Copyright © 2025 The Author(s)
Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan Vol. 14 No. 4 Nopember 2025

Representation of Multiculturalism and Critical Thinking Aspects in EYL Textbook Used in a Bilingual Classroom in Indonesia

Jasmine Fadhillah[1], Siti Muniroh[2], Niamika El Khoiri[3]
[1,2,3] Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

[1]jasmine.fadhillah.2202218@students.um.ac.id

Abstract

Multiculturalism and critical thinking are both crucial aspects that need to be incorporated to shape students as global citizens. Thus, this research aims to find the multiculturalism and critical thinking aspects in an EYL Textbook entitled "Story Central Student Book 3" published by Macmillan Education. This book was used in one of the elementary schools in Indonesia.This is a content analysis research. The data for the contents analysis was gathered using the multiculturalism checklist by Kara (2022) and the critical thinking checklist from the higher-order thinking skills based on the revised edition of Bloom's taxonomy by Anderson (2001). The results found that this book gives opportunities for cultural diversities for it includes some materials covering social traditions, interpersonal relations, living conditions, values,belief,and attitudes. Moreover, it also includes some critical thinking materials which covers the higher-order thinking skills such as, analysing, creating, and evaluating. Thus, this book has already covered both multiculturalism and critical thinking aspects which align with 21st-century educational goals. However, further research is necessary to evaluate its effectiveness in fostering critical thinking among students using this book as the teaching and learning material, acknowledging the limitations of this study's methodology.

Keywords: *Multiculturalism, Critical Thinking, EYL Textbook*

Introduction

Living in this global era is closely related to multiculturalism. It is supported by the study on analyzing multiculturalism has widely spread among researchers nowadays. However, there is still a little information on the representation of multiculturalism in a textbook, especially in primary or elementary level. Most of the research were undertaken in junior high school or senior highschool context (Pratama, Nurkamto, & Wijayanto, 2021). Moreover, multicultural content provides an authentic, meaningful context in which students can develop and practice critical thinking. Therefore, a study to see how multiculturalism and critical thinking presented in a textbook is needed.

In addition, nowadays students in the 21st century need to be able to grow not only linguistically, but also socially, critically and culturally at a young age. Awareness of various cultures is crucial in today's global age, as people from a wide variety of backgrounds frequently contact one another and one of that ways to meet that need is by incorporating multiculturalism and critical thinking in an English as Foreign Languge (EFL) textbook. By linking EFL learning to global issues and cultural diversity, students will begin to see themselves as part of a big community which will prepare them to think critically about real-life issues from an early age. Therefore, the researcher would like to conduct a study to see the representation of multiculturalism and critical thinking in EYL textbooks used in a Bilingual classroom in Indonesia.

The textbook used in this bilingual classroom should be investigated since it follows the Cambridge curriculum, which emphasizes preparing students to be global citizens who are aware of the diversity and cultures of the world. By conducting research on the representations of multiculturalism and critical thinking in EYL textbooks used in Indonesian private elementary school, it can help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current teaching materials and provide recommendations for improvement. A thorough evaluation of the textbook will help determine whether it provides accurate and inclusive representations of different cultures, including local cultures in Indonesia and global cultures as well as the incorporation of critical thinking materials.

Multiculturalism in EYL textbooks refer to the portrayal of other cultures and languages in materials and activities developed for young English learners. This approach is founded on a number of theoretical considerations, including linguistic, cultural, social, and pedagogical considerations(Cummins, 2000). Thus, EYL textbooks can increase learners' language competency and cognitive development by recognizing and appreciating other languages and cultures(Hossain, 2024). Another important feature of multiculturalism in EYL textbooks is cultural awareness. Hossain (2024) also stressed the need to expose students to a wide range of cultural practices, traditions, and beliefs in order to foster cultural sensitivity and intercultural competency. By using EYL textbooks that promote multiculturalism, it will help extend learners' view and encourage good attitudes toward diversity and inclusion by including culturally relevant topics and themes into the curriculum.

