Exploring Dialogic Pedagogy through Students' Voices: Unlocking Critical Thinking Potential

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Abstract
Higher education has to elevate its graduate's vital ability of critical thinking which is one of the competencies of the 21st century. Detailing from the name, dialogic pedagogy (DP) serves the purpose of enhancing the critical thinking of students by enabling interactions that require critical evaluation, looking at alternative views, and making sense collaboratively. Prior research on dialogic pedagogy and critical thinking has mostly focused on the experiences of educators, how it is incorporated into curriculum and learning, and the perspectives of educators. This study, thus, tries to challenge this gap by examining how university students perceive the influence of DP on critical thinking abilities, acknowledging its significance for graduates. A qualitative approach was used with an open-ended questionnaire given to 28 private university students in Malang who had directly engaged in dialogic pedagogy. The data was then analyzed by interpreting the result of the questionnaire. Moreover, NVivo application was used to manage, explore, find patterns, and visualize the data. The results, in general, indicated that students have positive experiences with dialogic pedagogy, such as deeper understanding, increased participation, and improved critical thinking skills. In addition, they get to share ideas, comprehend different points of view, and develop well-reasoned arguments. Nevertheless, they also face some challenges, such as language proficiency, unfamiliar topics, and lack of confidence. These findings imply that lecturers or teachers should integrate dialogic pedagogy in the teaching-learning process to build engaging, supportive, and dynamic learning environment that improves students' critical thinking.
Key words: critical thinking, dialogic pedagogy, students' perception, discussion, higher education

Introduction

In higher education, critical thinking is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of academic success and lifelong learning. Critical thinking is one of the most important real-life competencies (Ayçiçek, 2021), an in-demand 21st-century skill identified in job postings that require a university degree (Rios et al., 2020), an essential skill to one's success (Luk & Lin, 2015) and an influential attribute to achieving quality learning and teaching in higher education institutions worldwide (Moeti et al., 2016). The capacity for critical thinking is pivotal in enabling students to resolve issues in both their academic and non-academic contexts. Conventional educational models placed a premium on the transmission of knowledge and the assessment of students' capacity for information recall. In contrast, recent models highlight the needs of students' engagement in interactive learning environments through the application of dialogic pedagogy to improve students' critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is a reflective process that results in action and the development of critical thinking requires that students learn to think about their thoughts. Fostering critical thinking skills among students has become a principal objective. Moreover, Gunawardena and Wilson (2021) argue that critical thinking is a crucially integral learning outcome of university education. Thus, higher education institutions are required to promote the capacity for independent thought in students (Bezanilla et al., 2019).

A pedagogical approach that has demonstrated considerable potential in the development of critical thinking skills and the cultivation of effective thinking methods is dialogic teaching. The implementation of activities such as dialogue, participation in oral argumentation, decision-making and problem-solving has been shown to enhance students' critical thinking abilities. (Bezanilla et al., 2019; Olivares et al., 2013). This student-centered method emphasizes joint knowledge generation, group meaning-making, and reciprocal communication. Instead of passively absorbing information and knowledge, students actively participate in debates by sharing perspectives and using critical thinking techniques. This active idea shares cultivate better understanding related to intellectual interest and a sense of intellectual autonomy. Dialogic teaching is a practical pedagogy for the 21st century (Wijaya, 2021) covering communication, collaboration, and critical thinking (Teo, 2019). Kuhn (2019) argues that critical thinking is understood as a dialogic practice that involves students to engage actively in dialogues.

Previous research have confirmed that dialogic practices stimulate better student achievement, and educators believe in its benefits as a pedagogical approach. Chow et al., (2023) assert that Interactive teaching is an effective pedagogical method that facilitates collaborative interaction between teachers and students, enabling them to constructively develop each other's ideas; this technique can improve classroom engagement and learning outcomes. Besides, dialogic teaching also promotes students to develop a better understanding of the subject by valuing all contributions. As Liru et al., (2024) found that dialogue-based learning and teaching can lead to productive educational outcomes, promoting equitable participation in dialogic collaborative problem solving, where participation itself and the equal opportunity to participate are fairly distributed among participants.

