

Promoting Critical Literacy in Academic Reading Class: EFL Learners' Activity Exploration

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Abstrak. The goal of this study was to investigate what EFL students did in academic reading class. The goal of the lesson is to prepare students to respond intelligently and critically to academic texts and to issues raised in written assignments. The idea behind this reading reaction has been influenced by Rosenblatt's research. She considers the act of reading to be a live event. The author believes that it would be useful to adapt this concept to academic reading even if it was often employed by literary majors. Qualitative information is provided to show how these pupils engage with text critically. In order to gather data for this study, the author observed, spoke with, and examined the written work of learners. The paper's recommendations for teachers to develop their own critical literacy approach to texts and modules are provided in the last section. In order to finish their output, the EFL students in this study employed a careful selection of texts, background knowledge activation, questions about the author's ideas, intertextuality for responding to the questions, and reflection.

Key words: critical literacy, reader-response, reading, writing, academic text

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the fact that Indonesian Qualifications Framework (IQF) must be applied in all higher education curricula in Indonesia, education in the country is finally forced to compete on a global scale. The International Qualifications Framework (IQF) is essentially a set of standards for a country's accepted qualifications. Learning outcomes are the expression of what the graduate (the qualification holder) understands, can accomplish, and can use in a setting such as the job or future learning (MOEC, 2013).

As a reaction to those issues, reading for academic purposes at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon aims to improve students' critical reading and academic writing skills as well as their understanding of the relationship between reading and writing. Reading instruction will cover both theoretical and practical aspects. The course is built on theories and methods for teaching reading that are supported by research. Throughout this course, students develop their language skills, focusing in particular on the techniques used by informed readers to act professionally.

In addition to IQF, 21st-century educational trends mandate that readers be able to assess what they read and comprehend the author's intentions as well as the accuracy of the reading. They must see themselves as participating actively. The emphasis on learning gives

students more latitude to examine, assess, and respond critically to the material they are reading. Teachers must choose a good teaching strategy when using integrated skills (reading and writing) to improve students' literacy. For a long time, reading and writing skills have been associated with the term "literacy" (Endres, 2001). However, it is increasingly being acknowledged as a socially situated practice with social repercussions in which the reader must actively participate in comprehending, disseminating, and producing text.

Critical literacy is the last focus of the social implications literacy instruction. Learning critical literacy enhances students' capacity to think critically and act socially, in addition to their reading and writing skills. Critical literacy departs from conventional notions of literacy in this study. It requires the reader's participation, which causes the shift. It places a strong emphasis on reading broadly, which entails thinking about, responding to, and generating texts as well as engaging in social action and becoming aware of texts' relationships to the broader context of their environments. Readers who are critically literate understand that works do not represent "truth," but rather the perspective of the author and the socio-cultural setting in which they were produced (Lapp & Fisher, 2010, p. 159).

For the past 30 years, higher education in the United States has placed a heavy focus on

writing and critical thinking to prepare students for the trifecta of academic success, employment, and life (Yancey, 2015). Early critical literacy research in English-speaking countries placed a strong emphasis on using texts as study objects. Lewison, Flint, and van Sluys (2002); Behrman (2006); However, the study demonstrating the use of critical literacy in foreign settings is extremely uncommon.

In order for students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to function in today's society, it is our responsibility as educators to actively engage them in their learning. In actuality, critical literacy gives children lots of freedom for independent learning. Given that conducting an inquiry empowers students to take charge of their learning, the writer makes the premise that the students will engage in certain phases of inquiry (SAD Report, 2011). The critical literacy inquiry method will differ depending on the application. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how EFL learners use reading response as a critical literacy model.

What Researches Say about the Issue?

Certain researchers have undertaken some investigations that are related to the problem. Huang (2011) examines the perspectives of students in EFL reading and writing when it comes to critical literacy with a student-centered approach. She found that when language learners receive instruction in a critical literacy framework, both their traditional literacy skills and their capacity to engage with texts critically both significantly increase. Because of critical literacy, students' reading comprehension has improved and they are more eager to write.

