



Teachers' And Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of Deep Learning as a Learning Innovation in Indonesian Language Subjects at Junior High School

Sayama Malabar¹, Eka Sartika², Ananda Amelia Lihawa³,
Nurfadillah Ahamad⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-09-29 Revised: 2026-10-09 Accepted: 2026-10-10 Keywords: deep learning; teachers' and students' perceptions; Indonesian language learning; meaningful learning; mindful learning; joyful learning DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.12740 Corresponding Author: Eka Sartika eka@ung.ac.id Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo	<i>Deep learning in education emphasizes meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning experiences that encourage students' understanding, engagement, and reflection. This study aims to describe teachers' and students' perceptions of the implementation of deep learning in Indonesian language learning at MTs Nurul Yakin, Gorontalo City. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. The participants consisted of two Indonesian language teachers and twelve students, with six students selected purposively for interviews. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify patterns of perception and learning experiences. The findings reveal that teachers and students generally have positive perceptions of deep learning implementation. Teachers perceive that learning should move beyond content mastery by encouraging students to understand texts, express ideas, collaborate, solve problems, and reflect on their learning. Students also reported positive experiences in meaningful learning, mindful learning, joyful learning, critical thinking, and collaboration. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding limited learning time, diverse student abilities, and the need for stronger reflective activities. The study concludes that deep learning can support contextual, interactive, and student-centered Indonesian language learning in madrasah settings.</i>

1. Introduction

The transformation of education in the 21st century requires a fundamental shift in the way learning processes are conceptualized. Learning can no longer be limited to the transmission of knowledge and the achievement of academic outcomes; instead, it should provide meaningful, contextual, and student-centered learning experiences. Contemporary education emphasizes the development of higher-order thinking skills, collaboration, creativity, and the ability to apply knowledge in authentic contexts (OECD, 2021). Therefore, learning approaches that encourage students to construct knowledge actively and develop deeper understanding have become increasingly important.

One approach that aligns with these educational demands is the deep learning approach. Deep learning in education refers to a learning process that emphasizes conceptual understanding, the integration of knowledge, reflection, and the ability to apply knowledge in different contexts (Fullan et al., 2023). Unlike surface learning, which focuses primarily on memorization and reproduction of information, deep learning encourages learners to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and create meaningful connections between concepts (Hattie & Donoghue, 2021).

Deep learning is implemented through three interconnected principles: *meaningful learning*, *mindful learning*, and *joyful learning*. *Meaningful learning* occurs when students connect new knowledge with prior experiences and real-life situations, allowing knowledge to become more relevant and sustainable (Ausubel, 2021). Meanwhile, *mindful learning* emphasizes students' awareness of their thinking processes, active engagement, and reflection during learning activities (Langer, 2021). In addition, *joyful learning* highlights the importance of creating a positive emotional environment that supports students' motivation, participation, and willingness to engage in learning processes (Immordino-Yang et al., 2021). These three dimensions should not be viewed as separate objectives but as integrated elements that support deeper and more meaningful learning experiences.

However, classroom practices in many educational contexts still tend to emphasize content delivery, assessment achievement, and lower-level cognitive activities. In Indonesian language learning, particularly at the madrasah level, learning activities are often still dominated by reading texts, answering comprehension questions, and mastering linguistic concepts without providing sufficient opportunities for students to analyze information, express arguments, reflect on their learning, and connect learning materials with everyday experiences (Sari & Prasetyo, 2022). Such conditions may limit students' opportunities to develop critical and reflective thinking skills.

In fact, Indonesian language learning has considerable potential to develop students' critical thinking and reflective abilities. Language learning involves not only mastering linguistic structures but also interpreting meaning, evaluating information, constructing arguments, and communicating ideas effectively (Abidin, 2022). Through listening, reading, speaking, and writing activities, Indonesian language classrooms can become spaces where students develop cognitive, social, and reflective competencies. Therefore, integrating deep learning principles into Indonesian language learning may strengthen students' ability to understand texts, construct meaning, and relate knowledge to their social contexts.

The successful implementation of a learning approach is influenced not only by instructional design but also by how teachers and students perceive and experience the learning process. Teachers' beliefs and perceptions influence their instructional decisions, classroom strategies, and willingness to adopt educational innovations (Buehl & Beck, 2021). Similarly, students' perceptions represent their engagement, motivation, and learning experiences, which are important indicators of the effectiveness of instructional implementation (Wang et al., 2022). Alignment between teachers' and students' perceptions can support more effective implementation of innovative learning approaches.

