

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A Research Finding

The research was conducted at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2, located at Jl. H. Daman Huri, RT. 02 RW. 06, Sudimoro Karangmalang village on Gebog sub-district and Kudus district. This research focused on the roles of English teachers in strengthening students' critical thinking and communication competencies. The following are research findings taken from interviews, observation, and documentation with English teachers namely M. Syaifuddin Zuhri and Siti Djoeriyah and also several students at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus, namely:

1. The Role of Teacher

a. Teacher as a Learner

Before planning lessons, Mr. Zuhri sometimes reads or looks for references on effective and interesting learning methods according to the times. In addition, Mr. Zuhri also has his own classification of students and looks at the characteristics of students first. That way, Mr. Zuhri could plan a suitable lesson according to the characteristics and intelligence of the students at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari.¹ While according to Mrs. Djoeriyah, she usually only matches the method according to the character and abilities of the students at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2. She does not dig up information or read anything that might give a new color to her learning method.²

b. Teacher as an Instructor

As an instructor, Mr. Zuhri makes a lesson plan (RPP) which includes critical thinking and communication competencies. RPP is also adapted to the conditions of students. The learning steps in RPP for strengthening critical thinking competence are the teacher delivering the active and passive voice material in a simple way, the teacher gives some questions related to active and passive voice material, students are given the opportunity to ask questions, and the teacher answers and provides conclusions regarding the material that

¹ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the interview from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, interview 1, transcript.

² Siti Djoeriyah, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 2, transcript.

has been presented.³ After making RPP, he usually teaches using several methods such as lectures, games, role-play and quizzes. He delivered the material with some of those methods and adapted it to the intelligence and conditions of students in learning.⁴ The same thing was done by Mrs. Djoeriyah, she also made a lesson plan which contained 4C competencies. Regarding the learning method, she usually uses the lecture or speech, discussion, and role-play methods. She more often uses the speech method in delivering material because the method is easy and can still be accepted by students.⁵ The learning steps in RPP for strengthening communication competence are the teacher conveys material about habitual action and general truth in the form of simple present tense, students are asked to understand the concept of the simple present tense, students are asked to practice conversations, and the teacher provides opportunities for students to ask questions then the teacher answers and provides conclusions regarding the material and practices that have been studied.⁶

c. **Teacher as an Educator**

Mr. Zuhri instills moral values at the beginning of each lesson, whether related to the material or not. Moral values take precedence within the scope of the madrasah. Mr. Zuhri always instills the values of morals and manners to students because the spirit of the madrasah emphasizes those two things.⁷ Then, Mrs. Djoeriyah also always teaches good ethics and manners to all her students. She does not really like students who do not have ethics towards their teachers, she usually immediately reprimands students who are not polite or behave badly. According to Mrs. Djoeriyah, ethics is number one in everything.⁸

³ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, RPP documentation data, April 19th, 2022, documentation, transcript.

⁴ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the interview from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, interview 1, transcript.

⁵ Siti Djoeriyah, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 2, transcript.

⁶ Siti Djoeriyah, RPP documentation data, April 20th, 2022, documentation, transcript.

⁷ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the observation from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, observation 1, transcript.

⁸ Siti Djoeriyah, the observation from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, observation 2, transcript.

d. Teacher as a Guide

Mr. Zuhri guides students to grow and develop according to the potential of each student. Mr. Zuhri accompanies students who appear to have talent or potential in English. However, Mr. Zuhri also helps students who are having difficulties in learning English by instilling a simple pattern of understanding because he knows that not all students are able or have the same level of understanding.⁹ Mrs. Djoeriyah also agrees with Mr. Zuhri that Mrs. Djoeriyah guides and provides a sense of warmth to all students. This feeling is given to both students who are interested in English and to students who are not so interested. Mrs. Djoeriyah knows that not all students like English subjects, but he always pays attention and reminds students that we all have to respect each other in order to achieve learning goals.¹⁰

e. Teacher as a Manager

Mr. Zuhri always tries to manage the class as well as possible. Learning will not run effectively if class conditions are not conducive. Mr. Zuhri usually conditions the class at the beginning of the lesson, but when in the middle of learning the students are noisy, Mr. Zuhri admonishes the students in a good way so that the learning process continues according to plan. In addition, Mr. Zuhri also manages the time well so that the material can be delivered.¹¹ While Mrs. Djoeriyah also tries to do as much as possible. She does her best regarding time management, extra energy is also needed to keep the class calm and conducive. So, she always reminds students to work well together in order to create conducive learning. She usually has difficulty in handling classes B, C, and D. For class A, it is rather easy because class A is the chosen and best class among the others.¹²

⁹ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the interview from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, interview 1, transcript.

