Developing Pre-Service Arabic Teachers' Competence in Implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* through Curriculum Development Course

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ENGLISH ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the preparations that pre-service Arabic teachers underwent to improve their ability to implement *Kurikulum Merdeka* through the Arabic Curriculum Development course. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation and were analyzed with Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's interactive model of qualitative data analysis. The results show that the Arabic Curriculum Development course at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of Sunan Ampel Islamic State University was structured as follows: Presentation about *Kurikulum Merdeka*; introduction to the regulatory aspect of the curriculum; P5 and P2RA Modul writing assignment; discussions on the planning, learning, and assessment stages of *Kurikulum Merdeka*; review of *Kurikulum Merdeka* Learning Module model; and assignment to write *Kurikulum Merdeka* Learning Module. Through this course, the competence of the participants was prepared to implement the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in their School Field Practice (PLP).

Keywords: *Kurikulum Merdeka*, Curriculum Development, Arabic Learning, Arabic Teachers

INDONESIAN ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penyiapan kompetensi mahasiswa calon guru bahasa Arab dalam implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka melalui mata kuliah Pengembangan Kurikulum Bahasa Arab, problematika dan solusinya. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini ialah deksriptif-kualitatif dengan menggunakan teknik pengumpulan data observasi, interview, angket, dan dokumentasi. Sedangkan teknik

analisis data yang digunakan ialah teknik analisis data kualitatif model interaktif versinya Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwasanya penyiapan kompetensi mahasiswa calon guru bahasa Arab dalam implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka melalui matakuliah Pengembangan Kurikulum Bahasa Arab di Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan (FTK) UIN Sunan Ampel berupa: pemberian materi terkait apa dan bagaimana Kurikulum Merdeka, pengenalan regulasi Kurikulum Merdeka, penugasan menyusun Modul P5 dan P2RA, pembahasan perencanaan, pembelajaran, dan asesmen Kurikulum Merdeka, bedah contoh Modul Ajar Kurikulum Merdeka, dan penugasan menyusun Modul Ajar Kurikulum Merdeka. Dengan demikian, melalui mata kuliah Pengembangan Kurikulum bahasa Arab, mahasiswa calon guru bahasa Arab dapat menyiapkan kompetensinya dalam implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka ketika Praktik Lapangan Persekolahan (PLP) di Sekolah atau Madrasah.

***Kata Kunci**: Kurikulum Merdeka, Pengembangan Kurikulum, Pembelajaran bahasa Arab, Guru Bahasa Arab*

Introduction

Efforts to improve the quality of education have been a major challenge for the Indonesian government. Therefore, the government has made various efforts, including the development of education curricula (Bahruddin et al., 2021). From the 1947 Curriculum to the 2013 Curriculum, Indonesia has changed its education curriculum 10 times (Manurung, 2019). Nonetheless, these changes have not sufficiently improved education quality. This is reflected, among others, in the student learning result indicators, which are still relatively low. To solve this problem, the Indonesian government has developed and introduced a new curriculum called the Learning Recovery Curriculum, known also as *Kurikulum Merdeka* (BSKAP, 2021). This curriculum is part of the Merdeka Belajar (literally: Freedom of Learning) concept (Marisa, 2021) and a re-evaluation of the 2013 Curriculum. It emphasizes diverse intra-curricular learning, where learning materials are optimized to provide students with enough time to dig deeper into concepts and improve their competence (Saryanto, 2022).

This new curriculum has been designed as part of the government's efforts to overcome learning crises that have inflicted Indonesian education for a long time, a condition which was worsened by the Covid-19 Pandemic (Simarmata & Mayuni, 2023; Rizaldi & Fatimah, 2023). These crises are marked by learning loss, a phenomenon that has resulted in low outcomes of student learning even in the most basic competencies such as reading literacy (Anggraena et al., 2022). To solve this issue, education units

need to be re-oriented to enable them to achieve the basic competence targets that were not achieved during Distance Learning (PJJ). In this way, the introduction of *Kurikulum Merdeka* with its "independent characteristics" is expected to be able to help schools re-focus their targets (Junaidi, 2021). The Merdeka Curriculum is considered to be an ideal solution to the learning crisis in Indonesia (Hudayana et al., 2023), particularly about the study which shows that most Indonesian students are lacking in basic literacy competence such as the ability to understand simple reading texts and basic numeracy competence such as the application of basic mathematical concepts (Puskurjar, 2021). As the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results show, 70% of 15-year-old students are below the minimum competency in understanding simple reading or applying basic mathematical concepts (Susanto & Mahmudi, 2024; Lestari & Wulantina, 2024; Kamila et al., 2024).

