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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH READING INSTRUCTION WITH CRITICAL READING ABILITY AND CRITICAL THINKING OF ENGLISH LANGUANGE TEACHING FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL STUDIES LANCANG KUNING UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores whether reading instruction alone is sufficient to develop higher-order thinking skills—specifically Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking—among second-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning (UNILAK). The research aims to examine the relationship between Reading Instruction and these two cognitive outcomes using a quantitative correlational research design. Data were analyzed through Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), with Reading Instruction as the independent variable and Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking as dependent variables. Prior to analysis, instrument validity, reliability, and statistical assumptions—including normality and linearity—were tested and confirmed. The MANOVA results revealed no statistically significant multivariate effect of Reading Instruction on either Critical Reading Ability or Critical Thinking ($p > 0.05$, Wilks' Lambda), indicating that conventional reading instruction, in isolation, may not substantially contribute to the enhancement of students' critical competencies. These findings suggest that while reading remains a core component of English language education, it should be supported by pedagogical strategies that emphasize interaction, reflection, and inquiry. The study underscores the importance of integrating critical literacy practices, collaborative learning, and problem-based activities to better promote the development of higher-order thinking skills in EFL contexts. Implications for curriculum design and teacher training are also discussed, advocating for a shift from traditional instruction toward more dynamic and student-centered learning approaches.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a foundational skill in language learning, particularly within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where it plays a central role in supporting vocabulary development, grammatical understanding, and the cultivation of higher-order thinking skills. In higher education, especially for English Education majors, students are expected not only to comprehend texts but also to engage in critical reading and thinking, which are essential for academic achievement and professional teaching competencies.

However, reading instruction in many EFL settings, including at Universitas Lancang Kuning (UNILAK), remains heavily reliant on traditional methods that focus on literal comprehension, vocabulary exercises, and factual recall. Such approaches often fail to promote the analytical and reflective skills needed for deeper textual engagement. As a result, students frequently struggle to interpret complex texts, question assumptions, and construct well-reasoned responses. These instructional limitations hinder the development of critical reading and critical thinking—two interrelated skills that are vital for effective academic performance and responsible teaching practice.

To address these gaps, this study proposes a shift toward more student-centered pedagogies, particularly the Reader Response Approach, which emphasizes personal engagement, collaborative interpretation, and reflective discussion. Grounded in constructivist learning theory, this approach positions students as active participants in meaning-making and fosters both comprehension and critical thought. While promising in theory, its effectiveness in Indonesian EFL contexts remains under-researched, particularly in collaborative settings.

This study investigates the relationship between English reading instruction and the development of critical reading ability and critical thinking among second-semester English Education students at UNILAK. By examining the pedagogical impact of reading instruction methods, particularly those that prioritize active engagement and reflection, this research aims to contribute empirical evidence and practical insights for improving reading curricula in higher education.

2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative correlational approach to examine the relationship between English reading instruction and two cognitive outcomes: critical reading ability and critical thinking. The research focused on second-semester students enrolled in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning. These students had completed foundational reading courses and were selected using a saturated sampling technique, in which the entire population of students enrolled in the *Active Reading* course was included to ensure representativeness and reliability.

The research was conducted over a three-month period, from March to May 2025, encompassing all stages from proposal development to data collection and analysis. The instruments used in this study included a reading instruction questionnaire, a critical reading ability test, and a critical thinking test. The reading instruction questionnaire was designed based on bottom-up and top-down processing theories, capturing aspects such as decoding, vocabulary, grammar, background knowledge, and text structure. The critical reading test measured students' ability to interpret, analyze, and evaluate text content beyond its literal meaning. Meanwhile, the critical thinking test assessed higher-order cognitive skills, including reasoning, judgment, systems thinking, and problem-solving.

Instrument validity was assessed using Pearson Product Moment correlations to ensure each item accurately reflected the intended constructs. Reliability was measured through Cronbach's Alpha to confirm internal consistency. Data collection involved administering the

tests and questionnaires directly to the participants, followed by statistical analysis using SPSS software.

