

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings connected to the framed question the researcher chose to focus on. It presents the data and is categorized into the findings of the data. In the following paragraph, a deeper discussion of the findings and the discussion will be presented.

A. Findings

In this part, the researcher displayed the data obtained to answer research question: (1) How do the students use critical literacy approach in understanding reading comprehension? (2) How do the students perceive critical literacy approach in understanding reading comprehension? The researcher's goal concerning the research questions is to examine how students employed critical literacy in reading comprehension and their impressions of it. Perceptions are limited by their perspectives on the critical literacy approach, its benefits, the challenges they experience, and their responses to these challenges.

1. Using Critical Literacy Approach in Reading Comprehension

Previously, it was mentioned to see how students used the critical literacy approach in understanding reading comprehension by using an observation sheet. Observations were carried out on three classes of 5th semester who have passed Intensive Reading I, II, and III courses. They are: 20-A, 20-B, and 20- C. Regarding the first research question, the researcher applied the four resources of the critical literacy approach adopted from

Luke and Freebody (1997). The class was teacher-centred instruction, where the students were asked by the lecturer some critical questions for helped them in learning. The following of findings description would present how students using critical literacy approach in reading comprehension. Moreover, there are variations in the outcomes of observations using the critical literacy approach in each class on the components at each phase.

a. Breaking The Code of Text

The first observation carried out in class 20-C. The extensive reading class started by reading an article entitled “Anxiety and Perfectionist,” represented by two people while the remaining students were listened. After reading the story, the two of them presented their own conclusions. It was compatible with the first phase of the critical literacy technique, which is known as code breaking from components 1 to 4, in short:

- 1) alphabet, letter/sound correlations, word sounds, complete words
- 2) graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic sources
- 3) proper spelling and spelling functions, and
- 4) grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, intonation, and rhythm.

In contrast to the previous class, two representatives from class 20-A directly explained their conclusions and critical opinions to the article without having read it. Class 20-A completed components 2, 3, and 4 during this period. After that, all of the articles translated into

Indonesian were read out by class 20-B in a presentation. One of the other students responded in English to the lecturer's questions, "What is the topic of the article?" and "Who wrote the article," so that this code-breaking phase only includes two components, they are component 2 and 4.

b. Making Meaning

Furthermore, the classes had the same treatment in learning. They started with sharing some experiences by the lecturer related to the text for discussion, then asking critical questions to encourage students to develop their comprehension. The students were asked, "How do you feel when you're anxious?" and "How would you describe perfectionism?" One student from class 20-C expressed his opinion by relating his personal experience to the content of the text. Then, others provided a variety of literal and inferred interpretations of a paragraph. They do the making meaning phase in components 2, 3, and 5. Almost the same as class 20-C, while critical questions were asked in class 20-A, the students more critically responsive. Some students also gave their opinions according to what happened in the community.

Student 1: "Because Indonesia still has a lot of competition mentality in education, so many people become perfectionists who feel they have to always be perfect in doing something..."

Then other student linked with previous experience.

Student 2: "... as in this text I often feel anxious when I have to speak in public especially with people I don't know."

In this phase, class 20-A used components 1 to 5, in short:

- 1) text meaning is based on social, cultural, and prior knowledge
- 2) comparing personal and textual social and cultural experiences
- 3) comparing passages
- 4) reading about personal hobbies and lifestyles, and
- 5) interpreting literal and inferential meanings

While the condition of class 20-B was less responsive when they were asked some questions. To solve this problem, the lecturer appointed several students to answer. Those who answered, gave opinions suitable with components 1, 3, and 5 in the making meaning phase.

c. Using Text

Then, when entering the using text phase, some questions were asked, "What is the purpose of this text being written?" "What is the impact of anxiety and perfectionist in everyday life?" Most students from three classes could identify the purposes and recognize the particular structure of the text they discussed. There are some moral value from students:

Student 1 (20-C): "I learned that assignments are not must always perfect, do according to our abilities and don't

demand ourselves perfection because it has an impact on our mental health."