Teachers have an important role in education (Z. Arifin, 2021) that the success of education relies on (Hazmi, 2019). Therefore, any educational policy that needs to be implemented at school should involve teachers, including the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Considering the importance of the teacher's readiness in the implementation of the curriculum, prospective teachers must be equipped with the skills and competencies needed to implement the curriculum to achieve the national education objectives.

Several relevant studies have been conducted on teacher and pre-service teacher preparation for the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. A study by Rahayu et al. (2022) focused on vocational high school English teacher readiness to implement *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Teachers were trained and given an assignment to develop a conceptual map about vocational school teacher professionalism in implementing the curriculum. A study by Septiana and Hanafi (2022) discussed the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* and the training on the importance of digital literacy in implementing the curriculum given to the teachers of State Elementary School 1 of Sidem Village, Gondang District, Tulungagung Regency in the Province of East Java. Another study by Hanifah (2019) showed the professional development training given to Arabic student teachers to develop lesson plans (RPP) in the Lesson Planning course at the Arabic Education Study Program of Sunan Ampel Islamic State University. A study conducted by Rahmawati (2022) reported the Early Childhood Education (PAUD)

teacher readiness in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* through understanding the characteristics and structure of the curriculum, readiness of lesson plans, readiness of the learning process, readiness of infrastructure, readiness of modules or teaching materials and readiness for learning assessment. A study by Ihsan (2022) focused on the teacher readiness components in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The results of these studies indicate that many teachers still have no clear idea about the implementation of the new curriculum. They need to learn how to implement the curriculum into their classroom and what kinds of evaluation it uses.

A study by Alfaeni (2022) on the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* by the teachers of Baros State Elementary School, as one of *Sekolah Penggerak,* identified the constraints, problems, and obstacles that the teachers had in implementing the curriculum. These constraints, problems, and obstacles can be used as guidelines to emphasize mastery of the material to pre-service teachers in university or teachers in other schools. The study in this article focuses on the preparation of undergraduate students (S1) of Arabic to improve their competence through the Arabic Curriculum Development course at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of Sunan Ampel Islamic State University where they discuss and learn to develop learning media for the Arabic subject for the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, and write papers about it.

As a teacher education institution (LPTK), the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of Sunan Ampel Islamic State University has the vision to become an internationally leading and competitive education and teacher training institution. Its mission is to administer education and learning in Islamic, language, and science education that is professional, accountable, and internationally competitive (UINSA, 2020). Within this context, the Arabic Study Program is an educational study program with the aim is to prepare future Arabic teachers. This is relevant to the vision of the program that aims to produce Arabic education scholars who are professionals in Arabic learning (UINSA, 2020). Therefore, one of the expertise courses offered Arabic Curriculum Development course. This course equips students with extensive knowledge of curriculum documents, the regulations relevant to them, the implementation of curriculum at school, and the development of appropriate learning media.

Based on the previous discussion, the authors are encouraged to carry out a study entitled "Developing Pre-Service Arabic Teachers' Competence in Implementing

Kurikulum Merdeka through Arabic Curriculum Development Course". These competencies are the competence of pre-service Arabic teachers in planning and implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This study aims to discuss how the students are prepared to implement *Kurikulum Merdeka* at school through the Arabic Curriculum Development course, the problems they encountered, and the solutions they can offer.

Methods

The method used in this study is the descriptive analysis method. It is a method that is systematically used to explain anything relevant to the main issues of the study. The data that have been collected are processed and codified by providing explanations to them, then analyzed (Nawawi, 2015). This method is used to explain the objective condition of the learning process in the Arabic Curriculum Development course. The findings were then analyzed critically.

Two types of data were used for this study, namely literary data and empirical data. The literary data were obtained from books and working documents relevant to the issues of the study, namely: The Curriculum of the Arabic Education Study Program of Sunan Ampel Islamic State University, the syllabus of the Arabic Curriculum Development course, the Semester Study Plan (RPS) of the Arabic Curriculum Development course, and other documents relevant to the topic of this study.

