Teachers' Skill in Utilizing Literary Texts to Train Students' Critical Thinking

Diani Nurhajati¹*, Yunik Susanti², Dewi Kencanawati³

¹²³ Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri

Abstract: One of dimension in Pancasila Student Profile is students have ability to think critically. Teachers can apply many strategies to train their students in order that their critical thinking develop. One of them is by utilizing literary text in teaching. This research aims to describe the skills of elementary school teachers in utilizing literary text to train critical thinking to the students. This research applies a descriptive qualitative approach in which the subjects of this research were 1 school principal, 2 teachers of grades 5 and 6, and 40 students of SDN 1 Loceret, Nganjuk. The researcher used guided interview, questionnaires, and document analysis to collect the data. The finding of the research can be described that the teachers have already used local literary text, such as poems and short stories to train critical thinking skills. They used those texts for teaching materials. However, they still had problems to develop activities that train the students to think critically. They only utilize those texts in curricular activity or during the teaching-learning in the classroom. It is recommended that teachers should utilize the local-culture based stories in co-curricular and extra-curricular.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Literary Text, Utilizing

Introduction

School graduates face great challenges to be able to compete in the global era. To answer these challenges, the Indonesia government issued *Merdeka* Curriculum so that school graduates are equipped with character and a number of skills. For this reason, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia has issued guidelines for schools, especially teachers, in providing the necessary skills and forming character which is called the *Pancasila Student Profile* (PSP). *Merdeka* Curriculum is a learning design that is possible enable students to learn in calm, relaxed, happy, stress-free and pressure-free atmosphere which allows them to show their capability (Rahayu, 2022). This curriculum put forward education character through PSP (Rosmana, 2022).

PSP is a form of translation of national education goals. It is stated in (Badan Standar, 2022) that PSP acts as the main reference that directs educational policies, including being a reference for educators in building the character and competence of students. Furthermore, according to (Sulistiyaningrum, 2023), PSP is character and abilities built in

life the everyday pan that lives within every person and educate through school culture through learning in the curriculum.

PSP can be described as students who have certain character based on philosophy Pancasila or the values of Pancasila Principles in general whole and comprehensive. PSP consists of six dimensions, namely: 1) faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character, 2) independence, 3) mutual cooperation, 4) global diversity, 5) critical reasoning, (Ulandari, 2023), and 6) creativity (Badan Standar, 2022).

The application of PSP can be done through school culture, intra-curricular learning, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which focus on character formation and abilities that are built in everyday life and brought to life in each individual (Rahayuningsih, 2022). Elementary school level can choose 6 themes main subjects of PSP Strengthening Project as a guideline for implementation, namely sustainable lifestyle, local wisdom, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, developing body and soul, engineering and technology, and entrepreneurship. Cultural diversity in Indonesia is learning resources that can be utilized for good achievement of educational processes and outcomes (Ulandari, 2023).

Schools may implement the PSP Strengthening Project for the students in various ways. For example, SD Nasima Semarang implemented a project for PSP in the form has the theme of Local Wisdom "Preserving Wayang Culture People" produce some activity projects (Sulistiyaningrum, 2023). Another example is SDN 03 Taman Kota Madiun which developed the students' skill in creativity, communication, collaboration by assigning the students to make 'sambel pecel' and 'krupuk puli' (Rahayuningsih, 2022). Through the implementation of the Pancasila student profile, it is hoped that students, especially in elementary schools, will be able to develop character values so that good behavior is formed and inherent in students.

One of the dimensions of PSP is critical thinking. Based on researches by (Ernawati, 2022) and (Ulandari, 2023), critical thinking skill can be seen in the students' ability to process objectively qualitative and quantitative information, to build relationship among various information, to analyze information, to evaluate, and to make conclusion. In other words, students have the following elements of critical thinking, such as obtaining and processing information and ideas, analyzing and evaluating reasoning, reflecting on thoughts and thought processes in making decisions. Analyze and evaluate reasoning

