

# The Feasibility of Critical Literacy Practices in an EFL Reading Class

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**Abstract**—This research aims to explain how critical literacy was practiced in an EFL reading class. In this reading class, students read and responded to a short story about bullying and friendship entitled *Egghead*. The data were generated from the classroom's observations and interactions and students' artifacts during the reading class. This research thoroughly examined 1) how critical literacy was employed in the reading classroom and 2) students' engagement in the class. Using the four dimensions of critical literacy by Lewison et al. (2002), this research has figured out that critical literacy practices in the reading class are feasible to raise students' awareness. Two significant findings are emphasized in this research. First is the positive outcomes during classroom discussions. Second, this approach can create an atmosphere that can motivate students' enthusiasm and enjoyment. Both findings show that employing critical literacy allows students to verbalize their thoughts and opinions of their worldview, raising their awareness and understanding of social issues. However, as a role model, the teacher must engage students in a meaningful discussion while selecting and considering appropriate reading materials.

**Index Terms**—critical literacy practices, EFL reading class

## I. INTRODUCTION

People's perceptions of the environment have shifted along with the times due to the abundance of information available in today's culture. The information is then interpreted using texts as a reference (both written and oral). As a result, a comprehensive understanding of what has happened, what is happening now, and why this has happened is needed. With this in mind, as English teachers, we have often been confronted with a plethora of ideas and thoughts on how we should teach and what students should learn, especially when digesting information concerning their critical literacy skills. These skills are required to help them succeed in the twenty-first century's fast-changing society. In this era, students must be able to digest knowledge, challenge ideas, contend, take a stand, and (or) understand the voices in the texts.

In Indonesia, the curriculum design under the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) currently embraces improving students' critical literacy. The MoEC proposed *Gerakan Literasi Nasional/GLN* (National Literacy Movement) under the Ministerial Regulation of Education and Culture No. 23 in 2015. This regulation aims to improve and preserve the Indonesian students' characters which then covers three other literacy movements, namely, *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* (School Literacy Movement), *Gerakan Literasi Keluarga* (Family Literacy Movement), and *Gerakan Literasi Masyarakat* (Society Literacy Movement).

In the sense of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, the problems are even more perplexing. According to Gustine (2014), teachers and students face difficulties in terms of teaching and learning processes where they must master English reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills through memorization, yet at the same time, they must also develop their critical skills. Harste (2003), on the other hand, contends that the previously described traditional skills are no longer adequate for twenty-first-century students. Students are encouraged to engage "in higher-order thinking skills – creativity, innovation, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving – by tackling real-world problems" (Živkovic, 2016, p. 107). They note that educational institutions frequently place too much emphasis on memorization.

Today, Indonesia's conventional educational philosophy is still upheld; it relies on memorization. This tradition of memorization has been perpetuated and practiced in all schools for decades, and it has become a misconception that a student is intelligent and well-achieved if he or she can memorize all of the lessons taught by the teachers and pass the exams with flying colors. Even so, this memorization activity has hampered students' imagination to the extent that they are required to complete assignments based on the interests of the teachers (Rahayu, 2021).

With this in mind, a new teaching method that can help students improve their critical literacy skills is urgently needed. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian philosopher, pioneered the concept of addressing students with critical thought decades earlier. Freire was a precursor in the field of critical literacy. He emphasizes that critical literacy cannot be perceived as a single, unified approach but as a set of socio-political perspectives. Freire instructed Brazilian and Chilean workers to read decades ago using a problem-solving pedagogy that introduced them to practical and profound valuable vocabulary in their everyday lives (Freire, 1971). Freire used language to motivate and stimulate his students, engaging them in critical reflection on the oppressive realities of the moment and teaching them how to break away from injustice and change their lives.

