

Initiating the EFL University Students' Critical Thinking in Oral Mode through Pragma-Stylistic Strategies

Ruqoyyah Amilia Andania^{1*}, Mohammad Romadhoni², Fatma Rahayu Nita³, Slamet Setiawan⁴, Ai-Chun Yen⁵

¹Education and Human Potentials Development, Hua-Shih College of Education, National Dong Hwa University, Hualien County 974, Taiwan, ²Asia-Pacific Regional Studies, Collage of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Dong Hwa University, Hualien County 974, Taiwan, ³Language Development Center (P2B), Universitas Islam Negeri Surabaya, 60237, Indonesia, ⁴English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya 60231, Indonesia, ⁵English Department, Collage of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Dong Hwa University, Hualien County 974, Taiwan

*) Corresponding Author
Email: 811188119@gms.ndhu.edu.tw

DOI: 10.18326/jopr.v6i1.113-147

Submission Track:

Received: 29-02-2024

Final Revision: 28-04-2024

Available Online: 01-05-2024

Copyright © 2024 Authors



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Abstract

The objective of this study is to analyze how university lectures use pragma-stylistic strategies to encourage critical thinking in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom during speaking activities. The study aims to analyze the types of strategies used, the ways they are used, and the lectures' perception of the students' response. Critical thinking is important for EFL students' speaking ability, and students with higher critical thinking perform better. One strategy to initiate critical thinking is through the use of language style by the lectures. However, there are few studies on this topic. The study used qualitative descriptive interviews to collect data. The results showed that lectures prefer using assertive-stating, assertive-

suggesting, directive-advising, and prolepsis strategies to initiate critical thinking in speaking classrooms. These strategies are implemented through activities such as providing stimulus, conducting group discussions, giving instructions or questions, and providing feedback. The lectures noted that most students responded positively to these strategies, which effectively motivated and encouraged their critical thinking. The study suggests that language lectures should initiate critical thinking through pragma-stylistic strategies. Further research is needed to explore this topic in more comprehensive scopes and with different language skills.

Keywords: *English as a Foreign Language, Language Teaching, Speaking Ability, Assertive-Stating, Assertive-Suggesting, Directive-Advising, Prolepsis.*

INTRODUCTION

Higher-order thinking (HOT) or critical thinking (CT) skills are essential for college success. They enhance students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and reinforce their thinking logically. Masduqi (2006) emphasized that university students with high CT skills can effectively handle academic challenges. CT is also crucial for global development as it helps students transition from passive receivers to active learners. Folse (2006) highlighted the relationship between CT and language skills, specifically in speaking a foreign language. Speech plays a fundamental role in human communication, and it can be challenging in the EFL learning environment. Research has shown a significant correlation between CT skills and EFL students' speaking abilities. Critical thinkers tend to perform better in oral tasks compared to their peers who lack such skills (Ramezani, Larsari, & Kiasi, 2016). Malmir (2012) confirmed the positive impact of critical thinking on the oral abilities of Iranian English learners. These findings emphasize the need for educators to use targeted teaching strategies that engage students intellectually, aiding their development and performance in speaking classrooms.

The field of pragma-stylistics is important in educational settings as it focuses on the linguistic strategies used to engage and persuade. Previous studies such as Nurhadi (2016), and Wulandari (2020) have explored how pragma-stylistic

approaches can shape students' communication skills and their understanding of peace and cross-cultural dialogues. However, there is a gap in literature regarding the specific application of pragma-stylistics by educators to promote critical thinking (CT) among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Recent studies have started addressing this gap by examining the integration of CT in teaching curricula and its impact on language learning. A study conducted in 2022 by Isnaini, E. et al. revealed challenges such as limited CT understanding among student teachers and the need for better support in applying CT. Another study conducted by F. Bagheri (2015) found that CT training can enhance language learning strategies, highlighting the need for more comprehensive research to improve teaching methodologies and language education outcomes. This research emphasizes the importance of developing effective pragma-stylistics strategies to foster critical thinking in EFL contexts, which is the focus of the current study. This current study addresses the research questions as follows: (1) what components of pragma-stylistics strategies are used by the lecturers? (2) how do the lecturers use those pragma-stylistics strategies; (3) what are the lectures' perceptions towards their students' response in initiating CT for their EFL university students in oral mode, in speaking context?

Critical Thinking in Higher Education

Critical Thinking (CT) can be defined in various ways. Some experts argue that CT encompasses philosophical, psychological, and educational perspectives (Nikou, Bonyadi, & Amirikar, 2015). Watson and Glaser (2012) define CT as the skill of analyzing and investigating problems to gain valid results. Paul, R and Elder, L (2019) view CT as the ability to analyze and evaluate intellectual processes and how to improve them. Freeley and Steinberg (2007) describe CT as the ability to promote, analyze, and critique ideas, involving evaluating, analyzing, and criticizing information, knowledge, and problems to make valuable judgments and decisions. Jiménez-Aleixandre and Puig (2012) discuss how critical thinking involves

discriminating between claims supported by evidence and mere opinions, emphasizing the role of argumentation in supporting this capacity. They highlight that critical thinking includes developing independent opinions and challenging existing ideas, not just critiquing others negatively. These perspectives highlight the complex nature of CT, emphasizing its importance in critical evaluation and intellectual engagement.

In higher education, students are recognized for actively engaging with information, exploring its underlying meanings and implications (Bankole M. E., 2019). They seek to understand the connections between their studies and future career aspirations, performing optimally when aware of the potential outcomes of their efforts. This active engagement requires lecturers to provide creative opportunities for CT, especially in the EFL context. Lecturers should encourage students to deliberate arguments, evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and balance perspectives (Bankole M. E., 2019). CT is considered a core academic skill that enhances intellectual capabilities (Masduqi, 2006; Klimovienė, Urbonienė, & Barzdžiukienė, 2006). To foster this competence, lecturers can use strategies like pragmatic-stylistics during the teaching and learning process. This enables students to effectively analyze sources, take notes, complete assignments, and excel in other academic endeavors.

