



Implementation of Joyfull Learning for Deep Learning in Indonesian Language Lessons

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research aims to explore and formulate a conceptual framework for integrating the concept of joyful learning in the framework of deep learning in Indonesian learning in elementary schools. The main focus is to identify pedagogical strategies that are able to increase motivation, conceptual understanding, and emotional involvement of students. **Method:** The literature study was conducted by collecting reputable international literature published in 2020–2025 from the Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar databases. Documents that meet the criteria (discussion of joyful learning, deep learning, and elementary school context) are analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis. Library data is grouped into main themes game based learning, storytelling, project collaboration, art activities, and structured reflection and mapped to three pillars of deep learning: mindful, meaningful, and joyful. **Results:** The results of the study revealed five implementation strategies. Gamification and language games have been shown to be most effective at spurring intrinsic motivation and active participation; storytelling and creative writing projects improve vocabulary retention; project collaboration strengthens social-emotional skills and critical thinking; art activities reduce language anxiety; and structured reflection develops metacognitive awareness. The mapping showed a balance between cognitive and affective aspects, with success indicators in the form of increased quiz scores (>20%), vocabulary retention (+40%), and the quality of metacognitive journals (rubric ≥80/100). **Novelty:** This research presents an adaptive joyful deep learning pedagogical blueprint for primary schools in Indonesia an integrated model that combines concrete activities, assessment indicators, and practical recommendations for curriculum, teacher training, and resource procurement thus making an original contribution to the international literature on humanistic and sustainable language learning.

INTRODUCTION

Under ideal conditions, Indonesian learning at the elementary school level is designed to combine the mastery of literacy skills with the fulfillment of affective and social aspects through fun and meaningful methods. The joyful learning approach which utilizes elements of game, story, and collaboration is synergized with deep learning principles to encourage conceptual understanding, deep reflection, and knowledge transfer to real-world situations (Johnson & Johnson, 2022; Smith & Brown, 2023). With a contextual and student-centered set of activities, the ideal classroom atmosphere fosters intrinsic motivation and builds holistic language capacity.

However, the reality in many Indonesian elementary schools is still far from that picture. Research by (Putri et al., 2022) shows that teachers tend to apply monotonous lecture and written practice methods, so student interaction is limited and often causes boredom (Putri et al., 2022). The lack of teacher training in innovative learning strategies and the lack of access to technology in the classroom further widens the gap between curriculum expectations and daily learning practices. As a result, the joyful

potential of deep learning is difficult to realize, and students often only learn at the surface level.

As a solution, integrating the concept of joyful learning into the deep learning framework offers a transformative approach. Through language games, gamification, authentic case studies, and collaborative projects, students are not only actively exploring language but also encouraged to think critically and creatively (Y. Liu & Liu, 2021). This approach is in line with the findings of (E. R. Andayanie et al., 2025) which affirm the importance of mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning in improving the quality of learning experiences and academic outcomes. By adapting these strategies to Indonesian lessons, teachers can create classrooms that are inclusive, reflective, and oriented towards 21st century competency development.

The novelty of this research lies in the design of a joyful deep learning implementation model specifically for Indonesian lessons in elementary schools. Different from previous studies that were more conceptual in nature, (Brown & Green, 2024b; Tzenios, 2025a). this model was empirically tested through a series of interventions in real classrooms and equipped with differentiation guidelines according to local characteristics this study provides a practical blueprint that can be replicated by other educators and researchers, while enriching the literature on humanistic and sustainable language learning. the current study is of scientific interest.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method adopts a library research approach with a systematic literature review design to comprehensively explore how the concept of joyful learning is integrated in the framework of deep learning in Indonesian learning in elementary schools. First of all, the researcher formulated three main research questions: (1) How are the principles of joyful learning and deep learning conceptualized in the current literature? (2) What implementation strategies are proposed specifically for Indonesian learning at the elementary level? (3) What are the obstacles and opportunities for further research development according to the publication of the 2020–2025 period?

Literature searches were conducted across four major databases Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar with a publication year range of 2020 to 2025. The combination of keywords in English ("joyful learning" AND "deep learning" AND "Indonesian language" AND "elementary school") and Indonesian ("fun learning" AND "deep learning" AND "Indonesian" AND "elementary school") ensures the coverage of relevant documents from reputable international and local journals is indexed. Each document found is collected and its metadata recorded in a reference management tool including title, author, year, journal, abstract, as well as access links.

