

## **Novel Writer's Voice in Critical Annotated Bibliography**

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### **Abstract**

*Undergraduate students are required to think critically and put it into their writings and research. However, it is challenging for the students to do so, since they might encounter plagiarism issues, as they try to make use of their own voice. This study, carrying out a research and development design with a research subject of 77 students who programmed the Reading for Research course, aimed to produce educational products in the form of learning materials that can help them during their critical annotated bibliography composition. Data were collected in three stages using interview guidelines and inquiry journals in the preliminary research stage, observation sheet of validation form in the model development stage, and observation sheet in the form of field notes in the model trial stage. In the preliminary field testing of the use of the tutorials in the learning materials for Reading for Research class, it is found that writing Critical Annotated Bibliography while still including their voices as writers became easier for students. This is because the instructions used in the teaching materials that the writing team compiled are very explicit, so students can easily follow and execute the instructions in writing.*

**Keywords:** *Novel writer's voice, critical annotated bibliography, reading*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Literacy was initially only interpreted as an activity of reading and writing. However, in recent years, literacy has been associated with abilities in the realm of digital literacy. Students, in general, are familiar with the technology that can be used to access online information, so they only need to be directed to use the technology for academic purposes and scientific works. Lynch (2017) explained that digital literacy is not only about using technology but also the ability to evaluate the information received. Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, United States, has defined digital literacy as the ability to search, evaluate, utilize, share and create content using information technology and the internet.

By focusing on training students' critical thinking skills in evaluating scientific articles, the Reading for Research course is a series of reading skills courses that have a crucial role in preparing students to master several reading strategies and writing summaries as a manifestation of critical thinking while reading scientific articles. In addition, critical thinking skills can prevent students from practicing plagiarism. In lecture activities, lecturers often use anti-plagiarism software to check student work. Instead of just providing cursory explanations about plagiarism and punishment in assignments to learning activities, lecturers need to help students understand how to avoid plagiarism and equip them with the skills to become competent and confident writers (Sowell, 2018). Together with the skills obtained by students in the Paper Writing and Research Methods in Linguistics and Literature courses, the Reading for Research course is structured to equip students to be ready to take final assignments with a broader reading scope as a provision for research.

Developing an output-based curriculum by applying critical thinking skills is challenging for lecturers and students. Lecturers are required to prepare lecture materials and processes that facilitate students to add knowledge but are not spoon-feeding. In contrast, students have to learn to understand lecture material independently. In the 2021 Reading for Research class, the teaching team faced problems with students' ability to find scientific articles relevant to their chosen topic. In addition, students also feel that they have not sufficiently applied critical thinking skills in order to evaluate scientific articles and compare existing scientific articles to find gaps or gaps that they can use as a starting point in compiling research for their final project.

In addition, students also experience problems when they have to write a summary of previous research. Based on a need analysis conducted through an interview process with a lecturer in the Argumentative Writing course taken by students of the same class as the subject in this study, it is known that many students still do plagiarism because for quoting a source, for example, students did not know the strategy to paraphrase the information. They are also confused in writing down important points from previous research without being indicated as plagiarizing, especially how to write a summary while still including their own voice. The evidence of this problem is the high similarity index of their writings examined with the Turnitin program, as shown in Figure 1 below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	AUTHOR	TITLE	SIMILARITY
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		25%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		26%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		30%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		31%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		33%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		35%
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		43%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		47%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		48%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		51%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		54%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		56%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		60%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		60%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		61%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous		78%

Figure 1. Turnitin Receipt of Students' Argumentative Writing Paper

Writing a summary of previous research is a challenging activity for students. As shown in Figure 1, the level of similarity in student writing is high (25%-78%). Annotated Bibliography is a genre of writing that is systematically similar to a summary. Both of these genres will be encountered by students in lecture assignments, especially when compiling a thesis. The high level of similarity index in student writing, as seen in the Argumentative Writing assignment above, is a problem that needs to be addressed. Moreover, lecturers need to understand how students' academic writing interacts and develops their identity as writers and students. This is because students enter into dialogue with previous sources to understand how they construct their own meaning and

understand their own text production (Abasi & Graves, 2008).

To support the digital literacy movement, improve students' critical thinking skills, and help prepare students to become competent and confident writers, the research team conducts research on writing Critical Annotated Bibliography in Reading for Research materials. The results of this study are expected to guide students in evaluating and writing the evaluation results into a Critical Annotated Bibliography. Students are expected to be better prepared to conduct research for their final project (undergraduate thesis) with this ability. It should be noted that this research only focuses on writing Critical Annotated Bibliography and not on other genres, so that further research needs to be done in different genres.