Before hypothesis testing, the data underwent prerequisite assumption testing, including normality and linearity tests. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the central tendencies and distribution of the data, while inferential analysis was conducted using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). This analysis allowed the researcher to determine whether reading instruction had a statistically significant effect on critical reading ability and critical thinking, both simultaneously and independently. The results were further interpreted through p-values, regression coefficients, and coefficient of determination to assess the strength and direction of the relationships. This comprehensive methodological framework was designed to ensure valid, reliable, and meaningful results in evaluating the impact of reading instruction on higher-order thinking skills in an EFL context.

3. FINDINGS

This study investigated the relationship between English Reading Instruction and two cognitive outcomes: Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking, among second-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning. The research aimed to answer whether reading instruction significantly influences students' development of higher-order thinking skills. To address this, the researchers administered validated questionnaires and tests, followed by descriptive and inferential statistical analyses using SPSS software.

3.1. Description of the Data

Analysis of the test results for Critical Reading Ability demonstrated that the majority of students performed at a high level, with the mean score exceeding the theoretical average. This suggests that students were generally capable of engaging with texts beyond surface-level understanding—such as identifying central themes, drawing inferences, and distinguishing between fact and opinion. However, a few test items, notably those assessing character comparison and language accuracy at the sentence level, showed weaker correlations with the overall construct. This inconsistency indicates that while most students performed well, some aspects of the test may require revision to ensure alignment with critical reading constructs.

Similarly, the assessment of Critical Thinking revealed strong performance overall, with most students falling into the high or very high categories. Nonetheless, a few test items—particularly those measuring peer interaction and motivational engagement—had relatively lower correlations with the total scale. These findings suggest that although students scored highly, certain test items may not have fully captured the intended dimensions of critical thinking.The Reading Instruction questionnaire, composed of items representing both bottom-up and top-down reading strategies, yielded a moderately high reliability score. Most students perceived their instructional experiences positively, indicating consistent exposure to structured reading activities. The item-total correlations confirmed that nearly all items contributed meaningfully to the scale, suggesting that the instrument is valid for capturing students' perceptions of reading instruction.

311. Reading Instruction With Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking of English Students

In this section, we conduct a mutiple linear correlation analysis, incorporating three distinct variables. The experimental design incorporates one independent variables (Reading Instruction) and two dependent variables (Critical Reading And Critical Thinking). Before researchers can employ multiple linear regression analysis

to evaluate research hypotheses, the regression model must meet several characteristics. Researchers employ two assumption tests for regression requirements, including: normality test and linearity test.

To test the hypothesis regarding the relationship between one independent variable and multiple dependent variables simultaneously, the researcher conducted a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). This statistical method is appropriate when the aim is to examine whether an independent variable significantly influences more than one dependent variable at the same time.

In the present study, the independent variable is Reading Instruction, while the two dependent variables are Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether different levels or types of reading instruction have a significant multivariate effect on students' performance in both critical reading and critical thinking skills.

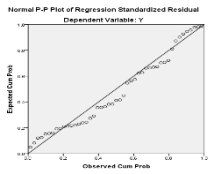
3.2. Normality Test

Table1. Of Normality and Figure of Normality

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Reading Instruction	,123	40	,133	,964	40	,234
Critical Reading Ability	,192	40	<,001	,916	40	,006
Critical Thinking	,129	40	,091	,916	40	,006

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



(**a**) (**b**)

Table 1. This study employed a statistical analysis to test the hypothesis. The present study implements product moment correlation and multiple linear regression analysis techniques. Prior to the analysis of data, it is imperative that the data meet the requirements of the analysis test used. The method employed in the normality test utilises the Shapiro Wilk method, leveraging the IBM Statistics SPSS 27 application program with the One-Sample Shapiro Wilk Test formula.

The results of the normality test can also be observed in the Normal P-Plot image below. It should be noted that the normality assumption referred to in the classical assumption of the regression standardized residual approach is that of residuals formed by a linear regression model that is normally distributed. In the event that residuals are found to be non-normal or non-Gaussian, the Normal P-Plot approach may be utilized by examining the distribution of points in the image.

