

Critical Thinking In Elt: How Cooperative Learning Affects The Efl Learners' Critical Thinking Aspects

Jaya Nur Iman¹⁾, Nike Angraini²⁾

¹⁾²⁾English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Indo Global Mandiri University
Jl. Jend. Sudirman No 629 KM 4 Palembang Kode Pos 30129
Email: jaya@uigm.ac.id¹⁾, nike@uigm.ac.id²⁾

Abstract

This research attempted to see whether the cooperative leaning was impactful on EFL learners' critical thinking aspects. Non-equivalent pretest and posttest control group design of comparison group design was used in this research. The population of the research was all of the undergraduate students of University of Indo Global Mandiri. Forty students were selected as the sample purposively in the experimental group (treatment group) and control group (non-treatment group), respectively. A critical thinking rubric was employed to measure the EFL learners' critical thinking_(aspects) and critical thinking aspects_(total). The research findings revealed that (1) there was a significant improvement on the EFL learners' critical thinking_(aspects) and critical thinking _(total), (2) There was a significant mean difference on the EFL learners' critical thinking_(aspects) and critical thinking aspects_(total), (3) there was a significant contribution of the critical thinking skill _(aspects) and critical thinking aspects_(total) in which the aspects of framing personal responses and acknowledging other perspectives had the lowest contribution and the aspects of recognizing stakeholders and context had the highest contribution. In conclusion statistically the cooperative learning was significantly impactful on the EFL learners' critical thinking aspects in English language teaching.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, critical thinking aspects

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berusaha untuk melihat apakah pembelajaran kooperatif berdampak pada aspek berpikir kritis peserta didik EFL. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian non-equivalent pretest and posttest control group design of comparison group design. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah semua mahasiswa sarjana dari Universitas Indo Global Mandiri. Empat puluh siswa dipilih sebagai sampel secara purposif dalam kelompok eksperimen (kelompok perlakuan) dan kelompok kontrol (kelompok non-perlakuan). Rubrik berpikir kritis digunakan untuk mengukur pemikiran kritis (aspek) pembelajar EFL dan aspek berpikir kritis (total). Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa (1) ada peningkatan yang signifikan pada pemikiran kritis (aspek) peserta didik EFL dan pemikiran kritis (total), (2) Ada perbedaan rata-rata yang signifikan pada pemikiran kritis peserta didik EFL (aspek) dan aspek berpikir kritis (total), (3) ada kontribusi signifikan dari keterampilan berpikir kritis (aspek) dan aspek berpikir kritis (total) di mana aspek meringkas tanggapan pribadi dan mengakui perspektif lain memiliki kontribusi terendah dan aspek dari para pemangku kepentingan dan konteks yang memiliki kontribusi tertinggi. Kesimpulannya secara statistik pembelajaran kooperatif berdampak signifikan pada aspek berpikir kritis peserta didik EFL dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: pembelajaran kooperatif, aspek berpikir kritis

1. Introduction

Critical thinking is a skill needed by the university students to cope with their academic activities such as having presentation, having class discussion, writing out the academic and non-academic paper, finishing the assignment, and the like. To these cases, the educators, especially the lecturers teaching at the university in Indonesia, must be aware of the learners' critical thinking skill and seek the instructional technique in the most eligible way so that the EFL learners can employ the critical thinking techniques when they come across with the various academic activities in the university.

Sezer (2008) claims that critical thinking is an intellectual and discipline process comprising of the conceptualization, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation which can be obtained from observing, experiencing, reflecting, reasoning, and communicating. In line with that, Lyutykh (2009) verbalizes that critical thinking is a systematic thinking skill to analyze and evaluate conflicting and complicated things in order to better understand and improve the problem solving the any life aspect. Apart from that, Rear (2010), states that critical thinking has a broad definition in which there are many interpretations that becomes the challenges for the instructors to expose it to the their students in the teaching and learning environment. Hence, critical thinking is a skill consisting of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesing, and evaluating which should be mastered by the lecturers at the beginning of the day in which this should be transferred to the learners to solve the their problems in the academic field at the end of the day.

To develop the critical thinking of the EFL learners, the EFL lecturers should find or even create the most appropriate instructional activities and techniques. One of the interactive activities that can be applied by the lecturers is the cooperative learning in which the students are expected to participate actively in the class discussion which cover any topic related the life issue. Stephen and Stephen (2005) said that discussion is the an activity of elaborating knowledge and increasing the mutual understanding among the learners after a process of producing and receiving the information.

