

Indonesian English language teachers' conceptions of critical thinking: challenge and strategy

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ABSTRACT

Critical thinking (CT) has already been acknowledged as a significant skill in education, including in the field of English language learning. However, very few studies have investigated the challenges and strategies in enhancing students' CT skills in English language subjects. This qualitative research aims to investigate the Indonesian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' conception of the necessity of implementing CT in EFL subject. This research is also intended to find out the challenges and strategies in encouraging students to use CT in their learning process. This research employed two research tools for data collection: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The study revealed that EFL teachers believe in the value of promoting CT in their teaching classroom activities. However, CT has been practically rarely unnoticed in the implementation of English language classes due to the EFL teachers' concentration on linguistic skills, grammar instruction, and English communicative skills. The findings also found some challenges faced by the EFL teachers in implementing CT, as well as some strategies in promoting the skill. This research recommends the importance of involving Indonesian EFL teachers in a training on CT to enhance their understanding and allow them to stimulate CT among their students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the value of critical thinking (CT) skills in the education field has been realized and emphasized. It is thought that the skill is important to the learners' success. CT has already been considered one of the most crucial and critical elements in 21st-century success [1]. As a result, there is no hesitation that CT is one of the fundamental aims of education in the 21st century, with a clear link to teaching and learning activities as well as our daily lives. Teachers in both higher education and university contexts have recognized the need to improve students' CT skills since 1990. Therefore, many researchers and educators have argued that CT is one of the most important abilities to educate children to help them engage successfully in social life, and make good decisions, whether personal or leadership-related [2], [3]. This is consistent with one of education's primary goals, which is to prepare learners to make substantial contributions to society [4].

The use of CT in the classroom raises the value of learning by assisting teachers in doing their jobs and promoting successful learning among students. Learning and teaching methods might be impacted by CT [2], [5], [6]. It is true that doing this would help pupils develop better study habits and prepare them for lifetime learning. It is important to note that CT plays a vital role in modern education, seeking to provide a setting where students may develop their own understanding and assume control over their own learning [2].

Furthermore, CT is seen as a process and action to encourage the achievement of students' higher thinking skills by applying several strategies to get the desired results based on the students' real needs [7]. From this standpoint, critical theory appears to be the best resource for directing, criticizing, and increasing students' intellectual growth. In a nutshell, CT is an academic skill that requires the ability to view ideas and issues as well as the ability to evaluate those ideas and solutions. It also entails the ability to discover connections between ideas and improve one's thought, as well as active participation in a variety of disciplines [8]. Therefore, some experts suggest that teaching CT should be divided into two main steps: provide learners with a CT protocol or process, and then give them opportunities to apply the process [8]. In addition, practicing CT based on tasks that provide students with a real context (i.e., based on students' daily life) will help them to analyze properly. The task-based activities include problem based-tasks, case studies and simulations [9], [10].

However, teachers face many obstacles in promoting CT in the classrooms due to practical constraints of conventional classes. Teachers had a lack of time with students. Furthermore, most educators often emphasize teacher-based methods that prioritize content learning above process learning. Even when it comes to evaluation, they prioritize knowledge over the thought process. As a result, the learners' primary focus was on the whole of course grades [8].

In accordance with the Indonesian national concept of education, the use of CT skills in learning process is crucial, including in English language teaching (ELT). CT in English learning is a cognitive process that aims to acquire information [11], [12] and reveal difficulties that have been resolved [13]. The performance of students is positively correlated with the level of CT and problem-solving skills, which Ghaani and Roslin [14] relates to the application of existing understanding, logical reasoning, and critical reflection. This is in line with previous studies [12], [15] which found that the level of CT and problem-solving skills is positively correlated with student performance. By enhancing students' CT abilities, they will be able to comprehend things more quickly, ask more in-depth questions, and defend written responses while addressing learning challenges [11], [12]. Thereby, in line with the objective, this study was designed to explore the English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' conception of the importance of enhancing students' CT skill. This research was also intended to know the challenges and strategies in implementing CT skills in EFL classrooms. Previous research results indicate that students' enthusiasm and CT have a significant role in influencing their motivation, interests, cognitive abilities, and academic performance. Moreover, recent data demonstrates that CT may be introduced into English language education. In order to improve problem-solving in EFL classes, it is essential to construct instructional materials that include CT. The process of ELT and learning should not only raise students' grasp of English language skills, but also build their CT skills [16].

