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## **EXPLORING CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITIES IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION EXERCISES**

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**Abstract:**

This study identifies the critical thinking activities employed in listening comprehension exercises and the way the activities facilitate students' listening comprehension. The study employs content analysis to explore integrating critical thinking activities in listening comprehension exercises. The study involves the listening exercise source, namely a textbook entitled Real Listening and Speaking Three by Miles Craven. The result of the study shows that critical thinking activities include identifying the situation and the factors that may influence it, locating the basis for the research that is presented to understand the big picture, learning how to avoid personal biases, and "evaluate information objectively," using the knowledge to make logical inferences, and figuring out what information is the most important and relevant to the situation. Meanwhile, developing the practice of curiosity— asking open-ended questions and following up on the answers is not found. The listening skills facilitated by these activities include finding general information, identifying the communicative purpose, finding specific information, and making a conclusion. This study significantly models English teachers to design listening comprehension exercises that promote students' listening comprehension and critical thinking skills.

**Keywords:** *critical thinking activities; listening comprehension exercises; content analysis*

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**Abstrak:**

*Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi kegiatan berpikir kritis yang digunakan dalam latihan pemahaman mendengarkan dan cara kegiatan memfasilitasi pemahaman mendengarkan siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis isi untuk mengeksplorasi mengintegrasikan kegiatan berpikir kritis dalam latihan pemahaman mendengarkan. Penelitian ini melibatkan sumber latihan mendengarkan, yaitu buku teks berjudul *Real Listening and Speaking* oleh Miles Craven. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan berpikir kritis termasuk mengidentifikasi situasi dan faktor-faktor yang dapat mempengaruhinya, menemukan dasar untuk penelitian yang disajikan untuk memahami gambaran besar, belajar bagaimana menghindari bias pribadi, dan "mengevaluasi informasi secara objektif," menggunakan pengetahuan untuk membuat kesimpulan logis, dan mencari tahu informasi apa yang paling penting dan relevan dengan situasi. Sementara itu, mengembangkan praktik rasa ingin tahu – mengajukan pertanyaan terbuka dan menindaklanjuti jawaban tidak ditemukan. Keterampilan mendengarkan yang difasilitasi oleh kegiatan ini termasuk menemukan informasi umum, mengidentifikasi tujuan komunikatif, menemukan informasi spesifik, dan membuat kesimpulan. Studi ini secara signifikan memodelkan guru bahasa Inggris untuk merancang latihan pemahaman mendengarkan yang mempromosikan pemahaman mendengarkan siswa dan keterampilan berpikir kritis.*

**Kata kunci:** *kegiatan berpikir kritis; latihan pemahaman mendengarkan; analisis isi*

## INTRODUCTION

Since listening provides language learners with abundant feedback, particularly for speaking, it is essential to learn in language classes. Although listening is the first language skill learned, it is acknowledged in the literature as a "neglected" and "forgotten" language skill (Palmer, 2014). Additionally, it is still considered less important than the other three linguistic abilities (speaking, reading, and writing). On the contrary, one sort of listening ability, listening comprehension, is frequently regarded as the most complex language skill to master. However, students in the English education department are required to learn it as one of their language talents.

Understanding the message substance of spoken texts and the speaker's intention, according to Pan (2016), is the goal of listening comprehension ability. Thus, "attention," "focus," and "understanding" are required. Listening comprehension often follows top-down listening techniques: listening for the gist, key ideas, topic, and setting of the text; listening for specific information; sequencing the material; and making predictions, educated guesses, and inferences (Wah, 2019). Students are mainly required to forecast material, listen for gist, recognize cues, pay attention to details, and infer meaning during listening lessons.

