In order to continue to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, the implemented curriculum is developing and adapting to educational units and regional potentials, and it is necessary to evaluate the extent of the effectiveness of implementing the curriculum. The development of curriculum improvements would be effective if the results of these developments followed the demands and needs, relevance, flexibility, continuity, practice, and effectiveness (Indarta et al., 2022). To develop the curriculum should have a strong foundation and principles to support the achievement of educational goals (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022).

The development of the curriculum is a tool for raising educational standards. The curriculum was developed to make learning easier. Starting in 1947 and continuing through 1964, 1968, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1994, 1997 (revised curriculum 1994), 2004 (competency-based curriculum), and 2006 (educational unit level curriculum), the curriculum in Indonesia has undergone 11 revisions and changes. In 2013, the government, through the Ministry of national education, changed it back to the 2013 curriculum (Kurtilas), and there was a revision in 2018 that resulted in the *Revised Kurikulum 2013*, before Kurikulum Merdeka era (Azzahra et al., 2022). Although the curriculum is altered frequently, each modification has a sound rationale because the overall objective is to enhance and perfect the prior curriculum. The transition to an all-digital era is inextricably linked to changes in the curriculum since one of the criteria for the existence of a new curriculum, namely Kurikulum Merdeka. This Kurikulum Merdeka is a result of a restructuring of Indonesia's national education system, which was done to respond to changes and national advancement and prepare the country for rapidly changing times (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020).

This curriculum is also an effort to restore learning in Indonesia, and the government has developed a Kurikulum Merdeka that is focused and flexible and is expected to develop students' character and competence. The Ministry of Education and Culture explained that three characteristics of Kurikulum Merdeka can support learning recovery, namely:

1. learning that emphasizes strengthening Profil Pelajar Pancasila, which is expected to build students' soft skills and character,
2. focusing on essential material, policymakers have chosen the essential learning outcomes for students,
3. the existence of differentiated learning that adapts to students' abilities and adjustments to the curriculum with the context and local content in the education unit (Fitria, 2023).

This curriculum is described as a learning strategy that gives kids a chance to learn in a calm, laid-back, enjoyable, stress-free, and pressure-free while also showcasing their innate skills. Merdeka Belajar emphasizes independence and original thought. According to Risdianto in [Dwipratama \(2023\)](#) said, Kurikulum Merdeka aims to answer educational challenges in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, which demands critical thinking skills and problem-solving, creative and innovative, as well as skills in communicating and collaborating for students.

The beginning of the driving school program was one of the initiatives the Ministry of Education and Culture offered to promote autonomous learning. This educational initiative is intended to help each school develop generations of lifelong learners who exhibit Profil Pelajar Pancasila. In 2022 the Ministry of Education and Culture will expand the Implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka for schools that are not Driving Schools through the independent pathway by issuing a decision from the Head of BSKAP regarding the Education Unit Implementing the Implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka through the Independent Pathway in the 2022/2023 Academic Year Phase II. For the selection of independent pathways, the Ministry of Education and Culture free education units determine independent pathway choices to be selected by using a questionnaire. The data collection questionnaire contains questions related to the readiness of the education unit to implement Kurikulum Merdeka ([Fitria, 2023](#)). A teacher's function is necessary for achieving everything ([Rahayu et al., 2022](#)). Because the teacher serves as the primary subject, they are expected to catalyze activity that benefits pupils ([Ainia, 2020](#)).

It is envisaged that students will be able to develop following their potential and abilities thanks to Kurikulum Merdeka, which provides them with critical, high-quality, expressive, practical, varied, and progressive learning. Along with adjustments to the new curriculum, cooperation, a strong commitment, seriousness, and practical implementation are required from all stakeholders so that students can internalize the Profil Pelajar Pancasila ([Sari et al., 2020](#)). In light of this, this study aims to gather data regarding the application of Kurikulum Merdeka for learning Arabic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kurikulum Merdeka

Since the "curriculum is the heart of education" and controls the course of education, the proper educational policy will manifest through the application of the curriculum. The curriculum is the essence of education, not only its heart, and it must be innovatively, dynamically, and periodically evaluated following advancements in science, technology, and the competencies required by the community and graduate users ([Fitriani et al., 2022](#)). The curriculum is described in *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional* as "a set of learning plans related to objectives, content, teaching materials, and methods used and used as guidelines in organizing learning activities to achieve a national education goal." The curriculum serves as a guide during the learning process since it is said that the curriculum is the heart of education. The realm of education has advanced alongside societal change. The current curriculum in Indonesia has also experienced numerous revisions and improvements. Moreover, today, a brand-new curriculum known as the autonomous learning curriculum has appeared.

