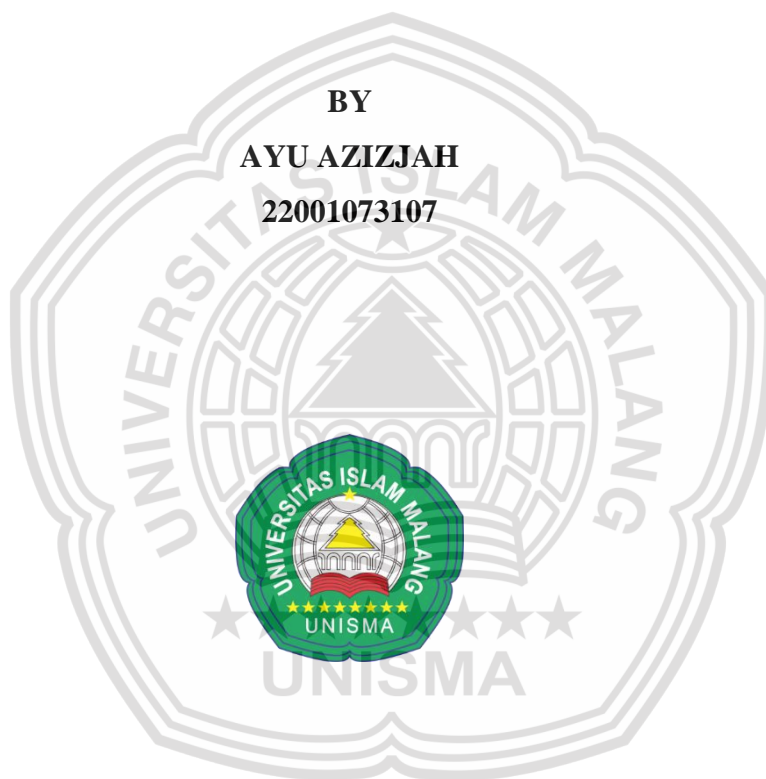# EXPERIENCE OF PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS'

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS'

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

SKRIPSI

BY

AYU AZIZJAH

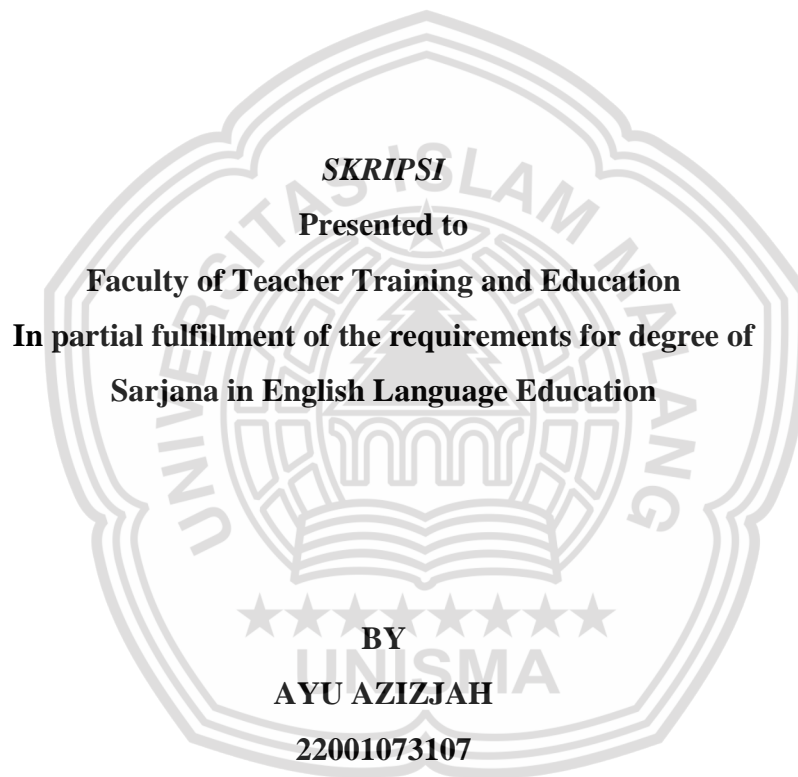22001073107

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF MALANG

FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS'

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SKRIPSI

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Faculty of Teacher Training and Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for degree of

Sarjana in English Language Education

BY

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ABSTRACT

Higher order thinking skills (HOTS) among students are very important to develop in the education system to prepare students for the 21st century situation and fulfill student potential. Critical thinking skills must be taught and familiarized from an early age but students' critical thinking skills will not just happen. There needs to be effort and intention, one of which is when daily learning in the classroom that can train students to develop critical thinking skills continuously.