### **Writer's Voice**

Several experts have mentioned that it is not easy to define what a 'writer's voice' actually means. However, some have tried to explain what the author's voice is and how we can identify it. In his book entitled *Crafting Authentic Voice*, Romano defines voice as *the writer's presence on the page* (2004). Just as a student's presence can be felt and recorded by the teacher, the author's voice can also be 'read' in their writings. On the other hand, Rubenstein (2018) views that the author's voice expresses the author's feelings towards the subject he writes and towards his readers. For example, a student may be unfamiliar or even uninterested in topic A. Still, because this is the task of the lecturer, he must do it by considering the feelings of the lecturer who will read the assignment. Rubenstein (2018) further reveals that this incident has become commonplace nowadays. A 'good' student will be able to suppress his personal voice as a writer so that it is not dominant and instead raises a voice according to the reader's expectations (teacher or lecturer) so that his writing gets good grades. Of course, this can become a serious problem if left unchecked. Learning in reading and writing classes should be able to develop students' critical thinking skills through reading activities and then writing based on what they read with the colored strokes of their respective opinions. If the color strokes cannot be found in the student's writing, it is necessary to make a change to the current learning.

Basically, it can be said that the author's voice contains the author's views. However, it should be noted that the surrounding environment can also influence one's view of something (Lorés-Sanz, 2011). In academic writing, it is important not only to present ideas, facts and conclusions, but also to express perspectives and attitudes. If you can convey this consistently in your writing, then it means that you (as a writer) have successfully develop your voice (Susan, 2016). Tardy (2012) explains three general dimensions in a writer's voice—individual, social, and dialogical. Zacharias (2018) gives an example of a student of Chinese descent named Shan (not his real name). Since childhood, Shan was always asked to use the English version of the name at school and other public locations. This makes Shan tend to *'double-voicedness'* or a condition which occurs when individuals are trapped in diverse social and linguistic environments (Zacharias, 2018).

This condition was then observed to affect the construction and development of Shan's voice in academic writing. There are three stages in constructing and developing a writer's voice—having, developing, and

becoming. Students like Shan will have difficulty in the first stage or having a position. Due to the influence of his environment, it is difficult for Shan to decide which position he will take when writing academic papers. Therefore, Zacharias (2018) argues that it is essential for teachers to ensure that they go through appropriate stages to build and develop their voices as writers. However, it should be noted that it will be even more important to teach students how to develop or sustain a position in their academic writings. In other words, it would be better if the teacher not only teaches how students can choose a position in a case or topic but teaches how students can provide arguments to defend and support the position he chose at the beginning. The student's ability to formulate these arguments shows the development of critical thinking skills that can be honed through writing activities.

### **Critical Thinking**

The ability to think critically is an essential ability for students to have and will be needed for their lives in the future. Not only in the academic field but critical thinking skills are also required when students enter the world of work and life in society later. Therefore, higher education seeks to cultivate students' critical thinking skills. Ma and Han (2020) stated that reading courses could be a means to develop student's critical thinking skills; because through this course, students are not only able to "read and know" but can improve their ability to "read and ask" and then "read and produce (writing)" with appropriate teaching strategies. In their writing, Ma and Han (2020) describe a learning strategy that is divided into three stages—before, during, and after class—that can be used in the Readings from British and American Press course. The first stage, before class, begins with selecting the appropriate text material. The selection of text material from British and American news allows students to follow the latest developments from various fields and parts of the world. Students will then identify, process, and assess the topics they read. Therefore, teachers must be able to prepare interesting topics and provide opportunities for students to discuss and find solutions to problems that arise. This plays a role in developing students' critical thinking skills.

In the second stage, teachers must adopt communicative teaching and student-centered classes during class. This can be done by dividing students into groups and guiding them to seek information, speak and express opinions, develop arguments and make evaluations. Ma and Han (2020) provide an example of gender issues by using the text *Heels at High Water*, which talks about how Japanese women protest the rigid dress code and require them to always wear *high heels* at work. Students are already familiar with the topic of gender discrimination and are interested in thinking further and debating this issue with other students. Through the discussions, students read the text given and can analyze and arrange arguments according to their respective points of view.

