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## **Exploring How Lecturers Comprehend and Apply Critical Pedagogy in English Listening Class**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Grounded in the Freire's (1971) critical pedagogy premise revealing that the act of listening should be active, critical, and transformative, rather than passive or merely receptive, this research explored the experience of English language lecturers who taught English listening classes with critical pedagogy approach. This study employed a qualitative method through a case study approach to explore lecturers' perspectives in depth. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four lecturers and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The findings indicate that while lecturers did not explicitly define or describe critical pedagogy, certain stages and elements of it were evident in their teaching. This suggests that, to some extent, they incorporated aspects of critical pedagogy in their listening classes.*

**Key Words:** *Critical Pedagogy, critical listening, reproductive skill.*

### **1. Introduction**

Implementing Critical Pedagogy in Indonesian higher education should be prioritized. Indonesia's long history under an authoritarian regime, followed by a regressive democracy in the post-reformation period highlights this need (Bangsa et al., 2023). These historical factors may have led to a diminished capacity for critique and a reduced sensitivity to social issues within the educational system. In education, the persistence of the banking system, where students are seen as depositories and teachers as the depositors of knowledge is evident. This system continues partly due to students' low interest and motivation in the learning process (Kızıldağ, 2023; Front, 2019). Additionally, while the information and communication technology development have positive effects, they also have drawbacks consequences, such as the spread of fake news. Therefore, fostering critical thinking abilities ought to be a top focus in Indonesian education at all levels.

In English language teaching (ELT), critical pedagogy has been introduced with the aim not only to improve English language skills but also to cultivate a critical awareness of injustice (Mishra, 2020; Bozkurt & Topkaya, 2023). Rooted in [Freire \(2020\)](#), critical pedagogy in language teaching seeks to transform classrooms by incorporating students' local culture, using their first language as a resource, addressing real-life

concerns, and raising awareness of issues faced by marginalized groups. This approach aligns with critical language pedagogy introduced by [Crookes \(2021\)](#) who outlines three main concepts. Firstly, "critical pedagogy is democratic," aiming to foster greater democracy in society and within the classroom. Secondly, a critical pedagogy classroom is "dialogical," emphasizing exploratory and discussion-oriented learning. Lastly, although challenging to implement, "critical pedagogy is action-oriented".

Efforts to incorporate critical language pedagogy in ELT and language teacher education programs have been documented worldwide. Mishra (2020) lays the groundwork for critical pedagogy in ELT by outlining critical pedagogy principles and suggesting areas for practitioners. In Indonesia, Bangsa et al. (2023) applies critical pedagogy in an ELT classroom by using codes to teach English, enhancing both language skills and students' critical thinking. [Tekin \(2020\)](#) introduces critical pedagogy in higher education institution, through participatory research with a graduate teacher student in a professional learning program. This program has been successful in designing and implementing critical pedagogy in ELT, helping students become more critical, tolerant, and socially aware.

Prior studies demonstrate the potential benefits of implementing critical pedagogy in ELT. However, implementing critical pedagogy in language teaching and learning is not without challenges. Several empirical studies have investigated these challenges in various contexts ([Tekin, 2020](#); [Kızıldağ, 2023](#)). While students respond positively to critical pedagogy in terms of language development and critical thinking through the dialogic approach to teaching critical language, the issues arise related to students' perspectives and academic voices and the conception of language as social practice. Additionally, [Liu \(2020\)](#) discusses the challenges of practicing critical pedagogy in EFL teaching in South Asia, including tensions between local and international geopolitical tendencies. He suggests the need to critically evaluate both traditional and modern approaches to education to be effective. In summary, previous studies indicate the potential for introducing or integrating critical pedagogy in ELT classrooms and English education programs, while also highlighting implementation challenges. These findings suggest the need for further investigation, particularly into how lecturers comprehend critical pedagogy and how they apply it in n teaching English listening.

Critical Pedagogy is particularly relevant now given that the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture has introduced a new curriculum named *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn). This curriculum aims to align education with current demands, changes, and the needs of the business and industrial sectors, preparing students for the workforce ([Maghfiroh et al., 2022](#); [Deta et al., 2020](#)). However, instead of prioritizing social justice, this program appears to reflect a neoliberal ideology disguised as "freedom" ([Sondari, 2021](#)). In this educational context, implementing critical pedagogy approach is crucial to counterbalance these neoliberal tendencies. Moreover, there is a need for further research on implementing critical pedagogy in ELT across various settings and contexts. Little is currently known about how lecturers in Islamic-based universities, which emphasize the unity of sciences integrating science and religion,

perceive and implement critical pedagogy. Therefore, the aim of this study is twofold: firstly, to examine lecturers' comprehension of critical pedagogy, and secondly, to explore its application in listening classroom.

## 2. Methods

### Research Design

To answer the research questions, this study used a case study design. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of a particular, bounded system such as an activity, event, process, or individuals defined by certain temporal, spatial, or physical (Buwono et al., 2021). The purpose of a case study is to shed light on a particular issue, problem, or theory. As a qualitative research method, data collection and analysis in a case study occur concurrently and continuously (Roseli et al., 2020). The case study design can be somewhat flexible, with research questions becoming more refined following the initial analysis of interviews, diary entries, or observations (Al et al., 2023; Wales, 2019). Case studies can focus on single individuals, multiple individuals, programs, events, or activities (Maag et al., 2021; Shrestha & Bhattarai, 2022). In this research, the cases involved some lecturers. Specifically, this study employed case study approach, aiming to offer insights into a broader case while specific issue itself was of secondary importance, helping to enhance understanding of something else. An instrumental case study was chosen as the research sought to explore a broader issue concerning the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening comprehension classes. As an exploratory study, it focused on how lecturers articulate their understanding on CP perspectives and they incorporated this understanding into their teaching practices, particularly in teaching English listening skill.

### Participants

This research involved four English lecturers from four different universities and regions. Three participants have over ten years of experience teaching English, as confirmed by their curriculum vitae and their accounts during the interviews and one confessed to be a new lecturer. Informal conversations prior to the interviews revealed that all participants also had experience teaching listening comprehension for several years. The selection of participants was initially based on data from higher education sources (PDDIKTI) to verify their teaching experience in listening comprehension. The researchers then contacted the participants via email or WhatsApp, with contact information provided by colleagues familiar with the potential participants. Every participant willingly signed consent forms for the study and agreed to supply the required data. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

**Table 1. Demographic information of the participants**

No	Name	Gender	Teaching Experience	Qualification	Teaching Expertise
1	Siska	Female	16 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening Informal Communication, for

						Listening for Academic Communication, TEFL
2	Anna	Female	13 years	Master Education	of	Listening I, Listening II, English Morphology, Critical Reading
3	Ariz	Male	11 years	Doctor of English Education		Listening for Social Interaction, Listening in Professional Context, Research Methodology in Linguistics and Literature
4	Eka	Female	5 years	Master of Education		Reading Comprehension, Intensive Listening, Extensive Listening

## Data Collection

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect data, asking participants about their experiences incorporating a critical pedagogy approach into their English listening classes. Prior to the first interview, this study had the interview guidelines reviewed by an expert to obtain feedback. The interview questions were then tested out on a person with research publications and experience in critical pedagogy. After revising the guidelines based on this feedback, this research involved four different interviews with the participants. Mrs. Siska was interviewed for the first time in the second week of January 2024. Mrs. Anna was interviewed in the third week of January 2024. The third interview, with Mr. Ariz, took place in the second week of February 2024. Finally, we interviewed Mrs. Eka in mid-March 2024. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom. To avoid language barriers and based on participants' preferences, the interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers then translated the transcripts into English.

## Data Analysis

The study's data were analyzed using six stages of thematic analysis, which include familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming the themes ([Braun, 2006](#)). Initially, the researchers familiarized themselves with the participants' responses by repeatedly listening to the audio recordings of the interviews. Next, the recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcriptions were read multiple times to fully grasp and interpret the participants' statements. Important statements from the interviews were then highlighted and coded according to theoretical frameworks, specifically components of critical pedagogy in teaching listening ([Crookes, 2021](#)). This process

aimed to identify instances where critical pedagogy was implemented in the listening classes.

### **3. Findings**

The results examine how the participating lecturers understood of critical pedagogy, how critical pedagogy was implemented in English listening classes, and what challenged they faced. The research questions and the emerging themes were used to organize the results.

#### **Lecturers' Understanding of Critical Pedagogy**

The lecturers were generally unfamiliar with critical pedagogy. One participant's comment, when asked about critical pedagogy, made this clear: "Not yet, but if it is feasible to provide critical education, in general, for instance, although I can't recall everything precisely, I know from educational liberation"(Siska/Interview). This suggests that participants did not always understand the idea of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, the participants did grasp the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy. She also recognized well-known figures in critical pedagogy, like Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. This indicates her basic comprehension of the critical perspective in language teaching.

The interview with Mr. Ariz further demonstrated the lack of familiarity with critical pedagogy in English language instruction. He was unable to clearly explain what critical pedagogy was. However, he was able to provide examples of how he saw critical pedagogy principles being employed in listening classes. The excerpt below illustrates this as narrated by Mr. Ariz:

*In my listening classes, I incorporate strategies that encourage students to engage in critical analysis and reflection on the content they hear. For instance, I use audio materials on social issues, like speeches or news reports discussing human rights topics. After listening, we have a class discussion where I ask students to share their thoughts and feelings about the issue and what insights they gained from the material. (Mr. Ariz/Interview)*

The result of interview above reveals that incorporating audio resources on social issues, such as speeches or news report about human rights subjects encouraged students to critically analyze the information in addition to understanding it. Students were given the opportunity to voice their opinions during the ensuing class discussions, assisting them to develop a greater understanding and empathy for other points of view. Moreover, the lecturer's comprehension of critical pedagogy is further elucidated in another excerpt as follows.

*We encourage them to embrace their role. Their role extends beyond being mere students to becoming agents of change. This realization emphasizes that their responsibility doesn't end with learning alone.*



*Students must exert a positive influence on their surroundings, demonstrating their ability to analyze and confront issues. By sharing insights and new information, they can help others develop a more informed perspective, thereby addressing any misunderstandings that may arise. (Siska/Interview)*

From the passage, Mrs. Siska recognized that critical pedagogy involved students critically analyzing issues and sharing their understanding with others, particularly those seeking insights from scholars. She also emphasized that students acted as social change agent, advocating for a positive impact on society during and beyond their university education. Moreover, another lecturer, Mrs. Anna, possessed deeper knowledge of critical literacy compared to critical pedagogy. Her research focused on critical literacy, and she was familiar with critical literacy pedagogy as well. Anna viewed critical pedagogy as a broader concept or an extension of critical literacy pedagogy; she utilized literary works to teach listening skills in her classroom.

*I am familiar with critical literacy through my research projects, where I actively incorporate its principles. As for critical pedagogy, my focus lies specifically on critical listening pedagogy. (Anna/Interview).*

*Mrs. Eka acknowledged that she recently learned about critical pedagogy, despite teaching courses like critical listening and reading comprehension at the university. As one of the youngest lecturers with less teaching experience compared to her colleagues, she recognized the interconnectedness of language, culture, and ideology. She noted that "A person's culture can be expressed through their language and reflects the ideologies they uphold. (Eka/interview).*

In summary, although lecturers' explicit understanding of critical pedagogy was not directly stated, they demonstrated familiarity with certain perspectives and principles of critical pedagogy during the interviews. Based on the analysis of their understanding and endorsement of critical pedagogy principles to some degree, lecturers in this study could be categorized as 'critical pedagogy, defined by ([Ortega, 2012](#)) as ELT lecturers who utilized the fundamental values and theories of critical pedagogy. The subsequent findings related to the teachers' experiences in applying critical pedagogy in the listening classroom.

### **How Is Critical Pedagogy Implemented in the English Listening Class? Listening as a Practice of Reproductive Skill**

"Listening as a reproductive skill" refers to the idea that listening is not just a passive activity but an active process where listeners mentally reproduce or reconstruct the information they hear. This involves comprehending, processing, and then potentially using the information in some form of response or further communication.

In this sense, listening requires cognitive engagement and the ability to understand and recall spoken language accurately, making it an integral part of effective communication and language acquisition. More importantly, teaching listening should offer opportunities for students to actively engage in varied listening exercises that encourage critical thinking and interpretation. Regular practice, reflection, and analysis of content are essential to deepen understanding. Likewise, interactive activities requiring responses, learning effective listening strategies, exposure to diverse contexts, and receiving constructive feedback all contribute to skill enhancement.

According to interview data, Mrs. Anna assumed that listening was not enough to listen to the ideas. Rather, it should be reproducing or reconstructing the information the students listen.

*Listening to ideas isn't enough. Instead, my students should actively work with the information they hear. This means they should understand it deeply and then use it to create their own ideas or responses. For example, they might summarize what they heard, talk about it with others, or use it in new situations. Good listening involves more than just hearing, it's about actively engaging with and using the information. .(Anna/Interview)*

It was also noteworthy that, as the following excerpt narrates, Mr. Ariz stressed the significance of providing opportunities for students to interpret the information during listening.

*Students have different interpretations as this happens because each listener brings their own background, experiences, and perspectives to what they hear. These personal factors can influence how they understand and interpret the information. For instance, one person might focus on the emotional tone of a speaker, while another might concentrate on the factual content. This diversity in interpretation is natural and can lead to rich discussions and deeper understanding when listeners share and compare their viewpoints.(Ariz/Interview)*

### **Connecting Listening with Real-Life Issues**

Mrs. Anna emphasized that effective listening required sustained concentration, which could be challenging to maintain, particularly during lengthy or complex discussions and presentations. To make her listening class more engaging, she introduced global topics and issues relevant to the students' lives. This approach involved having the students discuss these topics in class. She also encouraged them to share their opinions on what they listened to. This approach was illustrated in the following excerpt.

*In critical listening, after listening to the audio, the class becomes more interactive, resembling a discussion. Students are encouraged to consistently share their opinions, ensuring the class is lively and filled with discussions among the students*

Mrs. Anna highlighted that teaching listening should go beyond fostering critical thinking; it ought to benefit others, as she clarified in the following excerpt.

*Teaching listening skills should not be limited to developing students' ability to think critically. It should also aim to influence others positively. This can involve encouraging students to use their listening skills to contribute to discussions, support their peers, and engage constructively with the world around them. By doing so, the impact of effective listening extends beyond the classroom, fostering a more collaborative and empathetic community. (Anna/interview)*

She encouraged her students to link their listening activities to real-world issues, welcoming any topics to be discussed in the classroom, as she explained.

*I motivate my students to relate what they listen to such as podcasts, news, interviews, or any form of audio content to real-world problems and situations. I invite students to bring any relevant topics or issues they find important or interesting into the classroom discussions. This approach is intended to make the listening activities more meaningful and relevant to the students' lives, fostering an environment where diverse and significant real-life issues can be explored and discussed openly. (Anna/interview)*

In sum, lecturers in this study had understood how to teach listening more critically and know how to make listening classrooms to be more engaging as well as relate teaching listening with real-life issues. This practice of teaching was relevant to the principle of critical thinking which empathized on engaging students critically with social issues as suggested by Freire.

### **Developing Horizontal Relationships to Be Active Listener**

A horizontal learning pattern involved recognizing everyone's knowledge and backgrounds, where learners' contributions and perspectives were valued equally to those of the teacher. Mrs. Dynar revealed that the power of relation matters was significant in the teaching of listening. She argued that students ought to have more agency and influence in the classroom compared to the teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

*My teaching style is centered on power relationships; I empower my students and express my appreciation when they can effectively argue verbally. (Dynar/interview)*

*Giving students the ability to choose the listening materials they engage with, whether through selecting topics or formats that interest them, you empower them within the learning process. This autonomy fosters a sense of investment and responsibility in their own learning, thereby establishing a more balanced power relationship between teacher and students. (Eka/interview)*

The interview with Mrs. Dynar revealed his commitment to fostering a horizontal relationship between lecturer and student. In class, she often referred to her students as friends to build an egalitarian atmosphere. Initially, students found this approach awkward, but they gradually accepted it. Mrs. Dynar believed that creating an equal relationship enhanced student engagement in onsite discussions although she acknowledged that student motivation also played a role. Similarly, Mrs Eka, the youngest lecturer in this study, tended to develop close relationships with her students and frequently participates in student-organized activities. Overall, the participants in this study prioritize establishing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students.

### **Developing Students' Critical Consciousness to Engage with What They Hear.**

Based on the critical pedagogy components, [Freire \(2000\)](#) suggested that the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. Mrs. Siska argued that critical consciousness could be employed by engaging students in discussion that critically analyzes the content. This process required students to go beyond merely understanding the content by considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. Understanding the context such as the time, place, and situation surrounding the message helped students grasp why and how the information was being communicated, influencing its meaning and relevance. Similarly, recognizing the purpose helped students evaluate the speaker's intentions and understanding perspective allowed students to consider how the speaker's personal context and worldview influenced the content and how it was delivered.

Mr. Dynar also suggested that engaging in dialogue after students had understood listening material played a pivotal role in developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students shared diverse experiences and perspectives related to the content, fostering empathy and deepening understanding of societal issues. It encouraged students to challenge assumptions, critically analyze multiple viewpoints, and collaboratively construct knowledge. For example, students were studying a podcast about climate change. After listening to the podcast individually Mrs. Dynar divided the class into small groups. Each group discussed different aspects of the podcast, such as the causes of climate change, its impact on communities, and possible solutions. During these discussions, students shared their insights and raised questions about how societal norms contributed to environmental issues. They used reflective journaling to note down their thoughts on what they learned and how they feel about the topic. This process empowered them to critically reflect on environmental issues and considered actions they could take to address them, fostering a learning environment which encouraged transformative thinking and social responsibility.

### **Establishing Critical, Democratic, and Participatory Assessment**

According to [Crookes \(2021\)](#), assessment in education should embody critical, democratic, and participatory principles. Interviews with participants revealed a preference for assessments emphasizing practical outcomes over mere comprehension testing. They advocated for assessments requiring students to apply their understanding and critical thinking abilities to generate novel knowledge. For instance, Mr. Ariz asked students to listen to a news podcast episode talking about “social media impact on mental health among teenagers”. Having listened to it, they worked in pairs to identify key arguments in the podcast. Each pair then prepared a brief oral presentation where they critically analyzed how the podcast portrayed the relationship between social media use and mental health issues. This assessment promoted critical listening skills, evidence-based analysis, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with current issues in the media.

Similarly, Mrs. Eka requested students to listen to a recorded short speech by a community leader addressing the issue of homelessness in their city. After listening, students worked individually to analyze the speech critically. They identified the strengths, such as compelling personal stories, statistical evidence, or motivational language resonating with the audience. They also identified weaknesses, such as potential biases in the presentation of information or logical inconsistencies. Students then wrote a reflective essay summarizing their analysis discussing how effective they found the speech in conveying its message, and proposing additional considerations or actions enhancing the impact of addressing homelessness in their community. She also conveyed that this assessment encouraged students to apply critical listening, and analytical skills, and to reflect on the complexities of addressing social issues through persuasive speech.

### **Lecturers’ Self-Reported Challenges in Implementing Critical Pedagogy**

Previous research and this study both identified several challenges in implementing critical pedagogy. One significant challenge was the low level of student participation and engagement in discussions about texts. Mr. Ariz suggested this could be attributed to cultural factors, particularly among students who were alumni of *pesantren*. In *pesantren*, there was traditionally a vertical power relationship where students (*santri*) typically listened to and obeyed their teachers (*kyai*). Mr. Ariz, who himself was a *santri*, acknowledged the unequal power dynamics between students and lecturers in this context, noting that expressing ideas or opinions was not commonly encouraged.

"In *pesantren*, there is a cultural norm of listening and obeying rather than actively expressing thoughts and opinions. Reflecting on my own experience at the boarding school, I find that discussions and offering opinions in front of the *Kyai* (teacher) are uncommon. I listen to the *Kyai* with dialogue being infrequent". (*Ariz/interview*)

The reason why students were passive in the listening class was due to their low English proficiency. Students with limited English skills obtained some challenges: understanding vocabulary, language structure, and expressing opinions in English. To address the third challenge, one potential solution was letting students to use their native language (L1) when sharing their arguments. However, there were concerns permitting L1 employ could be seen as a violation, especially since these students were training to become English teachers who needed to demonstrate proficiency in English. Additionally, students' passivity was influenced by low motivation and literacy levels, as they perceived listening as a challenging activity.

The second challenge of implementing critical pedagogy in listening classroom was the problem of accents and pronunciation. Exposure to different English accents, such as British, American, Australian, posed challenges for students in understanding varied pronunciations and intonations. Accents different from those encountered in the classroom could be particularly difficult. Moreover, each accent had distinct pronunciation patterns, intonations, and even vocabulary differences. Mrs. Siska, Anna, and Eka confirmed this challenge since it directly impacted students' comprehension and communication abilities.

The third, from a personal perspective, Mrs. Eka highlighted a challenge of applying critical pedagogy, particularly concerning the evolving nature of critical thinking. She emphasized the need to continually update our understanding of what constituted critical thinking, suggesting ongoing exploration, such as through critical discourse analysis. Additionally, Mrs. Eka underscored the difficulty in ensuring students grasp critical thinking concepts, acknowledging this as a persistent challenge in education.

"Another challenge is ensuring students comprehend critical thinking. Currently, I am considering how to address students' struggles with this concept, suggesting that teachers should create structured stages, such as higher-order thinking skills guidelines. This approach involves transitioning from lower-order thinking to higher-order thinking using specific operational verbs'. (Eka/interview)

#### **4. Discussion**

This section discusses three main issues that arise from the findings. Firstly, this study examines lecturers' understanding of critical pedagogy. Based on this analysis, lecturers still lack awareness of critical pedagogy, particularly regarding its definition. However, interview data reveals that teachers do grasp aspects of critical pedagogy, especially in the context of teaching critical listening. They hope that students develop critical thinking skills through these units. This aligns with [Freire \(2020\)](#), educational philosophy, which states that the purpose of education is to foster critical thinking by presenting real-life situations as problems for reflection and action ([Basyoni & Medd, 2023](#)). Despite their unfamiliarity with the formal notion of critical pedagogy, previous research supports this finding. For example, [Magill \(2018\)](#) demonstrates that indicators of critical pedagogy can be observed in classroom activities and the learning process,



yet lecturers remain unaware of the concept itself. They do incorporate some critical elements in their teaching, yet as Wiley notes, "they just don't know what they know."

Second, the indicator focuses on steps for implementing critical pedagogy in listening classes, highlighting the essential components of this educational approach. It is evident that lecturers have, to some extent, incorporated the steps of critical pedagogy in teaching listening as recommended by [\(Basyoni & Medd, 2023\)](#). Lecturers emphasize that listening should not be confined to acquiring knowledge; instead, it should involve creating new knowledge. Expanding on this idea, [Active et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Vani \(2023\)](#) describe studying as a process of reinventing, recreating, and rewriting, which is an active task for the subject, not a passive one for the object. In this context, [Andriana & Evans \(2020\)](#), [Benjamin & Kline \(2019\)](#), and [Harida \(2021\)](#) note that learning involves constructing one's reality through social interactions rather than merely absorbing facts. The findings of this study also reinforce the idea that listening should be connected to real-life issues. Relating listening material to real-life contexts can enhance students' motivation, especially since many students find listening is the most difficult skill.

The passive nature of the classroom becomes problematic when implementing critical pedagogy. It is often assumed that students in East Asian countries are submissive and obedient, while lecturers are authoritative and authoritarian, leading to rigid and hierarchical classrooms that hinder discussions between students and lecturers [\(Baturay, 2020; Friston et al., 2020\)](#). However, data from interviews indicate that lecturers are challenging this assumption by fostering horizontal relationships with students. One lecturer even states that he empowers his students significantly. In critical listening classrooms, these lecturers emphasize that the relationship between teacher and listeners should be equal, necessitating a critical approach to listening. Nevertheless, student reactions to critical listening are mixed. In Mr. Ariz's class, some students complain that the lessons become more complex, conflicting with their belief that language learning is primarily for instrumental purposes, such as achieving higher test scores. Critical pedagogy, however, extends beyond this, aiming to equip students with a language of critique to promote equality, social justice, and social transformation [\(Ipek, 2020; Jia & Hew, 2021; Kabir & Zealand, 2024\)](#).

Mrs. Siska emphasizes the principles of critical pedagogy, as suggested by [Freire \(2000\)](#), which include dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. She advocates for fostering critical consciousness by engaging students in discussions that analyze content beyond surface understanding, considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. This approach helps students grasp the broader implications of the message. Mrs. Siska further suggests that dialogue, following comprehension of listening material, is crucial for developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students share diverse perspectives, challenge assumptions, and collaboratively construct knowledge, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of societal issues [\(Ngo, 2019; Ozelik et al., 2020; Wuryaningrum et al., 2022\)](#).

To further explore the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening classroom, some components suggested by [\(Crookes, 2021\)](#) were examined. The analysis assumed

some key components of critical pedagogy in this research: a negotiated syllabus, critical content in materials and codes, and critical, democratic, and participatory assessment. While these components are present in this finding, the negotiated syllabus is not fully employed by the teachers. This is largely as most lecturers have already created the syllabus themselves, and student engagement to construct the syllabus is still under consideration. Mrs. Siska says that in her listening class, students are provided with material such as news podcasts and recorded speeches that address relevant social issues like the impact of social media on mental health and homelessness. The assessments involve students working individually or in pairs to critically analyze these materials, identifying key arguments, strengths, weaknesses, and potential biases. The assessments entail students working individually or in pairs to critically analyze these materials, identifying key arguments, strengths, and weaknesses. [Rohaniyah \(2021\)](#), [Thi et al. \(2021\)](#), [Nur et al. \(2023\)](#), and [Fajriyah et al. \(2021\)](#) also suggest that materials related to the current issues encourages students to develop critical listening and analytical skills, apply evidence-based analysis, and engage deeply with current social issues.

Despite the identifiable indicators of implementing critical pedagogy in the listening classroom, several challenges persist, particularly students' passivity. This issue is highlighted by most lecturers in the study. For instance, Mr. Ariz noted that students' passivity can be attributed to their cultural background, as many students graduate from *pesantren* where the lecturer-student power dynamic is vertical. However, this assumption may not hold universally, as Pak Aris, a *pesantren* graduate himself, now embraces critical pedagogy and holds critical perspectives. [Liu \(2020\)](#) challenges the notion that East Asian students are inherently submissive and obedient, and that lecturers are authoritative, leading to rigid, hierarchical classrooms that impede discussion. Similarly, the second challenge in accents and pronunciation during listening activities are significant in the implementation of critical pedagogy. Besides, the last challenge highlighted by Mrs. Eka is the evolving nature of critical thinking. It emphasizes the necessity of ongoing exploration, such as through critical discourse analysis, and acknowledges the persistent difficulty in ensuring that students fully grasp critical thinking concepts.

## 5. Conclusion

Critical pedagogy is implemented in the English listening class through various strategies that enhance students' engagement and critical thinking. Firstly, it transforms listening from a reproductive skill into an active process where students not only comprehend but also reconstruct and apply information in diverse contexts. This approach fosters deeper understanding and encourages students to connect listening activities with real-life issues, making learning relevant and meaningful. Additionally, by developing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students, where student agency and contributions are valued, a more egalitarian learning environment is created. Moreover, critical pedagogy promotes students' critical consciousness by encouraging dialogue that analyzes content contextually, purposefully, and from



multiple perspectives. Assessments are designed to be critical, democratic, and participatory, emphasizing practical outcomes and the application of critical thinking skills. However, challenges in implementing critical pedagogy include cultural norms affecting student participation, language barriers impacting comprehension, and the evolving nature of critical thinking itself, requiring ongoing lecturers' reflection and adaptation. Addressing these challenges ensures that critical pedagogy in the English listening class remains effective and inclusive, fostering both linguistic proficiency and critical awareness among students.