Critical Thinking and EFL Students' Speaking Skill

Spoken language ability is widely regarded as a crucial aspect of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. In today's global era, there is an increasing demand for international communication, prompting many language students to enhance their oral skills in language classrooms. While basic oral skills are common, some students exhibit significantly higher oral communication abilities. According to Malmir (2012), those who communicate more effectively tend to achieve greater success in their academic and social lives. Folse (2006) equates the ability to convey a language orally with understanding the language itself, emphasizing that speech

is the most fundamental means of human communication. Despite its importance, speaking is generally considered the most challenging skill in the EFL context, more so than the other language skills.

Critical thinking has a significant correlation with and influence on EFL students' speaking skills. Ramezani, R., Larsari, E. E., & Kiasi, M. A. (2016) observe that EFL students identified as critical thinkers typically perform better in speaking classrooms than those who are not. This connection between critical thinking and speaking performance is further explored by Malmir (2012), who found that Iranian EFL learners who received critical thinking instruction demonstrated marked improvements in their oral skills during post-test interviews. Such improvements suggest that introducing critical thinking in the classroom positively impacts speaking abilities. Similarly, Sanavi and Tarighat (2014) conducted research in Tehran, which also confirmed that teaching critical thinking skills significantly enhances the speaking proficiency of Iranian EFL learners. These findings underscore the importance of high critical thinking skills for EFL university students and suggest that these skills can be effectively developed through strategic instructional methods, including the language style used by lecturers to initiate critical thinking during classroom interactions.

Pragmatics and stylistics (pragma-stylistics)

Pragmatics, a field within applied linguistics, examines language in context, going beyond grammar and semantic rules (Black, 2006). Yule (2006), defines pragmatics as the study of speakers' intentions, contextual meanings, non-literal expressions, social relationships, and the connection between linguistic forms and their use. Stylistics, a branch of linguistics, focuses on the diverse language usage found in literature. According to Turner, in Nurhadi (2016), "style" refers to literary criticism, while "istics" refers to linguistics, indicating a close relationship between language and style. Black explains that stylisticians view language in a text as a

complete representation of the textual world. This perspective draws on Whorfian ideas that suggest individual languages may influence worldviews. However, it has evolved to recognize that meaning is subjective and emerges through interpretation. Different readers may interpret aspects of a text's meaning differently, challenging the idea of a single, unified meaning.

Additionally, style is also associated with a mode of persuasion in rhetoric, commonly utilized in both written and spoken discourse to effectively persuade or sway listeners and readers into embracing the speaker's or writer's message (Tarigan H. G., 2009). Keraf (2009) supports this view by describing style as the manner in which people express their thoughts through language, which in turn reflects their spirit and personality. This expression is often enhanced by figures of speech or figurative language, which involve deviations from literal meanings to achieve a desired effect (Sudjiman, P., 1986). Such figurative language is used by speakers and writers to advise and persuade others to adopt similar viewpoints. Pragma-stylistics, as defined by Hickey and cited in Nurhadi (2016), combines pragmatic elements with stylistic analysis, focusing on achieving specific goals or expressions through various linguistic and extra-linguistic means within given contexts. This field studies the integration of linguistic rules and potential to create texts that influence or persuade. Additionally, Nurhadi (2016) adds that pragma-stylistics merges pragmatics and stylistics, highlighting the pragmatic aspects found within speech acts and situational contexts.

Pragmatics and stylistics (pragma-stylistics) components

Recent evidence by Nurhadi (2016) suggests that the pragmatics components are divided into three types; assertive speech acts, directives speech acts, and expressive speech acts.

In comparison, the stylistics components are categorized into six types; epizeuxis, parallelism, prolepsis, simile, chiasmus, and positive vs negative phrase. Here are the detailed explanations of the pragmatics components mentioned.

Assertive

Assertive is a speech act describing matters of external reality. There are two kinds of assertive speech acts. They are assertive-stating and assertive-suggesting.

Assertive-stating

Assertive-stating is a kind of speech acts assertive created from performative verbs which have a function to give statements.

Assertive-suggesting

Assertive-suggesting is a kind of speech acts assertive created from performative verbs which have a function to give suggestions.

Directive-advising: Directive is a speech act containing the speaker's wish to the hearer or audience to do something. While directive-advising is a kind of speech acts directive created from performative verbs which have a function to give advice.

Expressive-stating: Expressive is a speech act describing what the speaker feels. At the same time, expressive-stating is a kind of speech act reflecting the speaker's statements alongside a state psychologically.

While the detailed explanations of the stylistics components are presented below:

Epizeuxis: It is the repetition of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences directly

Parallelism: It shows the meaning of parallel elements in a sentence construction

Prolepsis: It illustrates the words as if the preceding events. In this case, the thought is delivered by the speaker before the event truly occurs construction.

Simile: It shows an explicit comparison to something similar with other things expressed by the words: same, like, as, as if, and so on.

Chiasmus: It is a kind of figure of speech in which the words, grammatical constructions, or concepts are repeated in reverse order, both in the same or a modified form. It has the formula A-B- B-A.

Positive vs. Negative phrase: It is the use of phrases or sentences, both positive and negative to make the language used to give a strong foundation in the mental construction.