Furthermore, if the previous two stages were more focused on how the teacher prepared the material and encouraged students to be interested and active in class, the third stage, after class, was more oriented towards students. With current technological advances, students can access various information they want. After class, Ma and Han (2020) mentioned, teachers can instruct students to write essays according to the topics they discuss in class. This writing process embodies critical thinking skills because students need to search, read, and analyze before they can

put their ideas into writing. Thus, Ma and Han (2020) concluded that the "*reading-discussion-writing*" mode is an excellent choice to be applied in the *reading* class in order to improve students' critical thinking skills.

White, Stains, Escriu-sune, Medaglia, and Rostamjad (2011) previously conducted research on 185 science students at different levels—106 undergraduate freshmen, 47 senior undergraduate students, 19 master's students, and 13 doctoral students—to measure students' critical thinking skills. Students are asked to read and evaluate three different research reports on a phenomenon (X/Pellagra disease). They used the Assessment of Critical Thinking Ability (ACTA) instrument, a short survey that can be conducted online or in class, to determine the three main critical thinking abilities of students. The first is the ability to understand information and draw conclusions. Second, the ability to identify weaknesses and how they can be overcome. Third, the ability to read other possibilities/potentials from the studies that have been carried out. The results showed that almost all (more than 90%) students could understand and draw conclusions from the three writings they read. Still, they had difficulty finding flaws and other possible interpretations of the study.

White et al. (2011) stated that students' critical thinking skills would develop along with their education level, so those who master these abilities will participate more in learning. However, from the research that has been done, it was found that around 38.3% to 48.9% of senior students (S1) from the science department did not master the three critical thinking skills. Likewise, with S3 students. Although most of them already have the three critical thinking skills, there are around 7.7% to 30.8% who do not yet have them. So it can be concluded that the science curriculum has failed to develop students' critical thinking skills. White et al. (2011) then emphasized the importance of critical thinking skills for students and the need for further research on this matter.

Like Ma and Han (2020) and White et al. (2011), Christine E. and Kate M. (2016) also notice the students' struggle to write persuasively, critically and reflectively. Hence, to foster students' critical thinking as well as develop their voice, they have prepared various autobiographical texts that the student could use as a model for their writing. They set a series of workshops focusing on critical autobiography and suggest various teaching practices that can be used as workshop for fostering critical thinking. This shows that critical thinking is indeed important for students and can be developed through several courses and practices. Hence this study will evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities, curriculum, or programs in improving students' critical thinking skills.

### **Plagiarism**

Unfortunately, as White et al. (2011), in the process of applying the first ability, namely the ability to understand information and draw conclusions, to be poured into a literature review, not a few students with English as a foreign language have difficulty until they are finally trapped in the practice of plagiarism (Abasi & Graves, 2008; Pecorari, 2003, 2010). Pecorari (2010, p. 10) states that "the author commits plagiarism as an act of intentional error; or because they are pursuing another goal (such as learning terminology) and forgetting about resource use; or because they do not know that certain writing strategies can be labeled plagiarism and considered wrong." From this, one of the reasons why writers do

plagiarism is the lack of knowledge of writing strategies. In addition, culture might have been additional to the cause of plagiarism, as Chien (2014) believed that at the deeper level, for some collectivist cultures, knowledge is regarded as belonging to societies, so people need to share it with others for the benefit of the societies (Introna, Hayes, Blair, & Wood, 2003).

Therefore, students as budding academic writers need to learn to perform a rather complex set of skills that is not only widely accepted by the academic community but also meets the specific demands of their discipline. To do this, explicit instruction is the way that can be applied in the learning process (Pecorari, 2010). The application of explicit instruction can be made by providing students with a manual for the writing process, which is the objective of this research.

Researches on the subject of the voice of the author, especially students, have not been very diverse. Most researches share the result of their experiments, workshop, and/or learning practices on how to develop critical thinking as well as students' voice in their academic writing. However, there has yet been any actual products that can be adapted into the curriculum.

Ma and Han (2020) for instance have only focused on introducing the learning strategy—before, during, and after class—to improve students' critical thinking in Reading class. While White et al. (2011) sets to measure students' critical thinking skills and conclude that the science curriculum has failed to develop students' critical thinking skills. White et al. (2011) doesn't elaborate what should be done to the curriculum in order to foster students' critical thinking; but they emphasize on the importance of critical thinking skills for students and the need for further research on this matter. Hence, this study aims to produce educational products in the form of learning materials that can help students especially during their critical annotated bibliography composition.

## **METHOD**

### **Design**

This study uses a research and development approach because it is in accordance with the objectives to be achieved by adopting the educational research and development model developed by Borg and Gall (1983). According to Borg and Gall, "educational research and development (R & D) is a process used to develop and validate educational production." The results of the previous steps until finally a new educational product is obtained. The product of the research is a learning material for the Reading for Research course. This learning material consists of 5 units that are called Tutorials.