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## **2. BUKTI KONFIRMASI HASIL REVIEW DAN HASIL REVIEW**

[illegible]

## Exploring How Lecturers Comprehend and Apply Critical Pedagogy in English Listening Class

### ABSTRACT

*Grounded in the Freire's (1971) critical pedagogy premise revealing that the act of listening should be active, critical, and transformative, rather than passive or merely receptive, this research explored the experience of English language lecturers who taught English listening classes with critical pedagogy approach. This study employed a qualitative method through a case study approach to explore lecturers' perspectives in depth. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four lecturers and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The findings indicate that while lecturers did not explicitly define or describe critical pedagogy, certain stages and elements of it were evident in their teaching. This suggests that, to some extent, they incorporated aspects of critical pedagogy in their listening classes.*

**Key Words:** Critical Pedagogy, critical listening, reproductive skill.

### 1. Introduction

Implementing Critical Pedagogy in Indonesian higher education should be prioritized. Indonesia's long history under an authoritarian regime, followed by a regressive democracy in the post-reformation period highlights this need (Bangsa et al., 2023). These historical factors may have led to a diminished capacity for critique and a reduced sensitivity to social issues within the educational system. In education, the persistence of the banking system, where students are seen as depositories and teachers as the depositors of knowledge is evident. This system continues partly due to students' low interest and motivation in the learning process (Kızıldağ, 2023; Front, 2019). Additionally, while the information and communication technology development have positive effects, they also have drawbacks consequences, such as the spread of fake news. Therefore, fostering critical thinking abilities ought to be a top focus in Indonesian education at all levels.

In English language teaching (ELT), critical pedagogy has been introduced with the aim not only to improve English language skills but also to cultivate a critical awareness of injustice (Mishra, 2020; Bozkurt & Topkaya, 2023). Rooted in Freire (2020), critical pedagogy in language teaching seeks to transform classrooms by incorporating students' local culture, using their first language as a resource, addressing real-life concerns, and raising awareness of issues faced by marginalized groups. This approach aligns with critical language pedagogy introduced by Crookes (2021) who outlines three main concepts. Firstly, "critical pedagogy is democratic," aiming to foster greater democracy in society and within the classroom. Secondly, a critical pedagogy classroom is "dialogical," emphasizing exploratory and discussion-oriented learning. Lastly, although challenging to implement, "critical pedagogy is action-oriented".

Efforts to incorporate critical language pedagogy in ELT and language teacher education programs have been documented worldwide. Mishra (2020) lays the

**Comment [11]:** The study demonstrates several strengths, including its robust theoretical foundation in Freire's critical pedagogy principles, emphasizing transformative and dialogical learning. It effectively situates its findings within Indonesia's historical and educational context, underscoring the urgency of fostering critical thinking in a system long dominated by passive, banking-style education. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research delves deeply into lecturers' perspectives, benefiting from methodological rigor and participant diversity. The study provides valuable insights into how critical pedagogy can be implemented in real-world settings by focusing on practical applications in English listening classes. However, the research also reveals notable weaknesses, such as its limited sample size of four lecturers, which may not fully capture the diversity of practices across Indonesian higher education. The lecturers' implicit understanding of critical pedagogy and the study's narrow focus on listening classes constrain the broader applicability of the findings. The absence of student perspectives limits the assessment of the approach's impact on learners, and the implementation challenges are insufficiently addressed. To enhance future research, expanding participant scope, incorporating student feedback, offering professional development for lecturers, and leveraging technology to overcome systemic barriers are recommended solutions.



groundwork for critical pedagogy in ELT by outlining critical pedagogy principles and suggesting areas for practitioners. In Indonesia, Bangsa et al. (2023) applies critical pedagogy in an ELT classroom by using codes to teach English, enhancing both language skills and students' critical thinking. Tekin (2020) introduces critical pedagogy in higher education institution, through participatory research with a graduate teacher student in a professional learning program. This program has been successful in designing and implementing critical pedagogy in ELT, helping students become more critical, tolerant, and socially aware.

Prior studies demonstrate the potential benefits of implementing critical pedagogy in ELT. However, implementing critical pedagogy in language teaching and learning is not without challenges. Several empirical studies have investigated these challenges in various contexts (Tekin, 2020; Kızıldağ, 2023). While students respond positively to critical pedagogy in terms of language development and critical thinking through the dialogic approach to teaching critical language, the issues arise related to students' perspectives and academic voices and the conception of language as social practice. Additionally, Liu (2020) discusses the challenges of practicing critical pedagogy in EFL teaching in South Asia, including tensions between local and international geopolitical tendencies. He suggests the need to critically evaluate both traditional and modern approaches to education to be effective. In summary, previous studies indicate the potential for introducing or integrating critical pedagogy in ELT classrooms and English education programs, while also highlighting implementation challenges. These findings suggest the need for further investigation, particularly into how lecturers comprehend critical pedagogy and how they apply it in n teaching English listening.

Critical Pedagogy is particularly relevant now given that the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture has introduced a new curriculum named *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn). This curriculum aims to align education with current demands, changes, and the needs of the business and industrial sectors, preparing students for the workforce (Maghfiroh et al., 2022; Deta et al., 2020). However, instead of prioritizing social justice, this program appears to reflect a neoliberal ideology disguised as "freedom" (Sondari, 2021). In this educational context, implementing critical pedagogy approach is crucial to counterbalance these neoliberal tendencies. Moreover, there is a need for further research on implementing critical pedagogy in ELT across various settings and contexts. Little is currently known about how lecturers in Islamic-based universities, which emphasize the unity of sciences integrating science and religion, perceive and implement critical pedagogy. Therefore, the aim of this study is twofold: firstly, to examine lecturers' comprehension of critical pedagogy, and secondly, to explore its application in listening classroom.

## 2. Methods

### Research Design

To answer the research questions, this study used a case study design. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of a particular, bounded system such as an activity,

**Comment [I2]:** In what ways does the Indonesian "Merdeka Belajar" curriculum influence or conflict with the integration of critical pedagogy in ELT, particularly in Islamic-based university settings?



event, process, or individuals defined by certain temporal, spatial, or physical (Buwono et al., 2021). The purpose of a case study is to shed light on a particular issue, problem, or theory. As a qualitative research method, data collection and analysis in a case study occur concurrently and continuously (Roseli et al., 2020). The case study design can be somewhat flexible, with research questions becoming more refined following the initial analysis of interviews, diary entries, or observations (Al et al., 2023; Wales, 2019). Case studies can focus on single individuals, multiple individuals, programs, events, or activities (Maag et al., 2021; Shrestha & Bhattarai, 2022). In this research, the cases involved some lecturers. Specifically, this study employed case study approach, aiming to offer insights into a broader case while specific issue itself was of secondary importance, helping to enhance understanding of something else. An instrumental case study was chosen as the research sought to explore a broader issue concerning the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening comprehension classes. As an exploratory study, it focused on how lecturers articulate their understanding on CP perspectives and they incorporated this understanding into their teaching practices, particularly in teaching English listening skill.

### Participants

This research involved four English lecturers from four different universities and regions. Three participants have over ten years of experience teaching English, as confirmed by their curriculum vitae and their accounts during the interviews and one confessed to be a new lecturer. Informal conversations prior to the interviews revealed that all participants also had experience teaching listening comprehension for several years. The selection of participants was initially based on data from higher education sources (PDDIKTI) to verify their teaching experience in listening comprehension. The researchers then contacted the participants via email or WhatsApp, with contact information provided by colleagues familiar with the potential participants. Every participant willingly signed consent forms for the study and agreed to supply the required data. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

**Table 1. Demographic information of the participants**

No	Name	Gender	Teaching Experience	Qualification	Teaching Expertise
1	Siska	Female	16 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Informal Communication, Listening for Academic Communication, TEFL
2	Anna	Female	13 years	Master of Education	Listening I, Listening II, English Morphology, Critical Reading
3	Ariz	Male	11 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Social Interaction, Listening

					in Professional Context, Research Methodology in Linguistics and Literature
4	Eka	Female	5 years	Master of Education	Reading Comprehension, Intensive Listening, Extensive Listening

### Data Collection

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect data, asking participants about their experiences incorporating a critical pedagogy approach into their English listening classes. Prior to the first interview, this study had the interview guidelines reviewed by an expert to obtain feedback. The interview questions were then tested out on a person with research publications and experience in critical pedagogy. After revising the guidelines based on this feedback, this research involved four different interviews with the participants. Mrs. Siska was interviewed for the first time in the second week of January 2024. Mrs. Anna was interviewed in the third week of January 2024. The third interview, with Mr. Ariz, took place in the second week of February 2024. Finally, we interviewed Mrs. Eka in mid-March 2024. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom. To avoid language barriers and based on participants' preferences, the interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers then translated the transcripts into English.

### Data Analysis

The study's data were analyzed using six stages of thematic analysis, which include familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming the themes (Braun, 2006). Initially, the researchers familiarized themselves with the participants' responses by repeatedly listening to the audio recordings of the interviews. Next, the recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcriptions were read multiple times to fully grasp and interpret the participants' statements. Important statements from the interviews were then highlighted and coded according to theoretical frameworks, specifically components of critical pedagogy in teaching listening (Crookes, 2021). This process aimed to identify instances where critical pedagogy was implemented in the listening classes.

## 3. Findings

The results examine how the participating lecturers understood of critical pedagogy, how critical pedagogy was implemented in English listening classes, and what challenged they faced. The research questions and the emerging themes were used to organize the results.

### Lecturers' Understanding of Critical Pedagogy

The lecturers were generally unfamiliar with critical pedagogy. One participant's comment, when asked about critical pedagogy, made this clear: "Not yet, but if it is feasible to provide critical education, in general, for instance, although I can't recall everything precisely, I know from educational liberation"(Siska/Interview). This suggests that participants did not always understand the idea of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, the participants did grasp the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy. She also recognized well-known figures in critical pedagogy, like Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. This indicates her basic comprehension of the critical perspective in language teaching.

The interview with Mr. Ariz further demonstrated the lack of familiarity with critical pedagogy in English language instruction. He was unable to clearly explain what critical pedagogy was. However, he was able to provide examples of how he saw critical pedagogy principles being employed in listening classes. The excerpt below illustrates this as narrated by Mr. Ariz:

*In my listening classes, I incorporate strategies that encourage students to engage in critical analysis and reflection on the content they hear. For instance, I use audio materials on social issues, like speeches or news reports discussing human rights topics. After listening, we have a class discussion where I ask students to share their thoughts and feelings about the issue and what insights they gained from the material. (Mr. Ariz/Interview)*

The result of interview above reveals that incorporating audio resources on social issues, such as speeches or news report about human rights subjects encouraged students to critically analyze the information in addition to understanding it. Students were given the opportunity to voice their opinions during the ensuing class discussions, assisting them to develop a greater understanding and empathy for other points of view. Moreover, the lecturer's comprehension of critical pedagogy is further elucidated in another excerpt as follows.

*We encourage them to embrace their role. Their role extends beyond being mere students to becoming agents of change. This realization emphasizes that their responsibility doesn't end with learning alone. Students must exert a positive influence on their surroundings, demonstrating their ability to analyze and confront issues. By sharing insights and new information, they can help others develop a more informed perspective, thereby addressing any misunderstandings that may arise. (Siska/Interview)*

From the passage, Mrs. Siska recognized that critical pedagogy involved students critically analyzing issues and sharing their understanding with others, particularly those seeking insights from scholars. She also emphasized that students acted as social

change agent, advocating for a positive impact on society during and beyond their university education. Moreover, another lecturer, Mrs. Anna, possessed deeper knowledge of critical literacy compared to critical pedagogy. Her research focused on critical literacy, and she was familiar with critical literacy pedagogy as well. Anna viewed critical pedagogy as a broader concept or an extension of critical literacy pedagogy; she utilized literary works to teach listening skills in her classroom.

*I am familiar with critical literacy through my research projects, where I actively incorporate its principles. As for critical pedagogy, my focus lies specifically on critical listening pedagogy. (Anna/Interview).*

*Mrs. Eka acknowledged that she recently learned about critical pedagogy, despite teaching courses like critical listening and reading comprehension at the university. As one of the youngest lecturers with less teaching experience compared to her colleagues, she recognized the interconnectedness of language, culture, and ideology. She noted that "A person's culture can be expressed through their language and reflects the ideologies they uphold. (Eka/interview).*

In summary, although lecturers' explicit understanding of critical pedagogy was not directly stated, they demonstrated familiarity with certain perspectives and principles of critical pedagogy during the interviews. Based on the analysis of their understanding and endorsement of critical pedagogy principles to some degree, lecturers in this study could be categorized as 'critical pedagogy, defined by (Ortega, 2012) as ELT lecturers who utilized the fundamental values and theories of critical pedagogy. The subsequent findings related to the teachers' experiences in applying critical pedagogy in the listening classroom.

### **How Is Critical Pedagogy Implemented in the English Listening Class?**

#### **Listening as a Practice of Reproductive Skill**

"Listening as a reproductive skill" refers to the idea that listening is not just a passive activity but an active process where listeners mentally reproduce or reconstruct the information they hear. This involves comprehending, processing, and then potentially using the information in some form of response or further communication. In this sense, listening requires cognitive engagement and the ability to understand and recall spoken language accurately, making it an integral part of effective communication and language acquisition. More importantly, teaching listening should offer opportunities for students to actively engage in varied listening exercises that encourage critical thinking and interpretation. Regular practice, reflection, and analysis of content are essential to deepen understanding. Likewise, interactive activities requiring responses, learning effective listening strategies, exposure to diverse contexts, and receiving constructive feedback all contribute to skill enhancement.

**Comment [I3]:** How do the lecturers' implicit or partial comprehension of critical pedagogy affect their ability to fully integrate its principles into English listening classes?

**Comment [I4]:** What specific strategies or activities did the lecturers employ in their English listening classes that align with the critical pedagogy principles of democracy, dialogue, and action?

According to interview data, Mrs. Anna assumed that listening was not enough to listen to the ideas. Rather, it should be reproducing or reconstructing the information the students listen.

*Listening to ideas isn't enough. Instead, my students should actively work with the information they hear. This means they should understand it deeply and then use it to create their own ideas or responses. For example, they might summarize what they heard, talk about it with others, or use it in new situations. Good listening involves more than just hearing, it's about actively engaging with and using the information. .(Anna/Interview)*

It was also noteworthy that, as the following excerpt narrates, Mr. Ariz stressed the significance of providing opportunities for students to interpret the information during listening.

*Students have different interpretations as this happens because each listener brings their own background, experiences, and perspectives to what they hear. These personal factors can influence how they understand and interpret the information. For instance, one person might focus on the emotional tone of a speaker, while another might concentrate on the factual content. This diversity in interpretation is natural and can lead to rich discussions and deeper understanding when listeners share and compare their viewpoints.(Ariz/Interview)*

### **Connecting Listening with Real-Life Issues**

Mrs. Anna emphasized that effective listening required sustained concentration, which could be challenging to maintain, particularly during lengthy or complex discussions and presentations. To make her listening class more engaging, she introduced global topics and issues relevant to the students' lives. This approach involved having the students discuss these topics in class. She also encouraged them to share their opinions on what they listened to. This approach was illustrated in the following excerpt.

*In critical listening, after listening to the audio, the class becomes more interactive, resembling a discussion. Students are encouraged to consistently share their opinions, ensuring the class is lively and filled with discussions among the students*

Mrs. Anna highlighted that teaching listening should go beyond fostering critical thinking; it ought to benefit others, as she clarified in the following excerpt.

*Teaching listening skills should not be limited to developing students' ability to think critically. It should also aim to influence others positively. This can involve encouraging students to use their listening skills to contribute to discussions, support their peers, and engage constructively with the world around them. By doing so, the impact of effective listening extends beyond the*

*classroom, fostering a more collaborative and empathetic community.*  
(Anna/interview)

She encouraged her students to link their listening activities to real-world issues, welcoming any topics to be discussed in the classroom, as she explained.

*I motivate my students to relate what they listen to such as podcasts, news, interviews, or any form of audio content to real-world problems and situations. I invite students to bring any relevant topics or issues they find important or interesting into the classroom discussions. This approach is intended to make the listening activities more meaningful and relevant to the students' lives, fostering an environment where diverse and significant real-life issues can be explored and discussed openly.* (Anna/interview)

In sum, lecturers in this study had understood how to teach listening more critically and know how to make listening classrooms to be more engaging as well as relate teaching listening with real-life issues. This practice of teaching was relevant to the principle of critical thinking which empathized on engaging students critically with social issues as suggested by Freire.

### **Developing Horizontal Relationships to Be Active Listener**

A horizontal learning pattern involved recognizing everyone's knowledge and backgrounds, where learners' contributions and perspectives were valued equally to those of the teacher. Mrs. Dynar revealed that the power of relation matters was significant in the teaching of listening. She argued that students ought to have more agency and influence in the classroom compared to the teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

*My teaching style is centered on power relationships; I empower my students and express my appreciation when they can effectively argue verbally.*  
(Dynar/interview)

*Giving students the ability to choose the listening materials they engage with, whether through selecting topics or formats that interest them, you empower them within the learning process. This autonomy fosters a sense of investment and responsibility in their own learning, thereby establishing a more balanced power relationship between teacher and students.* (Eka/interview)

The interview with Mrs. Dynar revealed his commitment to fostering a horizontal relationship between lecturer and student. In class, she often referred to her students as friends to build an egalitarian atmosphere. Initially, students found this approach awkward, but they gradually accepted it. Mrs. Dynar believed that creating an equal relationship enhanced student engagement in onsite discussions although she acknowledged that student motivation also played a role. Similarly, Mrs Eka, the youngest lecturer in this study, tended to develop close relationships with her students

and frequently participates in student-organized activities. Overall, the participants in this study prioritize establishing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students.

### **Developing Students' Critical Consciousness to Engage with What They Hear.**

Based on the critical pedagogy components, Freire (2000) suggested that the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. Mrs. Siska argued that critical consciousness could be employed by engaging students in discussion that critically analyzes the content. This process required students to go beyond merely understanding the content by considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. Understanding the context such as the time, place, and situation surrounding the message helped students grasp why and how the information was being communicated, influencing its meaning and relevance. Similarly, recognizing the purpose helped students evaluate the speaker's intentions and understanding perspective allowed students to consider how the speaker's personal context and worldview influenced the content and how it was delivered.

Mr. Dynar also suggested that engaging in dialogue after students had understood listening material played a pivotal role in developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students shared diverse experiences and perspectives related to the content, fostering empathy and deepening understanding of societal issues. It encouraged students to challenge assumptions, critically analyze multiple viewpoints, and collaboratively construct knowledge. For example, students were studying a podcast about climate change. After listening to the podcast individually Mrs. Dynar divided the class into small groups. Each group discussed different aspects of the podcast, such as the causes of climate change, its impact on communities, and possible solutions. During these discussions, students shared their insights and raised questions about how societal norms contributed to environmental issues. They used reflective journaling to note down their thoughts on what they learned and how they feel about the topic. This process empowered them to critically reflect on environmental issues and considered actions they could take to address them, fostering a learning environment which encouraged transformative thinking and social responsibility.

### **Establishing Critical, Democratic, and Participatory Assessment**

According to Crookes (2021), assessment in education should embody critical, democratic, and participatory principles. Interviews with participants revealed a preference for assessments emphasizing practical outcomes over mere comprehension testing. They advocated for assessments requiring students to apply their understanding and critical thinking abilities to generate novel knowledge. For instance, Mr. Ariz asked students to listen to a news podcast episode talking about "social media impact on mental health among teenagers". Having listening it, they worked in pairs to identify key arguments in the podcast. Each pair then prepared a brief oral presentation where they critically analyzed how the podcast portrayed the relationship between

social media use and mental health issues. This assessment promoted critical listening skills, evidence-based analysis, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with current issues in the media.

Similarly, Mrs. Eka requested students to listen to a recorded short speech by a community leader addressing the issue of homelessness in their city. After listening, students worked individually to analyze the speech critically. They identified the strengths, such as compelling personal stories, statistical evidence, or motivational language resonating with the audience. They also identified weaknesses, such as potential biases in the presentation of information or logical inconsistencies. Students then wrote a reflective essay summarizing their analysis discussing how effective they found the speech in conveying its message, and proposing additional considerations or actions enhancing the impact of addressing homelessness in their community. She also conveyed that this assessment encouraged students to apply critical listening, and analytical skills, and to reflect on the complexities of addressing social issues through persuasive speech.

### Lecturers' Self-Reported Challenges in Implementing Critical Pedagogy

Previous research and this study both identified several challenges in implementing critical pedagogy. One significant challenge was the low level of student participation and engagement in discussions about texts. Mr. Ariz suggested this could be attributed to cultural factors, particularly among students who were alumni of *pesantren*. In *pesantren*, there was traditionally a vertical power relationship where students (*santri*) typically listened to and obeyed their teachers (*kyai*). Mr. Ariz, who himself was a *santri*, acknowledged the unequal power dynamics between students and lecturers in this context, noting that expressing ideas or opinions was not commonly encouraged.

"In *pesantren*, there is a cultural norm of listening and obeying rather than actively expressing thoughts and opinions. Reflecting on my own experience at the boarding school, I find that discussions and offering opinions in front of the *Kyai* (teacher) are uncommon. I listen to the *Kyai* with dialogue being infrequent". (Ariz/interview)

The reason why students were passive in the listening class was due to their low English proficiency. Students with limited English skills obtained some challenges: understanding vocabulary, language structure, and expressing opinions in English. To address the third challenge, one potential solution was letting students to use their native language (L1) when sharing their arguments. However, there were concerns permitting L1 employ could be seen as a violation, especially since these students were training to become English teachers who needed to demonstrate proficiency in English. Additionally, students' passivity was influenced by low motivation and literacy levels, as they perceived listening as a challenging activity.

**Comment [15]:** What barriers or limitations did the lecturers encounter in applying critical pedagogy in listening classes, and how did these challenges reflect broader systemic issues in Indonesian education?



The second challenge of implementing critical pedagogy in listening classroom was the problem of accents and pronunciation. Exposure to different English accents, such as British, American, Australian, posed challenges for students in understanding varied pronunciations and intonations. Accents different from those encountered in the classroom could be particularly difficult. Moreover, each accent had distinct pronunciation patterns, intonations, and even vocabulary differences. Mrs. Siska, Anna, and Eka confirmed this challenge since it directly impacted students' comprehension and communication abilities.

The third, from a personal perspective, Mrs. Eka highlighted a challenge of applying critical pedagogy, particularly concerning the evolving nature of critical thinking. She emphasized the need to continually update our understanding of what constituted critical thinking, suggesting ongoing exploration, such as through critical discourse analysis. Additionally, Mrs. Eka underscored the difficulty in ensuring students grasp critical thinking concepts, acknowledging this as a persistent challenge in education.

"Another challenge is ensuring students comprehend critical thinking. Currently, I am considering how to address students' struggles with this concept, suggesting that teachers should create structured stages, such as higher-order thinking skills guidelines. This approach involves transitioning from lower-order thinking to higher-order thinking using specific operational verbs'. (Eka/interview)

#### **4. Discussion**

This section discusses three main issues that arise from the findings. Firstly, this study examines lecturers' understanding of critical pedagogy. Based on this analysis, lecturers still lack awareness of critical pedagogy, particularly regarding its definition. However, interview data reveals that teachers do grasp aspects of critical pedagogy, especially in the context of teaching critical listening. They hope that students develop critical thinking skills through these units. This aligns with Freire (2020), educational philosophy, which states that the purpose of education is to foster critical thinking by presenting real-life situations as problems for reflection and action (Basyoni & Medd, 2023). Despite their unfamiliarity with the formal notion of critical pedagogy, previous research supports this finding. For example, Magill (2018) demonstrates that indicators of critical pedagogy can be observed in classroom activities and the learning process, yet lecturers remain unaware of the concept itself. They do incorporate some critical elements in their teaching, yet as Wiley notes, "they just don't know what they know."

Second, the indicator focuses on steps for implementing critical pedagogy in listening classes, highlighting the essential components of this educational approach. It is evident that lecturers have, to some extent, incorporated the steps of critical pedagogy in teaching listening as recommended by (Basyoni & Medd, 2023). Lecturers emphasize that listening should not be confined to acquiring knowledge; instead, it should involve creating new knowledge. Expanding on this idea, Active et al. (2020) and Vani (2023) describe studying as a process of reinventing, recreating, and rewriting,

which is an active task for the subject, not a passive one for the object. In this context, Andriana & Evans (2020), Benjamin & Kline (2019), and Harida (2021) note that learning involves constructing one's reality through social interactions rather than merely absorbing facts. The findings of this study also reinforce the idea that listening should be connected to real-life issues. Relating listening material to real-life contexts can enhance students' motivation, especially since many students find listening is the most difficult skill.

The passive nature of the classroom becomes problematic when implementing critical pedagogy. It is often assumed that students in East Asian countries are submissive and obedient, while lecturers are authoritative and authoritarian, leading to rigid and hierarchical classrooms that hinder discussions between students and lecturers (Baturay, 2020; Friston et al., 2020). However, data from interviews indicate that lecturers are challenging this assumption by fostering horizontal relationships with students. One lecturer even states that he empowers his students significantly. In critical listening classrooms, these lecturers emphasize that the relationship between teacher and listeners should be equal, necessitating a critical approach to listening. Nevertheless, student reactions to critical listening are mixed. In Mr. Ariz's class, some students complain that the lessons become more complex, conflicting with their belief that language learning is primarily for instrumental purposes, such as achieving higher test scores. Critical pedagogy, however, extends beyond this, aiming to equip students with a language of critique to promote equality, social justice, and social transformation (Ipek, 2020; Jia & Hew, 2021; Kabir & Zealand, 2024).

Mrs. Siska emphasizes the principles of critical pedagogy, as suggested by Freire (2000), which include dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. She advocates for fostering critical consciousness by engaging students in discussions that analyze content beyond surface understanding, considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. This approach helps students grasp the broader implications of the message. Mrs. Siska further suggests that dialogue, following comprehension of listening material, is crucial for developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students share diverse perspectives, challenge assumptions, and collaboratively construct knowledge, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of societal issues (Ngo, 2019; Ozcelik et al., 2020; Wuryaningrum et al., 2022).

To further explore the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening classroom, some components suggested by (Crookes, 2021) were examined. The analysis assumed some key components of critical pedagogy in this research: a negotiated syllabus, critical content in materials and codes, and critical, democratic, and participatory assessment. While these components are present in this finding, the negotiated syllabus is not fully employed by the teachers. This is largely as most lecturers have already created the syllabus themselves, and student engagement to construct the syllabus is still under consideration. Mrs. Siska says that in her listening class, students are provided with material such as news podcasts and recorded speeches that address relevant social issues like the impact of social media on mental health and homelessness. The assessments involve students working individually or in pairs to

critically analyze these materials, identifying key arguments, strengths, weaknesses, and potential biases. The assessments entail students working individually or in pairs to critically analyze these materials, identifying key arguments, strengths, and weaknesses. Rohaniyah (2021), Thi et al. (2021), Nur et al. (2023), and Fajriyah et al. (2021) also suggest that materials related to the current issues encourages students to develop critical listening and analytical skills, apply evidence-based analysis, and engage deeply with current social issues.

Despite the identifiable indicators of implementing critical pedagogy in the listening classroom, several challenges persist, particularly students' passivity. This issue is highlighted by most lecturers in the study. For instance, Mr. Ariz noted that students' passivity can be attributed to their cultural background, as many students graduate from *pesantren* where the lecturer-student power dynamic is vertical. However, this assumption may not hold universally, as Pak Aris, a *pesantren* graduate himself, now embraces critical pedagogy and holds critical perspectives. Liu (2020) challenges the notion that East Asian students are inherently submissive and obedient, and that lecturers are authoritative, leading to rigid, hierarchical classrooms that impede discussion. Similarly, the second challenge in accents and pronunciation during listening activities are significant in the implementation of critical pedagogy. Besides, the last challenge highlighted by Mrs. Eka is the evolving nature of critical thinking. It emphasizes the necessity of ongoing exploration, such as through critical discourse analysis, and acknowledges the persistent difficulty in ensuring that students fully grasp critical thinking concepts.

