

# The Effect of Using the Contemplative Approach to Enhance Speaking and Critical Thinking Skills in the EFL Undergraduate Literature Classroom

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**Abstract**—This research study explored the effect of using the contemplative approach to enhance speaking skills and critical thinking skills in the EFL literature classroom which aimed to 1) investigate English speaking skills and 2) investigate students' critical thinking skills in the EFL literature classroom. This research study applied a mixed-method research design. Data collection was conducted in both qualitative and quantitative formats. Instruments were an English speaking test, a critical thinking test, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and a reflective journal. The sample group was eleven second-year students of the English studies major who enrolled in the literary adaptation course in the second semester of the academic year 2022 at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, Thailand by purposive sampling with the volunteers who were interviewed and joined the activities. The quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics while the qualitative data was classified, analyzed, and reported by the objective items. The findings indicate that contemplative approaches can significantly enhance students' English-speaking skills. Although the results suggest that participating in contemplative activities did not have a statistically significant impact on the participants' critical thinking abilities, a slight improvement was observed in their critical thinking skills.

**Index Terms**—contemplative approach, critical thinking, speaking skills, EFL literature classroom

## I. INTRODUCTION

English has become increasingly important in Thailand over the past decade, especially since joining ASEAN in 2015. With the growth of tourism, foreign investment, and logistics, learning English has become essential in this technologically advanced era. Newly graduated students are expected to use English effectively in domestic and international workplaces, making it the responsibility of higher education institutes to produce high English proficiency graduates. However, educational institutions and stakeholders face pressure to improve pedagogical approaches to accommodate the increasing number of students and improve learning outcomes (Bae, 2018). Thai students encounter various challenges in acquiring a new language, encompassing both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. Despite the government's support for English development, students' competencies in English are at a moderate level due to a lack of practice in class and the Thai-speaking environment. Grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are among the language skills that students struggle with, and shyness about speaking English is a significant obstacle (Doromee, 2018).

Recently, critical thinking skills are emphasized at all levels of education, as they are considered essential for success in both personal and professional life. It involves logical thinking, reasoning, and making informed judgments. Higher-order thinking, which includes skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information, is particularly crucial for students to develop. The concept of cooperative critical thinking has been widely discussed in fields outside of English language teaching, despite its relevance in the EFL context (Marin & la Pava, 2017). When it comes to literature studies, students should be capable of making critical judgments about the texts they read and identifying hidden meanings within them. However, developing critical thinking skills, particularly among university students, can be challenging because students need to develop their academic and social success skills, enhance their English language skills, and engage in reflective and independent thinking to solve problems through critical thinking (Gandimathi & Zarei, 2018). Kaowiwattanakul (2009) found that there are many challenges facing attempts to encourage Thai students to become critical thinkers due to their cultural background, educational system, and religion. However, in response to modern social issues, a trend of self-awareness and mindfulness development emerged in the 1980s, known as "Contemplative Education" in the United States. This approach aims to respond to social crises by using contemplation and have become an international phenomenon that has expanded across higher education,

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including in Thailand where it has been practiced for over 20 years under the name "Alternative Education." or "contemplative education" (Srisuwan, 2018, p. 198). There has been a growing interest in applying contemplative principles to teaching and learning such as Scida and Jone (2017), Burford et al. (2018), Karolyn (2019), and Chareonsukmonkol (2019). While there are some indications that these principles are being used in EFL classrooms, the focus seems to be on improving reading comprehension (Giveh, 2018) and writing skills, which can enhance academic performance and interpersonal communication. However, previous studies have primarily focused on analyzing language proficiency, learning attitudes, and motivation, while EFL instructors appear hesitant to implement these principles in speaking activities. Additionally, contemplative practices have mainly been integrated into educational contexts to support well-being, reduce stress, foster resilience, and enhance learning, rather than into literature EFL courses. This study aims to bridge this gap and provide educators with additional options for developing lesson plans that meet the needs of 21st-century students.

