New
Language
Dimensions
Journal of Literature, Linguistics, and Language Teaching

Pre-service English Teachers' Experience in Implementing Critical Thinking in English Teaching and Learning

Fifi Asfiranti[1*], Mohammad Fatoni[2], Nanin Verina Widya Putri[3]
[1] Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri, Bojonegoro, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Applying critical thinking is the ability to actively analyze, assess and understand information in depth before making a decision or concluding something. Researchers conducted this research on two English language education students at Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri University to find out what obstacles and efforts were applied when teaching in the classroom. This research uses a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews. Based on the research results, there are eight obstacles faced by teachers, namely: traditional teaching methods, time constraints, assessment challenges, teacher training, disciplinary disorders, resistance to change, limited resources, and cultural and social factors. All of these obstacles have been overcome well, namely by using various efforts such as argument mapping, analyzing texts and sources, using real-world examples, encouraging collaborative learning, building relationships, providing clear instructions, encouraging inquiry-based learning, demonstrating thinking processes, improve academic achievement, and problem-solving skills. Recommendations for future researchers are to develop this research by using comparative classes and expanding the scope of the research and further researchers can develop it by using more research instruments to further strengthen the results applying.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon that has occurred lately is that the teaching profession is increasingly in demand, because of allowances and salaries for teachers. With this phenomenon, superior seeds can be obtained as prospective teachers. People choose the teaching profession as a second profession if they are unable to reach other professions. It is not uncommon for teachers who do not have an educational background to choose to become teachers. Now there is also a set of teacher competency standards, which of course is closely related to the teacher's educational background. Regarding the concept of teacher competency standards, this must at least be seen from two main points, namely the level and type of education they have (Brownell et al., 2005).

Moreover, the examination of pre-service English teachers' utilization of critical thinking in the classroom is a topic that is both intriguing and of significant importance, particularly within the framework of contemporary education. Critical thinking is an essential competency that empowers students to analyze, evaluate, and attain a profound comprehension of the subject matter (Mangena,

2003). In the realm of English language acquisition, critical thinking can augment students' capacity to comprehend texts, assess arguments, and cultivate effective communication skills. Critical thinking encompasses a range of cognitive and affective abilities, including contextual comprehension, evidence identification, evidence evaluation, argument analysis, and the recognition of biases and logical fallacies (Abdulkarim & Ali, 2023). Within the educational context, critical thinking holds immense significance as it enables students not only to memorize information but also to comprehend and apply it. By refining their critical thinking skills, students are better prepared to confront challenges in their daily lives and professional endeavours, thereby transforming into more well-rounded and accountable individuals.

According to Peggy S (2018), pre-service English teachers are individuals who are undergoing education and training to become professional English teachers. They typically have educational backgrounds in education, English, or linguistics and are in the process of obtaining the necessary certification or licensing to teach in schools (Lestari et al., 2022). Pre-service English teachers play a crucial role in fostering critical thinking skills in students. The experiences they gain during their training and teaching practice greatly influence their ability to effectively implement teaching strategies that promote critical thinking. These future educators teach language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Mudra, 2018). Additionally, they create a supportive learning environment and encourage active participation in the learning process as facilitators. As role models, pre-service teachers exemplify correct and proficient use of English, providing clear and confident communication examples both orally and in writing. They are actively involved in developing and adapting curriculum and learning materials that are relevant and engaging (Sinem, 2016), ensuring that the content taught is appropriate for students' needs, abilities, student-centered learning and interactions between teachers and students to create the students' positive perception towards the curriculum (Fatoni & Zainuddin, 2021).

Pre-service teachers thrive in an inclusive environment that values and supports all students as they learn English. It is essential for pre-service teachers to possess strong communication skills in both English and the students' native language. This enables them to explain concepts clearly and effectively address students' inquiries. Pre-service English teachers continuously enhance their skills and knowledge through ongoing education, training, and active participation in professional communities. They stay updated with the latest teaching methods and trends in language education. By fulfilling these roles, pre-service English teachers can significantly contribute to the development of students' language and critical thinking abilities while also preparing them for future success. Through an extensive education and training process, pre-service English teachers equip themselves to become effective educators who can assist students in achieving English language proficiency.

Several previous studies conducted by Agustina and Abidin (2022) have demonstrated a positive and significant correlation between digital literacy and the role of co-parents in fostering critical thinking skills. The combination of digital literacy and parental involvement empowers individuals to access information effectively and efficiently. The capacity to process, interpret, and analyze information enhances critical thinking abilities. In a study conducted by Podolsky et al. (2018), it was discovered that teaching experience is positively linked to student achievement throughout a teacher's career. As teachers accumulate more experience, their students tend to perform better and display a greater inclination for critical thinking, thereby measuring success beyond mere test scores. The students' experience in conducting debate in integrating technology by using zoom in this digital era fosters the students positive perception and critical thinking (Fatoni, 2021). In addition, the teacher foster the students' critical thinking by guiding the students with several provided guidelines when they have peer review in writing class (Fatoni & Tauchid, 2020). In another study conducted by Pentury (2017), it was observed that creative teachers possess pedagogical skills that promote critical thinking, the development of life skills, in still values, and cultivate professional attitudes. These qualities can be acquired through the implementation of creative learning activities that align with the demands of the era of globalization.

