

# مجلة التربوي

مجلة علمية محكمة تصدر عن

كلية التربية الخمس

جامعة المرقب

العدد الرابع  
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- Investigating grammatical mistakes in liyan learners' written discourse in al mergeeb university .
- Teaching pre- service teachers critical reading through the newspapers .
- Using blogs in English language teaching and teacher education programs .



### الافتتاحية

مع إطلالة العدد الرابع من مجلتكم الناشئة "مجلة التربوي" نجدد العهد مع قراء المجلة الكرام بأن تكون دوما ملتزمة بنشر الجديد والمفيد والهادف من الأبحاث العلمية التربوية إيماننا منها بأن كلية التربية عبر منبرها المتمثل في مجلتها "التربوي" تعتبر قلعة ومنازة يشع نورها في ربوع بلادنا الحبيبة .

إن أعضاء هيئة التحرير بالمجلة ، وأسرة تدريس كلية التربية الخمس تتوجه بالشكر الجزيل لكل من أسهم ويسهم في مساعدة المجلة في تحقيق الهدف المنشود، وبخاصة الأساتذة الفضلاء الذين استقطعوا من وقتهم الثمين لقراءة البحوث فأفادوا الباحثين والمجلة بملاحظاتهم القيمة، التي تثري البحث، وترفع من قيمة المجلة في الأوساط العلمية .

ونحن إذ نسير في هذا الدرب يحدونا الأمل بأن نكون من الذين أسهموا في خلق الإنسان المؤمن والمربي الفاضل المتمسك بقيم الدين والأخلاق الكريمة .

هيئة التحرير



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**Abstract**

Critical reading is of significance due to being one of the colleges and universities requirements and helping learners question what is being read. Since English teachers are required to teach critical reading to their language learners, we believe that pre-service learners should be introduced to the ways of teaching critical reading. Therefore, this paper discusses the importance of critical reading by discussing how newspaper articles can be used to encourage pre-service teachers to read critically and showing them how to develop English learners' critical reading. The critical reading strategies that this paper is going to focus on are developing learners' questioning, language awareness, text comparison, and writing as a basis for teaching critical reading strategies.

**Introduction**

Critical reading is one of the significant requirements of colleges and universities. As a result, many language programs are encouraged to focus on developing English language learners' critical reading competence. Wallace (2012) encourages teaching critical reading to English learners because critical reading is one of the academic requirements in higher education. Wallace also calls for raising English

learners' awareness to "the option of resistance to powerful and pervasive texts" because they need to learn to critically question what they read and evaluate the writers' perspectives (p. 261). In other words, English learners need to learn how to resist or accept others arguments or opinions.

Defining critical reading is not an easy task because of its "multiple interpretations" (Macknish, 2011). However, Pirozzi, Starks-Martin, and Dziewiesz's (2011) definition summarizes the basic elements of critical reading. They state that critical reading can be regarded as "*high-level* comprehension of written material requiring interpretation and evaluation skills that enable the reader to separate important from unimportant information, distinguish between facts and opinions, and determine a writer's purpose and tone" (p. 290). In other words, critical reading requires high levels of thinking and understanding to specify the writer's purpose, realize the writer's tone, recognize the writer's elements of persuasion, and identify bias (Kurland, 2000). Critical reading means reading with the aim of understanding the main point raised by the writer, its logic, analyzing and questioning this point, and reflecting on it. It also means reflecting on the discourse of the text by looking at language choices preferred by the writer (Wallace, 2012; Lewis, 1996).

Although critical reading is highly valued by universities and have been in the academic conversation for a long while, surprisingly, research that investigates English learners' critical reading is really limited (Huang, 2011). Another surprising point is that there is an assumption that English



learners' ability in being critical is limited. The reasons that were stated were English learners' "educational background and culture" and their "lack of confidence in using the language (Meldrum, 2000, p. 170). However, some studies showed that English learners might read critically but their lack of knowledge about the academic expectations might be a main reason for not showing their criticality (Meldrum, 2000).

