



English Teachers's Readiness in Implementing Deep Learning Approach at The Elementary School Level

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Abstract. English education in elementary schools is crucial for equipping students with early communication skills in the global era. The Indonesian education curriculum continues to develop, including the implementation of a deep learning approach that is believed to improve students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. This study analyzes the readiness of elementary school English teachers on the southern coast of Central Java and Yogyakarta to implement deep learning in learning activities. The instrument in this study was an interview containing eighteen questions that had to be answered by fourteen elementary school English teachers. The results show that teachers have a positive understanding of this approach and implement it through methods that are relevant to student conditions, interesting media, and the use of technology. However, increasing the English teachers' readiness is still needed through training and workshops, especially for teachers without an English education background.

Keywords: Approach, English, Deep Learning, Readiness, Teacher

1. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that connects communication between nations around the world. English needs to be learned in order to adapt in this global era, where most people around the world are connected through the internet network. English education in elementary school is very important to equip students with early communication skills in facing the global era. Mastery of English can increase self-confidence and open up wider learning opportunities in the future. Therefore, English learning needs to be adjusted to the times. One form of this adjustment is evident in the changes to the education curriculum aimed at achieving an effective education system. The development of the education curriculum in Indonesia has undergone several significant changes in the last few decades. Since the New Order era to the Reformation era, the curriculum in Indonesia has continued to be adjusted to the needs of the times and global demands [1]-[3]. The 1994 curriculum, which emphasized the achievement of material targets, was replaced by the Competency-Based Curriculum (KBK) in the early 2000s, which then developed into the School Level Curriculum (KTSP) in 2006. This change aims to provide greater autonomy to schools in managing the learning process according to the characteristics and needs of students.

Furthermore, the government introduced the 2013 Curriculum (K13) as a means of improving KTSP, with a focus on strengthening character education, a scientific approach, and authentic assessment. However, the implementation of K13 in the field faces various challenges, especially in terms of teacher readiness and learning support facilities. Curriculum policy changes appear unstable because they often occur without clear direction and substance. These changes can reduce the effectiveness of learning [4].

The COVID-19 pandemic, which struck the world in early 2020, also had a significant impact on the education sector, including in Indonesia. Learning that was originally carried out face-to-face was forced to switch to an online model in a short time. This condition encourages the acceleration of technology adoption and the transformation of learning that is more flexible, independent, and oriented toward 21st-century skills [5]-[7]. The government responded to this situation by launching the Emergency Curriculum and then introducing the Merdeka Curriculum as an effort to adapt learning to the context and needs of students more flexibly [8]. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the importance of deep learning, focusing not only on mastering content, but also on developing critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative thinking skills. In this context, the role of teachers becomes very crucial, especially

English teachers at the elementary school level, who are expected to be able to integrate the deep learning approach into a fun, meaningful, and contextual learning process for early-age learners [9], [10].

However, the implementation of the deep learning approach cannot be done without adequate readiness from educators. This readiness includes teachers' conceptual understanding of the approach, the ability to design learning that encourages exploration and deep thinking, and mastery of technology that supports active and student-centered learning processes [9], [11]. This opinion is also reinforced by the idea of the Indonesian minister of primary and secondary education, Mr. Abdul Mu'ti who stated that to improve the education problem in Indonesia in the post-pandemic era by using a deep learning approach, it is necessary to improve from the educators first [12].

Teacher is a profession that requires interdependency between abilities, competence, and the various roles as one whole and synergetic union usually known as 'engagement' [13]. In the 21st century, the formation of professionalism requires a transformation of education, notably the quality of teachers capable of advancing knowledge, training, equity and students' achievement [14]-[15]. Teacher engagement and readiness can be achieved when some of conditions are fulfilled, which is when teachers can be the most influential part of students' lives, when the teachers have the enthusiasm for teaching but also concern for the students' success exceeds current standard, and when the teachers understand subjects well but not afraid to admit that they still need to learn more. Teacher must also take pride in their profession and thus transmit their trust and optimism to their students [16]. This theory of teacher engagement explains the extent to which teachers are prepared cognitively, effectively and psychologically to adopt new approaches or changes in learning. For educational institutions to be egalitarian and prosperous, highly qualified and competent teachers are essential. To help students realize their full potential and contribute to society in the twenty-first century, teachers today must meet increasingly demanding and complex standards. Teachers, now more than ever, need to be professionals who base their decisions on a solid and current body of knowledge, given the scope and diversity of these demands [17], [18].

