

EXPLORING CONTEXTUAL PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING PRACTICES WITHIN DEEP LEARNING-ORIENTED ENGLISH INSTRUCTION FOR ANALYTICAL EXPOSITION TEXTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Lathifah Nur Karimah¹, Ahmad Munir², & Muhaimin Abdullah³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

DOI: 10.23917/humaniora.v27i2.17755



Citation:

Karimah, L. N., Munir, A., & Abdullah, M. (2026). Exploring Contextual Problem-Based Learning Practices Within Deep Learning-Oriented English Instruction for Analytical Exposition Texts: A Qualitative Study. *Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora*, 27(2), 159–171. <https://doi.org/10.23917/humaniora.v27i2.17755>

Article History:

Received : 25-May-2026
Revised : 31-July-2026
Accepted : 31-July-2026
Published : 1-August-2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Keywords

Problem-Based Learning
Deep Learning
Analytical Exposition Text
Critical Literacy
English Language Teaching

Abstract

As Indonesian secondary schools move forward, their educational system is becoming more inclined toward developing meaningful learning experiences, reflective thinking, and learner-oriented approaches for deep learning. For English language teaching in particular, critical reasoning and understanding social contexts through reading analytical exposition texts should be the focus. However, conventional classroom learning practices usually make students passive receivers who focus on the structural aspects of texts. Consequently, this study investigated contextual Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategies in teaching analytical exposition texts from a deep learning perspective. This study used qualitative case study research with an English teacher and eleventh-grade students at one public senior high school in Indonesia. Data were collected through observations and interviews. The findings indicate that PBL helped students collaborate, reflect, analyze, think critically, and work contextually in the classroom. Contextual PBL facilitates students' participation in arguing, analyzing sociocultural issues, and writing critically in their analytical exposition text. The implementation of PBL reveals several major features of deep learning, including meaningful learning, mindful learning, joyful learning, collaboration, and learner autonomy. Nevertheless, there were some obstacles in PBL practice, including time restrictions, unequal participation, varied literacy proficiency among students, and teachers' struggles in forming a context-based learning problem. Overall, contextual PBL plays a vital part in promoting deep learning-oriented English instruction through the development of critical literacy in students.

Keywords: Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Deep learning, Analytical exposition text, EFL secondary education, Critical literacy

Corresponding Author

Lathifah Nur
Karimah
Universitas Negeri
Surabaya
Indonesia

Email:

24021565014@mhs.unesa.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Education has changed instructional models, making them more learner-centered with a focus on engaging learning activities, collaboration, and reflection. Modern education focuses more on developing critical and reflective thinking, problem-solving skills, communication, and the application of knowledge in real-life contexts rather than mere memorization (Din, 2020; Laksono et al., 2024). Such changes in modern education have inspired instructional strategies that involve active learning and higher-order thinking skills for effective learning.

In Indonesia, deep learning practices in education have recently gained popularity, along with other curricular transformations in the educational sector (Mulyono, 2026; Sufian et al., 2020). In pedagogy, deep learning is not about artificial intelligence technologies but about instructional methods that emphasize meaningful learning, reflection, context relevance, and long-term concept comprehension. In education, scholars indicate that instruction in deep learning practices motivates learners to engage knowledge with real-world experiences through meaningful and enjoyable learning methods.

The deep learning practices are highly consistent with the development of secondary English education in Indonesia. At present, English language instruction at senior high schools emphasizes communicative competence and critical literacy. The text-based instructional methods adopted by English teachers at senior high schools encourage students to think critically about reading texts (U'um Qomariyah, P. V. A., & Faizah, 2018). Analytical exposition text is considered the most intellectually challenging genre taught at senior high schools.

As mentioned earlier, students are required not only to employ appropriate language structures but also to conduct critical reasoning and evaluate evidence. To succeed in producing effective analytical expositions, students should be competent enough to detect issues, present arguments, analyze evidence, and express opinions. Therefore, the instruction of analytical exposition texts should include an approach capable of facilitating deep cognitive processes rather than just memorization of textual structure.

