

The Role of Teacher and English Textbook in Boosting the 7th Graders' Critical Thinking Skills: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates a junior high school teacher's understanding and application of critical thinking and the *English for Nusantara* textbook in teaching seventh-grade students under Indonesia's liberated curriculum, which emphasizes critical thinking as a 21st-century skill. Conducted as a case study in a junior high school in Madura, Indonesia, the research involved one English language teacher. Data were collected through interviews, textbook analyses, and classroom observations. The teacher demonstrated adequate critical thinking knowledge, gained through Professional Instructor Education Training, and assessed students' skills using Bloom's Taxonomy. The teacher actively facilitated argumentation and critical thinking in class activities. While the *English for Nusantara* textbook served as a reference for class topics, an analysis of Chapters 1–3 revealed a lack of critical thinking exercises. To address this, the teacher employed various strategies, such as critical questioning, brainstorming, and hands-on activities, to develop students' critical thinking. Visual aids were also used to enhance engagement and understanding. Findings indicate that the teacher's approach promoted deep and reflective thinking among students. Despite the textbook's shortcomings, integrating diverse methods and resources effectively developed students' ability to acquire, evaluate, and apply information to solve problems. The study underscores the importance of critical thinking in education and highlights the need for improved textbook content to support this goal.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking has become an essential focus in addressing challenges in academic writing, particularly in language instruction (Al Zahrani & Elyas, 2017; Utami, Liahmad, & Rusnindita, 2020). As critical thinking involves questioning the validity of knowledge and generating insights through reflection, it is imperative for educational institutions to integrate its teaching into their curricula (Ulum, 2016; Tyas, Nurkamto, & Marmanto, 2020). Scholars such as Sobkowiak (2016) and Sinaga and

Oktaviani (2020) emphasize that students must critically reflect on their personal experiences to foster deeper understanding and innovation. Developing critical thinking is now a central goal of contemporary education (Saputri, El Khoiri, & Muniroh, 2022; Savu, Chirimbu, & Dejica-Carțiș, 2014), driven by the transformative demands of 21st-century learning environments (Saleh, 2019). In this context, Ridwan et al. (2023) explored the enhancement of education and curriculum revision to address evolving needs. Their findings align with the Indonesian Ministry of Education's "Emancipated Plan," a forward-looking initiative designed to equip students with critical thinking and other essential 21st-century skills. These developments highlight the importance of reimagining educational approaches to ensure global competitiveness and relevance.

A government official from Ramadhan, Fahmi, and Hasanah (2023) asserts that an Emancipated Curriculum provides pupils with several subjects and extracurricular activities, enabling them to excel while also allowing time for acquiring new knowledge and enhancing existing skills. Law Number 262/M/2022 stipulates the required actions. The Pancasila Students' Profile (P3) delineates these skills. P3 enumerates the essential talents and habits of the 21st century that are imperative for all individuals to possess. The Pancasila students' profile was created from the learner's perspective. This signifies that it encompasses the character qualities and competencies essential for students to cultivate in order to become valuable citizens of Indonesian society and contributors to democracy in the twenty-first century (Naibaho, 2019; Rachmajanti, Sulisty, Megawati, & Akbar, 2020). This is the conclusion of the research. This explains the global expansion of education, including in Indonesia.

Currently, a very valuable skill is the capacity to acquire new knowledge and generate innovations. These competencies encompass critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and innovation, teamwork, effective communication, civic responsibility, and strong moral character. These skills are highly sought after due to their universal applicability (Mavroudi, Almeida, Frennert, Laaksolahti, & Viberg, 2022; Muniroh, 2021). A greater number of educators are also aware of them. The P3 test encompasses faith, a robust relationship with God Almighty, and ethical principles. The last four are creativity, independence, critical thinking, and cultural openness. Proficiency in P3 skills closely resembles proficiency in 21st-century competencies. Education in Indonesia appears to have evolved, akin to transformations observed globally. This study solely examined the aspect of critical thinking.

