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DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER-BASED VIDEO LEARNING MEDIA TO ENHANCE ANECDOTE TEXT WRITING SKILLS AMONG MA STUDENTS

Artikel

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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEEP LEARNING APPROACH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persepsi guru, strategi penerapan, serta tantangan yang muncul dalam mengimplementasikan pendekatan Pembelajaran Mendalam pada pengajaran bahasa Inggris di tingkat Sekolah Menengah Pertama. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara semi terstruktur kepada enam guru bahasa Inggris yang tergabung dalam MGMP Muhammadiyah Surakarta. Fokus penelitian mencakup bagaimana guru memahami konsep Pembelajaran Mendalam, bagaimana mereka menerjemahkannya ke dalam praktik pembelajaran sehari hari, dan bagaimana mereka menghadapi kendala yang muncul selama proses implementasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru memandang Pembelajaran Mendalam sebagai proses pembelajaran yang bermakna, berkesadaran, dan menyenangkan, yang mendorong siswa untuk berpikir kritis, membangun koneksi konseptual, serta mengaitkan materi pembelajaran dengan pengalaman kehidupan nyata. Dalam penerapannya, guru menggunakan strategi seperti kegiatan kontekstual, diskusi kolaboratif, pemecahan masalah, proyek sederhana, dan aktivitas yang dirancang untuk meningkatkan motivasi serta partisipasi siswa. Namun, guru juga menghadapi beberapa tantangan, di antaranya keterbatasan waktu pembelajaran, kondisi ruang kelas yang kurang fleksibel, serta kesulitan dalam merancang aktivitas yang sesuai dengan keragaman kebutuhan dan kemampuan siswa. Untuk mengatasi tantangan tersebut, guru melakukan perencanaan pembelajaran yang lebih terstruktur, menyesuaikan aktivitas dengan kondisi kelas, serta memanfaatkan forum MGMP sebagai ruang berbagi pengalaman dan strategi. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya pelatihan guru yang berfokus pada desain aktivitas Pembelajaran Mendalam yang adaptif dan aplikatif di berbagai konteks sekolah.

Kata Kunci: *persepsi guru, pembelajaran mendalam, sekolah menengah pertama*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze teachers' perceptions, implementation strategies, and challenges in applying the Deep Learning approach in English language teaching at the junior high school level. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through semi structured interviews with six English teachers who are members of the Muhammadiyah MGMP in Surakarta. The study focuses on how teachers understand the concept of Deep Learning, how they translate this understanding into daily instructional practices, and how they respond to the obstacles that arise during implementation. The findings indicate that teachers perceive Deep Learning as a meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning process that encourages students to think critically, build conceptual connections, and relate learning materials to real life experiences. In practice, teachers employ various strategies such as contextual tasks, collaborative discussions, problem solving activities, simple project work, and engaging learning activities designed to promote student motivation and participation. However, teachers also encounter several challenges, including limited instructional time, inflexible classroom conditions, and difficulties in designing activities that accommodate students' diverse needs and proficiency levels. To address these issues, teachers develop more structured lesson plans, adjust activities based on classroom realities, and utilize the MGMP forum as a collaborative space to share experiences and refine instructional strategies. These findings emphasize the importance of teacher training programs that focus on designing adaptable and practical Deep Learning based instructional activities suitable for diverse school contexts.

Keywords: teacher perception, deep learning, junior high school

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia is currently undergoing a major transformation with the launch of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility, student-centered learning, and the integration of 21st-century skills (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). This curriculum provides students with greater freedom to explore subjects according to their abilities and interests, while also allowing teachers to design learning strategies that fit student characteristics. In this context, learning is expected to be not only relevant and enjoyable but also capable of fostering higher-order thinking, problem-solving skills, and character development. Thus, the ultimate goal is to prepare a generation of learners who are both academically competent and socially responsible.

One of the core approaches integrated into the Merdeka Curriculum is the Deep Learning (DL) approach. DL is defined as a pedagogical method that emphasizes meaningful learning experiences, real-world relevance, and the cultivation of critical and creative thinking skills (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016; Winch et al., 2017). Unlike surface learning, which relies heavily on memorization, DL encourages students to connect concepts with authentic contexts and apply their knowledge in novel situations. This makes it highly relevant to the goals of Indonesian education reform, particularly in language learning where contextualization and communication skills are essential.

Empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of DL in enhancing students' engagement and conceptual understanding. For example, (Weng et al., 2023) found that design-based and project-based learning activities significantly improved students' analytical and critical thinking skills compared to rote learning approaches. Similarly, (Bhardwaj et al., 2021a) revealed that DL strategies, such as collaborative problem-solving and authentic material use, fostered greater student motivation, participation, and reflective learning in e-learning environments. While these findings highlight the potential of DL to transform classrooms, research focusing on its implementation in English language teaching at the junior high school level, particularly in Indonesia, remains limited.

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring how English teachers at the junior high school level perceive and implement DL, as well as identifying the challenges they face in the process. Specifically, it answers three key questions: (1) what is the teacher's perception of deep learning?; (2) how do teachers implement deep learning?; (3) what challenges do teachers face when implementing the Deep Learning approach in English classrooms, and how can these challenges be overcome?

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how DL can be effectively integrated into English teaching within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings also provide insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in strengthening pedagogical practices that support meaningful and engaging language learning.

Although international research has highlighted the benefits of Deep Learning in promoting engagement and conceptual understanding, studies in the Indonesian context have predominantly focused on STEM fields or general pedagogical practices. As a result, the application of Deep Learning in English Language Teaching (ELT), especially at the junior high school level, remains relatively underexplored. To address this research gap, the present study aims to investigate how junior high school English teachers perceive and implement the Deep Learning approach and to identify the challenges they encounter in the process. Specifically, this study examines: (1) teachers' perceptions of Deep Learning, (2) the strategies they apply in implementing it, and (3) the obstacles they face along with potential solutions.

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By articulating these aims, the study provides a clearer understanding of how Deep Learning can be integrated effectively into English instruction within the Merdeka Curriculum framework and offers practical insights for improving pedagogical practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The implementation of the Deep Learning (DL) approach in English Language Teaching at the junior high school level is grounded in constructivist principles, particularly those introduced by (Wang et al., 2024), who emphasizes social interaction, purposeful communication, and guided learning as essential elements in the construction of knowledge. Within this framework, learning is viewed as an active and meaningful process where students connect new ideas with prior experiences, aligning with the constructivist view of Piaget (1970) and further supported by (Trimurtini et al., 2025) concept of active knowledge construction. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) underscores the importance of scaffolding, as described by (Tsai et al., 2020), where teachers provide gradual support through guiding questions, reflective prompts, and structured collaboration until learners become increasingly independent. This interpretation strengthens the alignment between constructivism and DL by highlighting that deep understanding emerges from meaningful engagement rather than memorization(Cahya Susaniari & Santosa, 2024).

Constructivism also emphasizes collaborative learning, as students co-construct meaning through peer discussions and problem-solving activities, which enhance comprehension and promote metacognition as they reflect on their learning processes. Such interactions reinforce the cognitive and social dimensions of DL, making it highly relevant for junior high school English classrooms. This aligns with (Bhardwaj et al., 2021b) who argue that deep conceptual understanding develops through active inquiry and reflection.

The DL approach is further supported by the Higher-Order Thinking framework proposed by Hattie and Donoghue (2016), which stresses the importance of cognitive processes such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and reflection. Unlike surface learning that emphasizes memorizing rules or vocabulary, Higher-Order Thinking encourages students to explore why language forms are used, identify conceptual patterns, and justify their interpretations, fostering deeper engagement with language. Students are also encouraged to compare arguments, analyze linguistic choices, and solve complex tasks requiring thoughtful reasoning, which aligns with DL's emphasis on deep processing.

In classroom practice, DL activities informed by Higher-Order Thinking include project-based tasks, extended writing assignments, argumentative discussions, and real-world problem-solving scenarios. These activities require students to integrate information, apply reasoning strategies, and use English meaningfully. Such tasks help students not only develop linguistic proficiency but also cultivate critical, creative, and reflective thinking, enabling them to understand what language is used, how it functions, and why it is applied in specific contexts.

