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Characteristics And Implementation Of Qualitative Research Methods In Indonesian Language Education Research

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the characteristics and implementation of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research through literature studies on scientific articles published in national journals. This research is motivated by the increasing use of qualitative research methods in the field of Indonesian Language Education, but there have not been many studies that comprehensively synthesize the methodological characteristics, implementation trends, and their contribution to the development of research in this field. The research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method on 14 scientific articles that were purposively selected based on the relevance of the topic, year of publication, and completeness of methodological information. Data was collected through documentation studies and analyzed using content analysis techniques combined with thematic analysis. The results of

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the study show that qualitative descriptive research is the most dominant approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation as well as data analysis dominated by the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana models. The research focus includes the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, learning models, character education, learning evaluation, digitization of learning, and analysis of teaching materials. The novelty of this research lies in the presentation of a comprehensive synthesis of the characteristics and implementation of qualitative research methods that can be a methodological reference for researchers in designing Indonesian Language Education research in a more systematic, contextual, and quality manner.

Keywords: Qualitative Research; Indonesian Language Education; Research Methods; Implementation; Literature Studies.

INTRODUCTION

The development of research in the field of education in recent years shows the increasing use of qualitative approaches as a method to understand various learning phenomena in depth. This approach was chosen because it is able to explain the meanings, experiences, behaviors, and interactions that occur in the context of education naturally so as to provide a more comprehensive understanding than just quantitative measurements. In the field of Indonesian Language Education, qualitative research is widely used to examine curriculum implementation, learning strategies, literacy development, character education, learning evaluation, and analysis of teaching materials. This condition shows that qualitative research has a strategic position in producing contextual recommendations for the development of Indonesian language learning (Muhtadi & Dewi, 2025).

In line with these developments, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has encouraged the birth of various studies that explore the practice of learning Indonesian from various perspectives. The research is no longer only oriented to learning outcomes, but also examines the learning process, teacher readiness, learning differentiation, the use of digital media, and strengthening students' literacy competencies. Various studies show that the qualitative approach can explain the dynamics of education policy implementation more fully because it provides space for researchers to understand the experiences of teachers and students in the context of real learning (Judijanto et al., 2024).

Studies on qualitative research methods are also constantly developing. Various studies explain that qualitative research has characteristics in the form of data collection in natural

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conditions, researchers as the main instrument, the use of various data collection techniques, and analysis that is inductive and interpretive. In addition, qualitative research provides researchers with the flexibility to understand educational phenomena holistically through observation, interviews, documentation, and document analysis (Amirrachman, 2006; Muhtadi & Dewi, 2025). These characteristics make qualitative approaches relevant to be used in language research because linguistic phenomena and language learning are basically contextual, dynamic, and influenced by various social and cultural factors.

Although qualitative research has been widely used in Indonesian Language Education, most research still focuses on the implementation of a particular learning model, curriculum policy, or learning strategy. Previous research generally describes the results of research based on their respective contexts without synthesizing the methodological characteristics used (Syauqi et al., 2025). As a result, there is no comprehensive picture available of the trend of the implementation of qualitative research methods, their similarities and differences, and their contribution to the development of Indonesian Language Education research. In fact, the synthesis of various studies is very important to map the development of research methodologies as well as provide direction for future research.

Some synthesis-based research has indeed been conducted, for example through *meta-synthesis* and *systematic literature review*. However, the study mostly discusses the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in language education or research data analysis techniques in general. No studies have been found that specifically identify the characteristics, implementation, methodological tendencies, and patterns of use of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research based on the synthesis of various scientific articles. Thus, there are still research *gaps* that need to be filled through studies that are more focused on the methodological aspects of qualitative research.