While research on the importance of CT for students is emerging, very few studies have investigated EFL teachers' perceptions of CT, as well as challenges and strategies in promoting CT in their teaching activities. Scarcity of study when focusing on teaching EFL in the Indonesian context. This research tries to fill the gaps by investigating EFL teachers' conceptions of, and challenges and strategies the EFL teachers apply in enhancing students' CT skills. The research questions that were employed to guide this study are: i) What are the Indonesian EFL teachers' conceptions of CT?; ii) What are the challenges these teachers encounter in promoting CT in their classrooms?; iii) What are the strategies these teachers apply in promoting CT in their classrooms?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information continually and smartly [3], [17]. Therefore, CT is characterized by the ability to examine data, produce, and connect ideas, defend opinions, make comparisons and inferences, draw conclusions, and overcome problems [18]. Observing, experiencing, pondering, or sharing a belief and behavior are many ways to gather information. According to Kohzadi *et al.* [5], CT relates to the ability of self-regulation based on theoretical considerations, context, and method to get more logical conclusions based on the process of interpretation, analysis, and evaluation.

Critical thinking entails critical interpretation and dialogue, both of which are essential to solving problems and making decisions. CT is a critical analysis method for examining what is going on in the world. This method system might be used to establish problems, take actions toward a goal, make judgments, and perform retrospective evaluations [19], [20]. It is vital to comprehend indicators of CT skills in order to define, explain, analyze, and assess the CT process. Defining a problem, establishing alternative solutions and strong assumptions, generating valid conclusions about the solution, and assessing these conclusions are all part of the Watson-Glaser categorization of CT skills [20]. Inference, assumption recognition, deduction, interpretation, and evaluation are examples of such skills. CT, in other words, is a method of thinking that involves the ability to analyze, synthesize, and interpret a case or problem.

It has been widely realized that CT is directly linked to the ability to make argumentation and decisions, as well as to offer solutions to problems. On that basis, teachers need to recognize the relevance of CT abilities on this premise. The most important question, however, is how to promote or teach CT skills. Is it necessary to teach CT explicitly, such as a core subject, or is it sufficient to structure the teaching and learning process in such a manner that instructional activities allow students to engage their higher-order cognitive processes? [4]. Research by Garrett [21] investigated the relationship between CT skills and non-performance tasks by comparing direct versus integrated CT instruction. Research by Garrett [21] found that the number of hours spent in non-performance activities and the amount of time spent practicing CT abilities have a considerable and strong positive link. There is no significant relationship between the amount of time spent developing CT abilities and the amount of time spent growing CT skills. That is, spending time in the framework of the subject area where students must employ a high-level of cognitive abilities interacts significantly with CT, whereas activities focused at directly strengthening CT processes have no substantial influence on enhancing CT skills.

2.2. English language classrooms in the 21st century

Research by Undi and Hashim [22] indicate that there was a lot of effort of instructions have been done. Communicative language teaching (CLT), with its focus on language proficiency and learner-centeredness, was and continues to be one of the most well-known approaches. In reality, the CLT has inspired not only syllabus design and technique, but also method breakthroughs such as content- and task-based learning, and language-integrated learning [23]. Some researchers, on the other hand, feel that techniques are expert-constructed regimens for action that have both pedagogic, sociocultural, and political goals [24]. As a result, according to Ghaani and Roslin [14], teachers must be able to alter their technique in response to local and contextual conditions. Teachers can utilize these factors as a starting point for developing their own teaching tactics and strategies.

In recent years, teaching English cannot be treated and taught only as a simple linguistic skill, but it must be realized that English is a global language that people use to express their local identity and to communicate intelligently with other people around the world based on set goals [16]. As a result of the current views, grammar, and memorization should no longer be the focus of today's EFL courses. Rather, it should be considered a learning environment where people can use their linguistic and cultural expertise to communicate with people all over the world [3].

English teacher should create learning activities that involve students in real-world chores and propose a solution to existing problems that will be needed in the upcoming years. According to Sadeghi *et al.* [3], EFL students should be encouraged to work collaboratively, and they should not be required to complete assignments that focus only on translation or textbooks by putting phrases and sentences together. Students can be directed to use problem-based learning (PBL) or project-based learning (PjBL) to help analyze problems, make decisions, and find possible solutions. The PBL and PjBL encourage students to work collaboratively and autonomously during learning periods and create proper products and/or presentations at the end.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Research design

This research adopts qualitative research with a descriptive comprehensive approach. To take a detailed comprehensive approach, researchers looked at the ideas, perceptions, and aspirations of human actions by realizing that CT is situated in the study of human activities' meanings, sensations, and expectations [16]. CT is interpreted comprehensively by referring to the information presented by the participants to better understand its peculiarities in teaching English in the Indonesian context. The researcher employed two research tools for data collection, namely the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. These two sources of data allowed the researcher to gather rich data and offered triangulation to contribute to the credibility and validity of the research [25].

