

THE TRANSFORMATION OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING BASED ON DEEP LEARNING TO ENHANCE STUDENTS CRITICAL LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of Indonesian language learning has become an urgent necessity in the digital era to address the persistent issue of low students' critical literacy. Conventional instructional approaches are often insufficient in fostering higher-order thinking skills, analytical abilities, and reflective engagement with texts. This study aims to analyze the role and effectiveness of deep learning-based Indonesian language instruction in enhancing students' critical literacy. The research employs a qualitative approach using a systematic literature review of scholarly articles, research reports, and educational policy documents published between 2020 and 2025. The findings indicate that deep learning-based instruction, which emphasizes conceptual understanding, meaningful learning, reflective thinking, and knowledge integration, significantly contributes to the improvement of students' critical literacy, particularly in critical reading, argumentative writing, and discourse analysis. This study recommends the systematic integration of deep learning principles into Indonesian language learning as a strategic pedagogical approach to strengthening students' critical literacy skills.

Keywords: Indonesian language learning, deep learning, critical literacy, learning transformation, 21st-century education

Introduction

Critical literacy is a fundamental competency in Indonesian language education, playing a crucial role in developing students' higher-order thinking skills. It goes beyond basic reading and writing abilities, encompassing the capacity to analyze, evaluate, interpret, and critically reflect on texts within their social, cultural, and ideological contexts. However, numerous studies indicate that Indonesian students' critical literacy levels remain relatively low, particularly in comprehending argumentative and complex texts.

Indonesian language instruction has traditionally focused on grammatical mastery and memorization of linguistic concepts, limiting opportunities for students to engage in deeper cognitive processes. In response to these challenges, the deep learning approach has emerged as a pedagogical paradigm that emphasizes meaningful learning, conceptual depth, reflective thinking, and the transfer of knowledge across contexts.

Aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum policy, which prioritizes student-centered and meaningful learning, the implementation of deep learning in Indonesian language education is both relevant and strategic. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how the transformation of Indonesian language learning through a deep learning approach can enhance students' critical literacy.

Literature Review

Critical Literacy in Indonesian Language Education

Critical literacy refers to learners' ability to critically engage with texts by questioning assumptions, identifying perspectives, recognizing bias, and understanding the broader socio-cultural implications of language use. In Indonesian language learning, critical literacy is essential for developing critical reading skills, argumentative writing, and reflective thinking.

Previous research demonstrates that instructional strategies emphasizing discussion, textual analysis, and reflective dialogue can significantly enhance students' critical literacy. Nevertheless, the widespread application of such strategies remains limited due to the dominance of teacher-centered instruction and assessment systems focused on rote learning.

Deep Learning in Education

Deep learning in educational contexts differs fundamentally from artificial intelligence–based deep learning. It refers to a learning approach that prioritizes deep conceptual understanding, cognitive engagement, problem-solving, and reflective thinking. Key characteristics of deep learning include meaningful learning experiences, integration of knowledge, metacognitive reflection, and the application of learning to real-world contexts.

This approach encourages learners not merely to remember information but to understand, analyze, and apply knowledge critically and creatively.

Deep Learning and Critical Literacy

The integration of deep learning principles into Indonesian language learning facilitates active student engagement in text analysis, critical discussion, and reflective interpretation. Several studies indicate that deep learning–oriented instruction positively influences students' critical literacy by enhancing their ability to interpret complex texts, evaluate arguments, and construct evidence-based reasoning.

Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative research design using a systematic literature review (SLR) method. The SLR approach enables a comprehensive synthesis of existing research related to deep learning–based Indonesian language instruction and critical literacy development.

Data Sources

The data consist of secondary sources obtained from peer-reviewed national and international journals, conference proceedings, and relevant educational policy documents. The reviewed literature was limited to publications from 2020 to 2025 to ensure relevance to contemporary educational contexts.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, involving thematic identification, categorization, and synthesis. The analysis focused on instructional strategies based on deep learning, indicators of critical literacy, and pedagogical implications for Indonesian language education.

Results and Discussion

Characteristics of Deep Learning–Based Indonesian Language Instruction

The findings reveal that deep learning–based Indonesian language instruction is characterized by contextual learning, reflective discussion, in-depth text analysis, and active student participation. Teachers function as facilitators who guide students in formulating critical questions, constructing meaning, and developing independent understanding.

Impact on Students’ Critical Literacy

The implementation of deep learning approaches significantly enhances students’ critical literacy, particularly in critical reading and argumentative writing. Students demonstrate improved abilities to identify main ideas, analyze authors’ perspectives, evaluate textual evidence, and articulate coherent arguments.

Challenges in Implementation

Despite its benefits, several challenges were identified, including limited teacher understanding of deep learning concepts, time constraints in classroom implementation, and assessment systems that prioritize learning outcomes over learning processes. Addressing these challenges requires targeted professional development and the alignment of assessment practices with deep learning principles.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the transformation of Indonesian language learning through a deep learning approach plays a significant role in enhancing students’ critical literacy. Deep learning fosters meaningful learning experiences, deep conceptual understanding, and critical thinking skills. Successful implementation requires teacher readiness, curriculum flexibility, and authentic assessment systems that support reflective and process-oriented learning.

Recommendations

1. Indonesian language teachers are encouraged to integrate deep learning strategies into reading and writing instruction.
2. Schools should support continuous professional development programs focused on deep learning–based pedagogy.
3. Future research should employ experimental or mixed-method approaches to empirically examine the effectiveness of deep learning–based instruction on students’ critical literacy outcomes.

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