Student 2 (20-A): "An article like this one can help people by providing them with new knowledge and informing them of the possibilities of what they commonly do and what they do because, in the present day and age, many people frequently feel afraid of being wrong until they are overly anxious. Consider the indications that they may suffer from anxiety as well as perfectionism."

Student 3 (20-B): "I believe that having friends or a place to go where we can talk about our feelings can help reduce our anxiety. Cooperative learning, which was mentioned before, is a solution that is particularly ideal for perfectionists because it encourages them not to compare themselves to others and to want to win by themselves, but rather to learn how to work together with other people."

From their opinion about critical literacy approach, it can be assume, they have understood the purpose of the text was written to give us new insight into what is experienced by someone who has anxiety and also someone who perfectionist. In addition, students in both the C and A classes were able to identified the text type of the articles they

read, indicating that the articles in the form of expository texts aimed for academic and scientific purposes, then continued with other friends giving opinions about the text. Class 20-C and 20-A used the components 2, 4, 5, and 6 in this situation. Slightly different from class 20-B, in this phase used components 2 and 4. Indicating they knew the purpose of the text that they were discussed and several people gave their opinions. To summarize:

- 2) understanding the purpose of a text was written and how it should be used
- 4) recognizing what to do with a text and what others could do
- 5) recognizing text types' structures and features, and
- 6) knowing how to use text to convey meanings effectively.

d. Analyzing Text Critically

In the last phase, the three classes also have similar results. The students were given a question similar to using text that asks about the author's purpose in making the article. The difference is how the text influences other people's opinions or perspectives. They were asked, "After reading the effects of perfectionism, do you think being a perfectionist is good or bad?" Here, one of student from 20-A expressed their opinion.

Student 1: "I believe that having friends or a place to go where we can talk about our feelings can help reduce our anxiety. Cooperative learning, which was mentioned before, is a

solution that is particularly ideal for perfectionists because it encourages them not to compare themselves to others and to want to win by themselves, but rather to learn how to work together with other people."

Some students from grades 20-B and 20-C has the same thought that perfectionist trait is not good when applied in everyday life. So, it can be seen that the three classes in this phase used components 1 to 3, in short:

- 1) identifying the writer, speaker, or shaper's purpose and how text shapes ideas/perspectives
- 2) identifying how information or ideas are expressed to impact readers, viewers, or listeners, and
- 3) recognizing commonplace opinions, biases, viewpoints, and gaps.

Furthermore, when the students were asked questions related to moral values, several theories were used and the author's interest in the article, class 20-A and 20-C, had the same results. According to the findings of the observation, both classes are also capable of performing the fourth components of critically analyzing text, which is understanding how texts are constructed by the author, speaker, or shaper.

2. Students' Perceived Critical Literacy in Understanding Reading

Comprehension

The finding of the second research question is presented from some information obtained from the interview. In this section, students' perceptions including opinions about the critical literacy approach, benefits and challenges, and how they handle the challenges.

a. Students Opinions About Critical Literacy Approach

The first question that interviewees asked students was their opinion on the critical literacy approach, or how they interpreted the critical literacy approach when it was applied to reading comprehension. However almost all of the students who were interviewed understood the idea that the critical literacy approach help in reading comprehension, specifically not only by reading but also critically understanding a text or article. Students' perspective on the critical literacy approach were also mentioned.

Student 1: "Critical literacy is how students understand the reading text, it also improves their skills in reading. In addition, it can train students who initially read slowly to become faster and he can also grasp the meaning of the contents of the article" (Ayunda F. T, personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Student 2 and Student 3 shared the same viewpoint, stating that the critical literacy approach is a way to critically understand a text in

order to understand and be aware of the contents of the article. From some of the students' perspectives above, students realized that reading skills are improved through both active and reflective reading practice with the critical literacy approach and allows for more accurate understanding.

There are another opinion from other students about critical literacy.

