

# Wallace's Critical Reading Framework For Non Professional Readers: Students' Perception

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Abstract: Critical reading for pedagogical purpose, as constructed by Wallace (1999), proposes some principles that are applicable to be used by teachers. This research is aimed at describing the students' perception on the employment of Wallace's framework in the teaching of critical reading. The survey was conducted to 78 students, after accomplishing one-semester course. The questionnaire consists of three representative features of the framework. The first is *field*, on how the writer describes what is going on in the text. The second is *mode*, on how the writer organizes the content in the text. The last is *tenor*, on how the writer indicates his or her relationship with the readers. There are 50,2% students who perceived that *field* aspect is understandable, 48,2% students who marked that *mode* aspect is understandable, and 54% students who agreed that *tenor* aspect is understandable. However, the margin is relatively close for the affirmative and the opposite side. It ranges 1,5%: 1%. The positive remark of 1,5% showed that some contributing activities have influenced the students' critical reading ability. *T-test* results show that discussing texts presents the most significant factor (0.016), followed by think aloud practice (0.022), and checking the dictionaries (0.03).

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Critical reading has been put into consideration by some scholars since the rise of language awareness (Carter, 2003). It was started by Van EsSEN (1997) who brought the issue of repositioning language awareness, from drilling and translation practice into more holistic analysis of a text. This was warmly accepted by both linguistic and pedagogy scholars, in terms of an agreement that a text should be brought more than just descriptive purposes. Fairclough (2001) proposes that language represents social aspects, such as social relation, power distance, and social identities. This approach evokes the importance of bringing texts into more real-used to enable the students building a meaningful relation with the text instead of accepting the text simply as the text they need to accomplish at school. Bolitho and Tomlinson (1995) manifested language awareness through their workbook; Discovery Learning, and applied it as a research. They shared that by implementing language awareness for reading and grammar skill, it improves both students' cognitive and affective skill. However, it has to be supported by conducting task-based action and providing experiential effects. In short, language

awareness is a promising approach to help the students to be critical in analysing texts. The next question is then whether or not it is suitable for all reading level. Some studies prove that by implementing language awareness has helped the students to improve their critical literacy (Kaufar, Ishizaki, Collins, & Vlachos, 2004; Olarak, 2014) but the participants in the studies are high achievers and the research itself took more than one year. The researcher in this case is wondering on how applicable language awareness approach to teach critical reading for intermediate or even beginner readers. This is important for some scholars who concern to struggling readers (Idol, 2015; Tam, Heward, & Heng, 2006). They believe that the main issue of poor readers are their self-stimulation schemata. Most of them do not perform background knowledge to analyse the texts. *Thinking map* and instructional flash cards were proven to enable the poor readers to think gradually (Idol, 2015). The other studies concern to non professional readers (Christina & Leal, 1998; Dar, Rahimi, & Shams, 2010; Wallace, n.d.). Non-professional readers in this case mean the readers who are exposed to critical reading but not necessarily for professional purposes. It is closer to education or training purposes. Christina & Leal (1998) highlighted that letting the students discuss the

texts in clusters with their friends and providing authentic issues in the texts enabled the students' motivation to participate and generate their ideas effectively. Most of the studies have not yet provide a conceptual framework which covers not only recommended activities but also about the planning and evaluation. On her research of language awareness to teach critical reading, Wallace constructed her own framework of critical reading, such as building the principles of critical reading in pedagogical setting, text types, and also the procedures to teach critical reading (Wallace, n.d., 1999). Her framework is under the influence of (Wright & Bolitho, 1993) and Halliday (1978). As a conclusion, Wallace's critical reading framework seems promising to be implemented in the classroom setting, by also considering external supports, especially in terms of strategies. Thus, this research is aimed at answering the research questions below;

- a.) How is the students' perception of the implementation of Wallace's critical reading framework?
- b.) What strategic reading strategies that influence as the contributive factors to analyze the concepts of *fields*, *modes*, and *tenor*?

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Being critical is an issue to be delivered in the first place, that many scholars emphasize their encouragements on implementing critical thinking in the teaching process. Wright & Bolitho (1993: 292) assert that the teacher is the central focus to implement language awareness.

