



Construction of elementary school students in responding to pros and cons issues (Qualitative descriptive study of the functions of discussion texts)

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Submitted/Received 25 August 2022; First Revised 20 October 2022; Accepted 1 December 2022

First Available Online 1 December 2022; Publication Date 1 December 2022

Abstract

Critical thinking is a reflective and analytical activity in response to a certain phenomenon, usually triggered by a number of deficiencies or inconsistencies. In the context of education, critical thinking skills are increasingly important to be mastered by students, especially in the midst of the rapid development of science and technology. This development causes the sources, flow, and essence of information received by students to vary widely. Therefore, students are required to have the ability to select, sort, and process good and valid information to enrich their intellectual assets and avoid misinformation (Firdaus, 2019). Another reason why critical thinking is essential is that students are valuable human resources with high potential, which must be directed through the development of adequate thinking skills. The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. The instruments used to collect data in this study were data cards, with the object of research being students' written works. Based on the findings, it was found that students are capable of thinking critically, although still with simple patterns. The texts they produce generally function to persuade and evaluate with a direct and straightforward structure.

Keyword: Critical thinking, discussion text function.

INTRODUCTION

(Molan, 2012) said that "apart from being in the scientific world, critical thinking is also present in everyday life experiences. Critical thinking is very important in human daily life. This is because there are many incidents in everyday life that need to be criticized. Someone who has the ability to think critically can also develop other thinking skills, such as the ability to make decisions and solve problems (Saputra, 2020). Thinking and being critical is an ability that is not only in the form of understanding something, but also contains the power of analysis and evaluation of that thing, including the slightest circumstances and events that exist in society, from which thoughts about solutions emerge. It is important for anyone to have the ability to think critically, including even elementary school students. Students' critical thinking skills arise when they care about the surrounding environment, can provide assessments, as well as solutions or solutions.

Philosophically critical thinking is seen as a skill based on a caring attitude; thus this attitude is very good to be developed. The development of critical thinking in learning means providing opportunities for students to develop their reasoning abilities. The form of awareness as an active being is shown by students by thinking critically. They behave not on the basis of instinct, but think critically in examining various preferences for actions that have a purpose. Actions or actions that are carried out through critical thinking, enable them to communicate well with others and work to improve their level of life (Tilaar & et al., 2011, p. 197).

Critical thinking skills are important things that must be mastered by students. (Zamroni and Mahfudz, 2009, pp. 23–29) explain some of the reasons that form the basis of the importance of critical thinking. First, students are a resource that has high potential. They need to be equipped with adequate thinking skills (deductive, inductive, reflective, critical and creative) (Lai, 2011) so that this potential

can be directed and have a high commitment to morals, so that they are able to take part in developing the field of knowledge they are engaged in in the future. Second, the key to developing creativity is to think critically, because existing phenomena or problems will require students to think creatively. Another reason is that currently the flow of news on the internet is increasingly flooding technology users. The news obtained may not be appropriate and cannot be justified for its truth. To be able to use information properly and correctly, it is necessary to conduct a search and evaluation of the data and sources of information. The ability to evaluate and decide to use the right information requires critical thinking skills.

Through the learning process, critical thinking skills can be developed and strengthened. Learning processes that can develop students' creative thinking include encouraging discussion and providing many opportunities to express opinions, use and express ideas both orally and in writing, encourage cooperation in studying and discovering knowledge, develop responsibility, self-reflection and awareness social politics (Munawwarah et al., 2020). Learning that provides meaningful experiences will develop students' critical thinking, for example learning to write a discussion text.