This study aims to investigate the challenges faced and strategies used by pre-service teachers during teaching practice. This study was conducted using a qualitative research design. The instrument used was interviews with two pre-service teachers who have conducted teaching practice.

The findings of this study show that some of the challenges faced by prospective teachers include teacher knowledge, where teachers are still confused about designing lesson plans. Second, teacher preparation, teachers must prepare teaching activity strategies that contain hots. Third is the different abilities of students. While the first strategy used by teachers is preparing relevant lesson plans, teaching strategies through questions are very effective to see the effectiveness and understanding of students and practice before assessment.
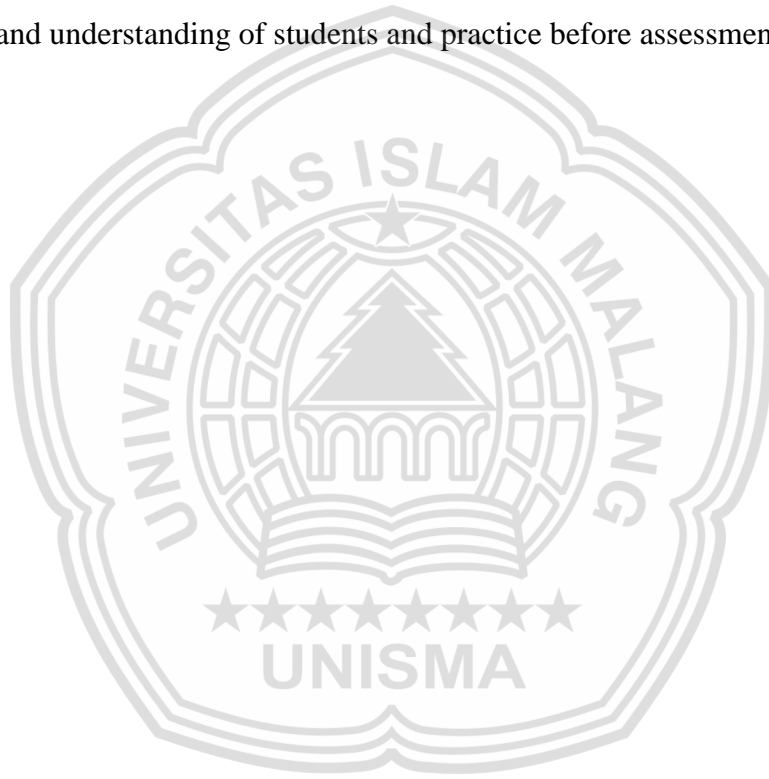
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses strategies and challenges for prospective teachers in teaching higher order thinking skills. The first part of the chapter discusses the background of the study and the research statement regarding this concept. The next section is the definition of the research question, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, and key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

The 21st century offers many opportunities to create fluid learning and working experiences with people around the world and to demonstrate the skills students need to succeed in an increasingly connected and complex world (Hidayat & Lestari, 2022). Critical thinking is one of the most important and necessary skills to meet the needs of 21st century workers. These are the characteristics of 21st century skills that the next generation must possess (Syawaludin et al., 2019). Individuals are required to make judgments in receiving information, give opinions along with their reasons logically, and objectively, and defend the decisions or conclusions made are correct (Fikriyati et al., 2022)

To develop such skills, students must acquire higher-order thinking skills (Hidayat & Lestari, 2022). In addition to that, it should be noted that critical thinking is a different concept from intelligence but critical thinking is a skill that can be improved in everyone (Moalosi et al., 2017). Critical thinking is the process by which a person makes decisions related to complex problems faced (Miatun & Khusna, 2020). Therefore, someone who is able to think critically will

continue to evaluate their thoughts to ensure that they will not come to the wrong conclusion or decision. However, in reality, the critical thinking performance of students in Indonesia is still unsatisfactory as said by (Galih & Alsa, 2019). Students are different and diverse individuals. Suhartoyo and Ni'mah (2020) found that students' written work was less critical. Some ideas and opinions tended to be descriptive because there was no argument. Some student have high critical thinking skills and some student still have low critical thinking skills (Alkurnia et al., 2019). Based on previous research by Fatmawati et al. (2019) thatcritical thinking skills are not well developed in students. The lack of collaborative thinking skills in students is also conveyed by Nahar who argues that teacher-centered learning causes students to have closed thinking and not accommodate each other, low respect for differences in opinion, low motivation, and no enthusiasm (Nahar et al., 2022). In actuality, collaboration in class can improve argumentative skills (Parlindungan et al., 2023)

On the other hand, the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in the fields of mathematics, language, and natural sciences that require the use of critical thinking in the process show that the ability of Indonesian students at the secondary school level is still below average. The results of the PISA evaluation in 2015 showed that Indonesia was ranked 62 outof 70 countries. Several factors point to low PISA results. One of the factors pointed out by several researchers is the lack of ability of Indonesian students insolving contextual questions in the form of tasks Faravani and Atai (cited in Ginting & Kuswandono, 2020).