**Comment [16]:** How did incorporating elements of critical pedagogy in listening classes influence students' language development, critical thinking skills, and engagement with social issues?

## 5. Conclusion

Critical pedagogy is implemented in the English listening class through various strategies that enhance students' engagement and critical thinking. Firstly, it transforms listening from a reproductive skill into an active process where students not only comprehend but also reconstruct and apply information in diverse contexts. This approach fosters deeper understanding and encourages students to connect listening activities with real-life issues, making learning relevant and meaningful. Additionally, by developing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students, where student agency and contributions are valued, a more egalitarian learning environment is created. Moreover, critical pedagogy promotes students' critical consciousness by encouraging dialogue that analyzes content contextually, purposefully, and from multiple perspectives. Assessments are designed to be critical, democratic, and participatory, emphasizing practical outcomes and the application of critical thinking skills. However, challenges in implementing critical pedagogy include cultural norms affecting student participation, language barriers impacting comprehension, and the evolving nature of critical thinking itself, requiring ongoing lecturers' reflection and adaptation. Addressing these challenges ensures that critical pedagogy in the English listening class remains effective and inclusive, fostering both linguistic proficiency and critical awareness among students.

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## Exploring How Lecturers Comprehend and Apply Critical Pedagogy in English Listening Class

### ABSTRACT

Grounded in the Freire's (1971) critical pedagogy premise revealing that the act of listening should be active, critical, and transformative, rather than passive or merely receptive, this research explored the experience of English language lecturers who taught English listening classes with critical pedagogy approach. This study employed a qualitative method through a case study approach to explore lecturers' perspectives in depth. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four lecturers and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The findings indicate that while lecturers did not explicitly define or describe critical pedagogy, certain stages and elements of it were evident in their teaching. This suggests that, to some extent, they incorporated aspects of critical pedagogy in their listening classes.

**Key Words:** Critical Pedagogy, critical listening, reproductive skill.

**Comment [AA1]:** What kind of the new insight, values, and impacts of this study want to address for?

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**Comment [AA3]:** What is the meaning of this statement refers to?

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### 1. Introduction

Implementing Critical Pedagogy in Indonesian higher education should be prioritized. Indonesia's long history under an authoritarian regime, followed by a regressive democracy in the post-reformation period highlights this need (Bangsa et al., 2023). These historical factors may have led to a diminished capacity for critique and a reduced sensitivity to social issues within the educational system. In education, the persistence of the banking system, where students are seen as depositories and teachers as the depositors of knowledge is evident. This system continues partly due to students' low interest and motivation in the learning process (Kızıldağ, 2023; Front, 2019). Additionally, while the information and communication technology development have positive effects, they also have drawbacks consequences, such as the spread of fake news. Therefore, fostering critical thinking abilities ought to be a top focus in Indonesian education at all levels.

In English language teaching (ELT), critical pedagogy has been introduced with the aim not only to improve English language skills but also to cultivate a critical awareness of injustice (Mishra, 2020; Bozkurt & Topkaya, 2023). Rooted in Freire (2020), critical pedagogy in language teaching seeks to transform classrooms by incorporating students' local culture, using their first language as a resource, addressing real-life concerns, and raising awareness of issues faced by marginalized groups. This approach aligns with critical language pedagogy introduced by Crookes (2021) who outlines three main concepts. Firstly, "critical pedagogy is democratic," aiming to foster greater democracy in society and within the classroom. Secondly, a critical pedagogy classroom is "dialogical," emphasizing exploratory and discussion-oriented learning. Lastly, although challenging to implement, "critical pedagogy is action-oriented".

Efforts to incorporate critical language pedagogy in ELT and language teacher education programs have been documented worldwide. Mishra (2020) lays the

groundwork for critical pedagogy in ELT by outlining critical pedagogy principles and suggesting areas for practitioners. In Indonesia, Bangsa et al. (2023) applies critical pedagogy in an ELT classroom by using codes to teach English, enhancing both language skills and students' critical thinking. Tekin (2020) introduces critical pedagogy in higher education institution, through participatory research with a graduate teacher student in a professional learning program. This program has been successful in designing and implementing critical pedagogy in ELT, helping students become more critical, tolerant, and socially aware.

Prior studies demonstrate the potential benefits of implementing critical pedagogy in ELT. However, implementing critical pedagogy in language teaching and learning is not without challenges. Several empirical studies have investigated these challenges in various contexts (Tekin, 2020; Kızıldağ, 2023). While students respond positively to critical pedagogy in terms of language development and critical thinking through the dialogic approach to teaching critical language, the issues arise related to students' perspectives and academic voices and the conception of language as social practice. Additionally, Liu (2020) discusses the challenges of practicing critical pedagogy in EFL teaching in South Asia, including tensions between local and international geopolitical tendencies. He suggests the need to critically evaluate both traditional and modern approaches to education to be effective. In summary, previous studies indicate the potential for introducing or integrating critical pedagogy in ELT classrooms and English education programs, while also highlighting implementation challenges. These findings suggest the need for further investigation, particularly into how lecturers comprehend critical pedagogy and how they apply it in a teaching English listening.

Critical Pedagogy is particularly relevant now given that the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture has introduced a new curriculum named *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn). This curriculum aims to align education with current demands, changes, and the needs of the business and industrial sectors, preparing students for the workforce (Maghfiroh et al., 2022; Deta et al., 2020). However, instead of prioritizing social justice, this program appears to reflect a neoliberal ideology disguised as "freedom" (Sondari, 2021). In this educational context, implementing critical pedagogy approach is crucial to counterbalance these neoliberal tendencies. Moreover, there is a need for further research on implementing critical pedagogy in ELT across various settings and contexts. Little is currently known about how lecturers in Islamic-based universities, which emphasize the unity of sciences integrating science and religion, perceive and implement critical pedagogy. Therefore, the aim of this study is twofold: firstly, to examine lecturers' comprehension of critical pedagogy, and secondly, to explore its application in listening classroom.

## **2. Methods**

### **Research Design**

To answer the research questions, this study used a case study design. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of a particular, bounded system such as an activity,



event, process, or individuals defined by certain temporal, spatial, or physical (Buwono et al., 2021). The purpose of a case study is to shed light on a particular issue, problem, or theory. As a qualitative research method, data collection and analysis in a case study occur concurrently and continuously (Roseli et al., 2020). The case study design can be somewhat flexible, with research questions becoming more refined following the initial analysis of interviews, diary entries, or observations (Al et al., 2023; Wales, 2019). Case studies can focus on single individuals, multiple individuals, programs, events, or activities (Maag et al., 2021; Shrestha & Bhattarai, 2022). In this research, the cases involved some lecturers. Specifically, this study employed case study approach, aiming to offer insights into a broader case while specific issue itself was of secondary importance, helping to enhance understanding of something else. An instrumental case study was chosen as the research sought to explore a broader issue concerning the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening comprehension classes. As an exploratory study, it focused on how lecturers articulate their understanding on CP perspectives and they incorporated this understanding into their teaching practices, particularly in teaching English listening skill.

### Participants

This research involved four English lecturers from four different universities and regions. Three participants have over ten years of experience teaching English, as confirmed by their curriculum vitae and their accounts during the interviews and one confessed to be a new lecturer. Informal conversations prior to the interviews revealed that all participants also had experience teaching listening comprehension for several years. The selection of participants was initially based on data from higher education sources (PDDIKTI) to verify their teaching experience in listening comprehension. The researchers then contacted the participants via email or WhatsApp, with contact information provided by colleagues familiar with the potential participants. Every participant willingly signed consent forms for the study and agreed to supply the required data. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

**Table 1. Demographic information of the participants**

No	Name	Gender	Teaching Experience	Qualification	Teaching Expertise
1	Siska	Female	16 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Informal Communication, Listening for Academic Communication, TEFL
2	Anna	Female	13 years	Master of Education	Listening I, Listening II, English Morphology, Critical Reading
3	Ariz	Male	11 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Social Interaction, Listening

					in Professional Context, Research Methodology in Linguistics and Literature
4	Eka	Female	5 years	Master of Education	Reading Comprehension, Intensive Listening, Extensive Listening

### Data Collection

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect data, asking participants about their experiences incorporating a critical pedagogy approach into their English listening classes. Prior to the first interview, this study had the interview guidelines reviewed by an expert to obtain feedback. The interview questions were then tested out on a person with research publications and experience in critical pedagogy. After revising the guidelines based on this feedback, this research involved four different interviews with the participants. Mrs. Siska was interviewed for the first time in the second week of January 2024. Mrs. Anna was interviewed in the third week of January 2024. The third interview, with Mr. Ariz, took place in the second week of February 2024. Finally, we interviewed Mrs. Eka in mid-March 2024. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom. To avoid language barriers and based on participants' preferences, the interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers then translated the transcripts into English.

### Data Analysis

The study's data were analyzed using six stages of thematic analysis, which include familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming the themes (Braun, 2006). Initially, the researchers familiarized themselves with the participants' responses by repeatedly listening to the audio recordings of the interviews. Next, the recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcriptions were read multiple times to fully grasp and interpret the participants' statements. Important statements from the interviews were then highlighted and coded according to theoretical frameworks, specifically components of critical pedagogy in teaching listening (Crookes, 2021). This process aimed to identify instances where critical pedagogy was implemented in the listening classes.

## 3. Findings

The results examine how the participating lecturers understood of critical pedagogy, how critical pedagogy was implemented in English listening classes, and what challenged they faced. The research questions and the emerging themes were used to organize the results.

### Lecturers' Understanding of Critical Pedagogy

The lecturers were generally unfamiliar with critical pedagogy. One participant's comment, when asked about critical pedagogy, made this clear: "Not yet, but if it is feasible to provide critical education, in general, for instance, although I can't recall everything precisely, I know from educational liberation"(Siska/Interview). This suggests that participants did not always understand the idea of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, the participants did grasp the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy. She also recognized well-known figures in critical pedagogy, like Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. This indicates her basic comprehension of the critical perspective in language teaching.

The interview with Mr. Ariz further demonstrated the lack of familiarity with critical pedagogy in English language instruction. He was unable to clearly explain what critical pedagogy was. However, he was able to provide examples of how he saw critical pedagogy principles being employed in listening classes. The excerpt below illustrates this as narrated by Mr. Ariz:

*In my listening classes, I incorporate strategies that encourage students to engage in critical analysis and reflection on the content they hear. For instance, I use audio materials on social issues, like speeches or news reports discussing human rights topics. After listening, we have a class discussion where I ask students to share their thoughts and feelings about the issue and what insights they gained from the material. (Mr. Ariz/Interview)*

The result of interview above reveals that incorporating audio resources on social issues, such as speeches or news report about human rights subjects encouraged students to critically analyze the information in addition to understanding it. Students were given the opportunity to voice their opinions during the ensuing class discussions, assisting them to develop a greater understanding and empathy for other points of view. Moreover, the lecturer's comprehension of critical pedagogy is further elucidated in another excerpt as follows.

*We encourage them to embrace their role. Their role extends beyond being mere students to becoming agents of change. This realization emphasizes that their responsibility doesn't end with learning alone. Students must exert a positive influence on their surroundings, demonstrating their ability to analyze and confront issues. By sharing insights and new information, they can help others develop a more informed perspective, thereby addressing any misunderstandings that may arise. (Siska/Interview)*

From the passage, Mrs. Siska recognized that critical pedagogy involved students critically analyzing issues and sharing their understanding with others, particularly those seeking insights from scholars. She also emphasized that students acted as social

change agent, advocating for a positive impact on society during and beyond their university education. Moreover, another lecturer, Mrs. Anna, possessed deeper knowledge of critical literacy compared to critical pedagogy. Her research focused on critical literacy, and she was familiar with critical literacy pedagogy as well. Anna viewed critical pedagogy as a broader concept or an extension of critical literacy pedagogy; she utilized literary works to teach listening skills in her classroom.

*I am familiar with critical literacy through my research projects, where I actively incorporate its principles. As for critical pedagogy, my focus lies specifically on critical listening pedagogy. (Anna/Interview).*

*Mrs. Eka acknowledged that she recently learned about critical pedagogy, despite teaching courses like critical listening and reading comprehension at the university. As one of the youngest lecturers with less teaching experience compared to her colleagues, she recognized the interconnectedness of language, culture, and ideology. She noted that "A person's culture can be expressed through their language and reflects the ideologies they uphold. (Eka/interview).*

In summary, although lecturers' explicit understanding of critical pedagogy was not directly stated, they demonstrated familiarity with certain perspectives and principles of critical pedagogy during the interviews. Based on the analysis of their understanding and endorsement of critical pedagogy principles to some degree, lecturers in this study could be categorized as 'critical pedagogy, defined by (Ortega, 2012) as ELT lecturers who utilized the fundamental values and theories of critical pedagogy. The subsequent findings related to the teachers' experiences in applying critical pedagogy in the listening classroom.

### **How Is Critical Pedagogy Implemented in the English Listening Class?**

#### **Listening as a Practice of Reproductive Skill**

Listening as a reproductive skill" refers to the idea that listening is not just a passive activity but an active process where listeners mentally reproduce or reconstruct the information they hear. This involves comprehending, processing, and then potentially using the information in some form of response or further communication. In this sense, listening requires cognitive engagement and the ability to understand and recall spoken language accurately, making it an integral part of effective communication and language acquisition. More importantly, teaching listening should offer opportunities for students to actively engage in varied listening exercises that encourage critical thinking and interpretation. Regular practice, reflection, and analysis of content are essential to deepen understanding. Likewise, interactive activities requiring responses, learning effective listening strategies, exposure to diverse contexts, and receiving constructive feedback all contribute to skill enhancement.

**Comment [AA5]:** It needs more empirical evidence for this paragraph.

According to interview data, Mrs. Anna assumed that listening was not enough to listen to the ideas. Rather, it should be reproducing or reconstructing the information the students listen.

*Listening to ideas isn't enough. Instead, my students should actively work with the information they hear. This means they should understand it deeply and then use it to create their own ideas or responses. For example, they might summarize what they heard, talk about it with others, or use it in new situations. Good listening involves more than just hearing, it's about actively engaging with and using the information. .(Anna/Interview)*

It was also noteworthy that, as the following excerpt narrates, Mr. Ariz stressed the significance of providing opportunities for students to interpret the information during listening.

*Students have different interpretations as this happens because each listener brings their own background, experiences, and perspectives to what they hear. These personal factors can influence how they understand and interpret the information. For instance, one person might focus on the emotional tone of a speaker, while another might concentrate on the factual content. This diversity in interpretation is natural and can lead to rich discussions and deeper understanding when listeners share and compare their viewpoints.(Ariz/Interview)*

### **Connecting Listening with Real-Life Issues**

Mrs. Anna emphasized that effective listening required sustained concentration, which could be challenging to maintain, particularly during lengthy or complex discussions and presentations. To make her listening class more engaging, she introduced global topics and issues relevant to the students' lives. This approach involved having the students discuss these topics in class. She also encouraged them to share their opinions on what they listened to. This approach was illustrated in the following excerpt.

*In critical listening, after listening to the audio, the class becomes more interactive, resembling a discussion. Students are encouraged to consistently share their opinions, ensuring the class is lively and filled with discussions among the students*

Mrs. Anna highlighted that teaching listening should go beyond fostering critical thinking; it ought to benefit others, as she clarified in the following excerpt.

*Teaching listening skills should not be limited to developing students' ability to think critically. It should also aim to influence others positively. This can involve encouraging students to use their listening skills to contribute to discussions, support their peers, and engage constructively with the world around them. By doing so, the impact of effective listening extends beyond the*

*classroom, fostering a more collaborative and empathetic community.*  
(Anna/interview)

She encouraged her students to link their listening activities to real-world issues, welcoming any topics to be discussed in the classroom, as she explained.

*I motivate my students to relate what they listen to such as podcasts, news, interviews, or any form of audio content to real-world problems and situations. I invite students to bring any relevant topics or issues they find important or interesting into the classroom discussions. This approach is intended to make the listening activities more meaningful and relevant to the students' lives, fostering an environment where diverse and significant real-life issues can be explored and discussed openly.* (Anna/interview)

In sum, lecturers in this study had understood how to teach listening more critically and know how to make listening classrooms to be more engaging as well as relate teaching listening with real-life issues. This practice of teaching was relevant to the principle of critical thinking which empathized on engaging students critically with social issues as suggested by Freire.

### **Developing Horizontal Relationships to Be Active Listener**

A horizontal learning pattern involved recognizing everyone's knowledge and backgrounds, where learners' contributions and perspectives were valued equally to those of the teacher. Mrs. Dynar revealed that the power of relation matters was significant in the teaching of listening. She argued that students ought to have more agency and influence in the classroom compared to the teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

*My teaching style is centered on power relationships; I empower my students and express my appreciation when they can effectively argue verbally.*  
(Dynar/interview)

*Giving students the ability to choose the listening materials they engage with, whether through selecting topics or formats that interest them, you empower them within the learning process. This autonomy fosters a sense of investment and responsibility in their own learning, thereby establishing a more balanced power relationship between teacher and students.* (Eka/interview)

The interview with Mrs. Dynar revealed his commitment to fostering a horizontal relationship between lecturer and student. In class, she often referred to her students as friends to build an egalitarian atmosphere. Initially, students found this approach awkward, but they gradually accepted it. Mrs. Dynar believed that creating an equal relationship enhanced student engagement in onsite discussions although she acknowledged that student motivation also played a role. Similarly, Mrs Eka, the youngest lecturer in this study, tended to develop close relationships with her students

and frequently participates in student-organized activities. Overall, the participants in this study prioritize establishing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students.

### **Developing Students' Critical Consciousness to Engage with What They Hear.**

Based on the critical pedagogy components, Freire (2000) suggested that the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. Mrs. Siska argued that critical consciousness could be employed by engaging students in discussion that critically analyzes the content. This process required students to go beyond merely understanding the content by considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. Understanding the context such as the time, place, and situation surrounding the message helped students grasp why and how the information was being communicated, influencing its meaning and relevance. Similarly, recognizing the purpose helped students evaluate the speaker's intentions and understanding perspective allowed students to consider how the speaker's personal context and worldview influenced the content and how it was delivered.

Mr. Dynar also suggested that engaging in dialogue after students had understood listening material played a pivotal role in developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students shared diverse experiences and perspectives related to the content, fostering empathy and deepening understanding of societal issues. It encouraged students to challenge assumptions, critically analyze multiple viewpoints, and collaboratively construct knowledge. For example, students were studying a podcast about climate change. After listening to the podcast individually Mrs. Dynar divided the class into small groups. Each group discussed different aspects of the podcast, such as the causes of climate change, its impact on communities, and possible solutions. During these discussions, students shared their insights and raised questions about how societal norms contributed to environmental issues. They used reflective journaling to note down their thoughts on what they learned and how they feel about the topic. This process empowered them to critically reflect on environmental issues and considered actions they could take to address them, fostering a learning environment which encouraged transformative thinking and social responsibility.

### **Establishing Critical, Democratic, and Participatory Assessment**

According to Crookes (2021), assessment in education should embody critical, democratic, and participatory principles. Interviews with participants revealed a preference for assessments emphasizing practical outcomes over mere comprehension testing. They advocated for assessments requiring students to apply their understanding and critical thinking abilities to generate novel knowledge. For instance, Mr. Ariz asked students to listen to a news podcast episode talking about "social media impact on mental health among teenagers". Having listening it, they worked in pairs to identify key arguments in the podcast. Each pair then prepared a brief oral presentation where they critically analyzed how the podcast portrayed the relationship between

social media use and mental health issues. This assessment promoted critical listening skills, evidence-based analysis, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with current issues in the media.

Similarly, Mrs. Eka requested students to listen to a recorded short speech by a community leader addressing the issue of homelessness in their city. After listening, students worked individually to analyze the speech critically. They identified the strengths, such as compelling personal stories, statistical evidence, or motivational language resonating with the audience. They also identified weaknesses, such as potential biases in the presentation of information or logical inconsistencies. Students then wrote a reflective essay summarizing their analysis discussing how effective they found the speech in conveying its message, and proposing additional considerations or actions enhancing the impact of addressing homelessness in their community. She also conveyed that this assessment encouraged students to apply critical listening, and analytical skills, and to reflect on the complexities of addressing social issues through persuasive speech.

### **Lecturers' Self-Reported Challenges in Implementing Critical Pedagogy**

Previous research and this study both identified several challenges in implementing critical pedagogy. One significant challenge was the low level of student participation and engagement in discussions about texts. Mr. Ariz suggested this could be attributed to cultural factors, particularly among students who were alumni of *pesantren*. In *pesantren*, there was traditionally a vertical power relationship where students (*santri*) typically listened to and obeyed their teachers (*kyai*). Mr. Ariz, who himself was a *santri*, acknowledged the unequal power dynamics between students and lecturers in this context, noting that expressing ideas or opinions was not commonly encouraged.

"In *pesantren*, there is a cultural norm of listening and obeying rather than actively expressing thoughts and opinions. Reflecting on my own experience at the boarding school, I find that discussions and offering opinions in front of the *Kyai* (teacher) are uncommon. I listen to the *Kyai* with dialogue being infrequent". (*Ariz/interview*)

The reason why students were passive in the listening class was due to their low English proficiency. Students with limited English skills obtained some challenges: understanding vocabulary, language structure, and expressing opinions in English. To address the third challenge, one potential solution was letting students to use their native language (L1) when sharing their arguments. However, there were concerns permitting L1 employ could be seen as a violation, especially since these students were training to become English teachers who needed to demonstrate proficiency in English. Additionally, students' passivity was influenced by low motivation and literacy levels, as they perceived listening as a challenging activity.



The second challenge of implementing critical pedagogy in listening classroom was the problem of accents and pronunciation. Exposure to different English accents, such as British, American, Australian, posed challenges for students in understanding varied pronunciations and intonations. Accents different from those encountered in the classroom could be particularly difficult. Moreover, each accent had distinct pronunciation patterns, intonations, and even vocabulary differences. Mrs. Siska, Anna, and Eka confirmed this challenge since it directly impacted students' comprehension and communication abilities.

The third, from a personal perspective, Mrs. Eka highlighted a challenge of applying critical pedagogy, particularly concerning the evolving nature of critical thinking. She emphasized the need to continually update our understanding of what constituted critical thinking, suggesting ongoing exploration, such as through critical discourse analysis. Additionally, Mrs. Eka underscored the difficulty in ensuring students grasp critical thinking concepts, acknowledging this as a persistent challenge in education.

"Another challenge is ensuring students comprehend critical thinking. Currently, I am considering how to address students' struggles with this concept, suggesting that teachers should create structured stages, such as higher-order thinking skills guidelines. This approach involves transitioning from lower-order thinking to higher-order thinking using specific operational verbs'. (Eka/interview)

#### **4. Discussion**

This section discusses three main issues that arise from the findings. Firstly, this study examines lecturers' understanding of critical pedagogy. Based on this analysis, lecturers still lack awareness of critical pedagogy, particularly regarding its definition. However, interview data reveals that teachers do grasp aspects of critical pedagogy, especially in the context of teaching critical listening. They hope that students develop critical thinking skills through these units. This aligns with Freire (2020), educational philosophy, which states that the purpose of education is to foster critical thinking by presenting real-life situations as problems for reflection and action (Basyoni & Medd, 2023). Despite their unfamiliarity with the formal notion of critical pedagogy, previous research supports this finding. For example, Magill (2018) demonstrates that indicators of critical pedagogy can be observed in classroom activities and the learning process, yet lecturers remain unaware of the concept itself. They do incorporate some critical elements in their teaching, yet as Wiley notes, "they just don't know what they know."

Second, the indicator focuses on steps for implementing critical pedagogy in listening classes, highlighting the essential components of this educational approach. It is evident that lecturers have, to some extent, incorporated the steps of critical pedagogy in teaching listening as recommended by (Basyoni & Medd, 2023). Lecturers emphasize that listening should not be confined to acquiring knowledge; instead, it should involve creating new knowledge. Expanding on this idea, Active et al. (2020) and Vani (2023) describe studying as a process of reinventing, recreating, and rewriting,

which is an active task for the subject, not a passive one for the object. In this context, Andriana & Evans (2020), Benjamin & Kline (2019), and Harida (2021) note that learning involves constructing one's reality through social interactions rather than merely absorbing facts. The findings of this study also reinforce the idea that listening should be connected to real-life issues. Relating listening material to real-life contexts can enhance students' motivation, especially since many students find listening is the most difficult skill.

The passive nature of the classroom becomes problematic when implementing critical pedagogy. It is often assumed that students in East Asian countries are submissive and obedient, while lecturers are authoritative and authoritarian, leading to rigid and hierarchical classrooms that hinder discussions between students and lecturers (Baturay, 2020; Friston et al., 2020). However, data from interviews indicate that lecturers are challenging this assumption by fostering horizontal relationships with students. One lecturer even states that he empowers his students significantly. In critical listening classrooms, these lecturers emphasize that the relationship between teacher and listeners should be equal, necessitating a critical approach to listening. Nevertheless, student reactions to critical listening are mixed. In Mr. Ariz's class, some students complain that the lessons become more complex, conflicting with their belief that language learning is primarily for instrumental purposes, such as achieving higher test scores. Critical pedagogy, however, extends beyond this, aiming to equip students with a language of critique to promote equality, social justice, and social transformation (Ipek, 2020; Jia & Hew, 2021; Kabir & Zealand, 2024).

Mrs. Siska emphasizes the principles of critical pedagogy, as suggested by Freire (2000), which include dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. She advocates for fostering critical consciousness by engaging students in discussions that analyze content beyond surface understanding, considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. This approach helps students grasp the broader implications of the message. Mrs. Siska further suggests that dialogue, following comprehension of listening material, is crucial for developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students share diverse perspectives, challenge assumptions, and collaboratively construct knowledge, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of societal issues (Ngo, 2019; Ozcelik et al., 2020; Wuryaningrum et al., 2022).

To further explore the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening classroom, some components suggested by (Crookes, 2021) were examined. The analysis assumed some key components of critical pedagogy in this research: a negotiated syllabus, critical content in materials and codes, and critical, democratic, and participatory assessment. While these components are present in this finding, the negotiated syllabus is not fully employed by the teachers. This is largely as most lecturers have already created the syllabus themselves, and student engagement to construct the syllabus is still under consideration. Mrs. Siska says that in her listening class, students are provided with material such as news podcasts and recorded speeches that address relevant social issues like the impact of social media on mental health and homelessness. The assessments involve students working individually or in pairs to

critically analyze these materials, identifying key arguments, strengths, weaknesses, and potential biases. The assessments entail students working individually or in pairs to critically analyze these materials, identifying key arguments, strengths, and weaknesses. Rohaniyah (2021), Thi et al. (2021), Nur et al. (2023), and Fajriyah et al. (2021) also suggest that materials related to the current issues encourages students to develop critical listening and analytical skills, apply evidence-based analysis, and engage deeply with current social issues.

Despite the identifiable indicators of implementing critical pedagogy in the listening classroom, several challenges persist, particularly students' passivity. This issue is highlighted by most lecturers in the study. For instance, Mr. Ariz noted that students' passivity can be attributed to their cultural background, as many students graduate from *pesantren* where the lecturer-student power dynamic is vertical. However, this assumption may not hold universally, as Pak Aris, a *pesantren* graduate himself, now embraces critical pedagogy and holds critical perspectives. Liu (2020) challenges the notion that East Asian students are inherently submissive and obedient, and that lecturers are authoritative, leading to rigid, hierarchical classrooms that impede discussion. Similarly, the second challenge in accents and pronunciation during listening activities are significant in the implementation of critical pedagogy. Besides, the last challenge highlighted by Mrs. Eka is the evolving nature of critical thinking. It emphasizes the necessity of ongoing exploration, such as through critical discourse analysis, and acknowledges the persistent difficulty in ensuring that students fully grasp critical thinking concepts.