Previous study was conducted by Abdulkarim and Ali (2023) from translation Department, College of Languages, Cihan and Soran University, Kurdistan Region, Iraq, with the title *"Teaching Critical Thinking Skills in Sulaimani City High Schools: Challenges and Obstacles"*. This paper aims to examine the promotion of critical thinking in schools within the Kurdistan region, with a particular focus on addressing the common challenges faced by teachers and students in this area. The study provides a comprehensive overview of the relevant literature, research methodology, objectives, research questions, and the conceptual framework of critical thinking. The data for this study were collected through personal, semi-structured interviews conducted with ten experienced teachers having five to ten years of teaching experience. Additionally, this paper includes a review of previous studies supported by academic references to substantiate the claims put forth. In conclusion, the paper offers valuable insights and recommendations for education experts and reformers in Kurdistan, providing practical suggestions for enhancing the teaching of critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students.

Other previous study was conducted by Ag-ahmad et al. (2023) with the title *"Systematic Review on Issues and Challenges of Pre-Service English Teachers in Malaysia"* from Universiti Teknologi MARA Sabah Branch Kota Kinabalu Campus, Sabah, Malaysia and National Defence University of Malaysia Kem Sungai Besi, 57000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This systematic review examines the issues and challenges encountered by pre-service English teachers (PSETs) in Malaysia over the past decade. Enhancing the quality of English language teachers is a central objective outlined in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025. However, there remains a dearth of research investigating the recent issues and developments faced by pre-service teachers entering the profession. To bridge this gap, the review follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines and conducts a comprehensive search of seven databases for current research. The search results in the identification of twenty articles, which are then qualitatively synthesized using ATLAS.ti. The review reveals that PSETs in Malaysia encounter issues and challenges encompassing teaching competency, professional development, support, the disparity between theories and classroom practices, classroom management, and the transition phase towards becoming a teacher. The study concludes that future teacher education programs should prioritize equipping trainee teachers with resilience and adaptability to navigate new environments, confront challenges, and handle unexpected circumstances. Moreover, the study underscores a series of recommendations for future research endeavours.

Furthermore, previous study was conducted by Maharani & Fithriani (2023) with the title *"Exploring Challenges EFL Pre-Service Teachers Experience in Teaching Practicum: A Transformative Learning Perspective"* from Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. This study examines the experiences of pre-service teachers and the challenges they encounter during the process of transformative learning. The methodology employed in this research is qualitative descriptive, which aims to explore the experiences of these individuals during their teaching practicum. The study involved the participation of five seventh-semester students from the English education department. Data collection was carried out through reflective notes and in-depth interviews, which were subsequently thematically analyzed. The findings indicate that pre-service teachers face various obstacles during their teaching practicum, including a discrepancy between their vision and the reality they encounter, difficulties in classroom management, and a lack of adequate supervision. However, through the process of transformative learning, these obstacles can be overcome, especially in the area of classroom management, enabling teachers to select teaching techniques that are tailored to the needs and abilities of their students. The ultimate goal of this study is to alleviate the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum and ensure the successful achievement of their objectives.

A significant portion of the knowledge acquired in educational institutions is now regarded as analogous to the knowledge acquired outside of such establishments. This change in viewpoint is a direct result of navigating a swiftly evolving society characterized by instantaneous communication,

uninterrupted news dissemination, and an imperative to obtain immediate access to vast amounts of information. The pervasive influence and rapid advancements in technology have created an environment wherein information undergoes continual modifications, facilitating the rapid dissemination and adoption of novel concepts. However, this also engenders a proliferation of erroneous and misleading information, thus necessitating meticulous discernment and critical scrutiny.

LITERATURE REVIEW (Optional) PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TEACHING EXPERIENCE

According to Pratiwi et al. (2021) the experience of pre-service English teachers is a journey that involves various stages of educational training, and teaching practice aimed at preparing them to become effective English teachers.During teacher education, pre-service teachers receive a variety of training and practical experiences designed to develop their teaching abilities. This experience includes classroom teaching practice, observation and guidance frommore experienced mentors. Through these experiences, pre-service teachers learn how to integrate critical thinking strategies into their curriculum and teaching methods. This experience helps pre-service English teachers prepare tobecome competent, flexible, and innovative educators, ready to meet challengesin the classroom and help students reach their full potential in learning English.