Dialogic instruction has taken on many different facets in the university setting, but the most prominent involves posing open-ended questions, which require students to think deeply and justify their thought processes to one another. Chen et al. (2017) identified seven features of dialogic: proposing ideas, disagreeing, explaining, elaborating, refereeing back, resolving, and questioning. In addition, discussions allow students to obtain different ideas by giving constructive feedback each other. By facilitating student engagement in their learning, dialogic pedagogy may enhance student participation (Snell & Lefstein, 2018) by involving higher-order thinking skills to effectively develop students' perspectives in different educational contexts (Cui & Teo, 2023). Similarly, dialogic in classrooms emphasizes collaboration on knowledge and meaning by sharing, active listening, critiquing and questioning, problem-solving, and integrating diverse ideas (Laird-Gentle et al., 2023). Those activities motivate students to enhance critical thinking skills. Students engaging in dialogic practices improved their critical thinking skills, authentic exploratory talk, and overall enriched higher-order thinking ability (Chen et al., 2017).

Previous studies have shown that dialogic teaching can raise student achievement in various subjects. However, research on the impact of dialogic pedagogy on critical thinking in speaking classes is still alarming. Although research has examined the potential of dialogic pedagogy to improve diverse learning outcomes and its implementation by educators, further nuanced investigation into student perceptions of this methodology is necessary. Interactive teaching is an effective pedagogical method that facilitates collaborative interaction between teachers and students and among the students themselves. It also enables them to constructively develop each other's ideas in order to improve classroom engagement and learning outcomes.

Considering those facts, this study is designed to investigate how dialogic pedagogy affects the critical thinking abilities of university students who have participated in speaking classes at a private institution in Malang, Indonesia. The research focuses on the experiences and views of these speaking course participants. They are urged to engage actively in their education by employing this method, which entails

participation in dialogic activities that allow them to think critically and consider broader perspectives. Thus, this study tries to address the following questions:

1. What are students' experiences of the dialogic teaching approaches employed in their speaking classes?
2. In what ways has dialogic pedagogy impacted students' critical thinking abilities?
3. What factors influence students' comfort and engagement in classroom conversations that utilize dialogic teaching?
4. In what manner do the roles of their peers and lecturers influence students' comprehension through dialogue?

Literature Review

Dialogic Pedagogy

21st century learning requires students to have 4 Cs: a) critical thinking and problem-solving skills, b) communication skills, c) creativity and innovation skills, and d) collaboration skills (Nabilah & Nana, 2020; Nurjanah, 2019). These outcomes are also expected to be applied in English language learning, especially in speaking courses. The first C is very essential since studying at a higher education institution requires students to work hard and think critically, both of which contribute to the success of academic work in language learning (Hamidi & Kinay, 2021; Net & Kusmaryono, 2023; Sulistyo & Lutviana, 2023). Critical thinking plays a crucial role in learning languages as it enables learners to process, analyze, and use language more effectively in students' trajectory to master English. According to some studies, integrating critical thinking into language learning not only improves language skills, but also provides students with tools for broader intellectual and personal growth (Marhaban et al., 2023; Sulistyo et al., 2024; Widiastuti et al., 2022).

One such advantage of being critical is encouraging students' sense of lifelong learning. By questioning and evaluating information, language learners become curious and motivated to explore further, making learning an ongoing process (Abdolrezapour et al., 2015; Chang, 2019; Suphasri & Chinokul, 2021). However, they still need feedback or suggestions from others, particularly teachers, to maximize their potential by understanding what went wrong, what went well, and what needs to be improved (Isnawati et al., 2019; Sulistyo et al., 2024; Yusuf et al., 2017). One of the teacher feedback activities that is considered to be applicable is Dialogue Pedagogy (DP). DP is a learning process where lecturers and students critically discuss course topics, express and listen to multiple perspectives, and build respectful classroom relationships (Asterhan et al., 2020; Farooq & Benade, 2019).

