

## Investigating Factors Influencing Efl Students' Critical Thingking Skill And Reading Achivents In Reading Classroom

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### Abstract

*This study aims to investigate the factors that influence EFL students' critical thinking skills and reading achievement in reading classroom. To achieve the research objectives, so that the design of this research was a case study by taking 30 students at third semesters who program critical reading in English Study Program at the Faculty of Culture, Management and Business, Mandalika University of Education. The students were given critical thinking skill test in the form of reading an article and questionnaires consists of 22 items involves two dimensions including: psychology factors and cognitive factors influencing students' critical thinking and reading achievement. Responses were collected and analyzed. Based on results of the study, it concludes that the students' critical thinking skill in the scale of very poor. The result shows that critical thinking skill is not due to this individual's even though the individual was born with a state of vision and hearing problems that affect the innate ability critical thinking, the role of motivation and interest was also influencing the students' critical thinking And Cognitive factors including memory, attention and awareness, and forgetting, influencing critical thinking and reading achievement in reading classroom.*

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### Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kemampuan berpikir kritis dan prestasi membaca siswa EFL di kelas membaca. Untuk mencapai tujuan penelitian, maka desain penelitian ini adalah studi kasus dengan mengambil 30 mahasiswa semester tiga yang memprogram membaca kritis di Program Studi Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Budaya, Manajemen dan Bisnis Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika. Siswa diberikan tes kemampuan berpikir kritis berupa membaca artikel dan angket terdiri dari 22 item yang melibatkan dua dimensi yaitu: faktor psikologi dan faktor kognitif yang mempengaruhi kemampuan berpikir kritis dan prestasi membaca siswa. Tanggapan dikumpulkan dan dianalisis. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian disimpulkan bahwa kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa dalam skala sangat kurang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan berpikir kritis tidak dimiliki oleh individu ini meskipun individu tersebut dilahirkan dengan keadaan penglihatan dan masalah pendengaran yang mempengaruhi kemampuan bawaan berpikir kritis, peran motivasi dan minat juga mempengaruhi berpikir kritis siswa. Faktor kognitif termasuk memori, perhatian dan kesadaran, dan lupa, mempengaruhi berpikir kritis dan prestasi membaca di kelas membaca

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## 1. BACKGROUND

In Indonesia, English is considered as the first foreign language and is included in the educational curriculum. There are four basic skills in English, namely: *listening*, *speaking*, *reading*, and *writing*. Downing, J. (1984), points out that reading skill is the most fundamental basic skills that must be possessed by someone because to understand everything in this world cannot be separated from reading skills. For example, a student cannot be separated from reading activities because he or she has to read material when participating in teaching and learning activities; write material or important matters such examination test.

Above explanation by a linguist expert means that reading skills need to be exercised and trained in order to have a good reading. It is also something crucial and indispensable for the students because the success of their study depends on the greater part of their ability to read. If their reading skill is poor they are very likely to fail in their study or at least they will have difficulty in making progress. On the other hand, if they have a good ability in reading, they will have a better chance to succeed in their study. Reading skill is very important in the education field.

The reading skill is important so that Indonesian government has programmed in higher education institutions, including the study program of English language education at Mandalika University of Education, West Nusa Tenggara. In the 2013 academic curriculum programmed of four major types of reading skill, namely: *Fundamental Reading* which taught at the first semester, *Critical reading* which taught at the third semester and *Reading Comprehension II* which taught at the second semester, and *extensive reading* which taught at the fourth semester. *Critical reading* is one of the subject matters which exercised students' activity critically thinking in solve the problem in reading individual and in a group as well (Paul, R. W., Elder, L., & Bartell, T. (1997). Critical reading is one of the deepest type of reading help them to explore critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Garrison, D. R. (1991), described that the critical thinking ability of each individual is different, depending on the exercises that are often done to develop critical thinking. In reading, to comprehend the text the readers should be able to manage every part of the text, because it is easy to gain the comprehension in reading when the readers are able to organize the text. It is important for them to comprehend a reading text with having knowledge in general view of the text so that the student be able to achieve reading' learning outcomes such as *differencing, analyzing, synthesizing, speed reading, and reading critically*, (P1 Capain Pembelajaran on academic 2013 Curriculum) Unfortunately, the students shows that in students' critical thinking: they are still theoretical and do not develop critical thinking skills, their enthusiasm in answering questions posed by lecturers is still limited in theory and has not shown development that is in accordance with their potential and abilities.