The research gap in EFL contexts is the lack of attention given to the pragma-stylistic strategies employed by lecturers to initiate critical thinking (CT) in oral mode or speaking activities. While previous studies conducted by Shanti et al. (2014), Ramezani et al. (2016), and Folse (2006) have explored the relationship between CT and speaking ability, they have not specifically addressed the pragma-stylistic methods used by lecturers. This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth qualitative analysis of the language styles used by lecturers as a means to stimulate CT development in speaking classrooms, examining how these strategies are implemented, and how students perceive them. By emphasizing the correlation between linguistic style and pragmatic language use, this study provides a novel viewpoint on pedagogical methods for EFL speaking classrooms and highlights the requirement for further investigation into the pragma-stylistic approach across diverse language abilities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This current study implements a qualitative approach constructed through a depth interview to get the data from the participants. It focuses on the participants' perspectives and experiences. Qualitative research-based interview assists in obtaining profound and detailed insights into an individual's views, positions, and life experiences (Kvale, 2007). The participants are two lecturers of the Spoken English course of the English Education Department at one of the universities in

Surabaya-Indonesia. They are one male lecturer named Aldebaran and one female lecturer named Andin (both are pseudonyms), aged 29 to 33. They have been experiencing as lecturers in the English field for about three years. The process of selecting the participants is accomplished within the base of purposeful sampling. It is because purposeful sampling is valuable when the researchers try to find the participants who are expected to give information deeply in addressing the research questions (Cohen et al., 2018). In this study, all personal information from the selected participants is not presented as a part of the data to protect participants' privacy. The researcher of this study can only access the data. Besides, the selected participants are considered eligible to be respondents of this study since they have currently been assigned as lecturers in Spoken English courses at the university level where having high CT is required for all their students.

The data was taken in May 2021. By this time, the participants had been conducting the English-speaking classroom passing mid-semester of the academic year. In this case, they engaged with the students intensely and closely. The interview session was conducted for around 45 minutes for each participant. It was carried out through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were performed virtually via Zoom Meeting since they were conducted during the pandemic situation (Covid-19). English was used as the main communicative language during the interviews, but Bahasa Indonesia was also applied to get and to give clearer and more detailed information as well as to create a more enjoyable and relaxed atmosphere. The researcher managed the topic of the questions from general issues to specific issues relating to the main research questions of this study.

A thematic analysis (TA) was utilized in analyzing the data taken from the interviews. TA is commonly used to examine qualitative data. Braun & Clarke (2012) states that thematic analysis facilitates the researcher to evaluate and examine the dataset thru pattern categorization of the themes found in the dataset.

The researcher completed some steps in analyzing the data; (1) after conducting the interviews, the data was firstly transcribed using verbatim (2) the transcriptions were read several times to comprehensively understand the points given by the participants, to wisely avoid missing some important information and to certainly code the themes based on the determined categorization (3) the themes appeared in the dataset were coded or grouped (4) the coded or grouped themes were then accorded and compared with some theories or previous studies (5) lastly, triangulation technique was conducted to ensure and strengthen the validity of the findings.

This study followed ethical principles such as informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. Participants were given detailed information about the study's purpose, their involvement, and their right to withdraw without any penalty. Consent forms were obtained, assuring the use of pseudonyms to protect identities. All recordings and transcripts were stored securely and accessible only to the research team. A triangulation process was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. This involved cross-verifying the findings through a comparison with existing literature, consultation with fellow researchers for peer debriefing, and member checks with the participants to confirm the accuracy of the interpreted data. This triangulation not only reinforced the validity of the research but also enriched the study's contribution to the field of EFL teaching methodologies.

RESULTS

This section presents the study findings, organized by theme related to the research questions. The results focus on three main areas: the strategies used by lectures, the methods they use to implement these strategies in EFL speaking classrooms and also the students' responses towards the strategies conducted. The results explore the effectiveness of these strategies and how they enhance critical thinking among university students.

Pragma-stylistics Strategies Used by the Lectures

Table 1. Pragma-stylistics Strategies

Strategy Category	Strategy Description	Examples from Interviews
Assertive-Stating	Lectures assert the importance of critical thinking in communication and speaking skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I usually speak to my students to have higher critical thinking in my classroom since they are now university students, particularly in an EFL speaking classroom. In the first meeting, I said to the classroom (1) "having critical thinking is required for all of you as university students". In addition, I also said to my students (2) "one of the aspects that makes you more confident in speaking is your critical thinking skill". • I usually initiate my students to have critical thinking by saying to the classroom (3) "you have the same potential and opportunity to develop your CT skill in this classroom". I say those words

		many times in order they (my students) want to think critically.
Assertive-Suggesting	Lectures suggest behaviours or attitudes that promote critical thinking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a lecture, I try to suggest my students be critical thinkers because it will help them to develop their speaking performance. So, the classroom will be more active. I say (4) "everyone, you should give critical ideas in expressing your words". In detail, I sometimes give them long words such as (5) "There are two important aspects in speaking that should be owned. The first is the basic skill of the speaking itself, I mean about the vocabulary, pronunciation and intonation, as well as the way how we construct the sentence properly. The second is critical thinking. It refers to how you critically express your ideas about a topic provided". • I provide them with an instruction such as (6) "You

		<p>should critically comment each other on your friend's performance", or I might say (7) "you should share ideas with your friend to enhance your ways of thinking". I usually push them to practice their critical thinking.</p>
Directive-Advising	<p>Direct advice is given to encourage specific critical thinking behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In my classroom, the effective strategy to initiate or to develop students' CT is through giving them suggestions as often as possible during the classroom process. For example, I say to the students (8) "please, use critical ideas when you answer the questions given" or (9) "Give the logical reasons why you say.... ". The students then try to think critically and can express their ideas confidently.
Prolepsis	<p>Lectures use anticipatory statements to highlight the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, I also said other words in the classroom, for example (10) "When you have the high critical

	benefits of having critical thinking skills.	thinking, you will automatically be more confident and fluent in performing your speaking skill as well as in this EFL context". I tried to give the students better conditions that they might find if they have good critical thinking during the classroom process. Sometimes, I also say (11) "You will be easy to express your logical ideas when you have used to think critically both in your oral practice and written practice".
--	--	--

This table summarizes the pragma-stylistics strategies used by EFL university lectures to promote critical thinking among students. The strategies include: *Assertive-Stating*, *Assertive-Suggesting*, *Directive-Advising*, and *Prolepsis*. These strategies are effectively used to create an environment that encourages critical thinking. They not only highlight the importance of critical thinking in language proficiency but also actively involve students in developing this essential skill. The interviews provided demonstrate how these strategies can be applied in practical ways to enhance student learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

The Ways the Lectures Use Pragma-stylistics Strategies

The lectures agree that students in university are required to have high critical thinking moreover in EFL speaking classrooms. Therefore, they implement some

strategies to initiate their students' CT during the class; one of them is through the language style delivered in the classroom. However, the ways they conduct those strategies are varied. They will be detailly described on the table 2 below.

