

# English Teacher's Challenges in Implementing 'Joyful Learning' Method an Indonesian Junior High School

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## Abstract

*Purpose:* This research aims to identify the overall Joyful Learning method that has been implemented by English teachers in the current Merdeka Curriculum. This research also aims to analyze the challenges faced by teachers, and evaluate students' responses to the application of this teaching method in class.

*Methodology:* The methodology used in the research of Joyful Learning method in junior high school is semi-structured interviews and school observation, which are used to collect data using a qualitative research approach.

*Results:* The/results/of the data obtained by the researcher, show that with the application of the Joyful Learning method in class learning has succeeded in making the percentage of students interested in learning foreign languages increase, so that students can easily learn English language material at the next school level.

*Applications/Originality/Value:* however, as for the challenges or obstacles that teachers have in applying this method, teachers have their own ways so that learning runs well and smoothly. To provide assistance to students in understanding the material provided by the teacher, then the challenges faced by teachers can be resolved with this research. teachers can focus more on the methods that should be used to suit students' abilities. The results of this study add to our understanding of English language teaching methods at the junior high school level and provide guidance to improve the effectiveness of the Joyful Learning method.

## Introduction Section

In the era of globalization, English is growing so that learning English is now an obligation that must be fulfilled, understood, and mastered by students in schools. As the language of instruction in today's world, English is not only an academic necessity, but also a medium of global communication in social media and interaction with others. Therefore, language learning in schools can be designed with fun methods so that students have at least four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking (Mustofa, D., et al, 2019). In mastering the four language skills, teachers do not only focus on the teaching module but are expected to know the psychological conditions of their students. One of the main problems in learning English at school is the low level of student comprehension. Therefore, the selection of models, methods, strategies and other approaches as a form of learning process is very necessary.

Research studies on existing teaching methods in junior high school were conducted by (Prayogo, E. R, 2022; Dewati, B, 2020; Krisnanto, H., et al, 2023). Based on the research, we can conclude that various teaching methods, such as 'drill and practice', 'word squares' and 'flipped classroom', have had a significant impact on student learning in the classroom. Essentially, these researchers have incorporated game-based learning methods into the current curriculum. These methods not only improve students' comprehension (speaking, reading, writing and listening), but also motivate them to participate more actively in learning. Thus, the use of learning models has been shown to be effective in improving quality of English language teaching at the secondary level. However, few have explored fun learning methods that can be the basis for further developing learning methods used by teachers in the current curriculum era.

In this study, researchers used junior high school subjects, which is a school level where a person enters early adolescence. According to Anjani, A, et.al. (2023), junior high school students are individuals aged between 15 to 18 years. Therefore, with the age range listed in the theory, middle school students are included in the early adolescent stage of development. At this school level, a teacher who uses fun teaching methods is needed, thus encouraging students to actively learn in the classroom. In Indonesia, there are PAIKEM or PAKEM methods that have been used by some junior high school teacher. The "PAIKEM" learning method offered by teachers in the classroom can make students active. According to Matulesy, Y, et.al. (2021), PAIKEM are active, creative, innovative, effective and fun learning for learners. This method is a teaching approach that is usually used together with certain methods and accompanied by teaching aids in the form of environmental design, so that the learning process in the classroom runs smoothly and becomes active, innovative, creative, effective and fun. In this way, students' interest is aroused and the absorption of knowledge and skills imparted by the

teacher is facilitated. The methods by which PAIKEM can be implemented are (1) discussion methods, (2) joyful learning method, (3) role-playing method, and (4) simulation method.