Furthermore, research on this field of multiculturalism in the textbooks have been discussed recently, especially in Asia context where English is seen as second or foreign language. Several articles explore how primary and secondary English language textbooks in Indonesia, Korea, and China portray culture (Hanifa, 2018; Kim & Paek, 2015; Tang, 2021). Multicultural values, cultural content recommendations, and student preferences for EFL textbook representations are examined in those papers. Also, a research proposes multicultural English picture books for vocabulary and communication (Tang, 2021). The paper also criticizes EFL textbooks' multiculturalism and cultural sustainability. Thus, it can be seen that to foster international understanding and communication, EFL textbooks must consider cultural portrayal. Moreover, to see the multiculturalism in the textbook, (Kara, 2022) has categorized some aspects in the EYL textbook into Daily life, living conditions, interpersonal relations, Values, Belief and attitudes, Body Language, Social Tradition, Ceremonial behavior, and national Geography.

Being able to think critically means that we can develop the intellectual ability to raise vital questions and problems, and formulate them clearly and precisely. The higher-order thinking of Bloom's taxonomy is used to take the term Critical Thinking in this study. The higher-order thinking comprises knowledge in analyzing, evaluating, and creating(Krathwohl, 2002). There were two kinds of Bloom's Taxonomy. First is the old taxonomy which focuses on remembering categories of knowledge instead of understanding and using the knowledge to achieve more goals such as understanding synthetic categories (Krathwohl, 2002). Moreover, Pohl (2000) stated that Bloom's taxonomy is used by teachers to show low-level thinking activities (remembering, understanding, applying) and higher-order thinking (analyzing, evaluating, creating).

Furthermore, critical thinking is also needed in language education, especially in the 21st century (Li, 2016). In addition, research shows that critical thinking can facilitate the acquisition of language skills and improve language skills in general(Bonney & Sternberg, 2016) Moreover, the development of critical thinking enriches language learning by making it more than just memorization and extending it beyond language skills (Sanavi & Tarighat, 2014). However, previous research has pointed out the importance of developing such thinking in language

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s)

classrooms (Zhao et al., 2016) with a shred of evidence confirming the effectiveness of its integration into foreign language teaching. Therefore, it has been suggested that is a good thing for language teachers to empower students' ability to think critically during the language acquisition process by helping them engage in critical analysis of learning materials (Floyd, 2011).

Thus it can be seen that materials that cover both critical thinking and multiculturalism is needed to cultivate and develop critical thinking. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to identify the multicultural aspects and critical thinking materials in an EYL English textbook used in a bilingual elementary class that use the Cambridge Curriculum entitled “Story Central Student Book 3”by Macmillan Education. This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

(1) What are the multiculturalism aspects found in the selected textbook?
(2) What are the critical thinking aspects found in the selected textbook?

Method

In order to discover multiculturalism and critical thinking aspects in the textbook entitled "Story Central Student Book 3" published by Macmillan Education, a content analysis research was used in this study (Schreier,2012). In addition, this was a content analysis research which used Byram’s (2001) multicultural dimensions and Anderson’s(2001) higher-order thinking skills aspects.

The contents were taken from this "Story Central Student Book 3" published by Macmillan Education book. This book was chosen because it is used in an elementary school in Indonesia, Another reason was that it has been utilized in their institution for an extended period of time. Additionally, the authors and publishers of these books are users of the target language, and these books meet the criteria of being institutional books that can make a contribution to the existing body of study.

The research instruments were checklists to find the potray of multiculturalism and critical thinking aspects in the book. The checklists were driven from Byram, et.al (2001) which proposed a list of categories in multiculturalism, and it was improved by the Common European Framework Reference for Languages). The multiculturalism aspects break down into categories such as Daily life, living conditions, interpersonal relations, Values, Belief and attitudes, Body Language, Social Tradition, Ceremonial behavior, and national Geography. Here are the descriptions of each category:

1. Daily life: How people live day-to-day. Food, clothing, transportation, housing, and recreation are included.
2. Living conditions: This includes access to healthcare, education, work, water, and power.

Interpersonal relations: This includes communication, behavior, and social etiquette.