3.3. Linearity Test

Table 2. Linearity Test

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Critical Reading * Reading Instruction	Between Groups	(Combined)	206,092	16	12,881	,981	,505
		Linearity	,017	1	,017	,001	,971
		Deviation from Linearity	206,075	15	13,738	1,047	,449
	Within Groups		301,883	23	13,125		
	Total		507,975	39			
Critical Thinking * Reading Instruction	Between Groups	(Combined)	337,675	16	21,105	1,293	,280
		Linearity	11,338	1	11,338	,695	,413
		Deviation from Linearity	326,337	15	21,756	1,333	,260
	Within Groups		375,300	23	16,317		
	Total		712,975	39			

The results of the linearity test further support the validity of the regression analysis by confirming that the relationships among the studied variables adhere to the assumption of linearity. Specifically, the deviation of linearity between Critical Thinking and Reading Instruction was found to be 0.260, which is greater than the threshold value of 0.05. This result indicates that the relationship between students'

critical thinking skills and the reading instruction they receive is linear in nature, and thus meets the basic assumptions required for conducting linear regression analysis.

Likewise, the deviation of linearity between Critical Reading Ability and Reading Instruction was recorded at 0.449, which also exceeds the 0.05 significance level. This suggests that the pattern of association between students' ability to read critically and the type of reading instruction implemented in the classroom is also consistent with a linear relationship. Therefore, both sets of results provide strong statistical evidence that the linearity assumption is satisfied for these variable pairs, allowing for further parametric analysis to be carried out with confidence.

3.4. Manova Test

Table 3. Multivariat Test

Multivariate Tests[a]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	,988	987,913[b]	2,000	25,000	<,001
	Wilks' Lambda	,012	987,913[b]	2,000	25,000	<,001
	Hotelling's Trace	79,033	987,913[b]	2,000	25,000	<,001
	Roy's Largest Root	79,033	987,913[b]	2,000	25,000	<,001
X	Pillai's Trace	,664	,994	26,000	52,000	,492
	Wilks' Lambda	,442	,969[b]	26,000	50,000	,522
	Hotelling's Trace	1,021	,943	26,000	48,000	,554
	Roy's Largest Root	,654	1,308[c]	13,000	26,000	,270

a. Design: Intercept + X

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

In the present study, the independent variable is Reading Instruction, while the two dependent variables are Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether different levels or types of reading instruction have a significant multivariate effect on students' performance in both critical reading and critical thinking skills.

The multivariate analysis was conducted to examine whether the independent variable, Reading Instruction (X), had a statistically significant effect on the two dependent variables: Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking. The results are presented in Table 4.6, which displays the outcomes of several multivariate tests, including Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root.

As shown in the table, the significance values (Sig.) for all four tests related to the independent variable X are greater than 0.05 (Pillai's Trace = 0.492, Wilks' Lambda = 0.522, Hotelling's Trace = 0.554, Roy's Largest Root = 0.270). These values indicate that there is no statistically significant multivariate effect of Reading Instruction on the combined dependent variables. In other words, the differences in students' Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking cannot be attributed to variations in the Reading Instruction variable.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study address a crucial gap in the literature concerning the effectiveness of English reading instruction in promoting higher-order thinking skills—specifically, critical reading and critical thinking—among English Education students in Indonesian universities. While numerous prior studies have explored the effects of general literacy programs or isolated critical thinking interventions, few have examined the direct relationship between structured reading instruction and critical outcomes within the

context of local tertiary education. This study, situated at Universitas Lancang Kuning (UNILAK), provides new empirical insights into this intersection.

The study revealed that although the research instruments for measuring Reading Instruction, Critical Reading Ability, and Critical Thinking demonstrated acceptable reliability, the multivariate analysis showed no statistically significant effect of reading instruction on either dependent variable. The direction of the relationship was positive, suggesting a potential link, but the effect size was too small to be considered statistically meaningful ($p > 0.05$). In essence, while students who experienced more extensive reading instruction tended to perform better in critical reading and thinking, the relationship was weak and inconsistent across the sample.

These results are consistent with emerging scholarship emphasizing that reading instruction, in its conventional form, may not be sufficient to stimulate critical thinking unless it incorporates deeper pedagogical engagement. For instance, Zhao and Zhou (2022) found that critical literacy-based reading instruction only enhanced students' critical thinking when problem-posing and text-based discussions were integrated into classroom practice. Similarly, Marcellino (2019) observed that Indonesian EFL reading classes frequently operate at literal and inferential levels, rarely extending into evaluation or critique. Widodo et al. (2021) also emphasized the necessity of dialogic teaching and genre-based pedagogy to foster students' interpretive and evaluative skills.

