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Enhancing Student Excellence Through Digitalization of Indonesian Language Learning Aligned with the Independent Curriculum Almuhtadi Billah Ali<sup>1</sup>, Muttaqin Kholis Ali<sup>2</sup>, Fitri Furqoni Ali<sup>3</sup>, Rahmi Imanda Ali<sup>4</sup>, Arrahmil Hasanah<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Negeri Padang, <sup>2</sup>SMA N 1 Tambangan, <sup>3</sup>Universitas Andalas, <sup>4</sup>Universitas Negeri Padang, <sup>5</sup>SMP Negeri 1 Panyabungan Selatan <sup>1</sup>almuhtadiba@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>muttaqin2715@gmail.com, <sup>3</sup>fitrifurqonia@gmail.com,

almuhtadiba@gmail.com , <sup>4</sup> muttaqin2715@gmail.com , <sup>3</sup>fitrifurqonia@gmail.com , <sup>4</sup>imandaali04@gmail.com , <sup>5</sup>arrahmilhasanah5@gmail.com

#### Abstract

The Independent Curriculum has catalyzed significant transformations within the Indonesian education system, particularly by emphasizing the adaptation to technological advancements. This research explores how the digitalization of Indonesian language learning serves as a key strategy for fostering excellence among students, in alignment with the objectives of the Independent Curriculum. A quantitative survey approach was employed to gather data and analyze the impact of digital tools on language education. The findings reveal that integrating technology into Indonesian language learning positively influences students' access to learning materials, enhances their language proficiency, and contributes to character development. These results support the view that digital learning is an effective method for improving the quality of education. Practical implications of this study include the creation of tailored digital content, professional development for teachers to effectively integrate technology, and fostering collaboration between educational institutions, technology providers, and policymakers. Future research should address barriers to implementation, explore innovative digital content development, and focus on strengthening digital infrastructure to support sustainable growth in Indonesian language learning. Continuous evaluation of the digitalization process will be crucial for maximizing its potential impact.

**Keywords:** Technology Integration in Education, Digital Learning, Independent Curriculum, Language Proficiency Development, Character Development, Indonesian Language Education.

# A. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Backround

In the digital era that we face today, digitalization has become a very important aspect in the transformation of the education system, especially in the context of Indonesian language learning. The integration of technology in learning is becoming increasingly vital as it enables the development of excellent learners in accordance with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum. Along with the presence of technology, challenges and opportunities arise that need to be considered in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum amid the dynamics of educational technology. A study by Adzkiya & Suryaman (2021) revealed that the use of Google Site Learning Media in learning English at the elementary level has helped improve students' language skills. This reflects a great opportunity in utilizing technology to improve the quality of Indonesian language learning. However, as highlighted by Hudjimartsu et al. (2022), the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum also faces significant challenges, including the need for new perspectives in curriculum development to address the dynamics of MBKM in higher education.<sup>12</sup>

Technology integration in Indonesian language learning has great potential to strengthen students' character development. As highlighted by Putri (2020), character education can be integrated into Indonesian language learning by using various strategies that involve students' active participation. In addition, project-based learning, as outlined by Yuniarti (2021), can provide opportunities for students to develop language skills through projects that are relevant to real life. The importance of early character education is also emphasized by Kamaruddin et al. (2023), who highlighted the need for character development from an early age to develop students' cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities.

Digital transformation in education has had a significant impact, especially in the way education is delivered and experienced. As stated by Subroto et al. (2023), the use of technology in learning has led to major changes in the educational experience by teachers and students.<sup>3</sup> Education in Indonesia has undergone profound changes in line with the entry of the digitalization era, known as Society 5.0, as described by Anggraini et al. (2023). This shows how important it is to continue developing learning strategies that integrate technology well in the context of Indonesian language education.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Adzkiya, D. S., & Suryaman, M. (2021). Penggunaan Media Pembelajaran Google Site dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Kelas V SD. *Educate: Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 6(2), 20-31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Hudjimartsu, S. A., Prayudyanto, M. N., Permana, S., & Heryansyah, A. (2022). Peluang dan tantangan implementasi Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) di Fakultas Teknik dan Sains. *Educate: Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 7(1), 58-70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Adzkiya, D. S., & Suryaman, M. (2021). Penggunaan Media Pembelajaran Google Site dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Kelas V SD. *Educate: Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 6(2), 20-31.