Student 4: “In my opinion, critical literacy is reading while thinking critically or linking the reading material to something previously known by students. Critical literacy is very necessary and can help in understanding the text we read. Regarding critical thinking, we got a big picture of what we read” (M. Nabel El-Wafa, personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Student 5: “In my opinion, the critical literacy that is applied in class is still insufficient. It takes me a long time to understand an article, so I have to read it first in order to understand the text better” (Nuzulia R., personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Student 6: “When I read at home I can explore it first and then in class I can know and better understand the specific points of the article” (Tasyawaafal R., personal communication, September 22, 2022).

It can be assumed that Student 4's statement recognized critical literacy is closely related to critical thinking, where with critical thinking students also find hidden messages in the texts they read. Next, Student 5 has a different opinion, she realized that when she read using critical literacy approach, it was not enough only in class but also outside the class. This is supported by the opinion of Student 6 who also needs more time than just studying in class when using a critical literacy approach in reading comprehension.

b. Benefit of Critical Literacy Approach

In this part, students shared their opinions about the benefits they felt about the critical literacy approach used in reading comprehension. The data from students' responses showed various themes were identified.

- **Improving Students' Critical Reading**

Most of the students felt that they had improved in critically reading texts. Students were expected to do a significant amount of reading during their time in elementary school, middle school, and high school. When they enter higher education, they were not only expected to read more but they were also expected to read critically. Several of the responses from students indicated that they believed there had been growth in critical reading due to practicing the critical literacy approach.

Student 1: “The benefits that I feel, especially the scope of education, are very beneficial. Especially when entering the upper semester which requires us to read critically” (Zuraidah, personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Student 2: “The positive impact of using a critical literacy approach is that what we have read is not something that is remembered but something that is understood. So, instead of remembering the writing, we take the important points from the article” (M. Nazamuddin A., personal communication, September 27, 2022).

Based on students’ answers above showed, students were getting used to critical thinking in reading texts, which is very useful for students entering semester five and above. The Student 2 then indicated that he had a knowledge of the concept that critical reading is not something that needs to be memorized like arithmetic, but rather an understanding of the points in the context of an article.

- **Students Become More Active and Confident Use English Through Sharing and Discussion**

Furthermore, other benefits felt by some students presented below.

Student 3: “The benefits I get when reading using this critical literacy approach help us in how to implement or

explore our reading results to inform others” (Ayunda F. T., personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Student 4: “The benefits I feel, as I said before, critical literacy that related to critical thinking can help us understand a text. We can understand the big picture of the text, not only what is conveyed in the text but also what is conveyed in the text. Also, through critical literacy, we can gain a wider understanding, either through our own personal experience or with our knowledge of things outside or the general public” (M. Nabil El-Wafa, personal communication, September 22, 2022).

According to the perspectives both of student 3 and 4, gaining an understanding of reading comprehension through the lens of critical literacy helps students become more engaged and self-assured when it comes to discussing their points of view, in addition to having a positive impact on their ability to use and communicate in English.

From some of the answers given by students, it can be seen that the critical literacy approach is relevant and useful to the growth of the students' English skills, sociocultural awareness, and agency development. Besides reading articles, the contents of this article gave them some insight in dealing with various perspectives, both from the text itself and from other friends.

c. Challenges of Critical Literacy Approach

After collecting data about the benefits, then move on to the challenges faced by the students.

- **Reading Article Written in English/Foreign Language**

The researcher came to the conclusion that the majority of the students who were interviewed had almost same difficulties, specifically where it was difficult for them as EFL students to read a text critically while using English. As presented by Student 1.

Student 1: “Because if we read English texts and then use a critical literacy approach, we need to think harder when at the same time we need to find out the meaning of the word we don't understand. Then, when we understand the meaning of one word we have to understand once again what the text means as a whole” (M. Nabel El-Wafa, personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Student 1 discussed the challenges that come with reading articles written in a foreign language. As an EFL students, this is an essential aspect of the challenging in reading comprehension that uses a critical literacy approach.

- **Unfamiliarity Vocabulary**

After using critical literacy to read texts in a foreign language, it is clear from their perspective that they still face other difficulties. This challenges revealed as Student 2 explained.