Based on PSP in *Merdeka* Curriculum, the indicators of individuals who have critical thinking skills include 3 elements. For each element, the government is narrowing down the indicators of critical thinking skills so that they become more specific according to the level or phase of education in Indonesia. The indicators are as follows:

a. *Obtain and process information and ideas*

Students who have critical thinking skills have a great sense of curiosity, ask relevant questions, identify and clarify ideas and information obtained, and process this information. He is also able to differentiate between the content of the information or ideas of the presenter. In addition, he has the willingness to collect data or facts that have the potential to disprove personal opinions or beliefs. Armed with these abilities,

Pancasila Students can make appropriate decisions based on information from various relevant and accurate sources.

b. *Analyze and evaluate reasoning*

Besides obtaining and processing information and ideas, if students have critical thinking skills, they are able to use their reasoning relates with the rules of science and logic to decide and act by analyzing and evaluating the ideas and information they get. Furthermore, they are able explain relevant reasons accurately to solve problems and to make decision. At last, before they come to conclusion or decision, they give arguments to support their reasoning.

c. *Reflect and evaluate one's own thinking*

The indicator of students with critical thinking skill is that they are aware of their thinking processes and decisions they have created. They are also aware of the development and limitations of their thinking power. As a result, they realize that they could continue to develop his capacity through a process of reflection, efforts to improve strategies, and persistence in testing various alternative solutions. Moreover, if there are conflicts with existing evidence, they have the willingness to change their personal belief or opinion.

Critical thinking must be trained though activities at schools. In this case, teachers have a very important role in realizing the dimensions PSP. Teacher's task is to educate, teach and train students as well as continue and develop life values to be applied in life for the future of students (Dewantara, 2020). To achieve this goal, a professional teacher has an obligation to develop one's professionalism in accordance with developments in science and technology. Therefore, teachers must provide a variety of learning experiences that can shape the desired character inside and outside the class.

Based on the results of the Education Report of the SDN 1 Loceret, Nganjuk, published by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education in 2024, the scores of some indicators that need attention. In other words, the indicators were literacy skills: competence in reading literary texts and critical thinking skills. The score of those indicators decreased. The score of first indicator decreased 7,89 and the second indicator decreased 2,77.

In fact, the school has potential resource persons: the school head master is very an enthusiastic person who always motivates the teachers to develop their skills and knowledge. She also provides various facilities and activities to enhance the scores in Education Report, such as Reading Corner and reading activity in school literacy movement. Furthermore, the school has many potential teachers. They are not only still young, but also eager to do something new in order to facilitate their students.

As a matter of fact, the teachers can solve the problem by utilizing literary texts, such as short stories, poems, etc. They may use story about bullying, story about child's ideals, story about local sellers, story about attempt of a boy to reach his dream. The stories are about what students see and experience, so that it will be easier for them to understand. They are actually parts of literary texts which tell about local values and cultures. They can use the stories as instructional materials to teach in the class or in school literacy movement (*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*).

There are many ways to build students' character and skills, including critical thinking. Teacher can apply project-based learning in the class. Many researches (Sumarni, 2015) and (Setiawan, 2021) prove that this teaching model develop many skills, including critical thinking. Besides, they can also apply problem-based learning. This teaching model also has many advantages. Students are trained to find solution based on given problems by the teachers. They will increase their skill in obtaining and processing information. The process of learning train them to critically think by doing self-study and group discussions. Those activities develop skills, including self-directed learning, interdisciplinary knowledge creation, and collaborative skills. The entire process is very interactive, achieving the goal of student engagement in learning, which has been shown to improve retention and satisfaction (Klegeris, 2011).

Furthermore, to solve the problem related to literacy skill: the competence of in reading literary texts, teacher may utilize local-based story. Some previous researches prove that literary works, especially short story can increase students' critical thinking. The reason is that reading short stories made suitable tools for achieving critical thinking skills (Khatib, 2012). While other research found critical thinking can be developed through critical reading literary works, one of the works are stories (Jaffar, 2004). Reading short stories has a significant role in enhancing critical thinking skills because they can promote critical thinking skills in the EFL students' behavior (Houda, 2021) and (Pham, 2021). Therefore, short stories' reading has to be implemented within the Algerian Educational Curriculum. Moreover, research by Pham found out that using pop-up book media influence students' capability of critical thinking. In other words, teachers can utilize short story, especially local culture-based stories.

