Relevance of Pragmatism Philosophy in the Development of Indonesian Language Curriculum with Tyler Model

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Abstract: *The Indonesian educational landscape is transitioning from the philosophical advocacy of the Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) policy to the practical implementation of Deep Learning pedagogies. This transition is critical for the Indonesian Language subject, which is central to fostering critical discourse and national identity. This conceptual research article argues that the philosophy of Pragmatism provides a robust foundation for Deep Learning, while the Tyler Model offers a systematic framework for its implementation. Employing a critical qualitative literature review, this study deconstructs the current implementation challenges in Indonesia. The findings reveal a gap between policy ideals and classroom practice, where projects often remain superficial. The synthesis demonstrates how each stage of the Tyler Model—from formulating competency-based objectives to designing authentic learning experiences and performance assessments—can be guided by Pragmatist principles to create a coherent Deep Learning environment. The study concludes that a deliberate integration of these frameworks is essential for moving beyond ceremonial compliance towards a transformative Indonesian language curriculum that empowers students as critical thinkers, collaborative problem-solvers, and effective communicators.*

Key Words*: Deep Learning, Indonesian Language Curriculum, Pragmatism, Tyler Model, Competency-Based Education*

Introduction

The *Merdeka Belajar* (Independent Learning) policy represents a significant paradigm shift in Indonesian education, aiming to liberate schools from administrative rigidity and foster student-centered learning (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). However, as the policy matures, the central challenge has evolved from philosophical adoption to pedagogical implementation. The term "independent learning" risks being misinterpreted as a mere reduction in content load or a simple addition of projects, without a fundamental change in the depth of cognitive engagement. The emerging imperative is, therefore, the explicit and systematic integration of Deep Learning.

Deep Learning, as conceptualized by global education networks like New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL), refers to the process through which learners acquirecompetencies to create and apply new knowledge in real-world contexts, characterized by the 6Cs: character, Citizenship, Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, and Critical Thinking (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). This stands in stark contrast to surface learning, which is often characterized by rote memorization and the passive reception of information.

The Indonesian language curriculum is at the heart of this transition. Traditionally, it has heavily emphasized the mastery of structural knowledge and the appreciation of national literature. While valuable, this focus has often neglected the functional, critical, and ethical application of language in a complex, digital society. The current situation reveals a disconnect: while teachers are encouraged to create teaching module with projects, many of

these projects lack the pedagogical depth to foster the 6Cs, instead becoming decorative activities that do not fundamentally alter students' cognitive or communicative capacities (Supena et al., 2021).

This research posits that this implementation gap can be bridged by grounding the curriculum in a coherent philosophical and theoretical framework. The philosophy of Pragmatism, with its core tenets of experience, inquiry, and practical consequence (Dewey, 1997), provides the "why" for Deep Learning—it defines the purpose of education as empowering agentic problem-solvers. Concurrently, Ralph W. Tyler's (2013) model of curriculum development provides the indispensable "how." Its four fundamental questions create a logical sequence for ensuring that the lofty goals of Deep Learning are systematically translated into concrete learning objectives, experiences, and assessments. This paper contends that the systematic integration of Deep Learning pedagogies, underpinned by Pragmatist philosophy and operationalized through the Tyler Model, holds the potential to effectively transform the Indonesian Language curriculum, shifting its paradigm from rote knowledge transmission to the cultivation of essential.

This study rests on a tripartite theoretical foundation, weaving together a learning paradigm, a philosophical base, and a curriculum design model. Deep Learning: Beyond Superficial Engagement. Deep Learning is not a new curriculum but a pedagogical approach that redefines the learning process. It is characterized by several key elements that distinguish it from traditional surface learning approaches: knowledge construction: students are not vessels to be filled but active constructors of meaning. Learning involves grappling with complex questions, synthesizing information from multiple sources, and creating new knowledge products that demonstrate deep understanding (Fullan et al., 2018). Cognitive Engagement: Deep Learning demands higher-order thinking skills—analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and creation—as defined by Bloom's revised taxonomy. Tasks are cognitively challenging and require sustained intellectual effort rather than superficial engagement with content.

