

## CRITICAL READING SKILLS IN TURKISH AND INDONESIAN EDUCATION CURRICULA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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### ABSTRAK

This study compares the Turkish and Indonesian education curricula regarding critical reading skills. Critical reading is important for understanding and evaluating texts critically, rationally, and reflectively. In this study, data was collected from both countries to compare their critical reading skills using the comparative descriptive method. The Turkish Language Curriculum (TLCC) has a teaching hierarchy that allows for gradually developing reading skills according to grade level. The focus is on higher-order thinking skills such as classifying, interpreting, critiquing, and evaluating texts. TLCC teaches reading strategies, identifying main ideas, and evaluating media texts. In Indonesia, the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes critical and creative thinking in reading learning. The approach is student-centered and actively engages students in the learning process. It also focuses on developing creativity, scientific reasoning, reflection, and applying Pancasila values. In conclusion, TLCC provides a gradual teaching structure and focuses on higher-order thinking skills, while the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia encourages critical and creative thinking in broader learning. It is recommended to improve student feedback, use diverse reading materials, and integrate concrete steps in developing reading skills with critical and creative thinking.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research aims to conduct a comparative study on the Education curriculum related to critical reading skills in Turkey and Indonesia. Critical reading is an important skill for understanding and evaluating texts critically, rationally, and reflectively. This research is relevant because critical reading is essential in an increasingly complex and information-abundant society.

The results of previous studies show that critical reading learning in Turkey ((ÖZTÜRK, 2012;

Yildirim et al., 2019) and Indonesia (Anisa et al., 2021; Restuningsih et al., 2017) is still not optimal. Schools in these two countries still tend to focus on literal reading learning, thus increasing the need to see a comparison of critical reading skills between them.

In Turkey, , (ÖZTÜRK, 2012) found that many students did not understand what they read and could not apply the information they obtained daily. They also have difficulty critically analyzing the reading material. It is also found that children and youth in Turkey are not provided with adequate reading

knowledge during their education. This is one of the problems that is considered significant in the context of education in the country. Meanwhile, similar research in Indonesia shows that most people still have limited reading skills and cannot apply reading in everyday life (Hariyati, 2019).

One factor that can influence critical reading skills is the educational curriculum. In Turkey, the education curriculum has undergone several changes in recent years, while in Indonesia, the Merdeka curriculum emphasizes a love of literacy, especially critical reading. This difference in curriculum approach may affect critical reading skills in both countries.

In addition, social and cultural factors can also play a role in shaping critical reading skills. For example, cultural values that emphasize obedience to authority and a lack of encouragement for critical thinking in Turkey (Thornberg & Oğuz, 2016), as well as the tendency of Indonesians to place more importance on memorization than deep understanding (Asyari, 2019; Hakim, 2018; Mu'min, 2014).

Educational environment factors also need to be considered. Differences in the availability of resources, such as limited school libraries or limited access to relevant books, may affect critical reading skills in both countries (Bangsawan, 2018; Firdausi, n.d.; Fuadi et al., 2020). Similarly, the teaching methods used by teachers can also affect students' critical reading skills in both countries (Muttaqin & Sopandi, 2015; Wulandari et al., 2021).

This research can also highlight differences in critical reading learning outcomes among students with different socioeconomic backgrounds. For example, previous studies have shown that students from families with higher levels of education tend to have better critical reading skills (Kharizmi, 2015; Picton, 2019). A comparison between Turkey and Indonesia in this regard can provide insight into the educational gaps in both countries. In globalization and technological development, digital literacy is also important in critical reading. Understanding information obtained from the internet and social media requires good critical reading skills (Arafah & Hasyim, 2022; Bråten & Braasch, 2017; Elander, 2010; Saputra & Al Siddiq, 2020; Syam & Nurrahmi, 2020).. This study can identify differences in critical reading skills related to digital literacy among students in Turkey and Indonesia.

By comparing critical reading skills in Turkey and Indonesia, this study is expected to better understand the challenges and factors that influence critical reading skills in both countries. The results of this study can provide a basis for formulating more effective learning strategies in developing critical reading skills in both educational systems.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, researchers collected data from Turkey and Indonesia to compare critical reading

skills in the two countries. The comparative descriptive method provides a clear picture of the differences and similarities between the two countries regarding critical reading skills (Purwanto, 2022; Soendari, 2012).