Together, constructivism and Higher-Order Thinking provide a coherent and complementary theoretical foundation for implementing DL in English Language Teaching. Constructivism offers a socially interactive, scaffolded approach, while Higher-Order Thinking promotes deeper cognitive engagement. Cahya Susaniari & Santosa, 2024). Integrating these perspectives moves learning beyond surface-level recall toward deep comprehension, complex reasoning, and creative language use. With these foundations, DL fosters meaningful understanding, long-term retention, and holistic

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language development among junior high school students.

3. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore teachers' perceptions, practices, and challenges in implementing the Deep Learning (DL) approach in English language teaching at the junior high school level. The qualitative descriptive method was considered appropriate because it allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of participants' perspectives in natural classroom settings without manipulation, and to present rich and detailed narratives of how DL is perceived and practiced in the field (Sugiyono, 2021)

The research was conducted on July 22, 2025, during a meeting of the MGMP Muhammadiyah English teachers in Surakarta. The participants consisted of five junior high school English teachers with varied educational backgrounds, teaching experience, and certification status. To ensure the relevance of the data, participants were selected based on a minimum of two years of teaching experience and active involvement in implementing the DL approach. Such purposive sampling made it possible to gather diverse yet contextually relevant insights regarding the focus of the study.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted in both Indonesian and English to accommodate participants' preferences in expressing their thoughts. The interview protocol was designed to elicit information related to three main areas, namely teachers' perceptions of DL, their implementation strategies, and the challenges they encountered along with the solutions they employed.(Andreotti et al., 2018) Factors such as gender, teaching experience, educational background, certification status, and academic qualifications (S1 or S2) were considered in participant selection. All interviews were conducted with prior consent, recorded, and transcribed for subsequent analysis.(Surasak & Kitchat, 2022)

The researcher played a central role as the primary research instrument by directly engaging with participants during data collection and interpretation. To minimize bias, reflexivity was maintained throughout the process, while rapport-building ensured that participants felt comfortable in sharing their experiences openly.

The data were analyzed thematically through coding, categorization, and interpretation following (Sugiyono, 2021) qualitative descriptive framework, replacing the earlier, longer explanation of analysis procedures.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. All ethical procedures were consolidated into one paragraph as recommended, including obtaining ethical approval, securing informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity through coded identifiers, informing participants of their rights (including withdrawal), and maintaining cultural and linguistic sensitivity during bilingual interviews.(Marshall et al., 2025)

Finally, the trustworthiness of the study was established through credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Credibility was maintained through source triangulation, while dependability was strengthened by systematically documenting all research procedures. Transferability was addressed by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings in other settings. Confirmability was achieved by grounding interpretations in direct quotes from participants, ensuring that findings were derived from actual data rather than researcher bias.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings derived from semi-structured interviews with five English teachers who are members of the

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Muhammadiyah Junior High School MGMP in Surakarta. The results are organized into three main themes aligned with the research questions: teachers' perceptions of Deep Learning (DL), implementation strategies, and challenges with possible solutions.

Teacher Profile

To provide context, the study began with profiling the participants. Table 1 shows that four of the five teachers were female, while one was male. Their teaching experiences varied from less than four years to more than 18 years. Four teachers had completed undergraduate studies (S1), while one teacher had a master's degree (S2). Only three teachers were certified, while the remaining two had yet to obtain certification.

Table 1 Teacher Profiles

No	Teacher's Initial	Gender	Teaching Experience	Educational Background	Certification	Education Level
1	T1	Female	< 4 years	English	Not Certified	S2
2	T2	Female	>4 years	English	Certified	S1
3	T3	Female	> 4 years	English	Certified	S1
4	T4	Female	> 4 years	English	Certified	S1
5	T5	Male	> 4 years	English	Not Certified	S1

Teacher Perceptions of Deep Learning

Teachers' perceptions of Deep Learning (DL) were explored through interviews with five teachers, revealing three central themes regarding their understanding of the concept. First, several teachers viewed DL as consisting of three main principles: *Meaningful Learning*, *Mindful Learning*, and *Joyful Learning*. As stated by T1, **"***Konsep Deep Learning sendiri itu ada 3 ya, ada mindful, joyful sama meaningful. Kalau mindful, anak-anak diharapkan lebih bisa berfikir kritis, dan lebih mendalam dalam penanggapan materi. Kalau meaningful itu lebih bermakna dengan diselipkan beberapa permainan. Kemudian Joyful, menyenangkan."* T1 further emphasized that, **"***Menyenangkan itu berarti anak-anak bisa mengerti dari meaningful tadi.***"** Consistent with this, T2 explained that **"***Mindful learning itu melatih anak untuk tidak hanya menerima materi tetapi memahami lebih dalam***,"** showing that teachers associate DL with fostering higher-order thinking. This interpretation aligns with Vygotsky's view that learning becomes deeper when students engage in cognitively demanding tasks supported by scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