The ultimate goal of a Deep Learning framework is to cultivate holistic student proficiency across six interconnected competencies, known as the 6Cs. This model moves beyond academic knowledge to foster critical thinking, enabling students to expertly evaluate information, design innovative solutions, and make reasoned judgments. This cognitive skill is synergistically linked to creativity, which involves cultivating an entrepreneurial eye for opportunities and the capacity to generate novel ideas. To bring these ideas to life, students must master communication by effectively navigating oral, written, and digital discourse for diverse audiences. As complex problem-solving is rarely solitary, collaboration is essential for working productively and respectfully in diverse teams. Underpinning these skills are the dimensions of character—forged through resilience, empathy, and ethical reasoning— and citizenship, which empowers students to understand global issues and contribute meaningfully to the common good. Together, these competencies form a comprehensive blueprint for preparing students to navigate and shape the complexities of the modern world. Authentic Problem-Solving: learning is situated in real-world, relevant challenges that have meaning beyond the classroom walls, enabling students to see the immediate application and relevance of their learning (Said & Syahrul, 2022).

Pragmatism first emerged in America under Charles Sanders Pierce, but it itself developed rapidly and became world-famous thanks to William James and John Dewey, who also contributed to it. Pragmatism itself comes from the Greek word "pragma," meaning action or practice. Linguistically, pragmatism is a school of philosophy that holds that the criterion for truth is whether something is useful in real life (Muhadjir, 2001).

Pragmatism: The Philosophical Underpinning of Deep Learning

Biesta (2014:45) the principles of Pragmatism, as articulated by John Dewey and contemporary scholars, are not merely compatible with Deep Learning; they are its philosophical precursor. Several key principles demonstrate this alignment:

a) Education as Life, Not Preparation for Life: this principle directly challenges the inert knowledge of a traditional curriculum. It posits that the most meaningful learning occurs through authentic, life-like experiences (Dewey, 1997). A Deep Learning task in Bahasa Indonesia, therefore, is not writing an essay for the teacher, but drafting a persuasive proposal for a local environmental issue to be presented to the village head.

b) Learning through Experience and Inquiry: Dewey's concept of "learning by doing" is the engine of Deep Learning. It is a cyclical process of encountering a genuine problem, investigating solutions, applying knowledge, and reflecting on outcomes. This transforms the student from a passive recipient to an active inquirer (English, 2016).

c) The Instrumental Nature of Knowledge: in Pragmatism, knowledge is an instrument for action. The value of learning grammar, for instance, is not in its own right but in its power to make one's communication clearer, more persuasive, and more effective. This aligns perfectly with the Deep Learning focus on application and utility (Wills & Sandholtz, 2019).

The Tyler Model: A Blueprint for Systematic Implementation

The Tyler Model provides the structural integrity to implement the ambitious vision of Pragmatism and Deep Learning. Its four stages offer a coherent design logic that remains relevant in contemporary curriculum development (Hlebowitsh, 2018):

1. Defining Objectives: this is the most critical stage. Objectives must move beyond stating what students will "know" to what they will be able to "do" with that knowledge in complex situations. They must be formulated to explicitly target the 6Cs and be derived from studies of the learner, contemporary life, and subject matter. Backward design is an approach to designing curriculum, units, and lessons that starts with the end in mind and works backward from there. Rather than starting with a textbook, favorite lesson, or time-honored activity, backward design calls for us to make our goals or standards specific and then to 'work backward' to develop the means to achieve them (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

2. Selecting Learning Experiences: learning experiences are the pedagogical activities designed to achieve the objectives. For Deep Learning, these must be interactive, problem-based, and allow students to practice the behaviors outlined in the objectives. They should provide opportunities for students to engage with real-world problems and develop practical solutions.

3. Organizing Learning Experiences: deep learning requires a deliberate organization. This involves vertical organization (building complexity across grade levels) and horizontal organization (integrating knowledge across subjects, such as linking Indonesian language with social sciences and technology in a single project). This ensures a progressive development of competencies.

4. Evaluating Effectiveness: assessment must be authentic and performance-based, designed to measure the degree to which students have attained the deep competencies, not just superficial recall. It provides data for improving the learning process itself and ensures that evaluation aligns with the curriculum's philosophical foundations (Khoirudin & Prasetyo, 2021).

