

Implementation of Literacy-Based Learning in Indonesian Language Subjects

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Abstract: This study examines the implementation of literacy-based learning in Indonesian language instruction at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City, focusing on instructional planning, classroom practices, and evaluation processes. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with Indonesian language teachers, school principals, and students, as well as document analysis. Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation used to ensure data validity. The findings reveal that literacy-based learning has been implemented through reading activities, text-based discussions, and simple writing tasks integrated into classroom instruction. However, the implementation remains at a basic level and is predominantly teacher-centered. Literacy activities tend to emphasize initial text comprehension rather than higher-order thinking skills, such as critical analysis, interpretation, and reflective evaluation. Furthermore, learning evaluation focuses more on learning outcomes than on students' literacy processes. Major challenges include limited instructional time, students' diverse abilities, limited learning resources, and teachers' pedagogical competence. The novelty of this study lies in its contextual exploration of literacy-based Indonesian language learning in Private Madrasah Aliyah by integrating literacy practices with Islamic educational values and local cultural contexts. This study contributes theoretically by reinforcing literacy as a social and pedagogical practice and provides practical insights for developing more participatory and reflective literacy-based learning strategies.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Indonesian Language Learning, Literacy-Based Learning.

A. Introduction

Literacy is a fundamental competence that plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of human resources in the era of globalization and digitalization. Literacy is not merely understood as the technical ability to read and write, but also encompasses the ability to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and communicate information critically and reflectively across various contexts (Iskandar, Mesiono, & Sit, 2025). In the field of education, the strengthening of literacy serves as a primary prerequisite for students' success in mastering knowledge, developing reasoning

skills, and forming adaptive character traits in response to social and technological change (Abidin, 2023).

The Indonesian language subject holds a strategic position in the development of students' literacy, as its instruction directly integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Zainuddin, Zamzami, & Perera, 2024). Through literacy-based Indonesian language learning, students are guided not only to understand textual content but also to reason meaningfully, relate texts to social and cultural contexts, and produce written works that reflect critical and creative thinking abilities. Therefore, literacy-based learning represents a relevant approach for improving both the process and outcomes of Indonesian language learning at the secondary education level (Sitorus, Sipahutar, Nasution, Purnama, & Iskandar, 2025).

In the context of Madrasah Aliyah, literacy-based Indonesian language learning is closely aligned with the educational objectives of madrasahs, which emphasize a balance between the mastery of knowledge, the reinforcement of Islamic values, and the development of students' character. The implementation of literacy-based learning in madrasahs functions not only to enhance academic competence but also as a means of internalizing moral, cultural, and religious values through contextual and meaningful texts (Antoro, 2022). Consequently, Indonesian language learning in Madrasah Aliyah should ideally be designed systematically to foster a sustainable literacy culture within the madrasah environment.

However, the reality of Indonesian language learning in Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City indicates that the implementation of literacy-based learning has not yet been fully optimized. The learning process tends to remain oriented toward content delivery and the achievement of curriculum targets, resulting in students' literacy activities such as critical reading, text-based discussion, and written production not being fully integrated into classroom instruction. In addition, limitations in literacy-supporting facilities, the lack of varied instructional strategies, and teachers' competencies in developing literacy-based learning are factors that influence the effectiveness of this approach.

Tanjungbalai City, as a region characterized by social and cultural diversity, actually possesses considerable potential for the development of contextual literacy learning that is relevant to students' daily lives. Nevertheless, this potential has not been fully utilized in Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah. At the same time, rapid developments in information technology demand that students possess broader literacy competencies, including digital literacy and the ability to comprehend multimodal texts. These conditions further underscore the importance of implementing innovative and adaptive literacy-based learning approaches that respond to contemporary educational challenges.

Several previous studies (Barton & Hamilton, 2022) have demonstrated that literacy-based Indonesian language learning can enhance reading comprehension, writing

skills, and students' critical thinking abilities. However, these studies were conducted primarily in general secondary schools or public schools and focused on the effectiveness of specific instructional methods or models. Research that specifically examines the implementation of literacy-based learning within madrasah settings particularly Private Madrasah Aliyah remains relatively limited. This is noteworthy, given that madrasahs possess distinctive institutional characteristics, curricular structures, and religious values that may significantly influence Indonesian language learning practices.

