



Original Article

Integrating Kamoro Oral Literature into a Deep Learning Pedagogical Model to Strengthen Character Values in Language and Literature Education Students

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Abstract:

This study explores the integration of Kamoro oral literature into a deep learning pedagogical model to strengthen character values among undergraduate students in Language and Literature Education. Despite the richness of indigenous oral narratives in Papua, they are often excluded from formal education. This research addresses the gap by investigating how Kamoro stories—rich in moral, ecological, and communal values—can enhance students' ethical awareness and cultural identity through a structured learning process. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method with an ethnographic orientation. Data were collected five months through in-depth interviews with Kamoro elders, classroom observations, student reflection journals, and semi-structured interviews with students and lecturers. Thematic analysis was used to identify core values embedded in the narratives and evaluate student engagement across five stages of deep learning: engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, and evaluation. Findings revealed that Kamoro oral literature contains strong cultural values such as respect for elders, environmental harmony, and communal responsibility. Students demonstrated meaningful engagement, critical thinking, and creative synthesis throughout the learning process. Reflective journals showed increased cultural pride and internalization of moral values. The inclusion of indigenous elders as co-educators also contributed to a more authentic and transformative learning experience. The study concludes that integrating indigenous oral traditions into deep learning frameworks not only enriches educational content but also supports character formation and cultural affirmation.

Keywords: character education, cultural identity, deep learning, indigenous knowledge, oral literature



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Introduction

In the rapidly transforming landscape of higher education, the integration of local cultural knowledge into academic curricula has emerged as a critical pedagogical imperative ([Shahjahan et al., 2022](#); [Sharma, 2024](#)). Particularly in regions marked by rich indigenous traditions—such as Papua, Indonesia—oral literature plays a significant role not only as a means of cultural expression but also as a repository of moral, ecological, and philosophical values ([Mpumuje et al., 2024](#); [Rupiassa et al., 2024](#)). Kamoro oral literature, known for its ritual chants, myths of origin, and ecological metaphors, represents an untapped source of indigenous knowledge that can substantially contribute to the development of students' character and cultural literacy.

Despite its richness, Kamoro oral literature remains largely underrepresented in formal education. Prevailing curricula often prioritize globalized content while marginalizing local knowledge systems, resulting in a disconnect between academic learning and the sociocultural realities of students ([Kipkoech, 2024](#)). In teacher training institutions, this gap is particularly concerning, as future educators are not sufficiently equipped with culturally grounded pedagogical strategies. As a result, character education efforts may become abstract and decontextualized, failing to resonate with students' lived experiences ([Jones, 2025](#)).

To address this educational gap, this study proposes the integration of Kamoro oral literature into a deep learning pedagogical model. Deep learning, as theorized by Marton and Säljö ([Entwistle, 2023](#)) and expanded by [Ramadhani \(2025\)](#), emphasizes meaningful learning processes that engage students in reflection, analysis, and application beyond rote memorization. Applied in a culturally responsive manner, deep learning enables students to internalize ethical values ([Baniata et al., 2024](#)), interpret complex narratives, and relate traditional knowledge to modern contexts ([Hermes & Rimanoczy, 2018](#)). This integration is also in line with Indonesia's national educational vision, particularly the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, which promotes six core competencies: religious, independent, collaborative, critical, creative, and global citizenship rooted in local culture ([Mery et al., 2022](#)). Kamoro oral literature, with its themes of communal responsibility, ecological harmony, and reverence for elders, directly contributes to these character-building goals.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore how Kamoro oral literature can be embedded into a deep learning framework to enhance character values among students in Language and Literature Education programs. It analyzes the pedagogical design, classroom implementation, student reflections, and the emergent character outcomes from engaging with indigenous texts. By synthesizing local wisdom with modern pedagogy, this research seeks to contribute a model of culturally grounded education that is both academically rigorous and contextually meaningful.