The preceding explanation merits further consideration, especially in the context of Indonesian EFL teaching. On the one hand, the demand in the twenty-first century is high; students are expected to be critical thinkers, capable of debating and disputing opposing points of view and developing their understanding. On the other hand, in Indonesia, teaching and learning processes are still primarily developed on the basic idea that students should memorize (Dananjaya, 2013).

In line with the above explanations, this study explains how critical literacy practices are implemented in Mulawarman University's intensive reading class using a short story entitled *Egghead*. In conducting the practices, the four dimensions of critical literacy suggested by Lewison et al. (2002) are employed, namely 1) disrupting the commonplace, 2) interrogating multiple viewpoints, 3) focusing on socio-political issues, 4) taking action and promoting social justice. The four dimensions model is chosen as it offers an in-depth understanding of how critical literacy practices should be implemented in the class.

Based on the rationales above, this research is trying to explore empirical data to answer the following questions.

1. How are critical literacy practices implemented in the class?
2. How do students engage in the reading activities?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Critical Literacy

Experts and researchers classify critical literacy based on distinct theoretical frameworks and approaches, making its definition complex. For example, McDaniel (2006) notes that "critical literacy transcends conventional notions of reading and writing to incorporate critical thinking, questioning, and transformation of self and/or one's world" (p. 5). Moreover, according to Luke (2000), critical literacy education is also "a theoretical and practical attitude" (p. 454). Critical literacy has replaced this context's narrow skills-based reading and writing instruction model. Today's students encountering the 'web and net' age makes it more critical than decades ago. As Janks (2010) mentioned;

In an age where the production of meaning is being democratized by Web 2, social networking sites and portable connectivity, powerful discourses continue to speak us and to speak through us. We often become unconscious agents of their distribution. At the same time, these new media have been used for disseminating counter-discourses, for mobilizing opposition, for questioning and destabilizing power. This is the context within which we need to consider the role of critical literacy in education (p. 150).

Critical literacy undoubtedly plays an essential role in students' lives. As many scholars have said, Blanton (1999) asserts that critical literacy significantly transforms academic achievement because it involves more than just reading and writing. According to Comber (2001), language is utilized in increasingly potent ways to question freedom and injustice in society. Moreover, Knobel and Lankshear (2002) state that critically literate students can examine ongoing development, their roles in the world, and how their experiences make sense.

Although there are numerous approaches to critical literacy (Pennycook, 2001), it is concerned with "engaging with the possibilities that the technologies of writing and other modes of inscription offer for social change, cultural diversity, economic equity, and political enfranchisement" (Luke & Freebody, 1997, p. 1).

Critical literacy is then used to develop students' critical stance or perspective when studying a language and their ability to discover hidden ideologies embedded in texts, as previously mentioned.

In addition to that, Luke and Freebody (1999) stated that effective literacy practices allow students to:

1. Break the codes of the texts, and students need to comprehend the basic features of the written texts, such as alphabet, sounds, spelling, and structural conventions and patterns,
2. Participate in comprehending and creating meaningful written, visual, and spoken texts. In this instance, students are encouraged to relate their knowledge and cultural background, perspectives, and experiences to make meaning of texts or to compare and contrast their experiences with texts,
3. Utilize texts essentially by traversing and negotiating the labor and social relations surrounding them; – i.e., by understanding and going to act on the different social and cultural functions that numerous texts perform inside

and outside of class and by understanding that these features shape how texts are formed, their tone, the degree of formality, and the order of their structures.

4. Texts are neither ideologically natural nor neutral; they reflect one point of view while censoring others and affecting people's thoughts, and the designs of texts and the discourses contained within them can be criticized and reinvented in unique and hybrid ways.

The four models above help students consider their positions from various perspectives to analyze texts critically. According to Luke (2000), these models cannot be used hierarchically; instead, the four interdependent functions should be used synchronously. This research employs four models of critical literacy by Lewison et al. (2002):

1. Disrupting the Commonplace

A new take on the commonplace is one definition of critical literacy, which applies to this concept aspect. Language and other sign systems are utilized to determine implicit ways of perceiving and examine new frames to comprehend the experience. Another method of social action, according to Van Sluys et al. (2006) is: ...reading resistantly, communicating new lines of thinking, and pushing others to question how they come to see the world (Van Sluys et al., 2006, pp. 22-23).