Based on these conditions, this study seeks to present a synthesis of fourteen scientific articles that discuss Indonesian Language Education research with a qualitative approach. The analysis was carried out to identify the characteristics of the research, the implementation of qualitative research methods, the tendency of the research focus, and the methodological patterns that develop in the research of Indonesian Language Education. The results of the synthesis are expected to provide a more complete picture of the development of qualitative research as well as become a methodological reference for researchers, academics, and education practitioners in designing more systematic, credible, and contextual research.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics and implementation of

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qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research through a literature study of 14 scientific articles. The novelty of the research lies in the preparation of a methodological synthesis that not only maps the research theme, but also identifies the trends of research design, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, and the contribution of qualitative research to the development of Indonesian Language Education. The results of this research are expected to enrich the study of educational research methodology and become a reference for the development of qualitative research in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Qualitative Research in Education

Qualitative research is growing rapidly in the field of education because of its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of learning phenomena through meaning and social interaction (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach allows researchers to obtain contextually rich data in the natural environment based on the perspective of participants through direct interaction (Muhtadi & Dewi, 2025). Especially after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, this method is increasingly needed to understand the dynamics of changes in learning practices that take place dynamically in schools (Judijanto et al., 2024).

It can be concluded that qualitative research has an important contribution in producing recommendations that are in accordance with the needs of contemporary education because of its holistic nature (Muhtadi & Dewi, 2025). However, its quality still faces challenges related to the transparency of the data analysis process and procedures for maintaining credibility that are often not explained in detail (Syauqi et al., 2025). Therefore, strengthening the quality of methodology remains a crucial issue so that qualitative research can function as a means of building a strong conceptual understanding of learning practices.

Implementation of Qualitative Research Methods in Indonesian Language Education Research

Qualitative methods dominate Indonesian Language Education research because they are in harmony with the characteristics of language learning that involve the construction of meaning and social interaction (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach is widely used to explore learning strategies to digitalization, with qualitative descriptive design and content analysis as the main options for describing phenomena systematically (Judijanto et al., 2024; Amirrachman, 2006). Researchers generally apply the principle of triangulation through observation, interviews, and documentation to ensure the credibility of their findings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). In

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conclusion, the implementation of qualitative methods in language education not only serves to describe phenomena but has become an important instrument in uncovering the determinants of learning success (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, methodological challenges are still found, especially regarding the lack of details on the data coding process and the findings validation techniques (Syauqi et al., 2025). The use of interactive analysis models and *content analysis* techniques remains the most widely relied upon procedures to produce systematic and comprehensive information (Miles et al., 2020).

Issues, Developments, and Debates of Qualitative Research

The increased use of qualitative methods is driven by the transformation of education policies that place context as an integral part of the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This is characterized by a variety of research themes such as strengthening literacy and assessment which are the basis for evaluating education policies (Judijanto et al., 2024). On the other hand, innovations are beginning to emerge through the use of qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo or ATLAS.ti to improve the accuracy of the coding process and interpretation of complex data (Paulus & Lester, 2022).

Broadly speaking, this development has given rise to debates about the transparency of the design and data validation processes that differ in each study (Miles et al., 2020; Syauqi et al., 2025). The tendency of research that is only descriptive without methodological synthesis is also seen as producing partial findings and does not provide a comprehensive picture (Snyder, 2019). Therefore, a synthesis study is needed that is able to map research patterns collectively to strengthen the methodological foundation in the field of language education.

Research Position and Conceptual Framework

Previous research has contributed greatly to explaining the phenomenon of learning Indonesian language in depth through a qualitative approach (Judijanto et al., 2024; Muhtadi & Dewi, 2025). Unfortunately, the majority of research is still oriented towards solving local contextual problems without synthesizing the characteristics of the methodology used (Syauqi et al., 2025). The dominance of substantive results over methodological aspects leads to a lack of an integrated reference for the design of quality research in the future (Miles et al., 2020). In conclusion, this study takes a different position by focusing on the methodological aspect through the synthesis of fourteen scientific articles. Unlike previous studies that examined the implementation of learning specifically, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of

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the design patterns and analysis of qualitative research (Miles et al., 2020). This effort aims to make a significant contribution to strengthening the study of Indonesian Language Education methodology so that it is more systematic, transparent, and has high scientific credibility.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method to understand in depth the characteristics and implementation of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research through the interpretation of various relevant scientific articles. In contrast to field research that obtains data directly from participants, this study utilizes scientific documents as the main source to produce conceptual synthesis regarding the development of qualitative research methodologies. This approach allows researchers to identify patterns, characteristics, similarities, and differences in the implementation of qualitative research methods in various research contexts of Indonesian Language Education (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Snyder, 2019). The research data is in the form of descriptive information sourced from 14 scientific articles published in accredited national journals and relevant scientific journals. The selection of articles was carried out using *purposive sampling* techniques with criteria including: (1) published in the period 2021–2026; (2) discussing Indonesian Language Education research; (3) using a qualitative research approach; (4) adequately explain the components of the methodology; and (5) available in *full text*. Articles that do not meet these criteria are not included in the analysis process.

