

The Role of Children's Forums as a Means of Developing Critical Thinking Skills in Children

Nadia Amjadin Nissa Aqila

Non-Formal Education Study Program
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University

Email Correspondence: 2221210084@untirta.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The current condition of Indonesian education is experiencing paralysis in terms of critical thinking, because the critical thinking ability in children in Indonesia has not been stimulated optimally. Lack of opportunities for children to develop their critical thinking skills, because the learning process is still teacher-centered so that children are not given the opportunity to speak. The Children's Forum is an organization that is a forum for children's participation that supports the active role of children, its goal is to channel children's aspirations, opinions and participation in various aspects of life. This research method uses the SLR (Systematic Literature Review) approach. Data were collected by documenting related articles from similar studies. A total of 5 national journal articles were selected from Google Scholar in the last 10 years to be used in this study. The results of the study found that the role of the Children's Forum is very important in creating a young generation that thinks critically, innovatively and is able to adapt to existing changes. not only to develop critical thinking skills in children, but children's forums also aim to promote the values of democracy, tolerance and cooperation in community life.

Keywords: Role, Children's Forum, Critical Thinking Ability

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, the ability to think critically is very necessary. Children are the most valuable asset for the future of the nation, the quality of the young generation is greatly influenced by how they are formed and educated from an early age. Children are an important asset for the sustainability and progress of a country. In Indonesia, more than 35% of the population are children. Based on Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, children are individuals who have not reached the age of 18, including those who are still in the womb. Since the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the basic rights of children have been regulated and ratified by the Government of Indonesia through Presidential Decrees and Laws. However, until now, the implementation is often not optimal.

Children today are still often overlooked in the development process. Their well-being is often assumed to occur only if public development is going well. As a result, children are often only considered indicators of development success such as infant mortality rates, toddlers, education participation rates, and others, without being consciously treated as the main subjects in development itself. The concept of children is also often viewed with a bias, as individuals who are not fully mature or in the process of reaching adulthood, so they are often ignored in policy planning and implementation. In fact, children are citizens who have great potential to contribute to the development of a better future for everyone.

In the world of education in Indonesia, there are many gaps that widen the division between the desired competency standards and the results obtained. The conventional approach to education, which still emphasizes uniformity, physical uniformity, and the need to do things without a thorough analysis, has contributed to shaping a passive and less creative generation. The lack of encouragement from the education system to encourage students to think critically has created a generation that is more likely to go with the flow, who are only used to being in line rather than being innovators

capable of overcoming stagnation or changing the productivity dynamics around them. One of the key competencies in 21st century education that must be prioritized is the ability to think critically. Critical thinking can be considered as a core competency that is the parent for other abilities.

By thinking critically, a student can identify weaknesses in a problem and work to improve them, which includes abilities in creativity, problem-solving, and innovation. Through proper logical analysis, students can also build effective communication, work well in teams or groups, and be able to keep up with technological developments that are constantly changing and affecting the direction and priorities of people. Overall, critical thinking is the main foundation of all desirable competencies in 21st century education. Therefore, it is important to agree that preparation to achieve this competency cannot be done only at one level of education, but must start from the level of primary education to tertiary education. According to the Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1991), it is argued that changes in students occur through changes in the mindset and emotions of each individual. However, when viewed from the theory of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1973) change occurs as a result of awareness, namely the ability of students to analyze their social reality and act to change it.

In the period of child development is the most important time in the growth and development of a child. The growth and development of a child must be considered by parents, the community, and the government. The ability to think critically is a provision for children to face the future so that their cognitive abilities are higher. By being equipped with the ability to think critically well, a child will grow up to be a superior, meticulous, objective, and not easily receptive to information that is not clear about the truth.

Piaget (in Ruseffendi, 2006) states that each individual goes through regular and sequential stages of cognitive development, starting from the sensory-motor stage (0-2 years), pre-operational (2-7 years), concrete operational (7-11 years), and formal operational (11 years and above). The focus on the cognitive system puts the teacher in the role of a learning facilitator, while the student plays the role of a real problem solver and decision maker.

According to Ennis, Hidayat and Nur said that critical thinking skills are a basic competency that must be developed so that children can be ready to enter the next level of education, and have better life provisions, one of which includes the ability to analyze problems in decision-making.

In Lipman's opinion, critical thinking uses more cognitive activities at a high level such as analyzing, synthesizing, inferring, and evaluating. So that a person who is able to think critically on his intellectual abilities is far superior to someone who is able to think ordinarily.