Teaching critical reading can be challenging, especially when it comes to the materials that are going to be used. One of Hedge's (2000) suggestions for the materials that can be used to teach critical reading is newspaper articles. Newspaper articles are one of the authentic sources that are readily available and provide great examples for teaching reading comprehension and critical reading in the English classroom. They provide learners with up-to-date and captivating information that is relevant to their real world (Street, 2002). Learners can read about varied topics that are covered in newspapers which can be about cultural events, entertainment, sports, political issues, environmental issues, or other sorts of topics that interest them (Cheyney,1992). This is what any textbook would be missing. Newspapers provide students with locally and globally discussed topics on a daily basis. Thus, they can be regarded as the "living textbooks" that teach students about their real world, the use of the language they are learning, and the concepts presented in the articles (Street, 2002, p. 131). Not only that; newspapers can develop learners' vocabulary, increase their knowledge about varied topics that would develop their speaking and writing skills, and raise their learning attitudes. Therefore, this paper

discusses how newspaper articles can be used to encourage pre-service teachers to read critically and show them how to develop English learners' critical reading. The paper will focus on using newspaper articles in developing learners' questioning, language awareness, text comparison, and writing as a basis for teaching critical reading strategies.

### **1. Questioning**

According to Feather (2012), English teachers are usually the ones who ask questions instead of giving students the chance to raise the questions. She states that they tend to raise questions that motivate students' low level thinking skills that include knowledge, comprehension, and memorization. Whereas the type of questions that are expected by university professors are questions that are "substantial, thoughtful, relevant, high quality, and based on personal experience"; and show criticality (Feather, 2012). Since English learners are required to raise questions related to the assigned readings that demonstrate their critical reading competence and their ability to handle class discussions at the university, Feather (2012) states that English teachers need to teach English learners how to form quality questions. This is by allowing them to prepare questions, develop varied question types, and give them feedback about the quality of their questions to prepare them to become more active readers by questioning.

As a beginning activity, English teachers can teach English learners posing questions by using Schacter's (2006) thin and thick questions' T-chart. By posing 'thin questions', learners form questions where the answers can be found in the text,

whereas by posing ‘think questions’ learners practice forming inferential questions where answers are driven from a combination of information. While using a T-chart, learners practice forming thin questions on one part and thick questions on the other part. In the process of changing “thin” questions to “thick” questions, learners learn how to form questions using the 5w questions. They learn inference by using “*how, why, could, or imagine*” (p. 220).

This activity also helps them understand the question answer relationships. Shapley (Unknown) categorized questions’ answers as: “right there answers”, “think and search answers”, “finding answers in my head”, and “finding answers on my own” (p. 22 - 23). By showing learners how to pose questions and find their answers, learners will be able to develop their awareness of how to comprehend a text, articulate its main point, and respond critically (Shapley, Unknown).

As a following activity, English teachers can use questioning to develop learners “critical perspective on texts” and “identify and resist the values of the text” (Clarke & Silberstein, 1979; Wallace, 1992; cited in Hedge, 2000, p. 213). In this activity, students learn to question the writers’ views, recognize the writers’ values and resist or accept these views and values. By introducing English learners to varied newspaper articles, training them to pose critical questions such as: “For what purpose and for what audience is this intended? What is the topic being written about? Do you share the author’s point of view?” and other critical questions; learners will learn not to accept the ideologies of the texts they

read easily, question the authors' perspectives, and decide to either accept or resist this the authors' perspective.

## 2. Language Awareness

English teachers need to raise English learners' awareness towards language choices by showing them how to analyze writers' choices. For instance, Wallace (1992, 2003) presented a framework for teaching English learners critical language awareness. She asked her students to explore texts' ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning. In this process, students examine the writers' word choices, such as adverbs, adjectives and nouns, in relation to the writers' moods, the texts' modality, organization, and cohesion. Following the same procedure, English teachers can raise English learners' awareness to writers' language choices through newspapers. This not only will develop their critical reading competence but also will enhance their writing skills.

Likewise, Hedge (2000) calls English teachers for teaching students "language analysis" regarding how and why the discussed texts' writers chose their words or phrases. English teachers can show students examples of texts that are driven by the authors own "version of reality" or perspective and how language is "manipulated in certain kinds of texts" (Hedge, 2000, p. 198). It is the responsibility of the English teacher to improve students' language awareness.