Moreover, earlier research (Hidayah & Suyitno, 2023) tends to position literacy merely as an academic skill, without deeply connecting it to the social context, local culture, and Islamic values embedded in madrasah education. In fact, contextual literacy-based learning is believed to be more effective in enhancing student engagement and fostering meaningful learning experiences. The limited number of studies integrating literacy, Indonesian language learning, and the context of Islamic education indicates a significant research gap, particularly in understanding how literacy-based learning is implemented in practice within Private Madrasah Aliyah.

In the context of Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City, this research gap becomes increasingly apparent due to the scarcity of empirical studies that comprehensively examine the planning, implementation, and evaluation of literacy-based Indonesian language learning. Previous research has generally not provided detailed descriptions of the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing literacy implementation, such as teachers' competencies, the availability of literacy resources, students' characteristics, and the relevance of teaching materials to local culture and twenty-first-century literacy needs. As a result, current understanding of literacy-based learning implementation in private madrasahs remains fragmented and lacks a comprehensive contextual perspective.

Based on this research gap, the present study offers novelty in several aspects. First, it specifically examines the implementation of literacy-based learning in Indonesian language subjects at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City, a context that has received limited attention in educational literature. Second, this study does not focus solely on instructional strategies, but holistically analyzes the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation of literacy-based learning, as well as the factors influencing these processes within the madrasah environment. Third, this study conceptualizes literacy as a social and pedagogical practice integrated with Islamic values and local cultural contexts, thereby contributing conceptually to the development of contextual and meaningful Indonesian language learning.

Thus, this research is expected to fill an existing scholarly gap in the study of literacy-based learning within Private Madrasah Aliyah, while also providing practical contributions for teachers and madrasah administrators in developing Indonesian language learning that is effective, adaptive, and responsive to the demands of twenty-first-century literacy.

B. Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation process of literacy-based learning in Indonesian language instruction, including lesson planning, instructional implementation, and learning evaluation, as well as the factors influencing these processes within the context of Private Madrasah Aliyah. This approach enables researchers to capture the natural realities of classroom practices based on the perspectives of the research participants (Moleong, 2024).

The study was conducted in several Private Madrasah Aliyah located in Tanjungbalai City. The selection of research sites was based on the consideration that private madrasahs exhibit diverse management systems, resources, and academic cultures, making them relevant for examining the contextual dynamics of literacy-based learning implementation. The research subjects included Indonesian language teachers, madrasah principals, and students who were directly involved in the learning process. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, in which individuals were chosen based on their relevant knowledge and experience related to the research focus (Suyono, 2023).

Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to obtain empirical data on literacy-based learning practices in Indonesian language classrooms, including reading activities, writing tasks, text-based discussions, and interactions between teachers and students. In-depth interviews were carried out to explore the perspectives and experiences of teachers and madrasah administrators regarding the planning and implementation of literacy-based learning, the challenges encountered, and the efforts undertaken to address these challenges. Documentation was used to complement the data by collecting syllabi, lesson plans, instructional materials, students' written works, and other relevant documents related to literacy implementation (Arikunto, 2021).

Data analysis in this study was conducted interactively and continuously by referring to the qualitative data analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Creswell, 2024). Data reduction involved selecting and focusing on data that were relevant to the research objectives, particularly those related to the implementation of literacy-based learning. Data were displayed in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic matrices to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships among the data. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn gradually by considering the consistency and depth of the collected data.

To ensure data trustworthiness, this study employed triangulation techniques, including source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source

triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from teachers, madrasah principals, and students, while methodological triangulation involved comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted to confirm the accuracy of the data in reflecting the participants' experiences and perspectives (Yin, 2024).