Senthamarai and Chandran (2016) propose that every learning process should train students to think critically. Similarly, according to the Partnership for the Twenty-first

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Century, students must learn not only the art of listening but also the art of critical thought. It has been established that critical thinking is a necessary talent for a thorough education and a prosperous commercial career (Brown et al., 2017). A taught skill, critical thinking requires training and practice. On the other hand, learning environments that encourage critical thinking are undermined by a lack of training, scarce resources, preconceived biases, and time restraints (Snyder & Snyder, 2008). So far in the field, the learning process was commonly still teacher-centered, which meant that students were not being guided to develop their critical-thinking abilities. Because the information was delivered through lectures, the students were not yet given the chance to sharpen their critical thinking abilities. Also, the teachers' test questions continued to be at the level of remembering (C1), understanding (C2), and applying (C3). Critical thinking should be incorporated into the listening activities to obtain those competencies. In actuality, the two abilities are closely related to one another. The TOEFL Listening Comprehension Exam and Critical Thinking Questionnaire have proved that critical skills can considerably improve listening comprehension (Muhammadi & Zare, 2015).

In the same way, Turmudi and Hajan (2020) argue that everyone in the twenty-first Century should be able to think critically since, from a philosophical standpoint, it is one of the learning principles that promote the attainment of high standards in the learning process. Today's workplace requires the ability to think critically to be included in expert judgment. Thus, everyone should be able to master critical thinking skills to compete in the world of work (Trilling Bernie & Fadel Charles, 2009). Everyone can learn critical thinking skills through the educational system because education plays a significant role in forming one's attitudes, knowledge, and abilities.

In their study, Abrami et al. (2015) state that critical thinking is purposeful, self-regulatory judgment consisting of sub-skills such as interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanations or justifications which likely results in a logical conclusion to an argument or solution to a problem. Critical thinkers actively and skillfully conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate information gathered from or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a guide to belief and action. Adult learners are urged to develop critical thinking skills and put them to use in real-world scenarios. Concluding some proposals of the critical thinking definition, Uribe-Enciso et al. (2017) emphasize that the common aspects of critical thinking include cognitive skills

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and values. "Cognitive skills involve interpreting, augmenting, inferring, analyzing, evaluating, making proposals, creating, and making decisions according to the context; seeking relevant and reliable information; being adaptable and flexible about changes, while values cover prudence, humility, intellectual integrity, and empathy." For fostering students' critical thinking while listening, there are three recommendations for teachers. First, make the most of the listening resources, create the task environment, and encourage students' thoughts. Second, encourage the logical growth of thinking based on text analysis. Lastly, use cooperative learning to encourage students to think critically. This process appears more suited to accompany listening activities (Feng & Chen, 2020).

The questioning techniques and the types of questions must be considered to encourage critical thinking. Based on the survey results, Qatipi (2011) reports that for students to reflect on new information and integrate it with prior knowledge, they should be involved in discussions by asking, e.g., What do you see? (leaving enough time for discussion) What do you think? (evaluation): What happened? (knowledge): Why did it happen? (understanding) What do you think would happen later? (analysis): Why do you think so? (synthesis): What would you do instead? (application): What difference do you see? (interpretation). However, designing classroom activities and integrating listening and critical thinking skills at the same time is not an easy task. Therefore, this study explores classroom activities to identify how critical thinking skill activities are integrated with listening comprehension class.

Many researchers have conducted studies related to the topic above. The topic of listening comprehension has been discussed in many studies. Focusing on listening skills, Putri et al. (2018) observed the students' quality of listening skills based on their mastery of listening. Meanwhile, through experimental design, Hudiaty and Sulistyani (2022) discussed teaching listening using research-based learning. Similarly, Krisnoviani Sulistyani (2022) experimented with project-based learning in listening class. Both of the later studies mentioned implicitly expect the students under investigation to develop their critical thinking skills and improve their listening comprehension.