Although curricula demand English instruction that emphasizes critical literacy and meaningfulness, in practice, English language learning in Indonesian classrooms may involve rather conventional teaching practices. Namely, teachers may focus on explaining grammar rules, working with vocabulary, and analyzing text structure while offering few opportunities to explore issues or engage in discussion and reflection. Such an instructional approach may create an environment in which students act as passive learners who reproduce text patterns without developing argumentative skills. Thus, it is common for students to face challenges in presenting arguments and expressing ideas.

To address these instructional challenges, educators have increasingly adopted more student-centered and exploratory learning approaches. One such approach is Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which emphasizes collaborative problem-solving and contextualized learning experiences. Through PBL, students actively construct knowledge by investigating and solving authentic problems rather than passively receiving information (Hariani et al., 2023; Wibowo & Munir, 2024). This approach encourages learners to develop critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and communication skills while engaging meaningfully with learning materials. As a result, PBL has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for promoting deeper learning and improving students' ability to apply knowledge in real-world contexts.

Many studies have found positive effects of Problem-Based Learning on the development of critical thinking skills, collaboration, and writing competence of students. Studies conducted specifically in the field of analytical exposition writing revealed that PBL helps students to produce better arguments since they consider authentic issues that require evaluative analysis and discussion. Moreover, recent research on deep learning instruction

suggests that contextual inquiries, reflective discussion, and collaboration constitute meaningful learning practices.

Although Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and deep learning instruction share similar goals in promoting student engagement, inquiry, and meaningful knowledge construction, empirical research examining the intersection of these two approaches in English language education remains limited. Previous studies have generally investigated PBL as a standalone instructional strategy or discussed deep learning as a conceptual framework for improving learning quality and higher-order thinking skills. Consequently, little attention has been given to how PBL practices can support the implementation of deep learning principles in English language classrooms. This gap is particularly evident in studies focusing on the teaching of analytical exposition texts, where students are expected to develop critical thinking, argumentation, and problem-solving abilities. Therefore, further research is needed to explore how PBL can be implemented within a deep learning framework to enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes in English language instruction.

Moreover, integrating deep learning-focused pedagogy into real teaching situations proves to be difficult. Teachers often face numerous difficulties associated with time distribution, classroom management, students' preparedness, and testing when they try to incorporate the inquiry-based model of learning into their classes. As a result, there is limited understanding of how English teachers apply contextual Problem-Based Learning to deep learning-focused teaching of analytical exposition text.

A deep learning-oriented curriculum emphasizes deep learning that goes beyond mere memorization and performance skills (Nouby & Alkhazali, 2017). Deep learning, as a process of learning, means that students acquire knowledge meaningfully, connect the knowledge received to personal experiences, reflect on it, and use their acquired skills practically. Deep learning is vital in the context of English as a language subject that includes both grammatical and lexical knowledge together with interpretive, communicative, and analytical competencies. In this regard, the focus on deep learning will encourage students to become proactive and effective interpreters and users of the language capable of discussing topics, giving arguments, and communicating fluently (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Alim, 2025; Taqiyya, 2025).

In the context of secondary school learning, deep learning is closely connected to meaningful learning, mindful learning, and joyful learning. Meaningful learning implies a close relationship between class materials and the learners' life practice. When learners become self-aware of their own cognitive, reading, and communicative processes, they are referred to as mindful learners. Joyful learning occurs when learners enjoy the learning process and find it emotionally rewarding. All these learning types are critical in English classes where many learners tend to view English as difficult when taught through drills of grammar rules and vocabulary (Alim, 2025; Ramadona, 2025; Taqiyya, 2025).

At the same time, deep learning-based English lessons involve developing inquiring, collaborative, reflective, and contextual problem-solving skills among students. Beyond simply acquiring knowledge, students learn to evaluate the information presented, analyze different points of view, and draw valid conclusions. The importance of such skills is particularly relevant in argumentation-based genres, which require students to think analytically and express their thoughts convincingly. Thus, teaching argumentative expositions with a deep learning-oriented curriculum becomes an effective approach (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Richards, 2006; Widodo, 2016).

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an approach to education in which the learning process begins with the problem itself (Tsybulsky, 2019). Students are not mere receivers of information offered by the instructor; instead, they must solve problems, investigate various options, seek appropriate data, and find a solution to the issue raised. This means that the principles of the Problem-Based Learning pedagogical practice are grounded in

constructivism, the theory of active creation of new knowledge through communication and reflection (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978).