¹⁰ Siti Djoeriyah, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 2, transcript.

¹¹ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the observation from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, observation 1, transcript.

¹² Siti Djoeriyah, the observation from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, observation 2, transcript.

f. Teacher as a Facilitator

According to Mr. Zuhri, facilities have been provided by the school to make it easier for students in the learning process activities such as LKS, textbooks, whiteboards, markers, projectors, wifi, and others. Mr. Zuhri sometimes uses ppt media and videos from youtube, but this is rarely done considering the preparation is very time-consuming in learning. When giving homework, he often uses google forms to make it easier for Mr. Zuhri when correct the tasks and students can also immediately see the results of their assignments.¹³ The facilities used by Mrs. Djoeriyah in teaching are entirely from school such as LKS and textbooks. She does not use media or other facilities that are usually used by teachers now because she admits that she is not capable in terms of technology.¹⁴

g. Teacher as a Motivator

Mr. Zuhri always motivates and encourages students. The motivation given is not only about motivation to learn so that students get the passion to study harder, but Pak Zuhri also motivates and inspires students about life. We all know that life is full of challenges so that Mr. Zuhri always gives encouragement to his students in living this life.¹⁵ The same statement was delivered by Mrs. Djoeriyah. She always gives encouragement to students. According to her, students must be enthusiastic and disciplined in studying at school because parents are also struggling to make a living for their children (students) to become educated and successful people so that they are useful for the homeland and nation.¹⁶

h. Teacher as an Assessor

Mr. Zuhri conducts an assessment to find out the extent of the success of the learning that has been carried out. Assessment is determined by the results of daily tests, quizzes, UTS, UAS, and also student attitudes during learning.¹⁷ Then,

¹³ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, facilities documentation data, April 19th, 2022, documentation, transcript.

¹⁴ Siti Djoeriyah, LKS documentation data, April 20th, 2022, documentation, transcript.

¹⁵ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the observation from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, observation 1, transcript.

¹⁶ Siti Djoeriyah, the observation from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, observation 2, transcript.

¹⁷ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the interview from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, interview 1, transcript.

the form of assessment that Mrs. Djoeriyah uses is not much different from other teachers, namely through daily tests, UTS, and UAS.¹⁸

i. Teacher as an Evaluator

Evaluation is usually done by Mr. Zuhri after the lesson. Mr. Zuhri usually evaluates verbally by asking students directly whether students have really mastered the material that has been delivered and students are also given the opportunity to ask questions again. Sometimes Mr. Zuhri also gives some questions on the blackboard then Mr. Zuhri appoints several students to answer them so that students really master the material that has been delivered. In addition, Mr. Zuhri gave advice to students on student deficiencies during learning and vice versa.¹⁹ While Mrs. Djoeriyah usually refers to students whether the students have really understood the material that she has conveyed or not. If there are still those who do not understand, she will briefly explain again so that it does not take too much time because she usually evaluates at the end of the lesson.²⁰

2. 21st Century Skills

a. Critical Thinking

According to Mr. Zuhri, critical thinking is the ability to think at a high level which is understanding and analyzing information. The method that he used in strengthening critical thinking competence was a very simple and easy method, namely by using active and passive voice materials. The steps taken were as follows:²¹

- 1) First, Mr. Zuhri explained what active and passive sentences are.
- 2) Then, he explained slowly whether subject, verb, and object in a sentence.
- 3) When the students really understand the passage, Mr. Zuhri explained how the patterns of active and passive sentences are.

¹⁸ Siti Djoeriyah, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 2, transcript.

¹⁹ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the observation from the researcher, April, 19th, 2022, observation 1, transcript.

²⁰ Siti Djoeriyah, the observation from the researcher, April, 20th, 2022, observation 2, transcript.

²¹ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the interview from the researcher, April, 19th, 2022, interview 1, transcript.