Many researchers also carried out other studies focusing more on critical thinking skills. For example, Ordem (2016) analyzed critical thinking disposition aspects of Turkish

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adult learners in listening and speaking classes. Muhammad (2018) examined the critical thinking skills of critical scholars. Harizaj Hajrulla (2017) discussed strategies for developing students' critical skills. Kakavand (2013) questioned the significant connection between Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability and their critical thinking skills and the statistically significant distinction between the learners with high and low critical thinking ability and their listening comprehension ability. Then, Etemadfar et al. (2020) seek the effects of flipped classrooms on EFL learners' listening comprehension and critical thinking in the flipped classroom model. In the USA, Smith and Rawley (1997) observed critical thinking skills in a TV commercial to teach listening. Their studies mentioned that critical thinking can be developed through listening with several activities. In the previewing stage, students can do activities like determining sequence, concluding, making associations, predicting, seeing cause-and-effect relationships, hypothesizing, and verifying. In the viewing stage, the activities may include making inferences, generalizing and making associations, seeing cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, selecting relevant information, and ignoring irrelevant information. Then, the post-viewing stage activities include checking comprehension, integrating, evaluating, making comparisons, relating information to personal values, and making judgments. It should be noted that viewing here means listening while watching, and the researchers argue that the activities possibly apply to other oral texts.

However, exploring learning activities for both skills in a textbook is still rare. Considering the vital role of a textbook as the medium most teachers use for Teaching and the rarity of the study, this current research aims to fill the gap of the scarcity of exploration of the skills and activities integration. The findings of this study can extend knowledge and understanding of how critical thinking activities are integrated into and support listening comprehension activities. The answers to this question require the researchers to utilize the content analysis method to identify what critical thinking activities are integrated into the listening comprehension exercises in the textbook and how the critical thinking activities facilitate the students' listening comprehension. Therefore, this study questions:

1. How are critical thinking activities integrated into listening activities?
2. How do critical thinking skills facilitate listening comprehension?

## METHOD

### *Design*

This study is a descriptive-qualitative one, excluding calculation and numeration. The information in this study was offered as a description, identification, or analysis of texts that could be found in English textbooks. This research was designated "analysis research" because it dealt with textbook analysis. This study applied a content analysis design. This design is a research method for analyzing textual documents and inferring context from data that can be repeated and accurate (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2014). To put it another way, content or document analysis is a technique for looking through written or visual data to identify specific traits of materials.

By quickly coding the critical thinking and listening activities found in the text, the analysis concentrated on the content or contextual meaning of the learning tasks or instructions. The textual information was in print and taken from a textbook. The researchers verbally inferred and described the original texts to help readers better grasp them.

### *Research object*

In determining the data to be investigated, the data selection was carried out using purposive or judgmental sampling. This is a kind of nonrandom sampling that was selected randomly. The methodology and topic were considered when choosing the sample approach, not the need for the results to be generalizable. Purposive sampling is a type of qualitative sampling that best represents the research topic (Creswell, 2015). The objects of analysis in this study were texts in the textbook "Real Listening and Speaking 3." Among the fifteen units presented in the textbook, five were selected to balance having just enough data for a complete analysis so that findings were not constrained and having too much data so that the coding process became too laborious and heavy to produce valuable and beneficial results.

### *Instrument and data collecting technique*

As this research is qualitative, the researchers served as essential research instruments. In qualitative research, the researcher as an instrument is an accepted and acceptable stance (Xu & Storr, 2012), whereby with this discovery-oriented research instrument, the researchers performed a crucial role in getting information from the data sources. The

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researchers expressed the study goal, chose an object as a data source, compiled the data, determined the quality of the data, analyzed and interpreted the data, and produced a conclusion about the results. The second tool was a list of codes or categories to be used in further coding. Words or themes, word senses, phrases, or entire sentences all fall under one of these categories or codes. After being coded, the textual data are analyzed, and the analysis findings are presented (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003).

