

**DEEP LEARNING IN STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL
THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AT THE
VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL: A CASE STUDY**
A THESIS

**Submitted to fulfill one of the Requirement for *Sarjana* Degree
in English Education Department**



**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID
PEKALONGAN
2025**

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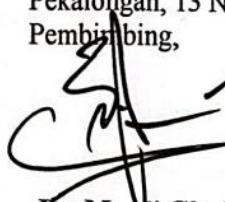
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Wassalamu 'alaikum W.W.

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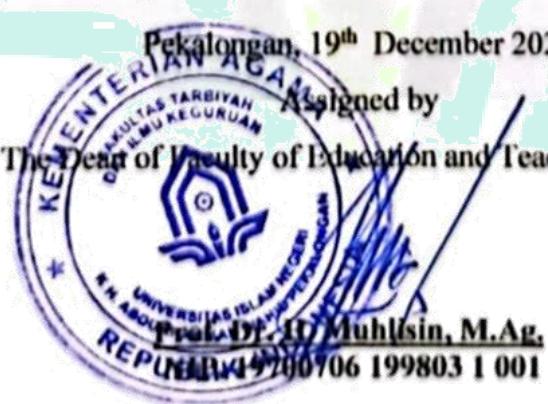
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“Tiada suatu pemberian yang lebih utama dari Orang Tua kepada anaknya selain Pendidikan yang baik”

Dinar Nimas Shabila



ABSTRAK

Pendekatan *Deep Learning* muncul sebagai kerangka inovatif dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, khususnya di tingkat Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) di Indonesia. Namun, penerapannya dalam pembelajaran menulis masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana *Deep Learning* diimplementasikan dalam mendukung pengembangan keterampilan menulis siswa melalui *Project-Based Learning* (PjBL). Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif yang dilaksanakan di sebuah SMK di Pekalongan dengan melibatkan satu guru bahasa Inggris dan dua siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi kelas, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik oleh Braun dan Clarke (2006). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan lima aspek utama, yaitu integrasi prinsip *Deep Learning*, penerapan PjBL sebagai sarana pembelajaran mendalam, tantangan dalam pelaksanaan, peran dukungan sosial dan iklim kelas afektif, serta penguatan kemampuan menulis siswa. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa PjBL mampu memfasilitasi proses menulis yang bermakna, reflektif, dan kontekstual sehingga membantu siswa membangun pemahaman yang lebih mendalam, koherensi tulisan, dan kepercayaan diri dalam menulis. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa PjBL berbasis *Deep Learning* efektif dalam meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran menulis.

Kata Kunci : Pembelajaran Mendalam, Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek, keterampilan Menulis, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, sekolah menengah kejuruan.

ABSTRACT

The Deep Learning approach has emerged as an innovative framework in English language instruction, particularly at the vocational high school level in Indonesia. However, its classroom implementation, especially in writing instruction, remains limited. This study aims to examine how Deep Learning is implemented to support students' writing skill development through Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Employing a qualitative case study design, the research was conducted at a vocational high school in Pekalongan and involved one English teacher and two students. Data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and documentation, and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The findings revealed five key aspects: the integration of Deep Learning principles, the application of PjBL as a tool for deep learning, challenges in implementation, the role of social support and affective classroom climate, and the strengthening of students' writing ability. The results indicate that PjBL facilitates meaningful, reflective, and contextual writing processes, enabling students to develop deeper understanding, coherence, and confidence in writing. This study concludes that Deep Learning-oriented PjBL can effectively transform writing instruction into a more meaningful learning experience. Future research is recommended to involve broader participants and longer observation periods.

Keywords: *Deep Learning, Project-Based Learning, Writing skill, English language learning, vocational high school.*

PREFACE

All praise is due to Allah SWT for abundance of grace, favors, and gifts that have given me strength, health, and determination, so that I can complete the preparation of a research proposal entitled "Deep Learning in Students' Writing Skill Through Project Based Learning at the Vocational High School Level: A case study." The completion of this paper is inseparable from the support and contribution of many parties. Therefore, on this occasion I would like to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to :

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the current era of globalization, mastering English has become a demand in the era of globalization (Mamaliga, 2023). More than 1.5 billion people worldwide use English as their primary or second language (Dash, 2022). This shows that good English skills open up vast opportunities in various fields, such as education, career, and social interaction (Akther, 2022). In Asia, the awareness of the importance of English is also increasing (Akther, 2022). Countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines have included English as the language of instruction in their schools (Astuti, 2023). In Indonesia, the government also continues to encourage the improvement of the quality of English learning.