Table 2. The way of Pragma-stylistics Strategies

Strategy Category	Strategy Description	Examples from Interviews
Beginning with Stimulus	Lectures initiate activities with a variety of stimuli (e.g., articles, audio, video) to provoke students' critical thinking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I usually provide a stimulus through articles, audio, and sometimes video. When they have got the information from those sources, I then ask them to answer the questions using their critical ideas or provide some instructions. Later on, I give them feedback.
Conducting Group Discussions	Group discussions or speaking clubs are used to enhance participation and critical thinking, particularly with topics relevant to IELTS speaking tests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I give certain topics such as hobbies, cultures, and sports to be discussed in a group... This approach helps them prepare for IELTS speaking tests and encourages them to use their CT.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the speaking club, I start with an impromptu speech, allowing them to explore their ideas freely."
Providing Instruction or Questions	Direct instructions and questions are provided to stimulate critical thinking, mirroring the format of IELTS speaking interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I imitate IELTS speaking interviewers by providing challenging instructions or questions... This method effectively stimulates students' CT during the classroom activity."
Giving Feedback	Feedback is used to evaluate and improve students' performance, encouraging deeper critical and creative thinking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I tried to give them feedback, mostly in terms of suggestions to improve their ways of thinking to make their speaking skills better... Feedback is given privately with each student, not during the classroom, to ensure it is specific and based on learning errors.

This table presents teaching methods for developing critical thinking skills in university students studying English as a foreign language (EFL). The methods include using multimedia stimuli, interactive dialogues, guided inquiries, and providing feedback. These strategies are incorporated into classroom practices to actively engage students and prepare them for challenges such as the IELTS speaking tests. By stimulating and assessing students' thinking abilities, educators are able to improve both their linguistic skills and critical thinking abilities. This

ultimately promotes intellectual growth and enhances their proficiency in communicating in English.

Students' Responses

This part focuses on lectures' perceptions of university students' responses to critical thinking strategies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking classrooms. The study found that students' responses can be categorized as positive or negative, based on their English proficiency. Positive responders, who are usually more fluent, actively and critically engage with the tasks, demonstrating higher linguistic competence and enthusiasm. On the other hand, negative responders, who have limited English skills, tend to participate less and face difficulties with the critical demands of the activities. For the details are shown on the table 3 below.

Table 3. Responses

Response Type	Description of Response	Example from Interviews
Positive Response	Students show enthusiasm and compliance with CT initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They commonly respond positively when I initiate critical thinking in the classroom. For example, when I say to the classroom (7) "please, use critical ideas when you answer the questions given" they directly do my instructions and try to answer the questions more critically. • Alhamdulillah the response is positive since they (students) change to be more active in the classroom after I give some suggestions to think critically, (5) "You should critically comment each other on your friend's

		performance" and (6) "you should share ideas with your friend to enhance your ways of thinking". I frequently persuade them to use their critical thinking when they are speaking.
Negative Response	Students show reluctance or inability to engage with CT tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yaaa, of course, not all of them then change to be more critical in delivering their ideas. There are still 5 to 7 students who are still not active yet in expressing their ideas critically even I have conveyed some strategies in supporting students' CT. And you know, they tend to be not critical not because they don't want to do so, that is because they have not enough background in English. Therefore, they often get confused about what they want to think and speak which influence negatively to their way of thinking.

This table shows how lecturers perceive university students' responses to critical thinking strategies in EFL classrooms. It highlights that language proficiency greatly affects student engagement. Students who are more fluent in English, known as positive responders, actively participate and show enthusiasm. On the other hand, students with lower proficiency struggle and tend to be passive. It is crucial for educators to understand these dynamics in order to develop effective teaching strategies that promote engagement and improve learning outcomes.

The researchers have compiled the data into a table to effectively summarize their findings. This helps readers understand the results more easily. The

structured presentation allows for a straightforward comparison and comprehensive analysis of strategies used to promote critical thinking in EFL classrooms. For the details, shown on the table below.

Table 4. Finding Summary

Strategy Category	Strategy Description	Implementation Methods	Lectures' Perception of Students' Response
Assertive- Stating	Lectures assert the importance of critical thinking in communication and speaking skills.	Verbal Reinforcement: Emphasize critical thinking verbally in class instructions.	Positive responses noted; students show compliance and active participation.
Assertive- Suggesting	Lectures suggest behaviours or attitudes that promote critical thinking.	Suggestive Guidance: Prompt students to offer critical ideas.	Most students react positively and become more engaged in discussions.
Directive- Advising	Direct advice is given to encourage specific critical thinking behaviours.	Direct Instruction: Advise specific ways to engage critically.	Positive; students follow instructions and engage more critically.
Prolepsis	Lectures use anticipatory	Future-Oriented Motivation: Highlight	Students motivated to

	statements to highlight the future benefits of having critical thinking skills.	long-term benefits of critical thinking.	improve their critical thinking for future benefits.
Beginning with Stimulus	Initiating activities with various stimuli to provoke critical thinking.	Multimedia Resources: Use diverse media to present information and provoke discussion.	Obedient students engage actively; stolid students show less engagement.
Conducting Group Discussions	Enhancing participation and critical thinking through group discussions relevant to IELTS speaking tests.	Interactive Dialogue: Facilitate structured group activities around specific topics to encourage debate and idea exchange.	Positive, especially in students who are proficient in English.
Providing Instruction or Questions	Stimulating critical thinking with specific instructions, mirroring IELTS speaking formats.	Guided Inquiry: Offer questions and scenarios that challenge students to think critically and respond comprehensively.	Responses vary; proficient students respond well, others struggle.