- 4) After that, Mr. Zuhri asked the students about the material. “Rendi eats bread”, from that sentence, Mr. Zuhri asked the students such as:
- Is the sentence active or passive?
 - Which are the subject, verb, and object?
 - What is the pattern/formula of the sentence?
 - Can you change the sentence into a passive voice?

Meanwhile, the same method was also used by Mrs. Djoeriyah. She used a very simple method and did not burden her as well as the students. The method she used was to give question that provoked students to think critically. That question was certainly related to the learning materials at MTs Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Kudus according to the 2013 curriculum. An example of question that she used to provoke or strengthen critical thinking competence, namely:
What does the notice below mean?

Keep the classroom clean!

From the example above, students were asked to explain the meaning of the notice. However, she still helped and guided students when students did not know the Indonesian meaning of the notice. She did not necessarily leave students without guidance because she was aware of the condition and level of intelligence of students in this school. In addition, she also provided answer choices for the meaning of the notice, such as:²²

- put the rubbish on the floor
- put the bag on the bag rack
- don't throw rubbish anywhere
- don't make any noise in the classroom

Several students at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus also gave statements about the teacher's role in strengthening critical thinking competence. Ahmad Faruq stated that the teacher's role in teaching was very good and disciplined. In mastering critical thinking competence, he had not been able to master all the criteria of critical thinking although the teacher's method used was very simple. He could

²² Siti Djoeriyah, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 2, transcript.

only get to the analysis stage. When there was a question material or information presented, he was able to understand and analyze it.²³

Nuraini Rahayu as a student also gave a statement that the teacher's method used was also very simple and easy to understand. From all criteria of critical thinking competence, she was able to understand, analyze, assess or evaluate, conclude, explain, and self-regulate. However in the explaining stage, sometimes she is still nervous or not fluent in explaining the information she receives.²⁴

b. Communication

The method used by Mr. Zuhri in strengthening communication competence was also very simple, such as asking how things are, calling students or checking attendance using English and students must also answer in English. Then, when the students were asked to express the material, two people were asked to come forward to communicate with their friends and practice the expression. The principle that Mr. Zuhri emphasized to students is do not be shy, do not be afraid to be wrong, and dare to come forward to practice communication even though the pronunciation is still not right, it does not matter.²⁵

Meanwhile, Mrs. Djoeriyah used a simple method that was adapted to the abilities and conditions of students. Students were asked to memorize some vocabulary so that students have a foundation or provision in communicating English. In addition, Mrs. Djoeriyah asked students to carry out conversations in front of the class about a material such as habitual action. Students are also guided and assisted slowly by the teacher so that students are accustomed and confident in communicating using English.²⁶

Ahmad Lutfi Afianto as a student gave a statement about the teacher's role in strengthening communication competence. He stated that the method used by Mr. Zuhri and Mrs. Djoeriyah

²³ Ahmad Faruq, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 3, transcript.

²⁴ Nuraini Rahayu, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 4, transcript.

²⁵ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the interview from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, interview 1, transcript.

²⁶ Siti Djoeriyah, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 2, transcript.

was good but Ahmad Faruq still lacked confidence and lacked perseverance. So, the criteria that can be mastered are conveying and listening to information. Sometimes, it is still difficult and still being helped by the teacher.²⁷

Idha Nur Khoiroh as a student also stated that the teacher had tried as much as possible for students to teach and provided effective and simple methods. In strengthening communication competence, the criteria that she has mastered to the stage of providing a response. But, sometimes it is still difficult and there is still a vocabulary that has not been mastered.²⁸

3. Challenges Faced by English Teachers in Strengthening Students' Critical Thinking and Communication Competencies

a. Critical Thinking

The challenges and obstacles faced by Mrs. Zuhri in strengthening critical thinking competence are; *firstly*, the teacher must be creative in delivering learning material, even though he already has several creative ways but the learning time is limited so sometimes the material is not conveyed in its entirety. *Secondly*, sometimes students' interest in learning is weak and when students' desire is weak, the learning process and learning objectives do not run smoothly. *Thirdly*, the monitoring from the parents of students is still lacking. *Finally*, the lack of facilities such as speakers and mics in each class.²⁹

Meanwhile, the challenges and obstacles faced by Mrs. Djoeriyah are; *firstly*, teachers must be able to master technology while she is still having trouble in mastering technology because Mrs. Djoeriyah is not young anymore. *Secondly*, Mrs. Djoeriyah has difficulty in preparing media and lacks literacy regarding the latest and creative learning models. *Finally*, students are less contributing, difficult to be invited to think critically, and still less active in learning.³⁰

²⁷ Ahmad Lutfi Afianto, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 5, transcript.

