

Curriculum Design Innovations for Multilingual Education in English Classes at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai

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Abstract

This study aims to explore innovative approaches in curriculum design to support multilingual education within English classes at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai. The research focuses on identifying effective curriculum strategies that accommodate the linguistic diversity of students and enhance their English language proficiency while respecting their native languages. The study employed a qualitative methodology, including analysis of the curriculum, observation of classroom activities, and interviews with teachers and students. Data were collected over a semester and analysed using thematic content analysis to uncover the key elements of successful curriculum innovations in a multilingual educational context. The findings reveal that integrating culturally responsive materials, flexible lesson plans, and collaborative learning activities significantly improves student engagement and language acquisition. Additionally, the curriculum innovations help students navigate between multiple languages effectively, fostering better communication skills and academic performance. The findings offer important implications for educators and curriculum planners who aim to advance multilingual learning in similar institutional settings.

Keywords: Curriculum Design, English Teaching, Language Innovation Multilingual Education

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of Indonesia's rich linguistic diversity, multilingual education has become a crucial aspect of effective language teaching, especially in English classrooms. Many students at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai come from varied language backgrounds, speaking local languages alongside Bahasa Indonesia and English. This diversity necessitates a curriculum design that not only supports English language acquisition but also respects and integrates students' multilingual identities (Rahmayani et al., 2024).

Traditional English curricula often adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, which may overlook the specific linguistic and cultural needs of multilingual learners. As a result, students may face difficulties in fully engaging with the material, leading to suboptimal learning outcomes. This challenge calls for innovative curriculum design that accommodates multiple languages and learning styles, creating an inclusive and dynamic classroom environment (Nurhamidah et al.,

2017).

Curriculum innovations in multilingual education involve integrating culturally relevant materials, flexible teaching strategies, and collaborative learning activities that encourage code-switching and language awareness. At STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai, such innovations aim to empower students to navigate between their mother tongues and English, thereby enhancing both language proficiency and cognitive flexibility (Widiastuty1 et al., 2024).

This study seeks to explore these curriculum innovations by examining how English classes at STAI Nurul Ilmi implement multilingual education principles in their teaching practices. Through qualitative methods, including observations and interviews with educators and students, the research aims to identify effective strategies and challenges faced in adapting the curriculum to multilingual contexts (Utami & Bram, 2023).

This research's outcomes are expected to aid in designing English curricula that are more responsive and efficient in Indonesia and comparable multilingual environments. This research highlights successful practices and potential improvements, offering valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers working to strengthen multilingual education and achieve better academic results. (Rasid, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indonesia is known for its remarkable linguistic diversity, with more than 700 languages and dialects spoken across the archipelago. The presence of diverse languages among students calls for an educational strategy that accommodates their linguistic requirements. Therefore, designing a creative and adaptive curriculum is essential to foster English proficiency without disregarding students' first languages.

The Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum provides educators with the flexibility to develop curricula tailored to the characteristics and needs of their students. This interest- and talent-based approach allows for a more flexible integration of local languages and foreign languages, thereby supporting effective multilingual education (Irma Budiana, 2024).

In the context of English language instruction, the CLIL approach has demonstrated its effectiveness. CLIL combines content learning with language mastery, enabling students to learn English through relevant and contextual materials. This approach supports holistic language skill development (SaThierbach et al., 2015).

Translanguaging, employed as an instructional approach, permits students to utilize their full range of linguistic abilities while learning. This not only enhances material comprehension but also strengthens students' linguistic identity, making it an effective approach in multilingual education contexts (Noor, 2018).

Studies at bilingual schools in Indonesia show that using a bilingual curriculum, which integrates Indonesian and English, improves students' communication skills. This approach enables students to switch smoothly between languages, enriching their learning experience.

Educational innovations that empower students, especially in rural areas, emphasize the use of teaching methods and educational tools that support competent and equitable language mastery. These innovations help bridge gaps in language proficiency and educational access.

At STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai, the implementation of project-based curricula has shown positive results in enhancing students' English language skills. Participating in group projects allows students to learn the language and, at the same time, cultivate their critical and creative thinking skills (Shukla, 2025).

Evaluations of curriculum implementation reveal that major challenges in multilingual education include insufficient teacher training and limited resources. Therefore, it is important to provide professional development for educators and develop teaching materials that support multilingual learning (Nurhamidah et al., 2017).

Community involvement in curriculum development is also a vital factor. Engaging parents and local communities in the education process enriches curriculum content and ensures cultural relevance in learning (Widiastuty1 et al., 2024).

Overall, innovations in curriculum design for multilingual education in English classes at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai demonstrate that inclusive and contextual approaches can improve learning effectiveness. Active involvement of educators, students, and communities is key to creating a learning environment that holistically supports language development (Irma Budiana, 2024).

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach to explore curriculum design innovations in multilingual education within English classes at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai. Qualitative methodology was employed because it provides a comprehensive understanding of how educators and students experience and perceive the implementation of the curriculum. (Shukla, 2025).

This study primarily gathers data through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of relevant documents. The observations focus on capturing teaching activities as they occur and assessing how the curriculum addresses the needs of multilingual learners in English lessons. The observations focus on instructional strategies, student engagement, and language use dynamics (Andira et al., 2025).

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with English teachers, curriculum developers, and selected students. These interviews provide detailed insights into the challenges and successes of implementing innovative curriculum designs. Teachers share their perspectives on curriculum flexibility and multilingual integration, while students discuss their experiences navigating multiple languages in the learning environment (Sakkir et al., 2023).

Document analysis involves examining curriculum plans, lesson materials, and related educational policies at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai. This analysis helps to understand the intended curriculum framework and how it aligns with multilingual education principles. It also identifies any adaptations or innovations made to address students' linguistic diversity.

Using thematic analysis, the collected data from observations, interviews, and documents are analyzed by coding to identify key themes related to innovative curricula, strategies for multilingual instruction, and the progression of students' language skills. The themes are then interpreted to provide a comprehensive understanding of how curriculum design supports multilingual education (Mawaddah et al., 2015).

To guarantee the accuracy and consistency of the results, data from various sources are cross-verified through triangulation. Member checking is also conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants for feedback. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, are strictly observed throughout the research process (Masita, 2023).

RESULTS

The findings from classroom observations revealed that teachers at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai actively incorporate multilingual strategies within their English lessons. They often encourage students to use both their first language and English during collaborative activities, helping them communicate their ideas more confidently and comfortably. This practice supports a more inclusive learning environment that respects students' linguistic backgrounds (Muslim & Sumarni, 2023).

Interviews with English teachers highlighted several innovative curriculum design features

implemented to support multilingual education. Teachers reported adapting lesson materials to include local cultural references and bilingual resources, which make learning more relevant and engaging for students. Additionally, flexible lesson plans allow teachers to modify content and activities based on students' language proficiency levels and needs (Latifa et al., 2023).

Students expressed positive experiences with the curriculum innovations, noting that the integration of multiple languages facilitated their understanding of English concepts. They appreciated the use of collaborative projects and discussions that encouraged peer learning and translanguaging, where they could switch between languages to clarify meanings. This approach was seen as helpful in reducing anxiety and improving overall language skills (Maru'ao, 2020).

Document analysis of curriculum plans confirmed that STAI Nurul Ilmi has formally incorporated multilingual education principles into its curriculum framework. The curriculum emphasizes cultural responsiveness and linguistic diversity, encouraging the use of both Bahasa Indonesia and students' mother tongues as scaffolds for learning English. This formal recognition provides a strong foundation for curriculum innovation and teacher creativity (Fergina, 2013).

However, challenges remain, including limited teaching resources specifically designed for multilingual classrooms and the need for more comprehensive teacher training. Teachers expressed a desire for professional development focused on multilingual pedagogy and access to richer instructional materials. Despite these challenges, the overall response to curriculum innovations was positive, demonstrating their potential to enhance multilingual education in English classes at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai (Gustian et al., 2024).

