
STUDENT'S RESPONSE THROUGH THE USE OF ONLINE CROSSWORD PUZZLE TO IMPROVE CRITICAL THINKING IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The development of game-based learning technology is one of the advancements in innovation in the field of education. Teachers can take advantages of this opportunity to help students to improve their critical thinking skills while learning English. The application of game-based learning that can be used to improve critical thinking skills in this study is the online crossword puzzle. The current study aims to reveal students' responses to the use of digital-based learning applications in improving students' critical thinking skills when learning English. The method used is qualitative through a descriptive approach. Data obtained through field observations and interviews. After that, the data was analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The results of the study showed that the students' responses when learning English through online crossword puzzles were very positive. Students' enthusiasm for learning is increasing, and there is an increase in student interest and motivation when implementing these applications in English classes so that students can develop self-confidence when doing English assignments better.

Key Words: Critical thinking; Digital based learning; Online crossword puzzle.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the development of educational innovation, especially the emergence of various learning applications or platforms is an interesting thing to implement in the classroom. The emergence of these various learning platforms began with the emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic which caused a cessation of the implementation of face-to-face learning activities in schools which

caused teaching and learning activities to be carried out online through various learning applications. Prayudha (2023) added that after the pandemic, many learning applications emerged that support online-based learning. Call it because learning activities stopped at school causing many developers and technology experts to create various learning applications to provide convenience in teaching difficult situations during a pandemic, so far there are many learning applications

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that can be downloaded and used free of charge on the Google play store and other app stores. Because so many learning applications are available for free, teachers should be able to take advantage of this opportunity to change traditional teaching methods into more modern learning by implementing technology integration in the classroom. As it is known that the emergence of new technology will make it easier for human performance and activities in carrying out activities, including in the field of education (Prayudha, 2021). Almost all aspects of life have their own technology that functions to make it easier to do things, so this needs to be an important consideration for today's teachers to be able to use and apply learning technology in the classrooms they bring. This becomes a very important thing in providing a good practice in integrating the use of technology to increase students' understanding and knowledge so that students can carry out learning according to the right time and age based on the current quality characteristics of education. In addition, applying learning by integrating technology will also train students' attitudes, mindsets and perceptions in responding to and carrying out learning that is in harmony

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with everyday life. Prayudha (2023) explained that there is a need for technology integration or what is called TPACK in learning so that it can make the classroom atmosphere more advanced and better. Where this will also have a good influence on the self-development of students and the social environment and around students. Through the integration of technology students will not only be able to master and understand the learning material they are studying but also, they will be able to master technology for life after they are not in school. The ability to use technology is very necessary for life so it is necessary for students to be equipped with knowledge of using technology at school (Budiati, 2017). Furthermore, students will familiarize themselves with using and applying good technology in their daily lives in the right way and way. Furthermore, through the integration of the use of technology in the classroom which also has unlimited boundaries, teachers can shape learning materials and concepts that they will bring in class and students can carry out activities ordered by the teacher, even students can join international learning if they have certain links or have access to enter other learning rooms. From this it can be concluded that through the

unlimited use of technology integration in the classroom, students can access material anywhere from anywhere, teachers can make learning concepts and material from any source if it is in accordance with the conditions and abilities of students. The ability to use technology is very important in classroom learning and can be done more flexible (Prayudha, 2021). With the increasingly widespread use of technology and there are no limits in learning, it will certainly provide positive and negative opportunities for students in pursuing education. Positively students will become more globalized, have broad views, diverse mindsets or mindsets and be able to access a wider range of knowledge. The use of technology can provide various kinds of benefits for the development of students' knowledge and competencies (Raman & Yamat, 2014). However, on the negative side, students will have an erratic and undirected mindset, filtering information that is a little difficult and will become more closed, so when the teacher is willing and sure to apply technology integration in the classroom, it must be ensured that students are ready to take part in the learning by kind and wise.

Then, it is necessary for teachers to be able to know the various competencies needed at this time. These competencies are skills that must be possessed and mastered by students to become individuals who can compete internationally. Students must be fully encouraged to achieve learning goals through the various skills needed at this time (Prayudha, 2022). In this century, the competencies that everyone must have been called 4C skills, including creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. These skills were introduced by the Partnership for 21st century skills (P21), an organization from the United States that focuses on improving the quality of education in America. Furthermore, in Indonesia this skill has increased by two, namely character and citizenship so that it becomes 6 C skills. These skills are very much needed for the younger generation of Indonesia so that they can become quality individuals and be able to compete globally to advance themselves and the country.