The Indonesian government, the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education (Mendikdasmen), has encouraged the use of deep learning approaches in the learning process of various subjects, including English at the Vocational high school level. This approach is expected to strengthen students' ability to understand and use English critically and creatively (Rintaningrum et al., 2023). Thus, English learning in vocational high schools has the potential to produce students who are not only proficient in English but also possess critical and creative thinking skills and communicate effectively at the global level. (Ferdaus & Novita, 2023).

Deep learning concept is supported by three main pillars, emphasizes student transformation through meaningful learning, mindful learning, and joyful learning engagement with the material being studied (Winje & Løndal, 2020). The integration of these three pillars in the deep learning approach in Indonesia is very important to study. These three pillars provide a strong foundation for student transformation, not only in terms of knowledge, but also in terms of 21st century skills. The integration of these three pillars is highly relevant in the context of education in Indonesia, especially in realizing the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes critical thinking, independence, collaboration, and creativity. The implementation of deep learning approach has an important role in shaping students' critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills (Ferdaus & Novita, 2023). This is in line with the concept of deep learning which emphasizes deep and meaningful understanding, not just memorization (Vasile, 2024).

In the context of English language Learning, deep learning involves complex cognitive activities such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation, which can help students develop more holistic and contextualized language skills (Han, 2022). One of the learning methods that is most in line with the principles of Deep Learning is Project Based Learning (PjBL). This allows students to explore real-world problems, work together in teams, and produce outputs that reflect meaningful understanding (Bell, 2010). Therefore, further exploration is needed to understand how Deep Learning

concepts are implemented in English language learning through the PjBL model, in line with national education policy directions (Dahyanti et al., 2025).

This research aims to How is Deep Learning implemented using Project Based Learning (PjBL) in Students' writing Skill taking into Minister of Primary and Secondary Education (Mendikdasmen) policy that emphasizes improving the quality of education (Dahyanti et al., 2025). By understanding these dynamics, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to the development of effective and contextualized English learning strategies in Indonesia, as well as enrich the scientific literature related to the implementation of deep learning in diverse educational contexts (Wakerkwa, 2023).

1.2 Identification of the Problems

The Deep Learning approach is a relatively new innovation in English language learning at the vocational high school level. Although it has the potential to support meaningful learning, its implementation in classroom practice is still limited, especially in developing students' writing skills. Through this approach, students are expected to gain deeper understanding and apply language knowledge meaningfully in writing activities. Through this approach, students are expected to develop a deeper understanding of language concepts and apply them meaningfully in writing tasks. This study examines the implementation of Deep Learning through Project-Based

Learning (PjBL) to support vocational high school students' writing abilities.

1.3 Limitation of the Problems

This research is limited to Vocational High School (SMK) students learning English through the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model with a focus on writing skills. The study examines the implementation of Deep Learning principles during the learning process in one class at one selected school. The analysis focuses on the implementation of Deep Learning-based PjBL, classroom activities, and students' writing development related to this approach. Other language skills such as speaking, reading, and listening, as well as comparisons between classes or schools, are not included in this research scope.