DP is expected to improve students' critical attitude, creativity, communication and collaboration skills in learning speaking. This is in line with research (Nussbaum et al., 2023) which found the fact that DP is useful for unifying perceptions in the teaching and learning process. Two studies (Teo, 2019; Ucan et al., 2023) uncovered that besides promoting students' cognitive, social and emotional development, DP also supports the acquisition of 21st century skills. In addition, Maine et al. (2019) also found that DP can provide an appropriate context for students' knowledge development. Teachers provide activities in the form of dialogic pedagogy where students are invited to think critically about their strengths, weaknesses, and what needs to be improved (self-reflection). Teachers accommodate activities in the form of dialogic pedagogy where students are invited to think critically about their strengths, weaknesses, and what needs to be improved (self-reflection). This is based on several previous research results related to the benefits of dialogic pedagogy (Anwaruddin, 2019; Beraldo et al., 2022; Gradovski, 2021) to increase student confidence in carrying out each learning activity (self-efficacy) and self-reflection. In

this case, the teacher helps and encourages students to think critically in order to find solutions and relate learning to the real world.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking and self-reflection allow them to self-correct and improve their speaking skills, which is in line with the results of other studies showing that critical thinking and self-reflection are important elements in the development of language skills (Dishon et al., 2017; Lew & Schmidt, 2011; Sulistyo et al., 2021), including speaking classes. Through speaking learning, students are expected to improve their oral communication skills in English. Therefore, speaking learning should be engaging and contextualized (Sakale, 2019) as suggested in the Outcome Based-Education (OBE) based English language learning curriculum which should focus on achieving specific learning outcomes (Merueña, 2023). However, this has not been fully implemented in speaking due to students' lack of courage to speak (self-efficacy), lack of understanding their strengths and weaknesses (self-reflection), and feeling that speaking is difficult because oral communication should be natural in second language acquisition (Kozhevnikova, 2019). Thus, dialogic pedagogy practically plays a very important role to maximize student critical thinking and self-reflection.

Method

Participants

This study used a qualitative research approach to investigate students' opinions of dialogic teaching and its influence on their critical thinking abilities. The primary data collection utilized an open-ended questionnaire to thoroughly investigate students' personal experiences and perspectives on the application of dialogic pedagogy in their learning processes. However, the study is limited in its generalizability due to its small sample size of 28 participants and the specific focus on speaking classes at a single university. Additionally, the study does not include perspectives from educators or explore the long-term impacts of dialogic pedagogy. The participants of this study are students of a private university in Malang, Indonesia, who have experienced dialogic pedagogy in their speaking courses. A purposive sampling technique is employed to select participants who are directly engaged in dialogic pedagogy to ensure relevance to this research objectives. Participants are informed about the study's purpose, provided with the opportunity for voluntary participation, and assured confidentiality through anonymized responses following informed consent

Procedure

Data are collected through an open-ended questionnaire designed to explore various scopes of students' experiences regarding dialogic pedagogy in a speaking class. The questionnaire items (see Appendix 1) were constructed by the authors and validated by an outstanding expert in English Language Teaching (ELT). The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents via Google form. The data was then analyzed by interpreting the result of the questionnaire based on the outline of students' dialogic pedagogy understanding, its impact on their critical thinking, engagement, and participation, the role of the lecturer as a facilitator, and any challenges encountered. NVivo application was used to manage, explore, find patterns of the data, and visualize the data.

Findings

The findings of this research revealed insights into students' experiences of dialogic teaching methods in the speaking classes. Then, employing a qualitative approach and analysing data using NVivo, the study reveals some facts related to why dialogic pedagogy influences students' critical thinking and active engagement. A number of

interrelated themes emerged from the analysis, highlighting students' perspectives on their interactions, participation and cognitive growth during dialogic learning activities.

Theme 1: Experience with Dialogic Pedagogy

In addressing the first research question, the NVivo project map, as shown in Figure 1 below, illustrates students' experiences with dialogic teaching methods, and shows the themes, ranging from engagement in discussions to challenges faced by students.