In today's era, the most recently used curriculum is the Merdeka Curriculum. In this Merdeka Curriculum, there is a "joyful learning" method, which is one of the methods in PAIKEM mentioned above. In one of the secondary schools in Indonesia, more precisely in Klaten Regency, Central Java, some teachers have used this method, especially English teachers. Based on research studies cited by several researchers with different case studies, namely/Pastika (2023), Nur (2019), Pemikiran & Vol (2021), it can be concluded in the article that through the approach, it can emphasize the importance of creating a fun and interactive learning environment where students can be actively engaged in the learning process. Through methods such as discussions, guided investigations and hands-on experiments in nature, students should construct knowledge in a meaningful way and develop an attitude of confidence and creativity. By creating a fun atmosphere and using varied methods, teachers can help students to be more engaged and actively participate in learning. In this way, Joyful Learning not only improves students' understanding of the environment, but also builds their character as individuals who care about environmental sustainability.

In conclusion, fun learning strategies can be implemented in schools through various approaches, such as PAIKEM, which includes the Joyful Learning method. The difference is that PAIKEM is a method that has been used by teachers in previous years, such as during COVID-19 (online learning), while Joyful Learning is a renewal of the PAIKEM method. This research also covers 3 problems, namely: 1) What procedures are used by teachers when implementing the Joyful Learning method? 2) What challenges do English teachers face when using Joyful Learning method? and 3) How do students respond to learning with Joyful Learning method?. From the 3 problem formulations, the purpose of this research is to identify, analyze, and assesing the application of the 'Joyful Learning' method and student responses to classroom learning through this method. The GAP in this study compared to previous studies is that this study does not investigate the procedures used by teachers in applying the Joyful Learning method, how they face challenges, and how students respond to the application of the Joyful Learning method taught by English teachers in one of the junior high schools in Klaten, Indonesia.

### **Theoretical Review**

Communication In the application of Joyful Learning methods in English subjects, an active, conducive, and fun classroom environment is needed, of course. Based on research that has been conducted by several researchers, such as research by Setyawan et al. (2020), A. D. Wulandari & Nurjaman (2023), and Jumrawarsi & Suhaili (2021). The research discusses the role of teachers in creating an effective and enjoyable learning environment in the classroom. By using different methods but still in the same context, these researchers have the same goal, one of which is for students in the classroom to be conducive when learning takes place. Effective learning is not only influenced by the material provided by the teacher, but also the involvement of a teacher-student interaction and a supportive learning environment. Recommendations for teachers in these research studies are to use varied media, maintain warmth in interactions with students, and create conducive conditions for the learning process to take place effectively.

In implementing the Joyful Learning method in English language learning in the classroom, it is proven effective in creating a fun, comfortable, active, and innovative learning atmosphere. Based on the theory from (Mustofa, D., et al, 2019), it can be concluded that this method not only helps to overcome students' boredom during English learning, but also increases students' engagement and motivation. The teacher's procedure in application the Joyful Learning method in the study was to integrate interesting games and activities. Joyful Learning is able to optimize the learning and teaching process, so that students can be more active in participating well. The study was more specific on psycholinguistic understanding of students to understand students' character, which contributes to the success of learning in the classroom. Therefore, teachers there need to apply active, creative, and innovative approaches to achieve optimal results when learning takes place.

The technology that has developed today can be used for the application of various teaching methods by teachers. In the Joyful Learning method, there is learning that uses multimedia to increase student effectiveness. This has been conveyed by (Rudjiono, D., & Rozikin, K. 2021) according to researchers, the use of interactive learning media through the Joyful Learning method has succeeded in increasing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. this method helps students in developing their way of thinking, then the ability to build understanding of the material presented by the teacher, and students can formulate conclusions in a fun way. Joyful Learning has an effect on student achievement, and student achievement will increase with the use of the Joyful Learning method (Safira Datu. 2021).

In conclusion, joyful learning strategies in schools can be implemented through various approaches such as creative, innovative, active and fun with the Joyful Learning method. Some of the research articles above focus on the very/important/role of teachers in/creating a/conducive learning/environment, through the arrangement of classrooms, the use of appropriate media, and the management of a positive school culture. Teachers' creativity and innovation in teaching is proven to increase students' motivation and interest in learning, which in turn has a positive impact on their learning outcomes. Various media are also used in the application of this method, which has been proven by several experts to have the potential to improve overall learning outcomes. In addition, approaches that suit the needs of students, including students with special needs, have a significant impact on their social and academic development.