Following Ur (1984) and Rost (2016), the study identified listening comprehension exercises such as answering questions, completion, true-false, ordering, error recognition and correction, following instructions, problem-solving, note-taking, gap-filling, conversing, summarizing, retelling, rewriting, and discussion. A listening lesson is commonly broken down into three stages: pre-listening, listening, and post-listening. In the study about the exploration of cognitive thinking activities through listening to TV commercials conducted by Smith and Rawley (1997), it is found that pre-listening involved critical thinking activities such as determining sequence, drawing conclusions, making associations, predicting, seeing cause-and-effect relationships, and hypothesizing and verifying. In the listening stage, the critical thinking activities included making inferences, generalizing and making associations, seeing cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, selecting relevant information, and ignoring irrelevant information. Then, in post-listening, students checked their comprehension by integrating, evaluating, making comparisons, relating information to personal values, and making judgments. For this current study, the researchers argue that those critical thinking activities also apply to other listening materials, depending on the tasks or instructions designed in the textbook.

Here are the steps in collecting the data:

1. Preparing the data. In this case, the researchers chose that particular textbook as the data source because it was used as a learning source of listening comprehension. In this book, the learning task or instructions for critical thinking activities integrated into listening comprehension activities emerged.
2. Determining the data. To determine the data, the researchers focused on the well-known, internationally published book and decided to take Real Listening and Speaking 3.
3. Selecting the data. In selecting the data, the researchers sorted five units, namely units



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one up to five, with the effectiveness consideration that those units could represent other units in terms of the intended data.

4. Reading the textbook comprehensively. To answer the research problem of this study, reading comprehensively made it easier for the researchers to analyze the instructions or learning task contents. At the same time, the researcher also made note of utterances or sentences that contained learning tasks or instructions.

***Data analysis technique and interpretation***

The data in this study were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. With a directed approach, the analysis started with relevant research findings to guide initial codes. According to Cohen et al. (2007), content analysis has eleven steps. This study, however, just used five appropriate steps for this research: relational content analysis. This research did not need to count the frequency of emerging data or perform statistical analysis. However, the researchers kept close to the text, used the words themselves, and described what was evident in the text (Berg, 2001).

At the beginning of the study, the research questions were determined to be addressed by the content analysis. The research questions addressed in the content analysis method included what critical thinking activities are integrated into the listening comprehension exercises and how the critical thinking activities facilitate the students' listening comprehension. The answers to these questions are considered necessary for teachers because they provide crucial information about providing students with appropriate classroom activities that align with the learning objectives. Then, the samples to be included were determined. The samples of this study were texts and five units of listening comprehension exercises in a published book entitled *Real Listening and Speaking 3*. The researchers chose learning activities in the textbook randomly, and the data were analyzed in detail and systematically. After that, the units of analysis were determined. The researchers developed the data using sampling units as the units of analysis in the form of learning activities or instructions. In general, a natural choice for the units of analysis was in the form of sentences, paragraphs, words, and whole texts that were presented verbally (Gavora, 2015).



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Thus, the researcher identified the utterances or sentences that contained instructions or learning tasks for critical thinking activities. Next, the categories for analysis were constructed. The researchers organized the data that was found based on types or classifications comprising the listening comprehension exercises and critical thinking learning activities. This was done by examining the data and comparing it to the previous studies. The data comparison was followed by some interpretation, which led to a conclusion. Lastly, summarizing was to summarize the research findings. The researchers wrote down the summary in paragraphs as the result of their research. Then, the arrangements in this result were set systematically to answer the research problems of this study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Results*

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), which in this case focuses on Learning and Innovation Skills (LIS), invites change and care to change the Teaching, learning, and assessment contained in teaching materials with 21st-century skills, or the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), in this case focusing on critical thinking and problem-solving, communications, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. Students will require all these talents to succeed in life today and in the future (Trilling Bernie & Fadel Charles, 2009).