According to Mudra (2018) recent research on the experiences of pre-service teachers has revealed various critical factors that have an impact on their level of preparedness for the teaching profession. One pivotal aspect identified is the significant influence of constructivist motivation and teaching beliefs. When pre-service teachers demonstrate high levels of motivation and hold strong constructivist beliefs, they are more likely to become effective educators, particularly when coupled with a sense of confidence in their chosen career path. However, several studies have also found that individuals often face significant challenges, including feeling disoriented in unfamiliar environments and struggling to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations. Reflective experiences and mentor support often play a crucial role in helping them overcome these obstacles and undergo transformative learning during their training period (Yunus et al., 2010).

Experience is everything that has ever been experienced (lived, felt, borne, etc.), experience is very closely related to the time and conditions experienced by someone in pursuing a field. Experience in all activities is needed, because experience is one of the main requirements for teachers to be able to lead students to achieve good learning outcomes (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). Teacher teaching experience Refers to a series of events and situations experienced by an educator while carrying out teaching duties at school. In the teaching process, the first step taken by the teacher is teaching preparation. Teaching experience is essentially a summary of a person's understanding of thethings experienced in teaching, so that the things experienced have been mastered, both regarding knowledge, skills and values (Ismail, 2011). Value attached to it. Referring to the description above, it appears that teaching experience is experienced by a teaching staff or the general public known as teachers. This experience is gained when they are involved in the world of education with all the provisions they have to carry out their duties as teaching staff in certain educational units.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking needs to be owned by today's young generation, especially students. There are many definitions of critical thinking. One explanation is that critical thinking is reasonable and relatively

focused thinking,in determining what to believe or what to do (Murawski, 2012). Critical thinkingis the flavor of the day, both in education and in public debate.

According to Monash University, critical thinking is the ability to question every important aspect of a problem. Critical thinking skills will stimulate students' cognitive reasoning in acquiring knowledge. Students' criticalthinking is very necessary because, during the learning process, students developideas and thoughts about the problems contained in learning. When practicing this ability, students are required to analyze a topic or problem objectively. Thatway, the results obtained are unbiased and truly based on existing facts.

Critical thinking is a mental process that involves logically and systematically analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information to reach appropriate conclusions or solve problems effectively. Critical thinking involvesseveral skills and attitudes, including the ability to identify and evaluate arguments, detect bias, consider multiple perspectives, and make decisions basedon sound evidence and reasoning.

PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER

Pre-service is a term generally used to refer to the period or preparatory stage before entering a particular position or profession. In the context of education, pre-service refers to the stage of preparation for an individual beforebecoming a teacher officially. Pre-service English teacher is an undergraduate student who has completed all education-related courses and is currently working as a teacher, in a high school or junior high school, teaching for severalmonths at a selected school (Alghamdy, 2018). Pre-service teachers are the mostchallenging experience, because they only have to teach students based on theirstudy program for only a few months. During their teaching experience, they must apply teaching strategies or methods, theories that they have learned in college. In the teaching process, they must apply the strategies they have learnedbased on the conditions in the classroom so that students can enjoy and make thematerial easier. Pre-service English teachers are language scholars who are assigned to teach in various middle and high schools for months to put their college education studies into practice (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). These skillsinclude delivery and teaching strategies to students, so that future English instructors understand what they need to convey in class. This experience is known as teaching practicum. This program is highly demanding and valuable for pre-service English teachers.

Pre-service English Teachers are prospective English teachers who takepart in a series of activities, namely apprenticeship activities, which aim to improve their abilities skills while in class. This apprenticeship program is not carried out alone, but also under the supervision of professional lecturers and teachers at schools, so that pre-service teachers are ready. This English teacher can communicate with them. So Pre-service English teachers are supervising teachers who are studying to become professional teachers in higher education (Kamarul & Ahsan, 2018).

METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach, which employs descriptive methods that prioritize analysis and emphasize both process and meaning. The data for this study were gathered through instrument interviews conducted with two pre-service English teachers. These teachers are currently enrolled at Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri University and possess teaching experience at a junior high school in Bojonegoro. Subsequently, the collected data were analyzed utilizing three methods: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. These processes were executed simultaneously to ensure a seamless progression of the study.

This research primarily investigates the challenges encountered by pre-service English teachers in leveraging critical thinking in their instructional approaches. In an autonomous curriculum, teachers

assume the role of facilitators, directing students towards the attainment of their educational goals. Therefore, it is imperative to identify the hurdles confronted by pre-service teachers and the strategies they employ to augment critical thinking abilities in the English teaching and learning process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings were presented in two distinct sessions. The initial session centered on the challenges encountered by pre-service English teachers when implementing critical thinking. The subsequent session delved into the endeavours undertaken by pre-service English teachers in implementing critical thinking.

PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTING CRITICAL THINKING

Based on the data gathered from semi-structured interviews, it is evident that the two participants in this study, referred to as S1 (Student 1) and S2 (Student 2), presented contrasting responses to the five interview questions relating to research question one. The findings from the interviews shed light on several challenges encountered by pre-service English teachers in terms of integrating critical thinking. These obstacles encompass:

The first interview with pre-service English teachers about the obstacles faced in implementing critical thinking in the classroom.