## Research Methods

This research uses qualitative research methods with a focus on identifying challenges as well as procedures and student responses in the application of Joyful Learning methods. This research uses a descriptive approach, this approach was chosen because it is to deeply understand the phenomenon or situation of the application of the Joyful Learning method in the context of learning in junior high school. With this approach, researchers can explore the experiences and perceptions that occur to teachers and students during the learning process in the classroom. This research design uses a case study. According to Assyakurrohim, D., et al., (2023) Case study is a study of a limited system or case over time by collecting in-depth data and integrating various sources of information in a particular context. Systems are limited to time and place, while cases can be studied based on programs, events, activities, or people. Through this design, the researcher will focus on a specific location, namely the school, then the subjects are 3 English teachers and students, and the data collection methods that will be carried out by the researcher are interviews and observations.

The reason why English teachers use the Joyful Learning method is because the school has implemented the Merdeka curriculum system as a whole by applying various learning methods that can increase student activeness and student understanding, one of which is Joyful Learning. The results obtained from the use of qualitative research itself are an emphasis on meaning and generalization. The procedure of Joyful Learning method, teachers' constraints in applying Joyful Learning method and students' responses in applying Joyful Learning method at school are the objects in this research. The object helps researchers in finding data to be sought in accordance with the topic and context. By using these research objects, the researcher wants to know how an English teacher can make students become active, creative and innovative when learning in one of the junior high schools in Klaten, Indonesia. There are many challenges and procedures experienced by a teacher, and the researcher will explore these issues according to the object.

The subjects of this study were all English teachers (as informants) and students at SMP Negeri 1 Pedan. In the school used for this study, there are 3 English teachers with the following descriptions: 1) the first teacher, teaching in grade 7 and grade 8, 2) the second teacher, teaching in grade 8 and grade 9, and 3) the third teacher, teaching in grade 9. Each grade level has 7 rombel which each rombel is determined by students' academic assessment. The purpose and focus of this research is to explore the challenges faced by English teachers in implementing fun learning methods in one of the junior high schools in Klaten, Indonesia. This research is expected to provide useful information to improve teachers' teaching effectiveness and students' learning experience.

The last, this methodology discusses data collection techniques through interviews and observations, all of which are supported by the methodology described by Sugiyono (2021). Semi-structured interviews have questions that have been prepared by the researcher in a systematic and complete manner for data collection. This interview technique aims to obtain comprehensive information and gain knowledge in the form of information relating to the procedures and challenges faced by English teachers in implementing the 'Joyful Learning' teaching method during lessons. This interview will be conducted by two people, namely the researcher and the English teacher. In this study, the researcher will collect data by conducting in-class observations in a junior high school during English language learning. The researcher goes directly to the field to examine the phenomenon that occurs when the teacher applies the joyful learning method.

## Research Results and Discussion

### Research Result

This research chapter outlines a framework for investigating the challenges faced by English teachers in junior high schools in Klaten, Indonesia regarding the implementation of the 'Joyful Learning' method. Further research and analysis will contribute to a deeper understanding of how to foster an engaging and effective learning environment. By elaborating on the themes that emerged from the data obtained from the approach in the form of interviews with teachers and students, school observations, and document analysis, then, the validity of the data in this study was tested using the triangulation technique, which means comparing and rechecking between one data collection method and another, as cited by (Maulidiah, et al., 2023).

Based on the theme of the theme taken, one of which is about understanding the concept of Joyful Learning, it is necessary to emphasize that Joyful Learning is a teaching approach that emphasizes learning experiences that are fun, effective, innovative, and based on student involvement. This method encourages student involvement both mentally and physically. Then, students who are actively involved tend to have a good understanding of the material that has been taught by the teacher. The aim of this method is to encourage students to be creative through a project, experiment, or presentation, this method can also make students always think ahead to solve the learning challenges they face. Students are involved with the teacher in discussions, games and group activities.