Furthermore, it must be integrated with listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as linguistic components of grammar, vocabulary, language awareness, and language for culture. This study explores the existence of critical thinking activities in listening comprehension exercises in the textbook and how those activities facilitate students' listening comprehension. The following is a description of each of them:

#### **a. Critical thinking activities integrated with listening activities**

The following table reveals the existence of critical thinking activities in listening comprehension exercises in the textbook. The critical thinking activities are distributed in the three listening stages: pre-listening, while listening, and post-listening, with their specific activities and locations, as seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: Critical thinking activities, listening activities, and data location**

Critical thinking activities	Listening activities	Data Location
<b>PRE-LISTENING</b>		
Drawing conclusions	grouping	U3
making associations	matching	U3; U4
	ticking relevant information	U3
	answering question	U5
predicting	grouping	U1; U4
seeing cause and effect relationships	answering choice and open-ended question	U2
hypothesizing and verifying	answering question	U3
<b>WHILST LISTENING</b>		
making inferences	answering questions	U1 (B1); U3(A1)
	true-false	U1(B2); U4(C); U5(A2)
	completion	U2(E1); U3(A2)
Generalizing and making associations	adding expression	U1(A3)
	completion	U1(E3)
Seeing cause and effect	answering questions	U1(E2)
comparing and contrasting	matching	U1(A1), (E1); U2(A2), (B2); U3(D1); U5(C1)
	grouping	U2(A1)
	gap-filling	U2(E2)
	true-false	U3(D2)
	completion	U3(F1)
	note-taking	U5(A1)
selecting relevant information and ignoring irrelevant information	ticking relevant information	U1(A2); U2(B1); U3(A3), (C1)
	error recognition/correction	U4(A2)
	note taking	U5(C2)
<b>POST LISTENING</b>		
checking comprehension	summarizing	U4
Integrating	conversing	U1; U2
	answering questions	U3
	retelling	U5
Relating information to personal values	answering open-ended question	U5

Notes:  
U = Unit

**Pre-listening**

Analyzing the critical thinking activities integrated into the listening comprehension skill in the Real Listening and Speaking Three book, it is found that this book has covered several critical thinking activities. Those activities are distributed in all chapters or units under

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analysis. Such activities shown in pre-activities are: first, drawing conclusions, which are presented as grouping adjectives into positive and negative adjectives in unit 3. Second, making associations in which learners are asked to match words with their pictures (unit 3) and words with their definitions (unit 4). Besides matching, making associations is also presented through ticking relevant information and answering questions. Third, predict where learners should group the expressions into three categories by writing one if the expressions are for starting a conversation, 2 for trying to end a conversation, and 3 for saying goodbye (Unit 1). In unit 4, learners group the expressions that customers and shop assistants speak. Fourth, learners see cause-and-effect relationships, found in Unit 2, by answering choice and open-ended questions about choosing a restaurant and asking what to eat when going out for a meal. Then, hypothesizing and verifying by answering questions about the critical factors when choosing a home to live in (unit 3).

***Whilst listening***

In the while-listening activity, there are four critical thinking activities: making inferences, generalizing and making associations, comparing and contrasting, selecting relevant information, and ignoring irrelevant information.

The activity of making inferences, found in Unit 1, is in the form of questions about the implied general message of a friendly chat between two people. In unit 3, the students' questions concern two people having a phone conversation about the requirements of renting a house. In this activity, students have to answer two questions whose answers, like in Unit 1, are not explicitly stated by both speakers. Besides answering questions, students are also asked whether the statements about the spoken messages are true or false. The statements relate to a friendly chat (Unit 1), understanding shop policy (Unit 4), and a film review (Unit 5). The other listening activity that represents making inferences is completion (units 2 and 3). In unit 2, part E1, the task is to listen to a review of two restaurants and then complete the two incomplete notes using some clues from the reviewer. The completion task in Unit 3, Part A2, is about client requirements that should be fulfilled when renting a property at Property Management Ltd.