The Minister of Education and Culture of the Indonesian Advanced Cabinet has announced the launch of the new policy initiative "Freedom to Learn" inside the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud RI). Nadiem contends that educators must first educate pupils on the fundamentals of free thought before imparting them to their charges ([Sabriadi & Wakia, 2021](#)). The prototype curriculum, formally introduced by Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim, has a new name: Kurikulum Merdeka. Kurikulum Merdeka was created as a framework for a more adaptable curriculum that concentrates on essential concepts and strengthens students' abilities. The

concept of independent learning aims to liberate education using free thinking and freedom of innovation (Vhalery et al., 2022).

Some of the advantages of Kurikulum Merdeka 1) It is more straightforward and in-depth. The material's content focuses on essential material and the development of student competencies in each phase. Learn more deeply, meaningfully, not in a hurry, and fun; 2) More independent. For students in the high school phase, the selection of subjects is adjusted to their interests, talents, and aspirations. Teachers teach according to the stages of achievement and development of students, and schools have the authority to develop and manage curriculum and learning according to the characteristics of educational units; 3) More relevant and interactive learning through project activities provides wider opportunities for students to actively explore actual issues to support the competency Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Dwipratama, 2023).

While implementing Kurikulum Merdeka as an option for this educational unit in the learning process, data was collected to determine which educational units were ready to implement the Independent Curriculum. Afterward, 2024 will determine the National Curriculum policy, which the Ministry of Education and Culture will carry out based on an evaluation of the curriculum during the learning recovery period. The results of this evaluation will later become a reference for the Ministry of Education and Culture in making follow-up policies after the recovery from the learning crisis (Nugraha, 2022).

Kurikulum Merdeka Concept

The Merdeka Belajar idea Nadiem Makarim was motivated by his goal to establish an enjoyable learning environment without placing pressure on him to achieve a particular score or value. To foster Merdeka Belajar, the Ministry of Education and Culture could implement the following four ideas, according to Marisa (2021):

1. The Ministry of Education and Culture states that schools have the latitude or discretion to choose the type of evaluation, such as portfolios, essays, and other assignments.
2. The Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey, which will replace the National Examination (UN), stresses reading and numerical reasoning skills based on the PISA test's best practices. In contrast to the National Exam, administered at the educational level's conclusion, the assessment is administered in grades 4, 8, and 11. Before students complete their education, the outcomes are anticipated to be used as feedback by schools to improve the learning experience further.
3. They are simplifying the lesson implementation plan (RPP), which needs to be one page long and include three parts-the learning objectives, the learning activities, and the assessment. Administrative simplification is intended to free up instructors' time so they may spend it on teaching activities and developing their expertise.
4. *Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru* (PPDB) zoning scheme has expanded regulations. For students that follow the affirmation and accomplishment pathways, the PPDB system offers greater chances. Technically, this zoning region shall be determined by the local government.

Table 1. The Movement for Merdeka Belajar

No	Merdeka Belajar Concept	Famous Motto
1	The implementation of the upcoming 2020 USBN will be returned to the school.	
2	In 2021, Nadiem plans to abolish the National Examination system and replace it with a new system, namely the Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey.	“Merdeka Belajar, Guru Penggerak”
3	Forming competent, intelligent students for the nation's human resources and virtue.	