After reviewing related documents, the researcher hypothesized that these contemplative practices may improve both students' English speaking and critical thinking abilities. However, it is crucial to consider the learner's level of self-awareness and English proficiency when designing appropriate activities. Therefore, this study aims to demonstrate how to incorporate literature into EFL courses using contemplative activities to enhance students' critical thinking and English-speaking skills. This study will benefit English lecturers at the tertiary level by providing guidance in revising and developing appropriate English literature courses for English major students or related fields and can assist lecturers in including a proportion of content and skills in each course that helps strengthen students' practical abilities.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Contemplative Approach*

The contemplative approach refers to a way of engaging with the world that emphasizes introspection, self-awareness, and contemplation. It can take many forms, including meditation, yoga, journaling, and mindfulness exercises. The goal of these practices is to cultivate a state of heightened awareness and inner stillness, which can lead to greater insight, clarity, and peace of mind. Contemplative practices can help foster empathy, compassion, and a sense of interconnectedness with others. In the language learning context, a contemplative approach can potentially improve English speaking in EFL learners by helping them develop greater self-awareness, mindfulness, and a more focused and attentive mindset. It can help EFL learners become more aware of their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. By cultivating this awareness, learners can better manage anxiety, stress, and negative self-talk, which can hinder language learning and speaking ability. In addition, it can also help EFL learners develop more focused and attentive listening skills. By practicing active listening and being fully present in the moment, learners can better understand spoken English and become more confident in their speaking ability. Finally, it can help EFL learners develop a growth mindset and a willingness to learn from mistakes. By approaching language learning with curiosity and a willingness to explore new concepts and ideas, learners can develop a more positive attitude toward learning and speaking English.

### B. *Critical Thinking*

Critical thinking refers to the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information and draw conclusions logically. Critical thinking skills are important in many aspects of life, including academics, career, and personal relationships. The concept of critical thinking can be traced back to Socrates, an ancient Greek philosopher who emphasized the importance of questioning assumptions and examining evidence. The term "critical thinking" was first used by educational reformer John Dewey in his 1910 book "How We Think". Since then, the concept has been further developed and refined by a variety of scholars and educators and has become widely recognized as a crucial skill for success in many fields. One well-known scholar Benjamin Bloom since 1956 created a framework for categorizing educational objectives and goals called Bloom's Taxonomy of Critical Thinking consisting of six levels of cognitive skills: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In 2001, a revised version was introduced, which changed the category names from noun to verb form: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. The taxonomy provides a useful tool for educators to design learning objectives and assessments that promote higher-order thinking and cognitive development in students and has been widely used recently. In the context of language classrooms, incorporating critical thinking into language learning can be beneficial for students as it can help the student develop not only language proficiency but also their abilities to analyze, evaluate, and apply information logically and systematically. Critical thinking for students also includes underlying mindfulness, personal engagement with each other as well as subject matter, self-confidence, and the transfer of these dispositions to situations beyond classroom exercises.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### A. *Method*

This research study employed a mixed-method design. Data collection was conducted in both qualitative and quantitative formats with a pre-test and post-test, observations, semi-structured interviews, and reflective journals.

### B. Sampling and Participants

The participants of the study consisted of eleven second-year English Studies (International Program) students at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, Thailand, enrolled in the literature course during the second semester of the academic year 2022. They were purposively selected as one sampling unit for the experimental group. Among the participants, there were 10 Thai students and 1 Chinese student, all with English proficiency ranging between A2-B1 according to the CEFR level for EFL learners.

### C. Data Collection

After studying all the relevant documents, the researcher created instruments which consisted of an English-speaking test, a critical thinking test, a lesson plan implementing the seven contemplative activities (check-in, card reading, deep listening, storytelling, dialogue conversation, reflection, and check-out) and semi-structured interviewing form. For text selection, the researcher chose three well-known and widely recognized literary works that explored universal themes, reflected on societal issues, and encouraged learners to exchange experiences and express opinions freely. The selected literary works were *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl, and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J.K. Rowling. These stories had also been adapted into movies, which aligned with the course content. All instruments were examined by three experts to examine the content validity, clarity, objective accuracy, language appropriateness, and the Index of Item Objectives Congruence (IOC), which was set at 0.50. The data collection and investigation of this research were conducted for 13 weeks. Each lesson takes three periods per week, with each period lasting 50 minutes. The researcher monitors the reflective writing, provides feedback, and collects it all at the end of the time allotment. After that, a semi-structured interview was conducted in a friendly environment during the last week. This was followed by gathering all the data, interpreting, and transcribing the interview into the English version, rearranging, and categorizing all data in terms, and analyzing all data using descriptive data analysis. The final step was interpreting, summarizing data, and reporting conclusions.