## **5. Conclusion**

Critical pedagogy is implemented in the English listening class through various strategies that enhance students' engagement and critical thinking. Firstly, it transforms listening from a reproductive skill into an active process where students not only comprehend but also reconstruct and apply information in diverse contexts. This approach fosters deeper understanding and encourages students to connect listening activities with real-life issues, making learning relevant and meaningful. Additionally, by developing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students, where student agency and contributions are valued, a more egalitarian learning environment is created. Moreover, critical pedagogy promotes students' critical consciousness by encouraging dialogue that analyzes content contextually, purposefully, and from multiple perspectives. Assessments are designed to be critical, democratic, and participatory, emphasizing practical outcomes and the application of critical thinking skills. However, challenges in implementing critical pedagogy include cultural norms affecting student participation, language barriers impacting comprehension, and the evolving nature of critical thinking itself, requiring ongoing lecturers' reflection and adaptation. Addressing these challenges ensures that critical pedagogy in the English listening class remains effective and inclusive, fostering both linguistic proficiency and critical awareness among students.

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**Comment [AA6]:** Mostly the citations of these references are not qualified based on [Scimago Journal & Country Rank](#) and [Web of Science Master Journal List - WoS MJL by Clarivate](#). Thereby, starting from Introduction part to Conclusion part are becoming big question marks argumentatively and qualifiedly.

### **3. BUKTI KONFIRMASI SUBMIT REVISI DAN ARTIKEL YANG DISUBMIT**





# Examining Lecturers' Perceptions and Practices of Critical Pedagogy in English Listening Instruction: Insights and Implications for EFL Education

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## ABSTRACT

Grounded in the Freire's (1971) critical pedagogy premise revealing that the act of listening should be active, critical, and transformative, rather than passive or merely receptive, this research explored the experience of English language lecturers who taught English listening classes with critical pedagogy approach. This study employed a qualitative method through a case study design to explore lecturers' perspectives in depth. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four lecturers and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The findings indicate that while lecturers did not explicitly define or describe critical pedagogy, certain stages and elements of it were evident in their teaching. In practice, lecturers applied the principles of critical pedagogy by incorporating discussions on social issues, fostering interactive methods, and utilizing participatory evaluations, while contending with challenges like low student engagement, language proficiency, and diverse accents. This suggests that, to some extent, they incorporated aspects of critical pedagogy in their listening classes.

**Key Words:** Lecturers' perceptions, lecturers' practice, critical pedagogy, critical listening, reproductive skill.

## 1. Introduction

Implementing Critical Pedagogy in Indonesian higher education should be prioritized. Indonesia's long history under an authoritarian regime, followed by a regressive democracy in the post-reformation period highlights this need (Bangsa et al., 2023). These historical factors may have led to a diminished capacity for critique and a reduced sensitivity to social issues within the educational system. In education, the persistence of the banking system, where students are seen as depositories and teachers as the depositors of knowledge is evident. This system continues partly due to students' low interest and motivation in the learning process (Front, 2019; Ha, 2021). Additionally, while the information and communication technology development have positive effects, they also have drawbacks consequences, such as the spread of fake news. Therefore, fostering critical thinking abilities ought to be a top focus in Indonesian education at all levels.

In English language teaching (ELT), critical pedagogy has been introduced with the aim not only to improve English language skills but also to cultivate a critical awareness of injustice (Zhang et al., 2023). Rooted in Freire (2020), critical pedagogy in

language teaching seeks to transform classrooms by incorporating students' local culture, using their first language as a resource, addressing real-life concerns, and raising awareness of issues faced by marginalized groups. This approach aligns with critical language pedagogy introduced by [Crookes \(2021\)](#) who outlines three main concepts. Firstly, "critical pedagogy is democratic," aiming to foster greater democracy in society and within the classroom. Secondly, a critical pedagogy classroom is "dialogical," emphasizing exploratory and discussion-oriented learning. Lastly, although challenging to implement, "critical pedagogy is action-oriented".

Efforts to incorporate critical language pedagogy in ELT and language teacher education programs have been documented worldwide. Rezai et al., (2023) lays the groundwork for critical pedagogy in ELT by outlining critical pedagogy principles and suggesting areas for practitioners. In Indonesia, Bangsa et al. (2023) applies critical pedagogy in an ELT classroom by using codes to teach English, enhancing both language skills and students' critical thinking. Agbo et al., (2023) introduces critical pedagogy in higher education institution, through participatory research with a graduate teacher student in a professional learning program. This program has been successful in designing and implementing critical pedagogy in ELT, helping students become more critical, tolerant, and socially aware.

Prior studies demonstrate the potential benefits of implementing critical pedagogy in ELT. However, implementing critical pedagogy in language teaching and learning is not without challenges. Several empirical studies have investigated these challenges in various contexts ([Chen, 2023](#)). While students respond positively to critical pedagogy in terms of language development and critical thinking through the dialogic approach to teaching critical language, the issues arise related to students' perspectives and academic voices and the conception of language as social practice. Additionally, Nawas et al., (2023) discusses the challenges of practicing critical pedagogy in EFL teaching in South Asia, including tensions between local and international geopolitical tendencies. He suggests the need to critically evaluate both traditional and modern approaches to education to be effective. In summary, previous studies indicate the potential for introducing or integrating critical pedagogy in ELT classrooms and English education programs, while also highlighting implementation challenges. These findings suggest the need for further investigation, particularly into how lecturers comprehend critical pedagogy and how they apply it in n teaching English listening.

Critical Pedagogy is particularly relevant now given that the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture has introduced a new curriculum named *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn). This curriculum aims to align education with current demands, changes, and the needs of the business and industrial sectors, preparing students for the workforce ([Maghfiroh et al., 2022](#)). However, instead of prioritizing social justice, this program appears to reflect a neoliberal ideology disguised as "freedom" (Sari et al., 2024). This neoliberal orientation, with its focus on market-driven competencies, conflicts with the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing empowerment, social justice, and critical thinking. *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum has a positive impact on critical

*pedagogy implementation* by offering learning flexibility, such as letting students to choose interdisciplinary courses promoting critical thinking and self-empowerment ([Andriana & Evans, 2020](#)). In Islamic-based universities, this approach enriches the integration of religious values with modern scientific knowledge in English language class discussions. However, *Merdeka Belajar* focus on industry and market-driven needs often conflicts with *critical pedagogy principles*, which concerns social justice and critical awareness. This pragmatic focus limits the exploration of critical issues such as equality or globalization, especially in settings that prioritize the integration of morality and spirituality. Thus, *critical pedagogy* is significance to balance the neoliberal influence of *Merdeka Belajar*, ensuring that education remains empowering and not solely driven by economic needs. The aims of this research are twofold: firstly, to examine lecturers' comprehension of critical pedagogy, and secondly, to explore its application in the listening classroom.

## 2. Methods

### Research Design

To answer the research questions, this study used a case study design. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of a particular, bounded system such as an activity, event, process, or individuals defined by certain temporal, spatial, or physical ([Wales, 2019](#)). The purpose of a case study is to shed light on a particular issue, problem, or theory. As a qualitative research method, data collection and analysis in a case study occur concurrently and continuously ([Roseli et al., 2020](#)). The case study design can be somewhat flexible, with research questions becoming more refined following the initial analysis of interviews, diary entries, or observations ([Al et al., 2023](#); [Wales, 2019](#)). Case studies can focus on single individuals, multiple individuals, programs, events, or activities ([Maag et al., 2021](#)). In this research, the cases involved some lecturers. Specifically, this study employed case study approach, aiming to offer insights into a broader case while specific issue itself was of secondary importance, helping to enhance understanding of something else. An instrumental case study was chosen as the research sought to explore a broader issue concerning the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening comprehension classes. As an exploratory study, it focused on how lecturers articulate their understanding on CP perspectives and they incorporated this understanding into their teaching practices, particularly in teaching English listening skill.

### Participants

This research involved four English lecturers from four different universities and regions. Three participants have over ten years of experience teaching English, as confirmed by their curriculum vitae and their accounts during the interviews and one confessed to be a new lecturer. Informal conversations prior to the interviews revealed that all participants also had experience teaching listening comprehension for several years. The selection of participants was initially based on data from higher education sources (PDDIKTI) to verify their teaching experience in listening comprehension. The

researchers then contacted the participants via email or WhatsApp, with contact information provided by colleagues familiar with the potential participants. Every participant willingly signed consent forms for the study and agreed to supply the required data. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

**Table 1. Demographic information of the participants**

No	Name	Gender	Teaching Experience	Qualification	Teaching Expertise
1	Siska	Female	16 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Informal Communication, Listening for Academic Communication, TEFL
2	Anna	Female	13 years	Master of Education	Listening I, Listening II, English Morphology, Critical Reading
3	Ariz	Male	11 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Social Interaction, Listening in Professional Context, Research Methodology in Linguistics and Literature
4	Eka	Female	5 years	Master of Education	Reading Comprehension, Intensive Listening, Extensive Listening

## Data Collection

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect data, asking participants about their experiences incorporating a critical pedagogy approach into their English listening classes. Prior to the first interview, this study had the interview guidelines reviewed by an expert to obtain feedback. The interview questions were then tested out on a person with research publications and experience in critical pedagogy. After revising the guidelines based on this feedback, this research involved four different interviews with the participants. Mrs. Siska was interviewed for the first time in the second week of January 2024. Mrs. Anna was interviewed in the third week of January 2024. The third interview, with Mr. Ariz, took place in the second week of February 2024. Finally, we interviewed Mrs. Eka in mid-March 2024. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom. To avoid language barriers and based on participants' preferences, the interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers then translated the transcripts into English.

## Data Analysis

The study's data were analyzed using six stages of thematic analysis, which include familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming the themes ([Braun, 2006](#)). Initially, the researchers familiarized themselves with the participants' responses by repeatedly listening to the audio recordings of the interviews. Next, the recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcriptions were read multiple times to fully grasp and interpret the participants' statements. Important statements from the interviews were then highlighted and coded according to theoretical frameworks, specifically components of critical pedagogy in teaching listening ([Crookes, 2021](#)). This process aimed to identify instances where critical pedagogy was implemented in the listening classes.

## 3. Findings

The results examine how the participating lecturers understood of critical pedagogy, how critical pedagogy was implemented in English listening classes, and what challenged they faced. The research questions and the emerging themes were used to organize the results.

### Lecturers' Understanding of Critical Pedagogy

The lecturers were generally unfamiliar with critical pedagogy. One participant's comment, when asked about critical pedagogy, made this clear: "Not yet, but if it is feasible to provide critical education, in general, for instance, although I can't recall everything precisely, I know from educational liberation"(Siska/Interview). This suggests that participants did not always understand the idea of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, the participants did grasp the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy. She also recognized well-known figures in critical pedagogy, like Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. This indicates her basic comprehension of the critical perspective in language teaching.

The interview with Mr. Ariz further demonstrated the lack of familiarity with critical pedagogy in English language instruction. He was unable to clearly explain what critical pedagogy was. However, he was able to provide examples of how he saw critical pedagogy principles being employed in listening classes. The excerpt below illustrates this as narrated by Mr. Ariz:

*In my listening classes, I incorporate strategies that encourage students to engage in critical analysis and reflection on the content they hear. For instance, I use audio materials on social issues, like speeches or news reports discussing human rights topics. After listening, we have a class discussion where I ask students to share their thoughts and feelings about the issue and what insights they gained from the material. (Mr. Ariz/Interview)*

The result of interview above reveals that incorporating audio resources on social issues, such as speeches or news report about human rights subjects encouraged students to critically analyze the information in addition to understanding it. Students were given the opportunity to voice their opinions during the ensuing class discussions, assisting them to develop a greater understanding and empathy for other points of view. Moreover, the lecturer's comprehension of critical pedagogy is further elucidated in another excerpt as follows.

*We encourage them to embrace their role. Their role extends beyond being mere students to becoming agents of change. This realization emphasizes that their responsibility doesn't end with learning alone. Students must exert a positive influence on their surroundings, demonstrating their ability to analyze and confront issues. By sharing insights and new information, they can help others develop a more informed perspective, thereby addressing any misunderstandings that may arise. (Siska/Interview)*

From the passage, Mrs. Siska recognized that critical pedagogy involved students critically analyzing issues and sharing their understanding with others, particularly those seeking insights from scholars. She also emphasized that students acted as social change agent, advocating for a positive impact on society during and beyond their university education. Moreover, another lecturer, Mrs. Anna, possessed deeper knowledge of critical literacy compared to critical pedagogy. Her research focused on critical literacy, and she was familiar with critical literacy pedagogy as well. Anna viewed critical pedagogy as a broader concept or an extension of critical literacy pedagogy; she utilized literary works to teach listening skills in her classroom.

*I am familiar with critical literacy through my research projects, where I actively incorporate its principles. As for critical pedagogy, my focus lies specifically on critical listening pedagogy. (Anna/Interview).*

*Mrs. Eka acknowledged that she recently learned about critical pedagogy, despite teaching courses like critical listening and reading comprehension at the university. As one of the youngest lecturers with less teaching experience compared to her colleagues, she recognized the interconnectedness of language, culture, and ideology. She noted that "A person's culture can be expressed through their language and reflects the ideologies they uphold. (Eka/interview).*

In summary, although lecturers' explicit understanding of critical pedagogy was not directly stated, they demonstrated familiarity with certain perspectives and principles of critical pedagogy during the interviews. Based on the analysis of their understanding and endorsement of critical pedagogy principles to some degree, lecturers in this study could be categorized as 'critical pedagogy, defined by (Zhiwei & Wang, 2024) as ELT lecturers who utilized the fundamental values and theories of

critical pedagogy. The subsequent findings related to the teachers' experiences in applying critical pedagogy in the listening classroom.

## **How Is Critical Pedagogy Implemented in the English Listening Class?**

### **Listening as a Practice of Reproductive Skill**

Listening as a reproductive skill" refers to the idea that listening is not just a passive activity but an active process where listeners mentally reproduce or reconstruct the information they hear. This involves comprehending, processing, and then potentially using the information in some form of response or further communication. In this sense, listening requires cognitive engagement and the ability to understand and recall spoken language accurately, making it an integral part of effective communication and language acquisition. A study has shown that active listening practices merely enhance students' ability to comprehend, analyze, and replicate spoken information in various communicative contexts (Crookes, 2021). Moreover, incorporating authentic listening materials and real-life scenarios can prepare students to deal with the challenges of language use in a variety of contexts (Ebadi et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Regular practice, reflection, and analysis of content are essential to deepen understanding. Likewise, interactive activities requiring responses, learning effective listening strategies, exposure to diverse contexts, and receiving constructive feedback all contribute to skill enhancement.

A partial comprehension of critical pedagogy among lecturers limits their ability to incorporate its principles effectively into English listening classes. It results in teaching approaches focusing more on passive learning rather than promoting critical thinking, active involvement, and deeper understanding, affecting students' ability to interpret spoken language effectively. Nevertheless, lecturers who successfully integrate critical pedagogy principles into their classes foster democratic discussions, encourage peer collaboration, and incorporate real-world topics to stimulate critical thinking. Additionally, they encourage open discussions for students to share opinions, offer peer learning through group activities, and integrate real-world issues to encourage critical thinking. Interactive tasks are used to stimulate analysis, reflection, and active participation, making learning more meaningful. Constructive feedback is also vital to support democratic and dialogic learning.

According to interview data, Mrs. Anna assumed that listening was not enough to listen to the ideas. Rather, it should be reproducing or reconstructing the information the students listen.

*Listening to ideas isn't enough. Instead, my students should actively work with the information they hear. This means they should understand it deeply and then use it to create their own ideas or responses. For example, they might summarize what they heard, talk about it with others, or use it in new situations. Good listening involves more than just hearing, it's about actively engaging with and using the information. .(Anna/Interview)*



It was also noteworthy that, as the following excerpt narrates, Mr. Ariz stressed the significance of providing opportunities for students to interpret the information during listening.

*Students have different interpretations as this happens because each listener brings their own background, experiences, and perspectives to what they hear. These personal factors can influence how they understand and interpret the information. For instance, one person might focus on the emotional tone of a speaker, while another might concentrate on the factual content. This diversity in interpretation is natural and can lead to rich discussions and deeper understanding when listeners share and compare their viewpoints (Ariz/Interview).*

### **Connecting Listening with Real-Life Issues**

Mrs. Anna emphasized that effective listening required sustained concentration, which could be challenging to maintain, particularly during lengthy or complex discussions and presentations. To make her listening class more engaging, she introduced global topics and issues relevant to the students' lives. This approach involved having the students discuss these topics in class. She also encouraged them to share their opinions on what they listened to. This approach was illustrated in the following excerpt.

*In critical listening, after listening to the audio, the class becomes more interactive, resembling a discussion. Students are encouraged to consistently share their opinions, ensuring the class is lively and filled with discussions among the students*

Mrs. Anna highlighted that teaching listening should go beyond fostering critical thinking; it ought to benefit others, as she clarified in the following excerpt.

*Teaching listening skills should not be limited to developing students' ability to think critically. It should also aim to influence others positively. This can involve encouraging students to use their listening skills to contribute to discussions, support their peers, and engage constructively with the world around them. By doing so, the impact of effective listening extends beyond the classroom, fostering a more collaborative and empathetic community. (Anna/interview)*

She encouraged her students to link their listening activities to real-world issues, welcoming any topics to be discussed in the classroom, as she explained.

*I motivate my students to relate what they listen to such as podcasts, news, interviews, or any form of audio content to real-world problems and situations. I invite students to bring any relevant topics or issues they find important or interesting into the classroom discussions. This approach is intended to make the listening activities more meaningful and relevant to the*



*students' lives, fostering an environment where diverse and significant real-life issues can be explored and discussed openly. (Anna/interview)*

In sum, lecturers in this study had understood how to teach listening more critically and know how to make listening classrooms to be more engaging as well as relate teaching listening with real-life issues. This practice of teaching was relevant to the principle of critical thinking which empathized on engaging students critically with social issues as suggested by Freire.

### **Developing Horizontal Relationships to Be Active Listener**

A horizontal learning pattern involved recognizing everyone's knowledge and backgrounds, where learners' contributions and perspectives were valued equally to those of the teacher. Mrs. Dynar revealed that the power of relation matters was significant in the teaching of listening. She argued that students ought to have more agency and influence in the classroom compared to the teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

*My teaching style is centered on power relationships; I empower my students and express my appreciation when they can effectively argue verbally. (Dynar/interview)*

*Giving students the ability to choose the listening materials they engage with, whether through selecting topics or formats that interest them, you empower them within the learning process. This autonomy fosters a sense of investment and responsibility in their own learning, thereby establishing a more balanced power relationship between teacher and students. (Eka/interview)*

The interview with Mrs. Dynar revealed his commitment to fostering a horizontal relationship between lecturer and student. In class, she often referred to her students as friends to build an egalitarian atmosphere. Initially, students found this approach awkward, but they gradually accepted it. Mrs. Dynar believed that creating an equal relationship enhanced student engagement in onsite discussions although she acknowledged that student motivation also played a role. Similarly, Mrs Eka, the youngest lecturer in this study, tended to develop close relationships with her students and frequently participates in student-organized activities. Overall, the participants in this study prioritize establishing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students.

### **Developing Students' Critical Consciousness to Engage with What They Hear.**

Based on the critical pedagogy components, [Freire \(2000\)](#) suggested that the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. Mrs. Siska argued that critical consciousness could be employed by engaging students in discussion that critically analyzes the content. This process required students to go beyond merely

understanding the content by considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. Understanding the context such as the time, place, and situation surrounding the message helped students grasp why and how the information was being communicated, influencing its meaning and relevance. Similarly, recognizing the purpose helped students evaluate the speaker's intentions and understanding perspective allowed students to consider how the speaker's personal context and worldview influenced the content and how it was delivered.

Mr. Dynar also suggested that engaging in dialogue after students had understood listening material played a pivotal role in developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students shared diverse experiences and perspectives related to the content, fostering empathy and deepening understanding of societal issues. It encouraged students to challenge assumptions, critically analyze multiple viewpoints, and collaboratively construct knowledge. For example, students were studying a podcast about climate change. After listening to the podcast individually Mrs. Dynar divided the class into small groups. Each group discussed different aspects of the podcast, such as the causes of climate change, its impact on communities, and possible solutions. During these discussions, students shared their insights and raised questions about how societal norms contributed to environmental issues. They used reflective journaling to note down their thoughts on what they learned and how they feel about the topic. This process empowered them to critically reflect on environmental issues and considered actions they could take to address them, fostering a learning environment which encouraged transformative thinking and social responsibility.

### **Establishing Critical, Democratic, and Participatory Assessment**

According to [Crookes \(2021\)](#), assessment in education should embody critical, democratic, and participatory principles. Interviews with participants revealed a preference for assessments emphasizing practical outcomes over mere comprehension testing. They advocated for assessments requiring students to apply their understanding and critical thinking abilities to generate novel knowledge. For instance, Mr. Ariz asked students to listen to a news podcast episode talking about “social media impact on mental health among teenagers”. Having listening it, they worked in pairs to identify key arguments in the podcast. Each pair then prepared a brief oral presentation where they critically analyzed how the podcast portrayed the relationship between social media use and mental health issues. This assessment promoted critical listening skills, evidence-based analysis, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with current issues in the media.

Similarly, Mrs. Eka requested students to listen to a recorded short speech by a community leader addressing the issue of homelessness in their city. After listening, students worked individually to analyze the speech critically. They identified the strengths, such as compelling personal stories, statistical evidence, or motivational language resonating with the audience. They also identified weaknesses, such as potential biases in the presentation of information or logical inconsistencies. Students then wrote a reflective essay summarizing their analysis discussing how effective they

found the speech in conveying its message, and proposing additional considerations or actions enhancing the impact of addressing homelessness in their community. She also conveyed that this assessment encouraged students to apply critical listening, and analytical skills, and to reflect on the complexities of addressing social issues through persuasive speech.

### **Lecturers' Self-Reported Challenges in Implementing Critical Pedagogy**

Previous research and this study both identified several challenges in implementing critical pedagogy. One significant challenge was the low level of student participation and engagement in discussions about texts. Mr. Ariz suggested this could be attributed to cultural factors, particularly among students who were alumni of *pesantren*. In *pesantren*, there was traditionally a vertical power relationship where students (*santri*) typically listened to and obeyed their teachers (*kyai*). Mr. Ariz, who himself was a *santri*, acknowledged the unequal power dynamics between students and lecturers in this context, noting that expressing ideas or opinions was not commonly encouraged.

"In *pesantren*, there is a cultural norm of listening and obeying rather than actively expressing thoughts and opinions. Reflecting on my own experience at the boarding school, I find that discussions and offering opinions in front of the *Kyai* (teacher) are uncommon. I listen to the *Kyai* with dialogue being infrequent". (*Ariz/interview*)

The reason why students were passive in the listening class was due to their low English proficiency. Students with limited English skills obtained some challenges: understanding vocabulary, language structure, and expressing opinions in English. To address the third challenge, one potential solution was letting students to use their native language (L1) when sharing their arguments. However, there were concerns permitting L1 employ could be seen as a violation, especially since these students were training to become English teachers who needed to demonstrate proficiency in English. Additionally, students' passivity was influenced by low motivation and literacy levels, as they perceived listening as a challenging activity. Due to students' poor motivation and reading levels, as well as their inadequate English proficiency, which affects their comprehension of terminology, language structure, and opinion expression, lecturers find it difficult to implement critical pedagogy in listening lectures. While using the mother tongue (L1) as a possible remedy can be beneficial, it presents concerns about infractions, especially for future lecturers who need to demonstrate their English proficiency. These challenges draw attention broader systemic issues within Indonesian education, such as insufficient emphasis on fostering students' critical thinking and communication skills in English. The education system's continued reliance on memorization and passive learning impedes students' ability to think critically and engage actively in learning. In addition, the problem is made worse by lecturers' lack of

training in cutting-edge pedagogical strategies, which makes it challenging for them to successfully use critical pedagogy concepts.

The second challenge of implementing critical pedagogy in listening classroom was the problem of accents and pronunciation. Exposure to different English accents, such as British, American, Australian, posed challenges for students in understanding varied pronunciations and intonations. Accents different from those encountered in the classroom could be particularly difficult. Moreover, each accent had distinct pronunciation patterns, intonations, and even vocabulary differences. Mrs. Siska, Anna, and Eka confirmed this challenge since it directly impacted students' comprehension and communication abilities.

The third, from a personal perspective, Mrs. Eka highlighted a challenge of applying critical pedagogy, particularly concerning the evolving nature of critical thinking. She emphasized the need to continually update our understanding of what constituted critical thinking, suggesting ongoing exploration, such as through critical discourse analysis. Additionally, Mrs. Eka underscored the difficulty in ensuring students grasp critical thinking concepts, acknowledging this as a persistent challenge in education.

"Another challenge is ensuring students comprehend critical thinking. Currently, I am considering how to address students' struggles with this concept, suggesting that teachers should create structured stages, such as higher-order thinking skills guidelines. This approach involves transitioning from lower-order thinking to higher-order thinking using specific operational verbs'. (Eka/interview)

#### **4. Discussion**

This section discusses three main issues that arise from the findings. Firstly, this study examines lecturers' understanding of critical pedagogy. Based on this analysis, lecturers still lack awareness of critical pedagogy, particularly regarding its definition. However, interview data reveals that teachers do grasp aspects of critical pedagogy, especially in the context of teaching critical listening. They hope that students develop critical thinking skills through these units. This aligns with [Freire \(2020\)](#), educational philosophy, which states that the purpose of education is to foster critical thinking by presenting real-life situations as problems for reflection and action (Nawas et al., 2023). Despite their unfamiliarity with the formal notion of critical pedagogy, previous research supports this finding. For example, Abdolrezapour & Ghanbari (2021) demonstrates that indicators of critical pedagogy can be observed in classroom activities and the learning process, yet lecturers remain unaware of the concept itself. They do incorporate some critical elements in their teaching, yet as Wiley notes, "they just don't know what they know."

Second, the indicator focuses on steps for implementing critical pedagogy in listening classes, highlighting the essential components of this educational approach. It is evident that lecturers have, to some extent, incorporated the steps of critical pedagogy in teaching listening as recommended by (Rezai et al., 2023). Lecturers

emphasize that listening should not be confined to acquiring knowledge; instead, it should involve creating new knowledge. Expanding on this idea, Rocha et al. (2022) [and](#) Zhang et al. (2023) describe studying as a process of reinventing, recreating, and rewriting, which is an active task for the subject, not a passive one for the object. In this context, [Andriana & Evans \(2020\)](#) [and](#) Walker et al. (2024) note that learning involves constructing one's reality through social interactions rather than merely absorbing facts. The findings of this study also reinforce the idea that listening should be connected to real-life issues. Relating listening material to real-life contexts can enhance students' motivation, especially since many students find listening is the most difficult skill.

The passive nature of the classroom becomes problematic when implementing critical pedagogy. It is often assumed that students in East Asian countries are submissive and obedient, while lecturers are authoritative and authoritarian, leading to rigid and hierarchical classrooms that hinder discussions between students and lecturers ([Baturay, 2020](#); Wang & Chen, 2024). However, data from interviews indicate that lecturers are challenging this assumption by fostering horizontal relationships with students. One lecturer even states that he empowers his students significantly. In critical listening classrooms, these lecturers emphasize that the relationship between teacher and listeners should be equal, necessitating a critical approach to listening. Nevertheless, student reactions to critical listening are mixed. In Mr. Ariz's class, some students complain that the lessons become more complex, conflicting with their belief that language learning is primarily for instrumental purposes, such as achieving higher test scores. Critical pedagogy, however, extends beyond this, aiming to equip students with a language of critique to promote equality, social justice, and social transformation ([Ipek, 2020](#); [Jia & Hew, 2021](#); [Kabir & Zealand, 2024](#)).