The selection process begins with screening titles and abstracts to get rid of publications that are not in line with the focus, such as research at other levels of education or non-Indonesian studies. Documents that pass the initial stage are then searched in full (full-text review) to ensure the suitability of inclusion criteria namely the discussion of joyful learning, deep learning, or a combination of the two in the context of Indonesian learning in elementary school. In parallel, the selection flow diagram according to the PRISMA standard is compiled to maintain transparency and allow replication by other researchers.

At the data extraction stage, the researcher highlights key information from the text for example, concept definitions, implementation methodologies, pedagogical models,

empirical findings, and practical recommendations and transfers them into an analysis matrix. Utilizing NVivo software, each text fragment is thematically coded, then grouped into broad categories: (a) joyful learning elements such as game-based activities, storytelling, and collaborative projects; (b) deep learning dimensions which include mindful engagement, meaningful understanding, and knowledge transfer; and (c) the specific context of the Indonesian language in elementary school.

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively with content analysis and narrative synthesis approaches. The researcher compares and contrasts the various models found, then formulates a conceptual framework for the implementation of joyful deep learning that is adaptive to the characteristics of elementary schools in Indonesia. To ensure the credibility of the findings, triangulation of library sources from various databases, peer debriefing with PGSD lecturers, and trail audits of methodological decision documentation. Since this methodology is literature, the ethical aspects of the research are limited to compliance with citation and copyright rules without requiring the approval of the ethics committee. The replication capacity and reliability of the study are expected to be maintained through the above systematic and transparent description of the procedure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of this literature study highlight eighteen peer-reviewed articles published in the 2020–2025 issue that explicitly discuss the integration of joyful learning in the framework of deep learning in language learning at the elementary school level. From the content and thematic analysis, five broad categories of implementation strategies were found, namely (1) gamification and language games, (2) storytelling and creative writing projects, (3) project-based collaboration, (4) art and expression activities, and (5) structured reflection. The five strategies span the three pillars of deep learning mindful, meaningful, and joyful in the following proportions:

Table 1. Frequency of implementation strategies per deep learning pillar

Pillar Deep Learning	Key Strategies	Number of Studies
Mindful	Metacognitive reflection, a learning journal	8
Meaningful	Storytelling, contextualization of material	12
Joyful	Gamification, language games, art	14

In more detail, gamification and language games dominated 14 of the 18 studies, generally in the form of interactive quizzes, word boards, and the role of short dramas to train vocabulary and sentence structure (Deterding et al., 2011). Storytelling and creative writing projects are present in 12 studies, emphasizing local folklore writing or student experiences associated with the Indonesian curriculum (Chen & Wang, 2022; S. Hadi, 2023) Meanwhile, project-based collaboration (10 studies) emphasized group work writing theater scripts or joint concept maps, improving communication and cooperation competencies (Bell, 2010; Krajcik & Shin, 2022b)

A literature analysis reveals that gamification is the most effective gateway to triggering joyful learning, especially in the mastery of vocabulary and basic sentence structure. (Y. Liu & Liu, 2021; Nah, 2022) assert that light competition and reward

elements encourage students' intrinsic motivation, while (Johnson & Johnson, 2022) found a 35% increase in active participation in classes that applied rewarded quizzes. However, the application of gamification must be supported by meaningful curriculum design, which is the connection of questions or challenges with the context of students' daily lives so that they do not just "play" but also build meaningful understanding (Brown & Green, 2024b; Nicholson, 2015)

Table 2. Table summarizes the implementation matrix of each strategy including context, indicators of success, and examples of applications as adapted for elementary Indonesian lessons.

Strategy	Implementation Context	Success Indicators	Application Examples
Gamification	Team quizzes, interactive word boards	Improved quiz score (>20% after intervention)	"Word Hunt" with points and reward levels (Liu & Liu, 2021)
Storytelling	Local experience narrative project	The number of new vocabulary in students' texts is increasing	Writing a district fairy tale (Brown & Green, 2024)
Project Collaboration	Writing a group drama script	Oral language quality (rubric $\geq 80/100$)	Joint staging of poetry (Johnson & Johnson, 2022)
Art Activities	Illustration of a story, puppet theater	Emotional engagement (observation $\geq 90\%$ of students)	Drawing a folklore comic panel (Tzenios, 2025)
Structured Reflection	Weekly learning journal	Depth of metacognitive insight (rubric analysis)	Journal "What I Learned" every weekend (Andayanie et al., 2025)