Another reason for using the research and development approach is that it is considered appropriate to develop a learning model whose purpose is to find implementation profiles or learning practices and develop a learning model that is effective and easy to implement, according to actual conditions and needs of the campus. For that reason, each tutorial provides vivid steps that guide students to meet the learning outcome of the course, they are being able to: (1) make use of methods and strategies in reading academic references critically, (2) distinguish key features in academic references in the area of linguistics, literature, and culture, (3) evaluate academic references, and (4) compose critical annotated bibliography of the selected academic references.

## **Respondents**

The subjects of this study were 37 students who programmed the Reading for Research course. They are the class of 2019 who are in their third year. The student has passed the Critical Reading and Argumentative Writing courses in the previous semester. They are divided into three parallel classes taught by two lecturers. Parallel class division is based on the Student. However, their ability in reading is not related to their admission pathway.

## **Instruments**

The data were in the form of interview responses with Argumentative Writing lecturer, students' responses in inquiry journals, and observation notes. Details of the data collecting techniques can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Instrument and Data Collecting Techniques

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Data Collecting Technique</b>
Preliminary research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interview guidelines</li> <li>● Inquiry journal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interview</li> <li>● Documentation</li> </ul>
Model development	Observation sheet in the form of a list of statements on the validation sheet	Observation by validator
Model trial	Observation sheet in the form of field note	Observation by the researchers

## **Procedure**

The stages taken during this research were 5 out of 10 steps of R & D as follow:

### (1) Research and information collecting

The researchers conducted an interview with the Argumentative Writing lecturer. This course was offered in the previous semester. The aim of this interview was to find out students' problem with plagiarism, especially since in the Argumentative Writing course students needed to make use of their own voice while constructing an essay. The lecturer also informed the students' similarity index results were high (25%-78%).

### (2) Planning

Based on the interview result, the researchers drafted a list of topics that were supposed to be mastered by the students. Since the goal of the course is to compose critical annotated bibliography, the topics prepared were Selecting Appropriate and Relevant References, Mendeley Referencing System, Descriptive Annotated Bibliography, Evaluating Academic Reference, and Composing Critical Annotated Bibliography.

### (3) Developing the preliminary form of product

In doing so, the researchers collected materials in line with the topics from various sources. The researchers then compiled the selected materials into a rough draft of the learning material. In this stage, the draft was assessed by expert validators based on several components including language, contents, and visualization.

### (4) Preliminary field testing

The validated learning material was then used in the Reading for Research course for the whole semester, taken by the respondents of the research who

previously programmed the Argumentative Writing course.

(5) Main product revision

By the end of the semester, the students were asked to fill out an exit ticket to evaluate the learning material. The learning material was currently under continuous improvement.

**Data Analysis**

In the Model development stage, the data, that were in the form of validation results, were used to revise the rough draft before being used as the learning material. Meanwhile, in the Model Trial stage, the researchers analyzed the learning progression of the students when they used the learning material during the course.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Following the methodology thoroughly, it was found that students' similarity index results were high (25%-78%) as the interview process took place. With this in mind, the researchers listed Evaluating Academic Reference so that the students can be guided in evaluating the reference. The evaluation may cover the strengths and weaknesses of the article, book, or other source, how the source compares to other books, articles, etc. on the same topic, and the usefulness of the source for the research topic. In this phase, the students would learn to find and incorporate their own voice.

During the Model Development stage, the expert validation results showed the following comments:

- 1) Language: satisfactorily
- 2) Visualization: good
- 3) Content: provide more examples, provide the link of the full articles in both descriptive and critical annotated bibliography, so that the students could find it easier to identify the components of the articles mentioned.

Referring to the learning material, the researchers believe that critical thinking is a constructive thinking process to find solutions. This requires students to make reasonable, logical, and well-thought-out judgments. When thinking critically, students accept all the arguments and conclusions in an article and question the validity of the arguments and conclusions presented in the article. In addition, applying digital literacy, a concept that states that all digital information available on the internet can be identified and used to form a complete understanding of related information, becomes an important skill to master. As a result, with the door open to access all kinds of information to enrich references, students are required to apply a critical mindset in filtering information from various sources. It is intended that students obtain the latest references that suit their research needs.

According to the results of the inquiry journal, it was revealed that students had not sufficiently applied critical thinking skills in order to evaluate scientific articles and compared existing scientific articles to find gaps that they could use as a starting point in compiling research for their final project.