Generalizing and making associations is the second critical thinking activity while listening. This critical thinking activity is realized by adding expressions and completion activities found in Unit 1. Students should listen to several conversations and add any more

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expressions to the list of expressions they have heard. This allows students to generalize and associate the expressions with their real-world knowledge. The completion activity is another realization of generalizing and making associations because, after listening to several conversations, students are to complete a table with two categories of expressions: agree and disagree with someone.

The third critical thinking activity is comparing and contrasting through matching, grouping, gap-filling, true-false, completion, and note-taking. The Matching activity appears in most units, such as unit 1, parts A1 and E1. Unit 2, parts A2 and B2; and unit 5, C1. In unit 1, students match pictures with expressions based on the spoken text they hear and match the conversations with the provided topics. In Unit 2, they should match the questions with their replies and the complaint expressions with their responses. In unit 5, they should match the speakers' descriptions with the words corresponding to the descriptions they hear. The last activity is selecting relevant information and ignoring irrelevant information. This activity is shown by ticking relevant information in Unit 1, Part A2, Unit 2, Part B1, Unit 3, Part A3 and C1, error recognition and correction in Unit 4, Part A2, and note-taking in Unit 5, Part C2. In unit 1A2, the instruction is for students to listen to the conversation again and then tick the expressions they hear in the previous section. In Unit 2 B1, students are instructed to tick the dishes described while listening to the waitress describe the dishes served by Café Filberto in Roma. Unit 3 A3 assigns students to listen to the second half of the conversation in which they have listened to the first half previously and tick the property the speaker decides to go and see. Another similar activity is in Unit 3 C1, where students tick off the questions the speaker answers.

Error recognition and correction are indicated by asking students to listen and circle the mistakes in the complaint form. Note-taking is found by asking students to underline any words and phrases that help them identify the type of program while listening to the TV program description.

***Post listening***

Post-listening is the last lesson structure in which students can extend listening activities. At this stage, they can connect the knowledge acquired from the main activity to a real-world application. Existing in this phase are checking comprehension through

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summarizing (U5) and integrating comprehension into productive activities such as conversation, answering questions, and retelling. Besides, students can also relate information to personal values through open-ended questions.

***b. The way Critical thinking skills facilitate listening comprehension***

Critical listening asks the listener not only for comprehension of the message but also for evaluation. In developing critical listening comprehension, we are building critical thinking. Using critical thinking in listening might include analyzing a message to identify gaps in logic and reasoning, identifying and analyzing speaker bias, distinguishing between fact and opinion, and detecting propaganda techniques. The five essential components of the critical thinking process include hypothesis identification, inductive and deductive thinking, and conclusion explanation and evaluation. Listening comprehension is the ability to comprehend the speakers' utterance by identifying what others are saying in English, which includes (1) recognizing the communicative goal, (2) finding the explicit information; (3) discovering the implicit information; (5) describing the meaning of words or expressions in a text (contextual meaning); and (6) explaining the reference to a pronoun in a text (Buck, 2001).

Most listening comprehension exercises have questions. They aim to identify a central idea or infer information about a topic. It is the information gathering mode: students practice listening to gather the information to answer the questions. What has been found in the book under investigation can be seen in the table below.

***Table 2: Critical thinking activities, Listening activities, Listening comprehension, and Data Location***

<b>Critical thinking activities</b>	<b>Listening activities</b>	<b>Listening comprehension</b>	<b>Data location</b>
making inferences	answering questions	Listening for gist	U1(B1); U3A1
	true-false	Listening for details	U1(B2); U4(C); U3D2
	completion	Inferring meaning	U5(A1)
Generalizing and making associations	adding expression	Listening for details	U1A3
	completion	Listening for details	U2A3
Seeing cause and effect	answering questions	Inferring meaning, listening for details	U1E2; U4A1
comparing and contrasting	matching	Listening for detail	U2A2; U2B2; U3A3;