Student 2: “Personally, I find it a little tricky in vocabulary when I read a lot of new vocabulary. Sometimes the vocabulary has a double meaning when interpreted together with other words to understand the content and meaning of the sentences in the reading text” (Arlina F., personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Student 3: “If you read a text in English, the challenge is the vocabulary with other synonyms. And it is also difficult to express an opinion about the content of the text that is read” (Nuzulia R., personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Another challenge is struggling with foreign vocabulary contained in the text. So, students have difficulty understanding the whole text. As stated by Student 2, when previously they knew the meaning of unknown vocabulary, they once again had to understand the meaning of the text as a whole. Then, in line with Student 2's statement, Student 3 added that he also found it difficult to give his opinion because of the lack of information from some vocabulary with the same meaning.

- **Need More Time and Effort**

Then, some students feel that they need more time and effort using critical literacy approach in reading when in class.

Student 4: “From the vocabulary is a bit challenging to understand.

In this course, it is also required to read quickly in a certain time so that you can understand the context without having to read everything in detail” (M. Al-Habib, personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Student 5: “The challenge I face is that it takes me a long time to understand the text when a word in a sentence has another more appropriate meaning” (Siti Azizah P., personal communication, September 27, 2022).

Due to the limited class time, as stated by Student 4, the instructor sometimes instructed students to read quickly. So, it's clear that when Student 4 was told to read faster, it was a little harder for him to understand the text. Student 5 required more time to comprehend the complete text in order to determine the specific meaning of a word.

It is possible to draw the conclusion that the majority of the challenges that students suffer began with reading articles written in English. The after effect is significant number of students are unable to comprehend the meaning of a vocabulary word that can have more than one meaning. The students need to re-match the meaning based on the context of the article they are now reading. Therefore, students need to spend more time and effort to find the meaning appropriate for the article's context. According to what the researcher noticed in the

classroom, only a few students were quick to give their opinion when they were asked about the articles they had read.

In this section, the researcher also asked students the part that is challenging to do from the four resources of the critical literacy approach. Most students said the most challenging thing to do was code-breaking and critically analyzing the text. This is connected to the difficulties they had in the past with critical reading of texts written in foreign languages and with basic linguistics. Regarding making meaning and the use of text, only a few students had difficulty. The reason is making meaning plays a very important role in the initial understanding of a text, so if students don't understand this beforehand, it will be difficult to analyze the text critically. Some students choose the use of text because they had difficulty understanding several options and alternatives in using text to convey certain meanings effectively.

d. Handling Some Challenges Students Faced

The following were various ways students face challenges when using the critical literacy approach to understanding reading comprehension as mentioned above.

The first step in resolving the challenges when they have difficulty criticizing foreign language readings and difficulties in new vocabulary. Compared to conducting a search of the dictionary either manually or via the internet, another method that can be used is to develop a habit of reading passages that demand critical thinking and increase new

vocabularies. The following students who was also confronted with the same difficulty, said:

Student 1: “Read a lot, then find out more complex vocabulary to better know which vocabulary meaning is more appropriate to use to produce a correct understanding of a text” (Arlina F., personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Student 2: “By understanding the context or topic raised from the article, we can also be helped even though we don't know the meaning of a word because we already have a bit of hint” (Ayunda F. T., personal communication, September 22, 2022).

Even though they don't know the meaning of foreign vocabulary perfectly, looking at the context they read has given clues about the meaning of the text.

In addition, handling in situations where students require additional time in critical literacy. The first step is to consult with those with more knowledge, just as Student 3 did. They can provide you with additional information. Then, from Student 4, read the article once more to better grasp what the text is trying to say.

Another way of dealing with challenges in general as mentioned earlier from Student 5 and 6 is by translating the entire text first and then take a note the important points. The last, from Student 7 chose to memorize new vocabulary and also studied the articles given first.