The empirical data are obtained from the field through the research process. In this study, the empirical data are classified into two. The primary data are the data that become the main source of the study. In this study, the sources of primary data are 3 lecturers and 80 students of the Arabic Curriculum Development course. The secondary data are data that support the primary data, including the head of the Arabic Study Program of the Sunan Ampel Islamic State University, the lecturers of Arabic Education, and documents relevant to this study (T. M. Arifin, 2005), such as papers and presentations made by the students that are relevant to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* and the learning media they produced. These documents are used to provide information about the competence development process and the student readiness in implementing the new curriculum at school.

To obtain the data, this study used several data collection techniques. The first technique used was observation. Observation is a technique that systematically observes and records the phenomena that are being studied (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). This technique was used to collect data about how the classes for the course were organized,

the problems the students faced when attending the course, the administration of the Arabic Curriculum Development course at the Arabic Education Study Program, and the issues related to this study through direct observation during the teaching process. The second technique used was an interview. The interviews were conducted to obtain data about the course design, how the classes for the course were organized, and the problems the students faced when attending the course. The third technique used was documentation which was used to collect data in the form of transcripts, records, books, letters, inscriptions, magazines, agendas, minutes, et cetera (Arikunto, 2013). The documents collected for this study include papers, PPT presentations, *Kurikulum Merdeka* learning media created by the student, comments made by the students in the discussions conducted on Google Classroom LMS, the syllabus and Semester Study Plan (RPS) of the Arabic Curriculum Development course, lecturing journal, attendance list (records of student participation), Student Worksheet, template of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, learning media, and other documents relevant to the topic of this study.

The data were analyzed with the non-statistical descriptive method, i.e. a type of data analysis used for non-numerical data and data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation, using the inductive and deductive techniques. The inductive technique was used with specific facts about the practical aspects of the Arabic Curriculum Development course, and the various events taking place during the administration of the Arabic Curriculum Development course. The data were then generalized. The deductive technique was used to draw conclusions from general facts to more specific facts. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed with the Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana interactive model of qualitative data analysis, comprising of the following stages: a. data collection; b. data condensation; c. data presentation; d. interpretation; and e. drawing of conclusions and or verification. Data analysis was conducted after the data collection by condensing the interactive model of qualitative data. Data obtained during the study were sorted, then simplified and abstracted, and finally transformed. In the condensation stage, the data were not reduced as used in the pre-revised model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana interactive data analysis (Miles et al., 2014). At this stage, data were summarized, paraphrased, and combined with other data. The relevant data from the condensed data were then

presented and displayed in a narrative. Finally, the data were interpreted and conclusions were drawn.

Developing the Arabic Students' Competence for the Implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* through the Arabic Curriculum Development Course

The objective of the Arabic Curriculum Development course in the university is to help students develop curriculum and lesson plans that are appropriate to the applicable curriculum based on science integration (integrated twin towers) to be implemented in the school learning process (Dosen Rumpun FTK UIN Sunan Ampel, 2022). The Arabic Curriculum Development is one of the prerequisite courses for Microteaching and School Field Practice (PLP-1 and PLP-2) courses. Students who did not pass the Arabic Curriculum Development course will automatically be prevented by *sinau.uinsby* system from signing up for Microteaching and School Field Practice courses in the following semester.

Based on the observations, interviews, and documentation, it can be reported that the Arabic Curriculum Development course had 16 sessions and was conducted both offline and online by employing Google Classroom LMS as one of its media.

The class began with an introduction to the subject, course arrangement, and the semester study plan (RPS), which includes the sequence of course materials, the course objectives and descriptions, the urgency, the course procedures, and information about assignments that students need to complete, the examinations, and the learning resources used. Before the classes, the lecturer would upload the RPS onto Google Classroom LMS so that the students could access it and read it before attending the class. These activities allow them to study and prepare questions about it. The assignment for the first session was to describe the what and how of the course and the functions and roles the course plays for the Arabic student teacher (Syafi'i, 2023).