The researcher used several steps in this study. First, the researcher conducted a literature review to study Turkey and Indonesia's education policies, curricula, and learning strategies. This will provide contextual information about the education system in both countries and might affect critical reading skills.

Next, the researcher collected data related to critical reading skills in Turkey and Indonesia. This data can be obtained through various sources, such as previous research or other relevant studies. The data collected will be analyzed qualitatively, which means the researcher will analyze and interpret the data to identify significant differences, similarities, or patterns that emerge between the two countries. In comparing Turkey and Indonesia, the researcher will compare the findings from both countries. Previous research on critical reading in both countries can be used as a reference to compare the results of the current study. Thus, the researcher can see changes or trends and understand the factors affecting critical reading skills in both countries.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Research Result

This study aims to compare the Education curriculum related to critical reading skills between Turkey and Indonesia. The comparative descriptive method is used, where data is collected from both countries and analyzed qualitatively to identify differences and similarities in critical reading skills. A literature review was conducted to understand both countries' educational policies, curricula, and learning strategies. Data was obtained through various sources, including previous research and related studies.

The results showed differences between Turkey and Indonesia regarding critical reading skills. Turkey has a more structured educational approach with a curriculum emphasizing text comprehension, critical analysis, and information synthesis. In addition, the learning strategies used in Turkey encourage students to read actively, ask questions, and participate in discussions that involve deep understanding. These results indicate a strong awareness in Turkey of the importance of critical reading in developing students' critical thinking (Bayram et al., 2019).

In the Turkish Language Course Curriculum (TLCC), reading and listening skills are interrelated skill areas. In the context of TLCC, activities related to listening aim to develop higher-order thinking skills such as sequencing, classifying, associating, questioning, interpreting, criticizing, evaluating, and making inferences. The mastery of listening skills in TLCC is organized hierarchically according to different grade levels, with the principle of gradualism

in teaching. This means that the teaching plan and implementation of reading activities should be adjusted according to the grade level and ability of the students (Turkish Language And Turkish Culture Course Curriculum, 2018).

The development of reading skills is set out in the Turkish Language Course Curriculum (TLCC). Through a structured learning process, students will develop their reading skills gradually and acquire various important learning outcomes. Grade level groups the learning objectives for reading skills in TLCC. At the grade 1 level, students are taught to be prepared to read, interpret pictures and photos, and recognize the meaning of pictures, symbols, and signs in the text. Then, at the 2nd grade level, the learning focus includes recognizing the letters of the Turkish alphabet, the relationship between letters and sounds, reading syllables and words, and reading simple sentences and short texts by understanding the symbols and signs. Students are also taught to talk about text images and summarize the short texts they have read.

Furthermore, at the grade 2 to grade 8 level, students continue to develop reading skills by finding the meaning of unfamiliar words, identifying the topic of a text, following written instructions, reading punctuation, and paying attention to proper stress, intonation, and pronunciation when reading. They are also trained in distinguishing real and imaginary elements in a text, identifying the main idea or mood of a text, and recognizing supporting ideas in a text. In addition, students learn to summarize the content of texts, make comparisons between texts, and draw inferences from the texts they read. They also study different text types, use reading strategies, and evaluate media texts.

In the advanced stage, at the grade 7 and 8 level, students develop their reading skills by recognizing the structure of Turkish words, reading texts according to text types, recognizing the function of affixes in their reading, and questioning the sources of information in texts. They also learn to recognize the properties of sentences in their reading, such as interrogative, command, and declarative sentences.

By applying these learning outcomes, students are expected to master good reading skills in Turkish, expand their knowledge and understanding, and develop critical and analytical thinking abilities in reading diverse texts.

On the other hand, Indonesia faces some challenges with critical reading skills. In the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, learning approaches centered on critical and creative thinking are the main focus. All education community members, including teachers and students, are invited to engage in a dynamic learning process actively. Students are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills through imagination, scientific reasoning, reflection, and real application kritis (Nugroho, 2022; Sherly et al., 2021; Wisnujati et al., 2022). One example of the

implementation of critical thinking in the Merdeka Curriculum is through the Pancasila strengthening project. In this project, students are invited to deeply understand the values of Pancasila and apply them in everyday life. They are challenged to think critically and creatively in finding solutions to problems around them based on the values of Pancasila. Through this approach, students are expected to develop their creativity to face various challenges in the future. By thinking critically, they can see problems from various points of view, analyze information better, and develop innovative solutions. Critical thinking skills also help students become independent and competitive individuals, ready to face the development of an ever-changing world.