> *Implementing critical thinking in the classroom can face several obstacles, including:* ***Traditional Teaching Methods, Time Constraints, Assessment Challenges, Teacher Training, and Disciplinary Disorders****. (S-1:11/7/24) [Obstacles]*
> *The obstacles I encountered was* ***Resistance to Change, Resource Limitations, and Cultural and Social Factors. (S-2:12/7/24) [Obstacles]***

Based on the aforementioned statement, it is apparent that pre-service English teachers encounter multiple challenges when it comes to integrating critical thinking into the classroom. These challenges encompass conventional teaching approaches, time limitations, assessment difficulties, inadequate teacher training, disciplinary issues, resistance to change, limited resources, and cultural and social influences.

The second interviews with pre-service English teachers about what happens if students cannot think critically in the classroom?

> *If students cannot think critically in the classroom,* ***several negative consequences can arise: Difficulty in Problem-Solving, Limited Understanding, Vulnerability to Misinformation, Weak Analytical Skills, Poor Decision-Making, Reduced Creativity, and Limited Engagement.*** *(S-1:11/7/24) [Negative Consequences]*
> *Students who cannot think critically* ***tend to be rigid in their thinking and do not easily accept other people's opinions or perceptions****. (S-2:12/7/24) [Tend to be Rigid in Thinking]*

From these two statements it can be concluded that if students are unable to think critically it can have negative consequences, such as: difficulty in problem-solving, limited understanding, vulnerability to misinformation, weak analytical skills, poor decision-making, reduced creativity, and limited engagement.

The third interviews with pre-service English teachers about how to encourage students who cannot think critically in the classroom?

> *Create a classroom culture where* ***questioning is valued and encouraged****.*
> *Prompt students to ask why, how, and what if questions to deepen their*

understanding and challenge assumptions. (S-1:11/7/24) [Encourage Questions]

***Provide constructive feedback on students' thinking processes rather than just their answers**. Encourage reflection on how they arrived at their conclusions and what alternative approaches could be considered. (S-2:12/7/24) [Feedback and Reflection]*

From these two statements, it can be concluded how to encourage students who cannot think critically, namely first by creating a class culture that respects questions so that it can foster students' self-confidence and happiness because they feel cared for and secondly by providing feedback on students' thinking processes. Encourage reflection on how they came to their conclusions and what alternative approaches could be considered.

Fourth interviews with pre-service English teachers about the main challenge that occur when implementing critical thinking in the classroom.

*The big challenges that I encountered were **difficulty managing student discipline, and difficulty controlling student behavior**. (S-1:11/7/24) [Disciplinary Disorders]*

***Resource Limitations**. Access to materials, technology, and other resources that support critical thinking activities may be limited in some schools or classrooms. Lack of access to these can affect the effectiveness of learning and create educational gaps between students. (S-2:12/7/24) [Resource Limitations]*

From the statement above, S1 said that the big challenge experienced was discipline disorders. Disciplinary disorders in critical thinking refer to barriers or obstacles that prevent the process of critical thinking effectively. These disorders can come from a variety of sources, both internal and external, and can affect a person's ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information logically. Meanwhile S2 stated that resource limitations were the big challenge that had been experienced. Limited resources in critical thinking refer to obstacles that arise due to lack of access or availability of materials, time, or support needed to carry out the critical thinking process effectively. Access to materials and technology that support critical thinking activities may be limited in some educational settings. So, this becomes an obstacle to critical thinking.

Fifth interviews with pre-service English teachers about the positive and negative impacts that occur when implementing critical thinking in the classroom.

***Yes, there is**. Among others are: A). Positive impacts: Enhanced Problem-Solving Skills, Deeper Understanding of Concepts, and Improved Decision-Making. B.) Negative impacts: Initial Resistance, Time-Intensive, and Assessment Challenges. (S-1:11/7/24) [Positive and Negative Impacts]*

***Yes, there is**. Among others are: A.) Positive impacts: Encourages Creativity and Innovation, Preparation for Future Challenges, and Promotes Lifelong Learning. B.) Negative impacts: Complexity, Misinterpretation of Concepts, and Resource Limitations. (S-2:12/7/24) [Positive and Negative Impacts]*

In this case, S1 has a similar view to S2, where both have positive and negative impacts that occur when applying critical thinking skills in the classroom. The positive and negative impacts include:

a. Positive impacts: Enhanced Problem-Solving Skills, Deeper Understanding of Concepts, Improved Decision-Making, Encourages Creativity and Innovation, Preparation for Future Challenges, and Promotes Lifelong Learning.
b. Negative impacts: Initial Resistance, Time-Intensive, Assessment Challenges, Complexity, Misinterpretation of Concepts, and Resource Limitations.

PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' EFFORTS IN IMPLEMENTING CRITICAL THINKING

This section presents the findings of research question number two, which examines the endeavors undertaken by pre-service English teachers in cultivating critical thinking skills. The data for this section were gathered through semi-structured interviews.

The first interview from research question number two about teachers' efforts to develop critical thinking skills.

> *Teach students how to visually represent arguments and their underlying reasoning* **using tools like concept maps or argument diagrams**. *This helps students see the structure of arguments and analyze the logical flow of ideas. (S-1:11/7/24) [Argument Mapping]*
> **Guide students in analyzing texts, articles, and other sources critically.** *They teach strategies for identifying bias, evaluating evidence, and assessing the credibility of sources. (S-2:12/7/24) [Analyzing Texts and Sources]*

Based on the transcript of the interview question provided, S1's focus is on "argument mapping". This approach aims to teach students how to visually represent arguments and the supporting reasons using tools such as concept maps or argument diagrams. By doing so, students are able to gain a better understanding of the structure of arguments and analyze the logical flow of ideas. On the other hand, S2's focus is on "analyzing text and sources". This method is valuable for guiding students in critically analyzing texts, articles, and other sources. By consistently implementing these strategies and fostering a supportive classroom environment that values critical thinking, teachers can effectively nurture and develop students' abilities to think critically, analyze information thoughtfully, and make well-informed decisions.

The second interview from research question number two about how do pre-service English teachers cultivate critical thinking skills during the second interview?

> **Connect classroom learning to real-world situations or current events.** *This helps students see the practical application of critical thinking skills and understand their relevance in everyday life. (S-1:11/7/24) [Use Real-World Examples]*
> **Foster collaboration among students through group discussions, debates, and collaborative projects.** *Working with peers encourages students to consider different viewpoints and learn from each other's reasoning processes. (S-2:12/7/24) [Promote Collaborative Learning]*

Based on the interview, it is evident that both respondents employ real-world examples and advocate for collaborative learning. Respondent 1 explained that using real-world examples in teaching helps students make connections between classroom learning and practical situations or current events. This allows them to see the practical application of critical thinking skills and understand their relevance in everyday life. On the other hand, Respondent 2 emphasized that implementing collaborative learning strategies, such as group discussions, debates, and collaborative projects,

promotes cooperation among students. By working with their peers, students are exposed to different perspectives and can learn from each other's reasoning processes. By incorporating these strategies into their teaching, teachers can assist students in developing and enhancing their critical thinking abilities over time. Regular practice and guidance in critical thinking about information and concepts will ultimately empower students to become more effective learners and decision-makers.

The third interview from research question number two about efforts to handle students who are difficult to manage when applying critical thinking.

> ***Develop positive relationships with students based on trust and respect.*** *When students feel valued and understood, they are more likely to engage in learning activities, including critical thinking tasks. (S-1:11/7/24) [Build Relationships]*
>
> *Break down tasks into manageable steps and **provide clear instructions** for critical thinking activities. Ensure that students understand what is expected of them and how they can succeed. (S-2:12/7/24) [Provide Clear Instructions]*

Based on the interview above, it can be inferred that there are two distinct approaches to addressing the challenges faced by students in relation to critical thinking. The first approach, as proposed by S1, revolves around the establishment of strong relationships with the students. The second approach, as underscored by S2, focuses on the provision of clear instructions. By consistently implementing these strategies and customizing them to cater to the individual needs of each student, educators can cultivate a constructive and nurturing learning atmosphere. This conducive environment will empower all students, even those who present difficulties, to proficiently acquire and apply critical thinking abilities.

The fourth interview from research question number two about how to foster critical thinking attitudes in students?

> *Fostering critical thinking attitudes in students **involves creating an environment that encourages questioning**. Allow students to explore topics by asking their own questions and seeking answers. (S-1:11/7/24) [Promote Inquiry-Based Learning]*
>
> ***Demonstrate Thinking Processes***. *By showing our own thought process when solving problems or making decisions, students will start to become interested and can foster critical thinking attitudes in the classroom. (S-2:12/7/24) [Demonstrate Thinking Processes]*

In the aforementioned excerpt from the interview transcript, S1 highlighted the significance of cultivating critical thinking dispositions among students by cultivating an environment that fosters inquiry. This entails granting students the freedom to explore the subject matter through their own questions and seek answers. Conversely, S2 proposed that by demonstrating our own cognitive processes when problem-solving or making decisions, students will become more invested and cultivate a critical thinking mindset in the classroom. From these two statements, it can be inferred that through consistent application of these strategies, educators can effectively aid students in developing robust critical thinking abilities that will prove advantageous both academically and in practical situations.

The fifth interview from research question number two is about why are efforts to develop critical thinking skills in students important?