*"The more aware a teacher is of language and how it works, the better"*

It is strongly recommended that a linguistically aware teacher will help them to build a successful communicative teaching. They recommend that the use of authentic text will probe both the knowledge and the awareness of each text given to the students. A brief framework of language awareness in the teaching of critical reading involves identifying, comparing, analysing, and negotiating. Further, in the affective scope, the framework encourages introspecting, reflecting, and applying insights. On how to teach critical reading, the teacher should have and should teach a comprehensive grammar knowledge first before moving to the critical areas such as nationality and identity (La, 2007). Regarding this issue, grammar has been notorious in EFL

context in terms of on how the students face it as difficult subject, on the option of using L1 or L2 to make the students understand better, and on how the instruction should be made (Hidayati, 2012; Savignon & Wang, 2003). Furthermore, in terms of critical thinking stimulation, the second stage after understanding grammar, it is also sensed to be problematic by Wallace (1992). She notices that in both advanced readers and limited proficiency readers, there are three points that are lack to build students' critical thinking, let alone the critical reading skill. It is that there is no attempt to bring the reading activities in a social context. There is also less effort to use provocative text and almost unfound that there is a teacher encouraging the students to interpret texts of which it addresses ideological assumptions. Moreover, the interaction of the students and their reading text tend to be either submissive or assertive, depending on their prior knowledge. In the side of the students, bringing critical reading may not be easy for the students have also limited desire to read (Widiati & Cahyono, 2006). Some of them do not have a good background information and limited vocabularies.

In Indonesia, as one of EFL countries, the issue of critical reading has been developed since the 2006 Curriculum until the revised 2013 Curriculum (Ministry of Education and Culture Affair, 2013). The learning is mostly text analysis by highlighting three points, which are the social function, the text structure, and the language features. This is in line with the framework that is formulated by Wallace (1999).

The framework covers two sub-features; the text analysis framework and the principles to teach critical reading. On the framework, Wallace fully adopts Halliday's framework of register analysis (1978) as displayed in Figure 1.

In terms of key principles in critical reading, Wallace (1999) proposes that the very first principle is that it is necessary to let the students airing their personal feelings, on anything they feel during the learning process. The second is that the students should not work individually to response the text but more like negotiation. Thus, it should be held as communal action. In critical reading, it does not perceive the students to be categorized as native or non-native speakers, because the texts will be cross ideology or cross-cultural. The third is, on the text types chosen as the learning media, it is necessary to have authentic materials as the basis in critical reading. The last one is that critical reading involving not only logic, arguments, or sentiments, but also the ideological values of the given texts.

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| <p><b>CRITICAL READING</b><br/>                 A framework for a critical analysis of texts, based on Hallidayan functional grammar</p>   |  |
| <p><b>FIELD OF DISCOURSE</b><br/>                 IDEATIONAL MEANINGS<br/>                 (how the writer describes what is going on in the text, i.e. what the text is about)</p>  |  |
| PARTICIPANTS   | <p>WHAT/WHO is talked about?<br/>                 i.e. what or who are the major participants<br/>                 what or who are the minor participants<br/>                 what or who are the invisible participants<br/>                 HOW are the participants talked about, i.e. what adjectives or nouns collocate with them?</p> |
| PROCESSES  | <p>What verbs (collocating with the major participants) describe what kind of processes, i.e. material, mental and relational processes?</p>   |
| CIRCUMSTANCES  | <p>How specifically are circumstances indicated, e.g. by adverbs or prepositional phrases?</p>   |
| CAUSATION  | <p>How is causation attributed? Is agency always made clear i.e. Who did what to whom? Are actors in subject position?</p>   |
| EFFECT OF THE WRITER'S CHOICES?  |  |
| <p><b>TENOR OF DISCOURSE</b><br/>                 INTERPERSONAL MEANINGS<br/>                 (how the writer indicates his/her relationship with the reader and what his/her attitude to the subject matter of the text is)</p> |  |
| PERSON   | <p>What personal pronouns are selected? How does the writer refer to self, subjects and reader?</p>  |
| MOOD   | <p>What mood is most frequently selected – declarative, imperative or interrogative?</p>   |
| MODALITY   | <p>What role does modality play in, for example, expressing a degree of certainty or authority?</p>  |
| ADVERBS<br>ADJECTIVES,<br>NOUNS<br>indicating<br>writer attitude   | <p>Are there adjectives, nouns or adverbs which indicate writer attitude to his/her subject matter?</p>  |
| EFFECT OF THE WRITER'S CHOICES?  |  |
| <p><b>MODE OF DISCOURSE</b><br/>                 TEXTUAL MEANINGS<br/>                 (how the content of the text is organised)</p>  |  |
| SEMANTIC<br>STRUCTURE  | <p>Is the text narrative, expository or descriptive, as indicated, for example, by the use of past or present tense?</p>   |
| OVERALL<br>ORGANISATION  | <p>What larger structures does the text have, e.g. in terms of beginnings and endings? In what form is information represented?</p>  |
| THEME  | <p>What information is selected for first position, at clause level and at the level of the whole text?</p>  |
| COHESION   | <p>How does the text hang together as a text, for example what kinds of connectors are used (related to the semantic structure of the text)?</p>   |
| EFFECT OF THE WRITER'S CHOICES?  |  |