3. Values, beliefs, and attitudes: Culture shapes people's behavior and worldview. Religion, spirituality, ethics, and morality are included.
4. Body language includes facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and gestures.
5. Social traditions: These include family practices, rituals, and holidays.
6. Ceremonial behavior: Weddings, funerals, and religious events involve formalized behavior.
7. National geography: a country's scenery, climate, natural resources, and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, those categories above have been turned in to a checklist by Kara (2022) in her current study analyzing the Turkish and English foreign language teaching books in terms of multiculturalism. The checklist stated in the current research by Kara (2022) which include the multiculturalism categories made by Byram, et.al (2001) are suitable for this study to see in

what extent the English Foreign language textbook promote multiculturalism. Thus Kara's (2022) checklist is adopted for this study.

The critical thinking checklist was taken from the higher-order thinking skills from the revised edition of Bloom's taxonomy by Anderson (2001) which are analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The checklist was used to find evidence on the materials that incorporate critical thinking. Furthermore, both multiculturalism and critical thinking checklist have been validated by an expert validator.

Results

The Multiculturalism Aspects Found in The Textbook

Multiculturalism materials are mostly stated in the reading and writing materials. The materials represent multicultural aspects such as daily life, living conditions, interpersonal relations, national geography, values, belief, attitudes, and social traditions. The frequency of each aspect can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. The Multiculturalism Aspects Found

Multiculturalism Categories	Page Number	Frequency
Daily Life (food and beverages, working hours, free time activities)	9, 45,88,94	4 times
Living Conditions (Living standards, accommodation opportunities, welfare status)	39	1 time
Interpersonal Relation (class structure and relations between classess, relation between genders,family structure)	54	1 time
National Geography	48, 56 58,59,65	5 times
Values, Belief, Attitudes (Regional culture, Institutions, History, Minorities, National Identity, Ideologies, foreign university, city or persons, politics, and art.)	35, 49, 55, 75, 76	5 times
Social Tradition (Offering foods and beverages, behavior speaking manner and prohibitions)	15	1 time

However, there are two aspects that are not included: body language and ceremonial behavior. Additionally, here are same examples or the visual representations of multiculturalism found in the book.

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s)

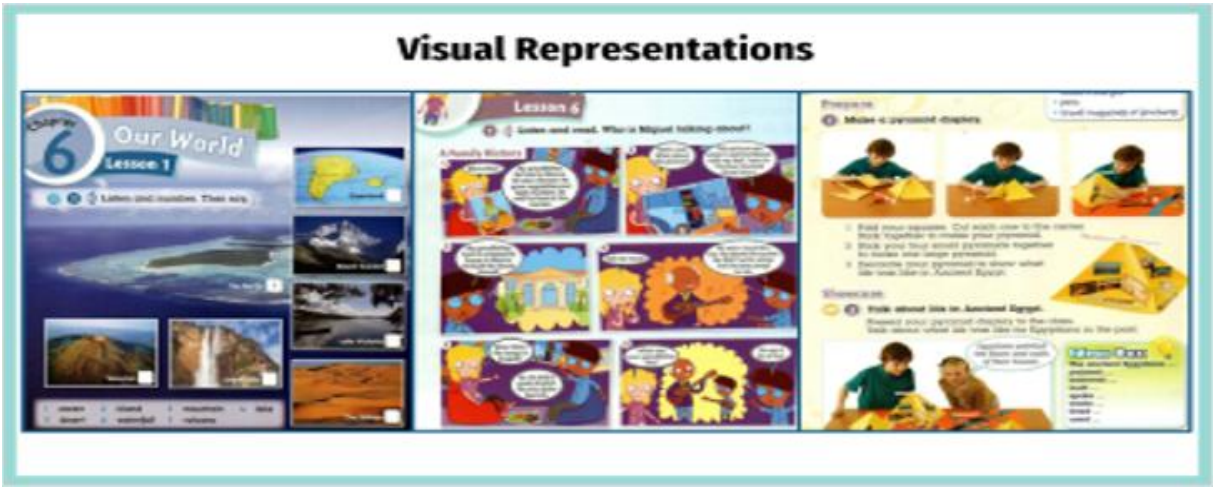


Figure 1. Visual representation of multiculturalism

The Critical Thinking Aspects Found

Among three aspects of critical thinking, namely analayse, create, and evaluate, analyse aspect appears as the most aspects found in the book as it can be seen in the table below.