*By developing critical thinking skills students **can enhances academic performance**. Critical thinking helps students understand and internalize complex concepts, leading to better academic performance. (S-1:11/7/24) [Enhances Academic Performance]*

*Because, developing critical thinking skills helps students in **Problem-Solving Skills**. Critical thinking equips students with the ability to analyze problems, consider various solutions, and make informed decisions. (S-2:12/7/24) [Problem-Solving Skills]*

Based on the provided interview transcript, it is evident that S1 emphasized the significance of fostering critical thinking skills in order to enhance academic achievement. By developing critical thinking abilities, students are better equipped to comprehend and internalize complex concepts, leading to improved academic performance. Conversely, S2 highlighted the importance of cultivating critical thinking skills as a means to develop effective problem-solving capabilities. Through critical thinking, students gain the ability to analyze problems, consider multiple solutions, and ultimately make informed decisions. In essence, the development of critical thinking among students is imperative for their success and well-being in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. This skill empowers them to navigate challenges, make informed choices, and contribute positively to society.

Table 1. Obstacles and efforts of Pre-service English teachers'

No	Pre-service English Teachers' Obstacles	Pre-service English Teachers' Efforts
1	Traditional Teaching Methods	Argument Mapping
2	Time Constraints	Analyzing text and sources
3	Assessment Challenges	Use Real-World Examples
4	Teacher Training	Promote Collaborative Learning
5	Disciplinary Disorders	Build Relationships
6	Resistance to Change	Provide Clear Instructions
7	Resource Limitations	Promote Inquiry-Based Learning
8	Cultural and Social Factors	Demonstrate Thinking Processes
9	-	Enhances Academic Performance
10	-	Problem-Solving Skills

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this research is to identify the challenges encountered by pre-service English teachers in implementing critical thinking and to investigate the measures teachers need to take to promote the cultivation of critical thinking abilities in the classroom.

The first finding of this research aims to examine the challenges encountered by pre-service English teachers in implementing critical thinking in the classroom. These challenges, diverse in nature, have the capacity to impede the efficacy of the learning process. By conducting interviews with two participants, the researchers identified various obstacles, such as conventional teaching methods, time constraints, assessment difficulties, inadequate teacher training, disciplinary problems, resistance to change, limited resources, and cultural and social factors. These findings align with a prior study conducted by Higgs (2024), which also underscored the influence of obstacles on the teaching process.

In addition to the aforementioned obstacles, this research (S1 and S2) uncovered a variety of experiences regarding the impact of critical thinking among students. S1 and S2 expressed both positive and negative views on critical thinking. The positive impacts observed by these students include enhanced problem-solving skills, a deeper understanding of concepts, improved decision-making, encouragement of creativity and innovation, preparation for future challenges, and promotion of lifelong learning. These findings align with earlier research conducted by Nappi (2017), which emphasized the positive effects of critical thinking on students. Nappi's study highlighted that critical thinking improves various aspects of education and personal growth, such as problem-solving abilities, understanding of material, analytical skills, creativity, and communication skills. Moreover, these

results are reinforced by the research conducted by Altas and Mede (2021), which also emphasized the positive view of critical thinking. Their study revealed that implementing critical thinking in the classroom greatly benefits students by increasing their confidence, self-development, ethical and moral awareness, independence in learning, and readiness for future challenges. Overall, critical thinking plays a crucial role in helping students become better learners, more independent individuals, and responsible members of society.

Apart from that, respondents (S1 and S2) have expressed unfavourable opinions regarding critical thinking. While critical thinking has numerous benefits, there are instances where its implementation can negatively impact students. This is consistent with the findings of Rahman et al. (2016), who determined that an intensive critical thinking process can induce stress and confusion, particularly when students feel overwhelmed by the information they need to analyze and evaluate. Furthermore, highly skilled critical thinkers may become excessively skeptical of other information or perspectives, leading to cynicism or resistance towards new ideas. Not only that, previous study by Elbyaly & Elfeky (2023) have also conducted research that supports these findings, revealing that excessive analysis and deliberation can impede decision-making, causing students to hesitate due to overthinking various aspects. Additionally, students who are overly critical may encounter difficulties in engaging with peers who do not share their aptitude or interest in critical thinking, resulting in social isolation.

In the initial finding, the researcher examined the results of semi-structured interviews conducted with two students who encountered various obstacles while attempting to apply critical thinking in the classroom. These obstacles, which frequently arose during their instruction, disrupted the learning process. Consequently, it can be inferred that the process of implementing critical thinking among students in the classroom does not proceed seamlessly. This finding aligns with a study conducted by Alghamdy (Alghamdy, 2018), which investigated the perspectives, perceptions, and experiences of pre-service English teachers participating in a training program. The researchers discovered that while the training program helped enhance the self-assurance and social skills of pre-service English teachers, it also exposed weaknesses, obstacles, and barriers in their instructional practice. These challenges encompass disruptive behaviour exhibited by students, low levels of English proficiency that impede communication and comprehension of instructions, difficulties faced by pre-service teachers who are simultaneously pursuing their studies in college and participating in a training program, lack of guidance from experienced teachers, and feelings of shyness and embarrassment in front of students. Furthermore, many pre-service teachers express difficulty in preparing lesson materials due to a lack of necessary resources.