The main research instrument is the researcher who plays a role in determining data sources, selecting articles, conducting critical reading, identifying methodological characteristics, classifying data, and compiling a synthesis of research results. To maintain the consistency of the analysis process, documentation sheets and literature review matrix are used that contain the identity of the article, research objectives, research design, data sources, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, data validity, research results, and the contribution of each article to the development of Indonesian Language Education research (Nugrahani, 2014). Data collection was carried out through documentation studies by searching, reading, recording, grouping, and studying in depth the fourteen articles that were the object of the study. This study uses a synthesis framework that integrates the concepts *of literature review* (Snyder, 2019), *content analysis* (Krippendorff, 2018), and qualitative data analysis according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020) to identify methodological characteristics, find implementation patterns, compare similarities and differences between articles, and compile conceptual synthesis.Data

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analysis is carried out interactively through the stages of data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification as stated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020). All articles are first read thoroughly, then a coding process is carried out on the methodology components which include research design, data sources, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, data validity, and research focus. The results of the coding are then grouped into themes that have similar characteristics to produce a comprehensive synthesis of the implementation of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research. The credibility of the research is maintained through observation diligence, consistency of the coding process, triangulation of literature sources, and *audit trails*, as well as comparing the results of the synthesis with the theory of qualitative research methodology and the findings of previous research so that the resulting interpretation has a strong level of *trustworthiness* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

RESULT

Characteristics of Analyzed Articles

This study analyzes 14 scientific articles that discuss the implementation of qualitative research methods in the field of Indonesian Language Education. The articles were published in the range of 2021–2026 and came from various national scientific journals relevant to the research focus. All articles were selected based on the inclusion criteria that have been set, namely discussing Indonesian language learning, using a qualitative approach, and adequately explaining the research methodology procedures.

Table 1. Characteristics of Analyzed Articles

No	Author (Year)	Article Title	Fokus Penelitian	Desain Penelitian	Teknik Pengumpulan Data	Teknik Analisis Data
1	Nur Rezki, Salam, & Muhammad Saleh (2021)	*Integrasi Pendidikan Karakter pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia*	Implementation of character education in Indonesian language learning	Qualitative descriptive	Documentation, observations, interviews	Qualitative descriptive analysis

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2	Hana Nathasia & Machrus Abadi (2022)	*Analisis Strategi Guru Bahasa Indonesia dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di SMKN 11 Malang*	Teachers' strategies in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum	Quakitative	Interviews, observations, questionnaires	Qualitative descriptive analysis
3	Nadia Alifulia & Triwati Rahayu (2022)	*Implementasi Pembelajaran Daring Bahasa Indonesia di SMP Negeri 1 Jebus Bangka Barat*	Implementation of online learning in Indonesian	Qualitative descriptive	Observations, interviews, quesioner, documentation	Qualitative descriptive analysis
4	Indra Rasyid Julianto (2022)	*Integrasi Pendidikan Karakter pada Digitalisasi Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia*	Integration of character education through digitization of learning	Qualitative descriptive (literature study)	Documentation/literature studies	*Content analysis*
5	Juwanda, Wagiran,	*Implementasi Model*	Implementation of	Qualitative	Interview	Qualitative

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	& Subyantoro (2023)	*Evaluasi Formatif dan Sumatif dalam Pembelajaran Morfologi Bahasa Indonesia*	formative and summative evaluation			descriptive analysis
6	Eni Umiyati, Ruslan, & Ade S. Anhar (2024)	*Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia*	Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesian Language Learning	Qualitative descriptive	Observations, interviews, documentation	Analisis deskriptif kualitatif
7	Sri Handayani, Farida Nugrahani, & Suwarto Suwarto (2024)	*Implementasi Model Pembelajaran DRTA (Directed Reading-Thinking Activity) sebagai Inovasi Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*	Implementation of the DRTA learning model	Qualitative descriptive (case study)	Observations, interviews, documentation	Interactive analysis of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña

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		di Sekolah Dasar				
8	Fransiska Wiratikusuma (2024)	*Content Analysis of Bahasa Indonesia Textbook for Indonesian Language*	Content analysis of Indonesian language textbooks	Content analysis	Interview documentation	*Content analysis*
9	Ardi Pranata, Yundi Fitrah, & Andiopenta Purba (2024)	*Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Kelas X SMKN 1 Kota Jambi*	Implementation of the Independent Curriculum	Qualitative descriptive	Observation, interviews, documentation	Qualitative descriptive analysis
10	Sepdian Retnosari, Arif Adiwibowo, Wawan Shokib Rodli, & Mohammad Kanzunnuddin (2024)	*Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Satuan Pendidikan Dasar*	Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools	Qualitative	Studi dokumentasi	*Content analysis*

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		Kecamatan Wirosari				
11	Tri Indah Prasasti, dkk. (2024)	*Telaah Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar pada Buku Teks Bahasa Indonesia Sekolah Menengah Atas*	Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesian Language Textbooks	Literature study (qualitative)	Documentation study	*Content analysis*
12	Pili Angga Putra, Man Hakim, Yanti Paulina, & Elyusra (2025)	*Implementasi Nilai Pendidikan Karakter dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di SMP Negeri 7 Bengkulu Selatan*	Implementation of character education values	Qualitative descriptive (case study)	Observation, interviews, documentation	Qualitative descriptive analysis
13	Emawati & Arinda Dwi Sandi (2025)	*Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar pada*	Implementation of the Independent Curriculum	Qualitative descriptive	Interviews, observations, documentation	Qualitative descriptive analysis

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		Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di SMA Negeri 11 Palembang				
14	Rinja Efendi, dkk. (2026)	*Prinsip dan Pendekatan Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Sekolah Dasar*	Principles and approaches to learning Indonesian	Qualitative descriptive (case study)	Qualitative descriptive (case study)	Qualitative descriptive analysis

Based on Table 1, the articles analyzed show a diversity of research focuses, ranging from the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, learning models, character education, learning evaluation, online learning, textbook analysis, to principles and approaches to learning Indonesian. Although they have different study focuses, all studies utilize a qualitative approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of learning Indonesian at various levels of education.

Judging from the year of publication, research on the implementation of qualitative research methods has increased in recent years. Articles published in 2024 dominated the study with six articles, while the other articles were spread across 2021, 2022, 2023, 2025, and 2026. This condition shows that Indonesian Language Education research continues to develop in line with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, digital transformation, and increasing attention to strengthening literacy and character education.

Characteristics of the Implementation of Qualitative Research Methods

Analysis of the fourteen articles shows that qualitative descriptive research design is the most widely used approach. A total of nine articles used qualitative descriptive design, two articles applied case studies, two articles used literature studies or content *analysis*, while one article used a qualitative approach with a focus on learning evaluation. These findings show that qualitative

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descriptive research is still the main choice because it can describe learning phenomena contextually according to real conditions in the field.

In terms of data collection, most studies use a combination of observation, interviews, and documentation as the main techniques. The combination of these three techniques is used to obtain more comprehensive data while increasing the validity of the findings through triangulation. Some studies in the form of literature studies utilize documentation as the main data source, while studies that examine learning implementation also add questionnaires or questionnaires as supporting data.

The data analysis techniques used showed a relatively uniform tendency. The majority of the research applied qualitative descriptive analysis and interactive analysis models which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. On the other hand, research that is oriented towards document studies uses *content analysis* to identify the themes, concepts, and tendencies of the content of the document being analyzed. The variety of analysis techniques shows that the choice of analysis method is greatly influenced by the characteristics of the data and the research objectives.

Implementation of Qualitative Research Methods in Indonesian Language Education Research

The results of the synthesis show that the implementation of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research can be grouped into six main themes. The first theme is the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which is the dominant focus in several articles. The research on this theme examines teacher readiness, the preparation of teaching modules, the use of the Independent Teaching Platform, differentiated learning, and various challenges faced by schools in implementing the new curriculum. The findings show that teachers in general have a positive perception of the Independent Curriculum, but its implementation still faces obstacles in the form of limited facilities, training, and literacy skills of students.