The ability to think critically in children in Indonesia has not been stimulated optimally. The current state of Indonesian education is experiencing paralysis in terms of critical thinking, this is due to memorization-based learning methods (Sulaiman and Syakarofath). Lack of opportunities for children to develop their critical thinking skills, because the learning process is still teacher-centered so that children are not given the opportunity to speak. Children are not taught in the process of problem-solving. Basically, learning to practice critical thinking skills is very easy to do, but in fact, currently the learning conditions in schools do not support the implementation process.

In 21st century education, learning outcomes are not only mastery of learning materials, but also require students to have cognitive and social skills. These skills are important to equip students to face the development of challenging times, with rapidly evolving information and increasingly advanced technology. Technology today has penetrated various aspects of daily life to the world of work. Education should be able to produce quality human resources, so that they can adapt to the dynamic and challenging changes of the times.

According to Yunita, the benefits of developing critical thinking skills in children are so that ordinary children become meticulous individuals in choosing the information they receive and so that children are able to take responsibility for every decision they make. According to Trenholm in Abbasi and Izadpanah, the development of critical thinking skills in children can train children to have complete knowledge in interpreting the information they receive, so that in the process of making decisions, children can do well and can easily face every challenge they receive.

Bayer (Hasanudin, 2007) identified 12 indicators of critical thinking skills, namely: 1) Recognizing the core of the problem; 2) Comparing similarities and differences; 3) Determine relevant information; 4) Formulate the right questions; 5) Distinguish between evidence, opinions,

and reasoned opinions; 6) Improving the accuracy of the argument; 7) Knowing unstated assumptions; 8) Identify the existence of tropes or imitations; 9) Recognizing biases, emotional factors, propaganda, and inappropriate use of words; 10) Recognize differences in value orientation and views; 11) Assessing the adequacy of data; 12) Predict possible consequences.

Some of the factors that affect critical thinking skills in children are physical condition, motivation, anxiety, intellectual development, and interaction with educators. According to Sajoto in Prameswari, et al., good physical condition is very important because if a person is in poor physical condition, the spirit of learning and concentration will weaken, hindering the development of his thinking ability. Motivation also plays an important role, because with motivation, children will be encouraged to learn with enthusiasm, which in turn will develop their thinking skills optimally (Mariska, et al.). Anxiety is an emotional state that can limit a person's ability to think. When it comes to intellectual development, age is a major factor; According to Piaget in Purwanto, the older the child, the more mature his thinking ability becomes. The interaction between educators and children is also very influential; Educators who are able to create a fun and meaningful classroom atmosphere will make it easier for children to receive learning materials and develop their critical thinking skills well.

Talking about children is inseparable from their rights and obligations, children are the next generation of the nation that must be taken care of by all groups, therefore there needs to be guaranteed protection for children's welfare. Children's rights are part of human rights that must be guaranteed, protected, and fulfilled by parents, families, communities, the state, and the government. According to the Minister of PPA (I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati) stated that the basic rights of children consist of four that must be fulfilled, namely the right to life, the right to develop, the right to education, the right to get protection from violence, exploitation and the right to Participation.

The Children's Forum is an organization under the auspices of the Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. Children's Forum as a forum for children's participation whose purpose is to channel children's aspirations, opinions and participation in various aspects of life. The main purpose of the establishment of the children's forum is to create a supportive environment for intellectual and social development in children. Children's forums have great potential to develop critical thinking skills in children because these organizations support the active involvement of children. With various activities carried out, children are given the opportunity to hone their thinking skills.

Children's forums are one of the means that provide space for children to actively participate. There are three main forms of participation in children's forums, namely as pioneers, reporters, and in regional development planning in accordance with Law No. 18 of 2019. Members of the children's forum are limited in age, starting from 12 years old until before reaching the age of 18 according to Law No. 18 of 2019. The children's forum acts as a bridge between children and the government to ensure that children's right to participation is fulfilled. Currently, nationally there are 31 Provincial Children's Forums, 401 Regency/City Children's Forums, 267 Sub-district Children's Forums, and 170 Village/Kelurahan Children's Forums. Although the number is already significant, it still does not cover all regions in Indonesia as mandated in Law No. 34 of 2014 concerning Child Protection which affirms the right of every child to live, grow, develop, and participate fully.

The Role of Children's Forums is very important in creating a young generation that thinks critically, innovatively and is able to adapt to existing changes. not only to develop critical thinking skills in children, but children's forums also aim to promote the values of democracy, tolerance and cooperation in community life.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses the concept of literature to collect research sources from various journals to facilitate searches related to the management of English course programs in improving students' English language skills. Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is a method of identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all research that is relevant to a formulation of a particular problem or topic (Calderon and Ruiz, 2015). SLR is defined as the process of identifying, assessing, and interpreting

all available research evidence to provide answers to specific research questions (Kitchenham et al., 2009).