Giving Feedback	Evaluating and improving student performance through feedback.	Individual Assessment: Provide personal feedback addressing specific strengths and areas for improvement.	Positive influence on students willing and able to engage with the feedback.
-----------------	--	---	--

DISCUSSION

The components of pragma-stylistics strategies are used by the lecturers

In EFL classrooms, lectures aim to develop critical thinking skills through pragmatic and stylistic strategies. This discussion focuses on the effectiveness of assertive techniques and directive strategies in cultivating these skills among university students. The participants mentioned on the table are categorized as assertive-stating speech acts. These speech acts form statements and are part of an assertive-stating strategy. Yule (2006) defines assertive speech acts as describing external facts. One function of assertion is to give affirmation or make statements. In data (1), the speaker gives a statement to his students about the importance of critical thinking. Data (2) and (3) are also in the same category. These models involve expressive verbs in a functional state. Nurhadi (2016) states that verbal statements convey ideas or information in a general way, avoiding subjective attitudes of the speaker. This makes the listeners more receptive to the information. Kener, F. M. N. (2021) discovered that pragmatic tasks had a significant impact on developing critical thinking capabilities in prospective EFL teachers. They recommended further exploration of learner-centered activities that involve discussing and analysing utterances to enhance critical thinking. This finding answers the first research question, it emphasizes the use of assertive-stating components. Lecturer's frame critical thinking as essential by making factual statements.

The sentences in data (4), (5), (6), and (7) are considered assertive-suggesting because they contain suggestion words. Aliakbari and Bozorgmanesh (2015) found that assertive-suggesting strategies in EFL classrooms enhance student engagement and develop critical thinking skills. Clear communication of expectations and feedback are key factors in achieving this. Yaiche (2021) supports this by highlighting the guided discovery method as a way to encourage autonomous language exploration and boost critical thinking abilities. Harizaj and Hajrulla (2017) also advocate for practical activities that include assertive suggestions to improve communication skills, vocabulary, and language use. Nurhadi (2016) adds that using auxiliary modals like "should" or "should not" in assertive-suggesting speech acts effectively prompts students to improve understanding and take thoughtful actions. By employing these strategies, lecturers not only communicate expectations clearly but also guide student behavior towards enhancing critical thinking. This creates a conducive learning environment and optimizes educational outcomes.

Nurhadi (2016) defines directive-advising in expressions (8) and (9) as a speech act. It initiates with verbs like "use" and "give" to prompt listeners to develop critical ideas and provide logical reasons. This method emphasizes the advisory role of directives, which are performative. They urge students to take specific actions, fostering critical thinking through pragmatic and stylistic strategies. Suhartini, C., and Wulansari, Y. (2015) identify various directive speech acts—requests, commands, and suggestions. They note that commands can confuse students, but a mixed approach can enhance classroom participation and understanding. In their research, Suryandani, P. D., and Budasi, I. G. (2022) observed that English teachers at SMKN 1 Sawan frequently use question directives. This effectively engages students and improves their skills, attitudes towards science, and critical thinking. Sulistyani, S. (2017) further supports the significance of directive speech acts in education. They point out their essential functions in elicitation, instruction, and advice that guide learning processes and enhance critical thinking abilities. These

studies collectively illustrate the profound influence of adeptly utilized directive speech acts in educational contexts. They highlight the importance of promoting critical thinking as part of broader pragma-stylistic strategies.

The expressions in data (10) and (11) contain the prolepsis mark “when”. Nurhadi (2016) states that prolepsis markers in stylistics can be in the form of “when” and “later”. These markers provide an imaginative idea of the interlocutor’s condition that is not actually happening yet. It suggests that there might be a preceding condition before the possible event occurs. Ratna, K. N. (2009) also argues that prolepsis or anticipation is like a previous event existing before the main event appears. Prolepsis expression allows interlocutors to accept the designed-imaginative event as an implicit permission command. In this case, the lecture lets the students imagine the condition when they have good critical thinking. This will help improve their speaking skills in terms of fluency and confidence (data 10). Similarly, data (11) shows that the lecture gives students an opportunity to imagine a condition that might occur when they are used to implementing critical thinking in their oral and written communication. The lecture suggests that with this imagined condition, students will find it easier to express their logical ideas. It also shows how lecturers incorporate anticipatory and imaginative elements into their strategies. These strategies aim to enhance critical thinking.

The way the lecturers use those pragma-stylistics strategies

The lecture uses pragma-stylistic strategies to promote critical thinking in students. One way he does this is by starting activities with a stimulus. This helps students answer questions logically during speaking activities. The stimulus can be articles, audio, or video. Students use their critical ideas to provide detailed information. The lecture then provides feedback. Sarwinda et al. (2020) found that providing learning media, such as audiovisual learning based on the contextual teaching method (CTL), improves students’ motivation, skills, and critical thinking.

This method is about how lecturers use pragma-stylistic strategies. These strategies help students think critically and analyze deeply during speaking activities. The goal is to apply critical thinking to both real-world scenarios and abstract concepts.

Another way, the lecture implements group discussions and speaking clubs in the classroom to encourage student participation. The goal is to perform well on the IELTS speaking test. Topics such as hobbies, cultures, and sports are discussed in these groups, which also helps students prepare for the test. Before the main activity, students are given two minutes to speak impromptu or in a toastmaster style to freely express their ideas. Implementing critical thinking in sharing activities can be done by providing certain clues. Vogt and Short in Shanthi, Pothan, and Rao (2014) When students actively participate and discuss ideas, learning becomes more effective and helps them think critically. Speaking clubs and structured group discussions are examples of pragma-stylistic strategies. They aim to encourage active participation and critical engagement among students.

