

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING  
TO TEACH CRITICAL THINKING  
IN ENGLISH CLASS AT SMK NEGERI DANDER**

**SKRIPSI**



Presented to  
IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Sarjana in English Education

**By:**  
**Ridho Dwi Syaputra**  
**NIM 21120079**

**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND ARTS EDUCATION  
IKIP PGRI BOJONEGORO  
2025**

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
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**2025**

## APPROVAL SHEETS

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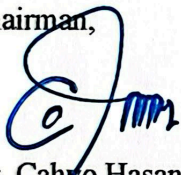
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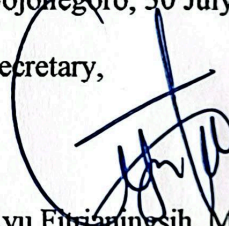
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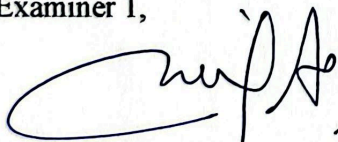
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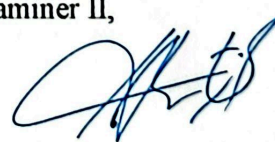
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## **MOTTO**

“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”

(Oscar Wilde)

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

(Franklin D. Roosevelt)

“It does not matter how slowly you go, as long as you do not stop.”

(Confucius)

“When you change your thoughts, remember to also change your world.”

(Norman Vincent Peale)

## **DEDICATION**

All praise and gratitude be to Allah SWT for His endless blessings and mercy, which have made it possible for the writer to complete this thesis successfully. With utmost respect and sincerity, the writer dedicates this thesis to:

1. My deepest gratitude goes to my beloved parents, Mr. Sugianto and Mrs. Siti Robiqoh, for their endless love, advice, motivation, and support in fulfilling my needs, as well as their continuous prayers throughout my undergraduate journey.
2. My sincere thanks go to Ika Kartika Sari and Yoga Septiansyah for their unwavering support, prayers, and financial assistance throughout my academic journey. Thank you for being an important part of this journey.
3. To my beloved little nephew, Adzando Haziq Syabani, whose smile and cheerfulness have always brought me joy and motivation during the tiring moments of this journey. May you grow into a smart, kind-hearted, and curious individual in the future.
4. Fitri Nurdianingsih, M.Pd., and Dr. Refi Ranto Rozak, M.Pd., as my first and second thesis advisors, who have generously dedicated their time and energy to guide me throughout the completion of this thesis.
5. The lecturers at IKP PGRI Bojonegoro who have provided me with valuable knowledge and insights throughout my academic journey.
6. And to all parties who have provided assistance and motivation for the smooth completion of this thesis.

## STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I, the undersigned below:

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In order to uphold academic integrity, sincerely and without coercion from any parties, I hereby declare that the thesis entitled:

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING  
TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING  
IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMK NEGERI DANDER**

Is the result of my own original work, and all sources of information used have been clearly cited in the reference list according to the scientific and academic code of ethics. I am aware that if any violations of scholarly ethics regarding to the authenticity of this work are found, I personally accept the consequences in accordance with the applicable regulations and am prepared to bear legal sanctions.



Bojonegoro, 11 Juli 2025  
The researcher,

Ridho Dwi Syaputra  
NIM. 21120079

## ABSTRACT

Syaputra, Ridho Dwi. 2025. The Implementation of Problem-Based Learning to Teach Critical Thinking in English Class at SMK Negeri Dander. Undergraduate Thesis, English Education Study Program, Faculty of Language and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Advisor (I) Fitri Nurdianingsih, M.Pd., Advisor (II) Dr. Refi Ranto Rozak, M.Pd.

**Keywords: Problem-Based Learning, Critical Thinking, English Language Learning, Analytical Exposition Text, Vocational High School**

This research was motivated by the low level of students' critical thinking skills in English language learning at SMK Negeri Dander. Preliminary observations and interviews revealed that students often displayed passive behavior, minimal involvement in discussions, and difficulty in identifying problems, analyzing information, and developing logical arguments. The purpose of this study was to describe how Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is implemented in English language learning, and how students' critical thinking skills are demonstrated during the implementation of PBL in the classroom. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving tenth-grade LPFKK students and an English teacher at SMK Negeri Dander. The analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, methods, and time. The findings showed that PBL was implemented through structured stages, including problem orientation, group discussion, data exploration, presentation, and reflection. The teacher's role was primarily as a facilitator who guided students through the problem-solving process while encouraging their autonomy. Furthermore, the findings revealed that students demonstrated critical thinking skills as conceptualized by Facione (2015), including interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. These skills were reflected in students' ability to formulate arguments, assess the credibility of information, draw conclusions, justify ideas, and revise their reasoning based on feedback and discussion. Thus, the implementation of PBL created a learning environment that supported the development of students' critical thinking skills in the context of English language instruction at a vocational high school.