²⁸ Idha Nur Khoiroh, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 6, transcript.

²⁹ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the interview from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, interview 1, transcript.

³⁰ Siti Djoeriyah, the interview from the researcher, April 20th, 2022, interview 2, transcript.

b. Communication

In strengthening communication competence, the obstacles or challenges by Mr. Zuhri are; *firstly*, students' basic vocabulary is still lacking even though the vocabulary is very important for anyone who wants to communicate in English. *Secondly*, the students' habit of using English which is still lacking is also an obstacle for him. *Finally*, students are still often shy when asked to come forward in the practice of conversation or expression in front of the class.³¹ While according to Mrs. Djoeriyah, the obstacle in strengthening communication competence is the lack of students' vocabulary mastery and students are still shy and lazy when students are asked to practice.³²

B Discussion

1. The Role of Teacher

The teacher is a key factor for success in the learning process. The teacher plays a very vital role in teaching and learning activities.³³ Teachers who understand their duties and role in teaching will create quality learning. The teacher's role is not only teaching and delivering learning material, but there are several common roles that must be mastered and carried out by the teacher. The following are some of the teacher's roles in teaching and learning activities:

a. Teacher as a Learner

The role of the teacher as a learner is to seek information or references about interesting and effective learning methods. In addition, the teacher can understand the conditions and situations of the students before starting the lesson because the teacher positions and thinks from the student's perspective so that the teacher can find out what method to use and which is in accordance with the student's condition. If the teacher can think from the perspective of students and the teacher always interacts with students, then students will feel comfortable so that the learning process can

³¹ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, the interview from the researcher, April 19th, 2022, interview 1, transcript.

³² Siti Djoeriyah, the interview from the researcher, April, 20th, 2022, interview 2, transcript.

³³ P. S. M. Annisa, B. Saragih, & H. T. D. Bancin, "Teacher Roles Used in English Classroom Interaction," *Jurnal Darma Agung* 29, no.1 (2021): 140.

run smoothly and learning objectives can be achieved.³⁴ Both of those things were done by Mr. Zuhri and Mrs. Djoeriyah, but for the point where the teacher looked for references, Mrs. Djoeriyah did not do this because of limitations in mastering technology and the age factor.

b. Teacher as an Instructor

Teacher as an instructor is a teacher's role in the process of transferring knowledge to students. The teacher must make a lesson plan (RPP) before teaching. English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus in carrying out their roles also make RPP that contains 4C competencies, especially critical thinking and communication. After making RPP, the teacher teaches using several methods such as lectures, games, quizzes, and role-play. However, teachers often use the lecture method because it is adapted to the conditions of the students and the classroom situation. The lecture method is very simple and does not take much time so that the material can be conveyed well. Therefore, the teacher as an instructor is not only able to master and deliver learning materials, but must know the conditions and situations of his students.³⁵ The teacher's role as an instructor is also the most dominant role in strengthening students' critical thinking and communication competencies at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus.

c. Teacher as an Educator

The teacher's role as an educator is not only teaching and delivering material. However, teachers also instill moral values to their students so that their students have ethics in saying and acting. The English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari always instilled moral values and taught good ethics to all students both during learning and outside the classroom. Teachers are like parents who must be good figures for their students, so teachers must be careful in saying and acting.³⁶ So, students must have courtesy and respect for all teachers

³⁴ S. Archana & K. Usha Rani, "Role of a Teacher in English Language Teaching (ELT)," *International Journal of Educational Science and Research (IJESR)* 7, no.1 (2017): 2.

³⁵ Azuka N. G. Alutu, "The Guidance Role of the Instructor in the Teaching and Learning Process," *Journal of Instructional Psychology* 33, no.1 (2006): 48.