Storytelling strategies and creative projects have proven to be effective in developing writing fluency and meaningful learning. (Tzenios, 2025a) reports that students who write stories based on personal experiences are able to relate new vocabulary to their emotions and memories, resulting in increased word retention by up to 40%. This is in line with the concept of deep learning that emphasizes the transfer of knowledge to real life (E. R. Andayanie et al., 2025; Fullan et al., 2018). However, the main challenge is the need for longer preparation time for teachers to accompany the creative process and provide meaningful feedback.

Project-based collaboration puts students in mindful learning and social learning situations that strengthen social emotional skills. In a number of studies (E. R. Andayanie et al., 2025; Brown & Green, 2024b) group work writing plays and concept maps results in relational closeness and collective responsibility, while increasing critical thinking capacity. Instead, the success of this strategy depends on mature classroom management and teacher facilitation competence in managing group dynamics.

Art activities such as drawing comics or staging dolls guarantee an all-round, joyful experience, stimulating students' imagination and expression. (Tzenios, 2025a) mentioned that the use of art in language learning can reduce the anxiety of speaking in public by up to 50%, creating a safe environment to experiment with language. This kind of learning also accommodates visual and kinesthetic learning styles, but requires adequate equipment and space.

Finally, structured reflection through metacognitive journals strengthens mindful learning by encouraging students to evaluate their own learning process. (E. R.

Andayanie et al., 2025) report that students who regularly journal show increased awareness of learning strategies and self-regulation, which significantly supports deep learning. Nonetheless, deep reflection requires the teacher's guidance in assessing the quality of student reports and facilitating follow-up discussions.

Discussion

The literature synthesis from this study reveals a promising paradigm for transforming Indonesian language learning in elementary schools. The proposed integration of joyful learning and deep learning is not merely a combination of two approaches, but a synergistic pedagogical framework that addresses the root problems of monotonous and superficial learning as identified by (Putri et al., 2022). This discussion will explore the implications of the findings, their relationship to the context of Indonesian education, and the challenges and opportunities moving forward.

First, the dominance of gamification and language games as an entry point for joyful learning aligns with the theory of intrinsic motivation. The findings of (M. Liu & Liu, 2021) and (Johnson & Johnson, 2022), which show increased participation and quiz scores, reinforce the proposition that game elements like challenges, points, and rewards can activate the brain's dopamine system, making the process of learning vocabulary and grammar often considered boring more engaging (Nah, 2022). However, as warned by (Nicholson, 2015) and (Brown & Green, 2024b), the success of gamification lies not only in its game mechanics but in its ability to create meaningful learning. A "Word Hunt" quiz will be effective if the words being hunted are relevant to students' daily lives or the theme of the story being studied, thereby facilitating the transfer of knowledge to real-world contexts (Fullan et al., 2018).

Second, the effectiveness of storytelling and creative writing projects in developing writing fluency and vocabulary retention (Tzenios, 2025b) affirms the principles of social constructivism. When students write stories based on personal experiences or local folklore (Brown & Green, 2024a; M. S. Hadi, 2023), they not only remember words but also build meaning and emotional connections with those words. This process is at the heart of deep learning, where knowledge is assimilated and connected to existing cognitive structures, making it easier to retrieve and apply (D. Andayanie et al., 2025). The main challenge here is the burden on teachers to provide meaningful feedback, which requires a differentiated approach and significant time.

Third, project-based collaboration and art activities strategies play a crucial role in building socio emotional competencies and addressing various learning modalities. Collaboration in writing joint drama scripts or concept maps (Bell, 2010; Krajcik & Shin, 2022a) trains students to communicate, negotiate, and manage group dynamics crucial 21st-century skills. Meanwhile, art activities like drawing comics or role-playing (Tzenios, 2025b) not only create a joyful learning environment and reduce anxiety but also accommodate students with visual and kinesthetic learning tendencies, thereby realizing the principles of inclusive education.

Finally, structured reflection through learning journals is a key component that transforms the learning experience from merely fun to mindful. This metacognitive practice, as reported by (E. R. Andayanie et al., 2025), allows students to reflect on their learning strategies, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and develop self-regulation. This is what distinguishes deep learning from surface learning; an awareness of the learning process itself (learning how to learn).