In the second session, the basic concepts of education curriculum were discussed. This includes different concepts of curriculum, concepts of curriculum development, principles of curriculum development, history of curriculum development in Indonesia, and analysis of Arabic curriculum development in Indonesia. In this session, students who got the assignment (assigned through Google Classroom LMS in the first session) should present the basic concepts of the education curriculum. The material covered in

the second session is an introduction to curriculum development. This is in line with Syamsul Bahri's opinion that some of the aspects that need to be considered in developing a curriculum are the theoretical and conceptual understanding of curriculum, the principles of curriculum development, the different conceptual models of curriculum, the foundation of curriculum development and other issues relevant to the development of curriculum (Bahri, 2017).

The third session discussed the 2006 Curriculum or the Educational Unit Curriculum (KTSP) before the K-13, including the understanding of KTSP, the basic concept of KTSP, assessment of KTSP, the foundation of KTSP, the development principles of KTSP, and Arabic subject in KTSP. In this session, students had to present their papers about the 2006 Curriculum or Educational Unit Curriculum (KTSP). The materials covered in this session are aimed at providing the Arabic student teacher with the opportunity to scrutinize the Educational Unit Curriculum that preceded the 2013 Curriculum, particularly regarding its development principles and the position of Arabic subject in it (Syafi'i, 2023) .

The fourth session focused on the 2013 Curriculum, including the notion of the 2013 Curriculum, the reason behind the revision of the Educational Unit Curriculum (KTSP) to the 2013 Curriculum, four fundamental changes of the KTSP in the 2013 Curriculum, namely: Graduate Competency Standard (SKL), Content Standard (SI), Process Standard, and Assessment Standard, and detailed discussions of these changes.

The materials covered in the third and fourth sessions were aimed at equipping the students with the ability to analyze both the advantages and disadvantages of the previous curricula, so that they have some idea about the causes of curriculum changes over the period (Ni'am, 2022), including the change from SKTS to 2013 Curriculum. Furthermore, reviews of the previous Arabic curricula are also expected to raise awareness among the students of the Arabic department in Indonesia at various school levels that the curriculum has always changed to adjust to the latest developments, the situation, and the condition (Khoiriyah, 2020). With the change of the curriculum, Arabic learning should also move more dynamically. The texts used in the textbooks should not be monotonous or uninnovative, they have to keep up with the age. Likewise, the Arabic learning design must also become more innovative, be it in the *mahârah al-istimâ', mahârah al-kalâm, mahârah al-qirâ`ah,* and *mahârah al-kitâbah* (Ni'am, 2022). The

Arabic student need to be able to design learning more creative and innovative (Huda & Hanifah, 2023).

The fifth session discussed and analyzed the regulations pertaining to the 2013 Curriculum, including: Law No. 20 of 2003 on National Education System, Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 20 of 2016 on Graduate Competence Standard, Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 21 of 2016 on Content Standard, Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016 on Process Standard, Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 23 of 2016 on Assessment Standard, Decree of Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) No. 183 of 2019 as replacement of Decree Number 165 of 2014 on Islamic Religious and Arabic Education in *Madrasah*, KMA No. 184 of 2019 on Guidelines for the Implementation of Curriculum in *Madrasah* as a replacement of KMA No. 117 of 2014, Circular of Minister of Education and Culture No. 14 of 2019 on Simplification of Lesson Plan, Decision of Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 719/P/2020 on Guidelines for the Implementation of Curriculum in Educational Units in Special Conditions, and the Decision Letter of Director General of Islamic Education Number 2791 of 2020 dated May 18th 2020 on Directives on Emergency Curriculum in *Madrasah*.

Discussions in the fifth session are aimed at expanding the students' perspective and understanding that the implementation of a curriculum needs to be based on regulations so that it can be implemented according to the objectives that have been set. Curriculum regulations are also needed to manage the entire process of preparation and implementation of the curriculum, such as the school curriculum development, the infrastructure, the teacher resources, and the educational staff (Ihsan, 2022). Teachers are a very important aspect as they are the curriculum implementation spearheads at the educational unit (Sofiarini & Rosalina, 2021) .