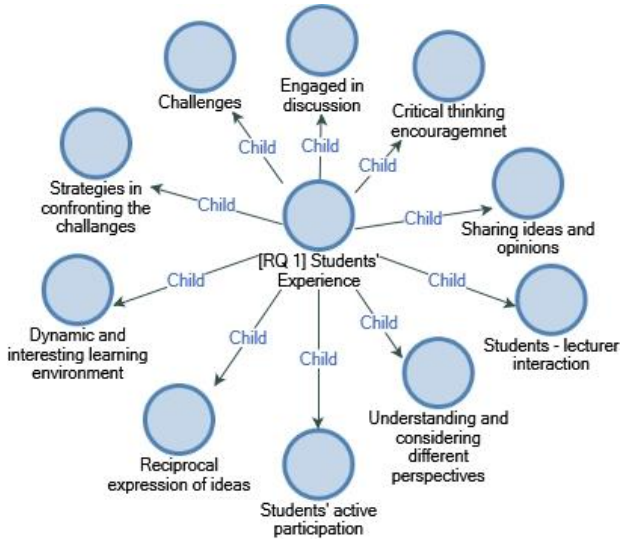


Figure 1 : Students' experiences with the dialogic teaching methods

Figure 1 reveals several interconnected themes regarding students' experiences with dialogic teaching, providing a comprehensive view of how these methods shape student engagement and cognitive development, as well as their overall educational experiences. These themes include challenges, the encouragement of critical thinking, sharing ideas and opinions, dynamic learning environments, and reciprocal exchanges. Through these experiences, students illustrate how dialogic teaching methods influence their learning in speaking classes, enhancing their confidence, communication skills, and intellectual growth.

Students' engagement and participation in discussions are the main aspect of dialogic pedagogy allowing them to exchange ideas and arguments with peers and teachers. This interactive approach helps students feel more involved in their learning, where communication is key in language classes. They raise their self-confidence and esteem in expressing their thoughts and improving their speaking skills through a more engaging and practical learning environment.

Theme 2: Impact on Critical Thinking

Students obtained significant benefits in critical thinking as a result of dialogic pedagogy which encourages them to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information. Reflecting on diverse perspectives and engaging in discussions, students are motivated to think exceed the surface level responses and develop academically-reasoned arguments. This challenge strengthens their communication skills and

prepares them for real-world interactions, where understanding different viewpoints is essential. The present study shows that dialogic pedagogy fosters communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. Both studies emphasize the role of inclusive environments, speaking opportunities, and supportive interactions, improving students' confidence, communicative abilities, and intellectual development, underlining the transformative power of dialogic teaching in fostering learning in speaking classes.

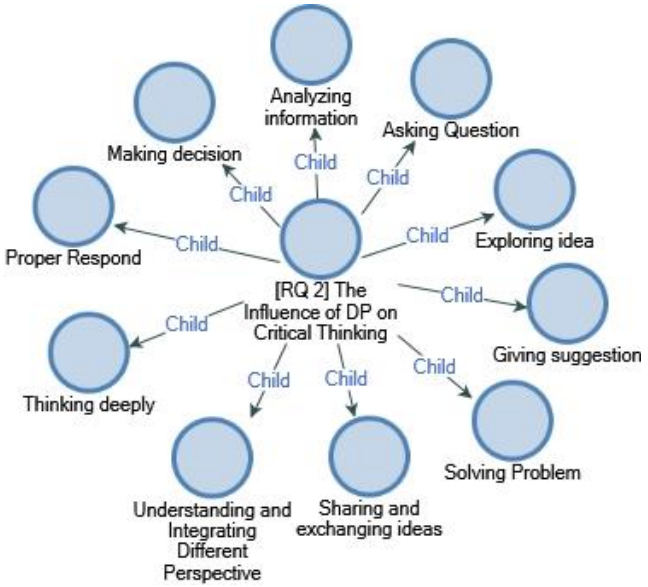


Figure 2 : How dialogic pedagogy influences students' critical thinking skills

In response to the second research question, the NVivo project map, as shown in Figure 2, highlights how dialogic pedagogy has positively influenced students' critical thinking skills. The analysis reveals that dialogic teaching fosters critical thinking through a range of interconnected activities. One key finding reveals that dialogic pedagogy encourages students to obtain and analyze information presented during discussions. This process enables them to assess the information and knowledge which enrich their critical thinking development.