With today's technological developments, junior high schools in Indonesia, particularly in Klaten, Indonesia are faced with the need to implement more engaging and relevant learning approaches for students. The 'Joyful Learning' method can be an effective solution to increase students' interest and motivation to learn, but the challenges faced by teachers in implementing it need to be addressed. The researcher will explore the 3 problem formulations described above. The first step is to observe the school for one day. The second day, researchers collected research data by interviewing teachers and

students, and for the last day researchers took documents to be analyzed again. The participants in this study consisted of 3 English teachers in Klaten Junior High School, Indonesia, 3 classes at the junior high school level (grade 7, grade 8, and grade 9) each with 1 rombel.

### ***Procedures Used by English Teacher's in Implementing the Joyful Learning Method***

The researcher produces data that interviews with 3 English teachers related to the procedures used in the implementing of the joyful learning method can be concluded that the method has indirectly been applied at school. By including games into English learning such as "Make and Match", ice breaking, word processing games, and can also add by watching short films, youtube, etc. to create a fun learning atmosphere and can increase student understanding even better. According to (Mustofa, D., et al., 2019) by including games in the learning process can provide a fun learning atmosphere. In other words, the responses of the 3 English teachers are in accordance with the theory above. Concrete evidence stating that the data is true can be seen from the results of interviews by researchers with English teachers at the school with details of the procedure below:

"Indirectly, the Joyful Learning method has been applied in learning, a way to make students in the class happy and comfortable first with learning English. By including a make and match vocab game, then students are asked to find and memorize vocabs, or it can also be playing cards and group games, watching videos and singing..." Teacher (Rini Listyowati, S.Pd), 6 November 2024, grade 7.

"By role playing with students, for example: singing, ice breaking at the beginning of learning, making a word and students are asked to find a new word from the word that has been given. So that they can learn vocab through the game, there are also listening songs and reading short stories with shifting snakes..." Teacher (Sri Sunarsih, S.Pd), November 6, 2024, Grade 8.

"Using videos to watch, for example, such as dramas or short films or narratives related to the material at that time, then students are asked to make a synopsis or summarize the story again and present it in front of the class..." Teacher (Sajadi, S.Pd), November 6, 2024, grade 9.

Based on the observations that have been made in class and in accordance with the data obtained, it can be concluded that each teacher has its own procedures, but in essence, the successful application of the Joyful Learning method must involve tips and tricks to build student activeness in class. Then after being observed, there is a percentage of students who prefer learning by watching short films, which is very high compared to various games. Students tend to have an attraction and understand the learning video given by the teacher faster than just using a textbook.

### ***Challenges for English Teachers in Implementing the Joyful Learning Method***

The implementation of learning methods does not always run smoothly as we expect, a teacher must have challenges that they when implementing the method. This is corroborated by the theory from (Rudjiono, D., & Rozikin, K., 2021). The results of interviews from 3 English teachers can be stated that, there is boredom, lack of enthusiasm in students, students tend not to focus when learning English at the end of the lesson schedule, and a teacher also experiences difficulties or obstacles when providing material in grade 7 because from elementary school (SD) has not received English lessons well. Of course, overcoming these challenges requires the involvement of teachers, students, school authorities and parents to create an active, creative, innovative, effective and fun learning environment. Concrete evidence showing the/results/of the research data can be revealed as follows:

"Sometimes feel bored or bored when students are very difficult to understand the material, students' responses are sometimes just silent and there is no high enthusiasm for English learning, and some students are lazy to do the assignments that have been given." Teacher (Sajadi, S.Pd), November 6, 2024, grade 9.

"Children tend not to focus when learning (more often chatting with their friends), vocabulary is still lacking, students feel shy and not confident when asked to perform or play challenge games in front of the class, give up before trying..." Teacher (Sri Sunarsih, S.Pd), November 6, 2024, grade 8.