Although deep learning has gained increasing attention in educational discussions, empirical studies exploring its implementation in Indonesian language learning contexts, particularly in madrasahs, remain limited. Previous studies have mainly focused on conceptual discussions of deep learning principles, while research examining how teachers and students perceive and experience deep learning practices in actual classroom settings requires further investigation (Feriyanto & Anjariyah, 2024). Understanding these perceptions is essential for identifying implementation readiness, challenges, and development needs in classroom practices.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe teachers' and students' perceptions of the implementation of the deep learning approach in Indonesian language learning at MTs Nurul Yakin, Gorontalo City. This study is expected to provide empirical insights into the implementation of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning principles and contribute to the development of Indonesian language learning practices that are more contextual, reflective, and student-centered.

2. Method

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a phenomenological perspective. This approach was selected because it allows researchers to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings regarding the implementation of deep learning in Indonesian language learning. The study focused not only on classroom practices but also on how teachers and students interpret and experience the learning process.

A qualitative phenomenological design was considered appropriate because the research aimed to understand the subjective experiences of teachers and students in relation to meaningful learning, mindful learning, and joyful learning practices within the Indonesian language learning context.

Research Participants and Setting

The research was conducted at MTs Nurul Yakin, Gorontalo City. The participants consisted of two Indonesian language teachers and twelve students. The teachers were selected because they were directly involved in implementing Indonesian language learning, while students were selected as learning subjects who experienced the implementation of deep learning practices.

For the interview stage, two teachers and six students were selected purposively to obtain more in-depth information regarding their perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to deep learning implementation.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. The use of multiple data collection techniques was intended to achieve data triangulation and improve the credibility of the research findings.

First, questionnaires were distributed to teachers and students to identify their general perceptions of deep learning implementation, including aspects of meaningful learning, mindful learning, joyful learning, learning experiences, critical thinking, collaboration, and learning environments.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and selected students to explore their experiences and perceptions in greater depth. The interviews focused on teachers' understanding of deep learning, classroom practices, students' learning experiences, and challenges encountered during implementation.

Third, classroom observations were conducted to examine learning activities directly, particularly student engagement, interaction patterns, discussion activities, and reflective learning practices.

Finally, documentation was collected in the form of learning materials, instructional documents, and classroom activity records to support and complement the interview and observation data.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process involved three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data from questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation were organized into relevant themes related to deep learning implementation.

Thematic analysis was conducted continuously throughout the research process to identify patterns of teachers' and students' perceptions, learning experiences, supporting factors, and challenges. Data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from different sources to ensure the validity and consistency of the findings.

Research Quality Assurance

The credibility of the research findings was maintained through methodological triangulation by comparing data from questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming the interpretation of interview results with participants to ensure that the findings accurately represented their experiences.

3. Results

1. Teachers' Perceptions of Deep Learning Implementation

Data angket dari dua guru menunjukkan kecenderungan positif terhadap implementasi pembelajaran mendalam dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. Ringkasan respons guru disajikan pada Tabel 1.

Table 1. Teachers' Perceptions of Deep Learning Implementation

Aspect	Strongly Agree (SS)	Agree (S)	Disagree (TS)	Strongly Disagree (STS)	Tendency
Conceptual Understanding	4	8	0	0	Positive
Attitude toward Deep Learning	7	6	1	0	Positive
Meaningful Learning	5	7	2	0	Positive
Mindful Learning	5	11	0	0	Positive
Joyful Learning	6	8	0	0	Positive
Implementation Readiness	0	11	1	0	Positive
Implementation Challenges	0	4	7	1	Limited Challenges
Support and Development Needs	6	8	0	0	Positive
Learning Impact	7	5	0	0	Positive

The questionnaire results indicate that teachers generally perceived deep learning implementation positively. The strongest responses were found in the aspects of mindful learning, joyful learning, learning impact, and support needs. However, teachers also identified several challenges, particularly related to implementation conditions and classroom management.

The interview findings supported the questionnaire results. Teachers explained that Indonesian language learning should not only focus on remembering concepts but also encourage students to understand texts, express ideas, connect learning materials with experiences, and reflect on their learning process.

Teacher 1 stated:

"Learning Indonesian language is not only about students remembering materials. Students need to understand the meaning of texts, express their opinions, and relate learning materials to their experiences in daily life." (T1)

Teacher 2 added:

"Students need opportunities to ask questions, discuss, solve problems, and reflect on what they have learned." (T2)

2. Students' Perceptions of Deep Learning Implementation

The questionnaire was administered to 12 students. The results showed a dominant positive perception toward deep learning implementation. The summary of students' responses is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions of Deep Learning Implementation