Table 2 . The Critical Thinking Aspects Found

Critical Thinking Element	Frequency	Page Numbers
Analyse	18	61, 65, 69, 72, 79, 81, 85, 92, 95, 82, 22, 25, 29, 32, 38, 42, 51, 55
Create	9	62, 63, 78, 83, 88, 92, 93, 33, 36, 46, 56
Evaluate	3	81, 50, 18

Furthermore, here is an example of the representation of the critical thinking aspect especially in creating. Here, the students need to choose another place and describe the place by themselves using the target language.

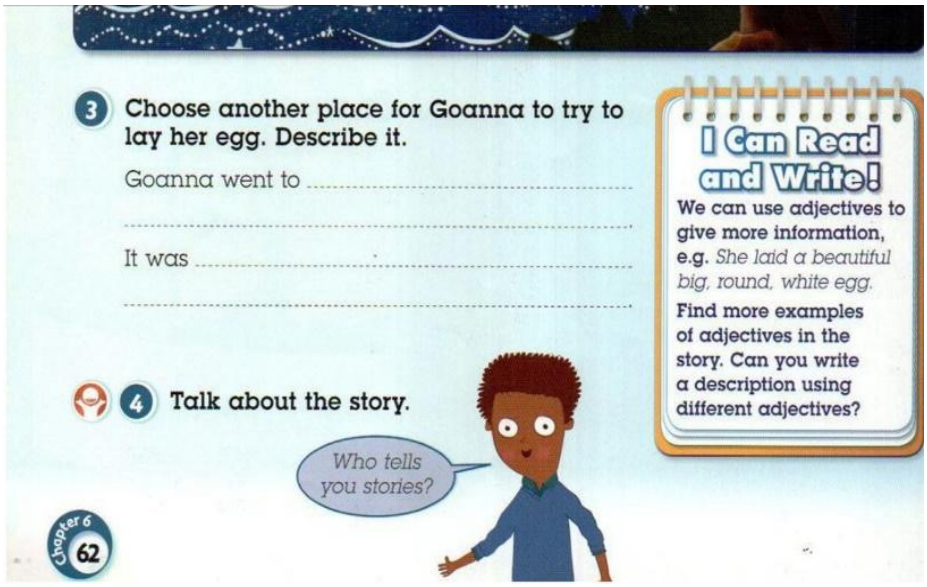


Figure 2. Visual representation of critical thinking aspect

The findings of the study reveal that among the three critical thinking aspects examined—analyse, create, and evaluate—the analyse aspect appears most frequently in *Story Central Student Book 3*. This is indicated by its 18 occurrences across various pages. Activities categorized under analyse generally require students to identify information, compare and contrast ideas, make connections, or explain reasons based on the text or visuals provided. The dominance of this aspect suggests that the textbook consistently encourages learners to process information deeply before engaging in higher-level thinking skills.

The second most frequently occurring aspect is create, with 9 occurrences. The create aspect reflects tasks that prompt students to generate new ideas, produce descriptions, or develop independent responses. The example shown in the image—"Choose another place for Goanna to try to lay her egg. Describe it."—illustrates how students are asked to select a new location independently and describe it using the target language. Such tasks promote imagination, creativity, and the ability to connect personal ideas with the learning context. This finding indicates that the textbook not only trains analytical skills but also provides meaningful opportunities for creative language use.

In contrast, the evaluate aspect appears the least, with only 3 occurrences. Evaluation tasks typically require students to make judgments, form decisions, or provide justification based on criteria. The low frequency of evaluate activities suggests that the textbook places greater emphasis on comprehension and production rather than judgment-based or reflective thinking. This is understandable for an EYL (English for Young Learners) textbook, as evaluative thinking is generally more advanced and often developed at higher educational levels.

Discussion

The respresentation of Multiculturalism and Critical Thinking in The textbook

The results of this study show that the Macmillan-published EYL textbook used in a bilingual classroom that follows the Cambridge curriculum has a strong and consistent representation of both multiculturalism and critical thinking components. Throughout the units, they presented multicultural aspects including variety, respect for diverse customs, and global citizenship. Those aspects demonstrate a comprehensive attempt to expose students to a range of global cultures while upholding an inclusive tone. In the context of an Indonesian bilingual school, where exposure to international viewpoints enhances students' local and national identities, this is especially crucial.