## ABSTRAK

Syaputra, Ridho Dwi. 2025. *The Implementation of Problem-Based Learning to Teach Critical Thinking in English Class at SMK Negeri Dander*. Skripsi, Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, Pembimbing (I) Fitri Nurdianingsih, M.Pd., Pembimbing (II) Dr. Refi Ranto Rozak, M.Pd.

**Kata Kunci:** Problem-Based Learning, Berpikir Kritis, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Analytical Exposition Text, SMK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh rendahnya keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di SMK Negeri Dander. Hasil observasi dan wawancara awal menunjukkan bahwa siswa cenderung pasif, kurang terlibat dalam diskusi kelompok, serta mengalami kesulitan dalam mengidentifikasi masalah, menganalisis informasi, dan membangun argumen yang logis. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsik bagaimana Problem-Based Learning (PBL) diterapkan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, dan bagaimana keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa ditunjukkan selama pelaksanaan PBL di kelas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan siswa kelas X LPFKK dan seorang guru bahasa Inggris di SMK Negeri Dander. Analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman, yang mencakup reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Validitas data diperoleh melalui triangulasi sumber, metode, dan waktu. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa PBL diterapkan melalui tahapan-tahapan terstruktur, yaitu orientasi masalah, diskusi kelompok, eksplorasi data, presentasi, dan refleksi. Guru berperan sebagai fasilitator yang membimbing siswa dalam proses pemecahan masalah sekaligus mendorong kemandirian belajar mereka. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa siswa menunjukkan keterampilan berpikir kritis sebagaimana dikemukakan oleh Facione (2015), yang mencakup interpretasi, analisis, evaluasi, inferensi, penjelasan, dan regulasi diri. Keterampilan ini tercermin dalam kemampuan siswa menyusun argumen, menilai kredibilitas informasi, menarik kesimpulan, memberikan justifikasi, serta merevisi pemikiran berdasarkan umpan balik dan diskusi. Dengan demikian, penerapan PBL menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung pengembangan keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di SMK.

## **PREFACE**

All praise is due to Allah SWT for His blessings, guidance, and mercy, through which the writer was able to complete this undergraduate thesis entitled “The Implementation of Problem-Based Learning to Teach Critical Thinking in English Class at SMK Negeri Dander” properly and successfully. This thesis is submitted as a requirement to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in English Education at the Faculty of Language and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. The writer fully realizes that this thesis would not have been completed without the support, guidance, and assistance from various parties. Therefore, with great respect and gratitude, the writer would like to express sincere appreciation to:

1. Dr. Junarti, M.Pd., as the Rector of IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, for the support and permission granted during the research and writing process.
2. Dr. Cahyo Hasanudin, M.Pd., as the Dean of the Faculty of Language and Arts Education, for the encouragement and academic guidance throughout the study.
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4. Fitri Nurdianingsih, M.Pd., as the first advisor, for her patience, continuous guidance, and valuable input throughout the completion of this thesis.
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The writer realizes that this thesis is still far from being perfect. Hopefully, it will be beneficial for both the writer and the readers, and may we always be under the protection of Allah SWT. Aamiin.

Bojonegoro, 04 July 2025

The Writer

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of Study

Critical thinking is one of the essential competencies that students must possess to face the challenges of the 21st century. This skill involves the ability to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and make decisions logically and reflectively, Facione as cited in (Nurjanah & Trimulyono, 2022). In the context of English language learning in vocational high schools (SMK), critical thinking is highly necessary, particularly in understanding, evaluating, and effectively delivering arguments through texts, discussions, and problem-solving based on real-life contexts.

However, the reality at SMK Negeri Dander shows that students still struggle to develop their critical thinking skills. Based on classroom observations and interviews with English teachers, students tend to be passive, show limited engagement in group discussions, and face difficulties in analyzing problems and constructing logical arguments. These findings are consistent with research by Kurniawan et al. (2021), which indicates that SMK students' critical thinking abilities remain low, especially in areas such as making assumptions and forming arguments. This condition is further exacerbated by teacher-centered instructional models, which offer limited opportunities for students to practice independent and reflective thinking.

In response to these challenges, several studies suggest implementing instructional models that actively promote the development of critical thinking skills. One approach proven to be effective is Problem-Based Learning (PBL).



PBL is a learning model based on solving real-world problems, which encourages students to learn independently, collaborate, and think critically in seeking solutions (Darwati & Purana, 2021). In practice, PBL places students at the center of the learning process, while teachers act as facilitators who guide the exploration of problems and the construction of arguments.