Furthermore, Utari (2020) and Maulana (2022) found that EFL students face internal and external challenges when it comes to developing satisfactory levels of critical thinking. They emphasized the importance of teaching methods in influencing this process. Similarly, Warliati, et al. (2019) studied the relationship between learning strategies, critical thinking, and speaking skills. Warliati's research showed that the Discussion Strategy was more effective than the Think-Pair-Share Strategy in promoting these skills. Chen and Preston (2021) also supported the benefits of collaborative learning in enhancing students' critical thinking skills. They suggested that instructors should implement strategies to improve team collaboration. These activities not only develop speaking skills but also foster a culture of critical examination and shared learning.

Moreover, creating a learning environment that allows for free interaction and discussion is important. Two lectures in the study prefer to provide instructions and questions to initiate critical thinking (CT) in their students. One lecture imitates an IELTS speaking interviewer by giving instructions or questions. This approach

effectively stimulates students' CT during classroom activities (Carole F. Robinson and P. Kakela, 2006). According to Hughes (2014), asking questions and avoiding assumptions is an indicator of CT. The lectures can give opinions on students' answers and support those opinions. This helps students become autonomous and independent, consider different perspectives, ask the right questions, weigh different points of view, challenge assumptions, acknowledge background information, imagine and explore alternatives, and develop reflective scepticism. This approach showcases the practical application of pragma-stylistic strategies. These strategies are used to engage students' thinking and encourage their responses in a controlled but impactful manner.

In studying the effectiveness of feedback in EFL settings, it is clear that immediate and specific feedback greatly improve students' speaking skills and critical thinking engagement. Zrair (2019) found that Saudi EFL students benefit from immediate oral feedback during speaking activities, emphasizing the importance of timely feedback in language learning. Ramezani, R., Larsari, E. E., and Kiasi, M. A. (2016) discovered a strong link between critical thinking and speaking abilities, suggesting that critical engagement significantly enhances speaking performance. Chien, Hwang, and Jong (2020) reported that integrating peer assessment with virtual reality settings not only improves speaking performance but also motivates learning and enhances critical thinking, reducing learning anxiety. Lecturers provide feedback to evaluate and comment on students' performances, facilitating future improvements and fostering critical and creative thinking. Butakor, P. K. (2016) supports the pivotal role of feedback in education, as it provides essential information for learning and critical thinking. Lecturers prefer to give this feedback privately, creating a trusting and safe learning environment. They also use pragma-stylistic strategies to teach and discuss learning errors, providing targeted feedback based on these errors to reinforce learning outcomes. Faridah, Thoyyibah, and Kurnia (2020) and Tai (2022) emphasize the importance

of peer feedback and critical thinking integration in boosting the confidence and speaking performance of EFL students.

To sum up, lectures enhance critical thinking and communicative proficiency in EFL classrooms by using pragma-stylistic strategies. This prepares students for academic achievements and real-world challenges. The approach fosters intellectual growth and cultivates a dynamic learning environment. It encourages continuous improvement and reflective engagement.

The lectures' perceptions towards their students' response in initiating CT for their EFL university students in oral mode, in speaking context.

Most students respond positively when lectures use critical thinking (CT) exercises in class. Marzban and Barati (2016), Fahim and Sa'eepour (2011), and Grosser and Nel (2013) have found a strong link between language proficiency and critical thinking in EFL learners. Marzban and Barati (2016) state that higher language skills are essential for understanding complex concepts, which improves critical thinking. Fahim and Sa'eepour (2011) argue that teaching critical thinking in language classes enhances reading, speaking, and overall language proficiency. Grosser and Nel (2013) added that academic language skills, like making inferences, are important for improving critical thinking, which is crucial for academic success. These studies align with classroom observations, where English-proficient students excel in critical thinking activities, expressing ideas effectively and following instructions.

However, EFL students face challenges with grammar and linguistic structure, which affect their speaking abilities. These challenges include issues with tenses and verb usage (Dhona, 2020), subject-verb agreement (Febriyanti, 2019), redundancy reduction (Fatmanissa & Novianti, 2022) and pronunciation (Normawati et al., 2023). Musabal and Abdalgane (2023) found that language anxiety, poor classroom management, and inadequate vocabulary hinder EFL learners' oral participation. They recommend enhancing student engagement

through improved rapport and tailored teaching methods. Ariyanti (2016) studied psychological barriers that affect Indonesian EFL students' speaking performance and participation. These barriers include fear of making mistakes and low self-esteem, which often lead to code-switching during discussions. The low language proficiency of some students undermines their confidence and participation in class, making it difficult for them to respond to CT initiatives. So, lecturers perceive those students with higher language proficiency respond more positively to critical thinking (CT) initiatives in oral and speaking contexts, as these students are better equipped to understand complex concepts and articulate their ideas clearly. However, they also recognize that students facing linguistic challenges may be less confident and reluctant to participate, which affects their ability to engage effectively with CT exercises in class.

CONCLUSION

Since Critical Thinking (CT) significantly give positive effects to the EFL students' speaking ability, moreover at the university level, this current study aims at (1) analyzing the pragma-stylistic strategies used by the lectures in initiating CT in their class (2) how they use those strategies and (3) how their perception on their students' response towards initiating CT in their classroom. A qualitative approach based on a depth interview was conducted to get the data from the participants. It focuses on the participants' perspectives and experiences about some issues clearly presented in research questions. The participants are two lecturers of the Spoken English course of the English Education Department at one of the universities in Surabaya-Indonesia.