#### (a). Quantitative Analysis

##### 1. An Analysis of the English Speaking Test

The English speaking test was adapted from the criteria of Kaowiwattanakul (2019), O'Malley and Pierce (1995, p. 61). Additionally, the designed test was examined by three English lecturers to ensure an Index of item-Objective Congruence (IOC) of  $\leq 0.05$ . These tests were utilized to measure students' speaking skills and assess various language functions, including intelligibility, fluency, coherence, lexical content, and structural content. Each test comprised ten questions and lasted approximately ten minutes. The teacher engaged individual conversations and asked questions of the students. The topic of the speaking tests revolved around childhood experiences, personal preferences, and family dynamics, providing an opportunity for individuals to share their memories, opinions, and cultural insights. Audio recordings were also obtained during the tests. The total score criteria for the test ranged from 0 to 24 points. Scores of 0-5 indicated a very low level of English-speaking skills, 6-10 denoted a low level, 11-15 represented an average level, 16-20 signified a high level, and 21-24 indicated a very high level of English listening-speaking skills. The tests were assessed by three native English speakers to ensure score validity.

##### 2. An Analysis of the Critical Thinking Test

In this research, the critical thinking test is used for measuring students' critical thinking level based on Bloom's critical taxonomy (revised 2001), which consists of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. It consists of twelve questions to monitor students' critical thinking levels. The students were asked to read the short story, "A Day's Wait" by American author Ernest Hemingway silently for 20 minutes and write the answers in a complete English sentence or paragraph. The critical thinking writing test and score rubric were examined by three English lecturers at the tertiary level for the Index of Item-Objective Congruence ( $\text{IOC} \leq 0.05$ ). The test aims to assess and measure students' ability to link ideas and use language to express ideas that indicate they are thinking about literature content, as well as to track student critical thinking improvement before and after experimenting with contemplative practices in the lesson. There were two times for the tests (pre-test and post-test) with the same test. The test takes approximately 20 minutes. The total score criteria of the test are 18 points; 0-6 is equivalent to low-critical thinking capability, 7-12 is equivalent to average-critical thinking capability, and 13-18 is equivalent to high-critical thinking capability. The tests are scored by 3 English lecturers for the score validity.

#### (b). Qualitative Analysis

##### 1. An Analysis of Reflective Journals

This activity results in the production of knowledge through experience. Students are asked to write about their learning to address the teacher on topics of their choice on a literary book they like from the lesson, their interests, and their attitude toward their learning with contemplative practices and course content areas. The teacher gives feedback, monitoring the language use in terms of idea expression, not correcting the student's language. Students have to write

three dialogue journals about Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.

### 2. An Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews aim at investigating student attitudes toward the use of the contemplative practice in the EFL literature classroom to improve critical thinking and English-speaking skills. Regarding the interview procedure, the researcher asks participants to do the interview individually after class. At the same time, the researcher investigates the students' speaking skills and critical thinking skills to meet the research objectives.

### 3. An Analysis of Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted for each 2.30-hour lesson per class per week, during which the researcher took notes on the observation form at the end of each session. The purpose of the study was to document student participation and interaction during classroom discussions and to investigate the extent to which contemplative approaches promoted students' speaking and critical thinking skills.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### A. Student English Speaking Skills

TABLE 1  
ENGLISH-SPEAKING ABILITY TEST BEFORE AND AFTER USING THE CONTEMPLATIVE APPROACH

Total Score Students Code	Pre-test Score		Post-Test Score		Result
	24	Interpretation	24	Interpretation	
STD1	10.67	Average	14	Average	Improved
STD2	18.33	High	20.67	Very High	Improved
STD3	14.67	Average	18	High	Improved
STD4	12.67	Average	16.33	High	Improved
STD5	18.33	High	17.33	High	-
STD6	7.67	Low	9.33	Low	Improved
STD7	8.67	Low	11	Average	Improved
STD8	14	Average	n/a	Incomplete	n/a
STD9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
STD10	11.33	Low	14	Average	Improved
STD11	10	Low	11	Average	Improved
<b>Average Total</b>	<b>13.66</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>14.63</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Improved</b>

\* STD 8 missed the post-test and STD9 withdrew from the activities

Table 1 shows the English-speaking pre-test and post-test scores before and after implementing contemplative activities. Nine students (81.81%) were able to complete both tests. The average pre-test score for the classroom was 13.66 points, indicating an average level of English-speaking ability. The average post-test score was 14.63 points, also at an average level of English-speaking ability. The highest score of the pretests was 18.33 and the lowest score of the posttests was 7.67. The highest score of the posttests was 20.67 and the lowest score of the posttests was 11. Students 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, and 11 showed an increase in their post-test scores, while Student 5's score decreased from 18.33 to 17.33, but remained at a high level of English-speaking ability. Based on the data in Table 1, it can be concluded that implementing contemplative activities has a positive effect on students' English-speaking ability, as the average post-test score increased from the average pre-test score. It is also worth noting that the majority of students (8 out of 9) showed an improvement in their post-test scores, with only one student showing a slight decrease. Overall, the results suggest that incorporating contemplative activities into the EFL literature classroom can be an effective way to enhance students' English-speaking abilities. However, it is also important to note that the sample size in this study is small and further research with a larger sample size is needed to validate these findings.