Aspect	Strongly Agree (SS)	Agree (S)	Disagree (TS)	Strongly Disagree (STS)	Tendency
Meaningful Learning	72	32	4	0	Positive
Mindful Learning	75	41	4	0	Positive
Joyful Learning	82	25	1	0	Very Positive
Learning Experience	66	28	2	0	Positive
Motivation and Engagement	64	30	2	0	Positive
Critical Thinking Skills	53	29	2	0	Positive
Collaboration and Social Interaction	50	22	0	0	Very Positive
Evaluation and Feedback	48	23	1	0	Positive
Learning Facilities and Environment	54	6	0	0	Very Positive
Overall Perception of Deep Learning	78	6	0	0	Very Positive
Total	642	252	16	0	Dominantly Positive

The results indicate that students experienced deep learning positively. The highest positive responses were found in joyful learning, overall perception of deep learning, collaboration, and learning environment. Interview data further revealed that students perceived contextual examples, discussions, and group activities as important factors supporting their understanding.

Student 1 explained:

"When the teacher provides examples related to everyday life, I can understand the material more easily because I can connect it with my own experiences." (S1)

Student 2 stated:

"Discussion activities help me understand the material because I can hear other opinions and exchange ideas with my friends." (S2)

3. Integration of Questionnaire and Interview Findings

The integration of questionnaire and interview data shows consistency between quantitative tendencies and qualitative experiences. Both teachers and students perceived that deep learning implementation had encouraged more meaningful, interactive, and student-centered learning processes. Table 3 summarizes the integration of findings from questionnaires and interviews.

Table 3. Integration of Teachers' and Students' Perceptions

Deep Learning Dimension	Questionnaire Findings	Interview Findings	Interpretation
Meaningful Learning	Positive responses dominated	Students understood materials better through contextual examples	Learning became connected with students' experiences
Mindful Learning	Positive responses dominated	Students experienced questioning, reasoning, and reflection activities	Learning encouraged cognitive engagement
Joyful Learning	Very positive responses	Students enjoyed discussions and interactive activities	Positive classroom atmosphere increased engagement
Collaboration	Very positive responses	Students learned through group discussion and peer interaction	Social interaction supported understanding
Critical Thinking	Positive responses	Students analyzed texts, opinions, and arguments	Learning encouraged higher-order thinking
Challenges	Some limitations identified	Need for additional explanation and reflection	Implementation requires continuous improvement

4. Discussion

4.1 Teachers' Understanding and Readiness toward Deep Learning Implementation

The findings indicate that teachers have positive perceptions of deep learning implementation in Indonesian language learning. Teachers no longer perceive learning as merely transferring knowledge or delivering instructional content, but rather as a process that encourages students to understand concepts, construct meaning, express ideas, and reflect on their learning experiences. This finding suggests a shift from a teacher-centered orientation toward a more student-centered learning paradigm.

Such a shift is consistent with the fundamental characteristics of deep learning, which emphasize students' active construction of knowledge, conceptual understanding, and the ability to apply knowledge in meaningful contexts (Fullan et al., 2023). Unlike surface learning approaches that emphasize memorization and reproduction of information, deep learning encourages learners to analyze, connect, and apply knowledge through active engagement and reflection (Hattie & Donoghue, 2021).

foundation for implementing educational innovations. Teachers' beliefs and perceptions influence how they design learning activities, select instructional strategies, and respond to educational changes (Buehl & Beck, 2021). Teachers who understand the principles of deep learning are more likely to develop learning experiences that incorporate meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning.

However, the findings also show that teacher readiness does not necessarily mean that implementation is free from challenges. Teachers still require support, particularly in developing assessment strategies, managing diverse student abilities, and allocating sufficient time for deeper learning activities. This indicates that implementing deep

learning requires not only teachers' understanding but also continuous professional development and institutional support.

4.2 Meaningful Learning as a Foundation for Contextual Indonesian Language Learning

The findings demonstrate that meaningful learning has become an important element in Indonesian language learning. Students reported that they could understand learning materials more easily when teachers provided examples related to their daily experiences and social contexts. This finding confirms that learning becomes more effective when students are able to connect new information with existing knowledge and personal experiences.

This result aligns with the concept of meaningful learning, which emphasizes that knowledge is constructed when learners relate new concepts to their existing cognitive structures (Ausubel, 2021). Meaningful learning enables students to develop deeper understanding because knowledge is not acquired as isolated information but integrated with previous experiences.

In Indonesian language learning, contextualization is particularly important because language is closely related to human experiences, social interactions, and cultural contexts. Indonesian language learning involves not only linguistic knowledge but also interpretation, communication, critical thinking, and meaning construction (Abidin, 2022).

However, the findings also reveal that meaningful learning has not been experienced equally by all students. Some students still required additional explanations and examples, indicating that contextual learning alone is not sufficient to ensure deep understanding. Therefore, teachers need to provide varied learning experiences and differentiated support so students with different levels of ability can construct meaning effectively.