However, critical thinking offers numerous advantages, including enhancing decision-making skills, improving problem-solving abilities, and enabling individuals to evaluate information objectively. Through the practice of critical thinking, individuals can approach problems from various perspectives, leading to well-informed judgments and innovative solutions. Nonetheless, there are certain challenges associated with critical thinking, such as the potential risk of overthinking, which can impede one's ability to appreciate humour and engage in casual conversations. Moreover, individuals who possess strong critical thinking skills may encounter difficulties in social interactions due to their inclination towards intellectual discussions and self-assurance. This idea is supported by Franco et al. (2017), who suggest that excessive critical thinking can lead to self-doubt. Additionally, it can also cause individuals to become overly critical of themselves and others, resulting in reduced self-confidence and self-esteem. Furthermore, excessive critical thinking can diminish empathy and consideration for the feelings and needs of others, as it tends to prioritize logical reasoning over emotional awareness.

The second finding of this research revolves around the efforts required from teachers to cultivate critical thinking skills in the classroom. The study has discovered various obstacles through interviews with two participants. These obstacles encompass argument mapping, text and source analysis, utilization of real-world examples, promotion of collaborative learning, establishment of

relationships, clear instructions, encouragement of inquiry-based learning, demonstration of thinking processes, enhancement of academic performance, and development of problem-solving abilities. This finding aligns with a previous study conducted by Ramli et al. (2023), which emphasizes the importance of teachers possessing the skills to guide students in enhancing critical thinking abilities. Teachers are acknowledged as knowledge facilitators who share and disseminate information to their students. To foster critical thinking skills in students, teachers are expected to promote students' growth, establish effective learning environments, and encourage interactive teaching and learning activities.

Furthermore, educators employ a range of strategies to cultivate students' critical thinking abilities. According to Fhaeizdhyall (2017), these methods include encouraging students to pose questions, assigning both individual and group projects, and possessing a wealth of knowledge to impart to their students. Teachers utilize a variety of instructional methods and models, administer oral and written assessments that incorporate analytical inquiries and student perspectives, all with the aim of nurturing students' capacity to articulate their own thoughts. In this particular study, two students (S1 and S2) expressed parallel viewpoints, suggesting that they employed similar approaches in their pursuit of enhancing their critical thinking skills.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the application of critical thinking in English language teaching and learning, a topic that has been largely overlooked, especially in junior high schools. The importance of addressing this research gap lies in the complex nature of effective critical thinking implementation, which necessitates thorough investigation. Therefore, the primary aim of this research is to identify the challenges faced by English teachers and highlight the strategies employed to facilitate successful English instruction in junior high schools.

Based on the research results, there are eight obstacles encountered by teachers, namely traditional teaching methods, time constraints, assessment challenges, teacher training, disciplinary disorders, resistance to change, resource limitations, and cultural and social factors.

All of these obstacles have been overcome well, namely by using various efforts such as argument mapping, analyzing texts and sources, using real-world examples, promoting collaborative learning, building relationships, providing clear instructions, promoting inquiry-based learning, demonstrating thinking processes, enhancing academic performance, and problem-solving skills.

REFERENCES

Abdulkarim, S., & Ali, A. (2023). *Teaching Critical Thinking Skills in Sulaimani City High Schools : Challenges and Obstacles*. *4*. https://doi.org/10.26750/Vol(8).No(4).Paper10

Ag-ahmad, N., Thamrini, A., Syed, F., & Bakar, E. W. (2023). *Systematic Review on Issues and Challenges of Pre-Service English Teachers in Malaysia*. *April*. https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v34i1/1-20

Agustina, H., & Abidin, Z. (2022). Learning Models That Can Grow Attitude Of Critical Thinking In Students. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, *8*(July), 153–159.

Alghamdy, R. Z. (2018). *Pre-Service English Teachers ' Perceptions , Obstacles and Experiences When Teaching English in the EFL Context*. *14*(8), 102–106. https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v14n8p102

Altas, E. A., & Mede, E. (2021). The Impact Of Flipped Classroom Approach On The Writing Achievement And Self-Regulated Learning Of Pre-Service English Teachers. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, *22*(1), 66–88. https://doi.org/10.17718/TOJDE.849885

Brownell, M. T., Ross, D. D., Colón, E. P., & Mccallum, C. L. (2005). *Critical Features of Special Education Teacher Preparation : A Comparison With General Teacher Education*. *38*(4), 242–

252.

Elbyaly, M. Y. H., & Elfeky, A. I. M. (2023). The Impact of Problem-Solving Programs In Developing Critical Thinking Skills. *European Chemical Bulletin*, *12*(June), 6636–6642. https://doi.org/10.31838/ecb/2023.12.si6.588

Fatoni, M. (2021). Students' Perceptions on Using Zoom Application in Debate Course during Crisis Remote Teaching. *New Language Dimensions*, *2*(2), 88–95.