The study found that lecturers in speaking classrooms prefer using Assertive-Stating, Assertive-Suggesting, Directive-Advising, and Prolepsis strategies to promote critical thinking. These strategies are implemented through activities like providing texts, audio, and video stimuli, conducting group discussions, giving

specific instructions, and providing feedback. Most students respond positively to these methods, showing increased motivation and engagement in critical thinking. These students are categorized as obedient, following instructions and focusing on tasks. However, a minority of students respond negatively, engaging passively and showing defensive behaviours. These students are labelled as stolid and often feel overwhelmed. The study provides insights into the strategies used in speaking classrooms to foster critical thinking, but it has limitations. It is based on data from only two lecturers at one institution, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The qualitative approach used does not measure the impact of the strategies quantitatively. Additionally, relying on self-reported data may not fully reflect students' development in critical thinking, and the study's short duration only captures a snapshot of the strategies' effectiveness. Furthermore, the study only considers the lecturers' perspectives and does not include students' views. To address these gaps, future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, extend over longer periods, and include both quantitative measures and students' reflections to better understand and validate the effectiveness of the strategies in enhancing critical thinking.

REFERENCES

- Aliakbari, M., & Bozorgmanesh, B. (2015). Assertive classroom management strategies and students' performance: The case of EFL classroom. *Cogent Education*, 2(1), 1012899.
- Ariyanti, Ariyanti. (2016). Psychological Factors Affecting EFL Students' Speaking Performance. *ASIAN TEFL: Journal of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. 1. 10.
- Bagheri, F. (2015). The relationship between critical thinking and language learning strategies of EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(5), 969.

- Bankole-Minaflinou, E. (2019). Promoting critical thinking skills in EFL University Students in Benin. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 8(1), 1-13.
- Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Black, Elizabeth. "Pragmatic Stylistics." *Pragmatic Stylistics*, 2006.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic analysis*. American Psychological Association.
- Butakor, P. K. (2016). The role of formative feedback in promoting higher order thinking skills in classrooms: A theoretical model. *African Research Review*, 10(5), 147-160.
- Chen, Y., & Preston, J. C. (2021). Improving EFL Students' Critical Thinking Skills through Organization Development Intervention Strategies at Zhejiang Yuexiu University in China. *ABAC ODI Journal Vision. Action. Outcome*, 9(1), 181-203.
- Chien, S. Y., Hwang, G. J., & Jong, M. S. Y. (2020). Effects of peer assessment within the context of spherical video-based virtual reality on EFL students' English-Speaking performance and learning perceptions. *Computers & Education*, 146, 103751.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Dhona, N. (2020). Common error in using English tenses by EFL students. *Ide Bahasa*. <https://doi.org/10.37296/idebahasa.v1i2.18>.
- Fahim, M., & Sa'eepour, M. (2011). The Impact of Teaching Critical Thinking Skills on Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners. *Journal of Language Teaching & Research*, 2(4).

- Faridah, D., Thooyibah, L., & Kurnia, A. D. (2020). Promoting students' critical thinking through peer feedback in oral communication classroom. *Academic Journal Perspective: Education, Language, and Literature*, 8(1), 50-59.
- Fathy Mohamed Kener, N. (2021). The Impact of Pragmatic Tasks on EFL Prospective Teachers' Critical Thinking Skills. -67), 127(32, *مجلة كلية التربية بنها*, 102.
- Fatmanissa, N., & Novianti, M. N. (2022, January). Linguistic Challenges in Solving Mathematics Word Problems: A Case of EFL University Students. In *Eighth Southeast Asia Design Research (SEA-DR) & the Second Science, Technology, Education, Arts, Culture, and Humanity (STEACH) International Conference (SEADR-STEACH 2021)* (pp. 16-23). Atlantis Press
- Febriyanti, R. H. (2019). Students' ability and factors in using subject-verb agreement: A case study of Indonesian EFL learners in university level. *Linguists: Journal Of Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 5(2), 78-85.
- Fidyati. *Autonomous EFL learners' ways of practicing speaking skills during pandemic of COVID 19; A study of engineering fresh graduates*. no. ICoSPOLHUM 2020, 2021, pp. 229-36.
- Folse, K. S. (2006). *The art of teaching speaking: Research and pedagogy for the ESL/EFL classroom*. University of Michigan Press.
- Freeley, A., & Steinberg, D. (2007). *Argumentative and debate: Critical Thinking for reasoned decision making*. London, UK: Wadsworth Cengage.
- Grosser, M. M., & Nel, M. (2013). The relationship between the critical thinking skills and the academic language proficiency of prospective lectures. *South African journal of education*, 33(2), 1-17.
- Harizaj, M., & Hajrulla, V. (2017). Fostering learner's critical thinking skills in EFL: Some practical activities. *European Scientific Journal*, 13(29), 126-133.
- Hughes, John. "Critical Thinking in the Language Classroom." *Recanati: ELI Publishing*, 2014, pp. 1-27.

- Islamiyah, Millatul, and Muchamad Sholakhuddin Al Fajri. "investigating indonesian master's students' perception of critical thinking in academic writing in a British university." *Qualitative Report*, vol. 25, no. 12, 2020, pp. 4402–22, doi:10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4058.
- Isnaini, M. H., Junining, E., & Perdhani, W. C. (2022). The perception of EFL student teachers on the teaching and use of critical thinking. *Linguista: Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pembelajarannya*, 5(2), 174-182.
- Jiménez-Aleixandre, M. P., & Puig, B. (2012). Argumentation, evidence evaluation and critical thinking. *Second international handbook of science education*, 1001-1015.
- Keengwe, J., & Schnellert, G. (2012). Fostering interaction to enhance learning in online learning environments. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (IJICTE)*, 8(3), 28-35.
- Keraf, Gorys. "Diksi dan Gaya Bahasa. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009. Available in <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=2zm9pAbUHP8C&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Klimovienė, G., Urbonienė, J., & Barzdžiukienė, R. (2006). Developing critical thinking through cooperative learning. *Studies about languages*, 9(1), 77-85.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing interviews*. SAGE
- Lasheen, Ibrahim. *Factors Affecting Some Students' Responses to Feedback on Writing*. no. February, 2020.
- Liu, L. (2011). An International Graduate Student's ESL Learning Experience Beyond the Classroom. *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(1), 77-92.
- Malmir, A., & Shoorcheh, S. (2012). An investigation of the impact of teaching critical thinking on the Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3(4), 608-617.