Regarding the core ideas of Problem-Based Learning and its application to English Language Teaching practice, one should mention the use of multi-dimensional issues that require research and analysis. Students are not going to provide a particular solution because they have to study the matter in-depth and justify their position with arguments. What is more important about implementing PBL in English Language Teaching is that this educational practice creates opportunities for communicating effectively in English (Savery, 2006; Richards, 2006). Therefore, one might say that Problem-Based Learning is both an educational and a communicative activity.

Finally, the benefits of using Problem-Based Learning as the basis for the entire learning process include developing students' skills in analyzing problems and finding solutions. Investigating problems requires organizing one's thoughts systematically, identifying the causal relationship between various phenomena, evaluating the evidence, and making conclusions, which means that all the skills applied while working on the problem-solving task are the same as those used in the process of expository writing (Kusumahati, 2023; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006).

Despite numerous pedagogical advantages of PBL, its implementation still presents several challenges. The first problem associated with implementing PBL is time limitations. As PBL involves steps such as problem orientation, discussion, information discovery, presentation, reflection, and writing productivity, it requires more time than traditional teaching (Savery, 2006; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Biggs & Tang, 2011). Teachers may face problems in implementing full PBL cycles in schools where time is very limited, and performance is evaluated according to strict criteria.

The second challenge relates to the inequality of students' participation in groups. As some learners may be more active in discussions, whereas others may stay silent during group work, this inequality can impair the effectiveness of collaboration if it is not managed adequately. Role assignment can be used as an effective strategy to ensure equal participation of all students in the process, assigning such roles as discussion leader, recorder, evidence finder, proofreader, and presenter (Vygotsky, 1978; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Widodo, 2016).

Limited English language proficiency of learners is another difficulty in implementing PBL. As some students may have ideas but be unable to express them due to a lack of vocabulary and linguistic skills, a teacher should support students in formulating their thoughts by providing appropriate sentence starters, model texts, and scaffolding for writing (Richards, 2006; Hyland, 2004; Emilia, 2011). Without proper linguistic scaffolding, PBL may prove to be cognitively challenging but linguistically impossible for some learners.

The previous body of literature shows that PBL positively influences student engagement, critical thinking, and the development of writing skills. PBL motivates learners to explore problems, develop critical thinking skills, and engage in collaborative investigations, thus fostering reasoning and effective interaction. Additionally, research on argumentative and exposition writing shows positive effects of discussion-based pre-writing activities since they help students brainstorm and structure their ideas effectively (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006; Kusumahati, 2023).

In deep learning-oriented education, studies focus on the need for meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning experiences. However, while the importance of deep learning is stressed in numerous discussions, researchers have not considered its implementation strategies across various genres of English classrooms. In particular, few studies have examined implementation strategies related to analytical expositions in English classrooms (Alim, 2025; Ramadona, 2025; Taqiyya, 2025).

Despite the increasing attention given to Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and deep learning-oriented instruction, limited research has explored how these two approaches

intersect in the teaching of analytical exposition texts within English language classrooms. Furthermore, little is known about how contextual PBL is enacted in practice, how students and teachers experience the learning process, and what challenges arise during its implementation. To address these gaps, this study seeks to investigate the implementation of contextual Problem-Based Learning within deep learning-oriented English instruction for analytical exposition texts. Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. How is contextual Problem-Based Learning implemented within deep learning-oriented English instruction for analytical exposition texts?

RQ2. How do students and teachers experience the implementation of contextual Problem-Based Learning in analytical exposition instruction?

RQ3. What challenges emerge during the implementation of contextual Problem-Based Learning in a deep learning-oriented English classroom?

METHOD

This research project used a qualitative case study design to study Contextual Problem-Based Learning in deep learning-oriented English education for analytical exposition lessons (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative case study methodology is preferable for studying instructional processes, patterns of interaction in classroom environments, teachers' perceptions, and students' learning processes and experiences. Therefore, it will be effective for revealing how teachers implement contextual Problem-Based Learning during the instruction of analytical expositions.