The second theme highlighted that some teachers perceived DL primarily as an instructional *approach*. T3 explicitly described this, stating, **"***Deep Learning itu merupakan suatu pendekatan yang berbeda dengan pendekatan yang lain, karena menuntut anak lebih aktif dan guru lebih banyak jadi fasilitator.***"** T3 also added, **"***Kalau DL, saya lebih membimbing dan memberi stimulus, tidak langsung memberi jawaban***."** Such descriptions reflect Vygotsky's emphasis on the teacher's role in providing guided support so learners can construct understanding through interaction and mediation rather than passive reception.

Third, teachers viewed DL as learning that connects to real-life contexts. T4 emphasized this perspective, explaining, **"***Deep Learning itu pembelajaran yang dilakukan dengan memantapkan materi dan mengaitkannya pada kehidupan sehari-hari supaya anak merasa belajar itu berguna.***"** T4 continued, **"***Kalau tidak dikaitkan kehidupan nyata, anak susah paham, tapi kalau ada contohnya dari keseharian mereka, langsung mengerti."* This idea resonates strongly with Vygotsky's theory that learning is socially and culturally situated, meaning that students make sense of concepts more effectively when anchored in meaningful, familiar contexts.

Overall, these findings show that teachers tend to associate Deep Learning with critical

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thinking, active engagement, and contextual learning elements that closely align with Vygotsky's social constructivism, especially the importance of interaction, scaffolding, and real-world relevance in constructing deeper understanding.

Implementation of Deep Learning

The results of interviews with five teachers revealed four main themes regarding the implementation of deep learning in the classroom. First, some teachers connect learning materials to students' personal experiences, as expressed by T5, to help build student awareness through reflective or stimulating questions. Second, teachers also emphasize critical thinking skills, as mentioned by T1, where students are guided to analyze and draw conclusions independently. Third, T2 highlighted the importance of fun and engaging learning activities, such as integrating play in English lessons (English for fun), to make learning experiences more memorable and lasting. Lastly, T3 emphasized the use of group discussions as a means of fostering collaboration and peer interaction among students. Overall, these findings show that teachers implement deep learning through contextual, critical, engaging, and collaborative approaches to enhance students' understanding and learning outcomes.

Challenges and Solutions in Implementing Deep Learning

Despite positive perceptions, teachers identified three key challenges in DL implementation: (1) Time constraints, (2) Space limitations, and (3) Difficulties in creating engaging activities.

Tabel 2 Challenges and Possible Solutions in Implementing Deep Learning

No	Challenges	Possible Solution
1	Time constraints (e.g., short class time, overlapping with breaks)	Developing more robust lesson plans (RPP); assigning pre-study tasks at home; improving classroom time management
2	Space limitations restricting student movement and interaction	Exploring flexible and engaging models both inside and outside the classroom
3	Difficulty in designing enjoyable activities for all students	Actively engaging in MGMP discussions; sharing strategies and ideas with colleagues

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the research findings in relation to the three research questions, highlighting their implications, theoretical grounding, and contributions to the broader discourse on the implementation of the Deep Learning (DL) approach in English language teaching at the junior high school level.

The findings show that teachers perceive Deep Learning (DL) as mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning, reflecting an orientation toward deeper cognitive engagement rather than surface-level instruction. These perceptions are aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum guidelines (Kemendikbudristek, 2022), which emphasize critical thinking, reflection, and contextualized application. This connection is also consistent with (Rochim et al., 2025), who assert that DL fosters deeper conceptual understanding by linking classroom content with students' real-world experiences.

Teachers who describe DL as a shift from knowledge transmission to higher-order engagement reinforce (Zubaidah, 2017) argument that critical and creative thinking are fundamental components of 21st-century learning. Their view that DL involves contextual

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learning also mirrors (Vygotsky, 1978) constructivist theory, which highlights that learning becomes meaningful when situated within students' social and cultural environments.