2. Interrogating multiple viewpoints

In this dimension, students are encouraged to understand experiences and texts from their perspectives and other viewpoints. Further, students are also challenged to identify whose voices are heard or silenced critically and those who are marginalized and oppressed through the analysis of the texts.

3. Focusing on sociopolitical issues

This dimension demonstrates that teaching is not a neutral form of social practice, yet it is frequently conducted without regard for how sociopolitical systems, power relationships, and language are inextricably intertwined with our teaching. Literacy can be understood in this dimension as a means to challenge unequal power relationships (Anderson & Irvine, 1993).

4. Taking action and promoting social justice

This aspect is commonly regarded as the core of critical literacy. Social justice promotion does not always require becoming a social activist (Lee, 2012). A change in perspective or the transition from superficial to resistant reading can also be classified as taking action (Lewison et al., 2006).

This research makes use of the four-dimensions model (Lewison et al., 2002) in three different capacities: as a teaching model, as a procedure, and as an analysis tool.

### *B. Literature in English Language Teaching*

The benefits of linking language teaching and learning with literature have grown over the last few decades. Students' ability to learn English is thought to be enhanced by reading literary texts. Lyutaya (2011) pointed out that reading literature "exposes them to exciting plots, interesting characters, and authentic dialogues as they learn the language in context" (p. 26). Further, she added that the reading assignments could be employed as a platform to integrate other language skills, such as; when the students have to verbalize their thoughts, it will lead to their improvement of listening and speaking skills, and when they have to write the feedback in the reading activities. In much the same vein, Povey (1972) declared that "literature will help increase language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage and complex and exact syntax" (p. 44).

However, the link between language teaching and literature has not always been flawless in the EFL context. Curriculum design, content availability, and teachers' experience in selecting suitable texts are all typical constraints that obstruct the use of literature in the teaching and learning process. In the early 1990s, the focus of ELT was using Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in ELT; literature functioned as "illustrations of the grammatical rules" (Duff & Maley, p. 3). The Grammar Translation Method, the original method for teaching foreign languages, was employed for the longest time in language education history, from its birth until the 1900s. The purpose of this technique was "to learn a language to read its literature in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from foreign language study" (Richard & Rodgers, 2001, p. 5). Only in the early 2000s was a space dedicated to literature in language teaching created. Despite the heated debates and contradictory stances on using literature in the language classroom, some studies and theories that support the ideas still win out among teachers and researchers.

## III. RESEARCH METHOD

### *A. Research Design*

The primary purpose of this study is to determine and clarify how important literacy activities are used in an EFL reading class. Specifically, the study is performed in a classroom setting with students obtaining a thorough understanding of the topic. As a result, a case study is thought to be the best method for this analysis. Case studies enable complicated problem-solving. Yin (1984, p. 23) defines the case study research method "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used". Further, Yin (1994) states that there are some advantages to employing case study, they are; 1) The examination of the data can be thorough as it is usually conducted within the context of its use, 2) The variations can also create space to approach the study by using

quantitative method, 3) Case study not only help to explore the data in real-world experiments but also aid in explaining the complexities of situations that other approaches may not cover. Thus, a case study is suitable for this research because this research will be conducted in real-life situations and will try to uncover the complexities of the issues (Arifin et al., 2022).

Teachers' in-class observations and discussions formed the basis for this study's data. Furthermore, data were obtained from students' artifacts during reading class exercises to concentrate on critical literacy practices. An open-ended questionnaire was circulated to the students to obtain more detailed information about their class participation.