Source: kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id

According to **Table 1** This Merdeka Belajar policy was implemented for a reason. However, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) research from 2019 revealed that Indonesian students only scored sixth from the bottom in math and literacy, placing Indonesia in position 74 out of 79 nations. In order to address this, Nadiem created a ground-breaking evaluation of the minimum ability that incorporates character, literacy, and numeracy tests. Provide an argument for the idea of Merdeka Belajar, which would allow schools to independently interpret the core skills of the curriculum for their assessments while bringing the national education system back to the letter of the law. The establishment of Kurikulum Merdeka is to help teachers and students be independent in thinking and to help students develop their creativity according to their potential (Wiryanto & Anggraini, 2022).

Self-Directed Learning

Independent learning is considered an essential factor in adult learning and is more suitable for adults (Miflin, 2016). Independent learning in the digital era also develops rapid implications for learning processes and learner attributes (Curran et al., 2017). Self-Directed learning is a form of learning activity that gives students the flexibility to choose or set their own time and method of study per the provisions of the semester credit system (Mardia & Sundara, 2020). Self-learning is learning without dependence on others so that everything that needs to be prepared in management learning can be done independently (Triyana, 2021). Self-directed learning entails individuals taking initiative and responsibility for their own learning (Loeng, 2020).

Merdeka Belajar is a learning process carried out by students both within the school environment and outside of school by reading, studying, and understanding knowledge following the relevant subject matter. In the Merdeka Belajar process, the most important thing is to increase the abilities and skills of students in the learning process without the help of others, so they are not always dependent on tutors or friends. The task of the tutor in Merdeka Belajar is as a facilitator. The tutor can help whenever students need it and when students want to determine learning goals, choose media or solve a problem that the students themselves cannot solve (Sebayang et al., 2020).

Self-directed learning is a process in which individuals learn without the help of others, supported by digital and mobile technology and technology applications developed to utilize the concept of Merdeka Belajar (Biru & Saepudin, 2020). So, with Merdeka Belajar, students are more active, creative, and innovative during the learning process (Indriani et al., 2021). According to Biggs, science and technology development will improve human Self-directed learning skills.

Arabic Learning

Learning is an interaction pattern between two people who need each other, namely between educators and students. In this interaction, directed and intense communication occurs toward a predetermined target. Arabic is a sentence used by the Arabs to express their aims and objectives. Arabic is a scientific discipline consisting of various aspects of its main skills. What is meant by the primary skills here are four skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Teaching Arabic for non-Arabic speakers is generally divided into two types: Arabic language for life and Arabic language programs for special purposes, including Arabic for academic purposes (AAP), Arabic for Businessmen People (ABP), Arabic for Education People (AEP), Arabic for Objective Purposes (AOP) and others (Fatoni, 2019). Following its primary objective, language learning is to grow and improve students' language skills. It can be understood that the notion of learning Arabic is a teaching and learning process between teachers and students where the teacher conveys Arabic material to students to improve students' mastery of Arabic.

The objectives of learning Arabic are directed toward achieving goals, according to Bakar in his book "*Metode Khusus Pengajaran Bahasa Arab*" namely:

1. General Purpose: The purpose of the learning itself and related to the subject matter.
2. Particular Purpose: The goals to be achieved from the subject at that time

In learning Arabic has principles in learning, namely:

1. The principle of speaking before writing;
2. Principles of basic sentences;
3. The principle of sentence pattern as a habit (Habit);
4. The principle of expressions/sentences is not words; Sound system principle to use;
5. The principle of vocabulary restriction/control;
6. The principle of writing what has been learned.