Multiculturalism materials are mostly stated in the reading and writing materials. The materials has already represented multicultural aspects which can be useful for the teaching and learning process. These findings are supported by the previous study by Xiong (2022) which suggested that teachers can select texts that represent a variety of cultures and perspectives and use these texts to facilitate class discussions and activities that promote intercultural understanding. Additionally, Susilowaty et al., (2025) offer a critical literacy approach to enhance diversity and inclusiveness in EYL classrooms.

Furthermore, the multiculturalism aspects were also supported with good visual representation. Not only making a good practice but also providing good illustration. This book provides real picture examples, story illustrations in comics, and even an illustration in the activity. These visual illustrations are good because it is in line with (Alsaawi, 2016) that students

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s)

are better understand the materials if a book can provide a good illustration for children are more into real things rather than abstract.

The results also show that the textbook has already covered both multiculturalism and critical thinking skills. It can be seen that multicultural values such as diversity, respect, and global awareness are presented and predominantly focused on international cultures. Moreover, critical thinking elements have also been integrated in the textbook. Some skills, such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating appear frequently. Furthermore, this textbook uses thematic units, therefore multiculturalism and critical can be embedded across units easily.

Finding that critical thinking skills are being incorporated in the textbook is a good sign for critical thinking is one of the essential skills that will benefit global citizens nowadays. Being able to think critically means that we can develop the intellectual ability to raise questions and problems and formulate them clearly and precisely. Furthermore, the new vision of quality education emphasizes the life skills essential for success in the 21st century. Thus, critical thinking is one of the targeted skills prioritized in education systems around the world and Critical Thinking (CT) is also needed in language education (Li, 2016)

In addition, research shows that critical thinking can facilitate the acquisition of language skills and improve language skills (Liang & Fung, 2021)The development of critical thinking enriches language learning by making it more than just memorization (Sanavi & Tarighat, 2014). Previous research has pointed out the importance of developing such thinking in language classrooms (Zhao, Pandian, and Mehar Singh, 2016), with a shred of evidence confirming the effectiveness of its integration into foreign language teaching. Therefore, it has been suggested that is a good thing for language teachers to empower students' ability to think critically during the language acquisition process by helping them engage in critical analysis which can be found in the textbook materials,

Moreover, these findings are in good contrast to earlier research on regional English textbooks in Indonesian school. Musiman et al., (2020) for instance, found that there was little engagement with local variety and a strong dependence on Western-centric cultural content, with little attention paid to critical thinking. Moreover, Riadini & Cahyono (2021) found a little international cultures depicted in an English textbook used in the indonesian primary school. The Macmillan textbook under study, on the other hand, offers students the chance to critically interact with the cultural material through questions, comparisons, and reflective assignments in addition to exhibiting a global perspective. The book's relevancy and connection with 21st-century educational objectives are further enhanced by the inclusion of varied people, locales, and real-world challenges. It is also supported by previous finding which also used the same book publisher but with a different level or class (Muniroh et al., 2022).

All in all, these findings related with the multiculturalism and critical thinking aspects highlight the potensial usefulness in learning and teaching materials used in the classroom. However, these results cannot be claimed to universally be the case for all macmillan book for young learnes. This suffers from limitations due to the method used in the study. Further research can dig more into the effectiveness on using this book to improve students' critical thinking in the English classroom.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows that this book by Macmillan Publishers entitled The Story Central Student Book 3 has already covered some multiculturalism and critical thinking aspects which can be one of the options for teachers to use this book to incorporate critical thinking in the English Classroom. This textbook also presents opportunities for critical engagement and

cultureal diversities which aligns with 21st-century educational goals. However, further research is necessary to evaluate its effectiveness in fostering critical thinking among students, acknowledging the limitations of this study's methodology. These results can also be used as the insight for the materials developer in developing an English textbook which also incorporate multiculturalism and critical thinking aspects.

Acknowledgment

This research is a result of many long and constructive discussions. I would like to thank my supervisors, Ms. Iroh and Ms. Mika for their constant help, support and encouragement.