The second theme is related to the implementation of learning models. Research on *the Directed Reading Thinking Activity* (DRTA) model shows that the model is able to improve reading skills through predicting, testing predictions, and reflecting on reading content. In addition, *Problem Based Learning* (PBL) and *Project Based Learning* (PjBL) based learning strategies are also widely applied to encourage student-centered learning and develop critical thinking skills.

The third theme is character education. The results of the study show that character values have been integrated into learning tools, both through syllabus, teaching modules, and learning activities in the classroom. The implementation of character education is carried out

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systematically through the planning, implementation, and assessment stages. However, several studies have identified obstacles in the form of low learning motivation, differences in student characteristics, and the influence of the use of digital technology that has not fully supported character formation.

The next theme discusses learning evaluation, online learning, and analysis of teaching materials. Research on learning evaluation shows that formative and summative assessments have been applied continuously to monitor the development of student learning outcomes. Meanwhile, research on online learning illustrates the adaptation of learning strategies through the use of various digital platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and Google Meeting. On the other hand, research on Indonesian textbooks shows that the material has been arranged according to the demands of the curriculum, although there is still an imbalance between linguistic and literary materials.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Tabel 2. Research Findings Based on Fourteen Articles

Aspek Synthesis	Key Findings
Research approach	All articles use a qualitative approach.
Research design	Qualitative descriptive is the most dominant design, followed by case studies, literature studies, and *content analysis*.
Sumber data	Teachers, students, principals, learning documents, textbooks, and scientific articles.
Data collection techniques	Observation, interviews, and documentation are the most commonly used techniques. Some studies add questionnaires or documentation studies.
Data analysis techniques	Qualitative descriptive analysis, interactive analysis of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, and *content analysis*.
Research focus	The implementation of the Independent Curriculum dominates, followed by character education, learning models, learning evaluation, online learning, textbook analysis, and learning approaches.
Research outputs	All research produces recommendations to improve the quality of Indonesian language learning through learning innovation, strengthening literacy, character education, and optimizing the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

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Based on the results of the synthesis of 14 articles, the qualitative research approach is still the main choice in Indonesian Language Education research. All articles use this approach because they can provide a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon of learning that takes place in a real context. The qualitative approach allows researchers to understand the learning implementation process, the experiences of teachers and students, as well as various factors that affect the success and obstacles in the implementation of Indonesian language learning.

From the methodological aspect, qualitative descriptive research is the most dominant design used. This dominance shows that most researchers place more emphasis on describing learning phenomena in depth rather than testing relationships between variables. In addition to descriptive research, some articles use case study designs to gain a more specific understanding of a particular school or program. Research based on literature studies and *content analysis* has also begun to develop, especially review textbooks, education policies, and the implementation of the Independent Curriculum through document analysis.

The results of the synthesis also showed similarities in the use of data collection techniques. Almost all studies use a combination of observation, interviews, and documentation as the main source in obtaining research data. The combination of these three techniques allows researchers to obtain more comprehensive information because the data from observations can be confirmed through interviews and supporting documents. In some studies, the use of questionnaires served as complementary data to strengthen the results of interviews and observations.

In terms of data analysis, most of the articles use qualitative descriptive analysis and the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing are the most widely applied procedures in analyzing research data. Meanwhile, articles that focus on document studies use *content analysis* to identify themes, concepts, and tendencies in document content. This shows that the selection of analysis techniques is adjusted to the characteristics of the data and the objectives of each study.

When reviewed based on the focus of the study, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is the most discussed theme in the fourteen articles analyzed. The research on this theme examines various aspects, such as the preparation of teaching modules, teacher readiness, the use of the Independent Teaching Platform, the implementation of differentiated learning, and the obstacles faced by schools in implementing the curriculum. In addition to the Independent Curriculum, the research also raises a lot of questions about the implementation of character education through learning Indonesian, the application of innovative learning models, learning

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evaluation, online learning, and textbook analysis as learning resources.

Overall, the results of the synthesis show that the implementation of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research has undergone significant developments during the 2021–2026 period. These developments are marked by the increasing variety of research themes, the increasing use of digital technology in the learning process, and the increasing breadth of study objects that not only focus on the learning process in the classroom, but also include curriculum development, character education, learning evaluation, and analysis of teaching materials. These findings provide an idea that qualitative research has a very important role in producing a deep understanding of the various dynamics of Indonesian language learning and becomes a foundation for the development of further research.