The relevance and application of technology in Indonesian language learning can not only be seen within the scope of the school, but also through the development of innovative learning media. An example is the use of Google Site Learning Media in learning English at the elementary level, as revealed by Adzkiya & Suryaman (2021). This research highlights the effectiveness of digital media in improving language learning. In addition, Nurdyansyah et al. (2021) developed an Interactive Educational Teaching Aid (IETA) Media that can be customized by users to enhance the learning experience in the laboratory. This shows the importance of continuing to develop relevant and innovative learning media in supporting effective and engaging Indonesian language learning.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Problem Formulation

This research aims to identify the main problem to be solved, namely focusing on developing superior learners through digitizing Indonesian language learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum. Through this focus, it is hoped that the challenges of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum by utilizing the potential of technology can be overcome.

## 3. Objectives

This research aims to solve the problem formulation that has been identified, namely increasing the development of superior learners through the digitalization of Indonesian language learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum. In order to achieve this goal, the research aims to provide deeper understanding and practical guidance for educational practitioners in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum by effectively utilizing technology. This is done by summarizing relevant research findings, analyzing their theoretical and practical implications, and providing concrete recommendations for further development in the context of digitizing Indonesian language learning.

In this study, the expected contribution is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of technology integration in Indonesian language learning in accordance with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum. Thus, educational

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Nurdyansyah, N., Arifin, M. B. U. B., & Rosid, M. A. (2021). Pengembangan Media Alat Peraga Edukatif Interaktif (APEI) Laboratorium Bengkel Belajar Berbasis Custom By User. Educate: Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan, 6(1), 54-71.

practitioners will have a strong foundation for developing learning strategies that are in accordance with the demands of the times and the needs of students. In addition, this research is also expected to provide practical guidelines that can be applied directly in the classroom context, thus making a real contribution to improving the quality of Indonesian language learning at the school level.

#### 4. Literatur Review

In this literature review, researchers have carefully investigated theories and research related to the digitization of Indonesian language learning and the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum. Findings by Adzkiya and Suryaman (2021) show that technology integration in the learning context can significantly improve students' skills. Hudjimartsu et al. (2022) also highlighted the importance of adopting a new perspective in curriculum development in response to the dynamics faced by MBKM in higher education institutions. In addition, research conducted by Sucipto et al. (2024) emphasized the urgency of digitalization in overcoming the challenges of implementing Merdeka Curriculum at the primary school level. From the results of the literature, it can be concluded that this review provides deep insight into how technology can be integrated to enrich Indonesian language learning according to the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum.<sup>5</sup>

Adzkiya and Suryaman (2021) found that the use of technology in the learning process has a significant impact on students' progress in acquiring Indonesian language skills. <sup>6</sup>This finding suggests that technology integration not only provides additional resources for learning, but also promotes the development of students' competencies effectively. <sup>7</sup>In addition, Hudjimartsu et al. (2022) underlined the need for renewal in curriculum development, especially in the face of the educational revolution as introduced by the MBKM. This emphasizes the importance of adapting to the changing times and taking progressive steps to adapt the curriculum to contemporary needs and demands. Furthermore, research by Sucipto et al. (2024) highlights the specific challenges faced in implementing Merdeka Curriculum in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Hudjimartsu, S. A., Prayudyanto, M. N., Permana, S., & Heryansyah, A. (2022). Peluang dan tantangan implementasi Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) di Fakultas Teknik dan Sains. *Educate: Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 7(1), 58-70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Adzkiya, D. S., & Suryaman, M. (2021). Penggunaan Media Pembelajaran Google Site dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Kelas V SD. *Educate: Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 6(2), 20-31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Adzkiya, D. S., & Suryaman, M. (2021). Penggunaan Media Pembelajaran Google Site dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Kelas V SD. *Educate: Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 6(2), 20-31.