Additionally, Abdu-Raheem (2011) revealed that discussion is a speaking and listening activity among the teachers and students in an effort to develop the students' social life skills. Therefore, it could be concluded that discussion is an academic activity among the instructor and language learners to exchange the information which ultimately can develop the learners' social skill both academic and non-academic.

On the basis of the above-mentioned rationale, this research attempted to see whether the cooperative learning, discussion activity, is impactful on the EFL learners' critical thinking skill. This research is chiefly limited on the application of cooperative learning in the EFL classroom whether it is impactful on the aspects of the EFL learners critical thinking skill such as identifying and explaining issues, recognizing

stakeholders and context, framing personal responses and acknowledging other perspectives, evaluating assumptions, evaluating evidence, and evaluating implications, conclusions, and consequences.

A. *Research Question*

Based on the description above, the following are the formulated research questions:

1. Was cooperative learning significantly impactful on the EFL learners' critical thinking?
2. Did cooperative learning give a significant mean difference on the EFL learners' critical thinking?
3. How much did the critical thinking (aspects) contribute to and critical thinking (total)?

In accordance with the research questions above, the researchers would like to:

1. Find out whether or not cooperative learning was significantly impactful on the EFL learners' critical thinking.
2. Find out whether or not cooperative learning gave a significant mean difference on the EFL learners' critical thinking
3. Find out how much critical thinking (aspects) contribute to and critical thinking (total) after the intervention applied.

Efl Learners' Problem In Oral Proficiency And Critical Thinking

In cooperative learning, particularly on the class discussion, the EFL learners frequently have a problem in terms of oral proficiency (how to say) and content mastery (what to say). The following is the EFL learners' problem in oral proficiency and critical thinking in the teaching and learning process. To communicate and understand what other people utter in the conversation especially in the academic setting, the need of oral proficiency mastery is very prominent.

Richards & Renandya (2002) point out that achieving proficiency in oral communication is the main dream ad motivation which a large percentage of learners bring to language classes. Harmer (1991) & asserted that speaking has many different aspects including two major categories which are accuracy involving the correct use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. However, the EFL learners still come across with some barriers of interacting with others in the communicative setting. When EFL students cannot communicate in English well, they become frustrated because learning how to speak in the language gives one a sense of superiority over one who learns to read and to write (Ya-ni, 2007).

Their frustration is most probably caused by neglect in the development of their oral communication skill as the years they spend in learning English are focused entirely on the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar. In general, some of the difficulties EFL students experienced in speaking English are: use of the mother tongue (L1) instead of English in speaking between the students in the classroom, a lack of knowledge of the vocabulary in the target language (L2) (Al-Jamal and Al-

Jamal, 2013 & Al Hosni, 2014), anxiety and fear of committing mistakes while speaking English (Dil, 2009 & Al Hosni, 2014), improper listening strategies, inadequate training, limited available resources in the classrooms, large classes, and a lack of time (Basim, 2007; Ahmed, 2012 & Jamal and Al-Jamal, 2013).

Like speaking, the EFL learners are also demanded to be critical thinker particularly on the understanding, analyzing, and criticizing to what they learn in the academic teaching and learning environment. The teaching of critical thinking should, therefore, be exposed more in the classroom as this can be useful for EFL learners in the workplace after graduation. Nonetheless, thinking is a natural process, but left to itself, it is often biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, and potentially prejudiced; excellence in thought must be cultivated (Scriven and Paul, 2004). Critical thinking is, very simply stated, the ability to analyze and evaluate information. Critical thinkers raise vital questions and problems, formulate them clearly, gather and assess relevant information, use abstract ideas, think open-mindedly, and communicate effectively with others. Passive thinkers suffer a limited and ego-centric view of the world; they answer questions with yes or no and view their perspective as the only sensible one and their facts as the only ones relevant. Critical thinking is an important and necessary skill because it is required in the workplace, it can help you deal with mental and spiritual questions, and it can be used to evaluate people, policies, and institutions, thereby avoiding social problems (Hatcher and Spencer, 2005).