Such as that condition also faced by the student especially who programmed critical reading at third semester students in the English education study program at Mandalika Education University, West Nusa Tenggara. In addition, there are some students still have difficulty to work in groups such as *reading discussion class, communicate, solve problems* an example of a real problem is proposed, and some of the students cannot make decisions as the right solution to a problem even in answering reading test. However, when the lecturer come to the students result test, some students found difficulty to answer some questions, even though they try to answer the essay question, especially the reference types and the main idea of the paragraph.

Goodman, K. S. (1990) described that reading is a receptive language process. It is a psycholinguistic process in that it starts with a linguistics surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs. Reading is a psycholinguistic process. It may be an active and passive reading. However, reading process is an attempt to *drill* or *explore* the textual passage in reading text. An active reading condition depends on the way in teaching it to the students. In line with this research, there are three problem in reading such as *physiology problems, and cognitive problems* (Arslan, S. 2012). Those problems becomes factors could be influenced students' critical thinking skill and students' reading achievements in reading classroom. These conditions make researchers interested to conduct a research entitled "*Investigating Factors Influencing EFL Students' Critical Thinking Skill and Reading Achievements in Reading Classroom*". This research is thought important to be studied to provide a new perspective for lecturers and teachers to have more indepth insight and comprehension on how to deal with difficulties in understanding and answering reading texts questions by the students with involving critical thinking aspects as a crucial view to trigger students' mastery in the reading activity in the classroom. It is hoped that the result of the study make the more insight on factors influencing the learning of reading in the classsroom the lectures have, the more efforts

the they will provide to make students easily learn reading through critical ways in thier learning process, which finally result in better reading achievements will the students have.

**2. RESERCH METHOD**

This study uses a case study design that aims to answer research problems that reflect the actual situation at the time the research was conducted. Researchers play a major role in obtaining sufficient data to understand the phenomenon better and to arrive at a deeper understanding of the factors that influence critical thinking skill and reading achievements in reading classroom.

The data needed to reveal the critical level of reading and the factors that influence it were in the form of critical thinking scores assessed through reading. The data source was reading an article entitled “A Moral for Any Age” written by Dubin and Ohlastain, (1981:3-4) by 30 students of the English Language Study Program, Faculty of Culture and Business Management, Mandalika University of Education. For students those who programed Critical Reading Course. The factors that affect the level of critical thinking are measured using a questionnaire.

To collect data, the first instrument used is critical thinking assessment through reading using rubrics. It is adapted from Stonewater and Wolcott (2005) in combination with Paul and Elder (2007).The rubric is used to minimize bias resulting from the subjective assessment of the two raters involved in this study. The target of the assessment is to classify research subjects into five levels which include Very poor, Poor, Fairy, Good, and Very Good.

**Table 1.** Rubric for Critical Thinking (ARC) Assessment in Reading

<b>Element of critical thinking</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Scale (5 to 10)</b>
Clarity	Clarity of the author’s thinking.	Assessing the quality of reader to gain the clarity of the author’s thinking.	
Accuracy	Focusing on the correctness of the information delivered by the author.	Reader's critically think about the accuracy or correctness of the given information.	
Precision	Mainly concerns with the precise information delivered in the article.	Reader’s ability in gaining precise information delivered in the article.	
Logic	Deals primarily with logical thought of the author.	Reader ability to primarily with logical thought of the author.	
Fairness	Deals with morality.	Reader ability to gain morality express by the author on the article.	
Total Score			

In the rubric, the scale given refers to the quality of the elements expressed in the student’s answer in the form of reading article. The total score is then interpreted as the level of critical thinking ranging from very poor (scored 25-30) to very good level (scored 46-50).

The other instrument used is questionnaire. It consists of two sections, the phycology factors in the first part which is followed by the information on cognitive factors. These factors are investigated through the responses of the students in the questionnaire given.

**3. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION.**

**3.1. Research Finding**

**Table 2.** Description of statistics of the text

Elements of critical thinking	Total paragraphs	Total sentences	Total words	Total number of reading test
Clarity	1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph	14	141	5
Logic	2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph	9	105	5
Accuracy	3 <sup>rd</sup> paragraph	4	67	5
Precision	4 <sup>th</sup> paragraph	5	153	5
Fairness	5 <sup>th</sup> paragraph	21	202	5