Realizing the fact, that teachers have very important role to train and build students' character and skill, the researcher is interested to do research with the title: "Teachers' Skill in Utilizing Literary Texts to Train Students' Critical Thinking". The objective of the research is to describe the skills of elementary school teachers at SDN Loceret 1, Nganjuk, in utilizing literary texts to train critical thinking to the students.

Methodology

The type of research used is qualitative research with a case study approach. Qualitative research is an approach to a study that follows the methods traditional ways of conducting social, behavioural, and health science research (Creswell, 2016). Qualitative research is also defined as research that produces discoveries that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or with other methods of quantification (Murdiyanto, 2020). The case of the study was the teachers at SDN 1 Loceret Nganjuk who utilize literary texts to develop students' critical thinking.

There were some data collection techniques: in depth interview, questionnaire, document analysis. Interviews were conducted with three informants, namely the school principal and 2 teachers. The interview was conducted with the aim of exploring information related to how the teachers utilize the culture-based stories to develop the students' critical thinking in curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

Questionnaire was given to 40 students as the representatives of grade 5 and 6 students to know how the teachers facilitate learning to develop critical thinking. The researcher also analyzed some documents, such as *Dokumen Kurikulum Sekolah Penggerak tahun Pelajaran 2023-2024, Modul P5*, and some videos related with school activities to implement PSP Strengthening Project for the students.

The data obtained was then analyzed using a data analysis model Miles and Huberman, namely through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, to draw conclusions (Sugiyono, 2015). After getting the field data, then carry out data reduction by summarizing, organizing or coding and discarding data that is considered unrelated to the research topic. Then data presented in the form of narrative text in accordance with the organization that has been made information is easy to understand. The final stage of drawing conclusions after the data has been analyzed.

Result and Discussion

To make it easier to present research results, this section is divided into two parts. The first part of the presentation is about SDN 1 Loceret which aims to provide readers with an overview of the real conditions of the school. The second part is the teacher's skills in utilizing local stories to train critical thinking skills which are classified into three school activities, namely curricular activity, extra-curricular activity, and co-curricular activity.

SDN 1 Loceret

SD Negeri 1 Loceret is one of the elementary schools selected for the Driving School Program (*Program Sekolah Penggerak*) since 2021. The school developed the SD Negeri 1 Loceret Curriculum Educational Unit Operational Curriculum. The Independent Curriculum of SD Negeri 1 Loceret was developed as an embodiment of the primary and secondary education curriculum. This curriculum was prepared by a team consisting of school elements and school committees under the coordination and supervision of the Loceret District Kindergarten/Primary School Supervisor.

Teachers, as persons in charge of the implementation of the curriculum, are obligated to implement this curriculum in the learning process. It is hoped that as educators they will be able to prepare fun and exciting learning for children, so that children feel at home at school. Based on this reality, learning in elementary schools should be educational, intelligent, arouse children's activity and creativity, be effective, democratic, challenging, fun and exciting. It is with this spirit that the curriculum developed will become a dynamic guideline for the implementation of education and teaching at SD Negeri 1 Loceret.

The preparation of *Merdeka* Curriculum for SD Negeri 1 Loceret is adjusted to the specificities, conditions and potential of the region by aligning the conditions of the educational unit and the characteristics of students in the educational unit. In its development, the school's operational curriculum will refer to learning outcomes that have been prepared by the center and translated into a flow of learning objectives that are concreted in the learning process. The preparation and development of the Merdeka Curriculum for SD Negeri 1 Loceret focuses on meeting the needs of students by developing

competencies in the changing lives of the 21st century which includes the characteristics and local potential of SD Negeri 1 Loceret.

To facilitate students' skill, especially critical thinking, the school provide many programs. For example, **School Literacy Movement** (SLM) or *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* is held once a week. In this program, the students read various sources for 20 minutes before the teaching-learning process begins.

The school also provides another facility to support SLM program that is Reading Corner. It is a spot outside the classroom where students access learning resources located in the corner of the classroom. The arrangement of this literacy corner is good. However, the reading resources in the reading corner are very limited, especially literature textbooks, including stories. The reading corner which has reading books does not have a place (shelf) to store these books. So, the books were just placed on a table. Here is the picture.