Santrock (Ismayanti, 2016) explained that metacognitive activity occurs when students consciously adjust and manage their thinking in solving problems and thinking about a problem. This metacognitive activity is very relevant to learning to write discussion texts. Students actively think about discussing an issue to find the best way by considering various opinions and ideas, through learning to write discussion texts. Students are trained to reason and learn to solve a particular problem by paying attention to various opinions and ideas, both supporting (pro) and opposing (contra) opinions. The ability of these students can be supported by the application of metacognitive aspects in learning to write discussion texts,

Discussion text is a text that presents two different or conflicting views (Reykhani,

2019). Students are expected to broaden their knowledge and experience by discussing. Ministry of Education and Culture (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014) defines a discussion text as a text that contains an issue, which has two sides between pros (support) and contra (against), between supporters and opponents of the issue. The problems presented in the discussion text are discussed based on these two points of view, the pros and cons. The communicative purpose of this discussion text itself is to present a problem or issue that is reviewed from at least two points of view, before arriving at a conclusion or recommendation.

Discussion text is one type of text taught in the 2013 curriculum. This text has a text structure that is different from other texts. Discussion text requires an understanding of the use of opposing conjunctions, the use of lexical cohesion (repetition, synonyms, antonyms, and hyponyms), the use of grammatical cohesion (references, substitutions, and ellipsis) and the use of modality as the most important elements in the preparation of discussion texts (Kosasih, 2018). Students are introduced to these structures and rules so they are not confused in the process of analyzing discussion texts. The close relationship between the concept of student knowledge and the theory of discussion text can produce a good analysis. The analysis carried out by students can be a benchmark for whether or not the competencies expected by the curriculum are achieved.

Text analysis as a language study based on a pragmatic approach means studying language texts in their actual use within communication contexts. This approach emphasizes not only the structural aspects of language, such as grammar or sentence construction, but also the functional and contextual dimensions of meaning. Brown and Yule (Firdaus, 2019) state that text analysis seeks to analyze language in its use as a tool for communication, highlighting the relationship between linguistic forms and their communicative purposes. This kind of analysis goes beyond examining isolated linguistic elements and instead focuses on

how those elements contribute to achieving specific intentions in real-life situations. It involves understanding how speakers or writers structure their language to achieve goals such as persuading, informing, questioning, or commanding. Furthermore, pragmatic-based text analysis also considers external factors that influence language use, such as the speaker's background, cultural context, social roles, and the relationship between interlocutors. These contextual elements play a vital role in shaping meaning, as the same linguistic expression can carry different interpretations depending on the situation in which it is used. Therefore, studying texts pragmatically enables a more comprehensive understanding of language as a dynamic, purpose-driven, and socially embedded phenomenon.

Language studies do not only focus on linguistic structure, but also on dynamic phenomena of language use. Linguistic studies have entered communicative and socio-cultural processes. Linguistic studies do not solely discuss the grammatical language, but language studies lead to a critical attitude, namely to actual speech and writing in communication in society. This is manifested in the language of criticism. This is as shown through previous research conducted by (Ernala, 2017), regarding the relationship between critical thinking skills and the ability to write discussion texts in Class VIII Students of SMP Negeri 1 Medan in the 2016/2017 Academic Year that there is a significant relationship between students' critical thinking skills and the ability to write student discussion texts.

Based on the assumptions above and the findings from previous studies, it becomes increasingly important to conduct research that explores the critical thinking skills of elementary school students. One effective way to analyze these skills is through examining students' written works, particularly in the form of discussion texts. Discussion texts provide a platform where students can express their arguments, analyze opposing views, and conclude ideas based on logical reasoning all of which are core

components of critical thinking. Elementary school students, as individuals who are still in the early stages of cognitive development, require systematic guidance and appropriate stimulation to help shape their patterns of thought. Therefore, embedding critical thinking exercises early in the learning process is essential to foster independent, reflective, and analytical learners in the future. This research is expected to reveal the actual level of critical thinking skills possessed by students at the elementary level, thereby serving as a useful reference for educators. The insights gained can equip teachers with a better understanding of how to design instructional strategies and interventions that encourage critical thinking. In the long run, this will not only enhance students' academic performance but also prepare them to face complex problems in real-life contexts with a critical and solution-oriented mindset.