Through these research methods, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth portrayal of the implementation of literacy-based learning in Indonesian language instruction at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City, as well as to generate valid and contextual findings that can serve as a foundation for the development of more effective Indonesian language learning practices.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

Implementation of Literacy-Based Learning in Indonesian Language Instruction at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City

Based on observations of the implementation of Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City, it was found that literacy-based learning has been incorporated into classroom activities, although its implementation has not yet been fully optimal. At the initial stage of instruction, teachers generally begin the lesson with reading activities using texts relevant to the learning materials, either in the form of printed texts or digital texts. These activities aim to build students' preliminary understanding of the lesson content; however, in practice, they remain largely instructional and have not fully encouraged students' active and critical engagement.

During the core phase of instruction, literacy activities are manifested through reading comprehension tasks, text-based discussions, and simple writing assignments. Observations indicate that some students are able to identify key information in the texts; however, their ability to interpret meaning and express critical opinions remains limited. Teachers function as facilitators by guiding discussions and providing additional explanations, yet the variety of literacy strategies employed is still limited, primarily relying on question-and-answer methods and written assignments.

In the closing phase of instruction, reflection and literacy-based evaluation activities are not implemented consistently. Learning assessment tends to focus more on the final outcomes of assignments rather than on the literacy processes experienced by students during instruction. Overall, the observational findings indicate that the implementation of literacy-based Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City has operated at a basic practical level, but still requires reinforcement in terms of instructional strategies, student guidance, and the optimization of literacy activities oriented toward the development of critical

thinking skills. These observational findings are also consistent with the results of the interviews, which are presented below.

Indonesian Language Teacher

"In Indonesian language learning, I usually begin by asking students to read texts that are relevant to the material, either from textbooks or other sources. After that, I invite them to discuss the text and answer questions. However, conducting deeper text analysis is still difficult due to students' varying abilities and the limited instructional time available."

Madrasah Principal

"In general, the madrasah supports the implementation of literacy-based learning, especially in Indonesian language subjects. We have accustomed students to reading activities, both in the classroom and outside regular instructional hours."

Student

"Usually, before the lesson starts, the teacher asks us to read a text first. After that, we are asked to answer questions or make a summary of the reading."

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that literacy-based Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City has been implemented through text-reading activities, discussions, and writing assignments. However, this implementation remains at a basic and instructional level. Students' critical engagement, the variety of literacy strategies, as well as reflection and evaluation of the literacy process have not yet been optimally implemented. Constraints such as limited instructional time, differences in students' abilities, and limitations in facilities and teachers' pedagogical competencies constitute the main challenges. Therefore, literacy-based learning still requires further strengthening to more effectively develop students' critical thinking skills.

Forms and Strategies of Literacy Activities in Indonesian Language Learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City

Based on observational findings, literacy activities in Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City are manifested through integrated reading, writing, and discussion activities within the instructional process. Reading activities are generally conducted at the beginning of the lesson using texts that are relevant to the learning materials, either printed texts from textbooks or digital texts accessed through learning devices. These activities aim to develop students' initial understanding of the learning topic; however, their implementation remains largely guided and has not yet fully encouraged students' independent exploration of texts.

The literacy strategies employed by teachers during the core phase of instruction include reading comprehension activities, question-and-answer sessions, text-based

discussions, and simple writing assignments such as summarizing, responding to questions, and rewriting the content of the text. Observations indicate that these strategies help students identify main ideas and key information in the text. Nevertheless, literacy strategies oriented toward the development of higher-order thinking skills such as critical analysis, meaning interpretation, and reflective engagement with the text have not yet been optimally implemented.

In addition, the discussion activities conducted tend to be classical in nature and are directly guided by the teacher. Active student participation in discussions is uneven, as it is still dominated by a limited number of students. Teachers act as facilitators by directing the flow of discussion and providing clarification of students' understanding; however, the variety of discussion methods, such as small-group discussions or text-based collaborative learning, remains limited.

During the closing phase of instruction, literacy activities are generally concluded with written assignments or learning outcome assessments, without being followed by systematic literacy reflection activities. Evaluation is more focused on the final products, such as students' tasks or answers, rather than on the literacy processes experienced during instruction. Overall, the observational findings indicate that the forms and strategies of literacy activities in Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City have been implemented at a basic level but still require the development of more varied, participatory, and critically oriented strategies. These observational findings are also consistent with the interview results, which are presented below.