TABLE 2  
RESULT OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING ABILITY T-TEST SCORE

Test Results	N	Score	X	SD.	t	t-test
Pre-test	9	24	12.48	3.68	1.86	4.43
Post-test	9	24	14.63	3.55		

\*Level of significance is at 0.05

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the English-speaking t-test scores before and after participating in the contemplative activities. Nine students (81.81%) completed both tests. The average score for the pretest was 12.48 (S.D. = 3.68) and for the posttest was 14.63 (S.D. = 3.55). The t-test result was 4.43. As the t-value from the t-distribution table was 1.86 and the statistical decision-making value was 4.43, which is greater than 1.86, the post-test score was found to be significantly higher than 0.05 level. The results in Table 2 indicate that the contemplative activities had a positive effect on the participants' English-speaking ability. The average pretest score of 12.48 suggests an average level of English-speaking proficiency, while the average posttest score of 14.63 indicates an improvement to an average level

of proficiency. The t-test value of 4.43 indicates that the post-test score was significantly higher than the pretest score. Therefore, it can be concluded that the contemplative activities had a statistically significant impact on improving the English-speaking ability of the participants.

The findings presented in Tables 1 and 2 provide strong evidence supporting the effectiveness of implementing contemplative activities in enhancing the English-speaking ability of EFL learners in the context of English literature studies. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Kim and Han (2016) and Zhang (2020), who reported significant improvements in the English-speaking proficiency through the use of mindfulness meditation. In the present study, the intervention group, which engaged in mindfulness meditation, group discussion, and reflective writing, demonstrated notable enhancements in fluency, pronunciation, and overall speaking proficiency. Furthermore, the positive impact of the contemplative approach on speaking ability has been observed in other studies as well. Zare-ee and Nouri (2019) found that Iranian EFL learners who received contemplative instruction showed significant improvements in fluency, accuracy, and complexity compared to a control group. Similarly, studies conducted by Hussain and Mahmood (2020), Ng and Lee (2018), and Shih and Lin (2017) have provided support for the effectiveness of contemplative approaches in improving English speaking ability, particularly in literature classrooms. Additionally, the findings of Charoensukmongkol (2019) indicated that mindfulness has a significant explanatory power in reducing ESL public speaking anxiety. These collective findings highlight the value of integrating contemplative activities in EFL literature classrooms to enhance English-speaking skills. The implementation of mindfulness meditation, group discussion, and reflective writing has demonstrated promising results in fostering fluency, pronunciation, and overall proficiency. By considering the consistently positive outcomes from various studies, educators can confidently explore the implementation of contemplative approaches to improve students' English-speaking ability, with a specific focus on literature education.

### B. Student Critical Thinking Skills

TABLE 3  
CRITICAL THINKING TEST BEFORE AND AFTER USING THE CONTEMPLATIVE APPROACH

Total Score	Pre-test Score		Post-Test Score		Result
Students Code	18	Interpretation		Interpretation	
STD1	8	Average	12	Average	Improved
STD2	13	High	15	High	Improved
STD3	16	High	14	High	Not improved
STD4	10	Average	15	High	Improved
STD5	15	High	14	High	Not improved
STD6	7	Average	8	Average	Improved
STD7	5	Low	-	Incomplete*	-
STD8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-
STD9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-
STD10	10	Average	12	Average	Improved
STD11	11	Average	8	Low	Not improved
<b>Average Total</b>	<b>8.63</b>		<b>8.90</b>		

\*STD 7 missed the post-test, STD8 and STD9 withdrew from the activities

Table 3 presents the critical thinking pre-test and post-test scores before and after implementing contemplative activities. Eight students (72.72%) were able to complete both tests and activities. The average pre-test score for the classroom (excluding STD7, 8, 9) was 8.63 points, indicating an average level of critical thinking ability. The average post-test score was 8.90 points, which is also at an average level of critical thinking ability. The range of pretest scores was from 7 to 16, while the range of posttest scores was from 8 to 15. Students 1, 2, 4, 6, and 10 showed an increase in their post-test scores, while Students 3 and 5 showed a decrease in their scores but remained at a high level of critical thinking ability. On the other hand, Student 11's score decreased and remained at a low level of critical thinking ability.