While the term "deep learning" is often associated with artificial intelligence technologies, in an educational context, deep learning refers to a deep and comprehensive learning process [10]. This approach emphasizes a deeper understanding of lesson materials and the development of high levels of thinking ability, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation [20] -[21]. The deep learning approach involves students emotionally and cognitively in their learning process, making the deep learning approach more focused on developing a deeper understanding of the lesson materials through the comprehensive learning experience [9], [23] -[25]. This approach has the potential to transform a traditional learning paradigm that is often glued to memorization and repetition of information into more constructive and reflective learning [25]. In recent years, the implementation of deep learning approaches in education has gained significant attention, as it is believed to enhance students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. The dominant conventional model, which has focused on the one-way transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, is no longer adequate to meet the demands of digital era. The digital era requires a more meaningful and contextual approach of learning [10], [26], [27]. Meaningful learning is learning that not only conveys information but also links the lesson materials with real and relevant experiences to students' lives. Contextual learning enables learners to understand and apply the knowledge they have acquired in various situations, thereby better preparing them to deal with the complexity and challenges of the digital era.

As with the principles available in Indonesia's curriculum known as Kurikulum Merdeka, the application of the deep learning approach is very much in line with it. Merdeka's curriculum makes room for students to explore the learning topics deeply according to their potential and interests [8], [28]. The Merdeka curriculum and the deep learning approach both promote freedom of learning and an emphasis of project based learning. Hence, the deep learning approach, which focuses on a meaningful and conscious learning experience, becomes particularly relevant for application in the context of education in Indonesia. The definition of deep learning is also defined by the Indonesia's Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Abdul Mu'ti in Tempo 2024 [12]. He stated that this approach model emphasizes the importance of learning that focuses on deep understanding, enabling students not only to memorize but to effectively internalize knowledge. The deep learning approach will be an integral part of the national educational system, supported by comprehensive ministerial rules and teacher training programs [10]. This approach rests on three fundamental elements: Meaningful learning, Mindful learning, and Joyful learning. Meaningful learning is a learning process in which new information is linked to the structured understanding a person has gained during the learning process. The meaning of meaningful learning occurs when a learner tries to associate new phenomena with the knowledge he has and is linked with the lesson and thus engages new concepts [29]. Mindful learning is defined as the application of a

flexible state of mind characterized by active engagement in the present, awareness of learning context, sensitivity to novelty, and the creation of new definitions and categories of information in the learning process [30]. Joyful learning is long known for its active, creative, effective, and fun learning process. The principle of joyful learning is to make the learning atmosphere fun so that learners are active, creative, comfortable, and happy to learn [31]-[35].

Deep learning is one of the creative, student-centered learning strategies that the Indonesian government has highlighted as being crucial. However, there is limited research on the readiness of elementary school English teachers to implement deep learning approaches, particularly in rural areas such as the southern coast of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The purpose of this study is to analyze and to portray the level of preparedness of elementary school English teachers in implementing the deep learning approach in English teaching activities. By portraying the readiness of English teachers to implement deep learning, the study aims to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers in adopting a profound learning approach and to inform English teaching in the region. This study aims to examine the extent to which elementary school English teachers on the southern coast of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta are prepared to implement the deep learning approach. The main problems in this study are formulated as follows:

To what extent are elementary school English teachers on the southern coast of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta prepared to implement the deep learning approach in English learning activities?

To address the underlying problem, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How well do elementary school English teachers understand the concept of deep learning?
2. What learning strategy do teachers use in integrating deep learning into English teaching?

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study focused on the case study design and employed qualitative research methods. Exploring a problem, gaining a thorough grasp of the phenomenon, gathering data based on words, evaluating the data for description using text analysis forms, and interpreting the finding's more significant significance are some of the characteristics of the qualitative methods [35], [36]. This study aimed to collect data on the readiness of English teachers to implement the deep learning approach in 14 elementary schools on the southern coast of Central Java and Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Participants of the Research

The data source of this research consisted the statements of the English teachers at the elementary school level on the coast of Central Java and Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The respondents involved in this study consisted of 14 English teachers in the elementary schools along the southern coast of Central Java, namely in Purworejo regency, including SDN Pagak, SDN Girirejo, SDN Jatimalang, SDN Jatinegoro, SDN Jogoresan, SDN Jogoboyo, MIM Krendetan. Elementary schools located in Kebumen regency, including SDN Wiromartan, SDN 1 Lembupurwo, SDN Selotumpeng, SDN Tlogopragoto, SDN Mirit, and elementary schools located in Kulon Progo, Special Region of Yogyakarta including SDN Glagah and SD Muhammadiyah Temon.