Taken together, these perceptions suggest that teachers possess a foundational readiness to adopt DL practices. However, the diversity in how DL is interpreted indicates a continued need for professional development to deepen and unify teachers' theoretical and practical understanding of DL.

Rather than restating the four practices presented earlier, their theoretical implications can be highlighted. Teachers' tendency to link English material to students' personal experiences demonstrates meaningful learning, supported by (Wijaya et al., 2025), who found that contextualization enhances engagement and relevance. This approach also aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on socially mediated meaning-making.

Teachers' focus on critical thinking reflects DL's mindful learning dimension and connects with (Aziz et al., 2024), who showed that reflective and metacognitive strategies foster analytical skills and learner autonomy. Playful learning through "English for Fun" activities corresponds with the joyful learning pillar and is reinforced by findings from (Anggi et al., 2024) and (Solo et al., 2024), which show that game-based learning reduces anxiety and supports vocabulary development and collaboration.

Meanwhile, group discussions reflect (Astuti, 2024) "6C" framework emphasizing communication and collaboration as essential competencies. These practices illustrate an effort to encourage higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), such as analysis, evaluation, and creation key outcomes of DL-oriented pedagogy.

Overall, teachers demonstrate movement toward deeper, student-centered instructional approaches, although the degree of depth and consistency varies.

Teachers identified three primary challenges in implementing DL: limited instructional time, insufficient classroom space, and difficulty designing engaging learning activities. These constraints align with findings by Wijaya et al. (2025), who stated that DL requires more time due to its emphasis on reflection and exploration. Teachers mitigated this issue by designing more structured lesson plans (RPP) and assigning pre-study tasks similar to flipped classroom principles that optimize in-class time for higher-order activities.

Constraints related to classroom space reduced flexibility for group work and collaborative tasks. This observation corresponds with Neill and Etheridge (2008), who explained that adaptive learning environments enhance student interaction. Teachers addressed this challenge by rearranging seating layouts or conducting learning outside the classroom when possible.

The difficulty in designing engaging and differentiated DL activities reflects broader pedagogical challenges. Teachers relied on MGMP professional forums to share strategies and resources, consistent with (Anwar, 2025) , who found that professional learning communities help strengthen teacher capacity and problem-solving skills.

Despite teachers' adaptive attempts, these challenges demonstrate that DL implementation still requires broader systemic support to be sustainable and effective.

Schools are encouraged to strengthen professional development programs that focus on designing DL-based English learning activities that foster higher-order thinking skills. Training should include reflective questioning strategies, metacognitive tasks, and project-based learning.

Learning spaces should be made more flexible to support collaborative and interactive activities. This can include rearranging classroom layouts or utilizing additional school facilities, in line with insights from (Neill & Etheridge, 2008)

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Curriculum structures and schedules should allow more time for the processes of exploration, discussion, and reflection, reinforcing the recommendations of (Ani Daniyati et al., 2023) regarding the time-intensive nature of DL.

Teachers should continue to optimize MGMP and school-based professional learning communities to exchange resources, collaboratively design lessons, and support one another in implementing DL strategies, a practice supported by (Mirabito & Verhaeghen, 2025).

Educational policymakers should ensure alignment among curriculum guidelines, assessment systems, and teacher development programs so that DL practices can be sustainably integrated into English language teaching.

5. CONCLUSION

Teachers perceived the Deep Learning approach as a way to promote meaningful, mindful, and engaging English learning, which they implemented through contextual activities, critical thinking tasks, games, and collaborative work. Although their perceptions were positive, they continued to face challenges such as limited time, constrained classroom space, and the difficulty of designing activities that truly support deeper learning. Teachers addressed these issues by adjusting lesson plans, using flexible strategies, and collaborating through MGMP. These findings imply that teacher training programs should include modules on designing Deep Learning based English learning activities that are adaptable to local classroom conditions.

The study also highlights that effective Deep Learning implementation depends not only on teacher competence but also on school level support, continuous professional development, and a collaborative culture among teachers. Broader future research involving more schools, varied methods, and different educational levels is recommended to understand more fully how Deep Learning shapes students' motivation and English proficiency. Overall, Deep Learning holds strong potential to make English instruction more meaningful and engaging when supported by consistent professional development and institutional commitment.

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