Since inquiry-based learning emphasizes that students generate their own knowledge by actively participating in their learning process, Lin (2007) found that it is challenging to apply. As a result, this approach is difficult for the majority of pupils. Dealing with this difficulty requires having a relevant grasp of students' inquiry-based learning experiences.

Beach's investigation revealed a connection between critical literacy and curiosity (2014). He looks at the methodology and methods of an elementary school teacher who uses both critical literacy and inquiry. Over the period of six months, he conducted two interviews with a classroom instructor and twelve observations of classroom activities to gather data for this study. According to a general inductive approach to

analysis, the classroom teacher used methods that combined traditional inquiry pedagogy for the development of critical literacy. This study illuminates the negotiations and connections made between critical literacy and inquiry by a primary school teacher.

Beach (2014) has significantly advanced our understanding of instructional approaches and the teaching of critical literacy in an inquiry-based setting. Studies have paid less attention to critical literacy teaching strategies that emphasize students' inquiry processes.

Critical Literacy in Classroom Application

The abilities developed in this course (unit) help ELT students become autonomous, critical readers. It covers understanding academic materials including essays, research articles, and book reviews. The works address issues linked to teaching languages. In this course, diversity concerns are covered as they relate to reading teaching and development, as well as methods that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. Students will gain the ability to describe the characteristics of various genres (e.g. argument construction, summarizing, paraphrasing, and synthesizing); identify the strategies authors use to make their writing appear clear and coherent, and assess their own writing in light of the characteristics of successful texts. Assessments in reading and writing test students' capacity to analyze texts critically, respond to them in writing, and provide an informed opinion on topics covered in class.

The reader response theory developed by Rosenblatt in 1978 had a significant effect on the concept of responding to text. According to Rosenblatt, reading is an active activity since meaning is formed when the reader and the text interact (Lynn, 2008). Majors in literature often use this notion. The writer believes it would be extremely beneficial to introduce.

This course introduces the critical stance, its role in connection to the Efferent-Aesthetic Continuum, and Rosenblatt's work on stances as the paradigm of critical literacy in the EFL context. Rosenblatt (2002). (2002). No reading experience, she observed, is either aesthetic or purely efferent; rather, readers constantly make decisions about their thinking, emphasizing both stances—and occasionally more on one than the other. The critical posture, a third position, may be seen as a part of the continuum. When reading critically, readers make connections

between their own ideas and the ideas put forth by the text's author using their prior. In this process, readers play the role not only of code breakers, meaning makers, and text users but also the role of text critics (Luke & Freebody, 1999).

According to Freire's theory, reading from a critical attitude necessitates not just reading and comprehending the words but also "reading the world" and realizing the objective of a work in order to prevent readers from being misled by it. To interact and learn more about knowing critically, it is vital to start with practice and reflection. Becoming critically literate is a developmental process. To assist his pupils adopt a critical viewpoint, professors at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon can start with this. It should be mentioned that the lecturers must take these concepts, modify them for their own circumstances, and support the learning of the students.

METHODS

Table 1. Procedure Applied by the EFL Learners in Responding the Text

Observation Focus	Coded Activity (Phases)
Before Responding Process	Selecting the text Summarizing the text
During Responding Process	Responding to author's ideas Supporting the responses with evidences
After Responding Process	Combining the summary with the responses in a coherent thought

The method used by EFL students to reply to the text is displayed in the table above. They were told to choose the text that would be responded to first. The professor only provided them with a few requirements for the paper, such as the need that it be research-based and published in a clearly identified publication. Second, students had to provide a summary of the text (article). This stage was used to gauge how well they understood. The summary would also be included in their finished work. Third, they were told to comment on the author's thoughts. This stage entails challenging the theories and providing evidence to back up the conclusions. Fourth, they were told to provide evidence to back up their statements. In order to substantiate their arguments, individuals should make connections between the material being read and other sources. Finally, students were told to construct a cohesive notion by combining the summary and the replies. In this stage, which involves writing, students should complete their final work (response essay).

The author spent seven weeks collecting ethnographic data and field notes about how students respond to texts by observing what they do before, during, and after responding. Three participants were subjected to an in-depth interview. Performance during the project served as the selection criterion for participants. They were seen as possessing more knowledge. The purpose of the interview is to ascertain how each step fits into the larger scheme of the investigation process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data and Initial Analysis

Based on the response procedure, the author coded the data from observation and field notes (before, during and after responding to text process). The author took notes on his thoughts regarding the approach the participants were adopting to texts as they were reviewing the coded topics.

