

**INVESTIGATE THE ROLE OF TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION IN  
FOSTERING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS  
AT SMP ISLAM AR-RAAFI'**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Salma, 2024 "Investigate the Role of Teacher-Student Interaction in Fostering Critical Thinking Skills at Smp Islam Ar-Raafi". A thesis of English Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar. (Supervised by Ika Sastrawati and Hijrah). The study aims to find out whether the interaction between teachers and students can stimulate the student's critical thinking. This study examines the interaction between teachers and students. The subjects of the study were one English teacher and five students of SMP Islam Ar-Raafi' Makassar who were selected using purposive sampling techniques. This method of research is qualitative research with phenomena experienced by the subject of research, for example interactions, learning materials, etc. This research data is collected through observation and interviews. Data analysis techniques use data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification. This research is expected to benefit teachers and students in interacting in the classroom. In this case, teachers are asked to build interaction with students by increasing communication to students. With the interaction between teachers and students, students can exchange views, express opinions, analyze, and evaluate the materials studied, which of course can encourage the critical thinking of students. It can be concluded that the role of interaction among teacher and students is very important in fostering the student's critical thinking skills.*

*Keywords: Interaction, Critical Thinking, Teacher-Student Interaction.*

**ABSTRAK**

Salma, 2024 "Investigate the Role of Teacher-Student Interaction in Fostering Critical Thinking Skills at Smp Islam Ar-Raafi". Sebuah tesis dari Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar. Dibimbing oleh Ika Sastrawati and Hijrah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah interaksi antara guru dan siswa dapat mendorong pemikiran kritis siswa. Penelitian ini meneliti interaksi antara guru dan siswa. Subjek penelitian ini adalah satu guru bahasa Inggris dan lima siswa siswi di SMP Islam Ar-Raafi' Makassar yang dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Metode penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan fenomena yang dialami oleh subjek penelitian, misalnya interaksi, materi pembelajaran, dll. Data penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan wawancara. Teknik analisis data menggunakan reduksi data, display data, dan penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan manfaat bagi guru dan siswa dalam berinteraksi dalam kelas. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa peran interaksi antara guru dan siswa sangat penting dalam mendorong keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa. dalam hal ini, guru dituntut untuk membangun interaksi dengan siswa dengan

cara memperbanyak komunikasi terhadap siswa. dengan adanya interaksi antara guru dan siswa, siswa dapat bertukar pendapat, mengutarakan pendapat, menganalisis, dan mengevaluasi materi yang dipelajari. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa peran interaksi antara guru dan siswa sangat penting dalam mendorong keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa. dengan adanya interaksi antara guru dan siswa, siswa dapat bertukar pendapat, mengutarakan pendapat, menganalisis, dan mengevaluasi materi yang dipelajari, hal tersebut tentu saja dapat mendorong keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa.

Kata Kunci: Interaksi, berpikir Kritis, Interaksi Guru-Siswa

### **A. Introduction**

Critical thinking is essential to making good life choices. With this ability, people can analyze data, evaluate different perspectives, and solve problems. Teachers are crucial in building students' critical thinking skills. By giving examples and creating a learning environment that encourages discussion and questions, teachers can equip students with the skills they need to succeed.

A strong relationship between teacher and student is the basis of effective learning. When students feel comfortable and confident in interacting with their teachers, they are more likely to participate actively in teaching learning activities and their best potential. Research also shows that students who have a strong relationship with their teacher tend to have better academic performance and are more motivated to learn.

To enhance their students' ability to think critically, educators can use a

variety of useful learning approaches. Observing, asking, collecting data, analyzing, and concluding are part of popular scientific methods. Open questions can also be used by teachers to encourage students to think further and explore a variety of potential answers. Teachers can make learning more relevant and meaningful for students by associating lessons with everyday life.

Critical thinking enables students to make better choices by thinking critically. Students can make more rational and positive-impact choices through the rational and logical analysis of information. The ability to think critically helps teachers and students find the source of the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, and choose the most effective methods. Critical thinking encourages students to question information, look at different perspectives, and understand concepts in depth. The ability to think

critically also helps students to speak and argue constructively. In other words, the ability to think critically is an effective tool to improve our quality of life in many aspects, both personally and professionally.

Based on the above background, the primary goal of education is to cultivate critical thinking in students. To this goal, teachers and students must work together to create a good learning environment, build positive relationships with students, and use effective learning methods. In this way, students can become active, creative, and critical students. Effective interaction between teachers and students can be an important component in improving critical thinking skills. With the aim of impressing the higher generations, SMP Islam Ar-Raafi' strives to create a learning environment that helps students learn to think critically. However, no research specifically investigates the role of teachers-students in these interactions in promoting critical thinking skills.

## **B. Research Methodology**

This research used a qualitative approach because the data collected or studied was ultimately more

qualitative. Therefore, it was expected that this approach produced more complete, in-depth, and significant data to the research objectives. In this research, this approach was more suitable for use because the purpose of the research is to ensure that the concepts listed in the textbook are true. The research used in this research was qualitative descriptive methods. Qualitative research was research aimed at understanding the phenomena experienced by the research subject, such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc. Qualitative research is very important because the goal is to discover the underlying motives of human behavior. The qualitative research paradigm emphasizes the meaning and interpretation of knowledge from the participant's perspective.