References

Bonney, C. R., & Sternberg, R. J. (2016). Learning to Think Critically. *Handbook of Research on Learning and Instruction*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736419.CH9

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706QP063OA

Cummins, J. (2000). Language, Power and Pedagogy. *Language, Power and Pedagogy*. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853596773/HTML

Floyd, C. B. (2011). Critical thinking in a second language. Higher Education Research & Development, 30(3), 289–302. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2010.501076

Hanifa, R. (2018). EFL Published Materials: An Evaluation of English Textbooks for Junior High School in Indonesia. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *9*(2), 166–174. https://doi.org/10.7575/AIAC.ALLS.V.9N.2P.166

Hossain, K. I. (2024). Reviewing the role of culture in English language learning: Challenges and opportunities for educators. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *9*, 100781. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SSAHO.2023.100781

Kara Özkan, N. (2022). An Analysis of Turkish and English Foreign Language Teaching Books in Terms of Multiculturalism. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, *9*(2), 884–902. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7639-9773

Kim, S. Y., & Paek, J. (2015). An analysis of culture-related content in English textbooks. *Linguistic Research*, *32*(special-edition), 83–104. https://doi.org/10.17250/KHISLI.32..201507.005

Krathwohl, D. R. (2002). A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview. Theory Into Practice, 41(4), 212–218. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4104_2,

Li, L. (2016). Integrating thinking skills in foreign language learning: What can we learn from teachers' perspectives? *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *22*, 273–288. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TSC.2016.09.008

Liang, W., & Fung, D. (2021). Fostering critical thinking in English-as-a-second-language classrooms: Challenges and opportunities. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *39*, 100769. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TSC.2020.100769

Muniroh, S., Rachmajanti, S., Laksmi, E. D., Fadhillah, J. N., Nilam, N., & Saputri, A. (2022). Incorporating critical thinking and English as a medium of instruction for elementary school students. *Bahasa Dan Seni: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, Dan Pengajarannya*, *50*(1), 17–35. https://doi.org/10.17977/um015v50i12022p17

Musiman, Sutopo, A., Ali, R. M., Aditama, M. G., Wiguna, A., & Syafiq, A. (2020). EYL in Indonesia: Implementations, Problems, and Challenges. *Proceedings of the 5th Progressive and Fun Education International Conference (PFEIC 2020)*, *479*, 105–113. https://doi.org/10.2991/ASSEHR.K.201015.017

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s)

Pohl, M. (2000). *Learning to Think, Thinking to Learn: Models and Strategies to Develop a Classroom Culture of Thinking*. Hawker Brownlow Education.

Pratama, Nurkamto, & Wijayanto.(2021). The Representation of Multicultural Values in National Mandatory English Textbooks Used in Indonesian Secondary Schools. *International Journal of Multiculturalism and Multireligious Understanding*, 8(1), http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i1.2337

Riadini, U. S., & Cahyono, B. Y. (2021). The Analysis of the Culture-Related Contents in an Indonesian English Textbook. *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, *5*(2), 285–295. https://doi.org/10.21093/IJELTAL.V5I2.711

Saldaña, J. (2009). The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Sanavi, R. V., & Tarighat, S. (2014). Critical thinking and speaking proficiency: a mixed-method study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *4*(1), 79–88. https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=LitRC&sw=w&issn=17992591&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CA358631229&sid=googleScholar&linkaccess=fulltext

Schreier, M. (2012). Qualitative content analysis in practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Susilowaty S, Setyarini S, Gustine GG (2025), ""When a fox desires to be yuman": exploring English teacher's practice of critical literacy instruction: lessons learned from an Indonesian junior high classroom". *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*,24(4), 329–349, https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-12-2024-0184

Xiong, T., Feng, D., & Hu, G. (2022). Researching cultural knowledge and values in English language teaching textbooks: Representation, multimodality, and stakeholders. In Cultural Knowledge and Values in English Language Teaching Materials: (Multimodal) Representations and Stakeholders (pp. 1-18). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore*Representations and Stakeholders*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-1935-0_1

Zhao, C., Pandian, A., & Mehar Singh, M. K. (2016). Instructional Strategies for Developing Critical Thinking in EFL Classrooms. *English Language Teaching*, *9*(10), 14. https://doi.org/10.5539/ELT.V9N10P14

--- This page is intentionally left blank---