DISCUSSION

The major objectives of this study were to determine when, how, and which texts EFL students interact critically. These five topics were the focus of the open-ended interview's questions: The key books in their lives? Which literary works are examined critically? What inquiries do they make regarding the texts that they interact with? What social justice problems, if any, are brought up? What types of texts are they creating, too? The following quotes are from focus group talks, observational notes, and interviews. The samples are also shown showing how the continuum may be utilized to understand comments made on texts created by participants as well as participant comments on social justice problems.

Selecting the text. Students were required to select a text to respond to independently during this step. Because students must discuss the topic in groups, previous knowledge may or may

not have an effect on the participants' choice of topic, but it did have an impact on how difficult or easy their themes were perceived by the participants. These findings provide credence to the hypothesis that students' prior knowledge may influence their inquiry-based learning (Beach, 2014).

The reading comprehension test is supposed to aid EFL students in the development of critical thinking skills. Many methods and techniques for implementing the reading comprehension section have been put forth in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. Particularly when it comes to writing for academic purposes, like critical response essays. Some of the techniques that are taught have three steps. During the planning phase, think about selecting the texts, eliminating the irrelevant information, and coming up with a summary. Here, they need to be careful about the wording they use for the required response. Choosing what the writer and readers should read is a crucial step in the assignment creation process (Crème Phillis and Lea Mary, 2003:43).

The criteria for academic content that should be chosen for responding and the section of text chosen by their own groups based on the assertions of the responders and instructor. They are given initial training on how to choose the text, but they are also allowed to choose the text area. Generally speaking, the requirements are the same: the academic book must have been published no earlier than 2013, it must have a unique identity, and it is preferred if the work comprises an international journal.

When it comes to choosing the text area, there is a difference between the first, second, and third respondent. The first reply selected Drama Activities' speaking skill category. The reading comprehension material on Task Induce of Reading Comprehension was the same topic that the second and third respondents selected. Because the text selection should be based on the passion of the EFL students and appropriate for their abilities to be answered afterwards.

The researcher is also curious as to why EFL students select a certain item to reply to. Although this phase provides students with a solid understanding of the topic, their inquiry process aims to be the beginning stages of inquiry since they must activate or expand their past knowledge before coming up with their own queries regarding the concepts offered (Moreillon, 2014).

According to the respondents' responses, the

academic text's language level, the writer's language preference, and the respondents' perceptions that the article they chose is appropriate for their ability and interest are the primary factors influencing EFL learners' decisions about which texts to respond to. According to Crème Phillis and Lea Mary (2003:43), who confirmed this, you should carefully consider what you will need to do this particular piece of work before choosing your resources.

EFL students should thus choose the content and then highlight the key ideas before summarizing it. The capacity to incorporate essential concepts from what has been read into one's own writing is one of the strategies for effective writing in an academic environment (Crème Phillis and Lea Mary, 2003:52).

According to the statements, EFL students' professors provide excellent instruction in the writing process. The next strategy used by EFL students is to highlight the key ideas from the article they have selected in order to motivate them to create a summary. A summary helps you grasp the essential concepts and material in an article, section of a book, or a cluster of paragraphs since summarizing the information is thought to assist condense it for use in your own writing (Anson, 2003).

Summarizing the text. The responsibility of summarizing the novel was given to the students at this phase. Depending on the interview, frequent activities at this step include reading the material, understanding terminology, and underlining important passages. Since they must first activate or expand their prior knowledge before creating their own inquiries on the concepts provided, students' inquiry processes in this phase aim to be the beginning phases of inquiry.

The EFL students were instructed in the writing process after emphasizing the article's key components to help them understand the material. Because omitting the important themes would make the book difficult for EFL students to understand. Being able to effectively combine important ideas from what you've read into your own work is one of the keys to writing well in an academic context (Phillis Crame and Lea Mary, 2003:52). They were instructed to use a particular method. It is a summary. According to Maimon et al. (2009), a summary aids in your understanding of the key ideas and details in a book, section of an article, or set of paragraphs.