Although the development of students' critical thinking in the classroom is increasingly studied, critical thinking still receives little attention in pre-service teacher education. As many researchers have argued (Cáceres et al., 2020), the development of critical thinking in students cannot occur without teachers who are qualified in curriculum skills and curriculum-orientated pedagogical methods. In addition, teachers also have some basic skills to improve their work, such as classroom management, lesson planning, group skills and opening and closing lessons, as well as understanding student behavior in the classroom.

Regarding to the issue, pre-service teacher training is one of the most important teacher training programs. Teachers must act as facilitators, organizers, guides, and motivators for students to create a good social environment n the classroom (Geng, 2021). Microteaching has been proven as a technique that improves prospective teachers' teaching skills and performance (Arslan, 2021; Karakaş & Yükselir, 2021; Mufidah, 2019). The results of some of these studies show that the PPL program can help pre-service teachers develop their teaching skills along with getting feedback from supervisors. Then, of this study indicate that in developing the learning plan it can be seen from the learner identity and methods factor when teacher teach.

Therefore, teachers should always try to evaluate their own beliefs and methods used whether they can improve students' critical thinking skills or not (Mogofe & Athiemoolam, 2023). In addition, the tasks given by teachers in class will also affect students' perceptions of the importance of the material they are learning (Halim, 2021) and self-evaluation can improve critical thinking skills,

which in turn will affect student learning outcomes (Werdinigsih et al., 2021). Shalihah et al. (2022) also argued that teachers should also provide more HOTS questions both orally and contextually through English textbooks that can help students build higher order thinking skills. On the other hand, Nahar stated that teacher-centered learning causes students to have a closed mindset this is one of the main reasons why education cannot be critical thinking education (Nahar et al., 2022). To improve students' critical thinking skills and help them become good critical thinkers, teachers must be good critical thinkers, teachers must be mentally prepared for their responsibilities, care about educating new generations in the context of change, flexibility, and strongly believe in the importance of encouraging critical thinking and believe in their students' abilities (Lorencová et al., 2019).

Previous studies in EFL has largely focuses on promoting critical thinking through teaching techniques and methods. Sheybani and Miri (2019) discussed professional teachers' practices in developing critical thinking. According to the findings of Kusaeri and Aditomo (2019), pre-service teachers should know the relationship between critical thinking and the function of constructivist learning in developing students' critical thinking. However, Liang and Fung (2021) explained that there is still little research investigating the implementation of critical thinking teaching in English classes by inexperienced teachers. The study by Arifin (2020) found that students failed in two main parts, namely making conclusions and expressing opinions. Students' lack of mastery of English is the main cause of this failure. In addition, with the implementation of HOTS-based

reading assessment, Damaianti et al. (2020) were able to identify that their research showed students' critical thinking skills were in the knowledge domain with a low cognitive level, and students were only able to recognize and recall factual information.

Based on the above issues, many previous studies have focused on students. Many of these studies looked at the effectiveness of higher-order thinking skills or their perceptions of questions. Therefore, the current study is one that focuses on teacher voice. Teacher voice is important to integrate critical thinking into other pre-service teacher training programs in promoting critical thinking and preparing their skills to teach it and improve the quality of learning.

1.2 Reseach Quetions

Based on the problems illustrated above, the following research questions formulated in this research are:

1. What are the challenges that pre-service teachers faced in developing students' critical thinking?

2. What are the strategies used by pre-service teachers to develop students' critical thinking?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the research question, this researcher wanted to explore the challenges faced and strategies used by pre-service teachers in developing higher order thinking skills (HOTS). The following are the objectives of this research:

1. To describe the challenges that prospective English teachers face in the process of developing students' critical thinking skills in the classroom.

2. To explore teachers' strategies in developing students' higher order thinking skills when learning in the classroom.

1.4 Significances of the Study

Research on the challenges and strategies undertaken by teachers in developing critical thinking skills in Senior High School at SMAN 3 Malang because this school is the place where I and my friends carry out the field teaching practice program. Therefore, it is expected to provide practical and theoretical benefits. This research is expected to provide input in teaching students in the classroom, especially those related to students' critical thinking skills. With this research, teachers and schools can develop forms of learning, as well as strategies that are more appropriate for students, especially to develop students' critical thinking skills. Then, practical benefits for teachers and school. This research can be used as a reference material to better understand the characteristics, abilities, and barriers that students have and the existence of this research can develop appropriate learning for students based on the abilities of students. On the other hand, theoretically, this research can be used for school guidelines related to understanding student barriers, especially in thinking skills, increase understanding of critical thinking skills, so as to provide appropriate learning for students, and develop and establish a learning system in schools that can accommodate critical thinking needs according to their characteristics and abilities.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms in this study are to help readers to understand it more easily. The researcher provides definitions for key terms used in this study in an effort to prevent the reader from misinterpreting the research concepts.