Observations of Lessons in Classrooms

Data for this qualitative case study were collected at a public senior high school in Indonesia that actively promotes student-centered and inquiry-based learning approaches aligned with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. The school was selected because it had previously implemented contextual Problem-Based Learning (PBL) practices in English language instruction, making it an appropriate setting for investigating deep learning-oriented teaching. The study involved one English teacher and 32 eleventh-grade students enrolled in an analytical exposition class. The students were between 16 and 17 years old and demonstrated intermediate English proficiency based on their classroom performance and school assessment records (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 1984). The classroom consisted of students with diverse academic abilities and literacy backgrounds, providing a rich context for examining the implementation of contextual PBL.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling because they met specific inclusion criteria relevant to the study objectives. The teacher had at least three years of teaching experience and prior experience implementing contextual PBL activities in English instruction. The students were selected because they were actively participating in analytical exposition lessons and had direct experience engaging in contextual PBL activities during the study period. Their involvement was considered particularly relevant because analytical exposition texts require argumentation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, which align closely with the principles of deep learning and PBL.

Data were collected over three months through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and reflective field notes. Observations focused on instructional processes, teacher facilitation strategies, student participation, collaborative problem-solving activities, and interaction patterns during contextual PBL implementation. The combination of participants, setting, and curriculum context provided an information-rich case for exploring how contextual PBL supports deep learning-oriented English language instruction.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain deeper insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to implementing contextual Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in analytical exposition instruction. The interviews involved one English teacher and twelve students selected purposively from the 32 participants. The selected students represented diverse levels of classroom participation, English proficiency, and academic performance to ensure a variety of perspectives.

The interview process was conducted after the completion of the classroom observation period. An interview protocol consisting of open-ended questions was developed based on the research objectives. The teacher interview focused on instructional planning, classroom implementation, perceived benefits, and challenges of contextual PBL within a deep learning-oriented framework. Student interviews explored learning experiences, participation in collaborative inquiry, argument development, critical thinking processes, and perceived difficulties during the learning activities.

Each interview lasted approximately 20–30 minutes and was conducted in Indonesian to allow participants to express their ideas comfortably and accurately. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then reviewed and coded alongside observation notes and document analysis data to support data triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings.

Data Analysis Procedures

Thematic data analysis procedure was used in this study. At the initial stage, all data obtained via interviews and observations were transcribed verbatim. Open coding involved identifying recurring patterns and concepts in the data. Codes obtained via open coding were categorized according to themes such as contextual inquiry, reflective learning, collaboration processes, argumentative literacy development, and challenges in implementing deep learning-oriented teaching. Themes were critically interpreted to conclude the findings.

DISCUSSION

Contextual Problem-Based Learning Practices in Analytical Exposition Instruction

English teachers had applied Problem-Based Learning authentically, incorporating contextual problems based on actual social issues in students' lives. The topics included environmental pollution, social media addiction, the effectiveness of online learning, school discipline rules, and youth mental health issues. The incorporation of contextual problems led to increased student involvement, since these topics were personally meaningful and socially relevant. In this regard, the findings are consistent with the concept of meaningful learning promoted in deep learning-oriented instruction.

Interview data also supported this finding. One student explained:

"I prefer discussing real-life issues because I already know something about the topic. It helps me express my ideas and write arguments more easily." (Student 4)

Another student stated:

"When discussing social media addiction, everyone had different opinions. The discussion helped me understand how to support my arguments with reasons and examples." (Student 9)

Document analysis further confirmed this finding. Students' analytical exposition drafts showed that most arguments were derived from issues discussed during PBL activities. Several students incorporated examples related to environmental awareness, social media use, and school regulations as supporting evidence in their texts.

As for the instructional processes, contextual Problem-Based Learning instruction began with orientation activities. Specifically, the students were involved in group discussions and the identification of problems in order to construct arguments afterwards. During

classroom observation, students' engagement increased when they discussed their opinions, negotiated meanings, and defended their arguments based on evidence. Furthermore, Problem-Based Learning instruction contributed to a shift from analytical exposition instruction, from structure-focused memorization towards argument-focused exploration. Instead of mechanically learning how to identify thesis statements, arguments, and reiteration in analytical exposition texts, students learned the function of argumentative structures in authentic persuasive communication. Thus, the students gained more understanding of the social and communicative purpose of analytical exposition texts.