With the Merdeka Curriculum that encourages critical and creative thinking, it is hoped that students can become a generation that has high adaptability, can face global challenges, and has a deep understanding of the values of Pancasila as the foundation of the nation and state.

### Discussions

The comparison between critical reading learning in the Turkish Language Curriculum (TLCC) and the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia has several differences and similarities. The Turkish Language Curriculum (TLCC) has several advantages. First, there is a hierarchy of teaching that allows for the gradual development of reading skills according to grade level. This will enable students to understand reading more deeply as their age and grade level increase. In addition, TLCC focuses on developing higher-order thinking skills, such as classifying, interpreting, critiquing, and evaluating texts. Students are taught to not only understand the text but also to question and analyze it more critically. Reading lessons are also structured with clear objectives, from understanding images to summarizing the content of the text. TLCC also teaches students to use reading strategies, identify main ideas, and evaluate media texts.

Nonetheless, TLCC also has some shortcomings. First, it needs to be mentioned whether adequate feedback is given to students to help them improve their reading skills. Clear and targeted feedback is essential for correcting students' mistakes and guiding them to make improvements. Next, there needs to be a mention of whether there is an emphasis on reading diverse and representative reading materials. Students need to be exposed to a variety of topics and genres so that they can develop a broader understanding of the world. In addition, there is no detailed mention of how reading skills are developed at higher grade levels after eighth grade. More information about the development of reading skills at higher grade levels would help in more effective planning and teaching.

In Indonesia's context of the Merdeka Curriculum, there are several advantages. The learning approach is centered on critical and creative thinking,

which invites students to be actively involved in the learning process. This encourages students to think independently, develop new ideas, and apply scientific reasoning in reading. In addition, the Merdeka Curriculum also focuses on developing creativity, scientific sense, reflection, and application in the context of real life. Students are encouraged to understand and apply the values of Pancasila in finding solutions to problems around them. This helps students relate reading learning to everyday life and build deeper understanding.

However, the Merdeka Curriculum also needs to be improved. It does not mention how critical and creative thinking are applied in reading learning. More details about concrete strategies for integrating critical and creative thinking in reading learning would help teachers design better learning experiences. Furthermore, whether there are concrete steps for developing students' reading skills should be mentioned. Further explanation of how these curricula specifically develop students' reading skills would help in effective lesson planning and implementation.

To improve both curricula, providing clear and targeted feedback to students on their progress in reading skills is recommended. This can be done through written comments, group discussions, or individual conferences between teachers and students. Furthermore, it is important to use diverse and representative reading materials. Teachers can choose reading materials that cover various topics and genres to develop a broader understanding and broaden students' horizons. Finally, concrete steps need to be integrated into developing students' reading skills with critical and creative thinking. Concrete guidelines and strategies should be provided to assist teachers in designing learning experiences that promote critical and creative thinking in the context of reading.

Both curricula have advantages and disadvantages in developing critical reading skills. TLCC provides a gradual teaching structure and a focus on higher-order thinking skills. At the same time, the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia encourages critical and creative thinking in a broader learning context. To improve these two curricula, providing clear feedback to students, using diverse and representative reading materials, and integrating concrete steps to develop students' reading skills with critical and creative thinking is recommended.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The comparison between the Turkish Language Curriculum (TLCC) and the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia in learning critical reading has both advantages and disadvantages. TLCC provides a gradual teaching structure and focuses on higher-order thinking skills, while the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia encourages critical and creative thinking in a broader learning context. However, there are areas for improvement in both curricula regarding adequate feedback to students, an

emphasis on diverse and representative reading materials, and concrete steps in developing reading skills.

Based on the findings of this study, here are some suggestions that can be considered to improve critical reading skills in Turkey and Indonesia. Both curricula need to ensure adequate feedback for students on their progress in reading skills. This can be done through written comments, group discussions, or individual conferences between teachers and students. Clear feedback will help students understand their strengths and weaknesses and provide direction for improvement. Furthermore, both curricula must select reading materials covering a wide range of topics and genres. This will help students develop a broader understanding of the world and increase their interest in reading. Representative reading materials will enrich students' learning experiences by presenting diverse perspectives. Then, the curriculum must show concrete steps for developing students' reading skills. This could include effective reading strategies, text analysis techniques, or relevant evaluation methods. By providing clear guidelines, teachers can design learning experiences that promote critical and creative thinking in the context of reading.

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