Students also claimed that asking questions during dialogic activities played a crucial role in enhancing their critical inquiry. The practice of questioning allowed them to engage with learning materials more thoroughly and challenge assumptions which lead to a deeper exploration of ideas. Besides, the opportunity to explore diverse viewpoints was an essential factor in fostering critical thinking. Dialogic pedagogy, thus, creates an open environment where students feel free to examine and develop different perspectives.

It is also noted that giving suggestions during class discussions was another area where they grew their critical thinking skills. By contributing solutions and assessing their feasibility, they learned to express ideas better and consider the broader implications of their ideas.

Theme 3: Engagement and Participation

The map in **Figure 3** illustrates the key factors that contribute to students' comfort and engagement in classroom discussions involving dialogic teaching.

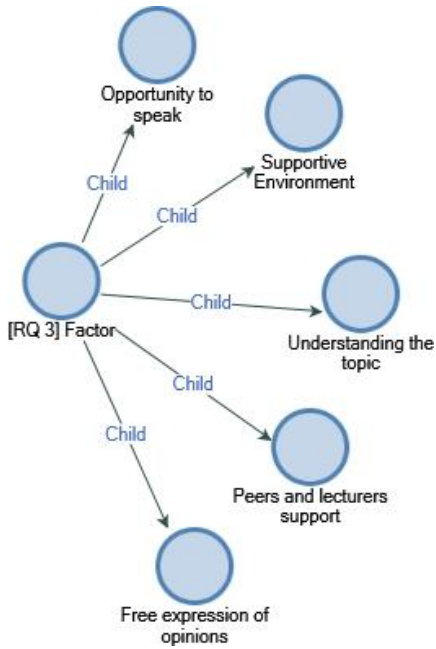


Figure 3 : Factors contributing to students' comfort and engagement in classroom

Figure 3 highlights the opportunity to speak, a supportive environment, understanding the topic, peer and lecturer support, and the free expression of opinions as the reasons why they felt comfortable and active in the classes. These factors promoted students' active involvement. The opportunity to speak is essential since it enables students to express their ideas and improve involvement in conversations. This is basically connected to the supporting environment that furnishes them with the emotional and academic reinforcement necessary for confident participation. The opportunity to speak is essential since it enables students to express their ideas and improve involvement in conversations. This is basically connected to the supporting environment that furnishes them with the emotional and academic reinforcement necessary for confident participation. Both peers and lecturers can stimulate a good class atmosphere which allows students to express their ideas without fear of judgment or mistakes. In addition, understanding the topic is another significant factor in student engagement since they have enough background knowledge dealing with the topic being discussed.

Furthermore, the capacity to openly articulate thoughts in the classroom is essential for ensuring that students perceive their voices as acknowledged and esteemed as indicated in Figure 3 in which an active dialogic creates a dynamic and engaging teaching environment.

Theme 4: Role of Peers and Lecturers

The research indicates the powers of peers and lecturers on student educational experiences. Peers motivate collaborative discussions that enhance comprehension and introduce students to better opinions and viewpoints. Lecturers, on the other hand, guide meaningful discussions by providing challenging subjects and critical questions to promote student thinking skills and cognitive development.