## **C. Findings and Discussion**

### **1. Findings**

#### **a. Teacher**

- 1) The material that can enhance students' ability to think critically

Extract 1 : "Actually anything but probably more related to the text, whether it's an announcement, a report, a story, or a recount.

Because the text requires children to read so they can dig deeper into the text like its contents, its structure, then they can dive deeper, like that”.

**2) Teacher's difficulty in helping students develop critical thinking skills.**

Extract 2 : “There must be a special challenge in educating children in the modern era. They're usually more relaxed and take everything available easily. With technological advances and lifestyle changes, children become accustomed to instant gratification. Although we help them think critically and become more independent, they basically still need guidance and guidance from adults. Therefore, as teachers, we must actively continue to give instructions and teach our students how to think critically”

**3) Teacher's challenge in explaining material to enhance students' ability to think critically.**

Extract 3 : “One of the biggest problems in the learning process is how to encourage students to participate in active activities. A good relationship between teacher and student is very important, in my opinion. Students who feel comfortable and familiar with their teachers tend to be more open to asking and answering questions, even if the questions are difficult. On the contrary, students who are not familiar with the teachers are more likely to be passive and uninterested in participating in discussions”.

**4) Teachers build interaction with students so that students can improve their thinking skills.**

Extract 4 : “Building effective interaction with students is not just asking answers in class. As teachers, we have to build a more intimate relationship with students outside the classroom. For example, act in the same way as a

friendly and open friend or parent. Students often need proactive teachers. Teachers should take the initiative to approach students if they are reluctant to interact. As a result, the bonds formed will make students more comfortable and active in the learning process”.

5) Examples of learning activities that teachers do to help students understand the material.

Extract 5 : “To teach, I use a scientific approach like discussion and questioning. I also give a short quiz before each meeting to improve student understanding. In this way, students are encouraged to study independently at home and are able to remember what they learned in class. Questions that are relevant to student's everyday life are the way I like to start lessons. The aim is to enhance their critical thinking and encourage them to associate the lesson with real-world situations”.

Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that the way the teacher builds interaction between the teacher and the student is quite good. However, there are difficulties experienced by the teacher when facing less active students in the learning process. Therefore, the teacher should build even better communication with the student so that the student can be active and confident in the process of learning. As for the activity that the teacher usually does to make the student understand the learning material, it is to give a quiz before starting learning. Usually the teacher will ask about the news and activities that the student does at home and then proceed with asking about the learning materials that have been learned before. Use, give feedback to students, and measure students' understanding of previously studied material.

**b. Students**

- 1) The material taught by the teacher can encourage students' critical thinking skill.

**Extract** “By learning and  
**S1:** understanding new things,  
 our insight will be wider and  
 the knowledge that we  
 initially did not know can  
 become a deep  
 understanding”.

**Extract** “Of course, every lesson  
**S2:** taught to us by the teacher  
 is very valuable. Teacher's  
 integrity in teaching  
 encourages us to truly  
 understand the subject  
 matter. As a result, we can  
 maximize the benefits of  
 each lesson and increase  
 our understanding”.

**Extract** “Yeah, the lessons have  
**S3:** improved my ability to think  
 critically significantly and  
 have given me very useful  
 new knowledge and skills”.

**Extract** “Yes, teachers use a variety  
**S4:** of techniques to enhance  
 critical thinking”

**Extract** “Yes, the teacher's  
**S5:** approach to learning is  
 amazing”

lessons. In order to deal  
 with this, I always tried to  
 actively ask the teacher to  
 get a clearer explanation”.

**Extract** “One of the problems I often  
**S2:** encounter is when I forget to  
 pay attention to the  
 teacher's explanation. As a  
 result, I have difficulty  
 answering questions related  
 to the material described  
 earlier”.

**Extract** “Yes, the difficulty I often  
**S3:** encounter is when the  
 material described by the  
 teacher is not fully  
 understood by me. I feel the  
 need for an opportunity to  
 ask for re-explanation when  
 there is a material that I do  
 not fully understand”.

**Extract** “No, because the teacher's  
**S4:** material is relatively easy to  
 understand.

**Extract** “Yeah, because every  
**S5:** teacher has a different  
 teaching style, sometimes  
 the explanation is difficult  
 for me to follow, and I don't  
 fully understand it”.

2) Difficulty of students in nurturing  
 critical thinking skills of students.

**Extract** “I often find it difficult to  
**S1:** understand some of the

3) The challenge that students face in  
 understanding material to enhance  
 their ability to think critically.

**Extract S1:** "One of the problems I've often encountered is being asked to talk by a friend while studying. I try to avoid interference, like a friend's phone call, because I need to concentrate to understand the lesson well".

**Extract S2:** "The first challenge in understanding the lesson is the ability to listen carefully to the teacher's explanation, focus on the material delivered, and live the concepts described".