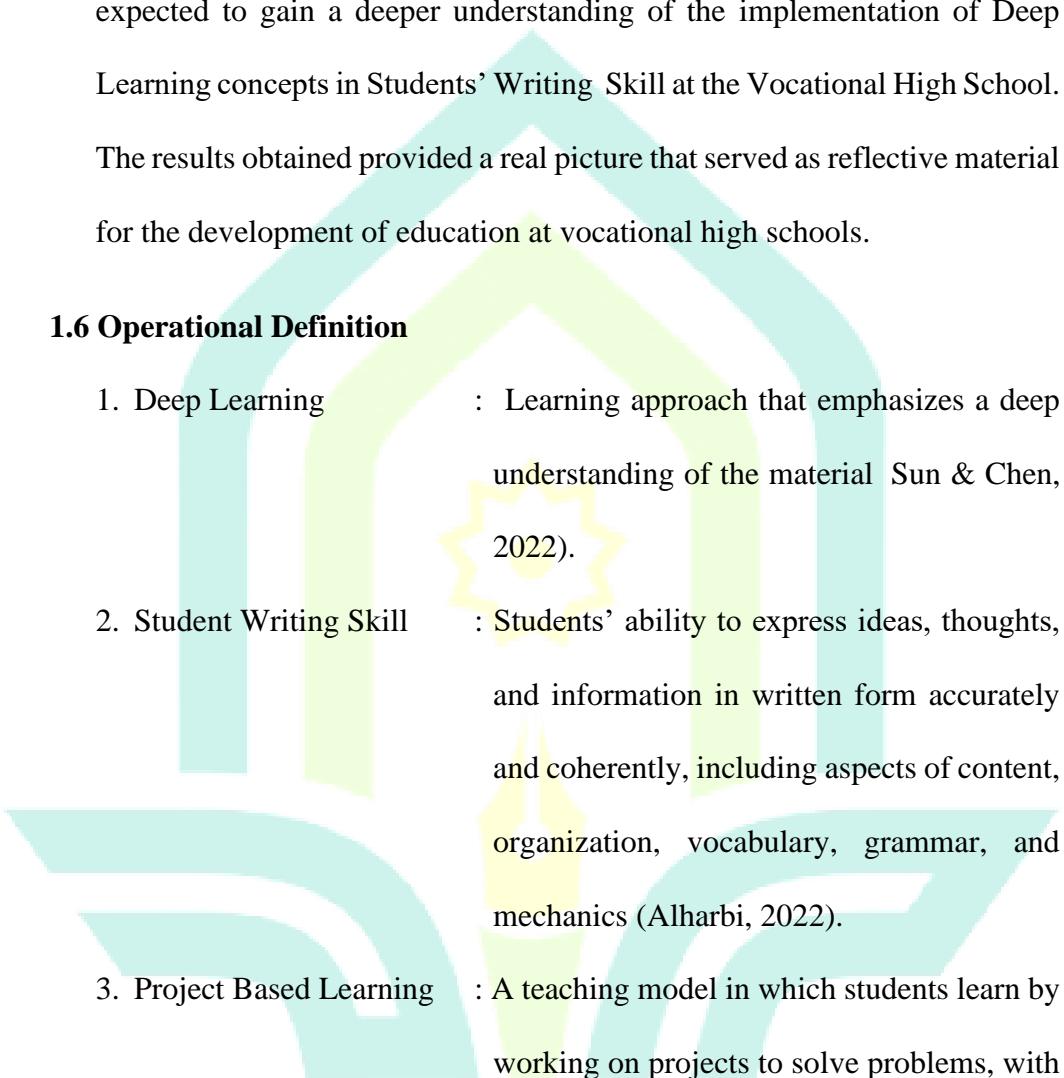
1.4 Formulation of the Problems

This study presents one research question. The researcher explores, *"How is Deep Learning implemented using Project Based Learning (PjBL) in Students' Writing Skill at the Vocational High School Level ?"*. By using this formula, researcher seeks to obtain more about the application of the concept of Deep Learning in the English learning process in Vocational high schools. The researcher intends to describe the reality as a reflection material for the development of education at the Vocational high school level