Methods

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach with an ethnographic orientation to explore the integration of Kamoro oral literature into a deep learning pedagogical model. Ethnography, in particular, is appropriate for capturing the indigenous meanings, values, and pedagogical potential of oral traditions, as it emphasizes deep cultural immersion and interpretation. The study was conducted in two main locations: first, among Kamoro communities in Mimika Regency, Papua, where data were gathered through interactions with traditional storytellers and elders; and second, at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Cenderawasih,

where the learning model was implemented in a classroom setting. The research spanned a five-month period from January to May 2025, which included field visits, storytelling sessions, instructional design, classroom implementation, and post-intervention reflection. Participants in this study were selected purposively, based on their relevance to the research objectives. They included eight Kamoro elders who are recognized custodians of oral tradition, two university lecturers specializing in language and literature education, and twenty-four undergraduate students enrolled in the fifth semester of the “Sastra Daerah” (Regional Literature) course.

Data for the study were derived from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data included transcribed oral narratives from the elders, observations of classroom implementation, interviews with participants, and reflective journals written by students. These were supplemented by secondary data such as published ethnographic reports, linguistic studies, and national education documents, particularly those related to the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* framework. A variety of instruments were developed to support the data collection process. Structured observation guides were used during classroom sessions to record patterns of student engagement, critical thinking, and peer interaction, with indicators informed by Biggs’ SOLO taxonomy. Semi-structured interview protocols were prepared for both elders and students, tailored to elicit insights into the values embedded in the stories and their perceived relevance to personal development. Students were also asked to complete weekly reflective journals that captured their emotional, intellectual, and moral responses to the learning process. Additionally, oral storytelling sessions were recorded in audio-visual format—upon receiving informed consent—for the purposes of transcription, analysis, and classroom use.

The data collection process unfolded through prolonged engagement and triangulated methods. In-depth interviews were conducted with Kamoro elders and student participants. Participant observations were carried out during classroom sessions where the oral literature was embedded into deep learning activities. Reflection journals, transcribed recordings, and related documents were collected and analyzed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical experience. Triangulation across different sources and techniques ensured the credibility and richness of the findings. Data analysis followed a thematic and interpretive approach. After initial data reduction through sorting and coding, a thematic analysis was applied to identify core values that recurred across the oral texts and student reflections, such as mutual respect, ecological harmony, communal responsibility, and reverence for elders. These themes were further interpreted using a cultural lens, highlighting their symbolic and moral significance within Kamoro cosmology and daily life. The analysis also examined how these values were internalized by students through the stages of deep learning—namely engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, and evaluation—providing a comprehensive picture of the learning experience. Member checking with cultural informants and peer debriefings with faculty colleagues were conducted to validate interpretations and enhance the rigor of the analysis.

Results

Core Cultural Values Embedded in Kamoro Oral Literature

The first key finding reveals that Kamoro oral literature carries a wealth of indigenous moral and philosophical values that are deeply relevant to character education. Based on interviews with community elders and transcription of traditional

stories, recurrent themes emerged: communal harmony, ecological stewardship, respect for elders, spiritual cosmology, and resilience in the face of adversity. These values are consistently embedded in symbolic narratives that have been transmitted orally for generations. Table 1 summarizes selected Kamoro narratives and the core values they embody:

Table 1. Core Values Identified in Kamoro Oral Narratives

Narrative Title	Theme/Plot Summary	Core Values
<i>The Sacred River</i>	A child sacrifices himself to restore water to his village	Selflessness, Communal Responsibility
<i>The Greedy Fisherman</i>	A man hoards fish and is punished by sea spirits	Honesty, Moderation, Ecological Harmony
<i>The Ancestral Tree</i>	A tree holds the spirits of ancestors and protects the clan	Reverence for Elders, Spirituality
<i>The Talking Canoe</i>	A canoe guides lost children back to their village	Trust, Guidance, Collective Memory

These stories are not merely entertaining folklore but function as moral codes that regulate social behavior and worldview. As Ratna (2014) argues, oral literature in traditional societies operates as a carrier of *nilai budaya*, shaping collective identity and intergenerational ethics. Similar to what [Tuwe \(2016\)](#) observed in African oral traditions, Kamoro narratives are structured pedagogically—full of metaphor and ritual—to convey ecological and social norms. This finding aligns with Indonesia’s national education goals, particularly the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, which emphasizes the formation of religious, environmentally conscious, and collaborative citizens ([Adhani et al., 2024](#)). By centering stories like *The Sacred River*, educators can frame moral reasoning in culturally grounded ways that resonate more deeply with students than abstract moral instruction typically found in textbooks.