The Ministry of Education emphasizes the importance of critical thinking skills, including the ability to evaluate information critically, process it logically, analyze connections, and draw reasoned conclusions (Ilyas, 2015). In an era of rapidly evolving media and technology, individuals can easily access books and information, as well as produce and disseminate content (Feng, 2013). This underscores the need for rigorous methods to distinguish authentic data from fraudulent information (Dilekçi & Karatay, 2023). Critical thinking enables individuals to reflect on their beliefs, evaluate knowledge, and solve problems by considering multiple perspectives (Boholano, 2017; Brown & Lee, 2015). To address these challenges, integrating critical thinking instruction into curricula is essential for improving educational quality.

Teachers play a vital role in fostering students' critical thinking skills. Beyond maintaining engagement and facilitating learning (AR & Hardiansyah, 2022), teachers must guide, assist, and act as a resource for students (Arsana et al., 2023). Indonesia's Ministry of Education has introduced the Teacher Activator program, which provides specialized training, including Professional Teacher Education Training, to support student-centered learning and school reform. This initiative aligns with the five principles of Pancasila and aims to develop inclusive teaching strategies.

Research highlights the positive impact of critical thinking on learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Teachers have employed diverse strategies such as inquiries, discussions, media evaluations, problem-solving, and distinguishing fact from opinion to enhance critical thinking (Al-Kindi & AL-Mekhlafi, 2017; Hardiansyah, 2022a). These methods encourage students to connect learning with personal experiences and engage deeply with tasks. Findings indicate that these

approaches significantly improve students' critical thinking abilities, fostering meaningful engagement and academic growth.

Although critical thinking is a key educational objective, children cannot develop these skills solely through their educational experiences (Hardiansyah, AR, & Hidayatillah, 2022; Saputri et al., 2022). Additional resources, such as textbooks, are essential to enhance cognitive engagement (Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020). Textbooks can empower students to engage in self-directed learning by enabling them to read, analyze, and reflect on information at their own pace (Utami et al., 2019). However, existing research highlights gaps in how textbooks facilitate critical thinking development. Studies have focused on textbook content (Ramadhan et al., 2023), the activities promoting critical thinking (Saputri et al., 2022), and instructional methods (Muniroh et al., 2022), but little attention has been given to how educators utilize these resources to align with Indonesia's liberated curriculum.

This study addresses this gap by examining how the *English for Nusantara* textbook supports the development of critical thinking skills among seventh-grade students. The book, designed for Indonesia's liberated curriculum and considering diverse competencies, provides an ideal case for this investigation. Unlike previous research, this study evaluates not only the textbook's content but also the teacher's strategies for implementing critical thinking activities in the classroom.

The research aims to analyze the extent to which the textbook fosters critical thinking and to explore the teacher's role in bridging identified gaps. By providing insights into the practical use of textbooks and instructional strategies, this study contributes to enhancing critical thinking pedagogy and aligns with the broader objectives of 21st-century education in Indonesia.

2. METHODS

This study adopts a case study approach to evaluate the proficiency of an EFL teacher in understanding and teaching critical thinking using the English for Nusantara textbook. The research investigates how English teachers utilize textbook content to foster critical thinking among EFL students, guided by the revised Bloom's Taxonomy framework (Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020).

The study was conducted in a junior high school in Sumenep, East Java, known for its pioneering independent education program initiated in 2021. This school was the first in Sumenep to implement the Emancipated Curriculum. The participant selection was based on three criteria: involvement in the Guru Penggerak (Teacher Activator) program, the use of English as the medium of instruction, and significant teaching experience. The selected participant is an English teacher with almost five years of teaching experience in the school and 16 years in public English instruction overall. She has actively engaged in seminars on critical thinking and the Emancipated Curriculum, and she serves as a teaching facilitator to advance her professional development.

Among five English teachers at the school, the selected participant met all eligibility criteria and demonstrated a willingness to participate. The teacher was fully informed about the study's objectives, and her consent was obtained with assurances of privacy and confidentiality. The research data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and textbook analysis to comprehensively understand the teacher's strategies for integrating critical thinking into classroom instruction.