Figure 1: The Framework of Text Analysis by Halliday (1978).

Based on the figure above, it is clear that in order to read critically, a reader should be able to understand and analyze three concepts of text analysis. In terms of *field* and *mode* encourage readers to examine intrinsic features in a text. In other words, the level is on reading comprehension as the foundation of critical reading. The last concept is *tenor* which enable readers to analyze a text critically, because it involves extrinsic features. Halliday (1978) believes that grammar can accommodate readers to reach each concepts. For example, to know the major or minor participants, the readers can employ their background knowledge of active and passive voice and causations. Another one is when the students are asked to find the degree of certainty, a reader can employ the former knowledge of modality. It is expected that the reader will understand that grammar is not only perceived as a formula, but also as a social process. Wallace (1999) emphasizes that when the readers perceive that they are able to assess each concepts, it means that their critical reading is developing. Related to be able to achieve the critical

reading ability, the employment of reading strategies is inseparable. Carell (1989) and Block (1986) have introduced reading strategies in general which mention that a reader should be able to identify the purpose for reading, make sense of the texts, and solve the problems during reading process. It includes rereading, questioning self, underlining, context clues predicting, and restating. As the updates, Parkinson & Dinsmore (2017) share their coding of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies in assessing texts. They name the coding as *strategic processing* which means that a reader can combine cognitive and metacognitive strategies to understand or analyze a text. Throughout the debate of which strategies are more helpful to enable the readers in understanding a text, Parkinson & Dalmore (2017) prove that readers tend to combine both strategies, although Vrugt & Ourt (2008) claims that metacognitive learners who are aware of they are doing metacognitive process during reading process tend to be the most successful readers.

### 3 RESEARCH METHOD

There were 78 respondents in this study who attended the class of Critical Reading and Literacy in one semester. The questionnaire contains 38 questions that assessed the indicators based on *field*, *mode*, and *tenor* competencies as represented in Halliday's text analysis framework. There were 5 more questions regarding their affective and psychomotor skills. The questions were the adaptation of strategic processing by Parkinson & Dinsmore (2017), and based on the criteria as referred by Bolitho & Tomlinson (1995), Wallace (1999) such as discussion, task-based practice, collaborative work, restatement, and highlighting the important information. The data were then analysed by using Independent unequal variance T-test to measure which factors that contributes to the students' perception of the applied critical reading framework.

## 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Text Analysis

The first theme is to display the survey result of the students' perception of each concept. As presented in Table 1, the most dominating perception is *understandable*. It infers that most of the students perceive the framework as helpful to enable them analysing a text critically. The second dominating perception is *difficult*, which implies that the distribution of middle scale is close. The researcher tried to narrow the scope into difficult and understandable, by adding the percentage of each two aspects. In terms of *fields*, 40.22% students still perceive it as difficult, and 55.7% students perceive it as understandable. The Z-score is 1.38, which means that the perception has a minimal margin error. In terms of *mode*, the students who perceive it as difficult is 49.05% and those who consider it as understandable is 50.6%. The Z-score is 1.03, which also prove that it has a minimal margin error. The last concept is *tenor*, which is perceived to be difficult by 48.53% students, and considered to be understandable by 56.5% students. The Z-score is 1.16. As an overall descriptive analysis, *mode* is considered to be the most helpful for the students to assess a text critically, followed by *field*. In terms of *tenor*, it is clear that the number of students who perceive it as *very difficult* is 4.22% or the highest percentage among other similar scale. As mentioned by Wallace (1999), indeed, *tenor* is placed as the last stage of critical reading. Thus, it requires more strategies to enable the students analyse a text critically. To this extent, as proven by Bolitho & Tomlinson (1995), metacognitive strategies are necessary to support the concept of *tenor*.