Mrs. Siska emphasizes the principles of critical pedagogy, as suggested by [Freire \(2000\)](#), which include dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. She advocates for fostering critical consciousness by engaging students in discussions that analyze content beyond surface understanding, considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. This approach helps students grasp the broader implications of the message. Mrs. Siska further suggests that dialogue, following comprehension of listening material, is crucial for developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students share diverse perspectives, challenge assumptions, and collaboratively construct knowledge, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of societal issues ([Ngo, 2019](#); [Ozcelik et al., 2020](#)).

To further explore the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening classroom, some components suggested by [Crookes, 2021](#) were examined. The analysis assumed some key components of critical pedagogy in this research: a negotiated syllabus, critical content in materials and codes, and critical, democratic, and participatory assessment. While these components are present in this finding, the negotiated syllabus is not fully employed by the teachers. This is largely as most lecturers have already created the syllabus themselves, and student engagement to construct the syllabus is still under consideration. Mrs. Siska says that in her listening class, students are provided with material such as news podcasts and recorded speeches that address



relevant social issues like the impact of social media on mental health and homelessness. The assessments involve students working individually or in pairs to critically analyze these materials, identifying key arguments, strengths, weaknesses, and potential biases. The assessments entail students working individually or in pairs to critically analyze these materials, identifying key arguments, strengths, and weaknesses. [Fajriyah et al. \(2021\)](#), [Rohaniyah \(2021\)](#), and Saed et al., (2021) also suggest that materials related to the current issues encourages students to develop critical listening and analytical skills, apply evidence-based analysis, and engage deeply with current social issues. Incorporating elements of critical pedagogy in listening classes significantly optimize students' language development, critical thinking skills, and engagement with social issues. Exposure to authentic materials relevant topics enhances students' vocabulary, comprehension, and contextual language use. Activities like analyzing arguments, identifying biases, and evaluating evidence foster critical thinking by stimulating deeper reflection and analytical skills. Furthermore, engaging with social issues through relatable materials inspires empathy, raises awareness, and connects learning to real-world contexts, making lessons more meaningful.

Despite the identifiable indicators of implementing critical pedagogy in the listening classroom, several challenges persist, particularly students' passivity. This issue is highlighted by most lecturers in the study. For instance, Mr. Ariz noted that students' passivity can be attributed to their cultural background, as many students graduate from *pesantren* where the lecturer-student power dynamic is vertical. However, this assumption may not hold universally, as Pak Aris, a *pesantren* graduate himself, now embraces critical pedagogy and holds critical perspectives. Ha (2021) challenges the notion that East Asian students are inherently submissive and obedient and those lecturers are authoritative, leading to rigid, hierarchical classrooms that impede discussion. Similarly, the second challenge in accents and pronunciation during listening activities are significant in the implementation of critical pedagogy. Besides, the last challenge highlighted by Mrs. Eka is the evolving nature of critical thinking. It emphasizes the necessity of ongoing exploration, such as through critical discourse analysis, and acknowledges the persistent difficulty in ensuring that students fully grasp critical thinking concepts.

## 5. Conclusion

Critical pedagogy is implemented in the English listening class through various strategies that enhance students' engagement and critical thinking. Firstly, it transforms listening from a reproductive skill into an active process where students not only comprehend but also reconstruct and apply information in diverse contexts. This approach fosters deeper understanding and encourages students to connect listening activities with real-life issues, making learning relevant and meaningful. Additionally, by developing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students, where student agency and contributions are valued, a more egalitarian learning environment is created. Moreover, critical pedagogy promotes students' critical consciousness by

encouraging dialogue that analyzes content contextually, purposefully, and from multiple perspectives. Assessments are designed to be critical, democratic, and participatory, emphasizing practical outcomes and the application of critical thinking skills. However, challenges in implementing critical pedagogy include cultural norms affecting student participation, language barriers impacting comprehension, and the evolving nature of critical thinking itself, requiring ongoing lecturers' reflection and adaptation. Addressing these challenges ensures that critical pedagogy in the English listening class remains effective and inclusive, fostering both linguistic proficiency and critical awareness among students.

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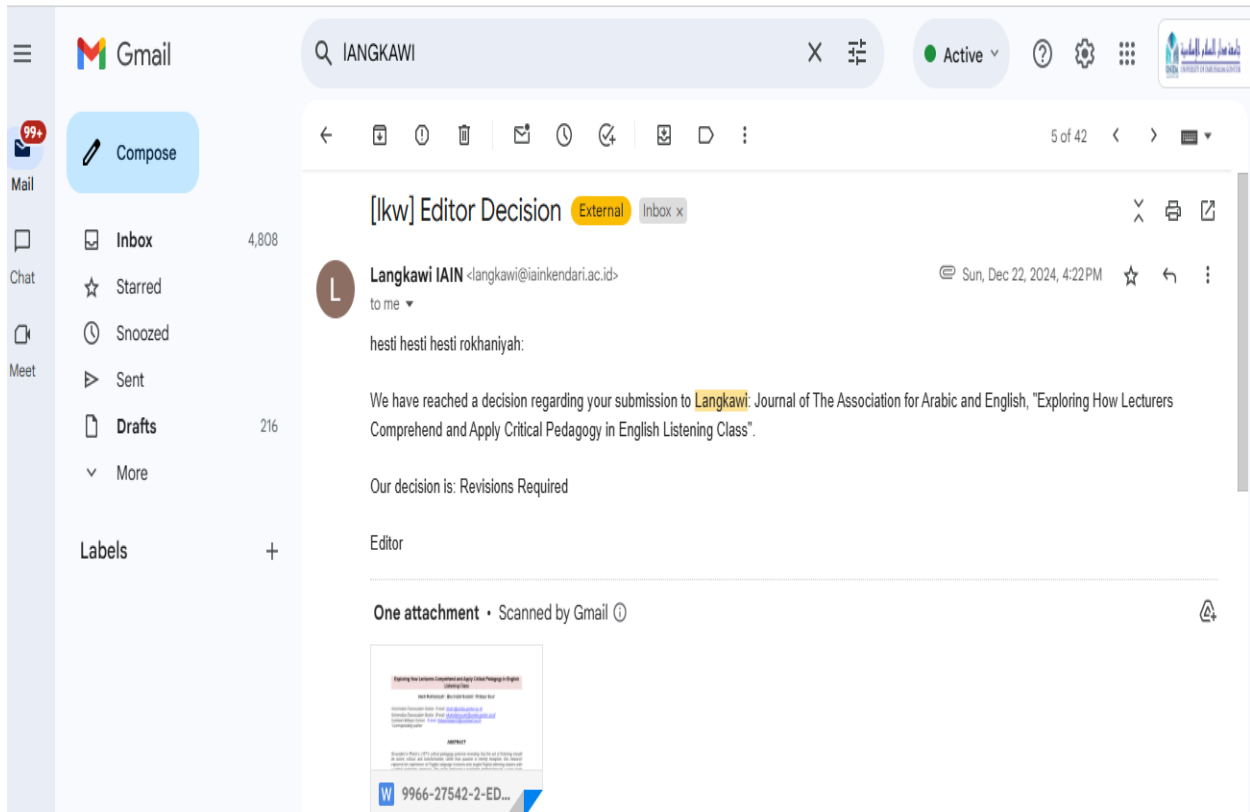
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#### **4. BUKTI KONFIRMASI HASIL REVIEW DAN HASIL REVIEW**



## Exploring How Lecturers Comprehend and Apply Critical Pedagogy in English Listening Class

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### ABSTRACT

*Grounded in Freire's (1971) critical pedagogy premise revealing that the act of listening should be active, critical, and transformative, rather than passive or merely receptive, this research explored the experience of English language lecturers who taught English listening classes with a critical pedagogy approach. This study employed a qualitative method through a case study design to explore lecturers' understanding in depth and their practices of critical pedagogy. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four lecturers and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The analysis identified key themes in lecturers' understanding, including their awareness of the transformative potential of listening activities, the importance of fostering student autonomy, and their understanding of listening as a dialogic process. The findings also indicate that while lecturers did not explicitly define or describe critical pedagogy, certain stages and elements of it were evident in their teaching. In practice, lecturers applied the principles of critical pedagogy by providing authentic materials, building horizontal relationships, developing critical consciousness, encouraging critical, democratic, and participatory assessment to support transformative learning, while contending with challenges like low student engagement, language proficiency, and diverse accents. This suggests that, to some extent, they incorporated aspects of critical pedagogy in their listening classes. The practical implications of this research recommend that lecturers should receive targeted training in critical pedagogy to better align their teaching practices with its principles, while institutions should provide resources and support to address the challenges.*

**Key Words:** *Lecturers' perceptions, lecturers' practice, critical pedagogy, critical listening, reproductive skill.*

### 1. Introduction

Implementing Critical Pedagogy in Indonesian higher education should be prioritized. Indonesia's long history under an authoritarian regime, followed by a regressive democracy in the post-reformation period highlights this need (Bangsa et al., 2023). These historical factors may have led to a diminished capacity for critique and a reduced sensitivity to social issues within the educational system. In education, the persistence of the banking system, where students are seen as depositories and teachers as the depositors of knowledge is evident. This system continues partly due to students' low interest and motivation in the learning process (Front, 2019; Ha, 2021). Additionally, while the information and communication technology development have positive effects, they also have drawbacks consequences, such as the spread of fake

news. Therefore, fostering critical thinking abilities ought to be a top focus in Indonesian education at all levels.

In English language teaching (ELT), critical pedagogy has been introduced with the aim not only to improve English language skills but also to cultivate a critical awareness of injustice (Zhang et al., 2023). Rooted in Freire (2020), critical pedagogy in language teaching seeks to transform classrooms by incorporating students' local culture, using their first language as a resource, addressing real-life concerns, and raising awareness of issues faced by marginalized groups. This approach aligns with critical language pedagogy introduced by Crookes (2021) who outlines three main concepts. Firstly, "critical pedagogy is democratic," aiming to foster greater democracy in society and within the classroom. Secondly, a critical pedagogy classroom is "dialogical," emphasizing exploratory and discussion-oriented learning. Lastly, although challenging to implement, "critical pedagogy is action-oriented".

Efforts to incorporate critical language pedagogy in ELT and language teacher education programs have been documented worldwide. Rezai et al., (2023) lays the groundwork for critical pedagogy in ELT by outlining critical pedagogy principles and suggesting areas for practitioners. In Indonesia, Bangsa et al. (2023) applies critical pedagogy in an ELT classroom by using codes to teach English, enhancing both language skills and students' critical thinking. Agbo et al., (2023) introduces critical pedagogy in higher education institution, through participatory research with a graduate teacher student in a professional learning program. This program has been successful in designing and implementing critical pedagogy in ELT, helping students become more critical, tolerant, and socially aware.

Prior studies demonstrate the potential benefits of implementing critical pedagogy in ELT. However, implementing critical pedagogy in language teaching and learning is not without challenges. Several empirical studies have investigated these challenges in various contexts (Chen, 2023). While students respond positively to critical pedagogy in terms of language development and critical thinking through the dialogic approach to teaching critical language, the issues arise related to students' perspectives and academic voices and the conception of language as social practice. Additionally, Nawas et al., (2023) discusses the challenges of practicing critical pedagogy in EFL teaching in South Asia, including tensions between local and international geopolitical tendencies. He suggests the need to critically evaluate both traditional and modern approaches to education to be effective. In summary, previous studies indicate the potential for introducing or integrating critical pedagogy in ELT classrooms and English education programs, while also highlighting implementation challenges. These findings suggest the need for further investigation, particularly into how lecturers comprehend critical pedagogy and how they apply it in n teaching English listening.

Critical Pedagogy is particularly relevant now given that the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture has introduced a new curriculum named *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn). This curriculum aims to align education with current demands, changes, and the needs of the business and industrial sectors, preparing students for the

workforce (Maghfiroh et al., 2022). However, instead of prioritizing social justice, this program appears to reflect a neoliberal ideology disguised as "freedom" (Sari et al., 2024). This neoliberal orientation, with its focus on market-driven competencies, conflicts with the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing empowerment, social justice, and critical thinking. *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum has a positive impact on critical pedagogy implementation by offering learning flexibility, such as letting students to choose interdisciplinary courses promoting critical thinking and self-empowerment (Andriana & Evans, 2020). In Islamic-based universities, this approach enriches the integration of religious values with modern scientific knowledge in English language class discussions. However, *Merdeka Belajar* focus on industry and market-driven needs often conflicts with critical pedagogy principles, which concerns social justice and critical awareness. This pragmatic focus limits the exploration of critical issues such as equality or globalization, especially in settings that prioritize the integration of morality and spirituality. Thus, critical pedagogy is significance to balance the neoliberal influence of *Merdeka Belajar*, ensuring that education remains empowering and not solely driven by economic needs.

This research uses critical pedagogy as the theoretical framework to analyze how English lecturers implement its principles, such as empowering students and fostering critical thinking, in listening comprehension classes. Thematic analysis (Braun, 2006) has been employed to identify patterns in the data, focusing on participants' understanding of critical pedagogy and its application in their teaching practices. Indicators include lecturers' perspectives, specific teaching strategies, and evidence of critical pedagogy integration, as derived from semi-structured interviews and thematic coding. The aims of this research are twofold: firstly, to examine lecturers' comprehension of critical pedagogy, and secondly, to explore its application in the listening classroom. This research seeks to address two main questions:

- (1) how do English lecturers comprehend the principles of critical pedagogy
- (2) how do they apply these principles in listening comprehension classes.

The study contributes theoretically by deepening critical pedagogy understanding within English language teaching, particularly in listening instruction, and practically by offering some strategies and examples that lecturers can employ to foster critical thinking and learner engagement in the classrooms.

## **2. Methods**

### **Research Design**

To answer the research questions, this study used a case study design. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of a particular, bounded system such as an activity, event, process, or individuals defined by certain temporal, spatial, or physical (Wales, 2019). The purpose of a case study is to shed light on a particular issue, problem, or theory. As a qualitative research method, data collection and analysis in a case study occur concurrently and continuously (Roseli et al., 2020). The case study design can be somewhat flexible, with research questions becoming more refined following the initial analysis of interviews, diary entries, or observations (Al et al., 2023; Wales, 2019). Case

studies can focus on single individuals, multiple individuals, programs, events, or activities (Maag et al., 2021). In essence, a case study is a qualitative research method involving an in-depth analysis of a specific, bounded system, such as an activity, event, or individuals. It aims at providing a deeper understanding of a particular issue, with data collection and analysis happening concurrently. The design is flexible, allowing research questions to evolve as the study progresses. In this research, the cases involved some lecturers. Specifically, this study employed case study approach, aiming to offer insights into a broader case while specific issue itself was of secondary importance, helping to enhance understanding of something else. An instrumental case study was chosen as the research sought to explore a broader issue concerning the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening comprehension classes. As an exploratory study, it focused on how lecturers articulate their understanding on CP perspectives and they incorporated this understanding into their teaching practices, particularly in teaching English listening skill.

### Participants

This research involved four English lecturers from four different universities and regions. Three participants have over ten years of experience teaching English, as confirmed by their curriculum vitae and their accounts during the interviews and one confessed to be a new lecturer. Informal conversations prior to the interviews revealed that all participants also had experience teaching listening comprehension for several years. The selection of participants was initially based on data from higher education sources (PDDIKTI) to verify their teaching experience in listening comprehension. The researchers then contacted the participants via email or WhatsApp, with contact information provided by colleagues familiar with the potential participants. Every participant willingly signed consent forms for the study and agreed to supply the required data. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

**Table 1. Demographic information of the participants**

No	Name	Gender	Teaching Experience	Qualification	Teaching Expertise
1	Siska	Female	16 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Informal Communication, Listening for Academic Communication, TEFL
2	Anna	Female	13 years	Master of Education	Listening I, Listening II, English Morphology, Critical Reading
3	Ariz	Male	11 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Social Interaction, Listening in Professional Context, Research



					Methodology in Linguistics and Literature
4	Eka	Female	5 years	Master of Education	Reading Comprehension, Intensive Listening, Extensive Listening

### Data Collection

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect data, asking participants about their experiences incorporating a critical pedagogy approach into their English listening classes. Prior to the first interview, this study had the interview guidelines reviewed by an expert to obtain feedback. The interview questions were then tested out on a person with research publications and experience in critical pedagogy. After revising the guidelines based on this feedback, this research involved four different interviews with the participants. Mrs. Siska was interviewed for the first time in the second week of January 2024. Mrs. Anna was interviewed in the third week of January 2024. The third interview, with Mr. Ariz, took place in the second week of February 2024. Finally, we interviewed Mrs. Eka in mid-March 2024. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom. To avoid language barriers and based on participants' preferences, the interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers then translated the transcripts into English.

### Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using the six stages of thematic analysis, including familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the themes, and writing the report (Braun, 2006). The theory of critical pedagogy, as outlined by Crookes (2021), was implemented to analyze how these concepts emerged in the practice of teaching listening. Crookes' critical pedagogy theory emphasized active student engagement through critical awareness, dialogue, and social analysis, with the aim of empowering students to become agents of change by developing critical thinking skills in a participatory and reflective learning context. This research utilized this theory to examine how critical pedagogy principles were integrated into the teaching of listening.

### 3. Findings

The [results-findings](#) examine how the participating lecturers understood of critical pedagogy, how critical pedagogy was implemented in English listening classes, and what challenged they faced. The research questions and the emerging themes were used to organize the results.

#### Lecturers' Understanding of Critical Pedagogy

The lecturers were generally unfamiliar with critical pedagogy. One participant's comment, when asked about critical pedagogy, made this clear: "Not yet, but if it is feasible to provide critical education, in general, for instance, although I can't recall

**Comment [LL1]:** Your research questions address two main questions: (1) how do English lecturers comprehend the principles of critical pedagogy (2) how do they apply these principles in listening comprehension classes.

But, your evidence showcases three main findings (including the challenge--).

Revise it

everything precisely, I know from educational liberation"(Siska/Interview). This suggests that participants did not always understand the idea of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, the participants did grasp the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy. She also recognized well-known figures in critical pedagogy, like Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. This indicates her basic comprehension of the critical perspective in language teaching.

The interview with Mr. Ariz further demonstrated the lack of familiarity with critical pedagogy in English language instruction. He was unable to clearly explain what critical pedagogy was. However, he was able to provide examples of how he saw critical pedagogy principles being employed in listening classes. The excerpt below illustrates this as narrated by Mr. Ariz:

*In my listening classes, I incorporate strategies that encourage students to engage in critical analysis and reflection on the content they hear. For instance, I use audio materials on social issues, like speeches or news reports discussing human rights topics. After listening, we have a class discussion where I ask students to share their thoughts and feelings about the issue and what insights they gained from the material. (Mr. Ariz/Interview)*

The result of interview above reveals that incorporating audio resources on social issues, such as speeches or news report about human rights subjects encouraged students to critically analyze the information in addition to understanding it. Students were given the opportunity to voice their opinions during the ensuing class discussions, assisting them to develop a greater understanding and empathy for other points of view. Moreover, the lecturer's comprehension of critical pedagogy is further elucidated in another excerpt as follows.

*We encourage them to embrace their role. Their role extends beyond being mere students to becoming agents of change. This realization emphasizes that their responsibility doesn't end with learning alone. Students must exert a positive influence on their surroundings, demonstrating their ability to analyze and confront issues. By sharing insights and new information, they can help others develop a more informed perspective, thereby addressing any misunderstandings that may arise. (Siska/Interview)*

From the passage, Mrs. Siska recognized that critical pedagogy involved students critically analyzing issues and sharing their understanding with others, particularly those seeking insights from scholars. She also emphasized that students acted as social change agent, advocating for a positive impact on society during and beyond their university education. Moreover, another lecturer, Mrs. Anna, possessed deeper knowledge of critical literacy compared to critical pedagogy. Her research focused on critical literacy, and she was familiar with critical literacy pedagogy as well. Anna viewed critical pedagogy as a broader concept or an extension of critical literacy pedagogy; she utilized literary works to teach listening skills in her classroom.

*I am familiar with critical literacy through my research projects, where I actively incorporate its principles. As for critical pedagogy, my focus lies specifically on critical listening pedagogy. (Anna/Interview).*

*Mrs. Eka acknowledged that she recently learned about critical pedagogy, despite teaching courses like critical listening and reading comprehension at the university. As one of the youngest lecturers with less teaching experience compared to her colleagues, she recognized the interconnectedness of language, culture, and ideology. She noted that "A person's culture can be expressed through their language and reflects the ideologies they uphold. (Eka/interview).*

In summary, although lecturers' explicit understanding of critical pedagogy was not directly stated, they demonstrated familiarity with certain perspectives and principles of critical pedagogy during the interviews. Based on the analysis of their understanding and endorsement of critical pedagogy principles to some degree, lecturers in this study could be categorized as 'critical pedagogy, defined by (Zhiwei & Wang, 2024) as ELT lecturers who utilized the fundamental values and theories of critical pedagogy. The subsequent findings related to the teachers' experiences in applying critical pedagogy in the listening classroom.

### **How Is Critical Pedagogy Employed in the English Listening Class?**

#### **Listening as a Practice of Reproductive Skill**

Listening as a reproductive skill" refers to the idea that listening is not just a passive activity but an active process where listeners mentally reproduce or reconstruct the information they hear. This involves comprehending, processing, and then potentially using the information in some form of response or further communication. In this sense, listening requires cognitive engagement and the ability to understand and recall spoken language accurately, making it an integral part of effective communication and language acquisition. A study has shown that active listening practices merely enhance students' ability to comprehend, analyze, and replicate spoken information in various communicative contexts (Crookes, 2021). Moreover, incorporating authentic listening materials and real-life scenarios can prepare students to deal with the challenges of language use in a variety of contexts (Ebadi et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Regular practice, reflection, and analysis of content are essential to deepen understanding. Likewise, interactive activities requiring responses, learning effective listening strategies, exposure to diverse contexts, and receiving constructive feedback all contribute to skill enhancement.

A partial comprehension of critical pedagogy among lecturers limits their ability to incorporate its principles effectively into English listening classes. It results in teaching approaches focusing more on passive learning rather than promoting critical thinking, active involvement, and deeper understanding, affecting students' ability to interpret spoken language effectively. Nevertheless, lecturers who successfully

integrate critical pedagogy principles into their classes foster democratic discussions, encourage peer collaboration, and incorporate real-world topics to stimulate critical thinking. Additionally, they encourage open discussions for students to share opinions, offer peer learning through group activities, and integrate real-world issues to encourage critical thinking. Interactive tasks are used to stimulate analysis, reflection, and active participation, making learning more meaningful. Constructive feedback is also vital to support democratic and dialogic learning.

According to interview data, Mrs. Anna assumed that listening was not enough to listen to the ideas. Rather, it should be reproducing or reconstructing the information the students listen.

*Listening to ideas isn't enough. Instead, my students should actively work with the information they hear. This means they should understand it deeply and then use it to create their own ideas or responses. For example, they might summarize what they heard, talk about it with others, or use it in new situations. Good listening involves more than just hearing, it's about actively engaging with and using the information. .(Anna/Interview)*

It was also noteworthy that, as the following excerpt narrates, Mr. Ariz stressed the significance of providing opportunities for students to interpret the information during listening.

*Students have different interpretations as this happens because each listener brings their own background, experiences, and perspectives to what they hear. These personal factors can influence how they understand and interpret the information. For instance, one person might focus on the emotional tone of a speaker, while another might concentrate on the factual content. This diversity in interpretation is natural and can lead to rich discussions and deeper understanding when listeners share and compare their viewpoints (Ariz/Interview).*

### **Connecting Listening with Real-Life Issues**

Mrs. Anna emphasized that effective listening required sustained concentration, which could be challenging to maintain, particularly during lengthy or complex discussions and presentations. To make her listening class more engaging, she introduced global topics and issues relevant to the students' lives. This approach involved having the students discuss these topics in class. She also encouraged them to share their opinions on what they listened to. This approach was illustrated in the following excerpt.

*In critical listening, after listening to the audio, the class becomes more interactive, resembling a discussion. Students are encouraged to consistently share their opinions, ensuring the class is lively and filled with discussions among the students*

Mrs. Anna highlighted that teaching listening should go beyond fostering critical thinking; it ought to benefit others, as she clarified in the following excerpt.

*Teaching listening skills should not be limited to developing students' ability to think critically. It should also aim to influence others positively. This can involve encouraging students to use their listening skills to contribute to discussions, support their peers, and engage constructively with the world around them. By doing so, the impact of effective listening extends beyond the classroom, fostering a more collaborative and empathetic community. (Anna/interview)*

She encouraged her students to link their listening activities to real-world issues, welcoming any topics to be discussed in the classroom, as she explained.

*I motivate my students to relate what they listen to such as podcasts, news, interviews, or any form of audio content to real-world problems and situations. I invite students to bring any relevant topics or issues they find important or interesting into the classroom discussions. This approach is intended to make the listening activities more meaningful and relevant to the students' lives, fostering an environment where diverse and significant real-life issues can be explored and discussed openly. (Anna/interview)*

In sum, lecturers in this study had understood how to teach listening more critically and know how to make listening classrooms to be more engaging as well as relate teaching listening with real-life issues. This practice of teaching was relevant to the principle of critical thinking which empathized on engaging students critically with social issues as suggested by Freire.

### **Developing Horizontal Relationships to Be Active Listener**

A horizontal learning pattern involved recognizing everyone's knowledge and backgrounds, where learners' contributions and perspectives were valued equally to those of the teacher. Mrs. Dynar revealed that the power of relation matters was significant in the teaching of listening. She argued that students ought to have more agency and influence in the classroom compared to the teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

*My teaching style is centered on power relationships; I empower my students and express my appreciation when they can effectively argue verbally. (Dynar/interview)*

*Giving students the ability to choose the listening materials they engage with, whether through selecting topics or formats that interest them, you empower them within the learning process. This autonomy fosters a sense of investment and responsibility in their own learning, thereby establishing a more balanced power relationship between teacher and students. (Eka/interview)*

The interview with Mrs. Dynar revealed his commitment to fostering a horizontal relationship between lecturer and student. In class, she often referred to her students as friends to build an egalitarian atmosphere. Initially, students found this approach awkward, but they gradually accepted it. Mrs. Dynar believed that creating an equal relationship enhanced student engagement in onsite discussions although she acknowledged that student motivation also played a role. Similarly, Mrs Eka, the youngest lecturer in this study, tended to develop close relationships with her students and frequently participates in student-organized activities. Overall, the participants in this study prioritize establishing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students.

### **Developing Students' Critical Consciousness to Engage with What They Hear.**

Based on the critical pedagogy components, Freire (2000) suggested that the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. Mrs. Siska argued that critical consciousness could be employed by engaging students in discussion that critically analyzes the content. This process required students to go beyond merely understanding the content by considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. Understanding the context such as the time, place, and situation surrounding the message helped students grasp why and how the information was being communicated, influencing its meaning and relevance. Similarly, recognizing the purpose helped students evaluate the speaker's intentions and understanding perspective allowed students to consider how the speaker's personal context and worldview influenced the content and how it was delivered.

Mr. Dynar also suggested that engaging in dialogue after students had understood listening material played a pivotal role in developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students shared diverse experiences and perspectives related to the content, fostering empathy and deepening understanding of societal issues. It encouraged students to challenge assumptions, critically analyze multiple viewpoints, and collaboratively construct knowledge. For example, students were studying a podcast about climate change. After listening to the podcast individually Mrs. Dynar divided the class into small groups. Each group discussed different aspects of the podcast, such as the causes of climate change, its impact on communities, and possible solutions. During these discussions, students shared their insights and raised questions about how societal norms contributed to environmental issues. They used reflective journaling to note down their thoughts on what they learned and how they feel about the topic. This process empowered them to critically reflect on environmental issues and considered actions they could take to address them, fostering a learning environment which encouraged transformative thinking and social responsibility.