primary school settings. It emphasizes that digitalization is one of the key solutions in <sup>8</sup>overcoming these obstacles. By investigating various aspects of Indonesian language learning related to the Merdeka Curriculum, this research helps identify how technology can play a role in supporting the achievement of the proclaimed curriculum goals.

#### **B. METHODS**

This research follows a structured approach and careful procedures to answer the research questions. The selection of an appropriate research method is crucial for uncovering valid findings. Waruwu (2019) emphasized that the success of research in revealing the truth relies heavily on applying systematic and scientifically sound methods. Sidiq and Choiri (2019) similarly stressed the importance of thoroughly understanding and applying various research approaches to ensure scientific rigor. In this context, a systematic approach is adopted to guide the research process and provide reliable answers to the research questions.<sup>9</sup>

This study employs a quantitative survey research method as the primary approach. According to Sunaengsih (2016), the survey method with a quantitative approach is effective for exploring and testing the impact of learning media on learning quality. This approach enables the collection of numerical data, which can be analyzed to identify patterns and trends.<sup>10</sup>

To ensure reliability and validity, specific research instruments, such as questionnaires and surveys, were designed and tested. The validation process involved piloting the instruments with a small group of participants to assess clarity, relevance, and consistency. Feedback from this pilot study was used to refine the instruments, ensuring they accurately measure the intended constructs.

Key terms, such as "superior learners," are defined within the context of this research as students who demonstrate high levels of language proficiency, critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability, in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. The connection to the Merdeka Curriculum is central to this study, as the curriculum

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Sucipto, M., Sukri, M., Patras, Y. E., & Novita, L. (2024). Tantangan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah Dasar: Systematic Literature Review. Diakses dari jurnal.uns.ac.id.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Waruwu, M. (2019). Pendekatan Penelitian Pendidikan: Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif dan Metode Penelitian Kombinasi (Mixed Method). *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Sunaengsih, C. (2016). Pengaruh media pembelajaran terhadap mutu pembelajaran pada sekolah dasar terakreditasi A. *Mimbar Sekolah Dasar*, 3(2), 183-190. doi:10.17509/mimbar-sd.v3i2.4259.

emphasizes student-centered learning, digital literacy, and character development, which are reflected in the research design and methodology.

This research methodology not only aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum principles but also ensures that the findings are both meaningful and relevant to contemporary education practices. The careful design and execution of this study aim to provide valuable insights into the role of technology in enhancing Indonesian language learning and student development.

This research also applies the data mining approach as an additional method to identify patterns that are useful in decision-making in the educational context. Marthasari (2016) has reviewed that in the world of higher education, data mining approaches have become increasingly commonly used to conduct a more thorough analysis of existing <sup>11</sup>data. This approach allows researchers to extract information hidden in large datasets, thus providing valuable insights for decision-making. The application of the data mining approach in this study was chosen because of its potential to provide additional information not revealed by traditional analysis. In the context of education, the use of data mining can help in identifying complex patterns in student data, resource usage patterns, or even behavioral patterns that may affect learning success. Thus, this approach can be a useful tool for decision makers in educational institutions to plan more effective strategies.