3.2. Research site and participants

This research study was conducted in two districts in South Sulawesi Province of Indonesia. The research sites were purposefully selected and considered appropriate because there are sufficient EFL teachers in these two districts. Thirty Indonesian senior high school EFL teachers were involved in the questionnaire with different teaching experiences. The participating respondents included 11 (36.7%) males and 19 (63.3%) females with a range of teaching experiences. Most of the participants were experienced teachers (53.3%) with teaching experiences between 5 to 15 years, and very experienced teachers (26.7%) with teaching experiences are more than 15 years. There were only 6 (20%) notice teachers who participated in the current study.

For the semi-structured interviews, six of the teachers who were involved in the questionnaire were selected. The six teachers came from various schools and had varying levels of teaching experience. They were selected purposefully to make sure that the data collected were relevant to the objective of the research. The

coding reference was utilized for the interview data, with IT standing for the interview transcript at the start of the reference quotes, followed by the participants' and school pseudonym names. "IT.Salsa. ET," for example, would correspond to the interview with Salsa, an experienced teacher. The participants for the semi-structured interviews are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' pseudonym names in the interviews

No	Name	Gender	District	Teaching experience ¹
1	Qaila	Female	District 1	19 years (VET)
2	Fikri	Male	District 1	14 years (ET)
3	Aliyah	Female	District 1	4 years (NT)
4	Ahmad	Male	District 2	17 years (VET)
5	Mutia	Female	District 2	9 years (NT)
6	Salsa	Female	District 2	3 years (ET)

Note: VET (a very experienced teacher); ET (an experienced teacher); and NT (a novice teacher)

3.3. Research instruments

The participants in the questionnaire were asked to answer four open-ended questions that were sent to them via Google Form. To encourage the participants to willingly participate and to express their views, they were informed the benefit of study, were informed that none of the data they supplied would be utilized for evaluative reasons, and that all data would be treated confidential [26]. The four questions in the questionnaire were: i) what have you understood about CT?; ii) in your mind, what's the importance of applying CT in EFL classrooms?; iii) what are the effective strategies for promoting CT in EFL classrooms?; iv) what are the challenges have you faced in implementing CT in your teaching practice? For the semi-structured interview, the key points of the questions were the same as the questions in the questionnaire. However, as the nature of semi-structured interviews, unexpected statements from participants could still be probed and followed up on by the researcher. The interviews were recorded, and the researcher took notes throughout them to highlight certain key points raised by participants. The interviews were done individually via video call at times convenient to the participants.

3.4. Data analysis

The thematic technique was used to analyze the responses of the participants since it has been found to be an effective, thorough, and adaptable tool for assessing qualitative data [27]. The inductive model by Schäfer and Vögele [28] was used to analyze the information, which aims to construct categories as close to the data to be understood as possible. The categories were scrutinized and gradually whittled down until just the core category remains. According to Bachtiar [29], the selection of category creates the representations of information that allow the data analysis to be examined. Sentences, phrases, paragraphs, and subjects that could be articulated in themes and sub-themes served as the study's units of analysis. The comments from the participants were collated and merged, with attention to the common components and a greater frequency being listed at the top of each category's conceptualization, and the comments with a lower frequency being placed at the bottom.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from this research are organized and discussed within the categories that arose from the responses of the participants, both in the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. The findings and discussion are chronologically presented based on the main questions that were asked to the participants. The first part delves into the teachers' perspectives of CT. The second section explores the importance of implementing CT in EFL classrooms. The third section discusses the difficulties teachers face while incorporating CT into their teaching practices. Finally, a discussion of the ways that teachers implement to promote CT in their classroom practices is elaborated.

4.1. Teachers' conceptions of critical thinking

Some of the participants in the questionnaire perceived CT as a skill that students need to allow them to participate more actively during learning processes. They believed that in the current development of education, students can't only passively as information users, but they need to become knowledge makers. In this sense, CT helps students to think clearly and rationally. It means developing students' ability to think deeply while learning certain subject content and/or processing new information [14]. One of the participants in the current study informed, "CT is a skill that students need since it will enable them to be more effective learners during the classroom activities and even become responsive learners".