Indonesian Language Teacher

"The literacy activities I most often conduct in class begin with reading texts, usually from textbooks or other sources. After reading, I invite students to engage in question-and-answer sessions and discussions about the text. Other strategies, such as in-depth text analysis or small-group discussions, are still rarely implemented due to limited time and differences in students' abilities."

Madrasah Principal

"The madrasah strongly supports literacy activities, particularly through reading habituation programs and the provision of reading materials. In Indonesian language learning, teachers have already implemented literacy activities, but the strategies still need to be developed further so that students can become more active and critical."

Student

"We are usually asked to read a text first, and after that the teacher asks questions about the content. Sometimes, we are also asked to summarize the text or answer questions based on it."

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that the forms and strategies of literacy activities in Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City have been implemented through reading activities, discussions, and simple writing assignments. However, the implementation remains basic, teacher-centered, and oriented toward lower-level text comprehension. Literacy strategies that encourage independent exploration, active participation, and the development of students' critical thinking skills have not yet been optimally applied. Therefore, literacy activities require the development of more varied, participatory, and reflective strategies to ensure that literacy-based Indonesian language learning can be implemented more effectively.

Discussion

Implementation of Literacy-Based Learning in Indonesian Language Instruction

The findings of this study indicate that literacy-based Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City has been implemented through reading activities, discussions, and writing assignments; however, it remains at a basic and instructional level. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by (Setiawan & Suyono, 2024), which reports that literacy learning at the secondary school level generally continues to focus on reading texts and answering questions, and has not yet been fully directed toward the development of students' critical and reflective thinking skills.

At the initial stage of instruction, reading activities conducted by teachers aim to develop students' preliminary understanding of the learning materials. This aligns with the view of (Zuhairi & Iskandar, 2026), who emphasize that reading constitutes the primary foundation of literacy-based learning. Nevertheless, as revealed in this study, reading activities remain largely guided and do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to independently explore texts. Similarly, Sari and Pujiyono (2024) found that classroom reading habituation often functions merely as an opening routine, without being followed by subsequent activities that demand higher-order cognitive engagement.

During the core phase of instruction, teachers have integrated reading comprehension activities, discussions, and simple writing assignments. This finding supports the study by (Wulandari, 2021), which states that the integration of reading and writing in Indonesian language learning can assist students in identifying main ideas and key information within texts. However, the results of the present study show that students' abilities to interpret textual meaning and express critical opinions remain limited. This reinforces the findings of (Nurhadi, 2023), who argues that limited variation in literacy strategies and the dominance of question-and-answer methods hinder literacy learning from effectively fostering higher-order thinking skills.

Furthermore, the role of teachers as facilitators in literacy-based learning has begun to emerge, yet it has not been optimally realized. Teachers continue to dominate the flow of discussion and determine the direction of students' understanding. This condition is in line with the findings of (Kurniawan & Hidayati, 2025), which reveal that many teachers still face difficulties in implementing collaborative and participatory literacy strategies due to limited instructional time and differences in students' abilities.

At the closing stage of instruction, reflection and evaluation of the literacy process are not conducted consistently. Assessment tends to focus on the final products of students' tasks rather than on the literacy processes experienced during learning. This finding supports the study by (Suyono, 2023), which notes that literacy learning evaluation in schools remains product-oriented, resulting in limited attention to process-oriented aspects such as reading strategies, deep comprehension, and students' self-reflection.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce previous research indicating that the implementation of literacy-based Indonesian language learning at the secondary school level still requires substantial strengthening, particularly in terms of diversifying instructional strategies, enhancing student scaffolding, and optimizing literacy activities oriented toward the development of critical thinking skills. Constraints such as limited instructional time, variations in students' abilities, and teachers' pedagogical competencies remain key challenges, as also identified in prior studies. Therefore, systematic efforts are needed to improve the quality of literacy-based learning so that the objectives of Indonesian language education—as a medium for developing students' critical and communicative competencies—can be achieved more effectively.