"Because from elementary school (SD) there is a lack of English learning, the teacher has difficulty in providing material. What should be descriptive text material but must repeat from the beginning for example from the introduction of the subject (I, You, We, They, She, He, It) then how to use it, (In, On, At), Numbers, etc..." Teacher (Rini Listyowati, S.Pd), November 6, 2024, grade 7.

Based on the observations that have been observed and in accordance with the results of the data above, there are various kinds of challenges in applying the Joyful Learning method during class, each teacher has their own challenges that they face as well as their students, but they have their own ways of dealing with these challenges, for example making the next meeting with a different learning model and the teacher is expected to see the students' ability to understand English learning. This Joyful Learning method requires good cooperation between teachers and students, seen from the challenges faced by junior high school teachers in Klaten, Indonesia, it can be analyzed that many students feel bored, lack of enthusiasm for the learning material provided.

### ***Evaluation of Student Response to the Implementation of Joyful Learning Method***

Student response is needed in examining the application of the method, and can be an evaluation for the teacher to find out the shortcomings in providing material with this learning method. According to the theory said by (Pali, A., et al., 2021), it is in accordance with student responses to the application of the Joyful Learning method. The results of the data obtained can be concluded that, there are some students who like the method, but there are also some students who are still difficult to understand the material delivered through the method. Students prefer to watch short movies or YouTube videos and exciting games rather than having to do assignments etc. The following researchers include concrete evidence based on data obtained after conducting interviews with students in class:

“With the application of fun learning methods such as a game and then watching a short film, the material related to the video can be understood easily, for vocab little by little can increase, but sometimes bored and lazy when you have to repeatedly play the video to re-observe and analyze the film” said 3 students, grade 9.

“I like learning while singing, it's easier to understand when it's fun in the learning process, playing vocabulary games and practicing speaking English through reading short stories in a snaking sequence even though the grammar is still wrong, pronunciation is also not yet fluent, it's nice to be able to speak in a foreign language looks cooler...” said 3 students, grade 8.

“The teacher is fun when giving material in class, I didn't get clear English material when I was in elementary school. Repeating the material from the beginning is indeed a delay in the material but it can be easily understood from the beginning or the basics first, the games provided are interesting but if the English lesson is in the last hour of school it can feel sleepy and bored...” said 3 students, grade 7.

Based on observations that have been made in class, it can be stated that there are various student responses regarding the application of the Joyful Learning method. Students' responses stated that the application of the Joyful Learning method succeeded in making students happy and interested in learning a foreign language even though there were some students who were still less active in the implementation of learning in the classroom. According to the English teacher there, not 100% of students are active in class and easily understand the material, but not a few students also easily understand material presented by the teacher with the method in implementing of the Joyful Learning method.

## **Conclusion**

This study examines the challenges, procedures faced by teachers when applying the Joyful Learning method with different characteristics. The method has succeeded in bringing students in Klaten Junior High School, Indonesia to be happy to learn a foreign language even though there are obstacles from students and teachers. The main findings were derived from data obtained through semi-structured interviews and school observations. This teaching method proved to be effective when teacher-student interaction in the classroom had begun to decline, thus making students lazy to learn. 96 students from 3 classes namely grade 7, grade 8, and grade 9 agreed that their English skills improved because of the learning method in the classroom, thus increasing their overall confidence in using English both in and out of the classroom.

English teachers in the junior high school have different perceptions of the Joyful Learning method. This method requires full involvement between teachers and students, so the method has indirectly been successfully implemented in the classroom during learning. The results show, with vocabulary games, watching short movies, playing cards, group games, and “Match and Make” sentences in English, it turns out that students understand faster than learning using textbooks alone. Judging from this method applied, students are happy because learning becomes not monotonous, which means not only listening to the material, but students must be involved or active in class learning. The obstacles faced by students can be overcome by involving technology owned by the school such as in the language lab by using computers and entering quizzes in the form of games such as quiz and others. So that by using technology maybe students who have difficulty understanding can understand in different ways between one student and another.

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