B. Discussion

This section would discuss the findings with the theories already mentioned in chapter II after the data has been processed in the form of a description. The objectives of study were to investigate how the students use the critical literacy approach to develop their understanding of reading comprehension and to find out how the students perceive the critical literacy approach in understanding reading comprehension. The study was carried out using the four resources of critical literacy, code-breaking, making meaning, employing text, and critically assessing the text, as claimed by Luke and Freebody (1997). The following are some of the topics that can be discussed in the discussion section:

1. Using Critical Literacy Approach in Reading Comprehension

a. Code Breaking

Code breaking refers to basic linguistic. According to Luke and Freebody (1997), students decode the text to understand the alphabet, sounds, punctuation, sentence patterns, and word formation. The finding showed that all the classes were able to breaking the code while reading comprehension. They performed components from 1 to 4 of the six code breaking components. They are:

- recognizing and using the alphabet, sounds in words, whole words, letter/sound relationships
- using graphophonic, syntactic and semantic sources of information
- spelling accurately and understanding the functions of spelling

- recognizing and using grammar and vocabulary including punctuation and intonation and rhythm.

This is reasonable because students who employed the critical literacy approach were in higher education and the reading texts they were taught not only narrative texts but articles. Students also have a basic background in English. Therefore they did not experience any challenges during this phase. However, during interview student showed, they had difficulty with new vocabulary and grammar.

b. Making Meaning

According to Hikmat (2017), students use written, spoken, visual, and multimodal texts to make meaning by connecting the information to their own experiences or prior knowledge. After breaking the code, students began to comprehend the text. The students were inquired about their personal experiences relating to the article. Students from all three classes discussed personal experiences comparable or linked to the text. Although there was a minor issue in one of the classes where students were less responsive, the lecturer resolved it by inviting select students to speak about their prior knowledge or experience. According to the data above, all classes have the ability in the making meaning phase, at least in the components that comparing and relating their experiences with the text in question. Furthermore, Critical literacy could be one of the strategies used to encourage students of all levels to broaden and enhance their social awareness (Gustine & Insani, 2019).

c. Using Text

In this part, the majority of students can determined what they and their peers would do with the content they have just read. This is noticeable in how they recognized the various purposes of text. It can be seen from how they understood the multiple objectives of the text. The 20-A and 20-C class got the same results when the class observations were carried out. The other two components were recognizing that each text has a different type of structure and features and understanding how to use the text to convey specific meanings effectively. Supported by Ludwig (2003), in his study, to become a "text user" and use text functionally, students must comprehend the text's aims, recognize the options and alternatives for utilizing a text to express certain meaning effectively, realize that each text type has specific features and structures and know what to do with a text in a specific context and what others might do with it.

d. Critically Analyzing The Text

Taking a critical perspective on a variety of issues and ideals offered in texts is the focus of the last learning circle aimed at developing students' critical literacy skills (Temple, 2005). The findings indicated that the three classes fulfill components 1 to 3. Students were able to identify the author's objectives and how the text influences one's viewpoint, as well as the way information presented can influence the reader, and also dominant or nondominant opinions and points of view.

In line with the term "critical literacy," refers to a set of activities and civic competencies that help students become more self-aware about the ways in which books represent some viewpoints while excluding others (Ciardiello, 2004). The researcher determined that the three classes that utilized the critical literacy approach to critically analyze the text were successful. As stated by Duncan and Morrell (2005) students can be considered text analysts since they represent their opinions and persuade or influence other students. In addition, based on observations conducted in classes 20-A and 20-C determined that both classes demonstrated an understanding of the fourth component, specifically comprehending how authors, speakers, and shapers build texts.

From the discussion of four sources of critical literacy adopted from Luke and Freebody (1997) were suitable for the average fifth-semester student, allowing them to employed a critical literacy approach to assessing reading comprehension in disciplines requiring significant reading. Although, lessons continue based on teacher-centered instruction, not students. A critical literacy strategy can allowed lecturers to develop an environment where students actively engage in critical thinking about what they read. Stated by Larson and Marsh (2005), this model is very suitable to be used and adopted in language classes, which is help students decode, comprehend, use, and evaluate texts, also language teachers can benefit from employing this model.