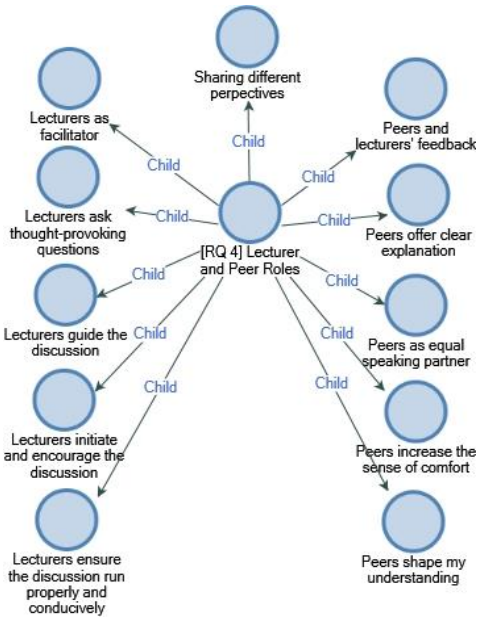


Figure 4 : The roles of peers and lecturers in a dialogic activity

Figure 4 stresses the roles of peers and lecturers in determining students' understanding through a dialogue. Lecturers act as facilitators by asking questions, guiding discussions, and managing discussions run well. Meanwhile, peers share opinions and sense of equality in discussions. Both roles support the creation of a collaborative and enriching learning environment, critical the growth of critical thinking. This result is in accordane with the study of Liru et al. (2024) which stresses the need for equal participation in dialogic learning. They further elaborate that learning outcomes through dialogue depends on fair chances as active participants. This research also points out key elements that make students feel comfortable to speak and listen in right environments so that they are motivated to participate.

Discussion

Students enjoyed dialogic pedagogy sessions by building their contribution and cognitive development when they had a chance to maximize their critical thinking. It implies that dialogic pedagogy is an approriate approach for critical education since it offers numerous opportunities for learning that builds students' rights to express their opinions and beliefs (Elkader, 2015) inside and outside the classrooms. It is also in harmony with Shugurova's (2023) study which found that students are engaged in the classes no matter who they have learned from. Furthermore, the dialogic pedagogy discussion goes beyond the traditional dichotomy, and it is an interpersonal experience (Maine et al., 2019; Marhaban et al., 2023; Sulistyo et al., 2024).

Sharing and exchanging ideas with peers provided a positive activity for students to conduct activities under different perspectives (Ruru & Sulistyo, 2020; Urch & Carpenter, 2019). Idea exchange has at least two benefits: first, it strengthened student

capacity to realize and and implement different perspectives, and second, it reinforced their ability to construct arguments. Besides, dialogic pedagogy encouraged students to think deeply about topics and to reflect on the significance of their ideas and examine different view points (Anwaruddin, 2019; Shih, 2018). Then, decision-making activities within the dialogic classroom also contributed to the development of students' critical thinking capacity (Boyd, 2019). Furthermore, the emphasis on providing appropriate responses during discussions stimulated students develop clarity of thought and precision in communication which become key indicators of critical thinking. The findings of Bezanilla et al. (2019) and Olivares et al. (2013) support this research by emphasizing that activities such as dialogue, argumentation, decision-making, and problem-solving facilitate critical thinking.

Figure 2 indicates how dialogic sctivity enhances students' critical thinking skills. The students obtain the critical thinking skills through activitities like information analysis, concept investigation, problem solving, and integration of different views. The findings confirm the power of dialogic pedagogy in empowering critical thinking and strengthening education practices. Segal et al. (2017) found that dialogic pedagogy gives the students an opportunity to speak and express their own ideas and to be heard by others (Matusov & Miyazaki, 2014). It proves that students tend to demonstrate a lack of respect if the topic is too easy for them meaningless for their dailiy lives (Lima & Von Duyke, 2016).

On the other hand, teachers are essential in initiating and directing discussions. By posing stimulating inquiries, they prompt students to engage in profound and critical contemplation of the subjects addressed (Saiful et al., 2019; Sulistyo et al., 2023). As facilitators, they ensure that the discussion remains focused and conducive to learning, while simultaneously providing opportunity for every student to engage (Sulistyo et al., 2021, 2024). Marhaban et al., (2023) add that lecturers' role during discussion is ensuring that the discussion remains focused and conducive. Besides, teachers guarantee that the discourse environment is inclusive and systematically structured, thus facilitating a productive exchange of ideas. Their active involvement motivates students to engage meaningfully and confidently share their insights. This is in line with Omodan, (2023) who claims that in dialogic pedagogy, teachers should serve as facilitators of learning rather than as the primary source of knowledge and information, which can positively impact student motivation and learning outcomes. Moreover, Shea, (2019) argues that dialogic teaching in EFL classes can be successful, but teacher interactional style plays a crucial role in eliciting and coordinating student engagement.

