

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The chapter reveals the background of the study, the research question, the purposes of the research, the significance of the research, the research scope, the research framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

Deep learning has been officially introduced in Indonesian education as a pedagogical approach that emphasizes meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning. According to the Academic Paper on Deep Learning published by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Kemendikdasmen, 2025), deep learning aims to develop learning that emphasizes deep understanding in students, reflective thinking, and the ability to apply their knowledge in real-life contexts, rather than relying on rote learning. In this regard, this approach generally places students as active connectors of meaningful learning through the stages of understanding, applying, and reflecting, which makes deep learning a philosophically grounded approach to classroom learning design in Indonesia, especially in English classes (Sari & Nugroho, 2024).

On the other hand, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes are interpreted as a learning context in which English is taught as a foreign language in addition to being used daily and mainly used in instructional environments such as schools, homes, and surrounding environments. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), effective EFL teaching should focus on language as a tool for communication, meaning formation, and interaction, rather than focusing solely on procedural grammar structures. Similarly, successful EFL classes engage students cognitively, connect language learning to real-life experiences, and encourage reflective use of English (Brown, 2007). Therefore, these principles indicate that EFL learning directly requires deep cognitive engagement. In English as a Foreign Language teaching, the implementation of deep learning aligns with the constructivist approach.

In line with this, the theoretical alignment between the deep learning approach and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning lies in the emphasis on meaning

construction, reflection, and contextual learning. The principle of deep learning proposed by Fullan et al. (2018) states that deep learning occurs when students focus on understanding meaning, exploring ideas, and applying knowledge to real-life contexts. These characteristics are very much in line with communicative language teaching and task-based learning in EFL classrooms, where students are expected to actively use language to express ideas, solve problems, and reflect on their learning.

Moreover, several empirical studies in Indonesia show that the implementation of deep learning is beginning to gain attention in its application, including in the context of English language education. A study by Benu et al. (2025) examined the application of deep learning in EFL classrooms, with a specific focus on meaningful, mindful, and enjoyable learning, and found that strategies such as contextual tasks enhance student engagement and critical thinking. Similarly, Aditama et al. (2025) investigated the impact of deep learning strategies on student engagement and reported significant improvements in students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. However, most previous studies have tended to focus on learning outcomes, teaching strategies, or program effectiveness, rather than examining teachers' beliefs as a central factor influencing the implementation of deep learning principles.

However, preliminary observation conducted at two junior high schools in Bandung, Indonesia, showed that English language teaching is still dominated by a surface learning approach. Classroom learning practices tend to emphasize vocabulary memorization, grammar rules, and reading or writing texts, with few opportunities for students to engage in meaningful, contextual language building. In this case, this condition is also explained by Biggs and Tang (2011), who argue that surface learning occurs when students attempt to reproduce information without deep understanding.

In many cases, teachers in Indonesia often prioritize curriculum requirements and time constraints over meaningful learning processes. As a result, English language teaching practices in EFL classrooms tend to focus on procedural knowledge rather than deep understanding (Indriyani, 2025). Furthermore, Rahmiati et al (2025) examine how teachers view the teaching and learning process

play a crucial role in determining how teaching approaches are implemented in the classrooms. Therefore, it is important to consider teachers' beliefs as one of the factors influencing the implementation of deep learning principles in the EFL context.

Therefore, Borg (2003) explains that teachers' beliefs influence how they interpret curriculum reform and learning approaches, choose teaching strategies, and respond to challenges in the classrooms. In language education, Borg (2003) further explains that teachers' beliefs significantly shape decisions in teaching, including task design, student-teacher interactions in the classrooms, and assessment. Consequently, understanding the beliefs of English teachers in this study is crucial for analyzing how deep learning principles are applied in EFL classrooms, and whether they are implemented meaningfully or only at a procedural level.

To better understand this condition, there is a clear need to investigate how deep learning principles can be interpreted and implemented in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms based on the beliefs of English teachers. This study aims to investigate the beliefs of English teachers at the secondary school level regarding deep learning, the challenges they face, and how the principles of deep learning are implemented in English classrooms practice in the national curriculum. With a focus on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes at the junior high school level, this study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to the improvement of deep learning in English teaching in Indonesia

B. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the research problems are identified as follows:

1. What are English teachers' beliefs about the deep learning approach and its principles in the EFL classrooms at a junior high school?
2. How are the principles of the deep learning approach implemented in the EFL classrooms at a junior high school?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the background of the research above, the research aims to:

1. To explore the English teachers' beliefs about the deep learning approach and its principles in the EFL classrooms at a junior high school.
2. To describe how the principles of the deep learning approach are implemented in the EFL classrooms at a junior high school.