2. Students' Perceived Critical Literacy in Understanding Reading Comprehension

a. Students Opinions About Critical Literacy Approach

The most popular opinion that students have said about the critical literacy approach. According to McLaughlin & DeVogd (2004), students not only know how to read and write, but they can also fully see the assumptions that are hidden in the texts. In the findings, Student 1 believed that critical literacy approach helped her improve reading skills. Then, Student 2 and 3 continued by explaining that critical literacy means that students analyze a text and think about what it means. Moreover, Molden (2007) explained the synonym for critical literacy is analytical reading where not reading the text in general but rather reading the situation, meaning and understanding through oral or written. From Student 4's statement, showed that he recognized that there were relationship between critical literacy approach and critical thinking. He argued with critical thinking, he can got the big picture of what he read. As explained by Alford (2001) questioning the text's concept and investigate how the ideology affects the reader will promote critical thinking in EFL reading. In his study, Jeong (2012, p. 9) argued, implementing the critical literacy approach, students and lecturers need more time than just studying in class. Beside, Student 5 has different opinion. She realized that in critical literacy approach need more time and effort, it was not enough just learning in class. Student 6 admitted

that she often read the article that would be discussed at home first since she required more time to read using a critical literacy approach.

b. Benefit of Critical Literacy Approach

In their studies by Bui (2016) and Gainer (2010), showed critical literacy pedagogy was beneficial because it improve students enhance their English language skills and social consciousness as well as a variety of abilities such as leadership, presentation, and teamwork.

- **Improving Students' Critical Reading**

Based on findings, from Student 1 and 2's answers, most of students said the benefit of critical literacy approach for their own self especially when reading comprehension is they had improved in critically reading texts. It is reasonable to presume that they used to analyzing the texts that they read critically. Furthermore, the result found in the study by Gustine (2013) showed that there were the improvement of students' critical engagement with text, after the critical literacy approach were implemented in the class.

- **Students Become More Active and Confident Use English Through Sharing and Discussion**

Furthermore, Student 3 and 4 shared the same thought, critical literacy approach help them to share some information to others through their own personal experience or knowledge. According to some researcher said the benefits of critical literacy approach are the improvement of students' critical engagement with text meanwhile,

the students were more active, confident, and collaborative in offering their points of view during the discussion section (Gustine, 2013). It also giving positive impact to use and communicate in English both in verbal and written form through discussion and sharing section (Rao V. S., 2016).

c. Challenges of Critical Literacy Approach

- **Reading Article Written in English/Foreign Language**

According to Gustine (2013), becoming critically literate in a foreign language is more difficult. The findings showed that most students faced same challenge. Student 1 indicated when reading article in English, they need to think harder than reading article in their own native language.

- **Unfamiliarity Vocabulary**

As stated by Ko (2013), the students struggling for basic linguistic competence and Hikmat (2017) has same opinion, students' low English proficiency and low of critical literacy. On the finding, researcher found, students also experienced the challenges with the vocabulary and grammar structures contained in the text. Aside from the fact that the book was written in English, it was more about the unfamiliarity of words that EFL students rarely use and know. Like when students express their thoughts about what the difficult thing to do from the four resources of critical literacy

approach adopted from Luke and Freebody (1997). Almost all students chose code-breaking and critically analyzing the text.

- **Need More Time and Effort**

Then, they faced further challenges. Because students were not familiar with vocabulary, they need more time and effort in using critical literacy. Jeong (2012) conveyed, it takes more time and effort to implement critical literacy into each normal session.

d. Handling Some Challenges Students Faced

There are various method that students used in handling challenges while reading using critical literacy approach. The first method is develop a habit of reading more article that demand critical thinking and increase new vocabularies. Krashen (1981) confirmed that reading increases vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and writing ability. The second is by understanding the topic or context of the article as preliminary clue. Then, provide additional information by consulting with those with more understanding of the article. Harrison (2004) argued that the significance of reading is not only connected to the development of one's knowledge but that it is also connected to an individual's capacity for gratitude. The last is memorizing new vocabulary and studied the article given first at home before discussing in the class.