Based on the results presented in Table 3, it can be observed that there was an improvement in the critical thinking scores of the participants after engaging in contemplative activities. The average post-test score of 8.90 points was slightly higher than the average pre-test score of 8.63 points. The range of post-test scores was also narrower than the range of pre-test scores, indicating that the participants' critical thinking abilities became more consistent after the intervention. Five out of eight students showed an increase in their post-test scores, which suggests that the contemplative activities had a positive impact on their critical thinking abilities. However, it is worth noting that three students (students 3, 5, and 11) showed a decrease in their scores. Although their scores decreased, they remained at a high or low level of critical thinking ability. Therefore, further investigation may be needed to determine why their scores decreased and if any factors could have affected their performance.

TABLE 4  
RESULT OF CRITICAL THINKING T-TEST SCORE

Test Results	N	Score	X	SD.	t-test
Pre-test	8	18	11.25	2.99	1.00
Post-test	8	18	12.25	2.68	

\*Level of significance is at 0.05

Table 4 illustrates the descriptive statistics of the critical thinking t-test scores of the participants before and after participating in the contemplative activities. Eight students (72.72 %) completed both tests. The average pretest score was 11.25 (S.D. = 2.99) and the average posttest score was 12.25 (S.D. = 2.66). The t-test result was 1.00. As the t-value from the t-distribution table was 1.89 and the statistical decision-making value was 1, which is lower than 1.86, the result from the posttest was not different from the pretest. Therefore, the results suggest that participating in the contemplative activities did not have a significant impact on the participants' critical thinking abilities statistically. However, it's important to note that the sample size was small, with only eight participants completing both tests, so further research with a larger sample size could help to confirm these findings.

While previous studies, such as the work of Zhang and Cheng (2018), Lihua Zhang (2021), and Xiangping Li (2022), have suggested that a contemplative approach can improve critical thinking skills, Giveh (2018) also indicated that the contemplative method significantly impacts learners' L2 autonomy, self-directed learning, and L2 reading comprehension skills, which can be related to critical thinking. These studies highlight that contemplative approaches can enhance students' engagement with literature, promote critical thinking, and foster a deeper understanding of literary texts. Furthermore, the results presented in Tables 3 and 4 of this study confirm the positive effect of implementing contemplative activities on students' English-speaking ability. However, it is worth noting that participating in contemplative activities did not statistically impact the participants' critical thinking abilities significantly. Some students' scores decreased, potentially due to factors such as student characteristics, language limitations, class schedule, teacher's skill and experience, student motivation and engagement, and specific teaching strategies. Future research is needed to explore these findings and identify strategies to enhance the impact of contemplative approaches on critical thinking skills. Additionally, consistent with Navaie et al.'s (2016) findings, there was no correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension, as well as between mindfulness and critical thinking. However, a positive relationship between mindfulness and reading comprehension was observed. On another note, Fisher (2017) raises concerns about the effectiveness and underlying assumptions of contemplative pedagogy, which prioritizes practices like meditation, attentive listening, and reflective reading, favoring direct personal experience as a way of knowing and potentially overshadowing analytical reasoning. Although Fisher does not directly address the impact of contemplative approaches on critical thinking, his analysis emphasizes the need for careful consideration of the assumptions and potential limitations of contemplative pedagogy, highlighting the complexities involved in thinking, knowing, and learning.

### C. Reflective Journal

Based on the student responses on the reflective journals, the levels of Bloom's critical thinking demonstrated by the students vary. There were different levels of critical thinking observed, such as remembering, understanding, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. For example, in the story Alice's Adventures in Wonderland the levels of Bloom's critical thinking demonstrated by the students vary. Some responses show Remembering (STD 1, 6, 7), Analyzing (STD 4, 8), Evaluating (STD 2, 10), and Creating (STD 3, 5 and 11). Students were asked to choose a character they disliked and explain their reasoning. STD1's response shows limited evidence of critical thinking. The reasoning provided is based on superficial characteristics of the Queen of Hearts, such as power and wealth. Her response is at a remembering and understanding level as shown in *"I would like to be the Queen of hearts because she is the queen, she has a lot of spower even though most people hate her or afraid of her but she can do whatever she wants and she also rich."* STD2's response demonstrates higher-level critical thinking at the analyzing and evaluation levels. The student provides a detailed analysis of the White Queen's behavior and compares her to the Red Queen, highlighting different characteristics and their effects as shown in

*"I don't like the White Queen. Because I think she is in the eyes of the world as pure, noble heart ratio who all relish, clean the surface of the white queen is in use at the expense of others, she handed the axe to Alice let her go to slay the dragon, and then their receptivity, maintain your perfect posture, like this person, who would be willing to hand over to her heart, look at the red queen, indeed, her temper is very poor, It is not good for her subordinates, but she will frankly let these little monsters stay around her, lonely people stay together, it will be a lot of warmth, they are not a mutual comfort, the White Queen actually wants to use people around her to keep her virtue noble, so, it is not good for her"*.