³⁶ G. Manju, "Teachers are the Role Models to Students," *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)* 6, no.1 (2018): 1528.

because nothing is more important than morals. In addition, etiquette is the core of the madrasah school.

d. Teacher as a Guide

Teacher as a guide is a teacher who guides students to grow and develop according to their respective potentials. The English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus always accompanied and paid attention to all students, both those who had talent in English and those who were less talented in English lessons. In addition, if there were students who had difficulty learning English, Mr. Zuhri and Mrs. Djoeriyah could help students by providing a simple pattern of understanding and explaining slowly until the students really understood the material presented. Therefore, the role of the teacher as a mentor is also called a tool that helps and directs students in the learning process, especially for students who have difficulty understanding a material.³⁷ In addition, the teacher always reminded that we must respect each other in order to achieve the learning objectives.

e. Teacher as a Manager

The teacher's role as a manager is the teacher who manages and regulates class conditions. Classroom management is very important so that learning can run normally. The English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus managed the class by conditioning the class and admonishing students who were noisy, for example managing and handling classes B, C, and D required extra energy compared to class A because class A is the choice and the best compared to class B, C, and D. In addition to managing class conditions to be conducive, time management is also very important because good time management will result in maximum learning.³⁸ Therefore, cooperation between teachers and students must be well established in order to create a conducive classroom.

f. Teacher as a Facilitator

Facilities are one of the aspects of supporting learning that must be fulfilled so that the delivery of information in the

³⁷ Esra Ali Omar Abu Al-Maali & Ahmed Gumaa Siddiek, "The Role of the Teacher's Guide in Enhancing English Language Education," *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* 10, no.1 (2022): 4.

³⁸ S. Archana & K. Usha Rani, "Role of a Teacher in English Language Teaching (ELT)," *International Journal of Educational Science and Research (IJESR)* 7, no.1 (2017): 3.

form of material can be well absorbed by students. Therefore, the teacher as a facilitator must be able to provide learning facilities that are relevant to the teaching material. Teachers must also be able to develop learning facilities, for example making attractive and interactive learning media so that students feel interested in learning.³⁹ The school has provided supporting facilities for learning English such as LKS, textbooks, projectors, LCD, and language laboratory. Unfortunately, the English teacher at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus has not been able to carry out this role optimally because the facilities provided are limited.

g. Teacher as a Motivator

Motivation is one thing that is needed in learning. When students feel bored or are losing their enthusiasm, the teacher can provide enthusiasm and motivation to learn as well as life motivation to students.⁴⁰ Thus, the English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus carried out their role as motivators by always giving students verbal motivation and encouragement, both related to learning and their daily lives.

h. Teacher as an Assessor

Assessment is one aspect that must be done in order to find out the extent to which students are successful in learning. Yesterday the English teachers of MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus played their role as assessor by assessing various student potentials such as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. The assessment is carried out through the provision of test questions, language practicum, UTS and UAS as well as an assessment of student attitudes during the learning process.

i. Teacher as an Evaluator

Evaluation is carried out so that teachers and students know the extent to which learning is effective or not. Through evaluation, the teacher can find out the shortcomings of the learning that has been done and what solutions will be taken to improve it, therefore evaluation becomes an important role

³⁹ S. Archana & K. Usha Rani, "Role of a Teacher in English Language Teaching (ELT)," *International Journal of Educational Science and Research (IJESR)* 7, no.1 (2017): 2.

⁴⁰ Ignatius Rindu & Ariyanti, "Teacher's Role in Managing the *Class* during Teaching and Learning Process," *Script Journal: Journal of Linguistic and English Teaching* 2, no.1 (2017): 96.

in the success of learning.⁴¹ In carrying out their role as evaluator, the English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus always took the time to ask students at the end of the lesson about the difficulties they might experience while learning English. For example, when students had difficulty understanding one of the English materials, the teacher would re-explain the material at the end of the lesson. In addition, the teachers also gave the opportunity to students so that they could convey suggestions on the learning that had been carried out.

2. 21st Century Skills

21st century skills are defined as the knowledge and skills needed to face an increasingly fast-paced world movement, those knowledge and skills are also needed in schools, work, and society.⁴² The era of the 21st century is marked by technology that is developing rapidly, information and communication are available and can be reached anywhere and anytime, and others. The development that occurs in the current era must be balanced with human skills or competencies in order to be able to face, adapt, and not fall into the times. In addition, this century also has an impact on education in which all elements of education must support each other and be ready to face this era.