According to the findings of the interview

with the respondents, summarizing was generally used to help the respondents understand the article. As suggested by Maimon et al. (2009), the writer may want to use an article summary or study summary to help organize and summarize the content. The objective of summarizing any source is to draw out its most important and pertinent details, such as findings, procedures, hypotheses, and so forth. According to the respondents, the advantage of the summarizing method is that it is easier to understand because it uses their own words.

Responding to author's ideas. In this stage, students were required to respond to the author's ideas. Since it includes their critical involvement and inquiry process, this is the most crucial stage. It connects students to their earlier learning and inspires them to pose their own inquiries regarding the author's concepts. You should continue studying because the issue is so exciting. The more open-ended and contentious a question is, the better it is for research. However, the results show that students typically ask incorrect or inadequate questions because they don't have enough pertinent information (Lin, 2007). According to the research, participants formulate their main questions and supporting questions in a number of ways. According to the literature, there are two main purposes that important questions and sub-questions serve in inquiry-based learning instruction (Tallman & Joyce, 2006).

Based on a set of standards, the EFL students respond to the material. They are the writer's choice of words, their ideas, and the way the essay is put together. It did emphasize the need of expanding on and debating the author's viewpoints, though. To respond to the concepts, it used the Reader Response Theory. Therefore, using efferent reading may help the writers' thoughts to evolve. In reading that is predominantly efferent, the child must learn to focus on figuring out the text's intended audience. The area that organizes the abstract ideas that the linguistic symbols relate to, known as the "token" top-of-the-inner-iceberg, needs the most focus. These can offer the information, guidelines, and logical conclusions that will. These can provide the data, instructions, and logical conclusions that will be the end result of the investigation. These can yield the information, the directions, the logical conclusions that will be the residue of the reading act Rosenblatt's (1982, p. 271).

Three responders acknowledged that their only motivation for replying to the essay was the author's viewpoints. As the first commenter verified, when she inquired about how to respond to an author's grammar, her instructor urged her not to do so before focusing on and developing the author's arguments to be addressed. In the course of this process of rereading, readers reconstruct the framework and meaning of ideas presented by others. They must read attentively, actively, critically, and reflectively. You must be acutely aware of all of these reading processes and changes in order to develop a good interpretation. You must also compare your responses to those of others in order to better understand them (Woodlief & Cornis-Pope, n.d.) cited in (Eliana & Harold, 2015). The second and third respondents then said that a method for assisting in the development of the author's views is to synthesize and read efferent in order to respond to the article. According to Connell (2000), the synthesis process of aesthetic experiences varies from non-aesthetic experiences because it involves three components: an organic absorption in the reader's prior thoughts and experiences; a connection to emotional impulses; and a spark of creativity (Connell, 2000:31).

Supporting the responses with evidences. One unique feature of information exploration for inquiry-based research is that, after questions have been generated, the study should remain steadfastly focused on answering those questions rather than investigating everything pertinent to the students' topic. In order to substantiate their answer to the query they had presented in the previous phase, students were instructed to compare the text they were reading with other texts. It's important to develop an answer to an engaging question. Through the integration of many resources and reflections, students produce an own product.

A number of participants were unable to consciously refer to their inquiries when seeking for pertinent information, according to the qualitative analysis of this study. Therefore, as Tallman and Joyce (2006) suggested, the professor might help students integrate their expertise with their inquiries to make their search more purposeful and meaningful rather than accumulating any entertaining information.

In response essays, EFL students should support their arguments, opinions, or assertions with evidence in order to improve their responses in their writings. According to Cronin,

et al., primary sources in science are often works that have been published in reputable journals (2008). Usually, the writers of responses use reliable journals as their accurate sources.

In the course of writing a response essay, three respondents claimed to have used the strategy of keeping track of sources to support their claims. The chart's top slots are used for storing sources, while its side slots are used to list the main disagreements around the topic at hand. The tactic is a synthesis matrix. It can help EFL students gather and contrast data to be used as evidence. The synthesis matrix is a diagram that aids in organizing and classifying the numerous arguments made on a particular subject by researchers. All of the respondents stated that two sources on the same topic and area are necessary to substantiate the writing ideas. We can find solutions to problems, compare points of view, and acquire a better understanding by using numerous sources of information rather than just one (Blachowicz & Ogle:2001).