This research employed structured interviews, literature review, and classroom observation. The teacher was inquired about Nusantara English, critical thinking, and their instructional methods as outlined in the proposed interview guide. Structured interviews included both pre-interviews and post-interviews. Interviews were conducted before and after the classroom observation. The interview addressed the initial two study questions. Researchers engage with individuals. These lectures utilize structured inquiries. The interview explores the educator's perspectives on critical thinking, his contributions to student development, the resources he employed, the English content of the Nusantara textbook, the challenges he encountered, and his recommendations. The structured post-interview

examines the educational activity and the objectives and results of students' critical thinking. The voice recorder documented the complete interrogation process.

Researchers assessed the guide utilizing their evaluation form. The publisher must evaluate the suitability of textbooks and non-textbooks for the Ministry of Education or BSNP. This is required by the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 8 of 2016. The BSNP endorses textbooks that encompass content, presentation, language, and images. The researcher exclusively analyzed the English presentation of the Nusantara handbook because of its demand for critical thinking. Textbooks must promote critical, creative, and unique thinking for effective presentation. The researcher utilized the updated Bloom's Taxonomy to enhance critical thinking. The revised Bloom's Taxonomy enhances critical thinking to a higher level of cognition. Evaluation, appraisal, and innovation (Krathwohl, 2002). Table 1 presents the blueprint checklist produced by the researcher, derived from the underlying concept and theory.

Table 1. Blueprint of the Textbook Analysis

Variable or Criteria by BSNP	Dimension	Sub-dimension of critical thinking	Indicators
Presentation Feasibility	The presentation of material can stimulate critical thinking, creative and innovative thinking.	Analyzing	Include the activities or questions that comprise the ability to analyze, compare, contrast, differentiate, criticize and question.
		Evaluating	Include the activities or questions that comprise the ability to argue, appraise, defend, judge, select, and evaluate.
		Creating	Include the activities or questions that comprise the ability to create, design, develop, formulate, and write.

The researcher concentrated on the activities and questions inside the English for Nusantara textbook during the analysis. Three steps were employed to evaluate the English for Nusantara textbook. The researcher systematically analyzed all pertinent topics, scrutinizing them page by page and unit by unit. The researcher examined the activities and questions in the textbook at this phase. The researcher identified secondary activities, inquiries, or assignments. Subsequently, the conclusion was reached. The researcher will ascertain whether the activities, questions, and assignments encompass critical thinking subdomains such as analysis, evaluation, and creation. All instruments were validated by experts. Experts in professional development, possessing over ten years of research expertise, concentrate on EFL instruction, critical thinking, and authorship. The instruments were validated by them. Experts recommend several modifications to the observation inventory section. Experts advocate for "how" inquiries rather than "what" inquiries in observational tools. Consequently, the data is more comprehensive. Experts advise annotating each segment of classroom observation to prevent the inclusion of notes regarding subsequent activities or classroom elements until the observation concludes.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This paper's findings and discussion are based on the data derived from the teacher's interview, textbook analysis, and classroom observation.

3.1 The Teacher's Knowledge of Critical Thinking Skills and Implement It Using Different Strategies and Media

Based on the survey results, it looked like the teacher's view of critical thinking skills matched the updated Bloom's Taxonomy. The teacher said that in order to be able to think critically, you have to think in a structured way, which forces students to do brain processing. In the new version of Bloom's Taxonomy, this idea is about comprehension as a brain function. According to the teacher, critical thinking means being able to solve problems and understand and use information (Arsana et al., 2023); this includes knowing facts, which is part of the knowledge factor of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The teacher's standards for critical thinking are also the same as the critical thinking part of the Pancasila students' profile that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology put forward in the free curriculum. In document number 009/H/KR/2022, the head of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency said that critical thinking skills include gathering and processing information and ideas, analyzing and judging reasoning, and thinking about how one makes decisions (Amali et al., 2022). These findings refer to excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1

"It's important to think critically. It has been a goal of the program since the beginning to teach students how to think critically. "I agree that critical thinking skills include being able to think in a structured way, since critical thinking is the act of thinking." Students must process their thoughts, which means they must look at and understand a case in a way that makes them curious and asks questions so that they can make a choice at the end." (The result of interview)

Following the classroom observation, the teacher emphasized several tactics employed to enhance the pupils' critical thinking abilities. The tactics utilized encompassed brainstorming, trigger questions/high-order queries, classroom discourse, and student performance assessment. The findings refer to excerpt 2

