



## The Implementation of An Adapted International Baccalaureate (IB) Curriculum To Improve Students English Learning Outcomes In Rural School: An Indonesian TESOL Context

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### Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of an adapted International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum to improve students' English learning outcomes in a rural Indonesian TESOL context. The research was conducted as a continuation of a Research and Development (R&D) study, focusing on the implementation and evaluation phase of a previously designed curriculum. The study involved expert validation and field testing with students in a rural partner school. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, and analyzed using descriptive quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings reveal that the adapted IB curriculum was effectively implemented, with positive responses across four key indicators: understanding, engagement, skill development, and contextual relevance. Students demonstrated a high level of comprehension (85%), supported by systematic and scaffolded material organization. Engagement was also notably high (88%), indicating the effectiveness of student-centered and interactive learning approaches. In terms of skill development, 82% of students reported improvements in their English abilities, particularly in basic communication skills, although productive skills such as speaking and writing still require further enhancement. The highest result was found in contextual relevance (88%), showing that learning materials closely aligned with students' daily lives significantly improved motivation and comprehension. The study concludes that integrating IB principles particularly Content and Language have beneficial impacts into the success of instruction.

**Keywords:** International Baccalaureate (IB), Curriculum, Implementation, Rural Context

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Referring to the results of the Academic Competency Test for high school students conducted in November 2025, English was the subject with the lowest average score nationally, with a score of 26.33 on a scale of 1-100. This situation indicates the continued low achievement of English language learning in Indonesia. Furthermore, this finding is confirmed by the annual Education First (EF) research report, which found that the average English proficiency of Indonesians (English Proficiency Index) is



relatively low, ranking 79th out of 113 countries surveyed (Hossain, 2016; Febriana, Adi, Yanti, 2019).

This information has given rise to various assumptions, one of which is closely related to suboptimal curriculum design, especially for schools in rural areas (Uyun, 2025). Although some experts argue that such problems are normal because English is not our first language (Crystal, 2003; Brown, 2012), this issue still requires attention and solutions. Education in rural areas certainly has distinct characteristics from education in urban areas. The challenges and opportunities schools face in developing a better curriculum also have their own unique characteristics (Harlina, Nur, 2020; Andriani, Sri et al., 2022). Therefore, it is crucial for the government to prepare, plan, and conduct English language teaching courses, especially in rural schools (Richards, 2008).

Designing a curriculum tailored to the needs of students in rural schools is expected to address to all educational challenges that frequently arise, particularly in English (Richards, 2001, 2008). This finding is supported by the author's previous research, which found that low teacher skills, exacerbated by limited government support for curriculum development in rural schools, are the primary factors contributing to the ineffectiveness of the current curriculum (Uyun, 2025).

Numerous studies on English curriculum development have produced curriculum designs that are considered contextually relevant and innovative (Barsturkment, 2006; Huckle, 2021; El Haq & Sabariyanto, 2025 ). However, the main challenge in the rural school context lies not only in curriculum design, but also in how teachers can actually implement it, within the constraints of resources, competencies, and existing learning culture (Uyun, 2024, 2025). A conceptually sound curriculum does not always work effectively when faced with classroom realities.

The author's previous research resulted in an English curriculum design based on an adaptation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) adapted to the rural school context. However, a curriculum is not only measured by its completeness but also by how it works when implemented in a real classroom (Uyun, 2023). Therefore, this follow-up study was conducted to test the implementation of the developed curriculum and examine how it affects students' English learning and achievement.

Previous research demonstrated that the implementation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum in rural schools in Indonesia could serve as a framework for a globally oriented English language education curriculum (Uyun, 2025).

The IB curriculum emphasizes the value of multiculturalism and communication skills, which rely heavily on the use of English as the language of instruction (International

Baccalaureate Organization [IBO], 2011). This aligns with the Indonesian national curriculum, which prioritizes the development of communicative competence as the primary goal of English language learning (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). The combination of these two approaches creates a learning environment where English is not only studied as a subject but also used functionally in interactions and academic activities (El Haq & Sabariyanto, 2025).