Despite the participants' agreement of the importance of CT for students, eight teachers in the questionnaire explicitly admit that they have limited knowledge of CT. CT is a new concept for them, and they considered that CT is a skill that is more emphasized in the Curriculum 2013. In their view, CT is the skill to identify problems or gaps and find a solution based on the problem/gap. Relating to the component skills of CT, they honestly admit that they have never learned CT intellectually, and therefore they are not sure how to explain it. In addition, the problem of measuring the implementation of CT in EFL classrooms brings some feelings of resistance to promoting the skill. This is interesting because the idea had also expressed by Abrami *et al.* [30] who outlined the reasons why teachers in schools may be hesitant to teach or promote CT, which is often tied to pupils' lack of academic comprehension.

There were three of the participants in the questionnaire perceived CT means being able to look from different angles, comment based on new perspectives, and ask questions for further clarification. In the learning process, students not only comment on a case, or an issue simply based on provided learning materials, but give comments or ideas from different sides. From this perspective, CT is perceived as the growth of problem-solving competencies and generic thinking skills that strengthen reasoning processes, including in ELT [3], [31]. As a result, the teachers' perception of CT is frequently tied to and in agreement with the definition suggested by Sadeghi *et al.* [3] in which CT involves using key cognitive abilities like interpretation, analysis, inference, and self-regulation to solve problems. CT entails the right thinking in the quest for relevant and appropriate knowledge.

Little different perspectives were expressed by four teachers in the questionnaire. They perceived CT as an active process in constructing knowledge and understanding and can create a new issue or concept. According to them, CT is an investigative inquiry to observe and interpret something. They generally assume that when students are actively involved and considering teaching materials that are given, they are of course thinking critically. One of the participants in the interview explained further that CT is an effective problem-solving. She believes that students need to be carefully nurtured in an environment that is challenging and stimulating their thinking in interpreting and analyzing something. Students need to be encouraged to make logical reasons behind every comment or decision they express and oversee these comments/decisions.

The results from this research revealed that the EFL teachers have different conceptions of CT appear to be shaped by their prior knowledge and skills, as well as their experiences incorporating CT into classroom activities. Therefore, their conceptions reflect their different understandings of that concept. Research by Ghaani and Roslin [14] indicated that actions and behaviors are constructed according to conceptions and understanding, and therefore the participating teachers' implementation of CT could vary between one teacher and other teachers. Their references to the parts of instruction in which they integrated CT showed this diversity. The research findings support the previous study findings [3], where some teachers have a hard time defining what CT means to them. Many of the participants in the current study with a variety of teaching experiences realize that they need to be teaching CT, and most of them desire to do so, but they are unsure exactly what that entails or how to go about doing so. This lack of understanding and skills regarding CT emphasizes that teachers should have a firm grasp on the idea before attempting to teach it [8].

4.2. The importance of critical thinking in the English as a foreign language classroom

Most survey respondents agreed that CT is an important component of EFL practice. They perceived that CT could help students construct knowledge, give opinions from a broader perspective, and offer solutions to a problem discussed. Some of them linked the CT with higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). One of the participants explained in more detail in the interview. He said, "*CT is one of the skills that has been emphasized in the 21st century. It gives students the ability to select and distinguish reliable information from fake ones*". The research findings have been confirmed by similar investigations conducted in other EFL contexts [8]. Similarly, research by Elfatih [2] pointed out that teachers can use a combination of presenting factual knowledge and critically evaluating the learning contents in the EFL classrooms to help students develop their CT skills. Further, research by Qing [32] suggests that students can be taught to think, but without the requisite foundation and expertise, they will be unable to correctly analyze content.

Despite the importance to include CT in the ELT, CT has almost never been noticed practically in ELT classes. According to the participants, the majority of ELT classes focus on linguistic competency, grammar instruction, and English communicative competence. Two of them stated that this concept is not relevant to English language learning. One of them stated, "*I do not believe I have introduced CT in my English classroom activities because it is not required for English language acquisition.*" Another teacher supported this by stating, "*I think, generally, teachers have lack understanding on how to integrate CT in their teaching. Therefore, I and many teachers did not promote CT to students because it is not easy to do that.*" A study conducted by Marin and Pava [16] also found similar misunderstandings among the university instructors who took part in their study, in which they perceived English language competencies like grammar, English communication skill, and linguistic competence are on the top priority in English teaching practices. In contrast to the findings of the study, research by Liu [33] asserted that language is more than a means of expression or

communication, but it is a product formed by how language learners identify themselves, their social surrounds, their histories, and their future potentialities.