Source: Bagus Kurniawan/detikcom

Figure 1. Kamoro tribe

Student Engagement and Deep Learning Responses

The second finding pertains to student engagement and cognitive-emotional responses during the implementation of Kamoro oral literature in the classroom. Observations across the five deep learning phases—engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, and evaluation—demonstrated that students interacted with the material on multiple levels. Their learning was not passive but reflective, analytical, and expressive. Table 2 summarizes how students responded during each phase of the deep learning model:

Table 2. Indicators of Deep Learning Observed During Classroom Implementation

Learning Phase	Learning Activities	Student Responses
Engagement	Listening to Kamoro storytelling (audio/video or live)	Emotional involvement, cultural curiosity
Exploration	Analyzing story structure, group discussion	Critical questioning, personal connections to story content
Explanation	Presenting analysis, connecting with personal experience	Active dialogue, comparative cultural interpretations
Elaboration	Creating new stories/artworks based on Kamoro values	Creative thinking, synthesis of traditional and modern elements
Evaluation	Reflective journaling and peer feedback	Deep reflection, expression of internalized values and character shift

Students' responses confirmed the assertion of [Stern et al. \(2017\)](#) that deep learning is characterized by personal engagement, conceptual understanding, and the transfer of knowledge to new contexts. The emotional engagement triggered by the stories—especially those that echoed their own village experiences—activated prior knowledge and cultural memory, creating a foundation for reflective analysis. Additionally, the elaboration stage produced student works that synthesized traditional themes with modern forms. These ranged from short fiction inspired by ancestral wisdom to visual storytelling based on ecological values. This supports the findings of [Bhardwaj et al. \(2021\)](#) that culturally responsive deep learning allows students to reinterpret traditional content through personal creativity, fostering both cognitive and identity development.

Character Development Through Cultural Narrative Integration

The final finding highlights how the integration of Kamoro oral literature into the deep learning model fostered observable development in students' character values. Analysis of student journals, combined with interviews and classroom observation, identified several values that students began to internalize as a result of their engagement with the narratives. These values included respect for elders, environmental stewardship, communal responsibility, and pride in cultural identity. Table 3 presents the character values most frequently articulated by students, along with representative expressions from their written reflections:

Table 3. Character Values Strengthened Among Students (Based on Reflections)

Character Value	Student Expression (Excerpts)	Frequency
Respect for Elders	"I feel ashamed that I never paid attention to the stories of my grandfather."	18/24
Environmental Awareness	"The story about the sea made me realize how greedy we've become."	14/24
Communal Responsibility	"I want to be more involved in my local youth group."	12/24
Spiritual Consciousness	"This narrative reminded me to pray and be grateful."	10/24
Cultural Pride	"Now I'm proud to be Papuan, not just an Indonesian student."	20/24

These outcomes echo the conclusion of [Yuliatin; Husni \(2021\)](#), who observed that character education rooted in local cultural wisdom tends to be more internalized and behaviorally manifested. Students not only articulated values learned from the stories, but also expressed intentions to apply them in their daily lives and future teaching practices. The pedagogical presence of indigenous elders in the classroom further reinforced the authenticity of the learning experience. As [Darong et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Sakti et al. \(2024\)](#) note, culturally grounded instruction that includes community participation enhances both content relevance and student motivation. In this context, the collaboration with Kamoro elders not only transferred knowledge but also transformed the learning environment into a space of intergenerational respect and ethical reflection. Overall, these findings demonstrate that integrating Kamoro oral literature within a deep learning model fosters holistic education—where students engage not only intellectually, but also emotionally, socially, and spiritually. This integration contributes to a culturally sustaining pedagogy that affirms identity, builds character, and develops critical consciousness.

Conclusion

The integration of Kamoro oral literature within a deep learning pedagogical model has proven effective in enhancing students' character formation, cultural awareness, and critical engagement. Through contextually meaningful narratives, students were able to internalize moral values rooted in indigenous wisdom, such as communal responsibility, environmental ethics, and respect for elders. The deep learning framework provided a structured yet flexible pathway for reflective, creative, and culturally grounded learning.

Suggestion

Educators are encouraged to incorporate local oral traditions into curriculum design to foster culturally responsive and character-based education. Universities should support collaborations with indigenous communities to ensure the authenticity and continuity of cultural knowledge. Further research is recommended to explore similar models in other cultural contexts and academic disciplines.

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