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that curriculum innovations at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai play a significant role in accommodating the linguistic diversity of students, which is essential in a multilingual context. By allowing the use of students' native languages alongside English, teachers create a supportive environment that fosters language development without alienating students from their cultural identities. This approach aligns with current theories of translanguaging, which emphasize the value of using multiple languages as resources in learning (Utami & Bram, 2023).

Integrating culturally relevant materials into the curriculum enhances students' engagement and motivation. When students encounter familiar cultural references within their learning materials, they can relate more deeply to the content, facilitating comprehension and retention. This contextualization also affirms students' cultural backgrounds, contributing to a more inclusive classroom atmosphere where diversity is celebrated rather than suppressed (Andira et al., 2025).

The flexibility in lesson planning observed in the study is a practical response to the varying language proficiency levels among students. Such flexibility allows teachers to differentiate instruction, ensuring that both advanced and struggling learners receive appropriate support. Differentiated instruction in multilingual settings is crucial because it recognizes the diverse needs of learners and adapts teaching methods accordingly to maximize learning outcomes (Masita, 2023).

Collaborative learning activities, such as group projects and peer discussions, serve as effective platforms for language practice and social interaction. These activities encourage students to communicate in English while drawing on their multilingual repertoires to negotiate meaning. This dynamic use of language supports the development of both linguistic competence and interpersonal skills, which are vital for academic success and future employability (Maru'ao, 2020).

The formal incorporation of multilingual education principles in the curriculum framework at STAI Nurul Ilmi provides a solid foundation for these innovations. It reflects an institutional commitment to valuing linguistic diversity and promoting inclusive education. Such policy support is critical to sustaining innovative practices and ensuring that they are systematically implemented across classrooms (Rahmayani et al., 2024).

Despite these positive developments, the study highlights persistent challenges that may hinder the full potential of curriculum innovations. Limited access to teaching resources tailored for multilingual learners restricts teachers' ability to diversify instructional materials. Moreover, the lack of comprehensive professional development in multilingual pedagogy means that some educators may feel unprepared to implement innovative strategies effectively (Nurhamidah et al., 2017).

Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative effort involving school leadership, policymakers, and teacher training institutions. Providing ongoing professional development and developing or sourcing multilingual teaching materials will empower teachers and enhance the quality of instruction. Additionally, involving the local community and parents in curriculum development could enrich content relevance and foster a supportive learning ecosystem (Shukla, 2025).

In conclusion, the curriculum design innovations at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai demonstrate promising approaches to multilingual education in English classes. Through the use of inclusive strategies, culturally sensitive materials, and flexible planning, the school promotes a fairer and more effective educational setting. Sustained support and resource enhancement will be vital for preserving and growing these innovations, thereby improving learning outcomes for students in multilingual environments (Sakkir et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that curriculum design innovations at STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai have effectively addressed the challenges of multilingual education by creating an inclusive and supportive environment for English language learning. The integration of students' native languages alongside English allows learners to feel valued and confident, which positively impacts their language acquisition process.

The use of culturally relevant materials and flexible lesson plans has been shown to enhance student engagement and accommodate varying language proficiency levels. These strategies contribute to more meaningful and contextualized learning experiences that bridge the gap between students' linguistic backgrounds and English language demands.

Despite these successes, challenges such as limited teaching resources and insufficient teacher training remain significant barriers. Addressing these issues is crucial for sustaining and further developing curriculum innovations. Providing professional development opportunities and enriching instructional materials will empower educators to implement multilingual education strategies more effectively.

Ultimately, the findings emphasize the importance of institutional support, community involvement, and ongoing innovation in curriculum design. By consistently emphasizing inclusivity and the value of linguistic diversity, STAI Nurul Ilmi Tanjungbalai can act as a model for schools aiming to advance multilingual English instruction and enhance students' learning outcomes.

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