Furthermore, the IB curriculum's focus on multicultural education is relevant to the growing need for students in rural areas to engage in global communication (Ballantyne & Rivera, 2014). According to Huckle (2021), a multicultural approach can enrich students' language repertoire and cognitive flexibility, enabling them to develop literacy and mastery of content through global languages, particularly English. When implemented in rural contexts, this approach not only improves students' English skills but also strengthens their confidence and identity as global learners. Exposure to authentic English use—through English-based administration, assessment, and international collaboration—provides opportunities for students to use the language meaningfully, moving beyond textbook-based learning to practical communication and critical engagement (Duncan & Paran, 2017).

Overall, the adaptation and integration of the IB curriculum into Indonesia's national education system offers a comprehensive model for improving English proficiency in rural schools. This integration bridges global and local educational interests by aligning the communicative goals of the national curriculum with the multicultural approach of the IB program. Therefore, understanding how the IB curriculum is adapted and implemented in rural contexts is crucial for designing effective and sustainable English language education programs in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the curriculum is implemented collaboratively. Further research findings will be discussed in more detail in the discussion section.

Extensive research has been conducted on the implementation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum in English language learning, particularly in the context of international schools that have received official IB licenses and are supported by adequate resources. Numerous studies have shown that the IB approach, particularly inquiry-based learning, content and language integration, and authentic assessment, positively contributes to improving students' language competencies and the overall quality of learning. For example, a 2014 report by Central Applied Linguistics on Happy Achievement International School in China showed that the integration of language and content within the IB framework significantly impacted students' language development. Similar findings were also reported by Purnomo (2016), who confirmed that IB-based curriculum management positively impacted language learning outcomes. Other studies by Mutammimah, Rochsantiningih, and Asib (2019) and

Devtiana, Purnawarman, and Sukyadi (2021) emphasize the effectiveness of the implementation and assessment system of English within the IB curriculum.

However, most previous research focuses on schools that have fully and formally implemented the IB curriculum, with relatively ideal institutional characteristics, both in terms of teacher preparedness, managerial support, and learning facilities. Furthermore, existing studies generally focus on teacher perceptions or curriculum management, while empirical evidence regarding the process and dynamics of implementing the IB approach in non-IB school contexts, particularly rural schools that use the national curriculum, remains very limited.

The novelty of this research lies in the empirical testing of an English language learning curriculum developed by adapting International Baccalaureate principles in a rural school context. This research goes beyond the curriculum design stage and goes further by implementing and testing the curriculum in real-life learning practices. Thus, this research contributes to a new understanding of the extent to which the IB approach can be adapted contextually, effectively, and realistically in schools with limited resources while still within the national curriculum framework.

Furthermore, this research offers novelties in the implementation process, examining challenges, adaptation strategies, and teacher and student responses during the implementation of the developed curriculum. Through this approach, the research is expected to produce an IB-based English curriculum implementation model that is contextual, applicable, and has the potential to be replicated in other rural schools as an alternative way to strengthen English language learning outcomes.

## **2. METHODH**

This research is a continuation of the previous research and development (R&D) conducted by the researcher. In the initial phase, the research included a needs analysis and the development of an English language learning curriculum design based on an adaptation of the International Baccalaureate. Therefore, this research no longer focuses on the product development stage, but rather on the implementation and trial phase of the curriculum in a real-life learning context to assess its feasibility and effectiveness.

The subjects in this study included expert subjects and trial subjects. The expert subjects consisted of curriculum experts and English subject matter experts. The trial subjects included students at a partner school (Binar Ilmu). The data sources obtained in this study came from the needs analysis, expert evaluation results in the form of suggestions for the developed product, and the results of the trial group with students.

The data collection instruments in this study consisted of: (1) observation, questionnaires, and interviews. These instruments were used to analyze teaching material needs; (2) obtain data from the trial group and obtain information regarding the English language learning curriculum.

The data analysis techniques used in this study were quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques, consisting of descriptive percentages. Quantitative analysis techniques use descriptive statistics, allowing researchers to draw conclusions from data collected through samples. Qualitative analysis techniques, on the other hand, draw conclusions from expert assessments based on collected suggestions and trial results.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research conducted, questionnaire data shows that the developed English curriculum shows a very positive trend in all measured aspects. In general, the average percentage value of each indicator is in the range of 78% - 88%. This data also shows that the developed curriculum has been effectively implemented in English learning practices. The discussion is structured based on four main indicators: understanding, engagement, skill improvement, and contextual relevance. These indicators are a synthesis of various learning theories, such as Benjamin Bloom's cognitive taxonomy, Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, and the contextual learning approach influenced by John Dewey's thinking.