The sixth and seventh sessions of the Arabic Curriculum Development course focused on the lesson planning aspect of the 2013 Curriculum, namely the Effective Week Plan (RPE), Annual Program (Prota), Semester Program (Promes), and the syllabus. Materials on the lesson planning aspect of the 2013 Curriculum were still given because the Indonesian government declared that the 2013 Curriculum was still in use as an alternative curriculum until 2024. So, in 2023 schools or educational units were not obligated to use the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Only in 2024 are schools mandated to apply the

Kurikulum Merdeka course (PLP-1), which is a continuation course of the Arabic Curriculum Development course, also still using the 2013 Curriculum lesson planning and micro-teaching practice (Laboratory Team FTK UIN Sunan Ampel, 2023). In PLP-2 of 2023, the Arabic student teachers are expected to be ready and able to use both curricula in the schools where they have their field teaching practice, i.e. the 2023 Curriculum and the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (*Interview with the lecturer of Arabic Curriculum Development Course on April 10th 2023*).

As stated in the Semester Study Plan (RPS) of the Arabic Curriculum Development course, the eighth session was the Mid-Term Exam (UTS). The students were assigned to make an individual portfolio consisting of Effective Week Plan (RPE), Prota, Promes, and Syllabus appropriate to levels and classes. The assignment was uploaded to Google Classroom LMS.

The ninth session discussed the lesson planning of the 2013 Curriculum, i.e., the Lesson Plan (RPP), which includes: the notion of the lesson plan, the difference between syllabus and lesson plan (RPP), the objectives and functions of the lesson plan, the principles of lesson planning according to the Regulation of Minister of Education and Culture *(Permendikbud)* No. 22 of 2016 and Decision of Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) No. 183 of 2019, components of lesson plan of the 2013 Curriculum based on Regulation of Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016 and KMA No. 183 of 2019, required or compulsory components of lesson plan according to Circular of Minister of Education and Culture No. 14 of 2019 on Simplification of Lesson Plan, Steps in writing a complete and simple lesson plan of the 2013 Curriculum, and examples of lesson plans of the 2013 Curriculum, the simplified and the complete version.

As in the sixth and seventh sessions, the ninth session is also aimed at enabling the Arabic student teachers to design quality lesson plans for the 2013 Curriculum as part of their pedagogical and professional competence as a prospective Arabic teacher (Umi Hanifah, 2019).

The tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth sessions of the course were used to discuss *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The details are as follows:

In the tenth session, students discussed *Kurikulum Merdeka* and reviewed the regulations pertaining to it. The discussions include the notion of *Kurikulum Merdeka* (questions and answers about the Merdeka Curriculum) and the differences between

Kurikulum Merdeka and the 2013 Curriculum. Second, discussion on regulations pertaining to the Merdeka Curriculum, including: Decision of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 56/M/2022 on the Guidelines for the Implementation of Curriculum for Learning Recovery, Decision of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 56 on the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, Decision of Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) No.347 on Guidelines for the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasah, Decision of Head of Education Standard, Curriculum and Assessment Body (BSKAP) Number 033/H/KR/2022 on the Amendment of the Decision of Head of BSKAP Number 008/KR/2022 on Learning Achievement at Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and High School Education in the Merdeka Curriculum, Decision of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 3211 of 2022 on the Learning Achievement of Islamic Religious Education and Arabic at *Madrasah*, and Decision of Head of BSKAP Number 009/KR/2022 on the Dimensions, Elements, and Sub-elements of Pancasila Student Profile in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

The tenth session of the course was filled with paper presentation and mind-mapping of the Merdeka Curriculum and its relevant regulations followed by discussions and questions and answers. As with the 2013 Curriculum, this session is expected to expand students' perspectives on the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Additionally, through the review of the regulations the prospective teachers will have the competence to implement the curriculum (Ihsan, 2022) before going to their field practice (PLP-2).

Next, in the eleventh session, they discussed Pancasila Student Profile Enhancement Project (P5) and the *Rahmatan lil Alamin* Student Profile (P2RA), including The Decision of Head of SKKAP on Pancasila Student Profile (BSKAP, 2022) and KMA No. 347 of 2022 on Guidelines on the Implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in *Madrasah* (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2022), Notions of Pancasila Student Profile Enhancement Project and P2RA, Dimension, and Elements of Pancasila Student Profile and P2RA, Principles for the Development of Pancasila Student Profile Enhancement Project and P2RA, Themes of Pancasila Student Profile Enhancement Project and P2RA, Selection and Choice of Pancasila Student Profile Enhancement Project and P2RA, and Preparation of Pancasila Student Profile Enhancement Project P2RA module (Syafi'i, 2023).