Excerpt 2

I mostly used games, brainstorming, critical questions/trigger questions, students' work, and conversation (in class or just in groups). Different kinds of materials make it different. There were different plans I used, but thinking and asking questions almost always worked.. (The result of interview)

This strategy allowed her to effectively stimulate the students' critical thinking during the classroom activity. This aligns with the findings of Al-Kindi and AL-Mekhlafi (2017), Al Zahrani and Elyas (2017), and Utami et al. (2020), who investigated the influence of instructors on the enhancement of students' critical thinking skills. Their findings indicated that these tactics effectively promote critical thinking among students. Contrary to the findings of this study, I observed in the prior research that certain educators continued to employ low-order inquiries. The study by Mustika et al. (2020) revealed that educators predominantly employed questions aimed at facilitating students' comprehension of knowledge rather than fostering critical thinking skills. They frequently employed low-order questions that necessitated pupils to recollect facts and understand factual information rather than critical ones that demanded critical thinking. Hughes (2014) asserted that questions necessitating solely yes/no responses do not facilitate critical thinking among pupils. The prevalence of low-level questions hinders learners' capacity to cultivate critical thinking skills. This situation arose due to the teacher's lack of awareness regarding the necessity of fostering and enhancing students' critical thinking skills in the classroom (Kummala, 2022). Kummala (2022) asserted that EFL teachers considered it essential for educators to possess critical thinking skills prior to instructing their students.

Moreover, the use of media enhances the educator's teaching endeavors and cultivates students' critical thinking skills. The instructor utilized flashcards as the medium at that time. The study observed

that employing flashcards can improve pupils' creativity and critical thinking skills. This aligns with the findings of Sobkowiak (2016) and Tyas et al. (2020), which demonstrate that flashcards improve critical thinking abilities and engage students' interest and motivation. Verify that flashcard educational games improve the accessibility of learning activities and increase students' engagement in the learning process (Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020). Regrettably, not all flashcards can enhance students' critical thinking abilities (Ramadhan et al., 2023). It is contingent upon the content of the flashcards themselves. To enhance students' critical thinking abilities, the flashcard content must encompass the components and elements of critical thinking skills. Moreover, prior to utilizing flashcards in the classroom to encourage critical thinking among students, the educator should evaluate the content and components of the flashcards.

3.2 The Teacher's Perception of English for Nusantara Textbook

Structured conversations were used in this study to find out what teachers thought about the English for Nusantara textbook that students and teachers used. The teacher emphasized that the effort to improve the textbook is commendable, with the author adding more aspects of Indonesian culture and a variety of themes. She said that the goals of the textbook were in line with the required program. The findings refer to excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3

"This is a good step forward for the national curriculum book because it tries to include more of the Indonesian idea as an active concept in all stories. This makes the kids more interested in what they are learning. Some of the parts, like "Did You Know?," "Word Box," and "Listening Section," are like current children's books, which is good." (The result of interview)

The teacher contended that the textbook exercises were inadequate for fostering critical thinking, contradicting the research's aim. The instructor indicated that the textbook necessitates the educator's ingenuity to integrate additional critical thinking components into the activities, as it predominantly features creative tasks rather than critical thinking exercises. The English for Nusantara curriculum was made to fit with a free-form learning system that includes all five traits of the Pancasila student profile. This means that the information in the textbook must be the same. The results pertain to excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4

"The idea and tasks have been changed, but I think the activities are still the same as before because they only ask about things that are "stated in the text" and not about the material's idea. There are also more "creative" tasks than "critical thinking" activities in it. So, it doesn't work as well for the idea of critical thinking. Some might say that encouraging students to think critically works, but it still takes creativity on the part of the teacher to come up with more critical thinking tasks. Basically, teachers need to go over the lesson plans first, then give students critical thinking tasks and questions". (The result of interview)

The conclusion was substantiated by the results of the textbook study conducted by the researcher on chapters 1 to 3, encompassing half of the book or one semester. The critical thinking skills tasks in the textbook revealed 17 activities throughout the three chapters. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The results of critical thinking activities in English for *Nusantara*