Moreover, STD7's response also demonstrates a remembering and understanding level. The choice of the Red Queen is based on superficial observations of appearance and reputation without deeper analysis or reasoning: *"Red queen. Because she has heart-shaped hair and it's so beautiful. She has a ruthless heart and there are people who fear her"*. Moreover, STD8's response

*"I would be the Caterpillar. It is because, at first although he is strict and not very friendly but he likes to help others. Then, he also teaches Alice how to cope with the difficulties that she will encounters in Wonderland. Besides that, he could changes into a butterfly. I love butterfly because it is beautiful and it can also fly freely, I like the feeling of freedom. But, I don't like the Caterpillar smoking the hookah, because that is a bad behavior, smoking is harmful to health"*.

It shows a moderate level of critical thinking. The student provides reasons for choosing the Caterpillar, including its traits, helpfulness, and ability to transform. However, the analysis remains somewhat superficial. STD10's response does not exhibit significant critical thinking. The choice of the Mad Hatter is based on personal dislikes without deeper

analysis or reasoning *"Mad Hatter I don't like because 1). I don't like to who sits always at the time like you have the free time all days. 2). I afraid someone who dressed like Joker. 3). I like the reason, so I don't like the madman"*.

Moving on to the reflective journal about the story Harry Potter with the question "If I have a magic power, what would I do?" one student showed a sense of sympathy and concern for others, with a suggestion that she might want to be an advisor to someone as shown in *"I would like to fly and talk to animal. Because can be friend when I have no friend and anything can talk with me"* (STD6). There is some evidence of critical thinking at the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, such as recalling information from the text, identifying character traits, making predictions, and expressing personal opinions. However, there is limited evidence of higher-level thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. For example, statements like *"Ron found the one who can be his friend"* and *"He is very kind to Ron even if he just met Ron in the first time"* demonstrate an understanding of character relationships and traits. Additionally, statements like *"If I am Harry Potter, I will escape from that place"* show a level of analysis and evaluation of the situation. However, other statements like *"His sound very cute. All of character"* and *"I feel joke. This is a sitcom so comedy"* are more subjective and do not demonstrate critical thinking skills. Moreover, it seems that some students showed a level of critical thinking in their responses, while others did not. Some examples of critical thinking in the responses include: *"I thought that her thought is very good to solve the problem to develop from mistake."* (evaluating and analyzing), *"I think she is a kind and good person she love the environment and concern about the nature."* (evaluating), *"If I have a magic power. I would like to fly and talk to animal. Because can be friend when I have no friend and anything can talk with me."* (evaluating). However, many of them appear to be more focused on personal opinions and preferences, rather than critical thinking.

For the story Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, it seems that the students are generally positive and empathetic towards the characters. With regard to critical thinking, based on the student responses in their journal, it seems that the students are not demonstrating a high level of critical thinking based on Bloom's Taxonomy. Most of their responses are at the "remembering" level, where they are simply recalling facts or details from the story. Some responses may be at the "understanding" level, where they are interpreting or explaining the meaning of certain events or characters in the story. There are a few instances where students may be demonstrating a slightly higher level of critical thinking, such as when they are making connections between the story and their own personal experiences or opinions (e.g. *"I think my friend feels for Charlie because he is a good kid," "I think my friend likes to feel rich like Veruca"*). However, overall, the responses provided suggest a need for further development of critical thinking skills.

#### D. Semi-Structured Interviews

The data from semi-structured interviews revealed three aspects of students' attitudes towards the implementation of a contemplative approach: the challenges and effects of speaking English in the English literary classroom, the use of contemplative activities by the teacher to improve English-speaking skills, and the impact of implementing the contemplative approach on critical thinking abilities".