SLR research is conducted to identify, evaluate, and interpret all relevant research results related to a particular research question, a specific topic, or the phenomenon being researched (Kitchenham, 2004). The purpose of this SLR research is to find strategies that can help overcome the problems faced, identify different perspectives related to the problems being researched, and uncover relevant theories.

This research consists of several stages, namely the first is the formulation of research questions, literature search, determination of inclusion and exclusion criteria, literature selection, data presentation, data processing and conclusion drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the study are presented in two tables containing journal articles conducted by literature review. Table 1 presents the results of the research which includes the year of publication of the article, the name of the journal, and the type of publication. From the findings obtained about the role of children's forums as a means of developing critical thinking skills in children.

Table 1 Indexed Journal Publications

Year	Journal Name	Number of Articles	Types of Derivatives
2021	Journal of Community Service and Empowerment	1	Sinta 5
2022	Governance: Journal of Government Science	1	Garuda
2016	<i>Social Work Journal</i>	1	Sinta 3
2017	Pendas Horizon Journal	1	Sinta 3
2022	Indonesian Journal of Social Technology	1	Sinta 4
2022	Horizon Journal of Education	1	Sinta 3

From some of the findings obtained in table one, it is a hot topic to be discussed in more depth. This is evidenced by the journal articles indexed Sinta 5 (1 Article), Sinta 4 (1 Article), Sinta 3 (3 Articles), and Garuda. This article on Pablo is in the last 10 years (2016-2022). The articles that have been obtained describe the role of children's forums in improving critical thinking skills in children.

Table 2 Authors, Methods, and Findings

Writer	Type of Research	Findings
(Nila Wahyuni et al., 2021)	Participatory and collaborative training approach	Based on the guidance of national and regional regulations and the needs of state development, namely increasing children's participation through children's forums is a must. The high proportion of children in the populations of these two countries makes the fulfillment of children's rights very important. Therefore, the initiation of the establishment of a children's forum is necessary for the fulfillment of children's rights.

		<p>After PKM activities were carried out in two Nagari, the results showed that in voicing the mainstreaming of children's rights (PUHA) and initiating the Nagari Children's Forum. three important factors that influence the effectiveness of policy advocacy are legitimacy, credibility, and power. Credibility is obtained from the knowledge and experience of stakeholders in their fields so that the aspirations of the FGD results presented have credibility. The active involvement of all stakeholders is very important to promote the Nagari Children's Forum and more intense assistance from the city/district government is needed so that the Nagari Children's Forum can be a holistic, integrative and sustainable government policy recommendation.</p>
(Miftahul Jannah et al., 2022)	Qualitative	<p>The role of the children's forum as a reporter needs to be improved so that the fulfillment of children's rights can be fully achieved. The trick is to focus on what can be controlled, for example in the form of collaboration with communities that care about children to hold socialization about children's rights. In addition, socialization can also be carried out in schools to train concern in voicing children's rights aspirations. Because when there is no training for children's rights, the role of children's forums as reporters can decrease. The role of children's participation in development planning needs to be increased by preparing themselves with children's forum facilitators from the previous period. This is done by making an analysis of the situation of children's rights in the city of Palembang before Musrenbang. Analysis can also be done by holding an online children's Musrenbang and inviting other children's forums or children in the school environment. If children's forums can open the first gate, their unconscious will shows great strength in prioritizing the fulfillment of children's rights so that they are really achieved or not just that.</p>
(Devi Ayu Rizki et al., 2016)	Qualitative Descriptive	<p>Children's participation involves all elements of society, including the child himself. This aims to make children play an active role and can enjoy the results of development. The right of children to participate in the development of child-friendly cities needs to be realized by all parties and in accordance with existing guidelines by paying attention to the best interests of children. Companions and facilitators have a feeling that Tegi wants to encourage the active participation of children in socializing the importance of involving children in planning programs and policies for the development of the city of Bandung towards a child-friendly city.</p>
(Amar Halim 2022)	Qualitative	<p>The results of the study found that in order to build an ideal generation, several preparations are needed and have been mapped in the projection of second-century education which includes: (1) Character consisting of moral character and performance character; (2) Competence, including critical, creative, cooperative, and communicative thinking competencies; and (3) Literacy, which includes literacy, science and technology, finance, digital, and culture. These three components (character, competence, literacy) are a model that is a principle to prepare a</p>