D. Research Significances

This study highlights the importance of the contributions offered in both the theory and practice of the deep learning approach, particularly in the EFL classrooms. The importance of this study involves theoretical and practical aspects.

1. Theoretical Significances

This study theoretically contributes to the literature on the implementation of principles of the Deep Learning Approach in the EFL classrooms, in the context of junior high schools in Indonesia. This study contributes to a clearer theoretical understanding of teachers' beliefs based on Borg's (2003) theory of teacher cognition and cognitive processes involved in the Deep Learning approach to English language learning proposed by Fullan et al. (2018). This study is expected to strengthen the theoretical understanding of how the principles of the deep learning approach support student comprehension, meaningful learning, mindful learning, and active learning in the EFL classrooms in Indonesia.

For future researchers, this study is expected to be useful as a reference for researchers who plan to explore the principles of the deep learning approach in the context of EFL learning. These findings can be used as comparative data for further studies conducted in similar Indonesian educational environments, both in the same and different contexts.

2. Practical significances

This study focuses on the application of deep learning approach in English classrooms instruction, so it is expected that this study will be useful for various parties in English language learning, including:

- a) For teachers, it is expected that this study can provide a better understanding of how to effectively integrate deep learning principles into EFL classrooms, what obstacles must be overcome, and what potential or strategies can be developed.
- b) For schools, it is expected that this research can provide recommendations or references to strengthen the teaching practice of the deep learning approach and support meaningful and contextual learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes.

E. Research Scope

This study focuses on teachers' beliefs regarding the implementation of deep learning principles as proposed by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (*Kemendikdasmen*) 2025 in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This study examines teachers' views on the deep learning approach, its implementation, as well as the challenges, strategies, and potential in the process. Using a qualitative case study method, the main data in this study is directly from the participants, two 9th-grade English teachers at a public junior high school in Bandung who have implemented the deep learning approach and its principles, limited to the principles of deep learning, dimensions of graduate profile (*dimensi profil lulusan*), and learning experience (*pengalaman belajar*). It should be noted that this study does not analyze the results or significant impact on students quantitatively in terms of learning outcomes, but rather teachers' beliefs about its implementation.

F. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study describes the relationship between the principles of the Deep Learning Approach and its implementation in the EFL classrooms by English Teachers' beliefs. All those aspects are interrelated; examine teachers' beliefs regarding the implementation of the deep learning approach and its principles in the EFL classrooms. The concept of this research is generally illustrated with the diagram below, which is then interpreted and explained in more detail in Chapter 2, the literature

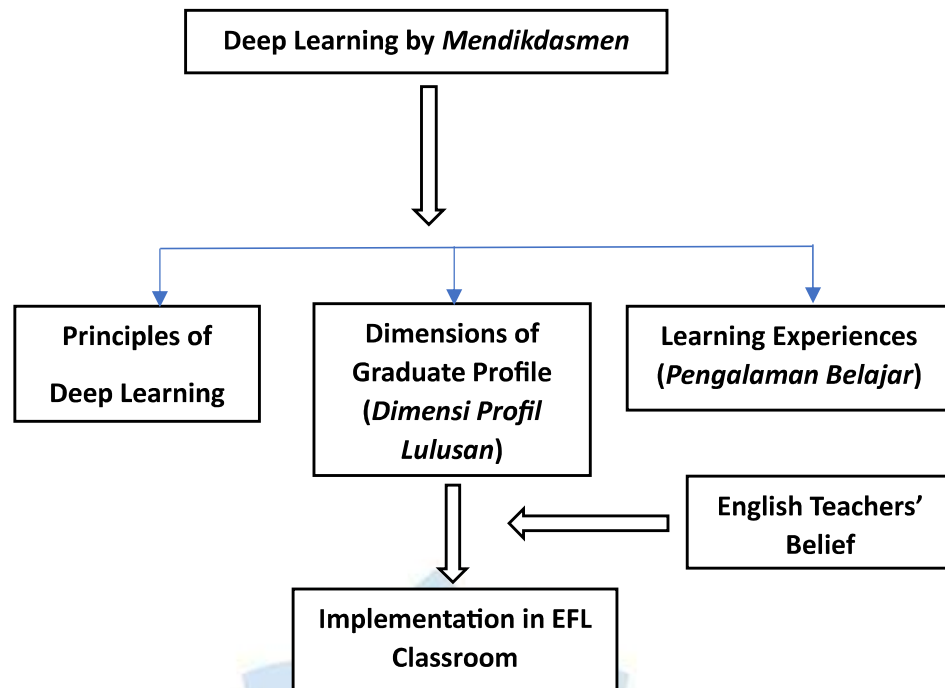


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

The deep learning approach focuses on students' deep understanding, reflective thinking, and the application of knowledge in real contexts, rather than mere memorization, and places learners as active meaning builders through experiences that involve understanding, application, and reflection (Fullan et al., 2018). On the other hand, the deep learning approach (*Pembelajaran Mendalam*) in Indonesia was officially issued and defined by *Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah (Kemendikdasmen)* as a pedagogical approach that emphasizes meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning. Within this framework, Rahman et al. (2025) emphasize that deep learning becomes the philosophical foundation that guides instructional design, assessment, and classroom interactions in line with the objectives of the National Curriculum in Indonesia.