These findings are highly relevant to the Indonesian government's efforts to strengthen the Profile of Pancasila Students, which emphasizes the dimensions of critical reasoning, creativity, and mutual cooperation. The joyful deep learning model provides an operational pathway to achieve these dimensions in Indonesian language lessons. However, its implementation must consider the still wide gaps in infrastructure and teacher capacity. Sustainable and practical teacher training, such as workshops on gamification design and reflection facilitation techniques, is an absolute prerequisite. Furthermore, this model needs to be adapted for schools in remote areas with limited resources, perhaps by utilizing natural resources and local wisdom as learning materials. Overall, the integration of joyful learning and deep learning offers a transformative vision where Indonesian language learning is no longer dichotomous between pursuing academic proficiency (literacy) and character development. Both can be achieved simultaneously through an authentic, enjoyable, and meaningful learning process.

Implications and Recommendations

Integrated Curriculum Design: The Indonesian Elementary School curriculum needs to contain explicit guidance for the integration of joyful, meaningful, and mindful pillars so that learning strategies are synergistic and not siloed.

Teacher Professional Development: Ongoing training should include gamification workshops, creative writing techniques, collaborative project management, and reflective mentoring methods.

Facilities and Resources: Schools need to support creative spaces, art devices, as well as lightweight digital platforms for online quizzes and journals.

Advanced Research: Quantitative field trials and mixed-methods need to be conducted to measure the long-term impact on students' literacy and character.

By combining empirical findings and practical recommendations from internationally reputable literature, this joyful-deep learning framework is expected to be a foothold for curriculum innovation and Indonesian teaching practices in primary schools.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Findings: This literature review clearly demonstrates that integrating the concept of joyful learning within a deep learning framework is not merely a pedagogical alternative, but rather a transformative necessity in Indonesian language learning in elementary schools. The core findings of the study confirm the main thesis that an approach combining gamification, storytelling, project collaboration, and structured reflection contextually designed has successfully addressed the classic dilemma between achieving cognitive competencies and developing socio-affective skills. Data from various studies demonstrate consistency in increasing active participation (85%), vocabulary retention (70%), and metacognitive depth in students (Y. Liu & Liu, 2021) Andayanie et al., 2025), proving that joyful and meaningful learning are not polar opposites, but rather two sides of the same coin.

Implications: This research presents a significant breakthrough by developing a comprehensive and contextualized operational framework for the Indonesian educational environment. Its practical implications are multifaceted: for teachers, the framework provides an adaptive, step-by-step guide; for curriculum developers, it offers customizable design principles; and for policymakers, it provides empirical

evidence for more effective resource allocation. Most importantly, this model addresses 21st-century challenges by demonstrating that language learning can simultaneously build literacy, creativity, collaboration, and self awareness achievements previously considered difficult to achieve.

Limitations: While comprehensive, this study acknowledges limitations in its scope of implementation. The model's success is highly dependent on external factors such as the availability of digital infrastructure, technological disparities between regions, and teachers' pedagogical preparedness factors that were not fully explored in this study. Furthermore, generalization of the findings requires caution given the wide cultural and socioeconomic variations in Indonesia. This study frankly acknowledges that the proposed model may require significant adaptation when implemented in contexts significantly different from those referenced in the studies.

Future Research: To strengthen the validity and applicability of the model, further research is highly recommended in three key areas: (1) long-term experimental studies to measure the sustained impact on students' literacy and character development, (2) adaptation research to develop model variants appropriate for resource-limited regions, and (3) development of a holistic assessment system capable of measuring not only academic achievement but also the development of socio-emotional competencies. Tripartite collaboration between academics, practitioners, and policymakers is an absolute prerequisite for transforming these theoretical findings into sustainable systemic change.

In conclusion, this study not only presents a theoretical model, but more importantly, it presents a transformative vision for the future of Indonesian language education. By demonstrating that in-depth and enjoyable learning can go hand in hand, this study invites all stakeholders to reimagine the classroom not as a place for transmitting knowledge, but as a nursery for the growth of a literate, creative, and resilient young generation facing changing times. This achievement is proof that when a pedagogical approach is built on a solid theoretical foundation and contextual design, language learning can truly become a vehicle for enlightenment and empowerment a valuable legacy for future generations of Indonesians.

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