		superior generation to face challenges in the 21st century. Critical thinking skills make a person more innovative, creative, collaborative, insightful and easy in finding solutions to a problem. For this reason, teaching and habituation to think critically from the elementary school level are needed. The ability to assess, analyze, and see a problem from various perspectives is a great asset for elementary school students to achieve more concrete goals at the next level.
(Haryanti 2017)	Qualitative	The problem-based learning model has an important role in developing students' critical thinking skills. This ability can be honed through learning steps that use a problem-based learning model. Problem-based learning is a problem-solving process in which problems become the main focus in learning. The problems presented are in a real and authentic context for students that are in accordance with the cognitive development and characteristics of elementary school students. By facing problems, students are required to think at a high level in solving them. A person can be said to have the ability to think critically if he is able to provide reflective, productive and evaluative answers to a problem that occurs. Therefore, it is necessary to apply the problem-based learning model to support children's lives in the 21st century era.
(Sarfa Wasahua 2021)	Qualitative Descriptive	A person can improve creative thinking skills by focusing on spatial thinking. Spatial thinking involves transforming ideas from prose forms to non-prose forms, such as turning concepts or theories revealed in text into diagrams. The process of changing the format or presentation of an idea, concept, or description of a particular situation is actually a creative act. Teachers need to introspect on their teaching methods to prepare students for future challenges. They must actively seek effective teaching strategies and methods as well as learning approaches that support appropriate student participation in developing their critical and creative thinking skills.

Discussion

Children's forums actively encourage children to develop themselves in accordance with their potential, interests and talents as well as other abilities such as developing spaces for children's participation, developing a forum for channeling children's aspirations, accelerating the process of fulfilling children's rights and building institutions for developing children's potential (Maryance et al., 2021). The Children's Forum was formed with the aim of bridging the interests of children and the interests of adults. The children's forum is a forum to fulfill the right of children's participation, specifically emphasized in article 10 of law number 23 of 2002 concerning child protection. As a form of commitment in responding to the understanding of the importance of children's right to participate in realizing a decent world for children (Thoomaszen, 2017).

The role of children's forums as pioneers and reporters. The role of a pioneer means that children are given a positive contribution as agents of change who are able to inspire many people to make even better changes (Nengsih, 2020). To measure the dimension of the role of pioneers, it can be measured by activities that can build positive, innovative, creative habits. This is done starting from himself and then inviting others to do the habit. The selection of issues is chosen according to the needs and environmental conditions of the child and provides alternative solutions to these

problems. The role of the Children's Forum as a reporter is to report all forms related to the fulfillment of children's rights. To measure this, there are several indicators, namely reporting obstacles in the fulfillment of children's rights, both experienced by themselves and other children, to adults who can be trusted by children, such as for example to companions. Broadly speaking, the role of the children's forum as a reporter is that if a child sees a deviation related to the fulfillment of children's rights such as seeing or feeling violence, he must report it to a trusted adult.

According to a child psychologist, Dra. Seto Mulyadi explained that children's forums provide a space for children to express their ideas and opinions. This can improve critical thinking skills because children learn to question, assess, and analyze various issues discussed in the forum. According to Dr. Ratna Megawangi, children's forums can encourage children to dare to speak and argue logically. Active involvement in discussions allows them to hone critical thinking skills that are useful in everyday life.

In Indonesia, the Children's Forum is a children's participation forum launched by the government and various non-governmental organizations to ensure that children's voices are reflected in decision-making processes regarding children's rights and welfare. The purpose of the Children's Forum is to provide a forum to discuss, exchange experiences and express opinions on various social, cultural and environmental problems faced by children. Participating in children's forums develops critical thinking skills by encouraging children to analyze problems thoroughly, consider various perspectives, and find creative and effective solutions. Children's participation is actually involving all elements of society, including children, to play an active role. This is intended so that children can be responsible and enjoy the results of the development.

The forum also teaches children the importance of human rights, gender equality and democratic values, all of which help strengthen their understanding of their active role in society. In addition, the Children's Forum also provides training and guidance to improve the communication, leadership, and collaboration skills of its members. Through various activities such as group discussions, seminars, workshops and campaigns, the Children's Forum helps children feel more confident in expressing their opinions and play an active role in influencing public policy. This not only strengthens their sense of social responsibility, but also helps them understand the importance of actively participating in building a better society.

Critical thinking can be interpreted as the ability to be present in life, work and function effectively in all aspects of life. Critical thinking is an important and vital thing in modern education. Critical thinking is one of the components of the thinking process at a higher level because it uses the basis of opinion analysis and gives rise to knowledge from each meaning to develop a cohesive and logical reasoning pattern.