No.	Chapter (Theme)	Cognitive Level		
		Analyzing	Evaluating	Creating
1.	Chapter 1: About Me	2	2	5
2.	Chapter 2: Culinary and Me	2	-	3
3.	Chapter 3: Home Sweet Home	2	-	1
	Total	6	2	9

The distribution of critical thinking aspects in the tasks varies and is diverse in each chapter, as illustrated by the table. The data indicates that chapters two and three have no evaluation activities. Bloom's taxonomy asserts that analysis is the fundamental component of critical thinking. The table above indicates that the "Analyze cognitive level" section consists of six items, which are allocated throughout the textbook. The researcher pinpointed particular acts that require analytical and critical skills, as demonstrated by the analysis outcomes. For instance, the exercises in Section 4b of Chapter 1, Unit 1. Students were tasked with analyzing the comic panels to extract information regarding "Andre," a character featured in the textbook.

According to Bloom's Taxonomy, evaluation is the second level of critical thinking skills. At this level, the tasks were mostly about how well the students could argue, evaluate, defend, evaluate, choose, and evaluate. The analysis results, which showed two items, showed that this dimension reflected the lower frequency found by the researcher in the textbook. The cognitive level is evaluated using only two activities from three chapters. The two activities in the exercises were framed as queries. The following questions are the tasks for the reading section. The textbook has a reading chapter regarding pastimes, supplemented by activities. The students' capacity to express their opinions and engage in debates about the environment is apparent in the questions posed. The activities were located in sections 4c and 6b of chapter 1, unit 2.

The apex cognitive level in Bloom's Taxonomy is the act of creation. The analysis indicated that textbooks with nine components frequently demonstrated this cognitive level. This level includes the student's capacity to write, formulate, develop, design, and create. This cognitive level encompasses nine activities, as illustrated in the table above. The assignment in section 3b of Chapter 1, unit 1. This assignment focuses on the students' capacity to compose and structure their introductions. An additional task is illustrated in Chapter Unit 3, sections 6a, 6b, and 6c. The assignment necessitates that students create, design, and communicate descriptions of their peers, subsequently formulating an outline and draft, ultimately resulting in the creation of a descriptive paragraph. These exercises correspond with the teacher's goals of improving students' critical thinking abilities, as they incorporate components of Bloom's Taxonomy that foster analytical reasoning.

This study agrees with the findings of Arsana et al. (2023), who used updated Bloom's Taxonomy to look at the cognitive domain level in English in the *Nusantara* textbook. The results showed that only 25.4% of the tasks meant to improve higher-order thinking skills were in the textbook. The main action was found to be at cognitive level C1, which is about understanding. Based on their research, Arsana et al. (2023) say that using only English for *Nusantara* texts might not be enough to help students develop their advanced cognitive or critical thinking skills. English for *Nusantara* is designed to be an emancipated curriculum that covers all areas of the Pancasila student profile. This means that the teacher has to be creative to add more critical thinking parts to the exercises. Because of this, the information in the textbook needs to be fair. One of the authors of the book told a researcher that the textbook doesn't have a unit or chapter just for critical thinking skills. Instead, these skills are spread out among several units and chapters, similar to how other skills and dimensions are spread out in the P3. She also said that the people who wrote the textbooks thought about the skills of students all over Indonesia to make sure that they were used correctly, which improved students' skills.

In conclusion, the Nusantara textbook's utilization of English aids educators by presenting a range of engaging themes, despite the limited emphasis on critical thinking in chapters one through three. It assists the educator in remaining focused to instruct and teach English in alignment with the curriculum. It can be contended that the textbook hinders the development of critical thinking skills in the classroom, as only a limited number of critical thinking components are addressed in the first three chapters, which encompass one semester. Nonetheless, this does not provide a significant challenge for the educator in cultivating critical thinking skills in the classroom, since the teacher has utilized a range of tactics and activities to enhance students' critical thinking capabilities.