#### **A. Understanding**

Research has shown that the majority of students like the curriculum design used. 85% of students stated that the material taught was easy to understand and systematically structured. This indicates that this category is in a very good position, based on the data presented. This also indicates that the material delivery process was effective and aligned with students' ability levels, thus improving learning outcomes

The research also revealed that the high level of student understanding of learning outcomes is inseparable from the organization of the material presented. The majority of students (82%) responded that the English material was structured systematically and gradually, moving from simple to complex. Furthermore, the material presented was highly contextualized to students' lives, helping to strengthen their understanding of the material being taught.

The above data is also supported by data obtained from interviews. Interview data indicate that students feel more understanding when the learning process is implemented in a structured and sequential manner, proceeding from simple to complex, much like scaffolding, one of the learning approaches in the IB curriculum. Furthermore, direct observations also show that student understanding of the material is determined, in part, by its systematic and well-organized organization.

This finding aligns with the approach used by the IB Curriculum in English language learning: CLIL, or content-integrated learning, allows teachers to create materials systematically and with content that is pre-adapted to students' needs (Coyle, 2010, 2018). Contextually structured materials will help make the learning experience more meaningful, enabling students to achieve the desired learning objectives (Syaepul Uyun, 2018, 2003, 2024, 2025). Similarly, Hutchinton and Waters' (1987) theory suggests that the appropriateness of the material to students' needs is fundamental.

In terms of cognitive development, this finding also aligns with Benjamin Bloom and Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which argues that learning can be optimal when considering time and sequence (Syaepul Uyun, 2023). The sequence developed is based on how the learning materials are organized. In English learning, several materials have prerequisites, which is why the materials need to be structured like a scaffold, from the simplest to the most complex. Research findings indicate that the material organization in this curriculum is sound. (Richard, 2008)

Thus, it can be concluded that the implemented curriculum has successfully created learning conditions that support optimal student understanding. This provides an important foundation for further language skill development.

## B. Students Engagement

Student engagement in learning is also considered high, or even very high. As many as 88% of students demonstrated a moderately active participation in the learning process. Students felt that their understanding of the learning encouraged them to participate more actively in class, whether through discussions, speaking practice, or other activities involving direct interaction.

Student engagement in class provides opportunities for student development. Teachers act not only as providers of material, but more as facilitators, encouraging students to be more actively involved in class (Trowler, V, 2010). This finding aligns with one of the pedagogical approaches adopted by the IB curriculum, namely student-centeredness, where students are encouraged to play a more vital role in the learning process. Griffiths (2004) stated in his research that the student-centered strategy has

the potential to encourage students to be directly involved in the learning process. This ecosystem of direct involvement enables all members of the class to be stimulated to participate. It's true that initially, only one or two students were prominently involved, but with strong encouragement from the teacher and a constructive learning environment, the majority of students in the class became directly involved.

Furthermore, this finding aligns with Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and active student involvement (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). In this context, students learn not only from the teacher but also from their peers through various collaborative activities (Aini, R Sakina, 2020). In conjunction with research findings on understanding indicators, high student engagement, also driven by students' achievement of understanding of the material, motivates students to be more proactive in all classroom activities (Fredrick, 2004). This internal drive, reinforced by a productive external environment, creates a positive combination. The learning environment is highly motivating and welcoming (Syaepul Uyun, 2023). This allows students to actively participate, ultimately leading to an inquiry-based learning process, where students gain understanding of a concept through direct, individual experiences.

This situation is reflected in daily learning. Interviews and observations reveal that classes are consistently dominated by interactive activities involving all elements, especially students. Strong classroom management skills are crucial to the learning process. Observations reveal that teachers possess strong classroom management skills. They effectively implement student-centered instruction, provide clear directions, a consistent learning flow, and a strong voice, effectively navigating the learning process. As a result, students understand the rhythm of the class and engage effectively in each learning activity.

Data collected indicates that although active participation in this curriculum is high, a small number of students are still unable to participate effectively. Interview and observation data also revealed that factors contributing to the lack of participation among some students include self-confidence, ability, and prior learning habits. Therefore, continued encouragement is needed to increase student participation.