Figure 1. Reading Corner

Skill of the Teachers

The skill of the teachers means the teachers ability in utilizing local culture-based stories to train critical thinking to the students. They can make use of the story as instructional materials of certain subject during teaching-learning process in the class as intra-curricular activity. They may also use the story as resource materials in co-curricular activities, such as SLM and in the implementation of PSP Strengthening Project (*Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*). Finally, they may use as the materials in extra-curricular activity. There are some extra-curricular activities, such as marching band, traditional dance, and other activities which are part of competition.

The following items are what the teacher do to utilize the local culture-based story to develop critical thinking ability of the students. The skills of the teachers can be seen when they implement school activities; they are intra-curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities.

1. **Intra-curricular Activity**

Intra-curricular activity is an activity of teaching-learning process carried out in the classroom. This activity is carried out according to a plan that is based on the curriculum. These intra-curricular activities are given to students in line with the curriculum components.

The teachers have already utilized the local culture-based story, especially in Indonesian language subject. They said that they often used folktale from local area, such as "The Origin of Sedudo Waterfall", "Malin Kundang", "Timun Emas", etc. The teachers believed that using those stories can help them train the students' critical thinking. The students can discuss about many things. For examples, they can discuss the characters and their characterization of a story and the moral value of the story after reading the story.

Teaching model chosen by the teachers were problem-based learning. They admitted that the teachers start by giving a problem to be solved by the students. They asked some questions to the students to collect students' understanding about the materials they would learn.

Teacher 1 gave example of the question:

"Students, could you explain the intrinsic elements of a story. Some students could answer, but some other students could not. Then the teachers gave problems to be solve They have to read a story to find the solution. They discussed and shared ideas with their peers to get the solution. This is the way how they practice the sub-elements of identifying, clarifying and processing information and ideas."

Teacher 2 added:

"The learning activity to train the element of processing information was by asking the students to write one short paragraph explaining about the description of one character, the synopsis of the story, or something they learn from the story or the moral value."

The activity to train the sub-element of analysing and evaluating the reasons and procedures was by explaining relevant and accurate reasons in solving problems and making decision. The teachers tried to provide an activity for the students by doing in groups. Each group had to discuss and make a report about different things, such as the structure of the story, explaining the personality of a character, the message of the story. By doing this activity the students analysed about something and evaluated the reasons.

The last element is reflecting thoughts and thought processes in making decisions. The students have to give reasons for what they think, and are aware of the possibility of bias in his own thinking. The teacher facilitates the reflection session by asking questions such as: "What have you learned from today's story and activities?", "How can you apply the values from this story in your daily life?" By doing so, the students are trained to think critically about stories, analyse characters' actions, and compare them with real situations.

The description above show that the teachers have good skill in utilizing the local culture-based stories. It is supported by the students' answer of the questionnaire. Here is the result.

Table 1. The Students' Answers

No	Questions	Answer			
		VO	O	R	N
1	Teachers utilize stories in teaching process	5%	92,5%	2,5%	-
2	Teachers ask question to compare information	15%	85%	-	-

3	Teachers ask to collect and comparing information	-	92,5%	5%	2,5%
4	Teachers ask to classify information	5%	90%	2,5%	2,5%
5	Teachers ask to give reason to make decision	2,5%	90%	7,5%	

Notes:

VO = Very often

O = Often

R = Rarely

N = Never

All of the questions related to the teachers' skill in utilizing local culture-based story are dominantly often. It means that the teachers have good skills in utilizing the story to train Most of the students answer often.

2. Co-curricular Activity

Co-curricular activities are activities and programs that take place outside of the traditional classroom but in some manner complement academic learning from classroom curriculum. Co-curricular activities at SD Negeri 1 Loceret include school School Literacy Movement activities, as well as strengthening the profile of Pancasila students as one of the driving school program schools. This learning is included in the co-curricular which is designed according to the major theme that has been determined by integrating several subjects as a form of project to implement PSP in the educational unit.