Method

This study employs a critical qualitative descriptive approach through an in-depth, systematic literature review and policy analysis. The methodology was designed to not only synthesize existing knowledge but also to critically analyze the gaps between policy intent and practical reality in the Indonesian context. The research process was conducted in three detailed phases:

1) Data Collection and Sourcing

The research utilized multiple data sources to ensure comprehensive coverage:

a) Academic Literature: a comprehensive search was conducted on scholarly databases (SCOPUS, Google Scholar, ERIC)

b) Policy Documents

c) Contextual Analysis: reports from Indonesian education watchdogs and articles in national journals were reviewed to understand the on-the-ground challenges of implementation, particularly regarding the Indonesian language curriculum.

2) Data Analysis

The analysis followed a systematic process to ensure comprehensive understanding: Thematic Analysis: The collected data was coded to identify recurring themes, such as implementation gap, project-based learning misconceptions, assessment challenges, and teacher capacity. This allowed for the identification of patterns across different data sources. Critical Gap Analysis: the synthesized theoretical framework was then used as a lens to critically examine the current state of the Indonesian language curriculum, identifying specific points of failure and opportunity for integration of Deep Learning principles. Based on the comprehensive analysis, a detailed, integrated model was constructed, illustrating how the Tyler Model's stages can be explicitly driven by Deep Learning goals and Pragmatist principles for the Indonesian language subject. This model provides a practical framework for curriculum developers and teachers to implement Deep Learning approaches systematically.

Results and Discussion

The analysis reveals a clear and actionable pathway for integrating Deep Learning into the Indonesian Language curriculum. The following sections provide a detailed discussion of how each stage of the Tyler Model can be operationalized to achieve Deep Learning outcomes.

Defining Deep Learning Objectives for Indonesian Language

The current curriculum often states objectives like "Students understand the structure of a persuasive text". A Deep Learning objective, informed by Pragmatism, would be fundamentally different in both formulation and intent. The formulation of objectives within this integrated framework follows a systematic process before being refined through a final screening:

a) Objectives are initially derived from a synthesis of three foundational sources. This begins with a study of the contemporary learner, recognizing that today's students are digital natives who must be equipped to critically evaluate and ethically produce online information, moving beyond the mere comprehension of printed texts. Subsequently, a study of contemporary life is conducted, focusing on pressing societal issues such as digital polarization, the spread of misinformation, and environmental crises. Finally, input from subject matter specialists ensures that the essential tools of the discipline such as rhetorical strategies, narrative techniques, and linguistic registers are not taught as ends in themselves but are positioned as vital instruments for achieving the broader, competency-based objectives.

b) These preliminary objectives are then filtered through a dual philosophical and psychological screen. The lens of Pragmatist philosophy rigorously filters out any objectives focused on inert knowledge, insisting instead that every goal must demonstrate a tangible, practical outcome applicable in real-world contexts. Concurrently, a psychological screen ensures the objectives align with constructivist learning theories, meaning they must be designed for acquisition through active, social, and contextualized experiences that connect authentically to students' prior knowledge and intrinsic interests.

Sequential Learning Experiences

1) Immersion and Problem Identification: students are presented with a portfolio of real (but vetted) hoaxes and misinformation campaigns that have affected Indonesian society. This creates an authentic need to know and establishes the practical relevance of the learning.

2) Inquiry and Analysis: in collaborative teams, students use critical questioning frameworks (e.g., CRAAP Test—Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose) to deconstruct the messages. They analyze the linguistic devices used (e.g., emotional language, us-vs-them rhetoric, logical fallacies) and research factual information to counter the misinformation.

3) Collaborative Design and Planning: teams brainstorm the most effective way to counter the misinformation, considering their target audience and platform. They storyboard their video, assigning roles (researcher, scriptwriter, video editor, presenter) and establishing timelines for completion.

4) Creation and Production: students apply their knowledge of persuasive language and ethical communication to produce a short, shareable video (1-3 minutes) that presents factual information in an engaging, accessible format. This phase integrates digital literacy skills with language competencies.