**Extract S3:** "Due to a very noisy and frequently disturbed environment, I have a lack of focus and difficulty understanding the lessons".

**Extract S4:** "Teachers always have a way to help us overcome challenges, so no challenges are too difficult to overcome."

**Extract S5:** "The main difficulty I faced was having to first translate English-language material into Indonesian so that I could understand and interpret it properly."

4) Interaction with teachers so that students can understand the learning material.

**Extract S1:** "Questioning is one of the most effective methods of improving understanding. We could say, for example, "Sorry, I haven't fully understood." Can you give me an additional explanation?".

**Extract S2:** "To ask questions when the teacher explains the material is one way to interact with him".

**Extract S3:** "I asked open questions to the teacher and actively participated in class discussion".

**Extract S4:** "One of the interactions I often do is directly ask the teacher if there's anything I don't understand".

**Extract S5:** I don't hesitate to ask the teacher back if it's still unclear.

5) Examples of learning activities that students do to help students understand the material!

**Extract S1:** "Re-reading the textbook not only helps remember, but also encourages us to think deeper about what we have learned. As a result, our understanding

and our memory will become stronger”.

**Extract S2:** “In my attempt to understand the subject matter, listening to the teacher’s explanation carefully and actively asking during the question-and-answer session are two complementary things. In this way, I can clarify the parts that I have not understood and gain a deeper understanding”.

**Extract S3:** “Interaction with teachers, like asking and answering questions, is vital to improving our understanding of the subject matter. For example, when teachers ask questions, we can give answers”

**Extract S4:** “I usually do some activities to improve my understanding of the subject matter, such as recording information, translating the writing, and then analyzing it”.

**Extract S5:** “One of my activities to improve my understanding is to re-read the material I’ve learned”.

Based on the data obtained, the role of teacher-student interaction is quite well in encouraging critical thinking students as teachers free students to exchange opinions and discuss with other students. Students are also active in question-and-answer activities when there is incomprehensible learning material. However, there are difficulties that students experience when teachers provide learning material, which is that sometimes students do not understand the teacher’s explanation. The way the teacher explains is also very influential to the student’s understanding because sometimes the teacher gives an unequivocal description so that the student does not understand learning.

## **2. Discussion**

### **1) The Role of Teacher Interaction**

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that the role of teacher and student interaction is very important in encouraging students’ ability to think critically. With the



existence of interaction between teachers and students, it can help students understand the material well, and students can also freely express their opinions to other students. It is in line with the opinion (Ajmal 2022) that the interaction between teachers and students is very important to each other. In order to generate interactions between teachers and students in a good way, teachers must build such interactions by multiplying communication with students in order to create interactive relations between teacher and student. This is in line with the opinion (Budiani 2021) that states that interactions are a set of interactive actions where two things or actions influence each other.

However, there are difficulties experienced by teachers when faced with less active students in the learning process. Therefore, teachers should build even better communication with students so that students can be active and confident during the learning process. If the student is active in the learning process, then the interaction between the teacher

and the student will be well connected, and students will also be able to easily express their opinions to other students. It can, of course, encourage students' ability to think critically. This is in line with the opinion (Ayuwanti, et al., 2021) that states that the nature and quality of student-teacher interaction determine student involvement. The teacher usually asks about the news and activities that students do at home and then continues by asking about the learning material that they have learned before. Use, give feedback to students and measure students' understanding of the material they have studied before.

## **2) The Role of Students Interaction**

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that the role of students in interaction in the classroom is important in encouraging their ability to think critically because, through interaction with teachers, students discuss, are active in learning, and exchange opinions with other students. This can encourage the critical thinking of students because of discussion

activities that require students to think and understand lessons. This is in line with the opinion (Bustami, et al., 2018) that states that good student-teacher interaction enables students to improve their skills of thinking critically through feedback discussions.

The way the teacher explains is also very influential to the student's understanding because sometimes the teacher gives an unclear explanation that makes the student less understanding of learning. The way students experience such difficulty by asking the teacher and asking him to re-explain the material so that the student can analyze and understand the material better can encourage the critical thinking skills of the student. This is in line with (Yaki 2022), who stated that in critical thought students must produce concepts, analyze, interpret, evaluate, and conclude to make decisions. As for the students' activities to encourage their critical thinking skills, they are reading books, translating texts, and actively asking questions and answers while the learning process is going on.

It can be concluded that the role of interaction between teacher and student is very important in promoting critical thinking skills of students. With the existence of interactions between teachers and students, students can exchange views, express opinions, analyze, and evaluate the materials learned, which of course can encourage critical thought students.

#### **E. Conclusion**

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted at SMP Islam Ar-Raafi', especially in the eighth grade with an English teacher and five students about how the role of interaction between teacher and student in encouraging critical thinking ability of students. The researchers can conclude that the teacher's role in interacting with students is crucial in promoting students' critical thought skills. With the existence of interactions between teachers and students, students can exchange views, express opinions, analyze, and evaluate the material they learn, this can of course encourage students to think critically. In this case, teachers

are asked to build interaction with students in a way that doubles communication with students.

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