1.5 Aim of the Study

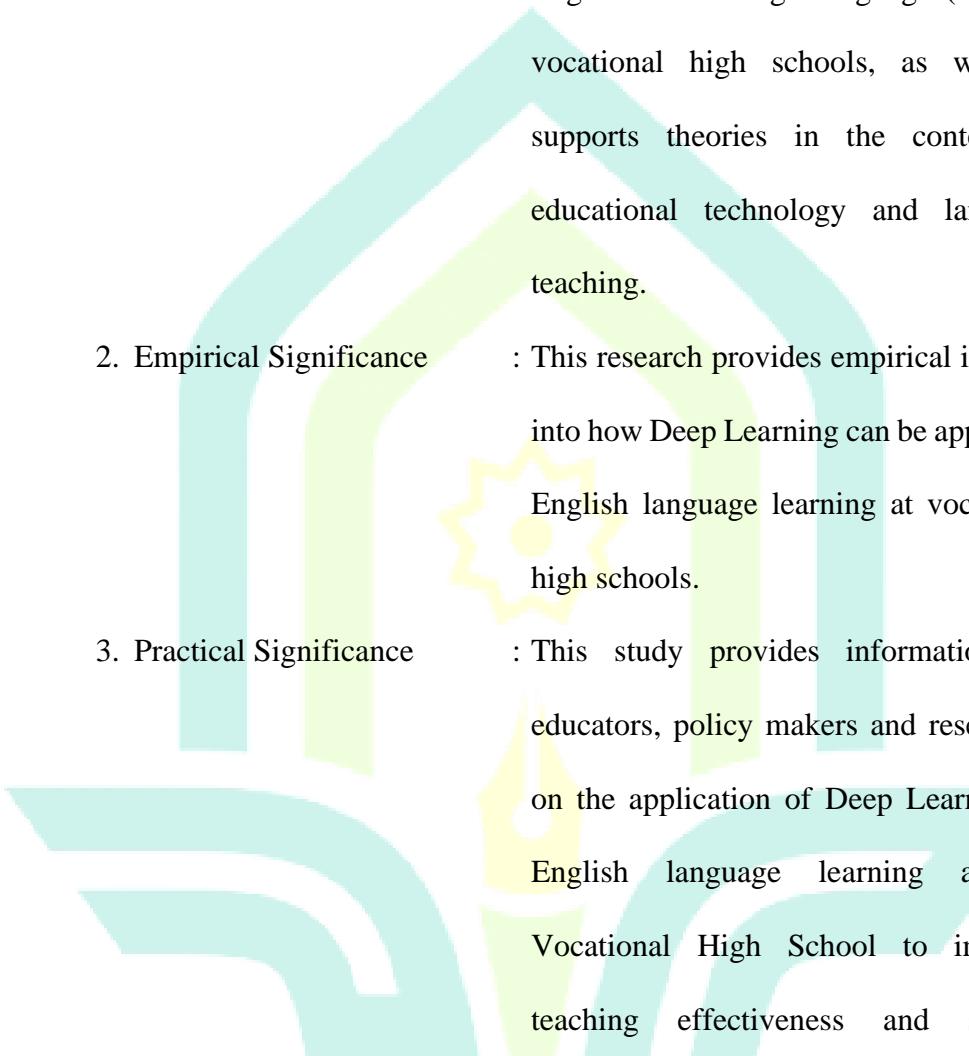
This research aimed to investigate *How the concept of Deep Learning was implemented using Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in students' writing skills at the vocational high school level*. Through this research, it is expected to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of Deep Learning concepts in Students' Writing Skill at the Vocational High School. The results obtained provided a real picture that served as reflective material for the development of education at vocational high schools.

1.6 Operational Definition



1. Deep Learning : Learning approach that emphasizes a deep understanding of the material (Sun & Chen, 2022).
2. Student Writing Skill : Students' ability to express ideas, thoughts, and information in written form accurately and coherently, including aspects of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (Alharbi, 2022).
3. Project Based Learning : A teaching model in which students learn by working on projects to solve problems, with the teacher acting as a facilitator (Hmelo-Silver & Krajcik, 2021).

1.7 Significances of the Research



1. Theoretical Significance : This research contributes to the development of theories related to the application of Deep Learning in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) at vocational high schools, as well as supports theories in the context of educational technology and language teaching.
2. Empirical Significance : This research provides empirical insights into how Deep Learning can be applied in English language learning at vocational high schools.
3. Practical Significance : This study provides information for educators, policy makers and researcher on the application of Deep Learning in English language learning at the Vocational High School to improve teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of Deep Learning through the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in developing students' writing skills at the Vocational High School level. The findings revealed five main aspects: the integration of deep learning principles, the use of PjBL as a tool for a deep learning approach, challenges in implementation, the role of social support and affective classroom climate, and the strengthening of students' writing ability. The results showed that students developed deeper understanding in writing when learning activities encouraged them to connect new knowledge with prior experiences. Writing was positioned as a reflective process involving idea generation, discussion, drafting, and revision, rather than merely as a final product, making the learning process more meaningful and contextual.