### B. Participants

The participants in this study are 32 students enrolled in Mulawarman University's English Literature Study Program's Intensive Reading Class. There are 14 females and 18 males among the students. In Indonesian schools and universities, large classes are pretty standard. These students are in their second semester, indicating they are still adapting to university life after graduating high school. Students' language abilities are also diverse, implying a disparity in their language proficiency.

All participants in this research are aged between 17-19 years old. The majority of the students come from Samarinda with different ethnic groups. Some are Bugisnese, Banjarese, Kutainese, Javanese, Dayaknese, and Berau. They spoke Bahasa Indonesia, mainly used to communicate, and some are fluent speakers of their local languages. As has been noted, the students' cultural and ethnic backgrounds are diverse, which indirectly also influences their worldviews and perspectives on how to see things which makes this research worth investigating further.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Implementation of Critical Literacy Practices & Students' Engagement

The implementation of the practices was guided by a lesson plan designed based on the four dimensions model of critical literacy. In order to understand the map of the ongoing teaching and learning process, the lesson plan is provided as follows:

TABLE 1  
LESSON PLAN

Meeting	2 <sup>nd</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup>
Main topic	Bullying
Sub-Topic	School, family, friendship, and emotions
Rationale	This course encourages students to discuss and reflect on issues teenagers commonly face. Furthermore, students are expected to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss whether the texts they read are still happening in society nowadays</li> <li>2. Make a connection between the texts and their life experience and cultural background</li> <li>3. Explore the definitions of bullying from different references</li> <li>4. Question the values of friendship</li> <li>5. Identify why diversity might become the source of the problem</li> </ol>
Language objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respond and ask to higher-order thinking questions</li> <li>2. Describe a person's specific appearance by using accurate adjectives in the story</li> <li>3. Report some specific events in the past by using correct tenses, such as; <i>Yesterday, Michael went to...</i></li> <li>4. Retell the story by using past tense and other verbs</li> <li>5. Use vocabulary embedded in the texts</li> </ol>
Class activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read aloud the story</li> <li>2. Give an opinion about the story</li> <li>3. Discuss the similarity and the difference in the setting</li> <li>4. Discuss the story and relate that to their life experience.</li> <li>5. Do the exercise in each chapter</li> <li>6. Create a bookmark</li> <li>7. Create a mind-map</li> <li>8. Write a reflective journal</li> </ol>

The lesson plan is made based on the *Egghead* storybook. The book consists of 79 (seventy-nine) pages and is divided into 6 (six) chapters; *Chapter I: The Monster Horse*, *Chapter II: A Day at School*, *Chapter III: Egg and Bacon and the Invisible Ball*, *Chapter IV: The Old Man*, *Chapter V: Tom's Story*, and *Chapter VI: The Prize*. In each chapter, the book is also provided with post-reading activities related to reading comprehension questions. There is also another question that leads the students to wonder in the next chapter of the book. In addition, this book is also equipped with a brief explanation of the four main foci in the story; first is the end of the story, the second is the description of the author's first-hand experiences as the bullying victim, third is the bullying, and fourth is the settings. The settings used by the author are all located in England, such as London Zoo, The Natural History Museum, and Hyde Park. The explanation helps students understand clearly the situation and the places.

### B. An Overview of Critical Literacy Dimensions in the Lesson on Friendship and Bullying From *Egghead* Story: The Implementation and Students' Engagement

Students' responses in this lesson were outlined with the four dimensions model elaborated in Chapter 2. The responses were outlined and related to the first dimension, disrupting the commonplace, and the second dimension, considering multiple perspectives presented below, followed the third dimension, focusing on socio-political issues, and the fourth dimension taking social action. The data used to document this lesson came from observations made in the classroom and assignments turned in by the students.

(a). *Questioning and Interconnecting 'Bullying'*

Based on the preliminary responses to the short story, students verbalized their thoughts on the definition of bullying and the stereotypical images of the bully and the victims. When the students were asked to do this, they emphasized the physical appearance of the bullying victims. They identified the physical attributes, such as *big head* and *red face*.