Peers, on the other hand, contribute by enhancing understanding through collaboration. As shown in Figure 4, peers act as equal speaking partners, which fosters a sense of mutual respect and comfort in sharing ideas. Their feedback and clear explanations help clarify concepts and broaden perspectives. Furthermore, peers increase engagement by creating a supportive atmosphere where students feel valued and encouraged.

Kos (2024) confirmed that peer collaboration promotes communication among peers and mutual support which affect students' achievement. Both lecturers and peers together facilitate a dialogic pedagogy framework that promotes students' critical thinking skills. As such the feedback and support obtained from lecturers and friends, this feedback is important in helping to identify and improve their weaknesses in speaking. This is in harmony with the findings of other studies, such as (Yilmaz, 2017) who found that when students were able to use feedback to reframe their ideas, this was very beneficial to their learning, and showed significant improvement in their speech after receiving feedback (Au & Bardakçi, 2020).

Dialogic pedagogy, through which teachers and students participate in a discussion of student performance, was a good aspect to the process because it allows students to

understand their strengths and weaknesses, as well as what to improve. The research conducted by Asterhan et al. (2020) and Farooq and Benade (2019) proves that good classroom relationships and mutual respect for each other motivate students to speak up and receive feedback from lecturers and peers. Also, Elkader (2015) argues that dialogical pedagogy allows students to give respects to others so that it cultivates critical teaching and learning processes. In short, dialogic pedagogy builds students' critical thinking and cognitive competence when it is well managed by letting students to speak and express their feelings, perceptions, and even their strengths and weaknesses. It implies that the way lecturers administer dialogic pedagogy facilitates students to maximize their critical thinking skills.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the significance of dialogic teaching in cultivating critical thinking and enhancing comprehension among students. The application of dialogic pedagogy significantly enhances students' critical thinking skills by promoting profound introspection, flexibility, and the capacity to formulate comprehensive arguments through peer engagement and informed choices. Through meaningful classroom atmospheres, students cultivate communication and critical thinking. The lecturer's function as a facilitator is essential in fostering a supportive learning environment and directing students through the dialogic pedagogy activities. It implies that lecturers need to provide students with good class atmospheres and opportunities so that students freely express their feelings, ideas, and critical thinkings well. Probably, this research has some limitations, such as the number of the respondents and length of treatment, more research is needed to investigate the long-term benefits of dialogic teaching on students' critical thinking capacities using longitudinal studies. Comparative research across disciplines and cultural contexts could shed light on its adaptability and effectiveness in a wide range of settings. Furthermore, with the advent of online education, researching how dialogic techniques might be integrated into digital learning settings would be beneficial. Finally, building strong techniques to assess its impact on critical thinking can improve future research and teaching strategies.

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Appendix 1. The List of Open-Ended Questions

NO	QUESTIONS
1	In speaking classes, did you experience dialogic pedagogy while studying at Unikama?
2	How would you describe your experience with the dialogic teaching methods used?
3	Can you describe a specific instance where classroom dialogue significantly influenced your thinking or understanding of a topic?
4	In what ways has dialogic pedagogy enhanced your ability to evaluate information and solve problems? Can you give an example of how classroom dialogue contributed to finding a solution?
5	Do you feel that your critical thinking skills have improved as a result of the dialogic pedagogy used? If so, how?
6	How comfortable do you feel participating in classroom discussions where dialogue is a central element? What factors contribute to this comfort or discomfort?
7	How do you think the role of your classmates in shaping your understanding through dialogue?
8	How would you describe the lecturer's role and strategy in guiding discussions and encouraging dialogue in the classroom?
9	What challenges did you encounter when engaging in dialogue-based learning, and how did you overcome the challenges?
10	How has your experience with dialogic pedagogy influenced your critical thinking skill, and do you believe the skill developed will be valuable for your future academic or professional development?