The instructor claims that using a synthesis matrix can help EFL students distinguish between and evaluate several sources on a single topic. It can therefore aid EFL students in improving their capacity to combine sources and understand their main themes. A synthesizing matrix, in accordance with Hussey (2006), enables the writer to capture the main points of each source and show how they relate to one another. Create a matrix to help the writer comprehend how the components fit together and apply to each of your themes. To do this, the sources were arranged in a matrix based on a subject or variable. Once this was done, the writer could see how the sources related to one another and begin to consider how to weave them together to produce a synthesis.

Combining the summary with the responses in a coherent thought. The preceding phases led to this one. Data are perceived as supporting, contradicting, or completing the responsive text as part of the sense-making process. They were required to combine their overview and responses into a single document. To construct their responses, they must connect several pieces of information (the questions' responses) together. They may use this phase as a time of reflection to confirm the connections between concepts. They may even correct an error in the question they have posed.

EFL students are urged to adopt a strategy to finish their final response paper method. When

producing a summary, synthesizing the sources, and then reacting to the article's theme, the EFL students combined their work processes. The environment to which the organism responds is made up of the activities that the organism chooses and attempts to organize based on the readers' already-acquired habits, assumptions, and expectations (Rosenblatt, 1978:17), which is quoted in (Eliana & Harold, 2015).

The lecturer claims that the students' final project writing process is logical and instructed. The techniques used at this level were summarizing and responding. EFL students should first do research on the article's subject matter, the experiment's findings, and the methodology used; as a consequence, they should have a solid knowledge of the work. It must be a part of the summary. You may determine what information, such as findings, techniques, hypotheses, and other material, is significant and relevant to the topic by summarizing each source. Because using a study or article summary can help authors organize and summarize the source material (Hussey, 2006). The EFL students should next respond to the authors' thoughts after making the summary. Response is essential for helping students go through the phases of the writing process, and several techniques are utilized to provide feedback, including peer response, teacher-student conferences, audiotaped feedback, and reformulation (Hyland, 2003).

CONCLUSION

The study's portrayal of EFL students provides a glimpse into this population where critical literacy and inquiry learning coexist. The findings of this study show that developing critical literacy in an inquiry-based classroom is an active process that calls for rigorous preparation and continuous introspection. The study's EFL participants developed a cautious selection of texts, activation of previous information, queries to the author's points of view, intertextuality for responding to the questions, and reflection when completing their work. This instructional strategy lays the groundwork for the growth of critical thinking and awareness. It was done in the context of an inquiry-based learning environment, where misunderstandings, questions, and ideas influenced the learning process and provided many chances to delve deeper into the reading material.

The respondents use writing methods in a

variety of ways. The EFL students first reflect on themselves during the planning process to determine the objectives of their writing and reading courses. Second, they think about who their target audience is for their work. Thirdly, they should decide which item will receive a response. Fourth, they have opted to focus on their article's key themes. Fifth, through creating research questions, they need to be able to expand the concepts. Sixth, they assess text comprehension by creating summaries. Seventh, they ought to be able to make a strong start. The first step in the drafting phase for EFL students is to properly organize each paragraph of their writing. Second, they use a synthesized matrix to store data from many sources as proof for the assertions made in the replies. Third, students should be able to resolve the issue using the inquiry chart technique and the synthesizing matrix strategy if they become stuck. Fourth, they create research questions in response to the author's ideas. Finally, they employ an approach to include the answer with the summary. Prior to submission, EFL students should double-check their writing throughout the rewriting and editing step. Second, they express gratitude to themselves after finishing their essay. Third, they should rewrite the lecturer's advice after conducting peer review or peer editing with their classmates. Fourth, they attempt to assume that certain writing issues may be resolved by rewriting in an effort to prevent feeling anxious about the outcome. Last, they should assess their writing after finishing the revision phase. Respondents should thank their professor even if it's just to inspire.

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