Data Collection

In order to collect data, the researchers used interviews as the instrument of this research. The interview was used in this research to answer the research questions. The interview provided an opportunity for the researchers to listen, view, or experience the respondents point of view for some time and to ask investigative questions to explore more ideas. The instrument in this study was an interview containing eighteen questions that had to be answered by 14 elementary school English teachers on the coast of Central Java and Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

The researchers conducted the interview to the participants. Interviews conducted by the researchers were divided into three categories. First, an interview that has a set of questions and all the participants will be asked with the same questions. This interview was called structured interview. Second, an interview that has close-ended questions can be called semi-structured interview. These interview questions will be asked based on the context of the participants' responses. Third is natural interview or unstructured interview, which means that the researchers or interviewer makes conversation with the participants with spontaneous questions or general questions based on their situation [37], [38]. These categories of interviews were used in the data-collecting process.

Data Analysis

After all the data were collected, the data needed to be analyzed. For the interview, the researchers will determine which parts that need to be included in the interview transcript. The researchers attempt to identify any information gained as the result of the interview by interpreting the narrative summaries of what participants did. The results of the interview were analyzed based on what the English teachers at the elementary school level said about their readiness to implement the deep learning approach in learning activities. The conclusion will be drawn based on the narrative interpretation of the interview transcripts.

The data of this study were displayed in the form of narration. After the data was displayed, the researchers would draw and verify the conclusion. The conclusion would be drawn based on the research questions. The purpose of displaying the data was to help the researchers understand the data deeper and then consider what to do for the next stage.

3. FINDINGS

This section presents the research findings obtained through in-depth interviews with 14 English teachers at the elementary school level. The interviews involved 18 questions designed to explore various aspects related to the level of English teachers' understanding of the deep learning approach and the learning strategies that teachers used in implementing the deep learning approach in English learning activities. The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively to identify significant patterns, themes, and views from the respondents, which will be further described in the following subsections.

The Level of English Teachers' Understanding of the Deep Learning Approach

This subsection will outline the English language teachers' understanding of the concepts, principles, and characteristics of the deep learning approach. The interview questions related to this subsection are questions number one to number ten, which ask about the teachers' background and the teacher's understanding of the deep learning approach. The findings of the interview questions will be presented in narrative form as follows.

The first question of the interview asked how long the teacher had been teaching English as a learning subject in elementary school. The 14 elementary school English teachers who were respondents to this study had varying time and experience in teaching English. Of all the teachers that the researchers interviewed, the longest time and experience in teaching English were respondents 3 and 13, who had taught English in elementary schools for approximately 15 years. Respondent 3 answered the first question as follows:

Researcher : How long have you been teaching English in elementary school?

Respondent 3 : I have been teaching English in elementary schools since 2010, so it has been at least 15 years until now.

While respondent 13 answered the first question as follows:

Researcher : How long have you been teaching English in elementary school?

Respondent 13 : Since I became a civil servant, I have taught English in Elementary schools, although it was still basic, at that time as far as I remember it was 2009, so it was about 16 years.

The two quotes above prove how long they have spent their time teaching English in elementary school until this study was conducted.

On the other hand, the average teacher that the researchers interviewed, other than respondents 3 and 13, had just started teaching English in elementary schools some time ago from the time this research was conducted. The underlying reason for this was that the teacher had just been assigned, and another reason was that the implementation of the latest curriculum required the implementation of English learning, which was not required in the previous curriculum. The first reason was stated by respondent 4:

Researcher : How long have you been teaching English in elementary school?

Respondent 4 : I was just assigned to this elementary school in 2024, so I have been teaching English here for about 1 year.

Another reason mentioned by respondent 1 is as follows:

Researcher : How long have you been teaching English in elementary school?

Respondent 1 : I just started teaching English this year, because previously I taught in lower grades still using the K13 curriculum where there was no English learning in elementary schools. This year I just started teaching grade 5 using the Merdeka Curriculum.

The above quotes represent some of the reasons they provided for why they had just started teaching English in elementary school not long before this research was conducted.

Interview question number two asked whether the teachers have ever attended training related to the Merdeka curriculum or the latest learning approaches. Most of the teachers that the researchers interviewed admitted to having attended training related to the independent curriculum, but for training related to the latest approaches, such as deep learning, some teachers admitted to having attended, some studied independently, and some admitted to having never attended any training at all. In her statement, respondent 11 said that:

Researcher : Have you ever attended training related to the Merdeka Curriculum or the latest learning approaches?

Respondent 11 : In 2024, I attended a deep learning workshop and training that was planned for the independent curriculum, but it was only explained briefly and focused more on designing teaching modules.