They used this meeting to present P5 and P2RA papers and PPT, and analysis of P5 and P2RA module. This session was concluded with a group assignment to write a P5 and P2RA module through school observations and interviews with school or *madrasah* communities about the writing of the P5 and P2RA modules. For this assignment, the lecturer has prepared the format and structure of the P5 and P2RA modules. This assignment was expected to enable the prospective teachers to understand the P5 and P2RA modules well so that when they have to write it on their own in the Microteaching (PLP-1) course, they already have the competence to do it (Tim Laboratorium FTK UIN Sunan Ampel, 2023). This competence is an important part of the preparation to develop their competence to implement *Kurikulum Merdeka* because P5 will provide which competence that the Indonesian system of education will produce. *Kurikulum Merdeka*, in this regard, is geared towards instilling Pancasila values in the students (Dewantara & Juliansyah, 2023; Zaeni et al., 2023).

The twelfth session was focused on the learning and assessment of the 2013 Curriculum, which includes: the principles of learning and assessment, lesson plan and assessment: (understanding Learning Achievement, formulating Learning Objectives, determining Learning Objectives Flow, and planning learning and assessment), administering Learning and Assessment, and manging and reporting Assessment Results: (processing and reporting Assessment results).

 Presentation and in-depth discussion methods were used in the twelfth session, focusing on the materials of the session. The lecturer informed us that this session was expected to equip the Arabic prospective teachers with the competence needed to conduct learning and assessment appropriate to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* at school (*Interview with the lecturer of Arabic Curriculum Development on April 10th 2023*).

The thirteenth session was focused on the Lesson Plans of the Merdeka Curriculum (Teaching Module), including: first, the minimum components of a lesson plan in the simplified version (learning objectives, learning procedures or activities, and learning assessment); second, the minimum components of a teaching module or a lesson plan in the simplified version (learning objectives, learning procedures or activities, assessment plan at the beginning of learning, assessment plan at the end of learning, and the learning media used); third teaching module components in the complete version (General Information: identity of module author, initial competence,

Pancasila student profile, facilities and infrastructure, student objectives, learning models used; Core Competence: learning objectives, assessment, meaningful understanding, triggering questions, learning activities, student and teacher reflection, and appendices: student worksheet, enrichment and remedial, student and teacher reading list, glossary, list of references); fourth, assessment plan in learning implementation plan or teaching module (formative assessment at the beginning of the learning and during the learning process, summative assessment (at the end of the learning); and fifth, examples of teaching modules in the Merdeka Curriculum.

This session was focused on paper and PPT presentation, and exposition of Arabic Teaching Module examples. The student was expected to deepen their understanding of lesson planning as it is an essential part of an instructional activity (Ilmiani et al., 2020). Here they learned the lesson planning of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, particularly its Teaching Module as it is one of the most important learning media that determines the success of the implementation of new paradigm learning at school (Maulinda, 2022). Teachers need to understand the concept of teaching modules to make the learning process more interesting and meaningful (Rahimah, 2022). In the previous curriculum, i.e. the 2013 Curriculum, the teaching module is the same as the lesson plan (RPP).

The fourteenth session focused on analyzing and understanding the example of the Arabic lesson plan that used the 2013 Curriculum and the Arabic Teaching Module of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* using the following procedures: A group of students presented an example of an Arabic Lesson Plan of the 2013 Curriculum and an example of Arabic Teaching Module of the Merdeka Curriculum. Then it is followed by a question-and-answer session and concluded with an analysis of the differences between these two documents, and an assignment to write a 2013 Curriculum lesson plan and a *Kurikulum Merdeka* teaching module for the following lecture session.

Based on the observations and interviews, class activities of the fourteenth session were aimed at developing students' competence in analyzing and writing lesson plans of the 2013 Curriculum and teaching modules of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Since the teaching module plays an important role in the implementation of the curriculum (Tanango et al., 2023), it must be written comprehensively and systematically. Comprehensive means that the teaching module must contain all the required components, whereas systematic means that it must be written sequentially beginning

from the opening to the content material and the ending to make it easier for the students to learn and for the teachers to deliver the materials (Tanango et al., 2023; Ayunani, 2022).