The following responses showed the interconnection between bullying and physical appearance:

Data 4.1.

*Ella: Michael was bullied by his school friends. They called Michael Egghead because he has a big head. He felt nobody liked him and never tell anyone about it. But Michael trying to ignored them and did anything he wants. When Tom tells him that Egghead means clever, he was getting confident. He doesn't care anymore if his friends call him Egghead every day.*

*Laras: This main story is about bullying that experienced by Michael and David because they have a different physical than others, Michael has a bigger had and David has a red face like bacon, the problem solved because Michael get support from tom, David, and his parent. He starts to show his self-confidence and his ability and there's no one bully him.*

Students then engaged in further discussion. In small groups, they listed some words which were related to bullying. They found some listed words: *mock, earning respect, confidence, toxic people, rejected, courage, proud, harassment, different, mockery, and support.*

During the class observations, one of the students stated that his group tried to list more positive words than negative ones. One of the reasons why they did that was because the group members used to be bullying victims. In the students' opinion, it can be seen that some of them tried to fight the accepted normalcy created in society. These activities showed that students could identify whose voices were heard and whose voices were unheard (Luke and Freebody, 1997) in the texts.

After that, students were invited to verbalize their opinions on why bullying was closely related to physical appearance and why having support was necessary, particularly for the victims. When the students were asked this particular question, they explained that some young people have become more aware by giving a counterargument. Below are some students' responses which are mainly highlighted on the above issues:

Data 4.2.

*Rina: Michael got bullied at school because of his appearance, and he solved it by showing people what he capable of, with some persistence.*

*Deni: The Main Problem of the story is that Michael don't have any friend and the other kid at school don't want to be friend or play with him and they always mock him when they have the chance the problem of this story is solved by Michael who write a story and tell that story in front of the school earning respect from the other student. Though this case might not happen in Indonesia, they committed suicide because there's no support from the surrounding.*

From the two responses above, the students could identify the different perspectives from the story (Lewinson et al., 2002), which aligns with the four dimensions of critical literacy. What is more, students also became the agents that tried to create a more just society by giving feedback on how to handle bullying. They mentioned *support, self-achievement, and courage*. As the discussion unfolded, students started to see more clearly the stereotyped nature of the representation of one's physical appearance. As Rina and Deni articulated, students' responses demonstrate an essential and gradual shift in their thinking.

During the discussion, however, most students questioned what if the bullying victims had no excellent support system, just like Michael. Deni, for example, questioned some of the bullying cases in Indonesia where the victims decided to end their lives in miserable ways. Deni's critical statement shows that he is gaining a critical awareness by comparing what happened in the texts and in some real situations in Indonesia. The responses from the students mark a crucial change in the way students compare and contrast the different settings of bullying, question the idea of bullying, and cope with the bullying.

(b). *Reflecting and Positioning*

Students' responses can be split into two groups: those who want to be the narrator and challenge the story's unfair treatment and those who want to be another character and challenge the story's unjust treatment. The following is the first example:

*Maria: I want to be like egghead, because I think people who successfully passed the times*

*Ahmad: when he bullied, he will be stronger than people who never got bullied*

*Ben: Yes I want to be a egghead so I can fight the bullied*

*Laila: Maybe yes, and I will fight them back if I get bullied. They will never stop if I don't make them quiet*

The responses above demonstrate that when the students are positioned to be the characters in the story, half of them try to fight back. Students' reflections on the story are also trying to prove that bullying is wrong in so many ways. Ahmad, for example, verbalized that the individual bullying experiences will make him/her stronger. When the discussion progressed, Rama also mentioned that he used to be a bullying victim, and after that, he escaped the situation by painting pictures/drawing.