METHODS

The descriptive qualitative method was employed in this investigation with a literature study approach (library research). According to (Creswell & Poth, 2016), qualitative research is a type of research that can describe actual phenomena. Qualitative research is natural, where the researcher is the key instrument. It can be concluded that this research is used to describe and describe natural conditions. The information is given descriptively, indicating a scientific study that can be expanded upon. Research using the library research approach has the following procedures: 1) exploring general ideas about research; 2) looking for information that supports the research topic; 3) clarifying the research focus and organizing appropriate materials; 4) Looking for and finding data sources in the form of primary library sources, namely books and scientific journal articles; 5) reorganize materials and note conclusions obtained from data sources; 6) reviewing the information that has been analyzed and is appropriate to discuss and answer the research problem formulation; 7) enrich data sources to strengthen data analysis and 8) compile research results (Adlini et al., 2022). The application of the independent curriculum for learning Arabic is the topic of study in this article. Interviewing Arabic instructors about the teaching and learning process after implementing the independent curriculum in schools was done to gather data. Documentation in the form of related scientific articles is also collected to bolster the data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka is not carried out simultaneously because it follows the policies of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), which gives flexibility to educational units in implementing the curriculum. There are three categories in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka on an independent path, namely: a) Independent Learning, educational units that still use the 2013 curriculum but have started to apply the principles of a Kurikulum Merdeka; b) Independent Changing, this category has started using the independent platform, choosing learning outcomes, learning objectives, learning objectives, assessments that the government has provided; c) independent sharing, education units that have fully implemented Kurikulum Merdeka and distribute works in the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka. Such as prioritizing independence in implementing the curriculum by looking at the actual conditions in the educational unit (Hilmin et al., 2022).

The critical presumption of this Merdeka Belajar is that the teacher will be trusted, allowing the teacher to conduct instruction freely. Because of this, a more comfortable learning environment is created, allowing teachers and students to converse more freely and learn outside the classroom. This encourages students to develop their courage, independence, social intelligence, civility, politeness, and competence rather

than relying on a ranking system, which, according to several surveys, only causes anxiety in children and parents.

While preparing to implement Kurikulum Merdeka at this school, teachers and principals have participated in various online and offline trainings held in the local cluster. There are several essential aspects or indicators in Kurikulum Merdeka, namely readiness in carrying out assessments as a substitute for USBN, changes in lesson plans to teaching modules, preparation of operational curricula, and compiling project modules to strengthen the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022).

Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka, schools are free to choose three options: First, apply some of the principles of Kurikulum Merdeka by not changing the school curriculum used. Second, using a Kurikulum Merdeka using the learning tools that have been prepared. Third, using a Kurikulum Merdeka to develop their teaching tools. The advantages of having a Kurikulum Merdeka are: First, it is more straightforward and profound due to the focus on important material and developing students' competence in their classes. Second, it is more independent, where students do not have specialization programs in high school. Teachers teach according to the ability and level of development of students. To develop curriculum and learning according to its characteristics, schools have strengths (Rahayu et al., 2022).

At this school, the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka in learning Arabic is still in a trial period. According to the Arabic language teacher at the school, the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka during this probationary period makes learning in class more effective and active because students are given freedom in choosing to develop students talents. For example, in Maharah Kalam learning, students can develop their talents through conversations with friends or telling stories in front of the class. Success in carrying out this implementation depends heavily on the efforts made by the school, both from the side of the teacher and the principal or head of the madrasah. These efforts can solve school problems related to implementing the Independent Curriculum in learning Arabic through upgrading or training on the Independent Curriculum, completing inadequate facilities and infrastructure, and supervising the ongoing teaching and learning activities in schools (Qomaruddin, 2022).

According to the results of experience and previous observations on learning Arabic, students usually tend to be more passive and less interested in learning Arabic. Moreover, learning Arabic is often considered difficult and tedious because learning Arabic is different from other learning. Arabic has four complex skills, namely listening skills (Maharah Istimah), speaking skills (Maharah Kalam), reading skills (Maharah Qira'ah), and writing skills (Maharah Kitabah). This also happened because learning Arabic in the classroom was dull and monotonous and did not use interesting methods for students. This also makes the teacher more active than the students because it does not implement a discussion system in the classroom. The teacher explains material to students using the lecture method, thus making the teacher play a more active role than his students. Incompatibility in choosing the method used to implement learning can make a National education goal unattainable because the method used in learning is part of the learning plan in the curriculum. As in *Undang Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*, "the curriculum is a set of learning plans related to objectives, content, teaching materials and methods used and used as guidelines in organizing learning activities to achieve a national education goal."