Given these findings, the lack of significant results in the current study may be attributed to the nature of reading instruction applied in the observed context—one that potentially emphasized comprehension and recall over analysis and reflection. While the instructional design may have succeeded in building foundational literacy skills, it appears insufficient in fostering the cognitive complexity required for critical engagement with texts.

Several external factors may also explain the low statistical power of the relationship. First, students' intrinsic motivation and prior exposure to analytical tasks could vary widely, affecting their capacity to engage critically with reading materials. Second, instructors' pedagogical approaches—particularly the extent to which they employ student-centered or inquiry-based methods—play a critical role in shaping classroom interaction and cognitive engagement. Third, the cognitive demands embedded in classroom assessments and tasks may not challenge students enough to activate higher-order thinking processes.

Despite the absence of statistically significant outcomes, the study presents important pedagogical implications. The positive, albeit weak, direction of the relationship suggests that reading instruction holds latent potential for contributing to students' cognitive development—if it is refined and delivered through more targeted and interactive strategies. Educators are encouraged to redesign reading instruction by integrating critical questioning techniques, collaborative reading discussions, and issue-driven assignments. Such approaches could transform reading from a passive, comprehension-focused activity into a dynamic process of interpretation, debate, and reflective inquiry.

Furthermore, these findings underscore the urgency of rethinking reading pedagogy in teacher preparation programs. For English Education students who will eventually take on the role of educators, mastery of critical thinking is not merely a personal academic goal—it is a professional imperative. If future teachers lack experience in critical reading and thinking, they are unlikely to foster these skills in their own classrooms.

To build upon the insights generated by this study, future research should consider expanding the scope of analysis. Studies involving larger and more diverse samples across multiple institutions would enhance generalizability. Longitudinal research designs could reveal the developmental trajectory of students' critical thinking in relation to sustained instructional exposure. Additionally, examining mediating variables such as teacher competence, student attitudes, and the nature of classroom discourse would provide a more

nuanced understanding of how reading instruction interacts with the broader learning environment.

In conclusion, while this study did not establish a statistically significant relationship between reading instruction and critical reading or thinking skills, it sheds light on the complex interplay between instructional practice and cognitive development. The findings call for a shift in reading pedagogy—from traditional models that emphasize recall and comprehension toward approaches that prioritize interpretation, analysis, and dialogue. For institutions like UNILAK, such transformation is key to preparing critically literate educators equipped for the demands of 21st-century classrooms.

4. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between Reading Instruction and two cognitive outcomes: Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking, among second-semester students in the English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Education and Vocational Studies, Universitas Lancang Kuning (UNILAK). The research employed a quantitative correlation method using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to analyze the influence of a single independent variable (Reading Instruction) on two dependent variables (Critical Reading Ability and Critical Thinking).

The analysis was supported by preliminary tests for instrument reliability and classical assumptions including normality and linearity. All instruments—covering Reading Instruction, Critical Reading Ability, and Critical Thinking—were confirmed to be reliable and valid. The assumption tests indicated that the data were normally distributed and the relationships between variables were linear, satisfying the prerequisites for the Data test.

This study contributes to the field of English Language Education by providing empirical evidence on the limitations of conventional reading instruction in fostering higher-order thinking skills. It underscores the importance of integrating critical literacy and reflective pedagogies into reading programs to better prepare students—particularly those in teacher education—to become critical readers and thinkers. Furthermore, the findings highlight the need for curriculum designers and instructors in English education programs to re-evaluate instructional approaches, ensuring they not only develop linguistic competence but also support students' cognitive and analytical growth. This research thus offers a valuable foundation for advancing more comprehensive, thought-provoking, and learner-centered reading instruction models within English Language Education Faculty of education and vocational at Lancang Kuning University.

In summary, the study concludes that while Reading Instruction is an integral part of English language education, it may not have a significant multivariate impact on students' development of critical reading and thinking skills without complementary teaching strategies and learning environments.

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