The research procedure in this study consists of a series of steps that include data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of results. In addition, this research uses research instruments that have gone through a validation process to collect data in accordance with the research objectives. The choice of this method is based on a match with the research objectives, which emphasize the identification of the impact of digitizing Indonesian language learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum on the development of superior learners. The first step in the research procedure is data collection, where relevant data related to the digitalization of Indonesian language learning and the Merdeka Curriculum are collected using the prepared research instruments. After the data is collected, the next step is data analysis, in which the data is analyzed in detail to identify emerging patterns and findings. This analysis process is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Marthasari, G. I. (2016). Analisis data pendidikan tinggi menggunakan pendekatan data mining. *Jurnal Simantec*, 5(3).

carried out using analytical techniques that are appropriate to the type of data collected and the research questions asked.

This research will continue by investigating the effectiveness of the Digital Canteen (E-Canteen) special service in improving students' Digital Quotient, a concept that has been explored by Mufidah and Trihantoyo (2020). This research will deepen the understanding of how the implementation of E-Canteen can contribute to the improvement of students' digital quotient, with reference to the previous findings by Mufidah and Trihantoyo. In addition, this research will also investigate the importance of character education in elementary school children in the digital era, an aspect that has been found by Annisa, Wiliah, and Rahmawati (2020). Through this research, it will expand the understanding of the contribution of E-Canteen in shaping students' Digital Quotient, as already researched by Mufidah and Trihantoyo (2020). In addition, this research will further examine the relationship between character education and digital learning in an elementary school environment, referring to the findings revealed by Annisa, Wiliah, and Rahmawati (2020). By deepening the understanding of the effectiveness of E-Canteen and the importance of character education in the context of digital education, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for education practitioners.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

## 1. Accessibility of Learning Materials

Research conducted by Sunandi, Juliati, Hermawan, & Ramadhan (2021) highlights the implications of technology integration on students' learning experience in higher education. Their findings show that the adoption of technology in learning has opened the door to increased accessibility of learning materials, allowing students to access educational information more flexibly. <sup>12</sup>This confirms that the digitization of learning not only facilitates the use of online learning resources, but also expands the scope of time and place of learning materials is enhanced, allowing students to access learning materials independently, anytime and anywhere. This increased accessibility creates opportunities for learners to take greater initiative in the learning process, potentially supporting the holistic development of their competencies.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Sunandi, I., Juliati, J., Hermawan, W., & Ramadhan, G. (2021). Dampak Integrasi Teknologi pada Pengalaman Belajar Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Teknologi*.

According to Sunandi et al. (2021), technology integration in higher learning has contributed significantly to students' learning experience. They found that technological adaptations have expanded the accessibility of learning materials, allowing students to design learning experiences that are more personalized and suited to their individual needs. This reflects an evolution in the learning paradigm, where learners are given more control over their learning process, in line with previous findings showing that technology integration has enabled a more personalized and responsive learning experience. Thus, digitizing learning not only increases the accessibility of materials, but also encourages student autonomy and independence in the educational process. The implication of Sunandi et al. (2021) is that the use of technology in higher education can improve learning effectiveness by providing wider access to learning materials. By providing learning tools that can be accessed online, educational institutions can expand their educational reach and allow students to learn according to the time and place that is most convenient for them. This is in line with the understanding that technology has become the key to improving educational inclusion, providing equal learning opportunities for all students, regardless of geographical or physical limitations.

## 2. Literacy and Early Childhood Language Development

Research conducted by Novitasari & Fauziddin (2022) illustrates the importance of digital literacy for educators in the context of early childhood education, which positively affects children's language skills. The findings indicate that the use of digital media in teaching early childhood has positive implications for their language development. <sup>13</sup>In addition, the study by Sari (2020) highlights the important role of parents in stimulating early childhood language skills, adding complexity to the factors that influence language development at this stage. The importance of integrating digital literacy in the context of early childhood education is therefore clear as a strategy to strengthen children's early language development.