Moreover, based on the results of previous observations, students are also not given the freedom to choose the talents they like and tend to be ordered to do things that are not their talent or that they do not like. That way, students who do not have abilities in their fields will feel quite pressured and feel quite objectionable to completing the assignments given. Even though they are still being done, the results will be sober and not produce satisfactory assignments. With things like that, and with the existence of a pandemic, learning is increasingly not directed, so with this Kurikulum Merdeka and the implementation of this Kurikulum Merdeka in learning Arabic, it makes students more active so that the teacher only becomes a facilitator. Learning becomes more fun because Kurikulum Merdeka defines learning as a learning

design that provides opportunities for students to study in a calm, relaxed, enjoyable, stress-free, and pressure-free manner to show their natural talents.

Merdeka Belajar for teachers is freedom in translating and developing the curriculum so that it gives birth to independence in teaching. Freedom of teaching will give birth to freedom of learning for students to form good character according to their potential or talent and intelligence in their respective fields. Hopefully, this will create more open, interactive, communicative, and fun learning that ultimately makes all parties happy. Therefore, the essence of "Merdeka Belajar" is the input of a scenario of improving the quality of human resources through the education sector, the process of which is creative and innovative, and the output is happy (happy for all parties) (Langke, 2021).

The teacher is one of the essential factors in implementing this Kurikulum Merdeka because the teacher must become a tutor, facilitator, and inspiration for his students to be able to motivate students to be more active, creative, and innovative (Arviansyah & Shagena, 2022). Because the idea behind the Merdeka Belajar policy is that instructors, as educators, can foster a welcoming learning environment and inspire a passion for learning, students will not feel overburdened by the teacher's material delivery (Reyes et al., 2023; Yusuf & Arfiansyah, 2021). To achieve this, the teacher must have the skills to process material in a pleasant atmosphere and utilize technology as a learning resource. Because by utilizing technology in learning Arabic can make students more interested in learning Arabic, take advantage of the time allocation for learning Arabic, and create an Arabic-speaking environment. In addition, using technology can improve teachers' ability or competence in teaching Arabic. In other cases, learning Arabic also requires a supportive environment. The role of the teacher is crucial to create a conducive environment in Arabic learning activities. In the classroom, the teacher can use methods to increase student participation. In addition, outside the classroom, schools can also organize extracurricular activities in Arabic and hold various kinds of competitions in Arabic (Masturoh & Mahmudi, 2023). Some examples of activities that can be carried out are drama contests, debates, or holding seminars in Arabic by students attended by teachers.

With that, the results of interviews with Arabic teachers in the application of Kurikulum Merdeka in the Arabic learning process take place in the form of the teacher providing raw materials such as giving some mufradat or vocabulary to students. Sentences are made from this vocabulary, but the teacher gives freedom to students to develop the sentence following the student's ability, for example, in the form of a short story or the form of a conversation with a friend, to utilize conversation technology or short stories that students have made, the conversations or short stories are made in video form. In addition, the teacher does mufradat puzzles. Students are divided into several groups, arranging the puzzles made and then arranging them in sentences or according to students' interests. With such learning, students find learning very interesting, fun, and not dull, and more importantly, students do not feel burdened in doing assignments in the way they choose or are given the freedom to choose their interests and talent.

For evaluation per chapter, the teacher asks students to study one chapter discussed, then gives a crossword puzzle (TTS). Through the TTS game media, students can write the letters of a separate Arabic word. Thus, students can write and know the correct arrangement of letters from the Arabic word to achieve the learning objectives and produce an exciting learning media product (Azizah, 2022). Here we attach an example of a TTS image for student evaluation (see **Figure 1**):