Pre-Service Teacher

Pre-service teachers mean individuals who are undergoing formal training and education to become teachers, but have not yet entered the teaching profession as fully qualified teachers. Emphasizing the development of critical thinking means teacher candidates engage in learning and practices that foster analytical thinking, information evaluation, problem solving, and decision making skills. In this regard, prospective teachers are expected to be able to develop their skills and knowledge. Not only does it provide information but also encourages the development of students' critical thinking. This can be done through assignments, practical experience and reflective practice. In short, prospective teachers actively acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to develop the critical thinking of future students.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking means the skills needed by students to develop their knowledge and understanding. Critical thinking is better than focusing on memorizing learning and simply remembering what they have learned, critical thinking will involve conceptualization, application, analysis of information, synthesis, and evaluation actively and skillfully to conclude decisions. Developing critical thinking requires developing a mindset that goes beyond simply accepting

information, encouraging individuals to question, enquire, and engage in decision-making. From the definition, it can be seen that when students think critically, they can justify what they believe or do. Critical thinking is also considered a skill to identify problems, analyses specific circumstances, draw solutions to a problem, and evaluate results.

Challenge

Challenge means to a complex problem, situation, or task that is encountered and requires individuals to use higher-order cognitive processes. These challenges are deliberately designed to stimulate critical thinking, encouraging individuals to analyses information, evaluate evidence, and propose appropriate solutions. Challenges in developing critical thinking often involve uncertainty, ambiguity, and the need to solve problems creatively. Facing these challenges gives individuals the opportunity to improve their critical thinking skills and make informed decisions.

Strategy

Strategy means refers to a deliberate and systematic plan or approach used to enhance a students' ability to think critically. These strategies are designed to encourage the development of analytical skills, effective problem solving, and evaluation of information. Critical thinking strategies aim to guide individuals in processing information more deeply, considering multiple perspectives, and making informed decisions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This section presents research conclusions, implications and suggestions. Thisconclusion is drawn from the results of the previous chapter. Based on this conclusion, several implications and suggestions are expected to help students acquire critical thinking skills in learning activities.

5.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the whole research problems which have been presented above, the researcher concludes this study as follows:

Some of the challenges faced by prospective teachers in the teaching process are three, including teacher knowledge, where teachers must understand how to make learning plans taking into account students' level and cognitive abilities. The second teacher is preparation, the teacher prepares strategies and teaching activities that contain hots. Third is the student's ability which shows how the student's abilities are. Lack of self-awareness in student's means teachers have to expend more energy to make activities interesting. Because some students have difficulty concentrating and don't like English. Some students are also active and tend to always take notes on what the teacher says.

The first strategy used by the teacher is to prepare a learning plan that is relevant to the students' cognitive level with consideration of bloom taxonomy. The second is teach through questioning, namely pre-service teachers giving hot questions to see students' effectiveness and understanding. Because when asked a question students are able to respond further and show interest, this can make

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students think critically in follow-up questions. Third, namely practice before judgment. This strategy is used in class by providing practice before the assessment. The exercises given contain hot spots for critical thinking because they have to analyze the phenomena they discuss. Teachers tend to often give group assignments because when they are in group students can be more active. The fourth strategy is review, refine, and improve. The teacher reviews the learning process, namely by reviewing it at the end of the lesson by asking several questions to find out which understanding the students still need. Fifth, namely the teacher provide feedback strategy. Every activity has an assessment so that teachers always convey their assessment standards and criteria so that they can plan and direct their efforts according to expectations. They assess each task sequentially. Not only teachers, students are also given the opportunity to assess their themes when there are group assignments.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the findings of this research, there are several recommendations that are potentially useful for improving students' higher-order thinking abilities. The English teacher asks students questions in stages from low-level questions to high-level questions. Even though most students' abilities are good, higher level thinking still needs to be trained gradually. Researchers also suggest teachers to develop their teaching strategies to motivate students to learn English and explore their thinking skills.

Meanwhile, for future researchers, this research still has several shortcomings. Therefore, research regarding the development of students' higher-

order thinking abilities is still an important and potential area for research. The researcher suggests that future researchers explore students' higher-order thinking abilities with more in-depth analysis, different research designs, varied participant groups, and with more valid instruments.

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