METHOD

The type of research used is descriptive research, using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research objectives is to understand the condition of a natural context (natural setting), by directing it to a detailed and in-depth description of a picture of a certain condition, about what actually happened according to what is in the field of study (Farida Nugrahani, 2014). (Sugiyono, 2013, p. 15) Qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism, used to research on natural object conditions, (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument, sampling of data sources is carried out purposively and snowball, collection techniques are triangulation (a combination of), data analysis is inductive/qualitative in nature, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization

The object of this research is the result of discussion text works and the research subjects are students of grades 5 and 6 of SDN 2 Banjarsari, Ciamis Regency. The instrument used in this study was a data card,

qualitative descriptive was the researcher himself.

The data collection process begins with the orientation stage, where at this stage the researcher introduces and understands the object of research (writing by elementary school students in grades 5-6 in the form of discussion text). The selection stage was carried out by the researcher to select the writing of grade 5-6 elementary school students in the form of discussion texts containing critical thinking. After the selection stage was completed, the researcher identified the writings that had been previously selected. The researcher identifies discussion texts that contain critical thinking, namely 1) sentences in which there are arguments and conclusions regarding the pros and cons of an issue which are presented clearly and logically and are supported by reasons or factual evidence; 2) sentences that have a complete structure and use the correct spelling.

As for analyzing the data, the researcher formulates an issue or problem formulation which is the main topic of student writing which can provide an overview of students' critical attitudes in the form of discussion texts. The researcher reads, examines and records formulas about the constructs of critical thinking found in the discussion texts of students' works by paying attention to aspects of the constructs of critical thinking in the form of inferences, assumptions, deductions and interpretations. After the researcher has done this, it is continued by identifying arguments in the linguistic rules contained in the discussion texts of students' work. The researcher describes and describes the data analysis in detail according to the results of data analysis and theoretical references. The final process in analyzing the data carried out by researchers is to conclude the findings that have been researched and then submit a report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results obtained are functional analysis of discussion texts written by elementary school students. Discussion texts were obtained from grade 5 and 6

students at SDN Banjarsari, Ciamis. Researchers chose a theme that was quite controversial and interesting for them to discuss, namely the use of mobile phones in schools. The theme was chosen because it would be more mastered by the students than other controversial themes which might be more difficult for them to discuss.

Discussion texts that have been written by grade 5 and 6 students at SDN Banjarsari, Ciamis are studied based on their function so that it can be seen that the function of the discussion text from each student matches the theory of experts or even has no match at all. Each discussion text has a different function. Some have only one function or even more than one. Functional categories that will be used as references in the discussion text review table based on their functions include: 1) persuading/influencing; 2) evaluate; and 3) others.

The following are the results of a discussion text review based on the function according to the theme set by the researcher.

Table 4.1
Discussion Text Study Results Based on Function

No. Code	Function		
	Convince / Influence	Evaluate	Other
SA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IS	<input type="checkbox"/>		
AR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
04	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Function			

No. Code	Convince / Influence	Evaluate	Other
AH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Referring to the table above, the following is the meaning of the results of a discussion text study based on function with the theme of prohibiting the use of mobile phones by students at school.

1) Convince/Influence

The function of convincing/influencing is that in the discussion text there are sentences that can make or cause the reader to feel confident about the author's discussion. Convincing expressions are the author's goal to the reader so that the reader follows or agrees with something the author conveys. The author does not only present sentences, but provides reasons, facts, or evidence so that the reader is truly influenced and believes in the author's writing.

Based on table 4.1, it appears that almost all of the discussion texts made by students contain convincing elements, especially in the section on the importance of using mobile phones by students at school. All the texts examined contain that statement. The sentences that state this function, among others, are as follows.

a) The cellphone can help me study, can communicate with friends and can call parents and other people; and can study in the teacher's room.

b) Using a cellphone can help me study, I can communicate with friends, and with a cellphone, I can call my parents.

c) Using a cellphone can help interest in learning, call parents, help with homework, can communicate with friends, and can ask which homework.

It can be seen from the sentences quoted that the sentences are in line, namely the students stated that the cellphone really helped them in learning and also helped them in communicating with other people: teachers, parents, friends. Of the ten texts observed, students' statements were almost the same as that.