### C. Skill Development)

The next indicator analyzed was the skill improvement indicator. The research found that 82% of students reported that they felt their English language skills had improved. The majority of students reported that, although not yet optimal, they had improved their speaking, writing, vocabulary, and listening skills. This data was further supported by interviews and observations. English teachers reported that students' average

English grades had increased in the current semester compared to the previous semester. Furthermore, active participation in the weekly English program, which focuses on speaking and writing skills, also increased significantly. This also serves as an indicator of students' achievement in improving their language skills.

From the researchers' perspective, this improvement is possible, in part, due to the CLIL (content language integrated learning) approach adopted by the IB curriculum. Coyle (2018) stated that this approach can make the learning process more contextual and practical. The implemented curriculum focuses not only on theoretical aspects but also provides opportunities for students to practice the language directly (Syauqiah, 2025). This is crucial in language learning, where skills cannot develop without consistent practice (Krasen, 2007). In second language learning theory, comprehensible input, or external input, serves as a robust support system. The CLIL approach has this advantage; it ensures that all instructional languages in the classroom, as well as outside the classroom, use English as their everyday language (Susmiati, 2025). This ensures students' active involvement in English language practice is more evident. This consistent practice leads to increased skill development (Putra et al., 2021).

However, compared to other indicators, the percentage for this aspect is relatively low. This indicates that language skill development, particularly productive skills like speaking and writing, still requires more attention. Additional strategies, such as increasing the frequency of practice and using more communicative methods, are needed to optimally develop students' skills.

#### D. Contextual Relevance

Referring to Hutchington and Waters' theory of curriculum development, linking learning materials to students' life contexts is crucial. Contextualized materials are argued to help students grasp learning more quickly. In this study, the contextual relevance indicator achieved the highest average percentage, at 88%. This indicates that the learning materials are highly relevant to students' lives. Most students felt that the material taught was directly related to their daily activities.

Interviews with teachers also yielded similar data; all teachers stated that contextualized materials in the designed curriculum provided greater benefits in enhancing student understanding. Observations also demonstrated that the learning process was effective and enjoyable, especially when discussing topics within the curriculum design.

Furthermore, these findings align with John Dewey's thinking, which emphasized that learning is more meaningful when linked to students' real-life experiences. Richards (2001) similarly stated that contextualized learning provides more meaningful experiences in the learning process (Angraeni, 2022). Within the framework of language learning, contextual relevance also contributes to increased student motivation and engagement. When students perceive that the material being studied has direct benefits in their lives, their tendency to actively participate in learning increases (Syaepul Uyun, 2024). This is a crucial factor in English language learning, which demands real-life language practice, not just theoretical understanding.

Thus, it can be concluded that high contextual relevance in the implemented curriculum is a key factor supporting effective learning. These findings confirm that contextual material design not only enhances student understanding but also strengthens engagement and the overall quality of the learning experience.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This research shows that the implementation of an English curriculum based on an adaptation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) in a rural school context in Indonesia has a positive impact on the learning process and student learning outcomes. Overall, the results indicate that the developed curriculum can be implemented effectively, with high levels of student acceptance and response across all measured indicators.

Four aspects were used as measurement indicators: student understanding, student engagement, skill development, and content appropriateness. In terms of understanding, the majority of students demonstrated a good level of comprehension of the learning material. This was influenced by the systematic, gradual, and contextual organization of the material, tailored to students' abilities and needs. In terms of engagement, student-centered learning encouraged active student participation in various interactive activities, although a small number of students still required further support, particularly in terms of self-confidence and study habits. Furthermore, in terms of skill development, most students reported progress in their English language abilities, particularly in basic skills such as vocabulary comprehension and simple communication. However, the development of productive skills such as speaking and writing still requires reinforcement through more intensive and communicative learning strategies. Meanwhile, in terms of contextual relevance, the learning materials were deemed highly relevant to students' daily lives, significantly contributing to increased motivation and ease of understanding.

Overall, this research provides an important contribution in the form of an IB-adapted English curriculum implementation model that is contextual, applicable, and has the potential to be replicated in other rural schools in Indonesia as a solution to improve English learning outcomes more equitably.

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