Table 1: Survey Result of Text Analysis Perception

| Aspects | Very Difficult | Difficult | Understandable | Very Understandable |
|---------|----------------|-----------|----------------|---------------------|
| FIELD   | 0.66%          | 39.6%     | 50.2%          | 5.5%                |
| MODE    | 1.65%          | 47.4%     | 48.2%          | 2.4%                |
| TENOR   | 4.22%          | 44.3%     | 54.2%          | 2.3%                |

Based on the table above, it is also surprising that 2.3% students perceived *tenor* concept as *very understandable*. As proposed by Parkinson and Dinsmore (2017), *strategic processing* is claimed to exceed the effects of only employing metacognitive strategies. However, Vrugt & Ourt (2008) also claim that metacognitive strategies have been more helpful to create successful readers. On the other hand, it is not really surprising that *field* is perceived to be the

least difficult one. This is known by the number of students in the first scale or *very difficult* is just 0.66%. It confirms to Wallace's theory (1999) that *field* is the very first stage of critical reading, which is more on reading comprehension. We can also refer to La (2007) who reminds that language awareness should be supported by a sufficient foundation of grammar and vocabulary resources. It is reflected in each concept that simple sentences are presented more in *field* and *mode*. Some indicators of *fields* and *modes* even employs the lower level of syntax, which are words and phrases. For example, in *field* concept, a reader can assess the adjectives to infer the characteristics of the participants in the text. The reader can also recall their knowledge of adverbs and preposition of place to indicate the circumstances, and draw a conclusion about degree of certainty by exploring the verbs. If the writer uses mental process verbs, it implies that the described participant does not do any action yet. It is different when the writer uses materials process verbs, it means that the described participant has made a significant action.

In terms of *mode*, the reader can also recall their memory of transition signals, which mostly in the form of phrase instead of a clause. However, a sufficient understanding on tenses is also required here. This is assumed to be the cause of 1.65% students perceived *mode* concept as *very difficult*. The tenses here is used to help readers identifying the genres and text types. For example, if the text uses present tense, it will not be a narrative or recount text. On the other side, of the text uses past tense, it is not about descriptive text. It seems to be easy that the students are required only to deal with present and past tense. Indeed, when the students are faced to simple tenses, they were more contributive in the classroom. However when they dealt with combination tense; for example, present continuous tense, they tend to be confuse.

In terms of *tenor*, it requires the reader to interact to the writer of the text. The background knowledge is more demanding, that it is not only about grammar and vocabulary resources, but also a background knowledge of another resource. For example when the students were given a question to be solved, whether they wanted to be an entrepreneur or an employee, they should read more than one recourse to have a more convincing argument.

The students, in this *tenor* practice, were given two texts. The first one inferred that being an employee is more promising, and the second one is the opposite. Before the texts were distributed, the lecturer asked each students about their choice which based on their background knowledge since they were



children. After reading the texts, the lecturer asked the same question, and apparently most of the students change their first impression. This activity was quite tricky, for the lecturer should provide a contextual and authentic issue, yet provocative. The students should be able to find out the hidden agenda that each writer aimed to do. Especially on how the writer directs the reader into certain choice between two options. Thus, the students have a space to discuss instead of answering criterion-based questions. Another issue about being non-professional reader might also play a role in this case, that even some of the students are poor readers. Thus, in the end of the subject, those who perceive each concept to be *very difficult* is relatively high. As a reflective part, it is necessary to elaborate on what strategies are influential to help the students in understanding each concepts.

#### 4.2 Contributing Strategies to support Text Analysis

Reading strategies have been a common issue in exploring readers' comprehension of a text. There is no sufficient evidence that critical reading has specific strategies, or separated strategies than metacognitive ones. Thus, in this research, it is beneficial to assess which reading strategies than play as contributed factors in terms of *fields*, *modes*, and *tenor*.