In general, the English teacher acted as a facilitator in classroom activities, conducting inquiry activities, posing reflective questions, and enabling collaborative interactions among students. Contrary to the traditional model where teachers control the entire process of classroom explanation, in Problem-Based Learning instruction, the teacher provided students with scaffolded strategies for independent inquiry into concepts. This approach is consistent with the student-centred perspective that dominates deep learning.

Deep Learning Characteristics in Classroom Interactions

Some deep learning characteristics were evident in classroom interactions. Firstly, meaningful learning occurred, as students identified connections between instructional content and personal experiences in social contexts. Students showed greater enthusiasm when discussing problems that were close to their social environment. One student explained:

"The topics were close to our lives, so it was easier to understand the problem and give opinions about it." (Student 3)

Similarly, another student stated:

"I could connect the lesson with experiences outside school, especially when discussing social media issues." (Student 8)

These responses indicate that learning became more meaningful because students were able to link academic content with authentic social contexts.

Secondly, reflective learning was also prominent when conducting collaborative inquiry. Students were able to question some of their assumptions after hearing different opinions from their peers. The reflective questioning helped students evaluate the validity of their arguments critically before concluding their writing tasks. Hence, such interaction can be viewed as evidence of reflective engagement.

Thirdly, the concept of mindful learning can be evidenced from the findings since students gained consciousness in the construction of arguments in analytical exposition texts. Namely, students became increasingly aware of how to select evidence and arrange arguments effectively to ensure coherence and logical consistency. This finding is consistent with deep learning theory, which promotes reflective engagement.

Fourthly, collaborative learning played an integral part in improving interaction quality. The students worked collaboratively to identify problems, analyse information, and formulate arguments before writing analytical exposition texts. In other words, students received necessary assistance from their peers and became more involved in classroom discussions.

Lastly, joy in learning became evident in students' enhanced enthusiasm and intense interactions in classroom activities. Unlike conventional lesson instruction, students showed increased motivation to interact and express their opinions during classroom discussion sessions. In this case, students were provided with a relatively relaxed atmosphere where they could discuss different ideas.

Students' Experience in Contextual Inquiry Activities

Interview data revealed that students generally perceived contextual Problem-Based Learning positively because it provided more opportunities for interaction, discussion, and active participation. Most students reported that English lessons became more engaging when they discussed issues closely related to their daily experiences rather than focusing solely on grammar exercises and text structures. During classroom observations, students appeared more willing to express opinions, ask questions, and respond to their peers' arguments.

One student explained:

"English class became more interesting because we discussed real problems that happen around us. It was different from just learning grammar rules." (Student 5)

Similarly, another student stated:

"I enjoyed discussing environmental and social media issues because everyone had different opinions to share." (Student 11)

Students also reported improvements in generating ideas for analytical exposition writing. Prior to participating in contextual inquiry activities, many students experienced difficulties developing arguments due to limited background knowledge and lack of discussion opportunities. Through collaborative inquiry, students gained broader perspectives and additional supporting information.

As one participant noted:

"Before the discussion, I did not know what arguments to write. After talking with my group members, I had many ideas and examples to support my opinion." (Student 7)

Observation notes confirmed that students frequently exchanged information and collectively developed arguments before beginning their writing tasks.

Another important finding concerned students' confidence in speaking and writing English. Interview responses indicated that repeated opportunities to present opinions and defend arguments helped students become more confident communicators.

One student explained:

"At first, I was afraid to speak English in front of my friends. After several discussions, I became more confident because everyone was encouraged to participate." (Student 2)

Document analysis of students' analytical exposition texts also showed improvements in argument development and evidence use. Compared with initial writing samples, later drafts contained more detailed explanations, supporting examples, and stronger logical connections between claims and evidence.

However, several students initially experienced difficulties adapting to inquiry-based learning. Observation data showed that some students remained passive during early discussions because they were accustomed to teacher-centered instruction. One student admitted:

"I was confused at first because the teacher did not directly give the answers. We had to discuss and find information ourselves." (Student 12)

Nevertheless, these students gradually became more involved as they gained familiarity with collaborative inquiry activities.