The activity of school literacy movement still focuses on habituation of reading any sources. All of the students take one text, it can be story or others, and they read it. The teachers have not followed up this activity by assigning the students to do something which train their critical thinking.

Figure 2. School Literacy Movement

Extra-curricular Activity

Extra-curricular activity is any activity that does not count towards an academic credit. These are activities that students participate in outside of class, such as activities in the arts, athletics, personal commitments and so on. Extra-curricular activities are supporting

activities at SDN 1 Loceret as a supplement to education to improve students' intelligence and skills according to their talents, interests and other competencies.

Extra-curricular activities at SD Negeri 1 Loceret include compulsory extras and optional extras.

1. *Mandatory Extras:*
    a) Scout
    b) Read and Write the Koran

2. *Extra Self-development options at SD Negeri 1 Loceret are as follows:*
    a) *English*

    English learning is one of the flagship programs of SD Negeri 1 Loceret which aims to develop students' English language skills through speaking, writing and listening. The material content prioritizes simple things that can be found in everyday life such as self-introduction, conditions at home, class, school and the surrounding environment. English learning also aims to equip students to achieve the Pancasila Global Diversity student profile.

3. *ICT / Digital capabilities*

    ICT learning is a superior program at SD Negeri 1 Loceret which aims to prepare students to welcome the millennial century, the Industrial Revolution 4.0 which is completely computerized and completely digital. Computer learning material begins with a simple introduction to computers, the tools available on computers. Of course, the activities in extra-curricular emphasize to develop students' character and skills, not purposely to train the element of critical thinking. The skills are integrated in the learning activities during the implementation of extra-curricular activity.

Discussion

Teachers have a very important role to develop students' character. They integrate character education in teaching and learning process in the class or in the curricular activity (Setiyaningsih, 2022). The same thing done by the teachers of SDN 1 Loceret who have good skill in utilizing local culture-based story to train students' critical thinking. They choose local culture-based story as the materials in teaching Indonesian language in the class. This can be seen that they choose problem-based learning as the teaching model. The teachers understand well how to implement the curriculum they have (Dokumen Kurikulum Sekolah Penggerak Tahun Pelajaran 2023-2024 SDN 1 Loceret, Kabupaten Nganjuk, 2024).

All of the informants think that utilizing story in teaching and learning process can help students develop their critical thinking. Stories about local culture reflects everyday events that the students see and do. Based on their everyday experience they can compare with what they read in the story. In this case, they practice to compare information. This idea is in line with (Houda B. , 2021), that short stories can help students to develop critical thinking skills and a special instruction is required in order to make active reading an appropriate area for the practice and promotion of critical thinking skills. In other words, by understanding short stories students do critical thinking practice.

The teachers of SDN 1 Loceret explained that they gave various activities to the students, like group discussion. This activity, which is sub-elements of critical thinking. encourage the students to analyze, synthesizing, and evaluating a certain case they found in the story. This condition supports previous research by (Khatib M. a., 2012) which says by analyzing, students are asked how ideas are composed, how they are related and interconnect with other ideas. Students are encouraged to discover and biases in order to un-cover evidence. The dangers of such analysis should be self-evident. Then, synthesizing involves the ability of putting together the parts students analyzed with other information to create something original. Finally, evaluating refers to the command of the thinker over the thought.

The teachers focus to develop critical thinking in curricular activity in the class. They do not realize that through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities they can also train and develop students' critical thinking. For example, the students make a project to perform mini drama when they have PSF Strengthening Project or they are assigned to write about one element of story they read in school literacy movement.

Conclusion

Based on the finding above, it can be concluded that the skills of the teachers' skills in utilizing literary texts, such as short stories, poems, as well as local folktale to train critical thinking at SDN 1 Loceret are good. They believe that using those texts can help them train the students' critical thinking. They implement problem-based learning as the teaching model because through the steps in the teaching and learning activities in this teaching model the students are trained their critical thinking. In other words, the teachers utilize literary texts to train critical training in intra-curricular activity, that is through the process of teaching and learning in the class. They have not trained the students' critical thinking through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Therefore, it is suggested for them to utilize local culture-based stories in co-curricular activity, as PSP Strengthening Project. The students are assigned to perform mini drama of local folktale.

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