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Qualitative Research Articles in Indonesian Language Education

The results of the synthesis of fourteen articles show that the qualitative research approach is still the most dominant approach in Indonesian Language Education research. These findings indicate that researchers prefer to understand the phenomenon of learning in depth rather than measuring the relationships between variables through a quantitative approach. The dominance of this approach is in line with the view of Creswell and Poth (2018) who stated that qualitative research aims to explore the meaning of a phenomenon based on participants' experiences in natural contexts. The findings of this study also have similarities with the research of Nur Rezki, Salam, and Muhammad Saleh (2021), Hana Nathasia and Machrus Abadi (2022), Eni Umiyati, Ruslan, and Ade S. Anhar (2024), and Emawati and Arinda Dwi Sandi (2025) who both use qualitative descriptive designs to describe the implementation of Indonesian language learning in schools. The four studies placed teachers as the main informants and used observation, interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques, thus showing that Indonesian Language Education research is still oriented towards a deep understanding of learning practices in the field.

On the other hand, the results of the synthesis also show a variation in the characteristics of the study. The research of Sri Handayani, Farida Nugrahani, and Suwarto Suwarto (2024) used a case study design to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of the *Directed Reading-Thinking Activity* (DRTA) model, while Fransiska Wiratikusuma (2024) applied a *content analysis* approach in analyzing Indonesian textbooks. These differences show that the choice of research design is greatly influenced by the characteristics of the object being studied. According

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to Krippendorff (2018), the research design must be adjusted to the type of data to be able to produce a valid and comprehensive interpretation. In addition, compared to previous studies that focused more on the implementation of learning in general, the results of this synthesis show the development of research themes towards the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, digitization of learning, character education, learning evaluation, and textbook analysis. These developments show that Indonesian Language Education research is starting to respond to changes in national education policies and the development of learning technology.

These findings also strengthen the results of Snyder's (2019) research which explains that the synthesis of various studies is able to show the direction of development of a scientific field through the identification of research patterns and tendencies. Based on the results of the synthesis, it can be understood that the characteristics of qualitative research in Indonesian Language Education are not only shown by the similarity of the use of research approaches, but also by the development of variations in themes, objects, and research contexts. This condition is an important contribution to the research because it has succeeded in mapping the methodological trends of Indonesian Language Education research based on fourteen scientific articles published in the 2021–2026 period. The mapping is expected to be a reference for future researchers in determining research designs that are in accordance with the characteristics of the problem and the needs of Indonesian Language Education research development.

Characteristics of the Implementation of Qualitative Research Methods

The results showed that the implementation of qualitative research methods in fourteen articles had relatively consistent characteristics, especially in the use of observation, interviews, and documentation as the main data collection techniques. The combination of these three techniques shows the researcher's efforts to obtain comprehensive data through various sources so that it is able to describe the learning phenomenon in its entirety. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the use of various data collection techniques is a key characteristic of qualitative research because it allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the research context. These findings have similarities with the research of Nur Rezki et al. (2021), Eni Umiyati et al. (2024), Sri Handayani et al. (2024), and Pili Angga Putra et al. (2025) which both combine observation, interviews, and documentation as the main data collection techniques. The use of these three techniques allows researchers to apply triangulation so as to increase the credibility of the data, as stated by Lincoln and Guba (1985), that the credibility of qualitative research can be strengthened through source triangulation, triangulation techniques, and perseverance of

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observation.

Although there are similarities in data collection techniques, the synthesis results also show variations in data analysis techniques. Most articles use the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), while some studies apply *content analysis* because the object of study is in the form of documents, textbooks, or literature study results. The research of Fransiska Wiratikusuma (2024), for example, uses *content analysis* to identify the suitability of the content of Indonesian textbooks with the principles *of Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL), while Tri Indah Prasasti et al. (2024) uses a literature study to analyze the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesian textbooks. These differences show that the selection of data analysis techniques is adjusted to the characteristics of the data source and the purpose of the research. These findings are in line with Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020) who explain that the process of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing is a systematic analytical framework in qualitative research. In addition, the results of this study also strengthen the study of Snyder (2019) who stated that the consistency of the use of analytical procedures is one of the indicators of increasing the quality of research methodology.