Another episode is based on a classroom activity in which students must select their favorite lines from the story and create bookmarks from them. Encouragement and constructive reinforcement from the environment are two items that bullying victims need, as shown by the bookmarks. Furthermore, some students argue that schools in Indonesia should have knowledgeable counselors, not just counselors who can advise them on the best universities to attend or how to improve their grades. From class discussions and activities, students have learned that the current system in some Indonesian schools needs to be modified, especially regarding student well-being. This definition is intertwined with critical literacy's third dimension (Lewinson et al., 2002).

Below is the bookmark created by one of the students.

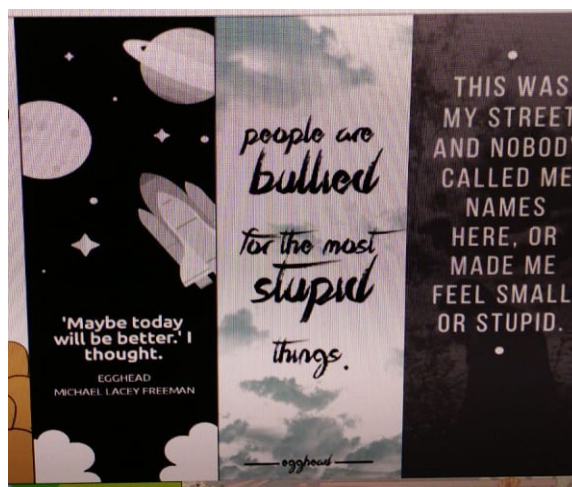


Figure 1. Bookmark

Students' favorite lines demonstrate that when optimistic and compassionate environments surround bullying victims, they can change and deal with their problems.

Those who do not want to be the protagonist in the story come up with the second concept. The following are extracts from their arguments:

*Sean: I would not like to be the character in this story, because it is so hard to be Michael bullied by other children, he did not tell his parents. He had no friends and was lonely even he had an imaginary friend 'Andrew'.*

*Lea: No, because I certainly won't be able to. I was too weak to face bullying. And to be honest, I'm not like Michael who is very patient. If I were in Michael's position, I would definitely fight them and avenge their treatment of me. But, I'm so proud of Michael. He can overcome problems with the brain not the muscles.*

While the students do not want to be the novel's protagonist, they acknowledge that bullying must be counteracted and ultimately eliminated. According to Lea, bullying can be countered using an intelligent brain. This argument stresses the importance of sound reasoning and critical thought in coping with bullying. Moreover, this idea resonates with the notion of disrupting the ordinary situation. Generally, a phrase says 'an eye for an eye', yet the students prefer to transform the shared belief by offering a solution to bullying.

Through analyzing the texts, students started to understand that bullying might happen in society because of the differences, and they also offered a more humanist approach to dealing with the bully.

### (c). Identifying and Redefining Self

After the students were questioned on the causes that caused bullying and how they would position themselves in the story, the discussion continued to their favorite part(s). The excerpts from the students demonstrate that most students choose the parts when Michael can achieve what he wants, show his strength, and solve problems with the help of the people around him.

*Mila: I love the part when Michael's friends start singing Egghead when swimming lesson finished. He tries to thinking people who love him and he smile. I think that was the best way to get rid of my anxiety.*

*Maria: I like when Michael in his swimming class. He feels so quiet in the water. He can't hear anything. So calm and he remember the thing Tom said to him. Then, when he out from the water, he feel better because he know how to not to care about people who call him names.*

*Dani: My favourite part of this story is when Tom said to Michael "just remember, they don't know you. So, if they don't know you, what they say isn't important. Don't let it hurt you inside. Remember, everybody who cares about you, and knows you, your mum and dad, David and me, we don't call your names. The others aren't important". Because when I read this part, I am also feeling better, just like Michael. I am touched. It motivates me, to love myself.*

The above responses reveal that the students can demonstrate a critical understanding of self-achievement. Mila's quote, for example, conveys that if someone can be content and achieve anything in life, they can overcome their anxiety. As a result, students gain an understanding of the value of being able to solve problems individually and how to deal with them. Mila has reached a stage where self-achievement can become a defining factor in someone's ability to inspire themselves, despite her inability to explain why.