Pertaining to the rationale above, it can be drawn that the EFL learners, in general, still encounter some problems in terms of oral proficiency mastery and critical thinking cultivation. By coming across those problems, the researcher offers the instructional model, discussion task model, to promote the EFL learners' oral proficiency and critical thinking as this model is an interactive model in which it can facilitate the EFL learners to be active in speaking and to activate their critical thinking cultivation during the discussion in teaching and learning environment.

B. Research Methodology

This research tried to see the impact of cooperative learning on the EFL learners' critical thinking skill. A quasi experimental research design, non-equivalent groups pretest-posttest control group design or comparison group design, was used in this research. Two equal-sized group, experimental and control group, were used in this research. In the experimental group, pretest, intervention, and posttest were employed while only pretest and posttest were employed to the control group.

C. Research Participant And Instrumentation

The population of the research was all of the undergraduate students of University of Indo Global Mandiri. Forty students were selected as the sample purposively. The sample taken in this research is required to have the same academic year and instructed

by the same English lecturer and not having English course during the research. Oral test was administered to gather the data of the EFL learners' critical thinking. The students were given the same speaking topics in the pretest and posttest, then their opinion was recorded. In addition, a critical thinking scoring rubric is used to assess the EFL learners' critical thinking achievement. This is an analytical scoring rubric consisting of the aspects of critical thinking such as: identifying and explaining issues, recognizing stakeholders and contexts, evaluating assumptions, evaluating evidence, and evaluating implications, conclusions, and consequences. The analytical scoring rubrics of oral proficiency and critical thinking were used by the two raters/experts can assess the EFL learners' critical thinking achievement.

D. Data Analysis

The data analyses were taken from the test given to the test takers in the pretest and posttest. To see the EFL learners' critical thinking achievements, an analytical scoring rubric was used to gain their critical thinking scores from the administered test. To see the category of the EFL learners individual score, the researchers set the score range of critical thinking was as follows: very good (19-24), good (13-18), average (7-12), and poor (<7). In addition, the following steps of the data analyses were employed after the treatment given and computed by SPSS comprising of paired samples t-test was employed to see whether there was a significant improvement on the EFL learners' critical thinking achievement after being taught by using cooperative learning and those who were not. Independent samples t-test was employed to see whether there was a significant mean difference on the EFL learners' critical thinking achievements after being taught by using cooperative learning and those who were not, and Multiple regression analysis was employed to see the percentage analysis of the contribution and critical thinking (aspects) toward and critical thinking (total).

2. Research Findings And Interpretation

A. Statistical and Multiple Regression Analyses

In carrying out the data computation, the statistical and multiple regression analyses were used in this research. The following description and tables of the statistical analyses (progressive and mean difference analyses) and multiple regression analyses were presented below:

1. Progressive Analysis

From the table 1, it could be seen that the results of progressive analysis of the EFL learners; critical thinking skill achievement in both experimental group and control group. The mean scores of critical thinking achievement in the experimental group were 11.00 and 14.00 with t-obtained 13.784. On the other hand, the mean scores of pretest and posttest in the control group were 10.75 and 11.70 with obtained 8.324. From the above-presented results, in concluding, there were a significant improvement within the pretest and posttest

of both groups as the results of t-obtained of critical thinking were higher than t-table and the significance levels of the critical thinking skill achievement in both experimental group and control group were lower than .05.

2. Multiple Regression Analysis

From table 2, it could be vividly seen that as all the significance levels of the aspects of the critical thinking skill were lower than .05, hence there was a significant contribution of the critical thinking skill aspects toward the critical thinking skill total in which the aspect of framing personal responses and acknowledging other perspectives had the lowest contribution and the aspect of recognizing stakeholders and contexts had the highest contribution.

Table 1. Results of Progressive and Mean Difference Analyses

Strategy	Variables	Pretest		Posttest		Mean difference pre and posttest Exp within	Mean difference pre and posttest Cont within	T-value posttest between Exp and Control	T value of Gain between Exp & Control	The value of Sig. 2-tailed Exp within	The value of Sig. 2-tailed Cont within	The value of Sig. 2-tailed between Exp and Control
		Mean Exp	Mean Cont	Mean Exp	Mean Cont							
CLS	CTA	11.00	10.75	14.00	11.70	3.000	0.950	2.521	2.300	.000	.000	.001

Table 2. Stepwise Regression Analyses of critical thinking (aspects) toward and critical thinking (total)