On the other hand, the results of the synthesis show that most of the articles are still dominated by qualitative descriptive designs, while phenomenology, ethnography, narrative research, and *grounded theory approaches* have not been widely used in Indonesian Language Education research. This condition shows that the implementation of qualitative research methods has developed well, but the diversity of research designs still needs to be improved in order to be able to produce a broader perspective in examining the phenomenon of learning Bahasa Indonesia, especially in the era of digital transformation and the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Based on the results of the discussion, it can be understood that the implementation of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research has shown the application of systematic research procedures and in accordance with the rules of scientific methodology. However, methodological innovations, especially in the selection of research design and data analysis techniques, are still needed so that research in the field of Indonesian Language Education can produce more comprehensive findings and make a greater contribution to the development of educational science.

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Implementation of Qualitative Research Methods in Indonesian Language Education Research

The results of the synthesis show that the implementation of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research has experienced significant developments during the period 2021–2026. This development is reflected in the increasingly diverse research focus that is no longer limited to the learning process in the classroom, but also includes the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, character education, digitization of learning, learning evaluation, textbook analysis, and the development of innovative learning models. This condition shows that qualitative research is able to adapt to changes in national education policies and the demands of 21st century learning. This is in line with the opinion of Creswell and Poth (2018) who stated that qualitative research has high flexibility in exploring various educational phenomena in accordance with the evolving context. Based on the results of the study, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is the most dominant theme. Research by Nathasia and Abadi (2022), Umiyati et al. (2024), Pranata et al. (2024), Retnosari et al. (2024), Prasasti et al. (2024), and Emawati and Sandi (2025) shows that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum encourages more student-centered learning through the preparation of teaching modules, project-based learning, learning differentiation, and the use of digital technology. The similarity of these studies lies in the change in the role of teachers from informants to facilitators of learning, although most still face obstacles in the form of limited infrastructure, diverse teacher competencies, and not optimal professional training.

These results are in line with the findings of Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) who explain that the success of curriculum implementation is influenced by teacher readiness, institutional support, and sustainability of professional development programs. Thus, the success of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum does not only depend on government policies, but also on the capacity of schools to manage learning changes in a sustainable manner. In addition to curriculum implementation, character education is also a consistent theme in Indonesian Language Education research. Research by Nur Rezki et al. (2021), Julianto (2022), and Pili Angga Putra et al. (2025) shows that character values are integrated through learning planning, the implementation of literacy activities, the selection of teaching materials, and the assessment of students' attitudes. The similarity of the three studies lies in the view that learning Indonesian is a strategic medium to shape the character of students through reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. As for the difference, Julianto (2022) emphasizes the integration of character education through digital media, while Nur Rezki et al. (2021) and Pili Angga Putra et al. (2025) emphasize the implementation of character in face-to-face learning through teaching modules

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and classroom activities.

The findings of the study also show that learning innovation is one of the new trends in Indonesian Language Education research. Research by Handayani et al. (2024) proves that the *Directed Reading-Thinking Activity* (DRTA) model is effective in improving students' critical reading skills through prediction, verification, and reflection on reading content. On the other hand, Alifulia and Rahayu (2022) research shows that online learning encourages teachers to develop more flexible learning strategies by utilizing various digital platforms, such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and Google Meet. The similarity between the two studies lies in the effort to present more active and student-centered learning, while the difference lies in the form of innovation applied, namely learning model innovation in the research of Handayani et al. (2024) and innovation in the use of technology in the research of Alifulia and Rahayu (2022). These results show that learning innovation is not only related to the use of learning models, but also the ability of teachers to adapt to information technology developments.

When compared to international research, this trend is in line with Fullan (2020) who emphasized that the transformation of 21st century learning requires teachers to integrate pedagogical innovations, digital technology, and strengthening student competencies at the same time. Therefore, the results of the synthesis show that Indonesian Language Education research in Indonesia has moved in a direction that is in line with the development of global education, although its implementation is still influenced by the conditions of each educational unit. Overall, the implementation of qualitative research methods in fourteen articles has made an important contribution in comprehensively explaining the dynamics of Indonesian language learning. These studies not only produce descriptions of learning practices, but also provide recommendations for curriculum development, teacher competency improvement, character education strengthening, and the use of technology in learning. Thus, qualitative research remains in a strategic position as an approach that can explain the phenomenon of education in depth as well as be the basis for the development of Indonesian Language Education policies and practices in the future.