This study focuses on analyzing several aspects of the deep learning approach framework, including the principles of deep learning, dimensions of graduate profile (*Dimensi Profil Lulusan*), and learning experiences (*Pengalaman Belajar*). All of these are interrelated in their implementation in EFL classrooms. The principles of deep learning become the essence of implementing the deep learning approach. According to Fullan et al. (2018), meaningful learning emphasizes new

knowledge that students acquire in relation to their previous experiences in the context of their real lives, mindful learning emphasizes reflection in the learning process, while joyful learning encourages students to engage emotionally and motivates them. These principles are in line with the deep learning theory proposed by Hidayat et al. (2025) argue that deep learning focuses not only on the acquisition of content knowledge, but also on transforming learning into a meaningful process through real-world problem-solving and active engagement. Students engage in authentic and relevant learning experiences that encourage learning to be connected to real-life contexts and foster students' ability to construct meaning, which aligns with the principles of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning in creating deeper understanding and engagement in the classrooms.

Dimensions of graduate profile (*Dimensi Profil Lulusan*) Similarly interpreted by Fullan et al. (2020) emphasizes that education must produce students who possess global competencies known as the 6Cs that include character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking interpreting the expected results of implementing the deep learning approach in Indonesian education. These dimensions include Faith and Devotion to God Almighty, Citizenship, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Independence, Health, and Communication (*Kemendikdasmen*, 2025). Within the framework of deep learning, these dimensions serve as the orientation for student learning that teachers are expected to integrate into their classroom teaching. In English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, language learning is not only aimed at developing linguistic competence, but also at fostering other aspects that serve as a means for student development.

Another aspect that must be considered is Learning Experiences. According to Kemendikdasmen (2025), Deep Learning provides learning experiences to students by understanding (*memahami*), applying (*mengaplikasi*), and reflecting (*merefleksi*). Learning experiences are processes experienced by individuals (students) in acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. These experiences occur in various environments, such as at school, at home, or in daily life, involving interaction with subject matter, teachers, peers, or the environment (Anggraini & Prasetyo, 2025). In the deep learning approach, learning experiences are activities

provided by teachers that are related to the SOLO (Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes) taxonomy developed by Biggs & Collis (1982).

All important aspects of the deep learning principles will be interpreted through teachers' beliefs. Teachers' beliefs are one of the important things that play a crucial role in shaping teaching practices when implementing educational approaches. According to Borgs (2003), teachers' beliefs influence how they interpret how policy approaches and curriculum as implemented in schools, then choose teaching strategies, and respond to challenges that arise in the classrooms. In the context of deep learning, teachers' beliefs determine whether the principles of deep learning can be meaningfully applied structurally or not. Borgs (2003) further explains that in language teaching, teachers' beliefs greatly influence classroom practices, including the design of tasks, instruction, student engagement, and assessment. Therefore, prioritizing the beliefs of English teachers in research is essential to understanding how deep learning principles are implemented into classroom practices.

The EFL classrooms are interpreted as an English language learning context in which the target language is used and studied not as an everyday language, but as a foreign language that will be used outside the classrooms. According to Richards & Rodgers (2014), in EFL contexts, language is not learned solely as a structure, but as a tool for thinking, interacting, and constructing complex meanings. According to Brown (2007), an effective EFL classroom is one that engages students' cognition, connects language to real-life experiences, and provides opportunities for students to reflect on their use of language. When linked to Deep Learning, the characteristics of an ideal EFL classrooms are very consistent with the principles of deep learning.

In summary, this conceptual framework positions the Deep Learning Approach as a fundamental pedagogical approach that accompanies the learning process in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The principles of deep learning, dimensions of graduate profile, and learning experiences are interconnected elements that shape how learning is designed, implemented, and understood by students. These components are influenced by the beliefs of English teachers, which affect how deep learning principles are interpreted and applied in

real classroom practice. In the context of EFL classrooms, language functions as a tool for meaning-making, while deep learning supports meaningful and contextual learning.