In the fifteenth session, the students brought the lesson plans of the 2013 Curriculum and the *Kurikulum Merdeka* teaching module that they had prepared and swapped them with others to be evaluated. Based on the interview with the lecturer, the prospective teachers are expected to be able to write a lesson plan for the 2013 Curriculum and teaching module of *Kurikulum Merdeka* on their own, and able to evaluate and grade a lesson plan and teaching module according to the lesson plan and teaching module grading instruments. The results of their evaluation and grading will become the basis for revision or improvement of their lesson plan and teaching module before being uploaded to the Google Classroom LMS as their final assignment (portfolio).

Teachers, including prospective teachers, need to have the minimum competency and skills before teaching with a particular curriculum as it will affect the students' learning quality (Apiyani et al., 2022). The learning process will be interesting and fun if a teacher can design more creative and innovative lesson plans and module (Anggrella et al., 2023). In the lesson plan and teaching module, a teacher can choose a suitable learning method for her students and use learning media that will make her lesson easier to understand (Zulaiha et al., 2022).

Problems Faced by The Language Students in Developing Their Competence for The Implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* through the Arabic Curriculum Development Course

Based on the observations and interviews with both lecturers and students, it was found that the problems they encountered in developing their competence were:

First, the course material still covered both the materials of the 2013 Curriculum and *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This has split the students' concentration and made them unable to focus on understanding the latest curriculum.

Second, the allocated time was divided between the 2013 Curriculum and *Kurikulum Merdeka*., Consequently, students felt that there was not enough time to understand *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Third, time constraints for field observation and interview (at school) to collect data to write P5 and P2RA assignments because students also had other scheduled activities on the effective days.

Here we offer solutions to these problems:

First, materials on the 2013 Curriculum should be offered at the beginning of the course before moving on to the discussion about *Kurikulum Merdeka*. In this way, students can study and understand both curricula without loosing their focus.

Second, the lecturer needs to use the Google Classroom LMS to upload course materials (PTT, papers, videos, and other supplementary materials) and assignments so that students can read and review them before coming to class. The Google Classroom LMS can be supplemented with WA Group as a communication and information channel where they can seek answers to the problem they have in the class.

The last, students should be allowed to conduct observations and interviews at a nearby school. If they still have a problem, they are allowed to learn about the P5 and P2RA through the internet (website, school blog, school IG, or the school's other social media).

By implementing the above solutions, it is hoped that pre-service Arabic teachers will be better prepared to implement *Kurikulum Merdeka* during School Field Practice (PLP). As the results of research on "teacher readiness in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka*", that teachers are not ready to implement *Kurikulum Merdeka* because they do not have sufficient knowledge and experience. Meanwhile, implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* will be easy if the teacher has sufficient knowledge and experience (Prihatini, 2022). In addition, material related to the differences between *Kurikulum Merdeka* and the 2013 Curriculum is very important to be given to pre-service Arabic teachers so that they no longer have difficulty distinguishing between *Kurikulum Merdeka* and the 2013 Curriculum (Anwar et al., 2022).

Conclusion

The development of pre-service Arabic teachers' competencies in preparation for the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* through the Arabic Curriculum Development course is carried out through several stages, including the introduction of government regulations related to *Kurikulum Merdeka*, analysis of teaching modules or lesson plans,

understanding of the learning process and assessment materials, and assignments to write teaching modules or lesson plans for *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

However, problems were still found as the materials were too broad that they covered both the 2013 Curriculum 13 and *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the allocated time to understand the latest curriculum was too short so they could not understand it well. Besides, they also struggled with collecting data for writing P5 and P2RA modules.

This study offered some solutions that may be able to solve the problems. First, the course materials for the 2013 Curriculum should be given at the beginning of the course. Second, lecturers should upload the course materials on to Google Classroom LMS so that students are able to read it beforehand. Third, students should be allowed to conduct observations and or interviews in a nearby school and do some digging on the Internet.

It is expected that the results of this study can be developed further by recommending that the student teachers study *Kurikulum Merdeka* not only through the course and in class but also online, for example through the website of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs at these addresses: https://kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id and https://sikurma.kemenag.go.id/.

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