Upon analyzing the responses regarding the main difficulties when speaking English in the English literary classroom, several common themes emerge. STD1 mentioned that the main difficulty lies in understanding the teacher and unfamiliar vocabulary which indicates that comprehension and vocabulary acquisition are areas of challenge for this person. STD2 expressed shyness and uncertainty when speaking English. This suggests that confidence and knowing how to navigate conversations are areas that need improvement. STD3 highlighted the difficulty of speaking in front of a friend who is more proficient in English. This points to the presence of social pressure and a sense of comparison that affects the interviewee's speaking abilities. STD4 identified the fast pace of English in movies shown in class as a challenge, particularly when there are no subtitles available. This suggests that speed of speech and lack of visual support affect comprehension. STD5 mentioned difficulties with unfamiliar words and uncertainty about correct pronunciation. This indicates that vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation accuracy are areas of concern. STD6 expressed challenges with understanding the teacher, particularly when the teacher speaks too fast or not clearly. This indicates difficulties in perceiving and comprehending spoken English due to the pace or clarity of the instructor's speech. STD7 mentioned a lack of confidence and fear of providing incorrect answers, resulting in silence and negative emotions after the class. This indicates a confidence issue that hinders student willingness to speak and participate actively in English-speaking activities. STD10 expressed interest in the class despite not explicitly mentioning specific difficulties. His response suggests a positive attitude towards the English literary classroom and a general enthusiasm for learning in this context. Overall, the students' responses reflect various difficulties they face when speaking English in the English literary classroom, including comprehension challenges, lack of confidence, comparison and performance anxiety, difficulties with rapid speech and unclear pronunciation, vocabulary struggles, and fear of making mistakes. These insights can inform strategies and interventions to address these difficulties and create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes students' English-speaking skills and confidence.

Regarding the impact of contemplative activities on their English-speaking skills, several common themes can be identified. STD1, STD5, and STD7 mentioned that the use of contemplative activities, particularly the ones involving cards, helped them improve themselves and their speaking skills. These activities provided them with an opportunity to speak, express their thoughts, and interact with their friends. They emphasized the importance of speaking out and the positive impact it had on their self-improvement and relationships. STD2 highlighted the significance of these activities for practicing speaking skills, especially for individuals who may be shy or lack confidence. She considered it an

important first step towards improving her ability to speak English. STD3 expressed that the activities showcased her communication skills, imagination, and ability to explain stories. The implementation of contemplative activities helped her develop these aspects of language and communication. STD4 emphasized that the activities not only improved her speaking skills but also enhanced her knowledge, vocabulary, and ability to express her thoughts based on different cards. STD6 shared a comprehensive response, stating that the use of contemplative activities had a significant positive impact on her English-speaking skills. She mentioned that these activities encouraged her to think, imagine, and find answers, which led to speaking out her thoughts with or without confidence. The subject made her feel more comfortable speaking English and eliminated her fear of doing so. STD10 provided a contrasting response, indicating that he does not feel any improvement in his English-speaking skills as a result of contemplative activities. He found the initial part of the class boring due to the level of detail involved but expressed interest in the movie-related aspects. Lastly, STD11 stated that she talks a lot and hears from her friends, indicating active participation in discussions. She mentioned having similar ideas with her friends, which suggests a sense of connection and shared understanding. This student expressed a positive feeling and improvement in speaking, specifically when discussing pictures and personal experiences. She found it beneficial to express her thoughts using pictures and provide explanations based on her own perspectives. Overall, the responses indicate that the implementation of contemplative activities in the classroom had a positive impact on the students' English-speaking skills. The activities provided opportunities for self-expression, interaction with peers, and the development of communication abilities. Many students reported improvements in their speaking skills, increased confidence, and a more comfortable approach to speaking English. However, it's important to note that not all students explicitly mentioned language development, and one student found certain aspects of the activities less engaging. These insights highlight the potential benefits of incorporating contemplative activities in language classrooms, fostering student engagement, self-expression, and growth in English-speaking skills.

Next, the improvement of critical thinking skills, the interviewee responses suggest that the implementation of the contemplative approach through activities such as using cards, imagination, and reflection has positively impacted their critical thinking abilities. The activities prompted them to think creatively, analyze problems, discover themselves, consider different perspectives, and communicate effectively. For example, STD1 mentioned that the contemplative activities, specifically using cards, prompted her to think and create explanations for the depicted person. STD2 expressed that the use of cards helped her imagine pictures that differed from those of her friends. STD3 highlighted the connection between contemplative activities and her ability to think creatively, mentioning the presence of codes and similarities in the cards. STD4 emphasized the realization and self-discovery that occurred through reading the cards, contributing to an understanding of oneself and one's mind. STD5 mentioned the opportunity to write down her imagination and think deeply when observing the cards. STD6 specifically stated that the contemplative activities helped her improve her critical thinking skills by encouraging her to think, compare, find reasons, and analyze problems, underscoring the significance of critical thinking in her life. Then, STD7 mentioned the impact of favorite lines or sentences from stories on his thinking, suggesting that engaging with meaningful content. Followed by STD10, she expressed that her drawings were a product of imagination and highlighted the differences in interpretations between herself and her classmates. Lastly, STD11 emphasized the ability of pictures to facilitate communication, decision-making, and the exploration of different points of view.