In implementing the practice at schoolteachers often find cases of students who have not been able to optimize the 6C abilities. It is the teacher's job to be able to form student personalities with good 6 C abilities.

One of the subjects which is an important indicator in the progress of students globally is the mastery of English, whereas is known English is the most widely used international language of communication and is most often taught in schools around the world. By looking at the position and potential of English as the most frequently spoken international language, it is necessary for teachers to emphasize more comprehensive English learning. Having good mastery and understanding of English will make it easier for students to communicate internationally and when students are able to communicate using English, students will not hesitate to start communicating globally. This will be good for an individual in using English to find information, communicate and so on so that it will make it easier for them to use it for a specific purpose. Mastering many things, especially the field of technology in learning, will create individuals who are ready to face the changing times (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018).

In addition, the thing that needs to be emphasized in communication is the need for critical thinking in dealing with and solving a problem. Here,

critical thinking becomes important because students will have a broad view in dealing with a case or problem by finding the right and correct solution. In English class the teacher needs to train students to get used to thinking critically. Critical thinking is one of the skills needed in this era because when someone has a critical view, he will find the right way to solve a problem. In the English class the teacher needs to train students to think critically through various activities and activities that challenge and attract students' interest and learning motivation. Teachers can use the right media so that students are able to issue creative and innovative ideas in overcoming a problem in learning (Prayudha & Ami, 2022). In this current study, researchers try to train and improve students' critical thinking skills by implementing digital game-based learning. Learning through digital games has become important in attracting students' critical thinking in learning. Here, researchers use digital game-based learning by using online crossword puzzles. Crossword puzzle is a game that can explore and train students' critical thinking in a simple but fun way. Through charades and answers will train students' critical thinking (Muzdalifah, 2018). The

teacher displays the crossword game on the blackboard and students guess or answer the questions presented so that students can fill in the empty boxes with the correct answers. The process of determining this answer will train students to think critically because answers must be adjusted appropriately based on the number of boxes available. The problem solving process will train students to find answers through critical thinking patterns (Njoroge et al., 2013). Practicing critical thinking in a fun way is expected to encourage students to be able to develop their critical thinking potential for the better. Thus, this study aims to determine students' responses to the use of online crossword puzzles in developing students' critical thinking skills in learning English in class.

METHODS

The current research adopted a descriptive qualitative approach. This method aims to provide a description, interpretation, and comprehension of student responses in using online crossword puzzles as digital game-based learning to improve critical thinking skills. According to Creswell (2013) qualitative research is a type of research that can examine a perception, opinion, perspective of the object under

study. In other words, this study aims to find out students' perceptions in learning English using online crossword puzzles in improving critical thinking skills. Furthermore, according to Sugiyono (2014) a descriptive approach is a method of explaining research results by describing, explaining, and representing a situation in detail and clearly in accordance with the actual situation in the field. It means that descriptive research is the result of real situations that occur during the learning process.

This research was conducted for one month by implementing online game-based learning using crossword puzzles to train and improve students' critical thinking skills while learning English. Participants in this study consisted of 30 students who were learning English. The data was obtained through direct observation of the implementation of learning and interviews with several students to obtain a more comprehensive perception related to the improvement and atmosphere of learning English through online crossword puzzles in improving critical thinking skills. After the data is collected, the data is analyzed through three stages presented by Miles, Huberman, &

Saldana (2013) they are data reduction, data display and conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research has been carried out for one month with the application of learning English using online crossword puzzles to improve students' critical thinking. The application of learning using crossword puzzles provides opportunities for students to learn using fun playing methods. Students will experience learning in a more interesting way because learning is done by playing in groups. Based on the results of direct observations that have been made during English learning activities, it is described as follows: the implementation of learning is carried out with good preparation where the teacher asks students to carry out learning based on the division of study groups. One group consists of five to six students. Where each group will answer questions based on group order and have only one minute. Furthermore, the teacher asks students

to answer questions according to the number they choose so that when answering students are only given one chance based on the number and column they choose. When they have chosen a number and column and are unable to answer, the question will be given to the group that has not answered in a scramble manner. Through this activity it can be seen how enthusiastic the students are in competing to answer the questions posed on the blackboard. Students tend to be more active in trying to answer questions and what is certain is that before answering students must first think critically about the answers they will give. In this way students become more stable in thinking in English.

Learning activities through online games using crossword puzzles provide opportunities for students to be able to determine and choose wisely the questions listed so that students will be trained to become careful individuals in dealing with a problem they face.