The quotes above stated that respondent 11 had been attended a brief workshop or training on the latest learning approach. On the other hand, Respondent 14 said that:

Researcher : Have you ever attended training related to the Merdeka Curriculum or the latest learning approaches?

Respondent 14 : Every beginning of the semester, there is always training for the latest approach. For the deep learning approach, although there is no special integrated training, I as a teacher am required to always be updated on the latest learning approaches. So I study it independently.”

The quote above states that even though there is no specific training that can be followed, every teacher should be able to learn the deep learning approach independently using the media they have. However, researchers found that there were still teachers who thought that they had never received any training regarding deep learning because they thought that deep learning was a new concept that was initiated not long before this research was conducted. There were also conditions where teachers have not had a turn to take part in training or workshops related to the latest approaches because their position is still as an honorary teacher. This statement was quoted from respondent 8. Her statement is as follows:

Researcher : Have you ever attended training related to the Merdeka Curriculum or the latest learning approaches?

Respondent 8 : I have not attended any direct training because I have not had my turn as an honorary teacher, but with this position I can try to learn and practice the latest approaches independently.”

The third interview question asked about what teachers know regarding the deep learning approach in learning activities. Of all the elementary school English teachers who had been interviewed by the researchers, most of them were of the opinion that deep learning in learning activities is in-depth learning where students act as subjects in learning. There are also some teachers who believe that deep learning is meaningful, fun, and memorable learning for students. Here are some statements from teachers that prove these findings:

Researcher : What do you know about the deep learning approach to learning activity?

Respondent 5 : In my opinion, deep learning is meaningful learning that gives students a more meaningful and easy-to-understand.

Respondent 4 : The deep learning approach is more centered on students who are required to be more active and give meaning to learning with an approach that makes students feel happy playing while learning.

Respondent 8 : In my opinion, the deep learning approach is a way of teaching using fun media so that students can understand English learning optimally.

Respondent 11 : In my opinion, deep learning is an approach that creates learning where students are more active in learning accompanied by teachers to develop students' independence and creativity in developing their talents.

Some of the quotes above are findings obtained by researchers regarding the answer to question number three.

The fourth interview question asked about teachers' opinions regarding the differences between deep learning and traditional learning. In this case, the researchers found that all teachers agreed that the deep learning approach was better than traditional learning. Below are some transcripts of interview responses from teachers that support the above statement.

Researcher : In your opinion, what is the difference between deep learning and regular (traditional) learning?

Respondent 12 : In my opinion, the deep learning approach gives a deeper impression to students, so students understand and absorb learning more easily. Then in the deep learning approach, teachers must be able to design learning that is appropriate and interesting for students. While traditional learning is only limited to the transfer of knowledge between teachers and students.

Respondent 10 : In my opinion, deep learning uses more digital media.

Respondent 2 : In my opinion, the deep learning approach is more interesting for students to provide meaningful and enjoyable learning and leave a mark on students' memories. While traditional learning is more about transferring knowledge as a formality and does not leave a mark on students' memories.

Respondent 6 : Deep learning requires students to be more active and think critically. Learning is centered on students and teachers as facilitators.

According to them, the traditional teacher-centered learning approach and lecture method are no longer relevant to the needs of elementary school students in this digital era. The use of learning methods with digital media, such as audiovisuals and the like, will be more easily absorbed by today's elementary school students. It can be concluded that the essence of the deep learning approach from the teacher's perspective is learning that is fun, memorable, meaningful, and beneficial for the lives and future of students.

The fifth interview question asked about the extent to which teachers understand the concepts and principles of deep learning. In this case, teachers were asked about the extent to which they understood the three fundamental elements of the deep learning approach: Mindful learning, Meaningful learning, and Joyful learning. Researchers found that the answers from teachers varied widely. Some teachers only highlighted one of the three fundamental elements or some of them. However, the most frequently highlighted by teachers was Joyful learning. Here are some of the answers from the respondents:

Researcher : To what extent do you feel you understand the concepts and principles of deep learning?

Respondent 1 : From my experience, the deep learning principle that I understand the most is the principle of joyful learning, where students will pay more attention to learning if the delivery is enjoyable for them.

Respondent 7 : From what I understand in the context of mindful learning, students do not feel forced to learn, for the context of meaningful learning is oriented to the environment. While joyful learning students enjoy learning more.

Respondent 9 : What I understand most is fun learning where the atmosphere in the classroom is comfortable and enjoyable for students and learning is more easily absorbed by students. Students are freer to express their opinions and are not afraid to learn.

Interview question number six asked whether teachers had ever attended a workshop or training in developing learning tools using a deep learning approach. Researchers found that most respondents had never attended a workshop or training in developing learning tools that reflect deep learning principles. Here are some answers from the respondents:

Researcher : Have you ever attended a workshop/training on compiling learning tools using the Deep Learning approach?