Fatoni, M., & Tauchid, A. (2020). An analysis of guided peer review to improve writing skill on personal recount texts for high school students in Bojonegoro. *Jurnal Pendidikan Edutama*, *7*(1), 63–74.

Fatoni, M., & Zainuddin, M. (2021). An Analysis of Students' Perceptions in Implementation 2013 Curriculum on Senior High School English Language Teaching (ELT) in Bojonegoro. *Jurnal Pendidikan Edutama*, *8*(1), 81–92.

Fhaeizdhyall, A. (2017). *The Effectiveness of Teacher Education Program : Identifying the Difficulties and Challenges Faced by the Pre-Service English Teachers*. *December*.

Franco, A. R., Costa, P. S., Butler, H. A., & Almeida, L. S. (2017). Assessment of Undergraduates' Real-World Outcomes of Critical Thinking in Everyday Situations. *Psychological Reports*, *120*(4), 707–720. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294117701906

Higgs, L. (2024). *Obstacles to critical thinking : A qualitative study on secondary school learners in*. *44*(1), 1–7.

Ismail, S. A. A. (2011). Student Teachers‟ Microteaching Experiences in a Preservice English Teacher Education Program. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *2*(5), 1043–1051. https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.5.1043-1051

Kamarul, M., & Ahsan, M. (2018). Assessing pre-service English language teachers ' learning using e-portfolios : Benefits , challenges and competencies gained Computers & Education Assessing pre-service English language teachers ' learning using e-portfolios : Bene fi ts , challenges and. *Computers & Education*, *58*(4), 1007–1020. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.11.011

Kini, T., & Podolsky, A. (2016). *Does Teaching Experience Increase Teacher Effectiveness? June*.

Lestari, I. W., Sa'idah B, S., Zumrudiana, A., & Fatoni, M. (2022). Pre-service English teachers' perceptions on the integration of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) during virtual teaching internship. *ELite Journal : International Journal of Education, Language, and Literature*, *2*(2), 79–86.

Maharani, F., & Fithriani, R. (2023). *Exploring Challenges EFL Pre-Service Teachers Experience in Teaching Practicum : A Transformative Learning Perspective*. *02*, 173–180.

Mangena, A. (2003). *Strategies to overcome obstacles in the facilitation of critical thinking in nursing education*. *August*.

Mudra, H. (2018). *Pre-Service EFL Teachers ' Experiences in Teaching Practicum in Rural Schools in Indonesia Pre-Service EFL Teachers ' Experiences in Teaching Practicum in Rural Schools in*. *23*(2), 319–344.

Murawski, L. M. (2012). *Critical Thinking in the Classroom … and Beyond*.

Nappi, J. S. (2017). The Impact of Teacher Efficacy and Beliefs on Writing Instruction. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, *84*(1), 30.

Pegy S, C. (2018). *ENGLISH PRE SERVICE TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN TEACHING SPEAKING FOR TENTH GRADE STUDENTS AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 10 JAMBI*.

Pentury, H. J. (2017). Development of Teacher Creativity in Creative Learning English Lessons. *Jurnal Ilmu Kependidikan*, *4*(3), 265–272.

Podolsky, A., Kini, T., & Darling-hammond, L. (2018). *Does teaching experience increase teacher effectiveness ? A review of US research*. 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-12-2018-0032

Pratiwi, V. U., Eka, D., & Wardhana, C. (2021). *Pre- Service English Teachers ' Experience with Various CALL Applications : Hindrances and Reflection*. *8*(1), 99–114.

Rahman, M. A., Azmi, M. N. L., Wahab, Z. B., Bin Abdullah, A. T. H., & Azmi, N. J. B. (2016). The

impacts of 'problem-based learning' approach in enhancing critical thinking skills to teaching literature. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, *5*(6), 249–258. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.5n.6p.249

Ramli, A., Riniati, W. O., Al Haddar, G., Munandar, H., & Ubaidillah, A. Z. (2023). The effort analysis of student's critical thinking skills program improvement using a guided inqury approach based on blended learning. *Jurnal Scientia*, *12*(4), 118–123. http://infor.seaninstitute.org/index.php

Sinem, Z. (2016). More Practice for Pre-Service Teachers and More Theory for In- service Teachers of English Language. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *232*(April), 677–683. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.092

Topkaya, E. Z., & Uztosun, M. S. (2012). Choosing Teaching as a Career: Motivations of Pre-service English Teachers in Turkey. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *3*(1), 126–134. https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.3.1.126-134

Yunus, M., Hashim, H., Mohd, N., & Mahamod, Z. (2010). *Understanding TESL pre-service teachers ' teaching experiences and challenges via post-practicum reflection forms*. *9*, 722–728. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.224