3.3 The Use of English for Nusantara Textbook by the Teacher to Stimulate Students' Critical Thinking Skills

At the outset of the lesson, the teacher greeted the students warmly, confirmed attendance, and directed them to retrieve their textbooks to begin the learning process. The lesson focused on Chapter 2: Culinary and Me. To initiate classroom activities, the teacher facilitated a brainstorming session using the textbook sections "Say What You Know" and "Did You Know." In the "Say What You Know" segment, the teacher posed thought-provoking questions to engage students, such as, "Which of the following foods and beverages have you consumed?" "What is your level of satisfaction with it?" "What constitutes the flavor profile?" and "What is the primary ingredient in your dish or drink?" Classroom observations indicated that these questions effectively enhanced student engagement and critical thinking skills, enabling students to analyze and articulate their responses.

Following this, the teacher transitioned to the "Did You Know" section, which builds on the initial brainstorming activity. In this segment, the teacher provided a more detailed exploration of the topic by posing culturally contextual questions, such as, "What is the cultural context of your residence or environment?" "What is the most frequently consumed dish or beverage in your community?" "What are its fundamental ingredients?" and "How would you describe its flavor?" These inquiries were designed to deepen students' understanding and further develop their critical reasoning abilities.

These findings align with those of Widiastuti et al. (2023), Feng (2014), and Hughes (2014), who identified brainstorming and ideation as effective pedagogical strategies for fostering critical thinking. They highlighted that teachers can use targeted, challenging questions to encourage students to think critically and engage actively with learning material.

Over the course of two units, the instructor covered all textbook components—speaking, reading, listening, writing, language focus, and enrichment—across four teaching sessions. However, critical thinking was primarily evident in the enrichment, writing, and speaking activities. In the speaking section, the instructor incorporated a flashcard game featuring food, sensations, and flavors. The objective was to match a dish's name with its texture and flavor using a single clue provided on the flashcard. Students were allowed only one card and tasked with correlating the information to identify the dish, texture, and flavor. This activity captured students' attention, and classroom observations demonstrated that using flashcards increased student engagement and motivated them to employ critical thinking skills to analyze the card content.

In the writing exercise, students were asked to compose and organize a conversation. Initially, they discussed their favorite cuisine in pairs before presenting their dialogues to the class. To support students in completing this task, the teacher implemented a structured process. First, the teacher encouraged students to identify and articulate relevant aspects of the activity. Students were then guided to recognize and categorize content related to their chosen topic. This preparatory work ensured that students could analyze, classify, and exemplify the subject matter. The final task required students to write a dialogue, allowing them to select a type of food for analysis and composition. This activity emphasized the critical thinking skills of analysis and synthesis, as students defined, organized, and expressed their ideas in a creative and structured manner.

The study's results showed that the English for Nusantara guide helps teachers give students tasks that make them think more critically. Even though there might not be critical thinking exercises in every

part of the textbook, the teacher can make most of the activities better by adding more critical thinking skills. The work by Tyas et al. (2020), on the other hand, seems to say the opposite. They said that teachers put too much emphasis on and relied too much on textbooks, which meant that there weren't many opportunities for critical thought in the classroom. The importance of a teacher's job and creativity is very high. Educators need to be creative in order for students to learn. Al-Kindi and Al-Mekhlafi (2017), Bag and Gürsoy (2021), and Saleh (2019) all show that teachers have a big impact on how well their students learn to think critically. Through brainstorming and thought-provoking questions, the preliminary exercises, such as the "say what you know" and "did you know" parts, really helped students improve their critical thinking skills. The results of this study agree with those of Feng (2014), Hughes (2014), and Widiastuti et al. (2023), who looked at brainstorming as a way to teach and came to the conclusion that it might help students think more critically. They said that teachers use brainstorming to improve students' critical thinking by asking them a lot of tough questions.

The teacher made the most of the rest of the textbook part by adding exercises. The results showed that some parts of the textbook that the teacher used helped the students think critically, while others did not. Our teacher went over every part of the guide four times over the course of two units. This included "Say What You Know," "Did You Know," speaking, reading, listening, writing, language focus, and enrichment sections. Speaking, writing, and enriching are the only areas where critical thinking is present. In this part of the class, the teacher leads activities like flashcard games and student talks. A flashcard game was used by the teacher to teach critical methods. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, analysis is a task that helps students learn how to think critically (Krathwohl, 2002). Erma et al. (2019) and Ramadhan et al. (2023), two new studies, back up the idea that using notes in school makes students better at critical thinking. Still, the study's results show that flashcards only work if they have the right information on them. The researcher says that flashcards' content and goal must be carefully thought out to help students think more critically. Before (Erma et al., 2019; Ramadhan et al., 2023), this was done in a study. They made flashcards to help students think more critically about their studies.

