

# Improving English for Teens (ET) 6 Students' Critical Thinking by the Application of Peer Feedback in LB-LIA Palembang: A Classroom Action Research

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out whether the application of peer feedback can improve English for Teens (ET)-6 students' critical thinking in LB LIA Palembang. This study was carried out as classroom action research. There were 16 students of ET-6 taken as samples of this study. The data were collected through observation, interviews, and a critical thinking evaluation form. Then, the data were analyzed. After conducting three cycles, the data showed that 14 out of 16 students (85%) fulfilled the desired level of their critical thinking skills. At last, it can be concluded that the application of peer feedback can improve the students' critical thinking skills.

**Keywords:** Critical Thinking, ET-6 Students, Peer Feedback

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this era, teaching and learning process must involve the 21st century learning skills, which is also known as 4Cs, namely critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Critical thinking is related to how students can find a way to solve their problems. Based on Oliver and Utermohlen [1] most students are too often becoming passive information receptors. It does not happen because they are not intelligent. Usually, they do not know how to develop and apply their critical ideas. Unfortunately, one of the weaknesses in our education system is lacking teaching critical thinking skills. Most students are seldom able to express their ideas. They also lack expressing their opinion or providing any kind of evidence [2]. Lacking of critical thinking will indeed have an impact on the students' ability [3]. That is why teachers are now expected to equip their students with critical thinking and communication skills [4].

Based on the writer's observation when teaching in LB-LIA Palembang, most students, especially students of English for Teens (ET) 6 classes, still find difficulties in developing their critical thinking. It may happen because of lacking of exposure from the teachers. Once the

students think that they cannot answer the teacher's question, they tend to become passive. They feel

reluctant to get involved since they feel that they will get stuck once they have to deal with questions that need deeper thought and understanding.

Actually, all students are expected to answer not only lower order of thinking (LOT) questions, but also higher order of thinking (HOT) questions that require their critical thinking. That is why students who have been taught the grammar format still have to answer questions that require their critical thinking skills. They create sentences using the correct form of grammar and apply their critical thinking skills. This way is implemented to all students from all programs, including English for Teens students. Although ET 6 students are still junior high school students, they are hoped to be able to answer questions such as:

- a. What would it be like if ...?
- b. What could happen if ...?
- c. What other outcomes might have happened?
- d. What would it be like if ...?
- e. What could happen if ...?
- f. What other outcomes might have happened?
- g. How would you solve .....?
- h. What do you think of.....?

In fact, there are many ways that teachers can do to help their students develop their critical thinking skills. One of them is by asking them to give feedback to their peers' learning performance. Based on Michael Henderson, a Project Researcher from Monash University, feedback is a process where the students can make sense of information about their performance and use it to enhance their work quality and/or learning strategies.

Commonly, feedback is given by the teachers. Teachers need to know that feedback that is given must be aimed to grade the students and focus more on improving the students' performance. As Sadler [5] states, feedback tends to make sense more when it aims to improve the students' performance than just grade them. Unfortunately, the feedback given by teachers can sometimes demotivate the students. It may happen because students consider feedback as a judgment of what they have done [6].

Peer feedback, which is also called peer assessment, means that the students evaluate or are evaluated by their peers [7]. Applying peer feedback or peer assessment can directly promote the development of evaluation skills, critiquing abilities, communication skills and also students' self-awareness. According to Cho and MacArthur [8], feedback that many students give can be more advantageous than the teacher's feedback only. [9] also states that students are able to support and evaluate one another. Besides, Brown [10] mentions that peer-assessment is considered one kind of many tasks and procedures that focus on student-centered and collaborative education.

Asking students to give feedback to their peers can benefit them. Biala [11] mentions the benefits of giving peer feedback. Helping other students improve and grow is the main benefit that students can gain. Feedback from peers is aimed to provide reflections on how other students have performed. From this, students can help their friends empower themselves by giving choices.

Above all, peer feedback is useful for both the giver and the receiver since it is given to provide an understanding of a performance by offering guidance based on the background knowledge that the students have.

Giving peer feedback is usually implemented during a writing session. As Rollinson [12] cited by Sholihah [13] mentions, peer feedback is beneficial in writing because students are usually able to make efficient revision based on their peers' feedback, which is usually more complete compared to the one given by the teacher. This will eventually make the students more critical.

In fact, it can also be beneficial when implemented in speaking subjects. Speaking as one of the productive skills is considered essential in the language learning process because it can help students get in touch with one

another by stating what they have in mind [14]. In addition, Brown [10] also mentions that speaking enables learners to process all the sources they have when having a talk with others.

Knowing that giving peer feedback can bring advantages, the writer conducted a classroom action research concerning with the application of peer feedback. She wanted to know how the application of peer feedback could improve her students' critical thinking.

## **2. METHODS**

This study was a classroom action research which was conducted through three cycles. She did the observation to know the students' critical thinking level, treated and evaluated the students to improve her students' critical thinking and teaching performance in the future.