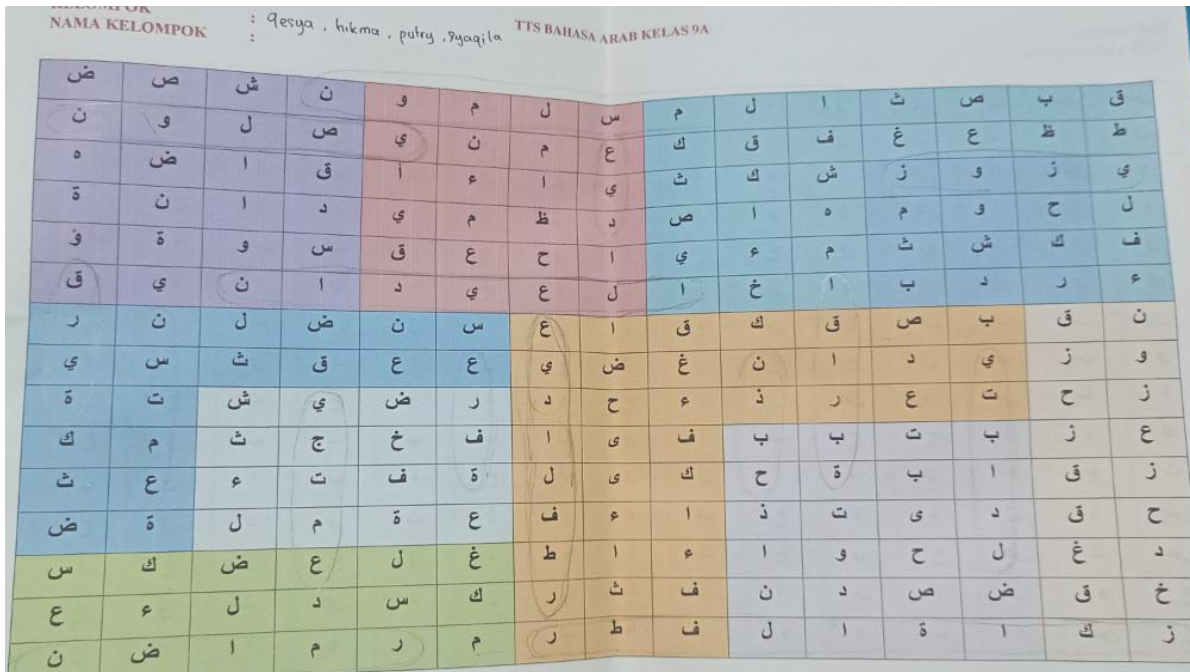


Figure 1. Examples of Crossword Puzzles (TTS)
 Source: Research finding 2023

The crossword puzzles (TTS) that students work on are in the form of words that contain mufradat, and students work on these crossword puzzles (TTS) without looking at the book. The answers obtained from crossword puzzles (TTS) are in the form of verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc. Then from the crossword puzzle vocabulary, students can develop the vocabulary obtained from doing the crossword puzzle into sentences, and can be developed into short material. Crossword puzzles are chosen because of their characteristics that are easy, flexible, and fun (Alescio-Lautier et al., 2023; Munasip, 2021). Even the evaluation is made to be as enjoyable as possible so that students do not feel pressured by only a collection of questions. Teachers can use TTS in learning Arabic, especially in memorizing mufradat, which later the learning process will make students more active and enthusiastic (Levita et al., 2023).

In learning Arabic, this is following the concept of a Kurikulum Merdeka, namely creating a pleasant learning atmosphere by learning while playing and providing choices to students without burdening students by giving freedom of choice and developing according to students' abilities with what they like, because each student has their talents and intelligence in their field. In this case, implementing Kurikulum Merdeka in learning Arabic can follow the policy concepts set by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Kurikulum Merdeka gives the freedom of "Freedom to Learn" to learning implementers, namely teachers, and principals, in compiling, carrying out the learning process and developing curricula in schools, and paying attention to the needs and potential of students (Zarkasi et al., 2022). Teachers need to take a role in planning learning activities according to regulations and the needs of students in the field to maximize the potential students possess (Mursyid et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

The curriculum initiated by the Minister of Education Nadiem Makarim is Kurikulum Merdeka, the newest curriculum in Indonesia, which in this Kurikulum Merdeka gives freedom to students to explore their abilities and interests. Implementing a Kurikulum Merdeka in learning Arabic makes teachers more flexible in teaching and knowing students' interests, talents, needs, and abilities. The freedom in choosing and developing each student's abilities makes the learning atmosphere more enjoyable. Students do not feel

burdened with things they are not interested in because they have talents and intelligence in their respective fields. The learning process carried out by the Arabic teacher follows the aspects contained in Kurikulum Merdeka. With the limitations and deficiencies in this study, further research can further develop Kurikulum Merdeka's research in learning Arabic.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The authors reported no potential conflict of interest, and the article's content is plagiarism-free.

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