On the table 02. Description of statistics of the text shows that every written (reading texts) has element of reasoning, namely; clarity, logic, accuracy, precision, and Farness: At the first paragraph was clarity consist of 14 sentence, 141 words, and 5 reading test. This element asked in order to gain the clarity of the author’s thinking. The questions regarding this clarity such “does the author state clearly what he or she means?”, “Does he or she use examples or illustrations that help clarify? Second paragraph was logic, consists of 14 sentences, 105 words and 5 reading test. Some questions related to logic are the following: “Do the conclusions follow from the evidence presented?” “Are there any problems with the reasoning where something does not seem to make sense?” Third paragraph was accuracy, consists of 4 sentences, 67 words, and 5 reading test. The questions concerning this accuracy were: “Is the information provided correct?”, “Can the information be verified and/or tested?” The fourth was precision, consists of 5 sentences, consists of 153 words, and 5 reading test. . Some questions of precision are the following: “Is the author sufficiently specific in providing details?”, “Does he or she need to be more specific?” the last was fairness, consists of 21 sentences, consists of 202 words and 5 reading test. The examples of the questions such as the following: “Is the subject dealt with in a fair manner?”, “Does the author consider viewpoints that he or she may not agree with?”, “If so, how does he or she respond to them?”

Students were asked to read a topic in the form of English reading text to identify five reasoning in reading critical thinking which was consists of 25 questions, each correct question was given a score of 4. The score of reading test can be seen on the table below.

**Table 3.** Score of reading test

Num.	Initial	Score	Num.	Initial	score	Num.	Initial	Score
1	AS	40	11	HAM	20	21	LIS	70
2	FA	40	12	SR	40	22	LO	80
3	HA	60	13	RO	60	23	SAN	60
4	JA	80	14	RU	50	24	SUS	40
5	SI	40	15	ER	40	25	SAF	40
6	SU	70	16	SIT	80	26	UN	60
7	MA	50	17	SAP	70	27	UM	60
8	SO	20	18	WIN	60	28	RI	70
9	HA	40	19	LA	20	29	SE	40
10	SO	50	20	LI	80	30	YA	80

The data obtained which is based on the student’s critical thinking in reading is presented in Table 04. In brief, the result of the research, where the students’ highest score was 46 and lowest was 26, average 3.4 there were 3 (11 %) students was very good, 4 (13 %) students whose category was good, 4 (13 %) students whose category was fair, 9 (30%) students whose category was poor and 10 (33 %) students whose category very poor. Therefore it can be inferred that the score obtained was within the very poor level.

**Table 4.** Student’s level of critical thinking in Reading

Score	Total	Percentage	Category
46- 50	3	11 %	Very good
41-45	4	13 %	Good
36-40	4	13 %	Fairy
31-35	9	30 %	Poor
25-30	10	33 %	Very poor

**3.2. Discussion**

On the element of clarity, the student’s reading is scored on their ability to gain clarity of the author’ thinking. In this aspect, mostly fall within the scale of very poor. It means that students’ ability to show their critical thinking though clarity of the author’s thinking is sufficiently. Even though, the author states clearly what he means and they have also used examples or illustrations to help clarify. Unfortunately, they did not understand the topic being discussion. It has something to do with the lack of the student’s interest towards article being read.

The next element to observe is accuracy, most students fall in the scale of poor. It means that their ability to measure the truth of the information conveyed by the author is far from the target. On the other hand, students' ability to identify information often does not read carefully to find data, someone’s opinions, and other empirical facts that the author uses to build premises and arguments. Generally, information is understood as a 'value message' from reading material so that the findings are not specific. When reading a few sentences and capturing a certain meaning, it is immediately concluded as information.

Relevance is the third element mainly deals with the appropriateness of the information delivered with the purpose or question being asked. Most students fall in the scale of poor. In average, students' ability to identify problems based on elements that are only related to the problem being discussed is far from the target. It means that the students do not understand about the information presented connected to the purpose or questions.

The last is logic and fairness, both of logic and fairness elements show that students have ability to read critically. Most students fall in the scale of good. Although this number is still small, it hope by more practice and habituation it will be able to produce critical readers. In this aspect, they able to conclude by follow by evidence presented and they are able about any problems with the reasoning where something does not seem to make sense. In fairness, the students have ability towards author consider viewpoints on the article.

There were three part questionnaire was developed by the researchers to achieve the study objectives. It includes: The psychology factors (10 items) and the cognitive factors (12 items).. Having collected the data, they were treated statistically. Such as that factors might influence students’ critical thinking and their achievement in reading classroom. Following is the results of the study. It can be seen on the table below.