### **Establishing Critical, Democratic, and Participatory Assessment**

According to Crookes (2021), assessment in education should embody critical, democratic, and participatory principles. Interviews with participants revealed a preference for assessments emphasizing practical outcomes over mere comprehension testing. They advocated for assessments requiring students to apply their understanding and critical thinking abilities to generate novel knowledge. For instance, Mr. Ariz asked students to listen to a news podcast episode talking about “social media impact on mental health among teenagers”. Having listened to it, they worked in pairs to identify key arguments in the podcast. Each pair then prepared a brief oral presentation where they critically analyzed how the podcast portrayed the relationship between social media use and mental health issues. This assessment promoted critical listening skills, evidence-based analysis, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with current issues in the media.

Similarly, Mrs. Eka requested students to listen to a recorded short speech by a community leader addressing the issue of homelessness in their city. After listening, students worked individually to analyze the speech critically. They identified the strengths, such as compelling personal stories, statistical evidence, or motivational language resonating with the audience. They also identified weaknesses, such as potential biases in the presentation of information or logical inconsistencies. Students then wrote a reflective essay summarizing their analysis discussing how effective they found the speech in conveying its message, and proposing additional considerations or actions enhancing the impact of addressing homelessness in their community. She also conveyed that this assessment encouraged students to apply critical listening, and analytical skills, and to reflect on the complexities of addressing social issues through persuasive speech.

### **Lecturers’ Self-Reported Challenges in Implementing Critical Pedagogy**

Previous research and this study both identified several challenges in implementing critical pedagogy. One significant challenge was the low level of student participation and engagement in discussions about texts. Mr. Ariz suggested this could be attributed to cultural factors, particularly among students who were alumni of *pesantren*. In *pesantren*, there was traditionally a vertical power relationship where students (*santri*) typically listened to and obeyed their teachers (*kyai*). Mr. Ariz, who himself was a *santri*, acknowledged the unequal power dynamics between students and lecturers in this context, noting that expressing ideas or opinions was not commonly encouraged.

"In *pesantren*, there is a cultural norm of listening and obeying rather than actively expressing thoughts and opinions. Reflecting on my own experience at the boarding school, I find that discussions and offering opinions in front of the *Kyai* (teacher) are uncommon. I listen to the *Kyai* with dialogue being infrequent". (Ariz/interview)

The reason why students were passive in the listening class was due to their low English proficiency. Students with limited English skills obtained some challenges: understanding vocabulary, language structure, and expressing opinions in English. To address the third challenge, one potential solution was letting students to use their native language (L1) when sharing their arguments. However, there were concerns permitting L1 employ could be seen as a violation, especially since these students were training to become English teachers who needed to demonstrate proficiency in English. Additionally, students' passivity was influenced by low motivation and literacy levels, as they perceived listening as a challenging activity. Due to students' poor motivation and reading levels, as well as their inadequate English proficiency, which affects their comprehension of terminology, language structure, and opinion expression, lecturers find it difficult to implement critical pedagogy in listening lectures. While using the mother tongue (L1) as a possible remedy can be beneficial, it presents concerns about infractions, especially for future lecturers who need to demonstrate their English proficiency. These challenges draw attention broader systemic issues within Indonesian education, such as insufficient emphasis on fostering students' critical thinking and communication skills in English. The education system's continued reliance on memorization and passive learning impedes students' ability to think critically and engage actively in learning. In addition, the problem is made worse by lecturers' lack of training in cutting-edge pedagogical strategies, which makes it challenging for them to successfully use critical pedagogy concepts.

The second challenge of implementing critical pedagogy in listening classroom was the problem of accents and pronunciation. Exposure to different English accents, such as British, American, Australian, posed challenges for students in understanding varied pronunciations and intonations. Accents different from those encountered in the classroom could be particularly difficult. Moreover, each accent had distinct pronunciation patterns, intonations, and even vocabulary differences. Mrs. Siska, Anna, and Eka confirmed this challenge since it directly impacted students' comprehension and communication abilities.

The third, from a personal perspective, Mrs. Eka highlighted a challenge of applying critical pedagogy, particularly concerning the evolving nature of critical thinking. She emphasized the need to continually update our understanding of what constituted critical thinking, suggesting ongoing exploration, such as through critical discourse analysis. Additionally, Mrs. Eka underscored the difficulty in ensuring students grasp critical thinking concepts, acknowledging this as a persistent challenge in education.

"Another challenge is ensuring students comprehend critical thinking. Currently, I am considering how to address students' struggles with this concept, suggesting that teachers should create structured stages, such as higher-order thinking skills guidelines. This approach involves transitioning from lower-order thinking to higher-order thinking using specific operational verbs'. (Eka/interview)



#### 4. Discussion

The findings reveal that while lecturers lack formal awareness of critical pedagogy particularly its theoretical definition; their teaching practices prove elements of this approach. This apparent aligns with Freire (2020) philosophy that the essence of education lies in fostering critical thinking by addressing real-life problems. The lecturers aim at cultivating students' critical thinking skills in listening classes, even though their understanding of the term 'critical pedagogy' remains limited. This is consistent with Abdolrezapour & Ghanbari (2021) research, which reveals that critical pedagogy indicators often manifest in classroom practices without explicit acknowledgment of the concept by educators. Wiley's observation that "they just don't know what they know" aptly represents this phenomenon. The lecturers' implicit adoption of critical pedagogy likely stems from the inherent need to address students' struggles with listening skills, as the subject is perceived to be particularly challenging. Incorporating real-life contexts and encouraging critical engagement, they align with Freire principles. This highlights a practical implication: professional development programs should bridge the gap between practice and theory, enabling lecturers to consciously employ critical pedagogy and maximize its transformative potential.

The research reports that lecturers integrate critical pedagogy by emphasizing active knowledge creation rather than passive knowledge acquisition. This approach reflects Freire (2020) notion of education as a process of reinventing and recreating knowledge. Similarly, Rezai et al. (2023) and Rocha et al. (2022) argue that learning should involve active engagement with materials, letting students to construct their realities through social interactions rather than rote memorization. The study suggests that listening material connected to real-life issues improves students' engagement and motivation. This corroborates the findings of Zhang et al. (2023), revealing that relating educational content to authentic contexts fosters deeper learning. However, challenges persist due to students' varying expectations; for example, some students' view language learning primarily as a means to improve test scores. This disconnect underscores the need for a pedagogical shift toward fostering critical thinking and social transformation, as suggested by (Ipek, 2020; Jia & Hew, 2021; Kabir & Zealand, 2024). Theoretically, these findings validate the importance of Freire principles such as dialogue and critical consciousness. Conceptually, they highlight the need to redefine listening pedagogy to include critical and reflective dimensions. Integrating authentic materials and participatory assessments address students' misconceptions about language learning, enhancing the significance and transformation of lessons (Ngo, 2019; Ozcelik et al., 2020).

One major challenge is the passive nature of students, often attributes to cultural factors. Lecturers declare that hierarchical classroom dynamics, prevalent in East Asian educational contexts, hinder open dialogue and critical engagement. This observation is in line with Baturay (2020) and Wang & Chen (2024) researches, critiquing rigid classroom hierarchies as barriers to applying critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, Ha (2021) challenges the generalization that East Asian students are submissive, suggesting that educators' own practices play an essential role to establish classroom dynamics.

Notably, lecturers in this research actively challenge traditional hierarchies by fostering horizontal relationships with students.

Another obstacle lies in students' difficulties with accents and pronunciation during listening activities. These issues hinder their ability to engage with materials, particularly those featuring different linguistic backgrounds. This is relevant to a research held by Fajriyah et al. (2021), Rohaniyah (2021), and Saed et al., (2021) who highlight the evolving nature of critical thinking as an ongoing challenge, emphasizing the need for continuous exploration of pedagogical strategies, such as critical discourse analysis. Theoretical implications of these challenges include the necessity of adapting critical pedagogy to diverse cultural contexts. Conceptually, they underscore the importance of redefining classroom roles to empower students. Practically, professional training for lecturers should address strategies to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers, ensuring that critical pedagogy can be effectively implemented.

## **5. Conclusion**

Critical pedagogy is implemented in the English listening class through various strategies that enhance students' engagement and critical thinking. Firstly, it transforms listening from a reproductive skill into an active process where students not only comprehend but also reconstruct and apply information in diverse contexts. This approach fosters deeper understanding and encourages students to connect listening activities with real-life issues, making learning relevant and meaningful. Additionally, by developing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students, where student agency and contributions are valued, a more egalitarian learning environment is created. Moreover, critical pedagogy promotes students' critical consciousness by encouraging dialogue that analyzes content contextually, purposefully, and from multiple perspectives. Assessments are designed to be critical, democratic, and participatory, emphasizing practical outcomes and the application of critical thinking skills. However, challenges in implementing critical pedagogy include cultural norms affecting student participation, language barriers impacting comprehension, and the evolving nature of critical thinking itself, requiring ongoing lecturers' reflection and adaptation. Addressing these challenges ensures that critical pedagogy in the English listening class remains effective and inclusive, fostering both linguistic proficiency and critical awareness among students. The research faces challenges such as low student engagement due to cultural norm, language barriers to understand materials, and the need for lecturers to adapt to students' evolving critical thinking skills. These issues limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Future research should explore strategies to solve cultural and linguistic barriers, examine the long-term effect of critical pedagogy on students' critical thinking, and create professional training programs to support lecturers in employing critical pedagogy effectively.

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## **5. BUKTI KONFIRMASI SUBMIT REVISI DAN ARTIKEL YANG DISUBMIT**

[illegible]

# Exploring How Lecturers Comprehend and Apply Critical Pedagogy in English Listening Class

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## ABSTRACT

*Grounded in Freire's (1971) critical pedagogy premise revealing that the act of listening should be active, critical, and transformative, rather than passive or merely receptive, this research explored the experience of English language lecturers who taught English listening classes with a critical pedagogy approach. This study employed a qualitative method through a case study design to explore lecturers' understanding in depth and their practices of critical pedagogy. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four lecturers and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The analysis identified key themes in lecturers' understanding, including their awareness of the transformative potential of listening activities, the importance of fostering student autonomy, and their understanding of listening as a dialogic process. The findings also indicate that while lecturers did not explicitly define or describe critical pedagogy, certain stages and elements of it were evident in their teaching. In practice, lecturers applied the principles of critical pedagogy by providing authentic materials, building horizontal relationships, developing critical consciousness, encouraging critical, democratic, and participatory assessment to support transformative learning, while contending with challenges like low student engagement, language proficiency, and diverse accents. This suggests that, to some extent, they incorporated aspects of critical pedagogy in their listening classes. The practical implications of this research recommend that lecturers should receive targeted training in critical pedagogy to better align their teaching practices with its principles, while institutions should provide resources and support to address the challenges.*

**Key Words:** *Lecturers' perceptions, lecturers' practice, critical pedagogy, critical listening, reproductive skill.*

## 1. Introduction

Implementing Critical Pedagogy in Indonesian higher education should be prioritized. Indonesia's long history under an authoritarian regime, followed by a regressive democracy in the post-reformation period highlights this need (Bangsa et al., 2023). These historical factors may have led to a diminished capacity for critique and a reduced sensitivity to social issues within the educational system. In education, the persistence of the banking system, where students are seen as depositories and teachers as the depositors of knowledge is evident. This system continues partly due to students' low interest and motivation in the learning process (Front, 2019; Ha, 2021). Additionally, while the information and communication technology development have positive effects, they also have drawbacks consequences, such as the spread of fake



news. Therefore, fostering critical thinking abilities ought to be a top focus in Indonesian education at all levels.

In English language teaching (ELT), critical pedagogy has been introduced with the aim not only to improve English language skills but also to cultivate a critical awareness of injustice (Zhang et al., 2023). Rooted in [Freire \(2020\)](#), critical pedagogy in language teaching seeks to transform classrooms by incorporating students' local culture, using their first language as a resource, addressing real-life concerns, and raising awareness of issues faced by marginalized groups. This approach aligns with critical language pedagogy introduced by [Crookes \(2021\)](#) who outlines three main concepts. Firstly, "critical pedagogy is democratic," aiming to foster greater democracy in society and within the classroom. Secondly, a critical pedagogy classroom is "dialogical," emphasizing exploratory and discussion-oriented learning. Lastly, although challenging to implement, "critical pedagogy is action-oriented".

Efforts to incorporate critical language pedagogy in ELT and language teacher education programs have been documented worldwide. Rezai et al., (2023) lays the groundwork for critical pedagogy in ELT by outlining critical pedagogy principles and suggesting areas for practitioners. In Indonesia, Bangsa et al. (2023) applies critical pedagogy in an ELT classroom by using codes to teach English, enhancing both language skills and students' critical thinking. Agbo et al., (2023) introduces critical pedagogy in higher education institution, through participatory research with a graduate teacher student in a professional learning program. This program has been successful in designing and implementing critical pedagogy in ELT, helping students become more critical, tolerant, and socially aware.

Prior studies demonstrate the potential benefits of implementing critical pedagogy in ELT. However, implementing critical pedagogy in language teaching and learning is not without challenges. Several empirical studies have investigated these challenges in various contexts ([Chen, 2023](#)). While students respond positively to critical pedagogy in terms of language development and critical thinking through the dialogic approach to teaching critical language, the issues arise related to students' perspectives and academic voices and the conception of language as social practice. Additionally, Nawas et al., (2023) discusses the challenges of practicing critical pedagogy in EFL teaching in South Asia, including tensions between local and international geopolitical tendencies. He suggests the need to critically evaluate both traditional and modern approaches to education to be effective. In summary, previous studies indicate the potential for introducing or integrating critical pedagogy in ELT classrooms and English education programs, while also highlighting implementation challenges. These findings suggest the need for further investigation, particularly into how lecturers comprehend critical pedagogy and how they apply it in n teaching English listening.

Critical Pedagogy is particularly relevant now given that the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture has introduced a new curriculum named *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn). This curriculum aims to align education with current demands, changes, and the needs of the business and industrial sectors, preparing students for the

workforce ([Maghfiroh et al., 2022](#)). However, instead of prioritizing social justice, this program appears to reflect a neoliberal ideology disguised as "freedom" (Sari et al., 2024). This neoliberal orientation, with its focus on market-driven competencies, conflicts with the principles of *critical pedagogy*, emphasizing empowerment, social justice, and critical thinking. *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum has a positive impact on *critical pedagogy implementation* by offering learning flexibility, such as letting students to choose interdisciplinary courses promoting critical thinking and self-empowerment ([Andriana & Evans, 2020](#)). In Islamic-based universities, this approach enriches the integration of religious values with modern scientific knowledge in English language class discussions. However, *Merdeka Belajar* focus on industry and market-driven needs often conflicts with *critical pedagogy principles*, which concerns social justice and critical awareness. This pragmatic focus limits the exploration of critical issues such as equality or globalization, especially in settings that prioritize the integration of morality and spirituality. Thus, *critical pedagogy* is significance to balance the neoliberal influence of *Merdeka Belajar*, ensuring that education remains empowering and not solely driven by economic needs.

This research uses critical pedagogy as the theoretical framework to analyze how English lecturers implement its principles, such as empowering students and fostering critical thinking, in listening comprehension classes. Thematic analysis (Braun, 2006) has been employed to identify patterns in the data, focusing on participants' understanding of critical pedagogy and its application in their teaching practices. Indicators include lecturers' perspectives, specific teaching strategies, and evidence of critical pedagogy integration, as derived from semi-structured interviews and thematic coding. The aims of this research are twofold: firstly, to examine lecturers' comprehension of critical pedagogy, and secondly, to explore its application in the listening classroom. This research seeks to address two main questions:

- (1) how do English lecturers comprehend the principles of critical pedagogy
- (2) how do they apply these principles in listening comprehension classes.

The study contributes theoretically by deepening critical pedagogy understanding within English language teaching, particularly in listening instruction, and practically by offering some strategies and examples that lecturers can employ to foster critical thinking and learner engagement in the classrooms.

## **2. Methods**

### **Research Design**

To answer the research questions, this study used a case study design. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of a particular, bounded system such as an activity, event, process, or individuals defined by certain temporal, spatial, or physical ([Wales, 2019](#)). The purpose of a case study is to shed light on a particular issue, problem, or theory. As a qualitative research method, data collection and analysis in a case study occur concurrently and continuously ([Roseli et al., 2020](#)). The case study design can be somewhat flexible, with research questions becoming more refined following the initial analysis of interviews, diary entries, or observations ([Al et al., 2023; Wales, 2019](#)). Case

studies can focus on single individuals, multiple individuals, programs, events, or activities ([Maag et al., 2021](#)). In essence, a case study is a qualitative research method involving an in-depth analysis of a specific, bounded system, such as an activity, event, or individuals. It aims at providing a deeper understanding of a particular issue, with data collection and analysis happening concurrently. The design is flexible, allowing research questions to evolve as the study progresses. In this research, the cases involved some lecturers. Specifically, this study employed case study approach, aiming to offer insights into a broader case while specific issue itself was of secondary importance, helping to enhance understanding of something else. An instrumental case study was chosen as the research sought to explore a broader issue concerning the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening comprehension classes. As an exploratory study, it focused on how lecturers articulate their understanding on CP perspectives and they incorporated this understanding into their teaching practices, particularly in teaching English listening skill.

## Participants

This research involved four English lecturers from four different universities and regions. Three participants have over ten years of experience teaching English, as confirmed by their curriculum vitae and their accounts during the interviews and one confessed to be a new lecturer. Informal conversations prior to the interviews revealed that all participants also had experience teaching listening comprehension for several years. The selection of participants was initially based on data from higher education sources (PDDIKTI) to verify their teaching experience in listening comprehension. The researchers then contacted the participants via email or WhatsApp, with contact information provided by colleagues familiar with the potential participants. Every participant willingly signed consent forms for the study and agreed to supply the required data. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

**Table 1. Demographic information of the participants**

No	Name	Gender	Teaching Experience	Qualification	Teaching Expertise
1	Siska	Female	16 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Informal Communication, Listening for Academic Communication, TEFL
2	Anna	Female	13 years	Master of Education	Listening I, Listening II, English Morphology, Critical Reading
3	Ariz	Male	11 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Social Interaction, Listening in Professional Context, Research

					Methodology in Linguistics and Literature
4	Eka	Female	5 years	Master of Education	Reading Comprehension, Intensive Listening, Extensive Listening

## Data Collection

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect data, asking participants about their experiences incorporating a critical pedagogy approach into their English listening classes. Prior to the first interview, this study had the interview guidelines reviewed by an expert to obtain feedback. The interview questions were then tested out on a person with research publications and experience in critical pedagogy. After revising the guidelines based on this feedback, this research involved four different interviews with the participants. Mrs. Siska was interviewed for the first time in the second week of January 2024. Mrs. Anna was interviewed in the third week of January 2024. The third interview, with Mr. Ariz, took place in the second week of February 2024. Finally, we interviewed Mrs. Eka in mid-March 2024. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom. To avoid language barriers and based on participants' preferences, the interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers then translated the transcripts into English.

## Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using the six stages of thematic analysis, including familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the themes, and writing the report (Braun, 2006). The theory of critical pedagogy, as outlined by Crookes (2021), was implemented to analyze how these concepts emerged in the practice of teaching listening. Crookes' critical pedagogy theory emphasized active student engagement through critical awareness, dialogue, and social analysis, with the aim of empowering students to become agents of change by developing critical thinking skills in a participatory and reflective learning context. This research utilized this theory to examine how critical pedagogy principles were integrated into the teaching of listening.

## 3. Findings

The findings examine how the participating lecturers understood of critical pedagogy, how critical pedagogy was implemented in English listening classes, and what challenged they faced. The research questions and the emerging themes were used to organize the results.

### Lecturers' Understanding of Critical Pedagogy

The lecturers were generally unfamiliar with critical pedagogy. One participant's comment, when asked about critical pedagogy, made this clear: "Not yet, but if it is feasible to provide critical education, in general, for instance, although I can't recall

everything precisely, I know from educational liberation"(Siska/Interview). This suggests that participants did not always understand the idea of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, the participants did grasp the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy. She also recognized well-known figures in critical pedagogy, like Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. This indicates her basic comprehension of the critical perspective in language teaching.

The interview with Mr. Ariz further demonstrated the lack of familiarity with critical pedagogy in English language instruction. He was unable to clearly explain what critical pedagogy was. However, he was able to provide examples of how he saw critical pedagogy principles being employed in listening classes. The excerpt below illustrates this as narrated by Mr. Ariz:

*In my listening classes, I incorporate strategies that encourage students to engage in critical analysis and reflection on the content they hear. For instance, I use audio materials on social issues, like speeches or news reports discussing human rights topics. After listening, we have a class discussion where I ask students to share their thoughts and feelings about the issue and what insights they gained from the material. (Mr. Ariz/Interview)*

The result of interview above reveals that incorporating audio resources on social issues, such as speeches or news report about human rights subjects encouraged students to critically analyze the information in addition to understanding it. Students were given the opportunity to voice their opinions during the ensuing class discussions, assisting them to develop a greater understanding and empathy for other points of view. Moreover, the lecturer's comprehension of critical pedagogy is further elucidated in another excerpt as follows.

*We encourage them to embrace their role. Their role extends beyond being mere students to becoming agents of change. This realization emphasizes that their responsibility doesn't end with learning alone. Students must exert a positive influence on their surroundings, demonstrating their ability to analyze and confront issues. By sharing insights and new information, they can help others develop a more informed perspective, thereby addressing any misunderstandings that may arise. (Siska/Interview)*

From the passage, Mrs. Siska recognized that critical pedagogy involved students critically analyzing issues and sharing their understanding with others, particularly those seeking insights from scholars. She also emphasized that students acted as social change agent, advocating for a positive impact on society during and beyond their university education. Moreover, another lecturer, Mrs. Anna, possessed deeper knowledge of critical literacy compared to critical pedagogy. Her research focused on critical literacy, and she was familiar with critical literacy pedagogy as well. Anna viewed critical pedagogy as a broader concept or an extension of critical literacy pedagogy; she utilized literary works to teach listening skills in her classroom.

*I am familiar with critical literacy through my research projects, where I actively incorporate its principles. As for critical pedagogy, my focus lies specifically on critical listening pedagogy. (Anna/Interview).*

*Mrs. Eka acknowledged that she recently learned about critical pedagogy, despite teaching courses like critical listening and reading comprehension at the university. As one of the youngest lecturers with less teaching experience compared to her colleagues, she recognized the interconnectedness of language, culture, and ideology. She noted that "A person's culture can be expressed through their language and reflects the ideologies they uphold. (Eka/interview).*

In summary, although lecturers' explicit understanding of critical pedagogy was not directly stated, they demonstrated familiarity with certain perspectives and principles of critical pedagogy during the interviews. Based on the analysis of their understanding and endorsement of critical pedagogy principles to some degree, lecturers in this study could be categorized as 'critical pedagogy, defined by (Zhiwei & Wang, 2024) as ELT lecturers who utilized the fundamental values and theories of critical pedagogy. The subsequent findings related to the teachers' experiences in applying critical pedagogy in the listening classroom.

### **How Is Critical Pedagogy Employed in the English Listening Class? Listening as a Practice of Reproductive Skill**

Listening as a reproductive skill" refers to the idea that listening is not just a passive activity but an active process where listeners mentally reproduce or reconstruct the information they hear. This involves comprehending, processing, and then potentially using the information in some form of response or further communication. In this sense, listening requires cognitive engagement and the ability to understand and recall spoken language accurately, making it an integral part of effective communication and language acquisition. A study has shown that active listening practices merely enhance students' ability to comprehend, analyze, and replicate spoken information in various communicative contexts ([Crookes, 2021](#)). Moreover, incorporating authentic listening materials and real-life scenarios can prepare students to deal with the challenges of language use in a variety of contexts (Ebadi et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Regular practice, reflection, and analysis of content are essential to deepen understanding. Likewise, interactive activities requiring responses, learning effective listening strategies, exposure to diverse contexts, and receiving constructive feedback all contribute to skill enhancement.

A partial comprehension of critical pedagogy among lecturers limits their ability to incorporate its principles effectively into English listening classes. It results in teaching approaches focusing more on passive learning rather than promoting critical thinking, active involvement, and deeper understanding, affecting students' ability to interpret spoken language effectively. Nevertheless, lecturers who successfully

integrate critical pedagogy principles into their classes foster democratic discussions, encourage peer collaboration, and incorporate real-world topics to stimulate critical thinking. Additionally, they encourage open discussions for students to share opinions, offer peer learning through group activities, and integrate real-world issues to encourage critical thinking. Interactive tasks are used to stimulate analysis, reflection, and active participation, making learning more meaningful. Constructive feedback is also vital to support democratic and dialogic learning.

According to interview data, Mrs. Anna assumed that listening was not enough to listen to the ideas. Rather, it should be reproducing or reconstructing the information the students listen.

*Listening to ideas isn't enough. Instead, my students should actively work with the information they hear. This means they should understand it deeply and then use it to create their own ideas or responses. For example, they might summarize what they heard, talk about it with others, or use it in new situations. Good listening involves more than just hearing, it's about actively engaging with and using the information. .(Anna/Interview)*

It was also noteworthy that, as the following excerpt narrates, Mr. Ariz stressed the significance of providing opportunities for students to interpret the information during listening.

*Students have different interpretations as this happens because each listener brings their own background, experiences, and perspectives to what they hear. These personal factors can influence how they understand and interpret the information. For instance, one person might focus on the emotional tone of a speaker, while another might concentrate on the factual content. This diversity in interpretation is natural and can lead to rich discussions and deeper understanding when listeners share and compare their viewpoints (Ariz/Interview).*

### **Connecting Listening with Real-Life Issues**

Mrs. Anna emphasized that effective listening required sustained concentration, which could be challenging to maintain, particularly during lengthy or complex discussions and presentations. To make her listening class more engaging, she introduced global topics and issues relevant to the students' lives. This approach involved having the students discuss these topics in class. She also encouraged them to share their opinions on what they listened to. This approach was illustrated in the following excerpt.

*In critical listening, after listening to the audio, the class becomes more interactive, resembling a discussion. Students are encouraged to consistently share their opinions, ensuring the class is lively and filled with discussions among the students*



Mrs. Anna highlighted that teaching listening should go beyond fostering critical thinking; it ought to benefit others, as she clarified in the following excerpt.

*Teaching listening skills should not be limited to developing students' ability to think critically. It should also aim to influence others positively. This can involve encouraging students to use their listening skills to contribute to discussions, support their peers, and engage constructively with the world around them. By doing so, the impact of effective listening extends beyond the classroom, fostering a more collaborative and empathetic community. (Anna/interview)*

She encouraged her students to link their listening activities to real-world issues, welcoming any topics to be discussed in the classroom, as she explained.

*I motivate my students to relate what they listen to such as podcasts, news, interviews, or any form of audio content to real-world problems and situations. I invite students to bring any relevant topics or issues they find important or interesting into the classroom discussions. This approach is intended to make the listening activities more meaningful and relevant to the students' lives, fostering an environment where diverse and significant real-life issues can be explored and discussed openly. (Anna/interview)*

In sum, lecturers in this study had understood how to teach listening more critically and know how to make listening classrooms to be more engaging as well as relate teaching listening with real-life issues. This practice of teaching was relevant to the principle of critical thinking which empathized on engaging students critically with social issues as suggested by Freire.