Critical thinking is a directed and clear process that is used to develop mental activities such as solving problems, making decisions, analyzing opinions and conducting scientific research. Black and Robert Ennis argue that critical thinking is a person's ability to use logic, logic is a person's way of thinking to gain knowledge whose truth is studied based on a certain pattern of reasoning.

According to Yunita, the benefits of developing critical thinking skills in children are so that ordinary children become meticulous individuals in choosing the information they receive and so that children are able to take responsibility for every decision they make. According to Trenholm in Abbasi and Izadpanah, the development of critical thinking skills in children can train children to have complete knowledge in interpreting the information they receive, so that in the process of making decisions, children can do well and can easily face every challenge they receive.

The ability to think in children must be instilled from an early age because by the time children are 11 years old and above, children are able to think reflectively, use assumptions or hypotheses and their ability to think is no longer bound so that they can reach the past and the future. So even though thinking is a mental process, thinking skills can be trained.

Paul and Elder (2007: 8) state that "The ability to think is the only capacity that can be used to learn." One of the important thinking skills that needs to be developed is critical thinking skills. Macpherson and Stanovich (in Eggen & Kauchak, 2012) argue that humans do not have a natural tendency to think critically. Even people with high achievement motivation often think uncritically like those with low achievement motivation. Therefore, critical thinking skills need to be habituated in the learning process so that students are able to solve the problems they face. In accordance with

Yaumi's opinion (2012: 67), critical thinking is the cognitive ability to state something with full conviction based on logical reasoning and strong empirical evidence.

Meanwhile, according to Karim in Lavinnatushifa, et al. stated that the purpose of developing critical thinking skills in children is so that children can improve their critical attitudes so that later they are able and brave in assessing discoveries, systems, values, or cultures through the process of knowledge.

Critical thinking involves the ability to analyze information objectively, evaluate arguments, recognize biases, and make logical decisions. Teaching methods that encourage open discussion, problem-solving, and self-reflection are considered to be highly effective in developing these skills.

Ennis (1995) identifies six basic elements in critical thinking, namely: Focus, Reason, Conclusion, Situation, Clarity, and Review. These six elements are abbreviated as FRISCO and are described as follows: Focus is the concentration on information that describes an issue, question, or problem, ensuring one can solve the problem well. Reason is a consideration or evidence that supports the conclusion drawn. Inference involves evaluating whether the reasons given are acceptable or not, and consists of conclusions as processes and conclusions as results. Situations connect problems to everyday life to facilitate decision-making. Clarity is explaining the results of drawing conclusions in detail. Review asks students to double-check the results that have been found, decided, and explained to ensure there are no errors. These six basic elements of FRISCO are interrelated and support each other, so they cannot be separated.

Any use of the process or activity of critical thinking always requires the individual to use his or her intellect in depth by conducting careful analysis, weighing benefits and disadvantages, testing its relevance to reality, and other practical considerations. Based on this definition, critical thinking encourages the person who does it to act more carefully and planned when faced with information that requires a response (Oktaviani, 2021). Although critical thinking is not limited to adults only, it can also be applied with different levels of implementation by children and adolescents. However, there are significant differences in the way children, adolescents, and adults interpret and use their reasoning. The essence of all of this remains the same, which is to spend more time analyzing information more thoroughly, in detail, and thoroughly.

In the world of education, critical thinking is very important because it includes the entire process of obtaining, analyzing, comparing, evaluating, and acting on the principles of science and values. As explained from the goals of national education, one of them is to develop thinking skills in general and develop critical thinking skills in particular.

The educational process begins with parents as the first and main teacher for children. Parents are responsible for guiding children to become complete adult human beings. The role of the family does not only include the fulfillment of biological needs, but also psychological and sociological needs which are reflected in the establishment of a secure attachment between children and parents (Indri Febriyanti et al., 2024). So, the family environment also plays an important role in creating an atmosphere that encourages exploration and critical thinking. Children who are taught critical thinking tend to be more independent, creative, and more able to adapt to complex situations. The importance of incorporating critical thinking skills into the curriculum from an early age to create a generation that is better prepared to face change and solve problems in an increasingly complex world.

CONCLUSIONS

Children's Forums have a very important role in developing critical thinking skills in children. Through this forum, children are encouraged to develop their potential, interests, talents, and other abilities optimally. They are given the space to actively participate in influencing decisions related to their rights and well-being. In addition, the Children's Forum also serves as a forum to convey their aspirations and accelerate the fulfillment of children's basic rights.

The Children's Forum not only provides a platform to improve children's critical thinking skills, but also teaches the values of democracy, human rights, and gender equality. Thus, participation in the Children's Forum not only strengthens children's social responsibility, but also prepares them to be part of a more inclusive society and actively contribute to building a better future for the country.

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