4.3 Mindful Learning and the Development of Students' Reflective Thinking

The study shows that mindful learning has begun to emerge through classroom activities involving questioning, reasoning, discussion, and analysis. Students experienced learning activities that encouraged them to provide explanations, analyze texts, distinguish information, and formulate conclusions. These practices indicate that learning has moved beyond simple information recall toward higher-level cognitive engagement.

Mindful learning emphasizes students' awareness of their learning processes, including how they think, understand, and construct knowledge (Langer, 2021). Therefore, students' involvement in questioning, reasoning, and reflection represents an important characteristic of deeper learning experiences.

Nevertheless, the findings suggest that reflective learning remains an area requiring further development. Although students were encouraged to think critically, reflection on their own learning processes was not always conducted systematically. Students were more frequently asked to summarize learning materials rather than evaluate how they learned, what difficulties they encountered, and what strategies helped them understand the materials.

This finding highlights that mindful learning involves not only cognitive engagement but also metacognitive awareness. Therefore, Indonesian language teachers need to strengthen reflective activities through learning journals, self-assessment, and reflective questions that encourage students to evaluate their own learning processes.

4.4 Joyful Learning, Collaboration, and Student Engagement

Joyful learning emerged as one of the strongest aspects of deep learning implementation. Both teachers and students perceived that a comfortable, interactive, and supportive classroom environment contributed to positive learning experiences. Activities such as group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and collaborative tasks encouraged students to participate actively.

These findings indicate that joyful learning should not merely be understood as creating enjoyable classroom conditions. Rather, positive emotional experiences provide psychological support that enables students to express ideas, ask questions, take intellectual risks, and learn from mistakes. Emotional and social aspects are important components of effective learning because students' engagement is influenced by both cognitive and affective processes (Immordino-Yang et al., 2021).

The strong perception of collaboration also demonstrates that social interaction plays an important role in deep learning. Through group activities, students can exchange ideas, negotiate meanings, and refine their understanding through interaction with peers. In Indonesian language learning, collaboration also supports communication skills because students practice expressing arguments and responding to different perspectives (Abidin, 2022).

4.5 Challenges and Implications for Indonesian Language Learning Development

Although the implementation of deep learning received positive responses, the findings reveal several challenges, including limited instructional time, differences in students' abilities, and the need for more appropriate assessment approaches. These challenges indicate that implementing deep learning requires continuous adjustment rather than simply adopting a new instructional approach.

Deep learning requires sufficient opportunities for students to explore concepts, discuss ideas, analyze information, and reflect on their learning processes (Fullan et al., 2023). Therefore, teachers need support in designing efficient learning sequences that maintain depth without exceeding available instructional time.

The findings also highlight the importance of differentiated learning strategies to accommodate variations in students' prior knowledge and abilities. In addition, assessment practices need to be aligned with deep learning principles by emphasizing understanding, reasoning, application, and reflection rather than merely measuring recall.

The findings have important implications for Indonesian language learning in madrasahs. Contextual and collaborative learning practices that have received positive responses should be maintained and strengthened. Meaningful learning needs to be expanded through authentic tasks that connect language learning with students' real-life experiences, while mindful learning should receive greater attention through systematic reflection activities.

Overall, this study demonstrates that deep learning has promising potential for supporting Indonesian language learning practices in madrasahs. The alignment between teachers' and students' perceptions indicates that meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning principles have begun to emerge in classroom practices. However, continuous improvement is still required, particularly in strengthening reflection, assessment, differentiation, and teacher professional development to achieve deeper and more sustainable learning experiences.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that teachers and students at MTs Nurul Yakin, Gorontalo City, generally have positive perceptions toward the implementation of deep learning in Indonesian language learning. The findings indicate that deep learning practices have begun to incorporate the principles of *meaningful learning*, *mindful learning*, and *joyful learning* through contextual activities, classroom interaction, collaboration, and opportunities for students to express ideas and reflect on their learning experiences.

Teachers perceive deep learning as a shift from content-oriented instruction toward learning processes that emphasize understanding, active participation, problem-solving, and reflection. Similarly, students experience deep learning as a more engaging and meaningful learning process, particularly through contextual examples, discussions, collaborative activities, and supportive classroom environments.

However, the implementation of deep learning still requires further improvement, especially in strengthening reflective learning activities, developing appropriate assessment strategies, managing differences in students' abilities, and providing continuous support for teachers. Therefore, the findings suggest that the implementation of deep learning in Indonesian language learning requires not only teachers' readiness but also systematic support through professional development, learning resources, and collaborative practices.

This study contributes empirical insights into how deep learning is perceived and experienced by teachers and students in the madrasah context. The findings can serve as a foundation for developing contextual Indonesian language learning strategies that are more reflective, meaningful, and student-centered

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