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Critical thinking activities	Listening activities	Listening comprehension	Data location
			U3C1; U3D1;
	grouping	Listening For Details	U3F
	gap-filling	Listening for details	
	true-false	Listening Making inference	U5A2
	completion	Listening for detail	U2E2; U3A2
selecting relevant information and ignoring irrelevant information	ticking relevant information	Predicting content; listening selectively	U2A1, U2B1
	error recognition/correction	Listening for detail	U4A2

**Discussion**

Correct thinking in the search for relevant and accurate knowledge about the world is what critical thinking entails. Reasonable, introspective, responsible, and skillful thinking centered on deciding what to believe or do is another way to characterize it. The present study's findings suggest that all critical thinking skills—making inferences, generalizing and making associations, seeing cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, selecting relevant information, and ignoring irrelevant information—exist and are integrated into most of the listening activities in the text. The listening activities primarily include answering questions, completing, true-false, error recognition and correction, and gap-filling.

The textbook acknowledges that a persistent objective in education is the development of students' critical thinking abilities. The existence of the critical thinking activities in the textbook can help remedy the problem stated by Brown et al. (2017), that one of the most significant flaws in many educational systems is the poor instruction of critical thinking abilities. Students who rarely present a unique viewpoint, a personal opinion, or supporting data are guided by the available activities in the book. In light of this fact, the lack of critical thinking that might have impacted the workforce and a person's capacity for leadership, for example, should not be worried about.

This result emphasizes the significant position of critical thinking in education and is in concurrence with previous studies. The finding is consistent with past studies by Smith and Rawley (1997), which mention various possible critical thinking and listening activities. This also supports Senthamarai and Chandran (2016), whose argument states that critical thinking

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is an essential element of learning, whether it comes from modern philosophers or ancient philosophers. They also said that educating students' thinking skills aims to help them grasp and accept concepts rationally. The finding also strengthens the conclusion made by Muhammad (2018) that, being transformative and formative, critical thinking establishes logical norms and aids in negotiating the connections between our thoughts, reading, and listening abilities. It can be said that the listening activities being observed are designed to improve students' critical thinking.

To become critical through listening practice, as one study found, students usually listen, fill in blank spaces, and draw conclusions (Harizaj & Hijrulla, 2017). This study confirms the close relationship between critical thinking skills and listening ability, in which students filled in the blanks, true or false, and multiple choice activities (Etemadfar et al., 2020). In addition, they also measured learners' listening ability through activities like note-taking, summarizing, questioning, paraphrasing, researching, inferencing, discussing, classifying, outlining, comparing and contrasting, distinguishing, synthesizing, and inductive and deductive reasoning, in which some of those activities, such as note-taking, summarizing, questioning, inferencing, and comparing and contrasting, appear in the textbook observed. This means that both skills are practically applicable in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, for most L2 students, strong critical thinking is not an innate or natural skill but can be taught to them through efficient educational approaches. Subject matter and critical thinking abilities are not mutually exclusive but complementary (Uribe-Enciso et al., 2017).

The textbook *Real Listening and Speaking 3* has provided clear examples of their application; however, the listening activities such as following instructions, conversing, and rewriting proposed by Ur (1984) are not found in the listening section in the five coursebook units selected. Instead, they are probably used for post-listening activities in other units not included in this study.

The analysis of the results indicated that the textbook has provided activities in which students have the opportunity to learn listening comprehension and develop critical thinking skills. The result demonstrates that because critical thinking activities are used in integration with listening comprehension exercises, it can be understood that critical thinking activities



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facilitate students' listening comprehension (Mohammadi & Zare, 2015). In short, the comprehension process involves critical thinking skills.

The present study investigated the existence of and how critical thinking activities facilitate students' listening comprehension in the listening textbook. It signified that critical thinking skills can be integrated and developed through language learning, specifically to support the development of listening comprehension. The result of this study revealed that the textbook contains the skill practices required by students to prepare for workplace demands. Listening is the most frequently used language skill in the classroom. Many studies specified that efficient listening skills were more important than reading skills as a factor contributing to academic success.