In addition, when asked whether the teacher should implement the contemplative approach to teach the EFL literature class in the future. STD1 expressed a positive opinion, stating that she really enjoyed the speaking test and found the activities related to movies interesting, indicating a favorable view toward implementing the contemplative approach. STD2 also expressed a positive inclination but raised concerns about the time required for these activities, suggesting that while she liked the approach, she felt it might be time-consuming. STD3 liked the idea of the contemplative approach, mentioning that it helped her understand pictures better and made her feel relaxed and less afraid. Her response suggests a preference for implementing the approach in the future. Then, STD6 strongly supported the implementation of the contemplative approach, particularly for EFL literature classes. She emphasized its potential to improve students' English-speaking skills, especially for those who are afraid of speaking. She also highlighted the engaging nature of thinking and imagining in the class, as well as the positive impact on communication and behavior. Overall, the interviewee responses indicate a generally positive attitude towards implementing the contemplative approach in teaching EFL literature. Students appreciated the engaging and relaxing nature of the activities, their positive impact on language skills, and the potential to boost confidence in speaking English. However, one student expressed concerns about time management.

#### *E. Classroom Observations*

From classroom observations, the students fully participated in the activities and willingly shared their personal opinions on the subjects and implemented activities. They listened attentively while their classmates were speaking, thinking, and comparing their internal voices with their peers' opinions. The classroom environment was relaxed and enjoyable, allowing every student to have the opportunity to speak, and most students attempted to speak in English. Students expressed their ideas using phrases such as "I think", "In my opinion", "I feel that...", "I agree with .....", etc., while a few students preferred to remain quiet and listen to their classmates, only speaking up when prompted by the teacher. Most of the class arrived early to participate in the check-in activities actively. This small class size was beneficial for the students in this group, as everyone had the opportunity to speak when it was their turn. The students



seemed to express their opinions on the stories because they could link their direct experiences from their childhood. It was found that the activities reduced students' anxiety about speaking and had a positive effect on their motivation to speak English, which in turn helped them share experiences, express opinions, and improve their potential. The finding indicated that the students enjoyed participating in various activities, such as the card reading activity, deep listening activity, and dialogue conversations from watching movie clips. The students appeared to be engaged and enjoyed expressing their ideas and opinions, often using phrases such as "If I were... I would..." during these activities. Laughter was a common occurrence during the class, suggesting that the students found the activities enjoyable. The students also appeared to benefit from the contemplative approach, which helped reduce their anxiety about speaking and increased their motivation to speak English. It can be recommended that incorporating contemplative approaches in classroom activities can have a positive effect on EFL undergraduate students' English-speaking skills development. Therefore, it is suggested that EFL instructors use contemplative approaches in their classroom activities to create a relaxed and enjoyable environment, which encourages students to participate and engage in activities.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this research has reviewed some perspectives for the implication of the contemplative approach in the EFL literature classroom context with the aim of enhancing students' English speaking skills and critical thinking skills. It's very challenging as the use of contemplative approaches in the EFL classroom is grounded in the belief that language learning is not only a cognitive process but also an affective and social process, leading to a more holistic and meaningful learning experience for students in the language classroom. From the finding of the research, contemplative approaches can strengthen students' English-speaking skills significantly. Although the results suggest that participating in the contemplative activities did not have a significant impact on the participants' critical thinking abilities statistically, there was a slight improvement in critical thinking. Therefore, further investigation may be needed to determine why their scores decreased and if any factors could have affected their performance. There are recommendations for further study as follows:

1. This study is a short-term implementation that only examines one classroom, with a small class size of eleven students, and only examines the immediate effects of the program. The researcher would recommend considering a long-term study with a bigger classroom size. Further research is needed to examine the long-term effects of a contemplative approach on English speaking ability and critical thinking skills, including whether the skills acquired through contemplative practices can be sustained over time.
2. The study focused solely on the contemplative approach, but many other approaches to language learning could be compared to it. Future research could compare the effectiveness of the contemplative approach with other methods, such as task-based language learning, project-based learning, or communicative language teaching.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research paper publication was funded by the University of Phayao.

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