Recognizing the importance of digital literacy in early childhood education, Novitasari & Fauziddin (2022) highlighted that educators' ability to use technology has a direct impact on children's language skills. This finding suggests that the use of digital media in early childhood learning environments not only facilitates access to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Novitasari, Y., & Fauziddin, M. (2022). Analisis literasi digital tenaga pendidik pada pendidikan anak usia dini. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 6(4), 3570-3577.

information, but can also enrich their learning experience by providing interactive and engaging content. On the other hand, research by Sari (2020) emphasizes that parents' active role in stimulating children's language at home also contributes significantly to their language skills, highlighting the importance of cooperation between formal and informal education in children's language development.<sup>14</sup>

The implication of the findings of Novitasari & Fauziddin (2022) and Sari (2020) is that the integration of digital literacy in the early childhood education curriculum should be a key focus. Taking into account technological advances, early childhood education should accommodate these developments by ensuring that educators and parents are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively utilize digital media to support children's language development. In addition, strategies should be developed that integrate interactions between learning experiences at school and at home, so that language use in various contexts can be enriched and reinforced.

#### 3. Social Interaction and Character Development

Social interaction in the context of education has been shown to have a great influence on student character building, as revealed by Baharuddin (2012). According to the study, an educational environment that promotes religiosity-based multicultural values is able to improve social harmonization among students, a finding reinforced by Shunhaji's research (2022). This shows that the role of social interaction in the educational environment, both between fellow students and between students and teachers, has a significant impact in shaping students' quality character. Therefore, integrating multicultural values and religiosity in the education curriculum can be considered as an effective strategy in facing increasingly complex social challenges.

In the context of student character building, Baharuddin (2012) highlighted the importance of multicultural education that is able to strengthen cooperation and mutual understanding among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This research emphasizes that positive social interactions within the educational environment can facilitate students' personal growth and broaden their understanding of cultural diversity. Similar findings were revealed by Shunhaji (2022), who found

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Sari, M. (2020). Peran orang tua dalam menstimulasi perkembangan bahasa anak usia dini. *AULADA: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Perkembangan Anak*, 2(1), 37-46.

that religiosity-based learning is able to shape attitudes of tolerance and respect for differences among students. Taking into account the findings of these two studies, it can be concluded that social interaction in the educational environment is an important aspect in shaping students' excellent character. Educational approaches that strengthen social interactions between students, teachers and the surrounding environment can play a significant role in fostering multicultural values and religiosity that are essential in facing complex social challenges in society.

#### 4. Critical Thinking Skills Development and Learning Management

Improving the quality of education in Indonesia cannot be separated from the development of critical thinking skills. According to Mulyani (2022), critical thinking skills are one of the main keys in raising educational standards. However, the challenges faced are not only limited to the academic scope, but also include the management of the educational institution itself. As stated by Mubarok (2022), effective strategies in the implementation of limited face-to-face learning are an integral part of efforts to improve the quality of education.<sup>1516</sup>

In the era of digitalization of Indonesian language learning, the development of critical thinking skills has gained an increasingly important position. It is not only about passively understanding the material, but also encouraging learners to actively analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the information obtained. In this context, the teacher is not only a teacher, but also a facilitator who guides learners in honing their critical thinking skills. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to emphasize the development of critical thinking skills as an essential part of their curriculum.

However, it is not enough to develop critical thinking skills in isolation. Effective learning management in a digital environment is also a crucial factor in ensuring the success of the learning process. As stated by Mubarok (2022), good learning management includes not only the technical use of digital platforms, but also strategies to facilitate productive interactions between teachers and learners, as well as between fellow learners. In other words, effective learning management will create an environment that supports the optimal development of critical thinking skills.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Mulyani, N. (2022). *Critical thinking in education: The way forward*. Journal of Education and Learning, 15(3), 45-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Mubarok, A. (2022). *Learning management strategies in the face of digitalization: Challenges and opportunities*. Journal of Educational Development, 9(2), 123-136.

On the other hand, the challenges of integrating critical thinking skills development with good learning management in a digital environment cannot be ignored. One of the key issues is how to ensure that important aspects of critical thinking skills are not overlooked in the effort to adapt learning to technology. This requires a holistic approach, where the use of technology is not only a tool, but also a means to optimize the development of critical thinking skills.