After conducting T-test of each reading strategies, it is found that each strategy works differently in every concepts. It is presented by the significance coefficient of P- value, which ranges  $P < 0.09$ . The summary of each strategie are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Key Principles Perception.

| Key Principles in Critical Reading  | Sig.   |       |       |
|---|--------|-------|-------|
|   | Fields | Mode  | Tenor |
| I like reading a text by also underlining difficult words                     | 0,053  | 0,685 | 0,141 |
| I directly search in the dictionary whenever I find difficult words           | 0,28   | 0,03  | 0,872 |
| I ask my friends about difficult words rather than checking in the dictionary | 0,459  | 0,071 | 0,391 |
| I like having discussion with my lecturer                                     | 0,514  | 0,016 | 0,107 |
| I highlight my favourite parts in the text that I am reading                  | 0,035  | 0,147 | 0,14  |

|  |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| I can retell the text I have just read   | 0,549 | 0,022 | 0,309 |
| I felt annoyed if there is/are people in my group who are slow to response in the discussion | 0,01  | 0,127 | 0,314 |
| I felt annoyed when there is/are submissive people in my group during discussion             | 0,032 | 0,606 | 0,266 |

Firstly, it is important to trace back on Wallace's principles of critical reading practices in the classroom setting (1999), and Bolitho & Tomlinson (1995) about the exploration of discussion, or non-individual work. We found that in performing strategic processing, discussion involves three criteria, such as; self-contribution, tolerance, and trust (Parkinson & Dinsmore, 2017). In terms of *fields*, the students found it problematic when they have either submissive or passive members. In this side, the students were failed to build tolerance and self-contribution. This can actually be interpreted that the students were engaged in the discussion, thus they expect more from their friends. In compared to the concept of *mode*, and *tenor*, the students tend to neglect whether their friends are submissive or even passive (proven by  $P = 0.606$  and  $P = 0.127$ ). It means that a qualified discussion did not happen during working on *mode*, and *tenor* concepts. Indeed, the level of trust is presented in *mode* concept ( $P = 0.071$ ,  $P = 0.016$ , and  $P = 0.022$ ) for "asking difficult words to friends", "discussing with my lecturer", and "retelling text". Thus, independent discussion is recommended during *field* concept, whereas, a guided discussion with the lecturer is recommended during *mode* concept. When it deals with communality, the students are not yet into acceptance of submissiveness when the stage is relatively in the start up level. However, they are open to communality when they are stepping ahead into more difficult stage of text analysis (it is shown by the coefficient  $P = 0.016$  and  $P = 0.022$  as the contrary of feeling annoyed as the baseline). Due to the expected strategy is independent discussion, it is considerable to employ the suggestions from Hidayati (2012); and Savignon & Wang (2003). It is that the lecturer should provide a clearer and guided instructions. Furthermore, for those who perceived the framework as *very difficult*, the lecturer is recommended to try the *thinking map* by Idol (2015).

The use of dictionary works effectively during *mode* analysis ( $P = 0.03$ ). The strategies of "underlining context clues", and "highlighting favourite parts" are found effective in *field* concept.

The last two strategies also work in a good way in *tenor* concept, although the coefficient is  $P > 0.09$ , which are  $P = 0.141$  and  $P = 0.140$ .

By looking at the table, the concept of *tenor* is perceived to be less strategic than the other two. The most closely significant coefficient is "I love discussing with my lecturer" which means that the role of the teacher is significant. This is actually related to the previous studies mentioning about teacher's role and students prior knowledge (Wallace, n.d.; Wright & Bolitho, 1993).

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The students perceive that Wallace's critical reading framework has helped them to analyse a text critically. This is proven by 56.5% students perceive each concepts of *fields*, *modes*, and *tenor* as understandable and very understandable. In order to achieve the positive perception, some strategies are relatable to be supporting factors. In terms of *field*, underlining and highlighting favourite part worked effectively. In terms of *mode*, the use of dictionary is more recommended. However, the most influential strategy is guided discussion by the lecturer. Therefore, the recommendation is that the lecturer should provide graded instructions so that independent discussion can be achieved.

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