Maria utters yet another comment. Maria emphasizes the importance of other people in forming a person's self-identity and self-confidence. According to our classroom observation, Maria added that people often choose not to discuss their issues because they are afraid or embarrassed. However, after reading the story, Maria understands that Michael's story may have happened to her brothers or friends, and she tries to listen first before making broad generalizations about people's experiences.

Another identical idea comes from Dani. Michael is strengthened by Tom, which is his favorite part of the plot. Dani also stated during the discussion that he had the same experience when his classmates bullied him. As a consequence, class, in this case, serves as a reflection of real life, enabling students to focus on and rethink social problems that have arisen in their lives. His reflective notions can also be seen in his words, such as; *feel touched, motivate* and *love myself*. Based on the comments, it appears that students have begun to raise their awareness of bullying, mainly how to deal with it. Furthermore, as shown by the above opinions, critical literacy discussions in class tend to cause students to become more reflective.

#### (d). Taking Action

As stated in the literature review, the final dimension of Lewison et al.'s (2002) framework is taking action, regarded as the 'heart' of critical literacy. In this dimension, students are involved in critical literacy when there is a shift in the reading activity. Students can question, argue and take a stance from the reading activity. Furthermore, it allows students to re-examine their way of thinking (Van Sluys et al., 2005).

*Riza: I think the author want we know that there is ok to be different, not so insecure and don't give up in any situation*

*Rani: The author -which is also the main character- want to tell us about his life. He wants people to know how society works. For child, teen, or adult. Not just in the past, but also present. He want the reader to be stronger and not give up when their life quite hard to bear. I think this story want to save people who have the same problem as him. Bully didn't end up until now. But through this story, the author tells us that there will be happy ending in your life. Just don't give up and go on. Maybe not just for them who get bullied, but also all people who want to give up of their life. And through this story, the author proves that someone who bullied other is nothing. Finally being nothing. Really-really nothing. That's what I think.*

*Rama: I think the author would like to remind us, just because the difference we treat people different unconsciously, we didn't even realise that the difference can make us 'complete' cause we fill up each the emptiness from the other, together we can make better world.*

From the above excerpts, Riza, Rani, and Rama have developed their awareness, and they can differentiate that in society, there must be actions that may lead to uncomfortable feelings. Moreover, they also explain that people are different in so many ways. Rama, for example, states that differences can be used as a 'tool' to see things and to 'fill' the empty gap. Though Rama could not clearly explain what he meant, he gave an example from the story. It was when Michael and David became friends. Michael's hobby is playing football, while David's is running around. Then Michael suggested that David play football together so that David could still run when he felt scared.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, students successfully demonstrate their ability to make responses that reflect the four dimensions of the critical literacy framework (Lewison et al., 2002). At least two essential findings emerge from the critical literacy practices and students' engagement in the reading class. The first finding relates to the positive outcomes during the discussions in class. Relating to critical literacy practices, students can define bullying by reflecting on their experiences and positioning themselves. Further, students can identify what happened in society, leading them to redefine themselves. This one relates to how students use the classroom as a reflective tool. In this instance, a classroom is seen not as a neutral place but as a contestation place to form self-identity. Last but not least is the most crucial part of critical literacy practices. It is when students can take action and try to transform an unjust society. In this phase, students gradually shift in seeing and interpreting the world.

Second, in terms of students' engagement in the class, they all showed enthusiasm and enjoyment. Their enthusiasm can be seen when the quiet students were also willing to verbalize their thoughts about their experiences. One of the students even gives opinions that learning English can be so much fun. Also, she can acquire new vocabulary during the

teaching and learning process. However, also, she can broaden her cultural knowledge about England. Hence, it can be assumed that a good choice of relevant stories, teacher preparations, and collaborative activities in the class will support the feasibility of critical literacy practices in an EFL setting.

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