Respondent 4 : The workshop on designing teaching modules has been carried out, but the deep learning approach has not been specifically socialized. So I am still learning little by little about learning devices with a deep learning approach.

Respondent 9 : I have never attended a workshop or training on compiling learning tools with deep learning principles, but I have attended for the Merdeka curriculum.

However, there were still teachers who attended training, namely respondent 8. She answers the question as follows:

Researcher : Have you ever attended a workshop/training on compiling learning tools using the Deep Learning approach?

Respondent 8 : About a year ago, I attended an online workshop on developing learning tools that included deep learning principles.

The seventh question asked to respondents in the interview was whether teachers were able to develop learning tools that reflected the principles of the deep learning approach. From all the answers given by respondents, they agreed that they must be able to compile learning tools that contain deep learning principles in them. Here are the answers from respondents 8 and 11 that represent the statement above:

Researcher : Are you able to develop learning tools that reflect the principles of the Deep Learning approach?

Respondent 8 : I must be able to and continue to study the preparation of these learning devices while implementing them in student learning activities to make them more innovative and varied.

Respondent 11 : So far I think I have implemented a deep learning approach by providing learning that is tailored to the student's learning style. So the point is I am little by little able to compile learning tools that reflect the principles of deep learning.

Next were questions number eight to ten, which contained questions about how teachers describe the three fundamental elements of deep learning, namely mindful learning, meaningful learning, and joyful learning. Here are the findings from the interview questions.

Teachers illustrate the principles of mindful learning by designing learning methods that require students to learn with full awareness and intention. Here are some opinions from the teachers:

Researcher : Can you give an example of learning that reflects the principle of mindfulness? (Mindful Learning)

Respondent 1 : From my experience, children will pay more attention and be present in class with full awareness if I insert quizzes, games or discussion materials that attract students' attention, if I only use lectures, students will pay less attention to the learning.

Respondent 6 : In order for students to focus, I use ice breaking to eliminate students' boredom and tiredness.

Respondent 8 : An example of a mindfulness learning method is using a game-based wordwall application to get children to pay attention or using colorful media to attract students' attention.

In describing meaningful learning, teachers relate the benefits of learning to students' daily lives. Here is their answer that represents the statement above:

Researcher : How do you describe learning that reflects meaningful learning?

Respondent 14 : Meaningful learning is learning that encourages students to understand the meaning and benefits of the knowledge they receive in the short and long term.

Respondent 3 : In my opinion, meaningful learning is when the learning that is learned will be useful in real everyday life.

Respondent 9 : In my opinion, meaningful learning is where students understand the learning well, when asked, are able to answer and are able to express the material appropriately.

Next is a description of joyful learning according to the answers of the teachers who were interviewed. Here are their opinions about joyful learning:

Researcher : What comes to your mind about joyful learning?

Respondent 8 : In my opinion, fun learning is learning where students are happy, teachers are also happy and vice versa. Not only fun, learning is also absorbed by students.

Respondent 10 : Joyful learning is where students do not feel forced to learn something. For example, if learning is done in groups, students can choose their group mates so that students are comfortable learning because they are with friends they like.

Respondent 11 : Joyful learning is learning that is not always directed at the teacher who teaches, but the atmosphere in the classroom must encourage students to be actively involved in learning. For example, by playing while learning but also encouraging passive students to be more actively involved in class. Fun learning must also be able to eliminate students' fears in learning such as fear of making mistakes or fear of appearing in front.

The Learning Strategies Used in Implementing Deep Learning Approach in English Learning Activities

This subsection will outline the learning strategies that were used by English language teachers in implementing the deep learning approach in English learning activities. Interview questions related to this subsection are questions number eleven to eighteen, which ask about strategies for implementing deep learning in learning, availability of facilities and support, and teacher needs and expectations. The findings of the interview questions will be presented in narrative form as follows.

The eleventh interview question asked about how teachers design English learning activities according to the principles of deep learning. The answers given by respondents to this question vary, but there are

similarities in their answers. The first is the adjustment of learning methods to the environmental conditions of students, and the second is the selection of learning media that are interesting to students.

Here are the opinions on teachers' strategies for designing English learning activities. The first opinion is the answer from respondent 2:

Researcher : How do you design English learning activities to be in accordance with the principles of deep learning (Mindful, Meaningful, & Joyful learning)?