- Marzban, A., & Barati, Z. (2016). On the relationship between critical thinking ability, language learning strategies, and reading comprehension of male and female intermediate EFL university students. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(6), 1241.
- Masduqi, H. (2006). The competency-based curriculum of English subject for senior high school in Indonesia: A critical evaluation. *Jurnal Humanitas*, 1 (2): 56-68.
- Maulana, R.H., & Putra, M. (2022). Efl Students' Critical Thinking in Speaking Activities. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*.
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2018) In: Merriam-Webster. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/response> [Accessed 6 Mar. 2017].
- Musabal, A., & AbdAlgane, M. (2023). Exploring the Obstacles EFL Learners Encounter in Classroom Oral Participation from the Perspective of Tertiary Level Instructors. *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 33S1 (2023).
- Nikou, F.R., Bonyadi, A., & Amirikar, N. (2015). Investigating the relationship between Critical Thinking skills and the quality of Iranian intermediate TEFL students' writing. *Journal of Australian International Academic Center*, 6(2).
- Normawati, A., Nugrahaeni, D. A., Manggolo, N. S. K. H., & Susanto, A. I. F. (2023). EFL Learners' Difficulties in Speaking English. *English Language and Education Spectrum*, 3(1).
- Nurhadi, Jatmika. "Utilization of Pragma-Stylistics Strategies in Learning Context for Communicating Global Peace." *Jurnal Politikom Indonesiana*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2016, pp. 106-16.
- Pamungkas, N. A. R., & Wulandari, L. T. (2020). Pragmatics in efl classroom: avoiding pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication. *English Education: Journal of English Teaching and Research*, 5(1), 74-91.
- Paul, R., & Elder, L. (2019). *The miniature guide to critical thinking concepts and tools*. Rowman & Littlefield.

- Rameezani, R., & Larsari, E. E. & Kiasi, MA (2016). *The relationship between critical thinking and EFL learners' speaking ability. Canada: Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 9(6), 189-198.
- Rameezani, R., Larsari, E. E., & Kiasi, M. A. (2016). The Relationship between Critical Thinking and EFL Learners' Speaking Ability. *English Language Teaching*, 9(6), 189-198.
- Ratna, KuthaNyoman. 2009. *Stilistik: Kajian Puitika Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya*. Yogyakarta: PustakaPelajar.
- Robinson, C. F., & Kakela, P. J. (2006). Creating a space to learn: A classroom of fun, interaction, and trust. *College teaching*, 54(1), 202-207.
- Robinson, C. F., & Kakela, P. J. (2006). Creating a space to learn: A classroom of fun, interaction, and trust. *College teaching*, 54(1), 202-207.
- Sanavi, V. R., & Tarighat, S. (2014). Critical thinking and speaking proficiency: A Mixed- Method Study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(1), 79-87.
- Sarwinda, K., Rohaeti, E., & Fatharani, M. (2020). The development of audio-visual media with contextual teaching learning approach to improve learning motivation and critical thinking skills. *Psychology, Evaluation, and Technology in Educational Research*, 2(2), 98-114.
- Shanti, W., Pothan, A., & Rao, A. R. (2014). Effective strategies to develop speaking skills. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Trends and Innovations in Language Teaching-TILT* (No. 1990, pp. 389-91).
- Silver, R., & Lee, S. (2007). What does it take to make a change? Lecture feedback and student revisions. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 6(1), 25-49.
- Sudjiman, Panuti. 1986. *Kamus Istilah Sastra*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Suhartini, C., & Wulansari, Y. (2015). Directive speech acts realization of Indonesian EFL teacher. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 3(2), 223-229.

- Suhartoyo, E. (2017, October). The importance of critical thinking competence: An investigation of students' writing experiences. *In Proceedings at International Seminar on Language, Education, and Culture (ISoLEC)* (pp. 2598-0653).
- Sulistiyani, S. (2017). The Power of Directive Speech Acts in EFL Classroom Interaction. *In Proceedings of the International Conference on English Language Teaching (ICONELT 2017)* (Vol. 145, pp. 16-20). UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya/ASSEHR: Atlantis Press.
- Suryandani, P. D., & Budasi, I. G. (2022). An analysis of directive speech acts produced by teachers in EFL classroom. *Journal of English Language and Culture*, 12(1).
- Swain, M., Kinnear, P., & Steinman, L. (2010) *Sociocultural theory in second language education*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Tai, N. H. (2022). Students' perceptions of applying critical thinking to learning and practicing English speaking skills. *Ho Chi Minh City Open University Journal of Science-Social Sciences*, 12(2), 135-146.
- Tarigan, H. G. (1985). *Pengajaran gaya bahasa*. Bandung: Penerbit Angkasa
- Utari, N. (2020). *An Analysis of EFL Students'critical Thinking in Speaking at Universitas Masa Depan* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang).
- Warliati, A. E., Rafli, Z., & Darmahusni, D. (2019). Discussion and Think-Pair-Share Strategies on the Enhancement of EFL Students' Speaking Skill: Does Critical Thinking Matter? *Journal of English Language Studies*, 4(2), 120-139.
- Watson & Glaser. (2012). *The watson-glaser Critical Thinking appraisal (W-GCTA)*. London, UK: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Widharyanto, B. and Binawan, Heribertus (2020) *Learning Style And Language Learning Strategies of Students From Various Ethnics In Indonesia*. *Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 39 (2). pp. 514-528. ISSN 0216-1370 (printed); 2442-8620 (online)

- Yaiche, W. (2021). Boosting EFL learners critical thinking through guided discovery: A classroom-oriented research on first-year master students. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume, 12*.
- Yule, George. 2006. *Pragmatik (Terjemahan)*. Yogyakarta: PustakaPelajar.
- Zrair, A. N. (2019). The Use of Oral Feedback in Developing the Speaking Skills of Saudi EFL Students. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research, 6(3)*, 183-198.