Synthesis of Findings, Research Gaps, and Study Contributions

The synthesis of fourteen articles shows that Indonesian Language Education research during the period 2021–2026 has experienced quite rapid development, both in terms of research themes and the implementation of qualitative research methods. Most of the research is still oriented towards the description of program implementation, learning models, or educational policies, such as the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, character education, online

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learning, learning evaluation, textbook analysis, and the application of innovative learning models. However, research that integrates these findings into a comprehensive synthesis is still relatively limited. This condition shows the importance of *literature review* research to systematically map research developments and identify the direction of further research development. These findings are in line with Snyder (2019) who stated that *literature review* not only summarizes previous research, but also identifies research patterns, trends, and gaps.

The results of the analysis show that there are similarities as well as differences in the articles studied. The most dominant similarity is the use of a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation, as well as making teachers the main informant in examining the implementation of Indonesian language learning. In addition, most of the research is oriented towards improving the quality of learning through learning strategy innovation, strengthening literacy, integrating character education, and implementing the Independent Curriculum. These findings support the opinion of Creswell and Poth (2018) that qualitative research focuses on understanding social processes and educational practices in natural contexts. On the other hand, the difference in research can be seen in the focus of the study and the object of the research. Several articles focus on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Nathasia & Abadi, 2022; Umiyati et al., 2024; Pranata et al., 2024; Retnosari et al., 2024; Emawati & Sandi, 2025), while other studies examine character education (Nur Rezki et al., 2021; Julianto, 2022; Pili Angga Putra et al., 2025), learning model innovation (Handayani et al., 2024), learning evaluation (Juwanda et al., 2023), online learning (Alifulia & Rahayu, 2022), textbook analysis (Wiratikusuma, 2024), and Indonesian language learning principles in elementary schools (Efendi et al., 2026). These variations show that Indonesian Language Education research has developed at various levels of education with diverse problem characteristics.

However, the results of the synthesis still found some research *gaps*. Most of the research is still local, so the generalization of the findings is relatively limited, and focuses more on the description of the implementation than on the development of conceptual models that can be used more widely. In addition, there is still very little research that integrates aspects of curriculum, literacy, character education, and technology in one analytical framework. The use of research design is also still dominated by qualitative descriptive approaches, while phenomenology, ethnography, narrative research, and *grounded theory* have not been widely utilized. These findings reinforce the view of Grant and Booth (2009) that *literature review* has an important role in identifying research vacancies as the basis for the development of the next

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research.

Based on these results, this study contributes through the preparation of a comprehensive synthesis of the implementation of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research based on fourteen articles published in the 2021–2026 period. themstudy succeeded in mapping the characteristics of the methodology, the tendency of the research theme, data collection and analysis techniques, similarities, differences, and research gaps in an integrated manner so that it can be a reference for researchers in determining the focus and methodological approach in the next research. The implications of this study show the need for research development that is not only oriented to the implementation of learning, but also to the development of conceptual models, evaluation of educational policies, integration of digital technology, and strengthening literacy based on the needs of students. Further research is also recommended to use a more diverse qualitative research design and combine it with *a mixed methods* approach to produce more comprehensive findings and be able to make a greater contribution to the development of theories, learning practices, and education policies in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of qualitative research methods in Indonesian Language Education research during the period 2021–2026 shows increasingly diverse developments, both in terms of methodology and study focus. Based on the synthesis of fourteen articles, the research is dominated by a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation as well as data analysis which generally uses interactive models. The research focus develops on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, character education, learning innovation, learning evaluation, digitization of learning, and textbook analysis which generally aims to improve the quality of learning in Indonesian. The results of this study also show that these studies have relatively similar methodological characteristics but are still dominated by studies in local contexts and the use of qualitative descriptive designs so that the variety of research approaches is still limited. The contribution of this research lies in presenting a comprehensive synthesis of methodology characteristics, theme tendencies, similarities, differences, and gaps in Indonesian Language Education research that can be a reference for researchers in determining the direction of further research. However, this study is limited to fourteen articles, so the next research is recommended to expand the sources of study by involving internationally reputable articles and apply a

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systematic literature review or *meta-synthesis* approach in order to produce a more comprehensive synthesis and have a stronger generalization power.

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