This study was conducted systematically and chronologically and followed the spiral model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart [15], which has four 'moments': planning, taking action, observing and evaluating, and reflecting.

This study's object was the English of Teens (ET) 6 students of LB LIA Palembang term IV/2020. There were 16 students. They studied every Tuesday – Friday at 16.30. These students consisted of 10 male students and 6 female students. They are the eighth graders of junior high school. The writer took more or less three months to conduct this action research. The timeline started from November 2020 until January 2021.

The data which the researcher got were classified into two kinds, namely quantitative and qualitative data [16]. Thus, the data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data were taken from observation, interview and teacher's journal. Quantitative data were analyzed by taking the percentage of the students' fulfillment of the rubric given and the percentage of the students who could fulfill the requirements.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study started by conducting an observation. The primary observation showed that only four out of sixteen students (25%) had fulfilled the desired level of critical thinking skills. Then, the researcher started her first cycle. In this cycle, she asked the students to give feedback on their friends' performance. Before asking them to give peer feedback, she distributed a peer feedback form and explained how to fill it in.

It was conducted in two meetings. On the third meeting, she checked the students' critical thinking

improvement by giving the assessment which was analyzed using a critical thinking evaluation form.

After conducting the first cycle, she found out that seven out of 16 students (45%) showed improvement on their critical thinking skills (shown in the following table).

**THE RESULT OF STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING IMPROVEMENT (1<sup>ST</sup> CYCLE)**

| NO | NAME      | INDICATORS  |   |  |  |  |   |   | REMARK |
|----|-----------|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|--------|
|    |           | Able to Interpret evidence, statements, graphics, questions, literary elements, etc. accurately and thoroughly. | Able to Analyze and evaluate key information, and alternative points of view clearly and precisely. | Able to examine beliefs, assumptions, and opinions and weigh them against facts fairly-mindedly. | Able to draw insightful, reasonable conclusions. | Able to justify inferences and opinions. | Able to address and evaluate thoughtful major alternative points of view. | Able to explain assumptions and reasons thoroughly. |        |
| 1  | Student A | √   | √   | √  |  |  |   |   | 42%    |
| 2  | Student B | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 71%    |
| 3  | Student C | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 86%    |
| 4  | Student D | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 86%    |
| 5  | Student E | √   | √   | √  |  |  |   |   | 42%    |
| 6  | Student F | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 71%    |
| 7  | Student G | √   | √   | √  |  |  |   |   | 42%    |
| 8  | Student H | √   | √   | √  |  | √  |   |   | 42%    |
| 9  | Student I | √   | √   | √  | √  |  |   |   | 42%    |
| 10 | Student J | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 100%   |
| 11 | Student K | √   | √   | √  |  |  |   |   | 42%    |
| 12 | Student L | √   | √   | √  |  |  |   |   | 42%    |
| 13 | Student M | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 57%    |
| 14 | Student N | √   | √   | √  |  |  |   |   | 28%    |
| 15 | Student O | √   | √   | √  |  |  |   |   | 28%    |
| 16 | Student P | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 71%    |

She continued with the second and the third cycle. The students were treated the same like in cycle 1. After conducting the second cycle, 10 out of 16 students had fulfilled the desired level of critical thinking skills.

Meanwhile, after the third cycle there were 14 students showed improvement in their critical thinking skills, as shown in the table below.

**THE RESULT OF STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING IMPROVEMENT (3<sup>RD</sup> CYCLE)**

| NO | NAME      | INDICATORS  |   |  |  |  |   |   | REMARK |
|----|-----------|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|--------|
|    |           | Able to Interpret evidence, statements, graphics, questions, literary elements, etc. accurately and thoroughly. | Able to Analyze and evaluate key information, and alternative points of view clearly and precisely. | Able to examine beliefs, assumptions, and opinions and weigh them against facts fairly-mindedly. | Able to draw insightful, reasonable conclusions. | Able to justify inferences and opinions. | Able to address and evaluate thoughtful major alternative points of view. | Able to explain assumptions and reasons thoroughly. |        |
| 1  | Student A | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 86%    |
| 2  | Student B | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 86%    |
| 3  | Student C | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 86%    |
| 4  | Student D | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 86%    |
| 5  | Student E | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 71%    |
| 6  | Student F | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 71%    |
| 7  | Student G | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 71%    |
| 8  | Student H | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 57%    |
| 9  | Student I | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 57%    |
| 10 | Student J | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 100%   |
| 11 | Student K | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 71%    |
| 12 | Student L | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 42%    |
| 13 | Student M | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 57%    |
| 14 | Student N | √   | √   | √  |  |  |   |   | 29%    |
| 15 | Student O | √   | √   | √  |  |  |   |   | 29%    |
| 16 | Student P | √   | √   | √  | √  | √  | √   | √   | 71%    |

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the application of peer feedback can improve the students' critical thinking. It was shown that 85% of the students had fulfilled the desired level of critical thinking skills.

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