## 3. Text Comparison

Classroom debate is an activity that can be used to teach students text comparison as a basis for critical reading through newspaper articles. In this activity, teachers use newspaper articles to raise learners' awareness towards the varied text

genres and the differences in language use in each text. For instance, Hedge (2000) suggests dividing the class into two groups. Learners in each group read and summarize newspaper articles. They form questions that would summarize the articles and provide a space for discussions. The class debate will be about the differences that they noticed and how each article dealt with the same idea from “a different account” (p. 215). In addition, Wallace (2012) states that students can bring varied text genres that discuss or present the same idea from different perspectives and categorize these texts into “genre categories” (p. 275). Following that is the activity of answering the following critical questions: “Who is the producer of the texts? For whom are they produced? Why have they been produced? Is this type of text of relevance or interest to you?” (p. 275). The class then might form more critical questions. In these two activities, learners learn to compare between the texts they read and discussed as well as develop their understanding of texts’ varied genres and styles.

Learners can also be asked to read similar topics in newspaper articles in their own language and discuss how the same topic was discussed in the two languages (Wallace, 2012). This will give them the chance to compare each language’s writing styles and identify the cultural differences.

#### **4. Writing**

Since English learners are required to write summaries and reflections at the university level, writing can be considered as a basis for critical reading by engaging students in writing critical summaries and reflections or writing letters. Learners

can be asked to summarize the newspaper articles and reflect on the content of the articles. This will give them the opportunity to learn how to summarize and reflect on what had been read.

Ideas like writing letters to the editor, writer, or a friend about the article are applied in many fields. For example, Chamberlain and Burrough (1985) chose two articles and asked their students to read them and write letters to someone who is naïve in cognitive psychology. This idea can be used in English language class by asking learners to write letters, to the writer of example, explaining their views and reflecting on what they have read. Writing also can be used as a post critical reading activity. English teachers can engage learners in post critical reading activities by asking them to “revisit the text to consider how it might have been written” and ask them to “rewrite” the text “from their point of view” (Wallace, 2012, p. 277).

## **5. Conclusion**

English medium print media is dominating the online media (Wallace, 2012). Thus, English learners need to be prepared to be able to recognize the elements of persuasion and be able to resist perspectives that are not related to them. English language learners also required to be competent critical readers by their university professors. English teachers can introduce them to those materials as supplementary materials that would develop their critical reading competence and prepare them to university professors’ expectations.

Since newspapers are the materials that can provide students with varied up-to-date topics, they can be considered

as the most suitable supplementary materials that can be used to teach critical reading to English language learners. By using newspapers in teaching critical reading, learners will not only enhance their language but also will be given the chance to learn how to evaluate texts and resist or accept what they have read. By teaching learners questioning, language awareness, text comparison, and summary, reflection, and letters writing strategies through newspapers, they develop their critical reading strategies and become active readers. This will also enhance learners' willingness to independent reading.

This paper was derived by my personal interest in critical reading and newspapers. The limited research studies in both areas showed that further research is needed to look at English learners' critical reading strategies and practices as well as to examine the use of English medium media, such as newspapers, as supplementary materials. Research on English learners' critical reading competence would eliminate the misconception of English learners not being able to read critically and provide teachers with practical suggestions to try in their classroom.

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يشترط في البحوث العلمية المقدمة للنشر أن يراعى فيها ما يأتي :

- أصول البحث العلمي وقواعده .
- ألا تكون المادة العلمية قد سبق نشرها أو كانت جزءا من رسالة علمية .
- يرفق بالبحث المكتوب باللغة العربية بملخص باللغة الإنجليزية ، والبحث المكتوب بلغة أجنبية مرخصا باللغة العربية .
- يرفق بالبحث تزكية لغوية وفق أنموذج معد .
- تعدل البحوث المقبولة وتصحح وفق ما يراه المحكمون .
- التزام الباحث بالضوابط التي وضعتها المجلة من عدد الصفحات ، ونوع الخط ورقمه ، والفترات الزمنية الممنوحة للتعديل ، وما يستجد من ضوابط تضعها المجلة مستقبلا .

تنبيهات :

- للمجلة الحق في تعديل البحث أو طلب تعديله أو رفضه .
- يخضع البحث في النشر لأوليات المجلة وسياستها .
- البحوث المنشورة تعبر عن وجهة نظر أصحابها ، ولا تعبر عن وجهة نظر المجلة .

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