In the section on writing and enrichment, it is made clear that the activities require students to write, draw, or make something connected to the topic of each unit. In Bloom's taxonomy, this action is called producing, which is a high-level thinking process. At the same time, the tasks in the reading and listening parts did not help students think critically. The tasks in the reading and hearing parts are only about understanding what is being said. Bloom's taxonomy doesn't list "understanding" as a high-level brain process or a critical thinking skill.

3.4 Challenges faced by the teacher and how to deal with them

During the interview, it came out that the teacher had trouble using critical thinking skills in the classroom. The teacher knew that it would be hard to teach critical thinking skills because of the students' lack of interest and desire, as well as their knowledge of history. This is because the students come from a range of backgrounds with different levels of English skills, knowledge, and hobbies. Sometimes, the teacher needs to give extra help to certain students who are having trouble learning. The interview excerpt illustrated.

Excerpt 5

What's been hard for me so far as a teacher is dealing with students' backgrounds, their lack of drive and interest, and their skills. Not every student in my class is interested in and good at the same things. (The result of interview)

The study revealed that at times, specific pupils were preoccupied with personal issues during the learning process, as seen by classroom observations. Furthermore, the educator is accountable for the proficient and effective administration of the teaching and learning process in their capacity as the learning director. Consequently, it is imperative for educators to implement and sustain strategies and activities that engage students.

Additionally, the instructor provided recommendations to alleviate these circumstances. Educators must be innovative and strive to create a classroom environment and instructional resources that are highly engaging. This circumstance will mitigate student tension and foster self-esteem. The instructor indicated that the classroom atmosphere would be highly stressful, impeding learning advancement due to students' apprehension regarding participation in activities. Moreover, cultivate an open-minded disposition and encourage children to articulate their viewpoints. It will motivate students to express their viewpoints and pose inquiries. Furthermore, it is imperative to utilize appropriate pedagogical instruments that enable students to express their perspectives, such as classroom and group discussions, brainstorming sessions, activities, and role-playing exercises. Saleh (2019) asserts that the recommendations are pertinent for cultivating critical thinking abilities and necessitate collaboration and reciprocal understanding among all participants in the educational process. The instructor effectively implemented such strategies, yielding favorable results. In conclusion, the educator should function as a classroom facilitator, minimizing lecture duration and actively engaging students in all activities. Thus, the goals of the educational programs can be achieved in all classrooms.

The study indicated that the teacher effectively implemented the components of critical thinking skills. The textbook's application aligned with the curriculum objectives; however, it lacked exercises that fostered critical thinking skills, as seen by the teacher's creativity and proficiency. The use of pedagogical tools and media increases student involvement in learning and promotes critical thinking skills. This discovery indicates that the teacher's involvement is essential for the efficient integration of critical thinking skills into the educational process.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the knowledge and practices of a teacher activator in integrating critical thinking and the English for Nusantara textbook to enhance critical thinking skills among seventh-grade students at a junior high school in Madura. The findings revealed that the teacher possessed a robust understanding of critical thinking, consistent with the frameworks of Bloom's Taxonomy and the liberated curriculum. The teacher effectively applied her expertise through diverse pedagogical approaches, including brainstorming, critical inquiry, and performance assessments. Activities such as classroom discussions, quick questions, and brainstorming sessions promoted the practical application of critical thinking, helping students analyze, evaluate, and creatively express their ideas. Media was also a valuable tool in supporting these efforts, facilitating engagement and deeper cognitive processing.

The implications of this research suggest that targeted pedagogical strategies and resources, such as critical thinking-focused textbooks and teacher training, can significantly enhance students' critical thinking skills. However, the study was limited to a single teacher in a specific context, which may not fully represent broader teaching practices. Future research should expand to include multiple educators and varied educational settings to validate these findings and explore additional strategies for integrating critical thinking into curricula. Further studies could also investigate the long-term impact of these approaches on students' academic and personal development.

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