Teacher's Perspective on Problem-Based Learning and Deep Learning

Interview data revealed that the teacher viewed contextual Problem-Based Learning as highly compatible with deep learning-oriented English instruction. According to the teacher, analytical exposition texts require students to develop critical reasoning, evaluate evidence, and communicate arguments logically, competencies that cannot be effectively developed through lecture-based instruction alone.

The teacher stated:

"Students need opportunities to discuss issues, analyze information, and justify their opinions. Analytical exposition is not only about text structure but also about critical thinking." (Teacher Interview)

Classroom observations supported this perspective. Throughout the lessons, the teacher frequently encouraged students to elaborate on their reasoning by asking reflective questions such as "What evidence supports your claim?" and "Why do you agree with that opinion?" These strategies encouraged deeper inquiry and critical reflection. The teacher further reported that students became more active and collaborative during contextual inquiry activities.

"Students participated more actively when the topic was connected to their daily lives. They were more willing to ask questions, argue, and express opinions." (Teacher Interview)

Despite these benefits, the teacher identified several implementation challenges. One major challenge involved selecting authentic problems that were meaningful, age-appropriate, and linguistically accessible for students.

"Finding suitable real-world problems is not easy. The topic must be interesting, relevant, and appropriate for students' English proficiency levels." (Teacher Interview)

Time management was another challenge. Observation data showed that inquiry activities, group discussions, evidence gathering, reflection, and writing required substantial instructional time.

The teacher also observed uneven participation among students. During several discussion sessions, more confident students tended to dominate conversations while quieter students participated less frequently. To address this issue, the teacher assigned specific roles such as discussion leader, note-taker, presenter, and evidence collector to encourage more balanced participation.

Finally, the teacher highlighted difficulties in assessment practices.

"Assessing critical thinking, collaboration, and reflective learning is more complicated than assessing grammar or vocabulary. Traditional assessment methods cannot fully capture these learning processes." (Teacher Interview)

Overall, both interview and observation data suggest that contextual Problem-Based Learning supports the development of deep learning characteristics while simultaneously presenting pedagogical challenges related to planning, participation, time allocation, and assessment.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that contextual Problem-Based Learning (PBL) serves as an effective pedagogical approach for operationalizing deep learning principles in English language instruction. Students demonstrated meaningful engagement, reflective inquiry, collaborative learning, and improved argumentative competence when participating in contextual problem-solving activities. These findings support previous studies that reported that PBL promotes critical thinking, learner autonomy, and active knowledge construction (Sulaiman, 2013; Wibowo et al., 2024). Similar to previous research, students in the present study became active participants rather than passive recipients of information because learning activities required them to investigate authentic problems and justify their opinions.

The findings further revealed that collaborative inquiry encouraged reflective learning and critical evaluation of ideas. During group discussions, students frequently reconsidered their initial assumptions after listening to alternative viewpoints and examining

supporting evidence. This result is consistent with Vygotsky's (2011) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that higher-order thinking develops through social interaction and dialogue. Similar findings were reported by Sipayung et al. (2018), who found that collaborative inquiry environments encourage students to refine their reasoning processes through peer interaction. The reflective dimension emerged because students were exposed to multiple perspectives that challenged their existing beliefs and required them to justify their positions logically.

Another significant finding relates to the development of argumentative literacy. Students demonstrated improvements in generating arguments, organizing evidence, and constructing coherent analytical exposition texts. This finding corroborates previous studies suggesting that PBL supports argumentative writing by providing opportunities for discussion, evidence evaluation, and problem analysis before writing activities (Alwina & Iswanti, 2026; Hyland & Jiang, 2021; Rohi et al., 2026). The improvement may be explained by the fact that contextual inquiry activities supplied students with both conceptual understanding and content knowledge, enabling them to construct more persuasive arguments. Rather than memorizing text structures, students learned to use language as a tool for reasoning and persuasion.

The findings also highlight the importance of the teacher's role as a facilitator within deep learning-oriented classrooms. Consistent with Malthouse et al. (2015), the teacher in this study guided inquiry through reflective questioning, scaffolding, and collaborative facilitation rather than direct explanation. Such practices encouraged students to become independent learners capable of exploring issues and constructing knowledge autonomously. This finding reinforces the view that deep learning is more effectively achieved when teachers create inquiry-rich environments rather than relying on transmission-based instruction.

Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges were identified. Time constraints, uneven participation, varying language proficiency, and assessment difficulties emerged as major barriers to implementation. Similar challenges have been documented in previous PBL studies (Gemil et al., 2023; Wibowo & Munir, 2024). These challenges occurred because inquiry-based learning requires extensive discussion, reflection, and collaborative problem-solving, all of which demand greater instructional time and pedagogical preparation than traditional approaches. Furthermore, students entering the classroom with different linguistic and academic backgrounds may participate at different levels, creating challenges for equitable engagement.

The present study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how contextual PBL can function as a practical mechanism for implementing deep learning principles in analytical exposition instruction. While previous studies have typically examined PBL and deep learning separately, this study illustrates their interconnected relationship within English language classrooms. The findings suggest that contextual inquiry, collaborative reasoning, and authentic problem-solving create conditions that support meaningful, reflective, mindful, and joyful learning experiences, thereby strengthening both critical literacy and argumentative competence among secondary school learners.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the implementation of contextual Problem-Based Learning (PBL) within deep learning-oriented analytical exposition instruction at the senior high school level. The findings revealed that contextual inquiry activities promoted meaningful learning, reflection, collaboration, and reasoning, enabling students to engage more actively in constructing analytical exposition texts through authentic problem-solving experiences. The implementation also reflected key principles of deep learning, including meaningful and mindful learning, learner autonomy, collaborative knowledge construction, and sustained engagement with learning tasks.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing discussion on deep learning pedagogy by demonstrating how contextual PBL can serve as an instructional mechanism for operationalizing deep learning principles in English language classrooms. While previous studies have often examined PBL and deep learning as separate constructs, this study highlights their complementary relationship in fostering higher-order thinking, inquiry, and authentic learning experiences. Pedagogically, the findings suggest that English teachers can enhance analytical exposition instruction by integrating real-world problems, collaborative investigations, reflective discussions, and student-centered learning activities that encourage deeper engagement with texts and ideas.

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. It was conducted in a single senior high school with a limited number of participants and focused on one text genre within a specific instructional context. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other educational settings, grade levels, or language learning contexts. In addition, the study relied primarily on qualitative data, which may not fully capture the long-term impact of the intervention on students' academic achievement and the development of higher-order thinking.

Future research is recommended to investigate the implementation of contextual PBL within deep learning-oriented instruction across different educational contexts, language skills, and text genres. Longitudinal and mixed-method studies may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of the sustained effects of this approach on students' critical thinking, literacy development, engagement, and learning outcomes. Such research would further strengthen the evidence base for integrating contextual PBL and deep learning principles in English language education.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the advisors for their valuable guidance, support, and encouragement throughout the completion of this study as a requirement for a master's program in English Language Education. Special appreciation is also extended to the Dean and all academic staff for their institutional support and academic assistance in the Faculty of Languages and Arts, UNESA. The authors are deeply thankful to the research site, including the English teacher and students who participated actively in the study, for their cooperation and contribution during the research process.

Conflict of Interest

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

AI Disclosure Statement

This manuscript was partially supported by the use of ChatGPT (OpenAI) for language editing and text improvement. All outputs generated by the AI tool were carefully reviewed and verified by the authors. The authors assume full responsibility for the content.

Funding

There is no support for this article. No parties or grants supported this research.

Author Contribution

Conceptualization: Lathifah Nur Karimah, Ahmad Munir, and Muhaimin Abdullah; **methodology:** Lathifah Nur Karimah; **investigation:** Lathifah Nur Karimah, Ahmad Munir, and Muhaimin Abdullah; **writing—original draft preparation:** Lathifah Nur Karimah and Ahmad Munir; **writing—review and editing:** Ahmad Munir and Muhaimin Abdullah; **visualization:** Lathifah Nur Karimah and Muhaimin Abdullah. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Data Availability

The datasets generated and analyzed during this study are not publicly available due to the inclusion of participants' personal information but are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request and with appropriate ethical approval.