**Table 5.** Psychology Factors

No.	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	I have problem with vision	33.3	33.3	30	3.3	0
2	I have problem listening.	3.3	20	30	13.3	0
3	I read my own choose.	30	43.3	16.6	10	0
4.	I cannot focus while I reading.	53.3	16.6	16.6	10	3.3
5.	I didn’t Enjoy to read.	43.3	33.3	20		3.3
6.	I didn’t interest to a new topic.	26.6	16.6	40	13.3	3.3
7.	I didn’t Interest in the given topics.	33.3	26.6	26.6	10	3.3
8.	I didn’t understand topics.	26.6	26.6	26.6	13.3	6.6
9.	I didn’t interest English articles.	36.6	30	16.6	6.6	10
10.	I didn’t interest to read varied articles.	36.6	30	16.6	6.6	10

Note: 5 = always, 4 = often, 3 = usually, 2 = rarely, 1 = never

As seen in table 05, most of the items received high responses on the scale whereas some items received low responses. The high frequency of responses to these items indicates that both the role of psychological factors as well as students' motivation factors and students' interest in reading. It plays an important role in influencing individuals to acquire critical thinking. However, students' low responses to item 3 in numbers 1, 2 and 3 might explain the idea that factors influencing quality of students' critical thinking about reading does not only involve psychological factors but also other factors for example students' topic interest. For the eyes vision, it carry was she/she birth such as disorders due to eye and hearing health, in some cases, a student can be described as lacking critical thinking. Low response to items 4-10 may explain the idea that a person's critical thinking ability is not due to this individual's innate even though the individual is born with a state of vision and hearing problems that affect the innate ability to learn critical thinking, the role of motivation and interest is also influencing the students' critical thinking.

**Table 6 Cognitive Factors**

No.	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	I not focus and attentive read and write the article	53.3	33.3	13.3	00.0	00.0
2.	I not focus and attentive read and write the article. The more I not read attentively, the more I not learn how to read article.	46.6	23.3	20	10	00.0
3	The more I not visually focus my attention, the more I not how to read article.	60	26.6	13.3	00.0	00.0
4	The more I not visual focus my attention on different things, the more I not learn how to read article.	36.6	36.6	20	6.6	00.0
5.	I find it not easy to recall the meaning of a word in article.	30	30	30	10	00.0
6.	I find it not easy to recall the correct pronunciation of a word when I read article.	26.6	46.6	20	6.6	00.0
7.	I find it not easy to recall the order of events for article.	33.3	33.3	26.6	6.6	00.0
8.	I find it not easy to recall the verse-lines of a poem or in article.	20	23.3	43.3	10	6.6
9.	I find it not easy to apply the rules of certain grammatical structures that I learned or read article.	33.3	33.3	30	3.3	00.0
10.	I find it not easy to link new knowledge about word to the knowledge I gained before	40	33.3	20	6.6	00.0
11	When it comes to read something on the article for the second time, I cannot learn it fast.	46.6	26.6	20	3.3	3.3
12	I guess the meaning of a difficult word from the context when I read the article.	50	26.6	23.3	00.0	00.0

Note: 5 = always, 4 = often, 3 = usually, 2 = rarely, 1 = never

As indicated in Table 06, the majority of the items receive high responses on the scale whereas few items receive low responses. The high frequency of responses to the items indicates that cognitive factors including the role of the memory, attention and awareness influencing students' critical thinking in reading. Students' responses to items 12, 13 and 14 indicate that the process of attention is the first step the learner should take when reading, and accordingly, the higher the rate of the learner's attention, the higher the level of language proficiency, and the lower the rate of the learner's attention, the lower the rate of language proficiency level. Also, attention requires the learner's understanding of what is going on around him/her during the learning process.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the data obtained which is based on the student's critical thinking in reading is presented, in brief, the result of the research, where the students' highest score was 46 and lowest was 26, average 3.4 there were 3 (11 %) students was very good, 4 (13 %) students whose category was good, 4 (13 %) students whose category was fair, 9 (30%) students whose category was poor and 10 (33 %) students whose category very poor. Therefore it can be inferred that the score obtained was within the very poor level. Besides, the result of questioners for psychology factors might explain the idea that factors influencing quality of students' critical thinking about reading does not only involve psychological factors but also other factors for example students' topic interest. For the eyes vision, it carry was she/she birth such as disorders due to eye and hearing health, in some cases, a student can be described as lacking critical thinking. Low response may explain the idea that a person's critical thinking ability is not due to this individual's innate even though the individual is born with a state of vision and hearing problems that affect the innate ability to learn critical thinking, the role of motivation and interest is also influencing the students' critical thinking. and cognitive factors including the role of the memory, attention and awareness influencing students' critical thinking in reading. Students' responses indicate that the process of attention is the first step the learner should take when reading, and accordingly, the higher the rate of the learner's attention, the higher the level of language proficiency, and the lower the rate of the learner's attention, the lower the rate of language proficiency level. Also, attention requires the learner's understanding of what is going on around him/her during the learning process.

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