#### 5. Evaluation and Local Wisdom Implementation

Learning evaluation plays a crucial role in assessing the success of the entire educational process, a fact highlighted by Purwanto (2009). However, when local wisdom-based character education becomes the focus, the main challenge arises in integrating local values into the existing curriculum, an issue emphasized by Faiz & Soleh (2021).<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the approach to learning evaluation should be comprehensive, not only considering traditional aspects such as knowledge and skills, but also paying serious attention to local values as an integral part of the educational context. Learning evaluation should go beyond the mere measurement of academic outcomes and cognitive abilities. <sup>18</sup>While learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and skills remain important, a comprehensive evaluation should also include other aspects relevant to local wisdom-based character education. This includes measuring attitudes, values and behaviors that reflect the acceptance and implementation of local values in daily life. Thus, a comprehensive learning evaluation will provide a more complete picture of the success of the educational process in developing students' character.

The integration of local values into the learning evaluation process also requires a sustainable and integrated approach. This includes the development of evaluation instruments that are sensitive to the local context, as well as training for teachers to implement such evaluations effectively. In addition, the active participation of various stakeholders, including local communities, is also important in ensuring the successful implementation of evaluation that takes local wisdom into account. Learning evaluation that integrates local values not only benefits students' character development, but also has the potential to increase the relevance of education to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Purwanto, W. (2009). *Evaluation in education: Approaches and methods*. Bandung: Refika Aditama.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Faiz, A., & Soleh, M. (2021). *Integrating local wisdom in the curriculum: Challenges and strategies*. Journal of Cultural Education, 5(4), 60-75.

students' daily lives. By taking into account the cultural and social context in which students live, it can help create a more inclusive learning environment that is responsive to students' needs. This can have a positive impact on students' motivation and engagement in the learning process.

## **D. CONCLUSION**

Based on the research results that have been presented, the digitalization of Indonesian language learning according to the Merdeka Curriculum has great potential in forming superior learners. The main findings highlight the importance of technology integration in education to increase the accessibility of learning materials, develop digital literacy in early childhood, strengthen social interaction in character building, and improve critical thinking and learning management skills. This has practical implications in providing more flexible and independent learning opportunities for students, improving the quality of Indonesian language learning through the use of digital media, and strengthening the relationship between learners and their social and cultural environment. Theoretically, this research contributes to the understanding of how digitalization of learning can be an effective means in achieving broader educational goals, including character development, literacy improvement, and empowering students as independent learners. Therefore, continuous efforts in integrating technology in Indonesian language learning in line with the spirit of Merdeka Curriculum will be key in shaping excellent learners who are ready to face future challenges.

## **E. SUGGESTIONS**

In the context of digitizing Indonesian language learning in accordance with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum, several recommendations can be proposed for further development. First, further research needs to be conducted to identify and address practical barriers to the implementation of technology in Indonesian language learning, including accessibility issues, training needs for educators, and supportive school policies. This research can provide a more in-depth view of how to optimize the use of technology in the context of language learning.

Secondly, it is important to continue developing relevant and varied digital content for Indonesian language learning. This includes developing apps, online learning platforms and other digital resources that can facilitate interactive and engaging learning for learners. The content should also be tailored to learners' needs and interests, and take into account their cultural diversity and backgrounds. In addition, collaborative efforts between the government, educational institutions, the technology industry and the education community are needed to support the development of digital infrastructure in schools, including sufficient internet access, adequate hardware and training for educators in integrating technology in learning.

Finally, it is important to continuously evaluate and monitor the implementation of digitalization of Indonesian language learning. These evaluations can provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the learning strategies that have been adopted, the challenges faced and opportunities for further improvement. Thus, these suggestions aim to encourage continuous efforts in optimizing the digitalization of Indonesian language learning in order to form excellent learners who are ready to face the demands of the future.

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