Respondent 2 : To design English learning activities that reflect the principle of deep learning, the first step I take is to choose materials that are fun and relevant to students' daily lives so that learning will be more easily absorbed by students. Can utilize social media or other media, such as films, to educate students. I once used a short animated film media whose dialogue was not too difficult and then searched for its meaning with students.

Next is the answer from respondent 7. The statement is as follows:

Researcher : How do you design English learning activities to be in accordance with the principles of deep learning (Mindful, Meaningful, & Joyful learning)?

Respondent 7 : I design learning activities by adjusting to the environment and conditions of students. Learning can be taken from the lives that students encounter every day.

The statement from respondent 11 differs from the others because it emphasizes differentiated learning. Here is the answer she gave:

Researcher : How do you design English learning activities to be in accordance with the principles of deep learning (Mindful, Meaningful, & Joyful learning)?

Respondent 11 : I will design learning activities by making them structured and chronological starting from the opening, core learning to the closing. The duration of time is also considered so that learning is more optimal. Then the selection of devices or media used is also important, especially in adjusting the learning style for active and passive students. Passive students tend to need more stimulus than active students. The point is I design learning activities with a differentiated learning method.

Interview question number twelve asks about how teachers create a learning atmosphere where students are mentally and physically present in English learning. The implied similarity in the answers given by the respondents in answering this question is by presenting learning methods and styles that encourage students to stay focused during learning activities. The strategy that most respondents often use is to present digital learning media and play while learning strategies that encourage positive competition among students.

Researcher : How do you create a learning environment where students are truly present mentally and physically during the learning process? (Mindful Learning)?

Respondent 8 : In my opinion, there are still obstacles in making students focus during learning unless they use strategies such as game-based learning and strategies that trigger healthy competition between students.

The statement from Respondent 8 above confirms that the use of game-based learning strategies and healthy competition is quite effective in creating student focus. There are also those who have to present digital devices and audio-visual learning models to make students pay attention to learning. Here is the statement of Respondent 4:

Researcher : How do you create a learning environment where students are truly present mentally and physically during the learning process? (Mindful Learning)?

Respondent 4 : To present students mentally and physically, I usually use audio-visual based digital media so that students can learn directly by watching and listening to English videos with focus and absorbing deeper meaning.

The thirteenth question asked about how teachers encourage students to seek real relevance and meaning from the English language they are learning. In this case, the strategy often used by teachers is to relate learning to students' daily lives. For example, this can be in the form of assignments that encourage students to practice learning outside the classroom and explore things in the environment around them. Here are the answers from respondents 11 and 13:

Researcher : What do you usually do to encourage students to seek real relevance and meaning from the English language learning they are learning? (Meaningful Learning)?

Respondent 11 : To encourage students to find meaning from the lessons learned, especially in English learning, I often direct students to practice what they have learned.

For example, I once gave students an assignment to make a simple conversation video. That way, I hope their English language skills will be useful in students' daily lives.

Respondent 13 : To encourage students to look for real-world relevance, I will direct students to explore outside of class to record vocabulary from what they see as a step to absorbing knowledge from real-world examples.

Question number fourteen asked about the strategies used by teachers to create an enjoyable learning environment in English learning. The strategies used by teachers to create a fun atmosphere in English learning are pretty diverse. Starting from the use of digital media, such as audio or audio-visual, icebreakers, games, and so on. Here are the examples based on the respondent's answers:

Researcher : What strategies do teachers usually use to create a fun atmosphere in English learning? (Joyful Learning)?

Respondent 1 : Instead of using lectures, my strategy in creating fun learning, I usually use songs or other media that are interesting to students. I also have plans to use Audio visuals such as Tiktok videos as English learning media in the classroom.

Respondent 3 : In fact, many students like English, the strategy I use is using audio media that contains dialogues or simple sentences, then students listen and examine the meaning together, this aims to make students feel challenged to understand the sentences they hear.

Respondent 8 : My strategy is sometimes to use games and then group students to answer questions that contain rewards that students like in order to encourage students' enthusiasm to compete and compete.

The fifteenth interview question asked about the resources available to support deep learning in elementary schools. Researchers found that each school already has adequate resources and infrastructure like internet access and digital devices to implement the deep learning approach. It is just that its use is not yet optimal. Here are what teachers said in the interview:

Researcher : Do you feel you have sufficient resources (media, tools, technology) to support learning with a deep learning approach?

Respondent 2 : Electronic devices such as laptops, projectors and other media are already available in the madrasah, it only requires clear conceptual direction and training to utilize the available facilities.

Respondent 4 : To support learning with a deep learning approach, resources are already sufficiently available at SDN 1 Lemburpurwo. Devices such as chrome books and internet access can be utilized. Students can learn and seek references from these resources and facilities.