Several challenges were identified, including limited instructional time, varying levels of student confidence, and uneven group participation, which affected students' opportunities to optimally refine their writing. However, teacher guidance and peer collaboration helped overcome these challenges by creating a supportive and non-threatening classroom environment. This affective climate increased students'

confidence, reduced anxiety, and encouraged active participation throughout the writing process. Through repeated project-based activities, students gradually improved their ability to organize ideas, select appropriate vocabulary, and produce coherent written texts. Overall, Project-Based Learning proved to be an effective platform for facilitating Deep Learning in writing instruction by providing collaborative, reflective, and meaningful learning experiences connected to students' real-life contexts.

5.2 Recommendations

Although this study revealed several important findings, it also had some limitations. The study involved a limited number of participants from one class in a single institution, which restricted the generalization of the findings. In addition, the relatively short duration of the study limited the observation of students' long-term development in writing skills through deep learning-based Project-Based Learning. Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to involve a wider range of schools and student levels to obtain more comprehensive results. Longitudinal studies are also suggested to observe the sustained impact of Deep Learning and Project-Based Learning on students' writing development over time. Research could explore specific aspects of writing, such as organization, coherence, or critical thinking in written texts, within different project designs. Practically, teachers are encouraged to design writing instruction using Project-Based Learning in a systematic and continuous manner,

rather than as a one-time or supplementary activity. Schools are also advised to allocate adequate time and provide professional development opportunities for teachers so that deep learning-based PjBL can be implemented effectively and sustainably in writing instruction.



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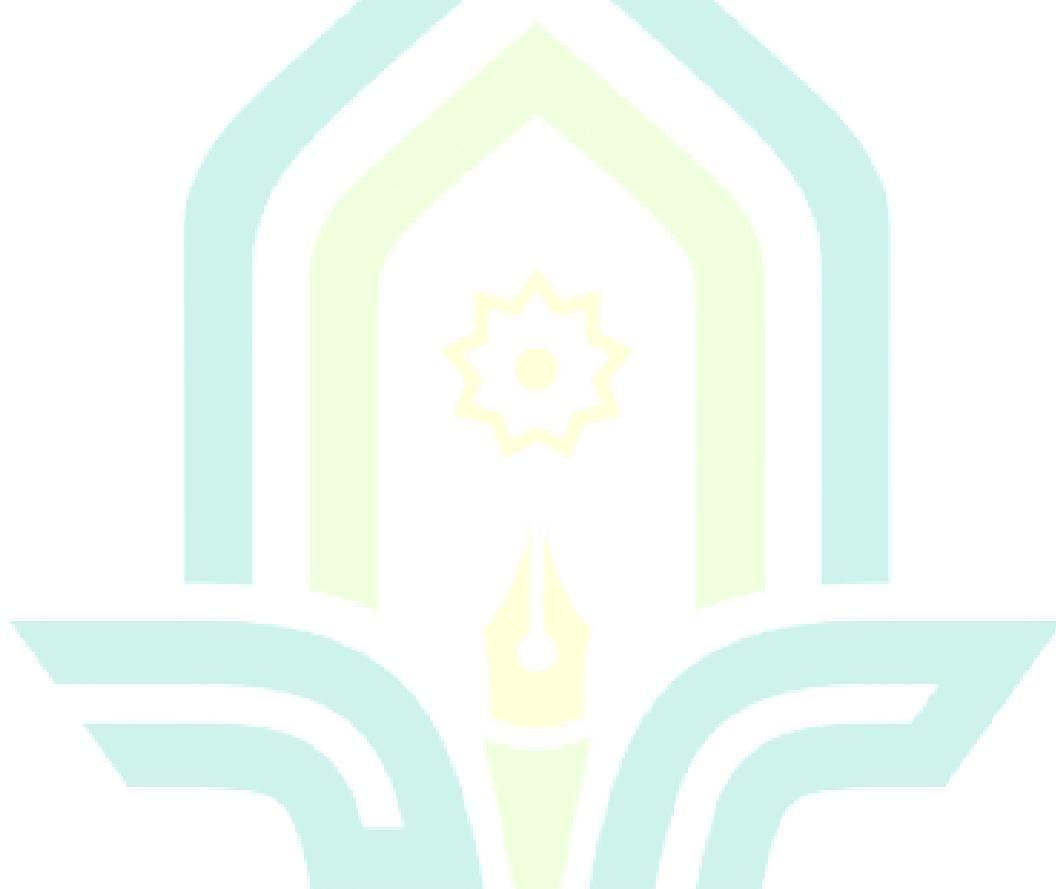
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