One of the skills emphasized in this century is the 4C competence (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity). However, the researcher focuses on critical thinking and communication competencies because it is adapted to the conditions and objectives of the research. Therefore, here are some of the roles of English teachers in strengthening students' critical thinking and communication competencies at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus:

a. Critical Thinking

English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus must know the condition and situation of students before the teachers carry out their role in strengthening students' critical thinking competence. The English teachers realized that the students at this school were still behind in

⁴¹ S. Archana & K. Usha Rani, "Role of a Teacher in English Language Teaching (ELT)," *International Journal of Educational Science and Research (IJESR)* 7, no.1 (2017): 3.

⁴² Cynthia, L. Scott. *The Futures of Learning 2: What Kind of Learning for the 21st Century?* (Paris: UNESCO Education Research and Foresight, 2015), 8.

terms of intelligence and quality compared to students at other favorite schools in Kudus.⁴³ So, the English teachers used a simple method that students could understand. Therefore, Mr. Zuhri used a very simple method, namely the lecture method by delivering the material and asking some questions about the material of active and passive sentences.

Indirectly, this simple method can provoke students to think critically where children can understand first, analyze whether the sentence pattern is an active or passive sentence, assess whether the analysis is correct or not, then students are able to explain when asked a question by Mr. Zuhri. Thus, the students can be said to have a strong foundation in critical thinking competence.

The method used by Mr. Zuhri was indeed very simple and familiar, but this was done because considering the conditions, culture, and students' English skills at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus which were still ordinary and need to be improved. Mr. Zuhri said that when students want to be invited to think critically by understanding and analyzing material or information, it was a good achievement. This is in accordance with the statement that critical thinkers are people who want to think by understanding and analyzing carefully and basing conclusions on evidence rather than just capturing information from their own feelings.⁴⁴

The same and simple method was also used by Mrs. Djoeriyah. She asked a question that provoked students to think critically. The method used was the same but with different materials, the material used by Mrs. Djoeriyah, namely material about notice.

Apart from asking question, Mrs. Djoeriyah also gave the answer choices so that students were able to learn gradually in strengthening their critical thinking competence, if it was not given answer choices, then students would have difficulty even not being able to answer it. From that question, the students could be provoked to understand, analyze, and think with different perspectives but still in accordance with their meaning.

⁴³ M. Syaifuddin Zuhri, The interview from the researcher, April, 19th, 2022, Interview 1, transcript.

⁴⁴ Linda M. Murawski, "Critical Thinking in the Classroom and Beyond," *Journal of Learning in Higher Education* 10, no.1 (2014): 26.

From the results of interviews and observations after the English teachers carried out their roles in strengthening critical thinking competence, the average students at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus still have not mastered all the criteria according to Facione namely interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation.⁴⁵

Even though the teachers have used a very simple and easy method, the average students are still in the interpretation and analysis stage and there are some students who are able at the inference stage but only a few or even rarely are able to the explanation and self-regulation stage. However, the efforts made by Mr. Zuhri and Mrs. Djoeriyah are a process towards true critical thinking competence because it cannot be done instantly and students still need guidance from the teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus.

b. Communication

Communication competence is an essential skill and this ability is the main goal for students learning foreign languages, especially English.⁴⁶ In strengthening communication competence, the English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus also used the same and simple method. Mr. Zuhri and Mrs. Djoeriyah usually invite students to communicate by asking how they are doing, checking attendance, calling students, ordering or reprimanding the students using English with familiar words. Besides that, Mr. Zuhri and Mrs. Djoeriyah used the method that students were asked to come forward to practice communicating with expression material or whatever, then students carried out conversations. In addition, Mrs. Djoeriyah usually asks students to memorize vocabulary so that they are equipped in communicating.

The teacher's role in strengthening communication competence is using conversational techniques. Hence, the conversation is a type of informal speech and is used to form interactions with other people which is in accordance with the purpose of language learning, namely being able to

⁴⁵ P.A. Facione, *Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts* (Millbrae, CA: Measured Reasons and the California Academic Press, 2015), 5-7.