G. Previous Studies

The first previous study by Benu et al. (2025) examined the application of deep learning in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, with a particular focus on developing conscious, meaningful, and enjoyable language learning. However, this study only focused on the three main principles of deep learning, without involving observations of graduate profiles or learning experiences, and without exploring in depth the beliefs or perceptions of teachers that underlie their teaching decisions. Furthermore, this study did not explore the challenges and strategies faced by teachers during implementation, resulting in a gap in understanding of how teachers' beliefs and perceived obstacles influence the application of deep learning in EFL classrooms. The results of the study show that deep learning strategies such as reflective questions, contextual tasks, and collaborative learning successfully increased student engagement, critical thinking, and meaningful language use.

The second previous study was conducted by Aditama et al. (2025), who examined the impact of deep learning strategies on EFL student engagement using a qualitative phenomenological design involving observation and interviews. However, this study focused on student engagement outcomes and teacher perceptions at the surface level, without investigating teachers' beliefs about the implementation of deep learning principles as a research construct. Furthermore, this study did not explicitly map teachers' beliefs to specific deep learning principles or explore how these beliefs shaped instructional views in the implementation of EFL deep learning. This study found that deep learning strategies such as problem-based learning, collaborative learning, and critical thinking significantly increased students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement.

A third previous study by Safira & Astuti (2025) proposed a conceptual framework for applying deep learning in English language teaching (ELT) through Cooperative Learning, specifically the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique, to improve the speaking skills of high school students. This research is

based on a Genre-Based Approach, and it is in line with the Indonesian Empowerment Curriculum, emphasizing how deep learning principles can be implemented through cooperative learning activities to encourage critical thinking and meaningful language use. Furthermore, this study does not investigate teachers' beliefs or interpretations in applying deep learning principles in the EFL classrooms context. This indicates a clear research gap for this study.

The fourth previous study was conducted by Bachtiar, Zuhairi & Puspitasari (2025), which reported on a community-based study examining the integration of the Deep Learning (DL) approach in English language teaching through a structured professional development program for junior high school English teachers in Bogor, Indonesia, based on Fullan's 6C framework (character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking). However, this study focused primarily on the results of professional development and program effectiveness, rather than on teachers' beliefs or interpretations as cognitive constructs or how those beliefs shaped the implementation of deep learning principles in the classrooms in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Furthermore, this study does not investigate how deep learning principles are applied in daily classroom practice in their implementation, thus indicating a research gap that requires in-depth qualitative exploration of teachers' beliefs and classroom observations in applying deep learning in EFL classrooms.

The fifth previous study was presented by Nurhasanah et al. (2025), who conducted a systematic review of Deep Learning Pedagogy for Indonesian Curriculum Reform, which directly reviewed the implementation of deep learning pedagogy in various international educational contexts and analyzed its relevance to curriculum reform in Indonesia. This study analyzed 31 reviewed articles. The findings show that deep learning is generally applied through project-based learning strategies, discovery-based learning, and reflective learning to develop critical thinking and reflective understanding. However, as a systematic review, this study mainly provides a macro-level policy and curriculum perspective and does not explore teachers' beliefs, interpretations, or real experiences in implementing deep learning. Furthermore, this study does not specifically focus on the implementation of deep learning in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms

or investigate how deep learning principles are implemented in EFL classrooms at the junior high school level.

The sixth previous study was conducted by Yang et al. (2023) and titled “The impact of teachers’ teaching strategies on students’ deep learning in online learning environments,” published in the journal *Frontiers in Education*. This study examined the influence of teachers’ teaching strategies on students’ deep learning in the context of online learning. This study used a quantitative approach focusing on teaching strategies, learning interactions, and student engagement. The results indicate that teachers’ teaching strategies play a significant role in fostering deep learning, particularly through increased interaction and active student engagement in the learning process. However, this study focuses on the direct impact of strategies on students, rather than through the lens of teachers’ beliefs, and the context is online learning, not an EFL classrooms.

Overall, the five previous studies indicate that the Deep Learning approach has the potential to be a powerful pedagogical approach for enhancing meaningful, mindful, joyful, and student-centered learning in English language education. However, most existing studies focus more on specific language skills, student learning outcomes, cooperative learning, curriculum analysis, or teacher training programs, rather than exploring teachers’ beliefs and the implementation of deep learning principles in real classroom contexts. In addition, several studies used survey, experimental, or literature review designs, without looking at teachers’ beliefs or interpretations. Research that specifically investigates the implementation of Deep Learning principles in English classrooms is also still limited in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) at the junior high school level in Indonesia. Therefore, there is a clear research gap in this study compared to previous studies.