Interestingly, two teachers in the questionnaire stated of the teachers' confusion of the importance of promoting CT and lack of understanding on how to integrate the CT in their teaching practice. On the one hand, they said that CT is a key component of their educational goals, but they claim that it is not so much CT that they have adopted due to lack of knowledge about it and their students need more knowledge and skill of English. When the participants were asked what CT skills become a priority to be developed among students, three participants in the interview stressed the ability to analyze, compare, criticize, and observe. The skills are known as HOTS in Bloom's taxonomy. The other two teachers in the interview, on the other hand, stated that they did not pay much attention to CT skills. To think critically, one must be a skilled observer of ideas or events, with the ability to ask questions, classify, and identify patterns.

Another two teachers in the interview are a good example of teachers who identify CT with thinking deeply about the learning contents, and beyond that, they sometimes applied CT strategies in their classroom activities. They said CT is one of the top primaries in their teaching and classroom activities. One of them informed that students' ability to think critically is not only a function of personal choice and learning target, but the skills will be needed by students in their social life. Although he realizes that how understanding English subject contents and can communicate English properly are priority goals, but he has been trying to integrate the CT skill to introduce students to one priority of 21st century skills. This is in line with what Elfatih [2] and Goodsett [34] informed that when students face task in the target language that includes features like inquiry and/or problem solving, they must think critically. Therefore, the ELT can be an excellent place to practice CT. It has also been confirmed that contemporary classroom language teaching methods and techniques need students to apply CT abilities to complete various language assignments [35]. From this view, many researchers feel that communicative language instruction offer a good environment for learners to learn and apply CT abilities [7].

4.3. Strategies in promoting critical thinking in English as a foreign language teaching practice

One of the primary findings from this research is that promoting CT in EFL teaching and learning in Indonesian context necessitates teachers to think over grammar or sentence structures and vocabulary when teaching. Some of the participants perceived the importance of fostering thinking, creativity, and self-learning evaluation among students while focusing on achieving the learning goals. From these perspectives, teachers must create chances for learners to be more innovative and participate in a truly communicative environment where the students can express their opinions on issues covered in class. The participants recommended several steps that teachers may use to promote CT during learning activities. These steps are: i) encourage students to explain something in relation to topic discussed; ii) stimulate students to evaluate their learning; iii) give comments and ask questions to provoke students make prediction; and iv) encourage students to find solutions to problems they are experiencing. The findings from this research support Saleh [36] study findings that CT can be included into language teaching and learning in a variety of ways, including instructional methods, learning materials, and assessment method. Along the same lines, Okolie *et al.* [37] believe of the ability to think critically should be incorporated into language training, and language materials should be created that allow students to engage in tasks and activities that require deep thinking and reflection.

Another finding emerged from this study is that the EFL teachers perceived the strategies to foster CT in English language learning can be applied in all stages of English language classes (from beginner to advanced). However, the complexity of the activities should change depending on the objectives of the learning topics. The teachers identified case studies, debates, roleplays, group discussions on issues of interest, self-learning evaluation, and project-and problem-based activities as some of the best ways for promoting CT in ELT. These strategies can be integrated into a communicative strategy because they provide communication contexts in which ideas can be exchanged.

The research findings support Abrami *et al.* recommendation [30] that some effective and productive methods and techniques for developing CT are small group discussion and PjBL. Saleh [36] also found that problem solving, group discussion, self and peer reflection, and other CT-promoted activities were also indicated as common behaviors that have great possibility to be integrated into language teaching and learning. Very much the same ideas with Marin and Pava [16] who believe of the importance of dialogues, media critiques, problem-solving exercises, and self- and peer evaluation, as well as encouraging learners to ask questions for the same purpose. From these considerations, Kim and Pollar [17] suggest that teachers serve as facilitators in order to foster a culture of CT. However, Lunney *et al.* [38] recommended that students should be taught how to ask the proper questions to improve their ability to evaluate written essays, websites, facts, and arguments critically. This will also help them improve their ability to evaluate the quality of lessons and classes, create their own opinions, write critical essays, and participate in class.

When the participants were asked to explain a typical moment in learning activities that promotes CT skill, most of the participants in the interview stated their views that are very similar with what have been stated with most of the participants in the questionnaire. They said that CT skill can be promoted to students in every part of learning activity and be integrated with communicative competence as demanded objectives of English language learning in the curriculum. The following quote exemplifies the participants' viewpoints.