REFERENCES

- Alwina, M. I., & Iswanti, E. (2026). Exploring teachers' perceptions of game-based learning in English classrooms: A case study at a private elementary school. *Journal of English Language and Educational Studies*, 1(1), 1–15. <https://journalng.uwks.ac.id/jeles/article/view/1093>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Din, M. (2020). Evaluating university students' critical thinking ability as reflected in their critical reading skill: A study at bachelor level in Pakistan. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 35, 100627. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100627>
- Gemil, K. W., Na'ila, D. S., Ardila, N. Z., & Sarahah, Z. U. (2024). The relationship of vocational education skills in agribusiness processing agricultural products in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *ASEAN Journal of Science and Engineering Education*, 4(2), 181–192. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ajsee.v4i2.65676>
- Hariani, L. S., Mohamad, M. bin, & Sulisty, S. (2023). How can HOTS for vocational high school students be enhanced through the problem-based learning model? *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(4), 5816–5824. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i4.4605>
- Hyland, K., & Jiang, F. (2021). Delivering relevance: The emergence of ESP as a discipline. *English for Specific Purposes*, 64, 13–25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2021.06.002>
- Laksono, K. T., Rohimah, N. K., & Fauziati, E. (2024). Exploring challenges of Indonesian EFL teachers in implementing differentiated instruction in ELT classrooms. *Panyonara: Journal of English Education*, 6(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.19105/panyonara.v6i2.14661>
- Malthouse, R., Watts, M., & Roffey-Barentsen, J. (2015). Reflective questions, self-questioning and managing professionally situated practice. *Research in Education*, 94(1), 71–87. <https://doi.org/10.7227/RIE.0024>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Toward a shared craft. *Educational Researcher*, 13(5), 20–30. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X013005020>
- Mulyono, N. (2026). Desain pembelajaran mendalam (deep learning) di sekolah dasar: Integrasi teori, paradigma Kurikulum Merdeka, dan praktik kelas. Diva Pustaka. <https://ejournal.45mataram.ac.id/index.php/armada/article/view/2012>
- Nouby, A., & Alkhazali, T. (2017). The effect of designing a blended learning environment on achievement and deep learning of graduate students at the Arabian Gulf University. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(10), 248–260. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2017.510022>
- Dewi, R. F., Rohi, S., & Li, X. (2026). Metacognitive reading strategies among English department students: A case study at a private university. *Journal of English Language and Educational Studies*, 1(1), 54–68. <https://journalng.uwks.ac.id/jeles/article/view/1095>
- Saddhono, K., Oktaria, D., Raharjo, Y. M., Nugroho, R. A., Sudaryanto, Qomariyah, U., Asteria, P. V., & Faizah, U. (2018). Effective sentence assignment as the key to improve skill of writing exposition with online learning media Quipper. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, 7(2.13), 437–441. <https://doi.org/10.14419/ijet.v7i2.13.18135>
- Sipayung, D. H., Sani, R. A., Rahmatsyah, & Bunawan, H. (2018). Collaborative inquiry for 4C skills. In *Proceedings of the 3rd Annual International Seminar on Transformative Education and Educational Leadership (AISTEEL 2018)* (pp. 440–445). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/aisteel-18.2018.95>
- Sufian, A., Ghosh, A., Sadiq, A. S., & Smarandache, F. (2020). A survey on deep transfer learning to edge computing for mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Systems Architecture*, 108, 101830. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sysarc.2020.101830>
- Sulaiman, F. (2013). The effectiveness of PBL online on physics students' creativity and critical thinking: A case study at Universiti Malaysia Sabah. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 1(3), 1–18.

- Tsybulsky, D. (2019). The team teaching experiences of pre-service science teachers implementing PBL in elementary school. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 45(3), 244–261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2019.1599505>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman (Eds.), *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (pp. 79–91).
- Wibowo, A. H., Munir, A., & Suhartono, S. (2024a). The effectiveness of task-based language teaching to improve cadets' critical thinking skills in comprehending ESP English text. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, 8(6), 5169–5178. <https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v8i6.3140>
- Wibowo, A. H., Munir, A., & Suhartono, S. (2024b). The influence of Kahoot-based TBLT in improving critical reading skills in higher education. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, 8(5), 1413–1425. <https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v8i5.1844>