⁴⁶ Shubhangi R. Khambayat, "Developing Effective Communication Skills in Students," *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4, no.37 (2017): 8800.

communicate with other people.⁴⁷ Therefore, English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus tend to teach the type of verbal (oral) communication. Thus, there are several criteria of communication competence that become a benchmark namely conveying information, giving attention when other people talk, providing responses, and asking.⁴⁸

Based on the results of interviews and observations, several students at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus have difficulties in strengthening this competence. On average, students can only convey messages and pay attention or listen well. Only a few students are able to give response, the stage of asking nothing at all. It is good enough because the average students are able to master two criteria.

While, the English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus had tried and used methods that were suitable for students' abilities. The teachers could not force it because after all learning was forced even though the students' abilities were still not qualified, so there would be no material or knowledge that students could get and absorb.

3. Challenges Faced by English Teachers and Their Solutions in Strengthening Students' Critical Thinking and Communication Competencies

In strengthening 21st century competence, the roles and efforts of English teachers are needed. Nevertheless, challenges and obstacles are always encountered by teachers. As it should be, teachers must be able to face and overcome existing challenges and obstacles. The following are some of the challenges, obstacles, and solutions for teachers in strengthening students' critical thinking and communication competencies at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus, namely:

a. Critical Thinking

The challenges faced by English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus namely Mr. Zuhri sometimes finds trouble using creative learning methods due to limited learning time at school, so sometimes the material is not conveyed in its entirety. Whereas, Mrs. Djoeriyah has

⁴⁷ Suparman, "The Effectiveness of the English Conversation to Improve Students' Speaking Skill," *Jurnal Studi Keislaman dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, 5, no.2 (2017): 40.

⁴⁸ Maya Dwika Putri, *et al.*, "Student Communication Skills through the Implementation of Project Based Learning Strategy at XI Grade in SMA Babussalam Pekanbaru," *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa*, 2, no.2 (2015): 5.

difficulty mastering technology and preparing creative learning media because of her age. In fact, teachers should be able to master technology and have creative and innovative methods in delivering material, especially in this 21st century era and in the future.⁴⁹ Therefore, teachers should broaden their insight, collect creative ideas, train their own creativity, and try to master technology.

Moreover, the obstacles faced by English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus are the *first*, sometimes students' interest in learning is weak and when students' desire is weak the learning process and learning objectives do not run smoothly. Although the students' English skills are still basic, but when students have a strong interest or enthusiasm, the students' abilities will definitely improve much better. Thus, the teacher must always provide motivation, maximize learning media so that students are interested, and adjust learning methods according to students' abilities. *Second*, the monitoring from the parents of students is still lacking even though monitoring from them is very important and the parents should always monitor and encourage students so that students feel cared for. *Last*, the lack of facilities such as speakers and mics in each class whereas those two things are very important because the teacher's voice when speaking is clearer so that the learning process can run well and the teacher can also save stamina.

b. Communication

The challenges and obstacles faced by English teachers at MTs NU Hasyim Asy'ari 2 Gebog Kudus are the *first*, the students' vocabulary mastery is still lacking, even though when students want to learn communication competence, students must master vocabulary first because with vocabulary students know what words they use in communicating.⁵⁰ *Second*, students' habit of using English is still lacking. Therefore, the teacher should make rules regarding the habituation of students' use of English in the classroom. *Last*, the attitude of students who are still shy and

⁴⁹ Siti Nur Azizah Septiyanti & Yustika Nur Fajriah, "The Challenges Encountered by EFL Teachers in Developing Students' 4C Skills In 21st-Century Education," *Journal of English Pedagogy and Applied Linguistics* 1, no.2 (2021): 107.

⁵⁰ Sh. Yukobjonova, "The Importance of Teaching Vocabulary," *International Journal of Academic Pedagogical Research (IJAPR)* 4, no.12 (2020): 67.

a bit lazy when asked by the teacher to practice and practice in front of the class. So, the teacher must try to motivate and communicate to students to find out what is the cause of students laziness.

Communication competence requires a lot of practice and time. Therefore, students must continue to practice alone at home or elsewhere such as reading, listening, and observing activities that can stimulate the students in practicing communication skills so that they do not only rely on teaching from teachers at school.⁵¹ That method can be used by students in strengthening communication competence.



⁵¹ Siti Nur Azizah Septiyanti & Yustika Nur Fajriah, “The Challenges Encountered by EFL Teachers in Developing Students’ 4C Skills In 21st-Century Education,” *Journal of English Pedagogy and Applied Linguistics* 1, no.2 (2021): 111.