Question number sixteen is about the role of schools and principals in supporting teachers in implementing the deep learning approach. The researchers found that every elementary school English teacher interviewed received full support in implementing the latest approach. The school and the principal also served as facilitators, providing everything needed to implement the deep learning approach. Here are the statements of the respondents:

Researcher : What is the role of the school or principal in supporting teachers to implement this approach?

Respondent 2 : Schools and principals always support every teacher who wants to explore and develop better learning methods. Schools and principals also facilitate media and devices that support learning such as free internet access and so on.

Respondent 8 : Schools and principals have an important role in supporting and facilitating the implementation of approaches that are useful for students and can improve the quality of learning in schools.

Respondent 11 : The role of the school and the principal is certainly to provide support such as holding internal meetings to discuss teachers' complaints and provide solutions and support needed by teachers. The principal also provides support if there is a better learning approach or model.

The next question is the seventeenth. This question aims to find out what kind of training or support is needed by teachers to be more prepared to implement deep learning. Most respondents answered that the training they needed was special training or workshops on deep learning methods in teaching English. Most teachers who teach in elementary schools do not have a basic knowledge of English because they are graduates of elementary school teacher education majors. Moreover, as class teachers who not only have to teach English but also master other subjects, a workshop specifically focused on one subject would really help them. Respondents' answers that represent these findings are as follows:

Researcher : What kind of training or support do you need to be better prepared to implement deep learning?

Respondent 1 : The training I need is conceptual and detailed training that can be specialized for each subject. For example, for English, there is a special workshop that uses learning tools with a deep learning approach. Training with examples of implementation and clear steps is also very necessary.

Respondent 4 : The training and support needed can be in the form of workshops on tips for learning English that are fun and meaningful and can be well received by students.

Respondent 12 : To teach English, I need additional support from educators in this school. The training I need, for example, is a workshop that is specifically for learning English using a deep learning approach.

The last question asked about teachers' expectations regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum and the immersion approach in learning English in elementary schools. The expectations expressed by most respondents were that the implementation of the existing curriculum be further improved and the shortcomings in the previous curriculum could be corrected. Respondents also hoped that English learning at the elementary school level could be easily mastered by students. Here are their statements:

Researcher : What are your expectations regarding the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and the deep learning approach in English learning in elementary schools?

Respondent 4 : The hope for the future is that deep learning can improve learning in Indonesia so that it can create students who are creative and enthusiastic in learning, do not feel burdened by learning, enjoy and not stressed in learning activities.

Respondent 8 : My hope is that the current curriculum can be improved and its shortcomings can be fixed, such as the policy that requires students to move up a class, sometimes leaving students with immature abilities who are already in high classes. The level of English learning is still not in accordance with the abilities of students who are still young and not ready to accept complex English learning. I hope that these shortcomings need to be fixed again.

Respondent 11 : I hope the current curriculum will be improved because it is too liberating for students, where sometimes there are still students who are already in high classes but their literacy skills are still lacking. In my opinion, the independent curriculum is good, but in its implementation there are still many shortcomings that need to be fixed and conditioned again. Hopefully in the future the education system in Indonesia can be developed to be even better.

4. DISCUSSION

This study investigated the readiness to implement deep learning approaches among 14 elementary school English teachers based on in-depth interviews covering their backgrounds, understanding of deep learning concepts, and strategies used in English learning activities. This research section will discuss the findings obtained by giving 18 interview questions to 14 teachers who teach elementary school English on the south coast of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Teachers' Understanding of the Deep Learning Approach

The study found varying levels of experience among the interviewed teachers. While some had extensive experience teaching English (up to 15-16 years), many were relatively new to teaching English in elementary schools due to recent assignments or the introduction of English learning in the latest curriculum. Regarding professional development, most teachers had attended training related to the Merdeka curriculum, but participation in deep learning-specific training varied. Some had attended brief workshops on deep learning, others studied it independently, and some had no formal training at all, perceiving deep learning as a new concept or not having had the opportunity due to their honorary teacher status. This highlights a potential gap in formalized deep learning training for elementary English teachers, particularly for those with less experience or specific contractual limitations.

When asked about their understanding of deep learning, most teachers perceived it as in-depth learning where students are the primary subjects. Many also emphasized its role in making learning meaningful, enjoyable, and memorable. This aligns with the core tenets of deep learning, focusing on active student engagement and lasting comprehension. All teachers agreed that deep learning is superior

to traditional learning, viewing traditional methods as limited to knowledge transfer and less engaging for students in the digital era. They specifically highlighted that deep learning fosters more profound understanding, requires teachers to design engaging lessons, and often utilizes digital media. From the teachers' perspective, the essence of deep learning is that it is fun, memorable, meaningful, and beneficial for students' lives and futures.