Students in the Reading for Research class should be introduced the importance of using the "reading-discussion-writing" approach, as per Ma and Han (2020) study. Following their suggestion, in the process of writing a Critical

Annotated Bibliography, the researchers proposed several steps that students need to take, including:

1. Choose a topic that they will raise as the topic of their final project in Academic Writing and Research Method in Language or Research Method in Literature courses.
2. Choose readings that are appropriate and relevant to the topic
3. Enter the readings list into the Mendeley Referencing System
4. Write a Descriptive Annotated Bibliography, where students are asked to write descriptively about the research paper they have read, without showing any in-depth analysis of the paper.
5. Write a Critical Annotated Bibliography by showing the advantages and disadvantages of articles, comparing the findings of one paper with the findings of other papers that have the same object of study, as well as linking the research findings with their usefulness for the research they will do.

With this guide, the researchers could find out through the prompts in the Inquiry Journal that students were starting to understand that the process of choosing reading also requires critical thinking skills. The activities included selecting references from reputable journals, sorting out the text according to the topic by reading the Abstract and Research Method sections, writing down the detailed sections of the article related to the content of the article, the purpose of the research, the theory used by the author, and examine research gaps.

In the learning material, the researchers also added explicit questions that students can use to assist in identifying the article's content, understanding the purpose of the research, and diagnosing the theory used by the author. This can be seen in the section of the learning material which reads:

Read the selected references comprehensively. As you read, respond to the following questions:

- a. What is the article about?
- b. What is(are) the purpose(s) of the article?
- c. What theories are used to analyze the data?
- d. Is there any research gaps between the article and the previous studies?

Figure 2. *Part of the tutorial in the learning material*

In relation to describing the contents of the scientific articles they read, the prompts in the Inquiry Journal through question 1, “What do you find interesting in those articles?” can help the students. As described by Student 1 below:

“The side of interest from several articles that I set as a source for topics of interest that I will make as research is that I can better understand the rules in feminism, how people's perspectives on feminism, and how everyone applies feminism. In addition, from several journals that I looked for, there were several reviews of literary works that contained feminism. This shows that feminism can be streamed through literature and shows that feminism must be upheld by society.”

From the description written by the student, it can be seen that the student is integrated with the article he is reading. Through questions in a separate session, it was noted that Student 1 had indeed chosen *Literature* as a study for his final

project. Through the description of Student 1 above, without realizing it, he had actually written down the contents of the scientific article he had read, even though it was still in the form of bullet points.

Through the follow-up question "What do you find lacking from those articles?" students are taught to begin to see the shortcomings of the articles they are reading, which in the end will lead them to see research gaps that they can use as their research data. Described in the Inquiry Journal, Student 2 wrote,

"I think it is the diversity of the participants. Most of the participants are students majoring in English. I think it would be better if we get more insights from English learners from other majors or those who learn English by themselves." - Student 2

"Some of the articles do not mention the previous study. Also, one of them does not discuss language development specifically but is more about the interaction of parents and children. One article also did not clearly state the theory used." - Student 3

From this description, Students 2 and 3 began to describe the parts they saw were lacking in previous scientific articles. This shows that the guiding questions in the learning material helps them see the shortcomings of the articles that students are reading. In the learning material, the researchers include several points that can explicitly help students, such as:

Ask more detailed article-related critical questions as you read:

1. What is the authors' hypothesis? There may be more than one hypothesis, and the hypothesis may not be directly described as such.
2. What was the experimental design? Was it an observational study, experimental study, within-subjects, between-subjects, etc.?
3. Did the data support or reject the hypothesis? How convincing are the data in your view?
4. How did the authors interpret their findings? Is the authors' interpretation convincing?
5. Did the results yield questions for further research? Did the authors suggest further research?
6. Were there any parts of the article that were not clear?
7. Were there any parts of the article that were especially insightful?

In the end, the process of writing a Critical Annotated Bibliography is a process that involves repeated drafting - reviewing - revising. Even though at first students felt that it was not enough to apply critical thinking skills in order to evaluate scientific articles and compare existing scientific articles to find gaps that they can use as a starting point in compiling research for their final project, with the guidelines in the learning materials, students find it easier and at the same time challenged to evaluate the scientific articles they chose.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the learning material consisting of 5 tutorials can guide students to compose a critical annotated bibliography, although in practice, students still need more time to compile a critical annotated bibliography that reflects the contents of the articles read. The Reading for Research teaching team needs to provide more practice and feedback when

delivering material on Evaluating Academic Reference to improve students' critical thinking skills.

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