Forms and Strategies of Literacy Activities in Indonesian Language Learning

The findings of this study indicate that literacy activities in Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City have been implemented through integrated reading, writing, and discussion activities within the instructional process. This pattern aligns with scholarly perspectives which argue that literacy in Indonesian language learning should not be understood merely as the mechanical ability to read and write, but rather as a process of comprehending, processing, and communicating textual meaning contextually.

Observational results showing that reading activities are conducted at the initial stage of instruction to build students' preliminary understanding are consistent with the findings of (Rahmawati, 2025), who states that initial reading activities function as scaffolding to support students' comprehension of learning materials. However, as revealed in this study, reading practices that remain guided and instructional indicate that literacy learning has not yet fully encouraged students' independent exploration and critical engagement with texts. This finding reinforces (Pratiwi,

2025) assertion that literacy learning at the secondary school level still tends to emphasize literal text comprehension rather than the development of interpretative and critical evaluation skills.

During the core phase of instruction, the literacy strategies applied by teachers include reading comprehension activities, question-and-answer sessions, text-based discussions, and simple writing assignments. These strategies have proven effective in helping students identify main ideas and key information in texts. This finding is in line with the study by (Sinaga & Iskandar, 2024), which reports that summarizing and answering questions are effective in improving reading comprehension at a basic level. Nevertheless, the limited application of advanced literacy strategies such as critical analysis and textual reflection indicates that instruction has not yet been fully oriented toward the development of higher-order thinking skills. According to (Street, 2023), literacy-based Indonesian language learning should be designed to encourage students to analyze, interpret, and critically reflect on textual content.

The predominance of teacher-led, whole-class discussions identified in this study also corresponds with the findings of (Luke & Freebody, 2024), who argue that classical discussion formats without varied group management often result in uneven student participation. In contrast, small-group discussions and text-based collaborative learning have been shown to be more effective in enhancing student engagement and critical thinking skills. Thus, the limited variation in discussion methods constitutes a significant barrier to optimizing literacy-based learning.

At the closing stage of instruction, observations reveal that literacy evaluation continues to focus on final products in the form of written assignments, without incorporating reflection on the literacy process. This finding supports the study by (Thomas & Brown, 2021), which notes that evaluation in Indonesian language learning at the secondary school level still prioritizes cognitive learning outcomes over the literacy processes experienced by students. In fact, literacy reflection plays a crucial role in helping students become aware of the reading and writing strategies they employ and in enhancing their metacognitive awareness.

Overall, the findings of this study are consistent with a body of literature indicating that the implementation of literacy-based Indonesian language learning at the secondary school level generally remains at a basic, teacher-centered stage. Institutional support for a literacy culture within the madrasah, as revealed through interviews with the madrasah principal, represents an important foundation; however, it has not yet been fully accompanied by the development of varied, participatory, and reflective literacy instructional strategies. Therefore, as recommended by previous studies, strengthening teachers' pedagogical competencies, improving instructional time management, and implementing literacy strategies oriented toward the development of critical thinking skills are essential to ensuring more effective literacy-based Indonesian language learning.

D. Conclusions

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that literacy-based Indonesian language learning at Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City has been implemented through integrated text-reading activities, discussions, and simple writing assignments within the instructional process. However, this implementation remains at a basic, instructional, and teacher-centered level. The literacy activities conducted have not yet fully encouraged students' active engagement, the development of critical thinking skills, or reflection on the literacy process, as learning assessment continues to emphasize final outcomes rather than the learning processes experienced by students. These findings imply the need to strengthen literacy-based Indonesian language instructional strategies that are more varied, participatory, and reflective, both through the enhancement of teachers' pedagogical competencies and through institutional support from madrasah management. From a theoretical perspective, the results of this study affirm that literacy-based learning cannot be limited to routine reading and writing activities alone, but must be directed toward the development of students' higher-order thinking skills.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, including the limited scope of the research sites, which were confined to Private Madrasah Aliyah in Tanjungbalai City, and the use of a qualitative approach that did not quantitatively measure the impact of literacy-based learning on students' literacy competencies. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the research settings, employ mixed-methods approaches, and develop as well as test more innovative literacy-based Indonesian language learning models that are oriented toward strengthening students' critical thinking skills.

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