5) Presentation and Reflection: students present their videos to an authentic audience (e.g., another class, parents, school community) and write a metacognitive reflection on their learning process, the challenges they faced, the ethical responsibilities of a communicator, and how they would improve their approach in the future.

This comprehensive experience is deeply Pragmatic—it starts with a genuine problem, uses knowledge as an instrument for inquiry and action, and results in a tangible consequence that extends beyond the classroom (Widodo & Perfecto, 2023).

Organizing Learning Experiences for Cumulative Complexity

The effective implementation of Deep Learning necessitates moving beyond isolated, stand-alone projects toward a strategically organized curriculum designed for the progressive development of competencies over time. This is achieved through deliberate vertical organization, often conceptualized as a spiral progression, where core skills are revisited at increasing levels of complexity across grade levels (Fullan et al., 2018). In the context of the Indonesian language curriculum, this translates to a carefully scaffolded sequence of learning experiences. For instance, in Grade 7, the focus can be on personal and local communication through a project like "My Community Story," where students create a digital poster about a local hero. This builds a foundation of basic research and narrative skills. In Grade 8, the scope expands to regional or national issues with a project such as "Preserving Our Culture," requiring students to produce a podcast episode on a threatened tradition, thereby scaling up the demand for analysis and digital production. By Grade 9, students are ready to engage with complex national or global issues through a project like "The Hoax Buster," which involves writing a formal policy brief or crafting a sophisticated awareness campaign. This

progression demands advanced critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and persuasive communication (Suwandi, 2022). Each year, the core skills of research, critical analysis, and communication are revisited at a higher level of complexity and abstraction, fostering progressive mastery and transfer of learning to new contexts (Zubaidah, 2019).

Evaluating Deep Learning with Authentic Assessment

Assessment must be radically redesigned to measure the development of the 6Cs, moving far beyond multiple-choice tests on grammar and literary knowledge.

a) Multidimensional Rubrics: assessment rubrics for the "Hoax Buster" project would have distinct criteria for each competency being assessed:

b) Critical Thinking: depth of source analysis, identification of logical fallacies, quality of evidence used in counter-narrative.

c) Communication: clarity, organization, persuasiveness of the video script and presentation; appropriateness for target audience.

d) Collaboration: peer and self-assessment on contribution to the team, effectiveness in fulfilling assigned roles, quality of teamwork.

e) Character & Citizenship: ethical use of information, constructive tone of the counter-narrative, demonstration of social responsibility.

Comprehensive Portfolios: students maintain a digital portfolio of their work throughout the year, including initial drafts, research notes, storyboards, final products, and reflective pieces. This portfolio showcases their growth in competencies over time and provides rich evidence of Deep Learning (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). The Continuous Feedback Loop: Evaluation data is used formatively throughout the learning process. If assessment rubrics show that students are consistently weak in critical thinking, for example, the subsequent learning experiences are adjusted to provide more scaffolding and explicit instruction in that area. This makes the curriculum a dynamic, self-improving system—a core Pragmatist ideal that emphasizes continuous growth and adaptation (Biesta, 2014).

Conclusion

This detailed analysis conclusively demonstrates that the current situation in Indonesian education—the necessary shift from advocating independence to implementing depth—requires a deliberate, theoretically grounded, and systematic approach. The philosophy of Pragmatism provides the essential "why," championing an education that is experiential, problem-oriented, and geared towards developing agentic citizens who can navigate complex real-world challenges. The Deep Learning framework, with its focus on the 6Cs, operationalizes this philosophy into a clear set of 21st-century competencies that are essential for success in contemporary society.

However, without a systematic design model, these ideals risk remaining as inspirational rhetoric rather than transformative practice. The Tyler Model emerges as the crucial "how," providing the structural backbone to transform theory into practice. Its four-stage rationale offers curriculum designers and teachers a clear, coherent, and actionable path:

1. It demands that objectives be formulated as complex competencies, derived from careful study of the learner, society, and subject matter.

2. It guides the selection of learning experiences that are inherently active, collaborative, problem-based, and authentic.

3. It necessitates the careful vertical and horizontal organization of these experiences to build deep, transferable understanding over time.

4. It requires an evaluation system that is as deep and authentic as the learning itself, providing meaningful data for continuous improvement of both student learning and curriculum design.

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