The present study's findings revealed that critical thinking activities exist and are significantly integrated with listening comprehension exercises. The integration of critical thinking activities into listening exercises in the textbook should be maintained, if not strengthened, because both skills are not only essential for students to perform well in school but also needed in future workplaces, social, and interpersonal contexts where, especially with critical thinking, appropriate decisions are to be made carefully and independently daily. Thus, textbook designers should focus more on critical thinking rather than just using learning strategies. When critical thinking becomes part of ongoing education, it makes students more successful and helps them successfully integrate into society (Fahim & Komijani, 2010). Considering these benefits, providing opportunities to promote critical thinking skills is essential.

The current study's pedagogical implications could be valuable, usable, and practical for syllabus designers, material creators, language teachers, and students. The results of this study indicated that listening comprehension exercises are well integrated with critical thinking tasks. It may be inferred that using critical thinking techniques would accelerate and deepen the learning of listening comprehension for EFL students.

This study exhorts language teachers, curriculum creators, and syllabus designers to consider critical thinking as one of the key components for academic and professional success. It is advised that syllabus designers and material producers create textbooks that regard critical thinking as one of the influential factors for academic and professional success

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to educate students who can efficiently utilize critical thinking abilities. Students will be educated and equipped with analytical skills that help them perform well if courses are specifically designed to encourage students' critical thinking and increase their strategic intent.

There are several limitations to this study. These limitations include the data, which only contains qualitative data. Both qualitative and quantitative data are required To reach a more decisive conclusion. Another limitation is the object of the study, which was only one book published for general English learners. The samples being analyzed were limited to five units, from unit one to unit five, which perhaps did not represent the whole unit completely. Also, this study was not followed by looking at the classroom practices, which demonstrate the implementation of the activities designed in the textbook.

Future research can include a quantitative approach for more accurate decisions. In future studies, more detailed data on integrating critical thinking activities and listening comprehension exercises should be collected to discover whether incorporating such learning activity patterns emerges in other textbooks. Based on the content analysis, this study looked into critical thinking and listening comprehension integration in five units of the textbook; a larger sample size can be included, and another area of interest is looking into the integration of other 21st-century skills and other language skills as well as their implementation in language classrooms. Other possible research includes comparing this textbook with other textbooks by different designers.

## CONCLUSION

### *Conclusion*

The present study was designed to answer how critical thinking activities are integrated into listening comprehension exercises in the textbook Real Listening and Speaking 3. The answers to this question require the researchers to utilize the content analysis method to identify what critical thinking activities are integrated into the listening comprehension exercises in the textbook and how the critical thinking activities facilitate the students' listening comprehension. One of the more significant findings from this study is that most critical thinking activities mentioned by Smith and Rawley (1997) are well integrated into

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listening activities. The critical thinking activities identified in the textbook also facilitate the process of students' listening comprehension. This means that developing students' critical thinking and listening comprehension can go hand in hand. Moreover, critical thinking skills contribute to enhanced listening comprehension.

***Limitation***

This observational study has a potential bias in the research results. Content analysis data tend to be nominal; however, this study did not include descriptive statistics processes such as counting percentages, means, modes, and medians. Therefore, the frequency of the emergence of the unit data cannot be measured. In addition, the study's sample size is small, so this content analysis still needs repetition of measurements and procedures for the same material to know whether the results show similar conclusions.

***Implication***

The findings from this study make several contributions to the current literature. Critical thinking in human communication aids in developing intellectual norms and instruments for analyzing comprehension, allowing critical academics to investigate, construct, critique, and combine complicated concepts and sophisticated texts. By listening as well as critical thinking, the critical learner is better equipped to analyze, produce, and comprehend increasingly complicated information, ideas, and evidence.

Further investigation and experimentation into the exploitation of critical thinking skills in other language teaching and learning elements is strongly recommended. Several possible future studies using the same design are apparent. It would be interesting to assess the implementation of critical thinking and listening skills and the student's achievements in their practice.

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