### **Developing Horizontal Relationships to Be Active Listener**

A horizontal learning pattern involved recognizing everyone's knowledge and backgrounds, where learners' contributions and perspectives were valued equally to those of the teacher. Mrs. Dynar revealed that the power of relation matters was significant in the teaching of listening. She argued that students ought to have more agency and influence in the classroom compared to the teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

*My teaching style is centered on power relationships; I empower my students and express my appreciation when they can effectively argue verbally. (Dynar/interview)*

*Giving students the ability to choose the listening materials they engage with, whether through selecting topics or formats that interest them, you empower them within the learning process. This autonomy fosters a sense of investment and responsibility in their own learning, thereby establishing a more balanced power relationship between teacher and students. (Eka/interview)*



The interview with Mrs. Dynar revealed his commitment to fostering a horizontal relationship between lecturer and student. In class, she often referred to her students as friends to build an egalitarian atmosphere. Initially, students found this approach awkward, but they gradually accepted it. Mrs. Dynar believed that creating an equal relationship enhanced student engagement in onsite discussions although she acknowledged that student motivation also played a role. Similarly, Mrs Eka, the youngest lecturer in this study, tended to develop close relationships with her students and frequently participates in student-organized activities. Overall, the participants in this study prioritize establishing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students.

### **Developing Students' Critical Consciousness to Engage with What They Hear.**

Based on the critical pedagogy components, [Freire \(2000\)](#) suggested that the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. Mrs. Siska argued that critical consciousness could be employed by engaging students in discussion that critically analyzes the content. This process required students to go beyond merely understanding the content by considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. Understanding the context such as the time, place, and situation surrounding the message helped students grasp why and how the information was being communicated, influencing its meaning and relevance. Similarly, recognizing the purpose helped students evaluate the speaker's intentions and understanding perspective allowed students to consider how the speaker's personal context and worldview influenced the content and how it was delivered.

Mr. Dynar also suggested that engaging in dialogue after students had understood listening material played a pivotal role in developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students shared diverse experiences and perspectives related to the content, fostering empathy and deepening understanding of societal issues. It encouraged students to challenge assumptions, critically analyze multiple viewpoints, and collaboratively construct knowledge. For example, students were studying a podcast about climate change. After listening to the podcast individually Mrs. Dynar divided the class into small groups. Each group discussed different aspects of the podcast, such as the causes of climate change, its impact on communities, and possible solutions. During these discussions, students shared their insights and raised questions about how societal norms contributed to environmental issues. They used reflective journaling to note down their thoughts on what they learned and how they feel about the topic. This process empowered them to critically reflect on environmental issues and considered actions they could take to address them, fostering a learning environment which encouraged transformative thinking and social responsibility.

### **Establishing Critical, Democratic, and Participatory Assessment**

According to [Crookes \(2021\)](#), assessment in education should embody critical, democratic, and participatory principles. Interviews with participants revealed a preference for assessments emphasizing practical outcomes over mere comprehension testing. They advocated for assessments requiring students to apply their understanding and critical thinking abilities to generate novel knowledge. For instance, Mr. Ariz asked students to listen to a news podcast episode talking about “social media impact on mental health among teenagers”. Having listened to it, they worked in pairs to identify key arguments in the podcast. Each pair then prepared a brief oral presentation where they critically analyzed how the podcast portrayed the relationship between social media use and mental health issues. This assessment promoted critical listening skills, evidence-based analysis, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with current issues in the media.

Similarly, Mrs. Eka requested students to listen to a recorded short speech by a community leader addressing the issue of homelessness in their city. After listening, students worked individually to analyze the speech critically. They identified the strengths, such as compelling personal stories, statistical evidence, or motivational language resonating with the audience. They also identified weaknesses, such as potential biases in the presentation of information or logical inconsistencies. Students then wrote a reflective essay summarizing their analysis discussing how effective they found the speech in conveying its message, and proposing additional considerations or actions enhancing the impact of addressing homelessness in their community. She also conveyed that this assessment encouraged students to apply critical listening, and analytical skills, and to reflect on the complexities of addressing social issues through persuasive speech.

### **4. Discussion**

The findings reveal that while lecturers lack formal awareness of critical pedagogy particularly its theoretical definition; their teaching practices prove elements of this approach. This apparent aligns with [Freire \(2020\)](#) philosophy that the essence of education lies in fostering critical thinking by addressing real-life problems. The lecturers aim at cultivating students' critical thinking skills in listening classes, even though their understanding of the term ‘critical pedagogy’ remains limited. This is consistent with Abdolrezaei & Ghanbari (2021) research, which reveals that critical pedagogy indicators often manifest in classroom practices without explicit acknowledgment of the concept by educators. Wiley’s observation that “they just don’t know what they know” aptly represents this phenomenon. The lecturers’ implicit adoption of critical pedagogy likely stems from the inherent need to address students’ struggles with listening skills, as the subject is perceived to be particularly challenging. Incorporating real-life contexts and encouraging critical engagement, they align with Freire principles. This highlights a practical implication: professional development

programs should bridge the gap between practice and theory, enabling lecturers to consciously employ critical pedagogy and maximize its transformative potential.

The research reports that lecturers integrate critical pedagogy by emphasizing active knowledge creation rather than passive knowledge acquisition. This approach reflects Freire (2020) notion of education as a process of reinventing and recreating knowledge. Similarly, Rezai et al. (2023) and Rocha et al. (2022) argue that learning should involve active engagement with materials, letting students to construct their realities through social interactions rather than rote memorization. The study suggests that listening material connected to real-life issues improves students' engagement and motivation. This corroborates the findings of Zhang et al. (2023), revealing that relating educational content to authentic contexts fosters deeper learning. However, challenges persist due to students' varying expectations; for example, some students' view language learning primarily as a means to improve test scores. This disconnect underscores the need for a pedagogical shift toward fostering critical thinking and social transformation, as suggested by [Ipek, 2020; Jia & Hew, 2021; Kabir & Zealand, 2024](#)). Theoretically, these findings validate the importance of Freire principles such as dialogue and critical consciousness. Conceptually, they highlight the need to redefine listening pedagogy to include critical and reflective dimensions. Integrating authentic materials and participatory assessments address students' misconceptions about language learning, enhancing the significance and transformation of lessons [\(Ngo, 2019; Ozelik et al., 2020\)](#)

One major challenge is the passive nature of students, often attributes to cultural factors. Lecturers declare that hierarchical classroom dynamics, prevalent in East Asian educational contexts, hinder open dialogue and critical engagement. This observation is in line with [Baturay \(2020\)](#) and Wang & Chen [\(2024\)](#) researches, critiquing rigid classroom hierarchies as barriers to applying critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, Ha (2021) challenges the generalization that East Asian students are submissive, suggesting that educators' own practices play an essential role to establish classroom dynamics. Notably, lecturers in this research actively challenge traditional hierarchies by fostering horizontal relationships with students.

Another obstacle lies in students' difficulties with accents and pronunciation during listening activities. These issues hinder their ability to engage with materials, particularly those featuring different linguistic backgrounds. This is relevant to a research held by [Fajriyah et al. \(2021\)](#), [Rohaniyah \(2021\)](#), and Saed et al., [\(2021\)](#) who highlight the evolving nature of critical thinking as an ongoing challenge, emphasizing the need for continuous exploration of pedagogical strategies, such as critical discourse analysis. Theoretical implications of these challenges include the necessity of adapting critical pedagogy to diverse cultural contexts. Conceptually, they underscore the importance of redefining classroom roles to empower students. Practically, professional training for lecturers should address strategies to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers, ensuring that critical pedagogy can be effectively implemented.

## **5. Conclusion**

Critical pedagogy is implemented in the English listening class through various strategies that enhance students' engagement and critical thinking. Firstly, it transforms listening from a reproductive skill into an active process where students not only comprehend but also reconstruct and apply information in diverse contexts. This approach fosters deeper understanding and encourages students to connect listening activities with real-life issues, making learning relevant and meaningful. Additionally, by developing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students, where student agency and contributions are valued, a more egalitarian learning environment is created. Moreover, critical pedagogy promotes students' critical consciousness by encouraging dialogue that analyzes content contextually, purposefully, and from multiple perspectives. Assessments are designed to be critical, democratic, and participatory, emphasizing practical outcomes and the application of critical thinking skills. However, challenges in implementing critical pedagogy include cultural norms affecting student participation, language barriers impacting comprehension, and the evolving nature of critical thinking itself, requiring ongoing lecturers' reflection and adaptation. Addressing these challenges ensures that critical pedagogy in the English listening class remains effective and inclusive, fostering both linguistic proficiency and critical awareness among students. The research faces challenges such as low student engagement due to cultural norm, language barriers to understand materials, and the need for lecturers to adapt to students' evolving critical thinking skills. These issues limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Future research should explore strategies to solve cultural and linguistic barriers, examine the long-term effect of critical pedagogy on students' critical thinking, and create professional training programs to support lecturers in employing critical pedagogy effectively.

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## **6. BUKTI KONFIRMASI ARTIKEL *ACCEPTED***





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**[lkw] Editor Decision**

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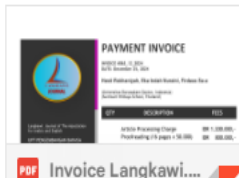
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## Exploring How Lecturers Comprehend and Apply Critical Pedagogy in English Listening Class

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### ABSTRACT

Grounded in Freire's (1971) critical pedagogy premise revealing that the act of listening should be active, critical, and transformative, rather than passive or merely receptive, this research explored the experience of English language lecturers who taught English listening classes with a critical pedagogy approach. This study employed a qualitative method through a case study design to explore lecturers' understanding in depth and their practices of critical pedagogy. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four lecturers and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The analysis identified key themes in lecturers' understanding, including their awareness of the transformative potential of listening activities, the importance of fostering student autonomy, and their understanding of listening as a dialogic process. The findings also indicate that while lecturers did not explicitly define or describe critical pedagogy, certain stages and elements ~~of it~~ were evident in their teaching. In practice, lecturers applied the principles of critical pedagogy by providing authentic materials, building horizontal relationships, developing critical consciousness, encouraging critical, democratic, and participatory assessment to support transformative ~~learning~~, ~~learning~~ while contending with challenges like low student engagement, language proficiency, and diverse accents. This suggests that, to some extent, they incorporated aspects of critical pedagogy in their listening classes. ~~The practical implications of this research recommend that lecturers should~~ is research's practical implications recommend that lecturers receive targeted training in critical pedagogy to better align their teaching practices with its principles ~~align their teaching practices with its principles, while. At the same time,~~ institutions should provide resources and support to address the challenges.

**Key Words:** Lecturers' perceptions, lecturers' practice, critical pedagogy, critical listening, reproductive ~~skill~~, ~~skills~~

### 1. Introduction

Implementing Critical Pedagogy in Indonesian higher education should be prioritized. Indonesia's long history under an authoritarian regime, followed by a regressive democracy in the post-reformation period, highlights this need (Bangsa et al., 2023). These historical factors may have led to a diminished capacity for critique and a reduced sensitivity to social issues within the educational system. In education, the persistence of the banking system, where students are seen as depositories and teachers as the depositors of ~~knowledge~~ ~~knowledge~~, is evident. This system continues partly due to students' low interest and motivation in ~~the learning process~~ (Front, 2019; Ha, 2021). Additionally, while ~~the~~ information and communication technology development

~~have~~has positive effects, ~~they~~it also ~~have~~has drawbacks and consequences, such as ~~the spread of~~spreading fake news. Therefore, fostering critical thinking abilities ~~ought to~~should be a top focus in Indonesian education at all levels.

In English language teaching (ELT), critical pedagogy has been introduced with the aim not only to improve English language skills but also to cultivate a critical awareness of injustice (Zhang et al., 2023). Rooted in Freire (2020), ~~critieucial~~critical pedagogy in language teaching seeks to transform classrooms by incorporating students' local culture, using their first language as a resource, addressing real-life concerns, and raising awareness of issues faced by marginalized groups. This approach aligns with critical language pedagogy introduced by Crookes (2021), who outlines ~~ess~~three main concepts. Firstly, "critical pedagogy is democratic," aiming to foster greater democracy in society and within the classroom. Secondly, a critical pedagogy classroom is "dialogical," emphasizing exploratory and discussion-oriented learning. Lastly, although challenging to implement, "critical pedagogy is ~~action-oriented~~action-oriented".

Efforts to incorporate critical language pedagogy in ELT and language teacher education programs have been documented worldwide. Rezai et al., (2023) ~~lays~~lay the groundwork for critical pedagogy in ELT by outlining ~~critical pedagogy principles~~essential principles of pedagogy and suggesting areas for practitioners. In Indonesia, Bangsa et al. (2023) ~~applies~~critical pedagogy in an ELT classroom can be applied by using codes to teach English, enhancing both language skills and students' critical thinking. Agbo et al., (2023) ~~introduces~~introduce critical pedagogy in higher education ~~institution~~institutions through participatory research with a graduate teacher student in a professional learning program. This program has ~~been successful in designing and implementing~~successfully designed and implemented critical pedagogy in ELT, helping students become more critical, tolerant, and socially aware.

Prior studies demonstrate the potential benefits of implementing critical pedagogy in ELT. However, implementing critical pedagogy in language teaching and learning is ~~not without challenges~~challenging. Several empirical studies have investigated these challenges in various contexts (Chen, 2023). While students respond positively to critical pedagogy in ~~terms of~~language development and critical thinking through the dialogic approach to teaching critical language, ~~the~~issues arise related to students' perspectives and academic voices and the conception of language as social practice. Additionally, Nawas et al., (2023) ~~discusses~~discuss the challenges of practicing critical pedagogy in EFL teaching in South Asia, including tensions between local and international geopolitical tendencies. He suggests the need to critically evaluate both traditional and modern approaches to education to be effective. In summary, previous studies indicate the potential for introducing or integrating critical pedagogy in ELT classrooms and English education programs, while also highlighting implementation challenges. These findings suggest the need for further investigation, particularly into how lecturers comprehend critical pedagogy and ~~how they~~apply it in ~~a~~teaching English listening.

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Critical Pedagogy is particularly relevant now given that the Indonesian Ministry of ~~Education~~Education and Culture has introduced a new curriculum named *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn). This curriculum aims to align education with current demands, changes, and the needs of the business and industrial sectors, preparing students for the workforce (Maghfiroh et al., 2022). However, instead of prioritizing social justice, this program ~~appears to reflect~~reflects a neoliberal ideology disguised as "freedom" (Sari et al., 2024). This neoliberal orientation, ~~with its focus~~focusing on market-driven competencies, conflicts with the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing empowerment, social justice, and critical thinking. *Merdeka Belajar's* curriculum ~~has a positive impact on~~positively impacts critical pedagogy implementation by offering ~~learning~~ flexibility, such as letting students ~~to choose~~ interdisciplinary courses promoting critical thinking and self-empowerment (Andriana & Evans, 2020). In Islamic-based universities, this approach enriches ~~the integration of~~integrating religious values with modern scientific knowledge in English language class discussions. However, *Merdeka Belajar's* focus on industry and market-driven needs often conflicts with critical pedagogy principles, ~~which concerns~~concerning social justice and critical awareness. This pragmatic focus limits the exploration of critical issues such as equality or globalization, especially in settings that prioritize the integration of morality and spirituality. Thus, critical pedagogy is ~~significancesignificant~~ significant ~~to~~in balanceing the neoliberal influence of *Merdeka Belajar*, ensuring that education remains empowering and not solely driven by economic needs.

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This research uses critical pedagogy as the theoretical framework to analyze how English lecturers implement its principles, such as empowering students and fostering critical thinking, in listening comprehension classes. Thematic analysis (Braun, 2006) has been employed to identify patterns in the data, focusing on participants' understanding of critical pedagogy and its application in their teaching practices. Indicators include lecturers' perspectives, specific teaching strategies, and evidence of critical pedagogy integration, ~~as~~ derived from semi-structured interviews and thematic coding. The aims of this research are twofold: firstly, to examine lecturers' comprehension of critical pedagogy, and secondly, to explore its application in the listening classroom. This research seeks to address two main questions:

- (1) how do English lecturers comprehend the principles of critical pedagogy?
- (2) how do they apply these principles in listening comprehension classes?

The study contributes theoretically by deepening critical pedagogy understanding within English language teaching, particularly in listening instruction, and practically by offering some strategies and examples that lecturers can employ to foster critical thinking and learner engagement in the classrooms.

## 2. Methods

### Research Design

To answer the research questions, this study used a case study design. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of a particular, bounded system such as an activity, event, process, or individuals defined by certain temporal, spatial, or physical (Wales,

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2019). ~~The purpose of a case study is~~ A case study aims to shed light on a particular issue, problem, or theory. As a qualitative research method, data collection and analysis in a case study occur concurrently and continuously (Roseli et al., 2020). The case study design can be ~~somewhat~~ flexible, with research questions becoming more refined following the initial analysis of interviews, diary entries, or observations (Al et al., 2023; Wales, 2019). Case studies can focus on single individuals, multiple individuals, programs, events, or activities (Maag et al., 2021). In essence, a case study is a qualitative research method involving an in-depth analysis of a specific, bounded system, such as an activity, event, or ~~individuals~~ individual. It aims ~~at providing to provide~~ a deeper understanding of a particular issue, with ~~data collection and analysis happening concurrently~~ concurrent data collection and analysis. The design is flexible, allowing research questions to evolve as the study progresses. In this research, the cases involved some lecturers. Specifically, this study employed ~~casea case~~ study approach, aiming to offer insights into a broader case while ~~specifi~~the specific issue ~~itself~~ was of secondary importance, helping to enhance understanding of something else. An instrumental case study was chosen as the research sought to explore a broader issue concerning the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening comprehension classes. As an exploratory study, it focused on how lecturers articulate their understanding ~~on of~~ CP ~~perspectives~~perspectives, and they incorporated this understanding into their teaching practices, particularly in teaching English listening ~~skills~~skills.

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### Participants

This research involved four English lecturers from four different universities and regions. Three participants have over ten years of experience teaching English, as confirmed by their curriculum vitae and ~~their~~ accounts during the ~~interviews~~interviews, and one confessed to be a new lecturer. Informal conversations ~~prior to before~~ the interviews revealed that all participants also had experience teaching listening comprehension for several years. The selection of participants was initially based on data from higher education sources (PDDIKTI) to verify their teaching experience in listening comprehension. The researchers then contacted the participants via email or WhatsApp, with contact information provided by colleagues familiar with the potential participants. Every participant willingly signed consent forms for the study and agreed to supply the required ~~data~~ data. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

**Table 1. Demographic information of the participants**

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No	Name	Gender	Teaching Experience	<del>Qualificatio</del> Qualificatio n			Teaching Expertise		
1	Siska	Female	16 years	Doctor of English	of	Listening Communication,	for	Informal	for

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				Education	<del>Academic</del> for <del>Academic</del> Communication, TEFL
2	Anna	Female	13 years	Master of Education	Listening I, Listening II, English Morphology, Critical Reading
3	Ariz	Male	<del>11</del> years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Social Interaction, Listening in Professional Context, Research Methodology in Linguistics and Literature
4	Eka	Female	5 <del>years</del> <del>years</del>	Master of Education	Reading <del>Comprehension</del> <del>comprehension</del> , Intensive Listening, Extensive Listening

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### Data Collection

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect data, asking participants about their experiences incorporating a critical pedagogy approach into their English listening classes. ~~Prior to~~~~Before~~ the first interview, this study had the interview guidelines reviewed by an expert to obtain feedback. The interview questions were then tested ~~out~~ on a person with research publications and experience in critical pedagogy. After revising the guidelines based on this feedback, this research involved four different interviews with the participants. Mrs. Siska was interviewed for the first time in the second week of January 2024. Mrs. Anna was interviewed in the third week of January 2024. The third interview, with Mr. Ariz, took place in the second week of February 2024. Finally, we interviewed Mrs. Eka in mid-March 2024. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom. To avoid language barriers and based on participants' preferences, the interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers then translated the transcripts into English.

### Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using the six stages of thematic analysis, including familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the themes, and writing the report (Braun, 2006). The theory of critical pedagogy, as outlined by Crookes (2021), was implemented to analyze how these concepts emerged in ~~the practice of~~ teaching listening. Crookes' critical pedagogy theory ~~emphasized~~~~emphasizes~~ active student engagement through critical awareness, dialogue, and social analysis, ~~with the aim of~~



~~empowering to empower~~ students to become agents of change by developing critical thinking skills in a participatory and reflective learning context. This research utilized this theory to examine how ~~critical pedagogy principles~~ essential principles of pedagogy were integrated into the teaching of listening.

### 3. Findings

~~The findings examine h~~ The findings examine how the participating lecturers understood ~~of~~ critical pedagogy, how ~~critical pedagogy~~ it was implemented in English listening classes, and what ~~challenged~~ challenges they faced. The research questions and ~~the emerging themes were used to organize~~ emerging themes organized the results.

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#### Lecturers' Understanding of Critical Pedagogy

The lecturers were generally unfamiliar with critical pedagogy. One participant's comment, when asked about critical pedagogy, made this clear: "Not yet, but if it is feasible to provide critical ~~education, education~~ in general, for instance, although I can't recall everything precisely, I know from educational ~~liberation~~" (Siska/Interview): liberation" (Siska/Interview). This suggests that participants did not always understand the idea of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, the participants did grasp the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy. She also recognized well-known figures in critical pedagogy, like Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. This indicates her basic comprehension of the critical perspective in language teaching.

The interview with Mr. Ariz further demonstrated the lack of familiarity with critical pedagogy in English language instruction. He was unable to ~~clearly explain what critical pedagogy was~~ explain what critical pedagogy was clearly. However, he ~~was able to provide~~ provided examples of how he saw critical pedagogy principles ~~being~~ employed in listening classes. The excerpt below illustrates this as narrated by Mr. Ariz:

*In my listening classes, I incorporate strategies that encourage students to ~~engage in critical analysis and reflection on the content they hear~~ analyze and reflect on the content they hear critically. For instance, I use audio materials on social issues, like speeches or news reports discussing human rights ~~topics~~. After listening, we ~~have had~~ a class discussion where I asked students to share their thoughts and feelings about the issue and what insights they gained from the material. (Mr. Ariz/Interview)*

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The result of ~~the interview above~~ above interview reveals that incorporating audio resources on social issues, such as speeches or news reports about human rights subjects, encouraged students to ~~critically analyze the information in addition to understanding it~~ analyze the information and understand it critically. Students were ~~given the opportunity~~ allowed to voice their opinions during the ensuing class discussions, assisting them to develop a greater understanding and empathy for other

points of view. Moreover, the lecturer's comprehension of critical pedagogy is further elucidated in another excerpt ~~as follows~~.

*We encourage them to embrace their role. Their role extends beyond being mere students to becoming agents of change. This realization emphasizes that their responsibility doesn't end with learning alone. Students must ~~exert a positive influence on~~ positively influence their surroundings, demonstrating their ability to analyze and confront issues. By sharing insights and new information, they can help others develop a more informed perspective, thereby addressing any misunderstandings that may arise. (Siska/Interview)*

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From the passage, Mrs. Siska recognized that critical pedagogy involved students critically analyzing issues and sharing their understanding with others, particularly those seeking insights from scholars. She also emphasized that students acted as social change agents, advocating for a positive impact on society during and beyond their university education. Moreover, another lecturer, Mrs. Anna, possessed ~~a deeper~~ more profound knowledge of critical literacy ~~compared to~~ than critical pedagogy. Her research focused on critical literacy, and she was also familiar with critical literacy pedagogy ~~as well~~. Anna viewed critical pedagogy as a broader concept or an extension of critical literacy pedagogy; she utilized literary works to teach listening skills in her classroom.

*I am familiar with critical literacy through my research projects, where I actively incorporate its principles. As for critical pedagogy, my focus lies specifically on critical listening pedagogy. (Anna/Interview).*

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*Mrs. Eka acknowledged that she recently learned about critical pedagogy, despite teaching courses like critical listening and reading comprehension at the university. As one of the youngest lecturers with less teaching experience ~~compared to~~ than her colleagues, she recognized the interconnectedness of language, culture, and ideology. She noted that "~~A~~ a person's culture can be expressed through their language and reflects the ideologies they uphold." *(Eka/interview).**

In summary, although the lecturers' explicit understanding of critical pedagogy was not directly stated, they demonstrated familiarity with certain perspectives and principles of critical pedagogy during the interviews. Based on the analysis of their understanding and endorsement of ~~critical pedagogy principles~~ essential principles of pedagogy to some degree, lecturers in this study could be categorized as 'critical pedagogy, defined by ~~Zhiwei & Wang, (2024)~~ Zhiwei & Wang, (2024) as ELT lecturers who utilized the fundamental values and theories of critical pedagogy. The subsequent findings related to the teachers' experiences in applying critical pedagogy in the listening classroom.

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## How Is Critical Pedagogy Employed in the English Listening Class?

### Listening as a Practice of Reproductive Skill

Listening as a reproductive skill" refers to the idea that listening is not just a passive activity but an active process where listeners mentally reproduce or reconstruct the information they hear. This involves comprehending, processing, and ~~then~~ potentially using the information in ~~some form of~~ response or further communication. In this sense, listening requires cognitive engagement and the ability to understand and recall spoken language accurately, making it an integral part of effective communication and language acquisition. A study has shown that active listening practices merely enhance students' ability to comprehend, analyze, and replicate spoken information in various communicative contexts (Crookes, 2021). Moreover, incorporating authentic listening materials and real-life scenarios can prepare students to deal with the challenges of language use in ~~a variety of multiple~~ contexts (Ebadi et al., 2022; ~~-~~Zhang et al., 2023). Regular practice, reflection, and analysis of content are essential to deepen understanding. Likewise, interactive activities requiring responses, learning effective listening strategies, exposure to diverse contexts, and receiving constructive feedback all contribute to skill enhancement.

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A partial comprehension of critical pedagogy among lecturers limits their ability to incorporate its principles effectively into English listening classes. It results in teaching approaches focusing more on passive learning rather than promoting critical thinking, active involvement, and deeper understanding, affecting students' ability to interpret spoken language effectively. Nevertheless, lecturers who successfully integrate critical pedagogy principles into their classes foster democratic discussions, encourage peer collaboration, and incorporate real-world topics to stimulate critical thinking. Additionally, they encourage open discussions for students to share opinions, offer peer learning through group activities, and integrate real-world issues to encourage critical thinking. Interactive tasks are used to stimulate analysis, reflection, and active participation, making learning more meaningful. Constructive feedback is also vital to support democratic and dialogic learning.

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According to interview data, Mrs. Anna assumed that listening was ~~not enough~~insufficient to ~~listen to~~grasp the ideas. ~~Rather~~Instead, it should ~~b~~involve reproducing or reconstructing the information the students ~~listen~~listen to.

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*Listening to ideas isn't enough. Instead, my students should actively work with the information they hear. ~~This means they~~ should understand it deeply and ~~then~~ use it to create ~~their own~~ ideas or responses. For example, they might summarize what they heard, talk about it with others, or use it in new situations. Good listening involves more than just hearing, it's about actively engaging with and using the information.-(Anna/Interview)*

It was also noteworthy that, as the following excerpt narrates, Mr. Ariz stressed the significance of providing opportunities for students to interpret the information ~~during~~while listening.

*Students have different interpretations as this happens because each listener brings their ~~own~~ background, experiences, and perspectives to what they hear. These personal factors can influence how they understand and interpret the information. For instance, one person might focus on the emotional tone of a speaker, while another might concentrate on the factual content. This diversity in interpretation is natural and can lead to rich discussions and ~~deeper~~more profound understanding when listeners share and compare their viewpoints (Ariz/Interview).*

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### Connecting Listening with Real-Life Issues

Mrs. Anna emphasized that effective listening required sustained concentration, which could be challenging to maintain, particularly during lengthy or complex discussions and presentations. ~~To make her listening class more engaging, s~~She introduced global topics and issues relevant to the students' lives to make her listening class more engaging. This approach involved having the students discuss these topics in class. She also encouraged them to share their opinions on what they listened to. This approach ~~was~~is illustrated in the following excerpt.