2) Evaluate

The function of evaluating is that in the discussion texts made by students there are sentences that give an assessment (good or bad, agree or disagree) accompanied by suggestions and reasons. In addition, they provide comments and solutions to the problems discussed in the discussion text. The author also often uses the words "should, should, should, better" as words in providing solutions.

Based on table 4.1 above, the assessment is more related to students' disagreement regarding the negative impact of cellphones. The intended statements, among others, are as follows.

Sentences that reflect the evaluate function are as follows.

a) Playing cellphones can damage the mind, become damaged nerves, can interfere with the brain, and can lose memory of lessons and can lose concentration when studying or during tests.

b) Using a cellphone is not good because it damages the eyes and brain.

c) Always use a cellphone when studying, why play with a cellphone if it's not for studying, aren't you worried if you can't read or write?

Similar responses were also seen in the assessment of other students. Their answers are almost the same that the use of cellphones by students can interfere with learning; also interfere with the physical, namely the damage to the eyes and brain.

3) Other

Based on table 4.1 above, there are also statements in the discussion text which contain statements of desire, namely by using a mobile phone he wants to be a smart kid to make his parents proud, continue school, and become a graduate. "Alhamdulillah, thanks to the cellphone, I hope to become a scholar." This statement is actually still related to the importance of using mobile phones, that this media can help them learn, even in achieving their goal of becoming a university graduate and making their family happy.

In the research conducted by Kristi Julianti (2019) it is possible to find other functions in the discussion text besides convincing and evaluating. The function in question, among other things, is suggesting. Here's an example.

a) In my opinion, the use of mobile phones must be limited in order to produce people who are even more useful, to protect, develop and defend this country, by arranging their playing schedule.

b) And the role of parents at home should be to limit their children so they don't keep playing on their cell phones and spend their time studying at home.

Based on these findings, several things can be identified as follows.

1) There were found four functions of the existence of discussion texts made by students, namely convincing and evaluating functions as the main function; express wishes and suggestions as a function of its derivatives or additions. The two main functions are always present in every discussion text that students make.

2) Almost all of the statements they built to express beliefs related to the importance or right of mobile phones being used by students at school or in everyday life. These statements are based on their experience of seeing and feeling (about the importance of mobile phones) for their daily lives. Their opinions have a lot in common between one student and another.

3) The students have also been able to provide evaluations in response to the use of mobile phones by their own circle. However, it is different from the convincing function whose reasons are based on their own experience. Assessments put forward about the negative impact of using mobile phones by students tend to be based on assumptions or what people say. That cellphones can cause brain and nerve damage, eye disorders, most likely those statements are based on other people's words. Even so, there is also an opinion that is most likely based on one's own experience, namely that mobile phones can also interfere with learning concentration.

4) Derivative functions, namely expressing wishes and suggestions are only found in a small part of the discussion text. The two functions are still related to convincing.

According to Beyer(Filsime, 2008)Critical thinking is a disciplined way of thinking that is used by someone to evaluate the validity of something (statements, ideas, arguments, and research). According to Screven and Paul and Angelo(Filsime, 2008)views critical thinking as an intelligent disciplined process of active and skillful conceptualization, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation gathered from, or produced by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a guide to belief and action. Based on the opinions of the two experts above, from the analysis and descriptions that have been carried out on the discussion texts written by several students, it appears that students already have the ability to think critically. This can be seen from the sentences written containing things that contain evaluations of the problems that surround them - the use of mobile phones at school. Evaluation sentences, both pros and cons, were expressed on the basis of their experience and based on what they heard from other people's opinions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be seen that the critical thinking skills of elementary school students have

appeared, although they are still in simple construction. Students are already able to express opinions by bringing out the function of the discussion text, namely persuading/influencing. Sentences that are written already appear to be able to influence and convince the reader to agree or follow what the author has written. Another function that appears is the function of evaluating, namely providing an assessment of a thing or problem by also including reasons. The reasons included are based on the author's experience, and some are based on the opinions or words of other people. Another function that is present is the wish and suggestion function, only present in a small number of written discussion texts.

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