Figure 1. Playing Crossword puzzle in the classroom



As seen in figure 1 the English teacher has implemented learning using online crossword puzzles where the enthusiasm and calm of the students can be seen in the pictures. Students have a good focus in following and trying to think of answers based on the existing answer columns. Activities that can make students have an interest in learning will train their thinking power to be better (Rahayu et al., 2021). Students also become calmer in thinking critically about answers based on the questions given. Then, from the observations it was also seen that students tended to have good collaboration skills with their learning groups. Students compete and regularly ask questions to answer questions in front of the class. Forming learning using groups not only trains students to understand the material but also develops collaboration skills in groups

(Anwar & Efransyah, 2018). The teacher only needs to monitor the movements and activities of students in the class, and when students start to get out of control the teacher needs to guide students to focus more on the game of answering questions, so that students' curiosity in answering questions can be better. Based on this teaching experience, researchers can feel how conducive and well the game is applied in language classes where students can not only hone their English skills but can also develop collaboration skills, critical thinking in the groups they have. Thus, learning activities through online crossword puzzle games can provide opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking skills for the better.

Furthermore, to find out how students respond when learning English using online crossword puzzles

in improving critical thinking skills, several students have been interviewed and the results are as follows:

1. What do you think about using online crossword puzzles to learn English?

"In my opinion learning by using crossword puzzles provides a new and interesting atmosphere. I become more enthusiastic when learning while doing fun activities. I can also be more enthusiastic when faced with questions in English which make me must be able to think deeply to find answers to the questions posed by the blackboard teacher".

2. How good is your understanding of English when answering the questions in the crossword puzzle game?

"Learning English sometimes makes me must try even harder to use and pronounce it. In addition, sometimes English is difficult when faced with long sentences or texts, but this time learning English using a crossword puzzle provides an interesting and fun opportunity for me to be braver to think critically in a more enjoyable way. One more thing, when I learned to use crossword puzzles, I became more

understanding of the English questions asked on the blackboard".

3. How can crossword puzzles help you improve your critical thinking skills?

"With an interesting learning concept and questions that have definite answers, it can hone my ability to find the right answer based on the number of boxes. I must think broadly and deeply about what answers I should fit into the number of boxes so that it makes me more motivated to think critically. Learning by giving time limits and answers must be precise, it requires me to think very long to find the right answer".

4. Are there any strengths or weaknesses that you feel when learning English using crossword puzzles?

"So far, the learning has been very interesting and fun, so it has encouraged me to improve my critical thinking skills. For the advantages, I think this game must compete with the right time and answers, so I really must be able to think critically and deeply to be able to answer the questions correctly. In addition, I feel that studying with groups in this game can

also hone good collaboration skills or cooperation in dealing with existing questions. I am more enthusiastic and positive when learning in a fun way. The drawback is maybe only the short activities so it is very necessary to manage game time at the right time so that it can make the learning atmosphere more enjoyable and make me more able to develop critical thinking skills."

5. How is your understanding of English after implementing learning using crossword puzzles?

"Learning English in a fun way will certainly make it easier for me to understand the material I am studying. When learning English by using crossword puzzles, I became more interested in thinking critically when answering questions. I also must think fast because I have a short and limited time, so I need to push myself to be a better individual. For my understanding of English, I value myself more to continue to improve my English skills because this language is important to build my international connections and I also become more aware and good at learning English through crossword puzzles."

From the presentation of the results of interview answers given by students when learning English through crossword puzzles, it illustrates that this game or learning method can shape and develop students' critical thinking in dealing with problems and questions that are obtained by their groups in a way that is faster, comprehensive, and in-depth. Games and activities that are adapted to the conditions of students will help develop students' interest in learning (Utami et al., 2022). Therefore, it is very necessary for English teachers to be able to always encourage and assist students' English language skills and need to develop their critical thinking skills so that they become individuals who are ready to face future challenges in a good and wise way.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Critical thinking skills are skills needed by students to help them think well to find solutions to problems in learning and everyday life. Through learning to think critically students will be more open in thinking to find and develop solutions and innovations to existing constraints and problems. To help students develop critical thinking skills, it is necessary for teachers to be able to encourage students through interesting

learning activities. One of them is using online crossword puzzles that teachers can use to encourage students to think critically by answering questions based on the answers in the boxes provided. In this way students will think deeply about the question and adjust the answer to the box provided. Crossword puzzles are very good for training students' thinking power in determining the right answer so that students will avoid wrong answers because each box has the right answer. Thus, the use of online crossword puzzles in learning English can properly improve students' thinking skills in determining answers in English. Suggestions for future researchers who have the same interest as this study are to be able to improve various English skills through online game-based learning.

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