Model	Critical Thinking Achievement (CTA)	R	R ²	R ² d	F	Sig
1	Context	.859	.737	.737	50.514	.000
2	Context, Assumption	.937	.878	.140	19.462	.000
3	Context, Assumption, Evidence	.959	.919	.041	8.196	.011
4	Context, Assumption, Evidence, Implication	.976	.952	.033	10.164	.006
5	Context, Assumption, Evidence, Implication, Issues	.986	.972	.020	10.096	.007
6	Context, Assumption, Evidence, Implication, Issues, Perspective	1.000	1.000	.028	.000	.000

3. Conclusion

On the basis of the research findings and interpretation, the conclusion were scratched as follows: Firstly, there was a significant improvement on the EFL learners' critical thinking skill achievement in both experimental and control group. Secondly, there was a significant difference on the EFL learners' critical thinking achievement after being taught by using cooperative learning and those who were not. Thirdly, there was a significant contribution made by the experimental group of the critical thinking skill aspect toward the critical thinking skill total. Ultimately, statistically cooperative learning, class discussion, was impactful on the EFL learners' critical thinking skill achievement viewed from the aspect and as a whole.

Suggestion

In conjunction with the research conclusion above, some suggestion and future research plan were thrown for the betterment of the research. First of all, the EFL

lecturer should vary the discussion topics on the basis of the learners' needs and English proficiency level. Second of all, the students should read more books, article, magazine, newspaper and the like to broaden their horizons as this can help them actively participate in the cooperative learning activity. Third of all, the stakeholder and policy maker should include this cooperative learning activity in the instructional curriculum in order to build student-student interaction and lecturer-students engagement in the teaching and learning environment. Forth of all, in relation to the future research plan for the future researchers, they can primarily focus more on the integrated language skill both productive and receptive skill. They also conduct mixed method research by integrating two or more instructional techniques and media on the other related aspects of linguistics competence and linguistics performance.

References

- Alessi, Stephen, Trollip, & Stanley R. 2001. *Multimedia for learning*. New York: Allyn and Bacon
- Abdu-Raheem, B. O. 2011. Effects of discussion method on secondary school students' achievement and retention in social studies. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 3(2), 293-301.
- Al -Hosni, S. 2014. Speaking difficulties encountered by young EFL learners. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, 2(6), 22-30
- Al-Jamal, D. A., & Al-Jamal, G. A. 2013. An investigation of the difficulties faced by efl undergraduates in speaking skills. *English Language Teaching*, 7(1), p. 19.
- Ahmed K. F. 2012. *Students' communicative skills through classroom interaction in Iraqi EFL classes*. University of Thi Qar College of Education, Department of English.
- Basim, Y. 2007. Identifying the advanced Iraqi EFL learners' obstacles in comprehending live speech and their pedagogical implications. *Tikrit University Journal for Humanities*, 14(8), 20-56.
- Dil, Y. 2009. EFL Learners' communication obstacles. *Electronic Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(29), 84-100. ISSN1304-0278
- Harmer, J. 1991. *The practice of English language teaching*. The 3rd Edition. Longman: London and New York.
- Hatcher, D. L., & Spencer, L. A. 2005. *Reasoning and writing: From critical thinking to composition*. 3rd. ed. Boston: American Press.
- Lyuthkh, E., 2009. Practicing critical thinking in an educational psychology classroom. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 45, 377-391.
- Rear, D. 2010. A systematic approach to teaching critical thinking through debate. *ELTWorldOnline.com*, 2, 1-10.
- Richards, J. C., and Renandya, A. W. 2002. *Methodology in Language Teaching : Anthology of*

- Current Practice*. (ed). Cambridge University Press.
- Scriven, M., & Paul, R. 2004. *The critical thinking community*. Retrieved November 28, 2005, from <http://www.criticalthinking.org/aboutCT/definingCT.shtml>.
- Sezer, R.2008. Integration of critical thinking skills into elementary school teacher. *Education*; 128(3), pp. 349-363.
- Stephen, D., & Stephen, P. 2005. *Discussion as a way of teaching*. USA: Jossey Bass Press. A Willey Imprint. Retrieved from www.josseybass.com.
- Ya-Ni, Z. 2007. Communication strategies and foreign language learning. *US-China Foreign Language*, 5(4), 43-47.