The effectiveness of the PBL model in improving critical thinking skills has been demonstrated in various studies. Maharani et al. (2023), developed PBL-based student worksheets (LKPD) and found that their use significantly improved SMK students' critical thinking skills, as reflected in an N-Gain score increase of 0.71. Similarly, Rachmawati & Rosy (2021) found that implementing PBL in General Administration subjects significantly enhanced students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities compared to conventional learning approaches. This is further supported by a study by Ikawati (2023), which showed that PBL could increase student participation and learning outcomes in English classes, although the study was conducted at the junior high school level.

Nevertheless, the implementation of PBL in English language instruction at vocational schools remains relatively underexplored. Most previous studies have focused more on exact subjects such as mathematics and science or have only quantitatively assessed the effectiveness of PBL without deeply exploring the classroom implementation processes and dynamics. Therefore, there is a need for research that specifically investigates how PBL is implemented in English language teaching at SMK and how students' critical thinking skills develop during the process.

Considering these gaps, this study aims to investigate the implementation of Problem-Based Learning to teach critical thinking in English class at SMK Negeri Dander. Through this approach, the study seeks to offer a more contextual and practical instructional model that encourages students to become active, reflective learners who are better prepared to meet the demands of the 21st century.

## **B. Formulation of the Problems**

Based on the background described above, the research questions in this study are as follows:

1. How is Problem-Based Learning (PBL) implemented in English language learning at SMK Negeri Dander?
2. How are the students' critical thinking skills in English language learning during PBL at SMK Negeri Dander?

## **C. Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to:

1. Describe the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in English language learning at SMK Negeri Dander.
2. Explore the students' critical thinking skills in English language learning during the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) at SMK Negeri Dander.

## **D. Significances of the Study**

This research is expected to provide the following contributions:

### **1. Theoretical Significance**

- a. Development of PBL Theory: This study is expected to contribute to the development of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) theory, particularly in the context of English language learning at vocational high schools.
- b. Enhancement of Critical Thinking in English Education: The findings of this study may enrich the existing literature on effective instructional strategies to improve students' critical thinking skills in English language learning.
- c. Development of Student-Centered Learning: This study may serve as a reference for the development of student-centered learning models through the application of the PBL approach.

### **2. Practical Significance**

#### **a. For Students**

This study is expected to help students develop their critical thinking skills during English language learning, which are essential not only for academic purposes but also for real-life decision-making and problem-solving.

#### **b. For Teachers**

The findings of this study may serve as a reference for English teachers in designing and implementing innovative and student-centered teaching methods, such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), to enhance students' critical thinking skills.

### **c. For Schools**

This study can provide input for schools in developing more effective curricula and instructional strategies, particularly in integrating critical thinking skill development into English language learning through PBL.

## **E. Definition of Terminologies**

To avoid misunderstandings and to clarify the scope of this study, the following are the definitions of several key terms used in the research:

### **1. Problem-Based Learning (PBL)**

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered instructional approach in which the learning process begins with the presentation of real-world problems relevant to everyday life. The primary goal of PBL is to foster students' conceptual understanding through inquiry-based activities, problem-solving, and collaborative work. According to Darwati & Purana (2021), PBL emphasizes the active mental engagement of students to understand concepts within the context of problem situations, which can stimulate critical, creative, and innovative thinking. Maharani et al. (2023) further highlight that the application of PBL through media such as student worksheets (LKPD) has been proven to enhance active participation and cognitive engagement, as students are directly involved in analysis and group discussions.

PBL significantly improves vocational school students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills through interactive and reflective learning activities. In this study, Problem-Based Learning is operationally defined as an instructional model used to teach critical thinking in English

class through active problem exploration, inquiry, and collaborative discussion.

## **2. Critical Thinking Skills**

Critical thinking skills refer to the mental process that involves the ability to analyze, evaluate, and draw conclusions based on information in a logical, systematic, and reflective manner. Facione (2015) identifies six core components of critical thinking: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. Ennis, as cited in Pratama & Mardiani (2022), also defines critical thinking as a rational and reflective process used to determine what to believe or what actions to take based on available information.

Kurniawan et al. (2021) found that certain aspects of critical thinking, such as making assumptions and constructing arguments, remain low among vocational school students. This finding highlights the importance of appropriate instructional interventions to improve these skills. Therefore, in this study, critical thinking skills are operationalized as students' ability to process and evaluate information, construct logical arguments, solve problems reflectively through systematic and evidence-based conclusions during English language learning activities using the PBL approach.

## **3. English Language Learning**

English language learning refers to the process of developing students' competence in understanding and using English through the four essential skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This process involves not only mastering linguistic structures but also applying language in real-life

contexts. Maharani et al. (2023) state that the effectiveness of language learning increases when instructional strategies are designed to actively engage students through media and contextual approaches. Similarly, Nurjanah & Trimulyono (2022) emphasize that integrating problem-based learning into English instruction can simultaneously enhance students' language proficiency and critical thinking skills. In this study, English language learning is defined as an interactive and contextual process in which students develop communication skills while simultaneously enhancing their critical thinking abilities through the application of Problem-Based Learning.