“CT is an important skill for 21st century learners I sometimes use a holistic approach by integrating grammatical and communicative competences with CT skills. I realize that I still have lack understanding on how to integrate the CT in learning activities, especially teaching English. But I am trying to learn about it and hope that there will be training about the strategies to teach CT to students.... For me, one of the key aspects that need to implement during learning is to encourage students to assess their own work/learning.”

The findings from this research, both in the questionnaire and interview, indicate that some of the participating teachers could elaborate some strategies to promote CT and have implemented these strategies. Some studies [34], [39] have recommended of the importance of providing a CT training for teachers to help them enhance their understanding of CT and strategies in implementing it. CT skills can be incorporated into ELT through instructional methods, learning materials, and assessment methods [36], [38]. These strategies could engage students in tasks and activities that require deep thinking and reflection.

4.4. Challenges in integrating critical thinking in English as a foreign language teaching practice

Eight of the teachers in the questionnaire explicitly admit that they have limited knowledge of CT. CT is a new concept for them. In their view, CT is the ability to criticize something based on someone's existing knowledge or develop a solution based on a problem. Relating to the component skills of CT, they honestly admit that they have never learned CT intellectually, and therefore they are not sure how to explain it. Those teachers further suggested that given teachers' deficiency in CT skills as urgent for our educators to equip them with CT competency by having sufficient knowledge and skills first before promoting it to their students.

Another challenge that some participants were informed about is that CT is rarely taught in EFL classes due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the concept. Although many teachers stated that CT is commonly promoted using oral and written practices based on expanding information, and the teachers employ implicit CT aspects in their classes, it is often done unknowingly. One of the participants in the interview said:

“I personally do eager to apply CT in my classroom activities because I know the skill is a part of 21st century competency that students need to possess. However, I have still lacked knowledge and competences of the appropriate approach and strategy to integrate CT with English learning contents. In addition, I don't know how to measure its achievement because as far as I know there are no fixed indicators to measure it.”

The findings from this research support previous study [8], that the negative attitude of university lecturers toward CT will deter them from incorporating it into their instructional practices. The current study also found that the primary issue of promoting CT in EFL context in Indonesia is that English language teachers are lack adequate training in this area. It appears that the skill is rarely discussed in teacher professional learning groups. These findings are consistent with previous study by Saleh [36] that suggested the importance of providing training courses and seminars for lecturers and instructors on how to properly integrate CT into language instruction. It's also critical to emphasize the importance of encouraging the instructors' positive views toward this concept.

One of the most important findings of this study is that many teachers, including Indonesian EFL teachers, still employ a traditional transmission of knowledge in which teachers transfer learning content and students passively receive and memorize it. One of the participants in the interview informed that rather of being presented with opportunity to engage with knowledge creatively and critically, most students are conditioned to passively absorb it. He further stated that many teachers are doing their tasks just to fall short of obligation and are sometimes resistant to changes in teaching, including the desire to instill CT in their learning activities. These findings share some similarities with previous studies [8], [35]. Previous study [8] found that many teachers used to teach using teacher-based approaches that valued content learning over process learning and emphasized knowledge over thought process. As a result, the learners' primary focus was the overall course grade. Furthermore, Research by Yanning [35] indicate the problem and issue seems to be related to the education system, where teachers still apply the old mindset that seeks to teach 'what to think' rather than 'how to think' successfully regarding the topic being studied.

5. CONCLUSION

Critical thinking has shed light on the important aspect of EFL teaching in Indonesia. The study has underscored the challenges faced by Indonesian EFL teachers in conceptualizing and implementing CT pedagogy, while also highlighting the strategies that can be employed to address these challenges. The need for ongoing professional development and training for EFL educators in Indonesia to enhance their understanding and application of CT in the classroom has also been highlighted. Furthermore, it has been underscored of the importance of curriculum reforms and educational policies that prioritize the cultivation of CT skills among students. Future research would benefit from a more thorough examination of the specific aspects that contribute to the relationship between CT, learning strategy, and student's learning achievement. The inclusion of survey and observation results may assist the qualitative results gain depth and clarity. Examining the effects of incorporating other aspects of 21st century skills, such as collaboration and innovation on students' academic achievement is another potential future research topic. These suggestions would further knowledge of the effects of instructional approaches and strategies and CT skills beyond the detection of significant change.




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