Delving deeper into the fundamental elements of deep learning (Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful learning), teachers' understanding varied, with a predominant focus on "Joyful learning." Joyful learning was described as making learning enjoyable for students, fostering a comfortable classroom atmosphere, encouraging free expression, and making learning easier to absorb. Mindful learning was understood as designing activities that require students' full awareness, often incorporating quizzes, games, discussions, and icebreakers. Meaningful learning was consistently related to connecting learning to student's daily lives and ensuring the knowledge gained has short and long-term benefits [39], [40].

Despite their conceptual understanding, most teachers had not attended workshops specifically on developing learning tools that reflect deep learning principles, though some had training on the Merdeka curriculum. However, there were exceptions, with at least one teacher having attended an online workshop on this topic. Encouragingly, all teachers recognized the importance of developing learning tools aligned with deep learning principles and expressed their commitment to doing so.

Learning Strategies for Implementing Deep Learning

Teachers employed various strategies to design English learning activities in line with the principles of deep learning. Common approaches included adjusting methods to students' environmental conditions and selecting engaging learning media. Specific examples included choosing fun and relevant materials, using social media or films, and differentiating instruction based on student learning styles.

To ensure students' mental and physical presence in English learning, teachers commonly utilize digital learning media and game-based strategies that encourage positive competition. The use of audio-visual aids was also noted as effective in enhancing student focus and comprehension. Encouraging students to find real-world relevance and meaning in English involved strategies such as assigning tasks that promote out-of-classroom practice and exploration of their environment. To create an enjoyable learning environment, teachers employed diverse strategies, including songs, digital media (such as TikTok videos), audio materials, icebreakers, and games that incorporate rewards to boost student enthusiasm and competition.

The availability of resources and support for deep learning implementation is adequate in most schools, with internet access and digital devices readily available. However, teachers noted that optimal utilization of these resources requires clear conceptual direction and further training. School leadership, including principals, was consistently reported to provide full support to teachers in implementing the deep learning approach, acting as facilitators and providing necessary resources.

Regarding future needs, most teachers expressed a strong desire for specialized training and workshops on deep learning methods specifically tailored to teaching English. This need is particularly acute, given that many elementary school teachers lack a foundational background in English and must manage multiple subjects. They emphasized the importance of training that includes practical implementation examples and clear steps.

Finally, teachers' expectations for the independent curriculum and deep learning approach centered on continuous improvement of the curriculum, addressing existing shortcomings, and ensuring that English learning at the elementary level is easily mastered by students. They hoped that deep learning would foster creative, enthusiastic, and unburdened students while also acknowledging areas for improvement in the current curriculum's implementation to ensure students develop mature abilities, particularly in literacy.

Overall, the findings of this study describe the readiness of elementary English language teachers to implement deep learning approaches as a nuanced and evolving landscape. While there is a solid conceptual understanding of the principles of deep learning, particularly the focus on playful and meaningful learning and a willingness to develop relevant learning tools, there is a clear need for more specific and detailed training on how to implement this approach in English language teaching. The availability of adequate school resources and support is a strong foundation, but its optimal use relies heavily on clear conceptual guidance and ongoing training. By addressing these training gaps, particularly for teachers from non-English speaking backgrounds, and by continually refining the curriculum to better suit the needs and abilities of students, teacher readiness can be significantly strengthened, ultimately resulting in more effective and engaging English language learning experiences for elementary school students.

5. CONCLUSION

This study shows that primary school English teachers have diverse but generally positive conceptual understandings of the deep learning approach. They acknowledge the superiority of deep learning over traditional learning, emphasizing its fun, meaningful, and student-centered characteristics. Most teachers have attended training related to the Independent Curriculum, but specific training on the deep learning approach varies, with some teachers learning independently or not having received any training at all. Nevertheless, all teachers showed willingness and commitment to develop learning tools that reflect the principles of deep learning. Their teaching strategies for implementing deep learning include adjusting learning methods to students' environmental conditions, selecting engaging learning materials, utilizing digital media and games, and connecting learning materials to students' daily lives. Resources and support from the school and principal were also considered adequate, although optimizing their use still requires conceptual direction and further training. Teacher readiness can be improved with more focused and specific training and workshops on in-depth learning methods in teaching English, especially considering that many teachers do not have an English language education background. Teachers' expectations for the current curriculum implementation are for continuous improvement to produce students who are more creative, enthusiastic, and not burdened by learning and to ensure that English learning is easy for students to master.

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