*In critical listening, after listening to the audio, the class becomes more interactive, resembling a discussion. Students are encouraged to ~~consistently share their opinions~~share their opinions consistently, ensuring the class is lively and filled with discussions among the ~~students~~students.*

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Mrs. Anna highlighted that teaching listening should go beyond fostering critical thinking; it ought to benefit others, as she clarified in the following excerpt.

*Teaching listening skills should not be limited to developing students' ability to think critically. It should also aim to influence others positively. This can involve encouraging students to use their listening skills to contribute to discussions, support their peers, and engage constructively with the world around them. By doing so, the impact of effective listening extends beyond the classroom, fostering a more collaborative and empathetic community. (Anna/interview)*

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She encouraged her students to link their listening activities to real-world issues, ~~welcoming~~explaining that she welcomed any topics ~~to be~~ discussed in the classroom, ~~as she explained~~.

*~~I~~ motivate my students to relate what they listen ~~to~~, such as podcasts, news, interviews, or any form of audio ~~content~~, to real-world problems and situations. I invite students to bring any relevant topics or issues they find important or ~~interest~~ into the classroom discussions. This approach is intended to make the listening activities more meaningful and ~~relevant~~ to the students' lives, fostering an environment where diverse and significant real-life issues can be explored and discussed openly. (Anna/interview)*

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In sum, lecturers in this study ~~had~~ understood how to teach listening more critically ~~and~~, ~~know how to~~ make listening classrooms ~~to be~~ more engaging, as well ~~as~~ relate teaching listening ~~with~~ real-life issues. This ~~practice of teaching~~ practice was relevant to the principle of critical ~~thinking~~, which empathized ~~on~~ engaging students critically with social issues, as suggested by Freire.

#### Developing Horizontal Relationships to Be Active ~~Listener~~ Listeners

A horizontal learning pattern involved recognizing everyone's knowledge and backgrounds, where learners' contributions and perspectives were valued equally to ~~those of the teacher~~ teacher's. Mrs. Dynar revealed that the power of relation matters was significant in ~~the~~ teaching of listening. She argued that students ~~ought to~~ should have more agency and influence in the classroom ~~compared to~~ than the teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

*~~My teaching style is centered~~ centers on power relationships; I empower my students and express my appreciation when they can effectively argue verbally. (Dynar/interview)*

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*Giving students the ability to choose the listening materials they engage with, whether through selecting topics or formats that interest them, you empower them within the learning process. This autonomy fosters a sense of investment and responsibility in their ~~own~~ learning, thereby establishing a more balanced power relationship between teacher and students. (Eka/interview)*

The interview with Mrs. Dynar revealed his commitment to fostering a horizontal relationship between lecturer and student. ~~In class,~~ She often referred to her students as friends ~~in class~~ to build an egalitarian atmosphere. Initially, students found this approach awkward, but they gradually accepted it. Mrs. Dynar believed that creating an equal relationship enhanced student engagement in onsite ~~discussions~~, although she acknowledged that student motivation also played a role. Similarly, ~~Mrs.~~ Eka, the youngest lecturer in this study, tended to develop close relationships with her students and frequently ~~participates~~ participated in student-organized

activities. Overall, the participants in this study prioritize establishing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students.

### Developing Students' Critical Consciousness to Engage with What They Hear.

Based on the components of critical pedagogy ~~components~~, Freire (2000) suggested ~~that~~ the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. Mrs. Siska argued that critical consciousness could be employed by engaging students in discussions s that critically analyzes the content. This process required students to go beyond merely understanding the content by considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. Understanding the ~~context~~context, such as the time, place, and situation surrounding the ~~message~~message, helped students grasp why and how the information was being communicated, influencing its meaning and relevance. Similarly, recognizing the purpose helped students evaluate the speaker's ~~intentions~~intentions, and understanding perspective allowed students to consider how the speaker's ~~personal~~ context and worldview influenced the content and how it was delivered.

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—~~Mr.~~Mr. Dynar also suggested that engaging in dialogue after students ~~had understood listening material played a pivotal role~~understood the listening material was pivotal in developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students shared diverse experiences and perspectives related to the content, fostering empathy and deepening understanding of societal issues. It encouraged students to challenge assumptions, critically analyze multiple viewpoints, and collaboratively construct knowledge. For example, students were studying a podcast about climate change. After listening to the podcast ~~individually~~individually, Mrs. Dynar divided the class into small groups. Each group discussed different aspects of the podcast, such as the causes of climate change, its impact on communities, and possible solutions. During these discussions, students shared their insights and raised questions about how societal norms contributed to environmental issues. They used reflective journaling to note ~~down~~ their thoughts on what they learned and how they ~~felt~~felt about the topic. This process empowered them to ~~critically reflect on environmental issues~~reflect on environmental issues critically and ~~considered~~consider actions they could take to address them, fostering a learning environment ~~which~~that encouraged transformative thinking and social responsibility.

### Establishing Critical, Democratic, and Participatory Assessment

According to Crookes (2021), assessment in education should embody critical, democratic, and participatory principles. Interviews with participants revealed a preference for assessments emphasizing practical outcomes over mere comprehension testing. They advocated for assessments requiring students to apply their understanding and critical thinking abilities to generate novel knowledge. For instance,

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Mr. Ariz asked students to listen to a news podcast episode talking about “social media impact on mental health among teenagers”. ~~Having~~After listening to it, they worked in pairs to identify key arguments in the podcast. Each pair then prepared a brief oral presentation where they critically analyzed how the podcast portrayed the relationship between social media use and mental health issues. This assessment promoted critical listening skills, evidence-based analysis, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with current issues in the media.

Similarly, Mrs. Eka requested students to listen to a recorded short speech by a community leader addressing the issue of homelessness in their city. After listening, students worked individually to analyze the speech critically. They identified the strengths, such as compelling personal stories, statistical evidence, or motivational language resonating with the audience. They also identified weaknesses, such as potential biases in the presentation of information or logical inconsistencies. Students then wrote a reflective essay summarizing their ~~analysis~~analysis, discussing how effective ~~they found the speech in conveying~~the speech conveyed its message, and proposing additional considerations or actions enhancing the impact of addressing homelessness in their community. She also conveyed that this assessment encouraged students to apply critical ~~listening~~listening and analytical ~~skills~~skills and to reflect on the complexities of addressing social issues through persuasive speech.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings reveal that while lecturers lack formal awareness of critical ~~pedagogy~~pedagogy, particularly its theoretical ~~definition~~definition, their teaching practices prove elements of this approach. This ~~apparent~~ aligns with Freire's (2020) philosophy that the essence of education lies in fostering critical thinking by addressing real-life problems. The lecturers aim at cultivating students' critical thinking skills in listening classes, even though their understanding of the term ‘critical pedagogy’ remains limited. This is consistent with Abdolrezapour & Ghanbari's (2021) research, which reveals that critical pedagogy indicators often manifest in classroom practices without explicit acknowledgment of the concept by educators. Wiley's observation that “they just don't know what they know” aptly represents this phenomenon. The lecturers' implicit adoption of critical pedagogy likely stems from the inherent need to address students' struggles with listening skills, as the subject is perceived to be particularly challenging. Incorporating real-life contexts and encouraging critical engagement, they align with Freire principles. This highlights a practical implication: professional development programs should bridge the gap between practice and theory, enabling lecturers to ~~consciously employ critical pedagogy and maximize its transformative potential~~employ critical pedagogy and maximize its transformative potential consciously.

The research reports that lecturers integrate critical pedagogy by emphasizing active knowledge creation rather than passive knowledge acquisition. This approach reflects Freire (2020) the notion of education as a process of reinventing and recreating

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knowledge. Similarly, Rezai et al. (2023) ~~and and~~ Rocha et al. (2022) argue that learning should involve active engagement with materials, letting students ~~to~~ construct their realities through social interactions rather than rote memorization. The study suggests that listening ~~to~~ material connected to real-life issues improves students' engagement and motivation. This corroborates the findings of Zhang et al. (2023), revealing that relating educational content to authentic contexts fosters deeper learning. However, challenges persist due to students' varying expectations; for example, some students' view language learning primarily ~~as a means to~~ improve test scores. This disconnect underscores the need for a pedagogical shift toward fostering critical thinking and social transformation, as suggested by (Ipek, 2020; Jia & Hew, 2021; Kabir & Zealand, 2024). Theoretically, these findings validate the importance of Freire's principles, such as dialogue and critical consciousness. Conceptually, they highlight the need to redefine listening pedagogy to include critical and reflective dimensions. Integrating authentic materials and participatory assessments address students' misconceptions about language learning, enhancing the significance and transformation of lessons (Ngo, 2019; Ozcelik et al., 2020)

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One major challenge is ~~the passive nature of students, often attributes students' passive nature, often attributed~~ to cultural factors. Lecturers declare that hierarchical classroom dynamics, prevalent in East Asian educational contexts, hinder open dialogue and critical engagement. This observation ~~is in line~~ aligns with Baturay (2020) and Wang & Chen (2024) researches, critiquing rigid classroom hierarchies as barriers to applying critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, Ha (2021) challenges the generalization that East Asian students are submissive, suggesting that educators' ~~own~~ practices play an essential role ~~to in establish~~ establishing classroom dynamics. Notably, lecturers in this research actively challenge traditional hierarchies by fostering horizontal relationships with students.

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Another obstacle lies in students' difficulties with accents and pronunciation during listening activities. These issues hinder their ability to engage with materials, particularly those featuring different linguistic backgrounds. This is relevant to ~~a~~ ~~research~~ research held by Fajriyah et al. (2021), Rohaniyah (2021), and Saed et al., (2021) who highlight the evolving nature of critical thinking as an ongoing challenge, emphasizing the need for continuous exploration of pedagogical strategies, such as critical discourse analysis. Theoretical implications of these challenges include the necessity of adapting critical pedagogy to diverse cultural contexts. Conceptually, they underscore the importance of redefining classroom roles to empower students. Practically, professional training for lecturers should address strategies to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers, ensuring that critical pedagogy can be effectively implemented.

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## 5. Conclusion

Critical pedagogy is implemented in the English listening class through various strategies that enhance students' engagement and critical thinking. Firstly, it transforms



listening from a reproductive skill into an active process where students ~~not only~~ comprehend ~~but also reconstruct~~, reconstruct, and apply information in diverse contexts. This approach fosters ~~deeper~~ a more profound understanding and encourages students to connect listening activities with real-life issues, making learning relevant and meaningful. Additionally, a more egalitarian learning environment is created by developing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students, where student agency and contributions are valued, ~~a more egalitarian learning environment is created~~. Moreover, critical pedagogy promotes students' critical consciousness by encouraging dialogue that analyzes content contextually, purposefully, and from multiple perspectives. Assessments are designed to be critical, democratic, and participatory, emphasizing practical outcomes and ~~the application of~~ applying critical thinking skills. However, challenges in implementing critical pedagogy include cultural norms affecting student participation, language barriers impacting comprehension, and the evolving nature of critical thinking ~~itself~~, requiring ongoing lecturers' reflection and adaptation. Addressing these challenges ensures that critical pedagogy in the English listening class remains effective and inclusive, fostering ~~both~~ linguistic proficiency and critical awareness among students. The research faces challenges such as low student engagement due to cultural ~~norm~~ norms, language barriers to ~~understand~~ understanding materials, and the need for lecturers to adapt to students' evolving critical thinking skills. These issues limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Future research should explore strategies to solve cultural and linguistic barriers, examine the long-term effect of critical pedagogy on students' critical thinking, and create professional training programs to support lecturers ~~in employing critical pedagogy~~ effectively employing critical pedagogy.

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# Exploring How Lecturers Comprehend and Apply Critical Pedagogy in English Listening Class

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## ABSTRACT

*Grounded in Freire's (1971) critical pedagogy premise revealing that the act of listening should be active, critical, and transformative, rather than passive or merely receptive, this research explored the experience of English language lecturers who taught English listening classes with a critical pedagogy approach. This study employed a qualitative method through a case study design to explore lecturers' understanding in depth and their practices of critical pedagogy. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four lecturers and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The analysis identified key themes in lecturers' understanding, including their awareness of the transformative potential of listening activities, the importance of fostering student autonomy, and their understanding of listening as a dialogic process. The findings also indicate that while lecturers did not explicitly define or describe critical pedagogy, certain stages and elements were evident in their teaching. In practice, lecturers applied the principles of critical pedagogy by providing authentic materials, building horizontal relationships, developing critical consciousness, encouraging critical, democratic, and participatory assessment to support transformative learning while contending with challenges like low student engagement, language proficiency, and diverse accents. This suggests that, to some extent, they incorporated aspects of critical pedagogy in their listening classes. Research's practical implications recommend that lecturers receive targeted training in critical pedagogy to better align their teaching practices with its principles. At the same time, institutions should provide resources and support to address the challenges.*

**Key Words:** Lecturers' perceptions, lecturers' practice, critical pedagogy, critical listening, reproductive skills

## 1. Introduction

Implementing Critical Pedagogy in Indonesian higher education should be prioritized. Indonesia's long history under an authoritarian regime, followed by a regressive democracy in the post-reformation period, highlights this need (Bangsa et al., 2023). These historical factors may have led to a diminished capacity for critique and a reduced sensitivity to social issues within the educational system. In education, the persistence of the banking system, where students are seen as depositories and teachers as the depositors of knowledge, is evident. This system continues partly due to students' low interest and motivation in learning (Front, 2019; Ha, 2021). Additionally, while information and communication technology development has positive effects, it also has drawbacks and consequences, such as spreading fake news. Therefore,

fostering critical thinking abilities should be a top focus in Indonesian education at all levels.

In English language teaching (ELT), critical pedagogy has been introduced with the aim not only to improve English language skills but also to cultivate a critical awareness of injustice (Zhang et al., 2023). Rooted in Freire (2020), crucial pedagogy in language teaching seeks to transform classrooms by incorporating students' local culture, using their first language as a resource, addressing real-life concerns, and raising awareness of issues faced by marginalized groups. This approach aligns with critical language pedagogy introduced by Crookes (2021), who outlines three main concepts. Firstly, "critical pedagogy is democratic," aiming to foster greater democracy in society and within the classroom. Secondly, a critical pedagogy classroom is "dialogical," emphasizing exploratory and discussion-oriented learning. Lastly, although challenging to implement, "critical pedagogy is action-oriented".

Efforts to incorporate critical language pedagogy in ELT and language teacher education programs have been documented worldwide. Rezai et al., (2023) lay the groundwork for critical pedagogy in ELT by outlining essential principles of pedagogy and suggesting areas for practitioners. In Indonesia, Bangsa et al. (2023) critical pedagogy in an ELT classroom can be applied by using codes to teach English, enhancing both language skills and students' critical thinking. Agbo et al., (2023) introduce critical pedagogy in higher education institutions through participatory research with a graduate teacher student in a professional learning program. This program has successfully designed and implemented critical pedagogy in ELT, helping students become more critical, tolerant, and socially aware.

Prior studies demonstrate the potential benefits of implementing critical pedagogy in ELT. However, implementing critical pedagogy in language teaching and learning is challenging. Several empirical studies have investigated these challenges in various contexts (Chen, 2023). While students respond positively to critical pedagogy in language development and critical thinking through the dialogic approach to teaching critical language, issues arise related to students' perspectives and academic voices and the conception of language as social practice. Additionally, Nawas et al., (2023) discuss the challenges of practicing critical pedagogy in EFL teaching in South Asia, including tensions between local and international geopolitical tendencies. He suggests the need to critically evaluate both traditional and modern approaches to education to be effective. In summary, previous studies indicate the potential for introducing or integrating critical pedagogy in ELT classrooms and English education programs, while also highlighting implementation challenges. These findings suggest the need for further investigation, particularly into how lecturers comprehend critical pedagogy and apply it in teaching English listening.

Critical Pedagogy is particularly relevant now given that the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has introduced a new curriculum named *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn). This curriculum aims to align education with current demands, changes, and the needs of the business and industrial sectors, preparing students for the workforce (Maghfiroh et al., 2022). However, instead of prioritizing social justice, this



program reflects a neoliberal ideology disguised as "freedom" (Sari et al., 2024). This neoliberal orientation, focusing on market-driven competencies, conflicts with the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing empowerment, social justice, and critical thinking. *Merdeka Belajar's* curriculum positively impacts critical pedagogy implementation by offering flexibility, such as letting students choose interdisciplinary courses promoting critical thinking and self-empowerment (Andriana & Evans, 2020). In Islamic-based universities, this approach enriches integrating religious values with modern scientific knowledge in English language class discussions. However, *Merdeka Belajar's* focus on industry and market-driven needs often conflicts with critical pedagogy principles, concerning social justice and critical awareness. This pragmatic focus limits the exploration of critical issues such as equality or globalization, especially in settings that prioritize the integration of morality and spirituality. Thus, critical pedagogy is significant in balancing the neoliberal influence of *Merdeka Belajar*, ensuring that education remains empowering and not solely driven by economic needs.

This research uses critical pedagogy as the theoretical framework to analyze how English lecturers implement its principles, such as empowering students and fostering critical thinking, in listening comprehension classes. Thematic analysis (Braun, 2006) has been employed to identify patterns in the data, focusing on participants' understanding of critical pedagogy and its application in their teaching practices. Indicators include lecturers' perspectives, specific teaching strategies, and evidence of critical pedagogy integration derived from semi-structured interviews and thematic coding. The aims of this research are twofold: firstly, to examine lecturers' comprehension of critical pedagogy, and secondly, to explore its application in the listening classroom. This research seeks to address two main questions:

- (1) how do English lecturers comprehend the principles of critical pedagogy?
- (2) how do they apply these principles in listening comprehension classes?

The study contributes theoretically by deepening critical pedagogy understanding within English language teaching, particularly in listening instruction, and practically by offering some strategies and examples that lecturers can employ to foster critical thinking and learner engagement in the classrooms.

## **2. Methods**

### **Research Design**

To answer the research questions, this study used a case study design. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of a particular, bounded system such as an activity, event, process, or individuals defined by certain temporal, spatial, or physical (Wales, 2019). A case study aims to shed light on a particular issue, problem, or theory. As a qualitative research method, data collection and analysis in a case study occur concurrently and continuously (Roseli et al., 2020). The case study design can be flexible, with research questions becoming more refined following the initial analysis of interviews, diary entries, or observations (Al et al., 2023; Wales, 2019). Case studies can focus on single individuals, multiple individuals, programs, events, or activities (Maag et al., 2021). In essence, a case study is a qualitative research method involving an in-

depth analysis of a specific, bounded system, such as an activity, event, or individual. It aims to provide a deeper understanding of a particular issue with concurrent data collection and analysis. The design is flexible, allowing research questions to evolve as the study progresses. In this research, the cases involved some lecturers. Specifically, this study employed a case study approach, aiming to offer insights into a broader case while the specific issue was of secondary importance, helping to enhance understanding of something else. An instrumental case study was chosen as the research sought to explore a broader issue concerning the implementation of critical pedagogy in listening comprehension classes. As an exploratory study, it focused on how lecturers articulate their understanding of CP perspectives, and they incorporated this understanding into their teaching practices, particularly in teaching English listening skills.

### Participants

This research involved four English lecturers from four different universities and regions. Three participants have over ten years of experience teaching English, as confirmed by their curriculum vitae and accounts during the interviews, and one confessed to be a new lecturer. Informal conversations before the interviews revealed that all participants also had experience teaching listening comprehension for several years. The selection of participants was initially based on data from higher education sources (PDDIKTI) to verify their teaching experience in listening comprehension. The researchers then contacted the participants via email or WhatsApp, with contact information provided by colleagues familiar with the potential participants. Every participant willingly signed consent forms for the study and agreed to supply the required data. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

**Table 1. Demographic information of the participants**

No	Name	Gender	Teaching Experience	Qualification	Teaching Expertise
1	Siska	Female	16 years	Doctor of English Education	Listening for Informal Communication, Listening for Academic Communication, TEFL
2	Anna	Female	13 years	Master of Education	Listening I, Listening II, English Morphology, Critical Reading
3	Ariz	Male	11 years	Doctor of English	Listening for Social Interaction,



				Education	Listening in Professional Context, Research Methodology in Linguistics and Literature
4	Eka	Female	5 years	Master of Education	Reading comprehension, Intensive Listening, Extensive Listening

### Data Collection

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect data, asking participants about their experiences incorporating a critical pedagogy approach into their English listening classes. Before the first interview, this study had the interview guidelines reviewed by an expert to obtain feedback. The interview questions were then tested on a person with research publications and experience in critical pedagogy. After revising the guidelines based on this feedback, this research involved four different interviews with the participants. Mrs. Siska was interviewed for the first time in the second week of January 2024. Mrs. Anna was interviewed in the third week of January 2024. The third interview, with Mr. Ariz, took place in the second week of February 2024. Finally, we interviewed Mrs. Eka in mid-March 2024. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom. To avoid language barriers and based on participants' preferences, the interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers then translated the transcripts into English.

### Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using the six stages of thematic analysis, including familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the themes, and writing the report (Braun, 2006). The theory of critical pedagogy, as outlined by Crookes (2021), was implemented to analyze how these concepts emerged in teaching listening. Crookes' critical pedagogy theory emphasizes active student engagement through critical awareness, dialogue, and social analysis to empower students to become agents of change by developing critical thinking skills in a participatory and reflective learning context. This research utilized this theory to examine how essential principles of pedagogy were integrated into the teaching of listening.

### 3. Findings

The findings examine how the participating lecturers understood critical pedagogy, how it was implemented in English listening classes, and what challenges they faced. The research questions and emerging themes organized the results.

#### **Lecturers' Understanding of Critical Pedagogy**

The lecturers were generally unfamiliar with critical pedagogy. One participant's comment, when asked about critical pedagogy, made this clear: "Not yet, but if it is feasible to provide critical education in general, for instance, although I can't recall everything precisely, I know from educational liberation" (Siska/Interview). This suggests that participants did not always understand the idea of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, the participants did grasp the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy. She also recognized well-known figures in critical pedagogy, like Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. This indicates her basic comprehension of the critical perspective in language teaching.

The interview with Mr. Ariz further demonstrated the lack of familiarity with critical pedagogy in English language instruction. He was unable to explain what critical pedagogy was clearly. However, he provided examples of how he saw critical pedagogy principles employed in listening classes. The excerpt below illustrates this as narrated by Mr. Ariz:

*In my listening classes, I incorporate strategies that encourage students to analyze and reflect on the content they hear critically. For instance, I use audio materials on social issues, like speeches or news reports discussing human rights. After listening, we had a class discussion where I asked students to share their thoughts and feelings about the issue and what insights they gained from the material. (Mr. Ariz/Interview)*

The result of the above interview reveals that incorporating audio resources on social issues, such as speeches or news reports about human rights subjects, encouraged students to analyze the information and understand it critically. Students were allowed to voice their opinions during the ensuing class discussions, assisting them to develop a greater understanding and empathy for other points of view. Moreover, the lecturer's comprehension of critical pedagogy is further elucidated in another excerpt

*We encourage them to embrace their role. Their role extends beyond being mere students to becoming agents of change. This realization emphasizes that their responsibility doesn't end with learning alone. Students must positively influence on their surroundings, demonstrating their ability to analyze and confront issues. By sharing insights and new information, they can help others develop a more informed perspective, thereby addressing any misunderstandings that may arise. (Siska/Interview)*

From the passage, Mrs. Siska recognized that critical pedagogy involved students critically analyzing issues and sharing their understanding with others, particularly those seeking insights from scholars. She also emphasized that students acted as social change agents, advocating for a positive impact on society during and beyond their university education. Moreover, another lecturer, Mrs. Anna, possessed a more profound knowledge of critical literacy than critical pedagogy. Her research focused on critical literacy, and she was also familiar with critical literacy pedagogy. Anna viewed critical pedagogy as a broader concept or an extension of critical literacy pedagogy; she utilized literary works to teach listening skills in her classroom.

*I am familiar with critical literacy through my research projects, where I actively incorporate its principles. As for critical pedagogy, my focus lies specifically on critical listening pedagogy. (Anna/Interview).*

*Mrs. Eka acknowledged that she recently learned about critical pedagogy, despite teaching courses like critical listening and reading comprehension at the university. As one of the youngest lecturers with less teaching experience than colleagues, she recognized the interconnectedness of language, culture, and ideology. She noted that "a person's culture can be expressed through their language and reflects the ideologies they uphold. (Eka/interview).*

In summary, although the lecturers' explicit understanding of critical pedagogy was not directly stated, they demonstrated familiarity with certain perspectives and principles of critical pedagogy during the interviews. Based on the analysis of their understanding and endorsement of essential principles of pedagogy to some degree, lecturers in this study could be categorized as 'critical pedagogy, defined by (Zhiwei & Wang, 2024) as ELT lecturers who utilized the fundamental values and theories of critical pedagogy. The subsequent findings related to the teachers' experiences in applying critical pedagogy in the listening classroom.

### **How Is Critical Pedagogy Employed in the English Listening Class? Listening as a Practice of Reproductive Skill**

Listening as a reproductive skill" refers to the idea that listening is not just a passive activity but an active process where listeners mentally reproduce or reconstruct the information they hear. This involves comprehending, processing, and potentially using the information in response or further communication. In this sense, listening requires cognitive engagement and the ability to understand and recall spoken language accurately, making it an integral part of effective communication and language acquisition. A study has shown that active listening practices merely enhance students' ability to comprehend, analyze, and replicate spoken information in various communicative contexts (Crookes, 2021). Moreover, incorporating authentic listening materials and real-life scenarios can prepare students to deal with the challenges of language use in multiple contexts (Ebadi et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Regular

practice, reflection, and analysis of content are essential to deepen understanding. Likewise, interactive activities requiring responses, learning effective listening strategies, exposure to diverse contexts, and receiving constructive feedback all contribute to skill enhancement.

A partial comprehension of critical pedagogy among lecturers limits their ability to incorporate its principles effectively into English listening classes. It results in teaching approaches focusing more on passive learning rather than promoting critical thinking, active involvement, and deeper understanding, affecting students' ability to interpret spoken language effectively. Nevertheless, lecturers who successfully integrate critical pedagogy principles into their classes foster democratic discussions, encourage peer collaboration, and incorporate real-world topics to stimulate critical thinking. Additionally, they encourage open discussions for students to share opinions, offer peer learning through group activities, and integrate real-world issues to encourage critical thinking. Interactive tasks are used to stimulate analysis, reflection, and active participation, making learning more meaningful. Constructive feedback is also vital to support democratic and dialogic learning.

According to interview data, Mrs. Anna assumed that listening was insufficient to grasp the ideas. Instead, it should involve reproducing or reconstructing the information the students listen to.

*Listening to ideas isn't enough. Instead, my students should actively work with the information they hear. They should understand it deeply and use it to create their own ideas or responses. For example, they might summarize what they heard, talk about it with others, or use it in new situations. Good listening involves more than just hearing, it's about actively engaging with and using the information.*  
(Anna/Interview)

It was also noteworthy that, as the following excerpt narrates, Mr. Ariz stressed the significance of providing opportunities for students to interpret the information while listening.

*Students have different interpretations as this happens because each listener brings their background, experiences, and perspectives to what they hear. These personal factors can influence how they understand and interpret the information. For instance, one person might focus on the emotional tone of a speaker, while another might concentrate on the factual content. This diversity in interpretation is natural and can lead to rich discussions and more profound understanding when listeners share and compare their viewpoints* (Ariz/Interview).

## Connecting Listening with Real-Life Issues

Mrs. Anna emphasized that effective listening required sustained concentration, which could be challenging to maintain, particularly during lengthy or complex discussions and presentations. She introduced global topics and issues relevant to the students' lives to make her listening class more engaging. This approach involved having the students discuss these topics in class. She also encouraged them to share their opinions on what they listened to. This approach is illustrated in the following excerpt.

*In critical listening, after listening to the audio, the class becomes more interactive, resembling a discussion. Students are encouraged to share their opinions consistently ensuring the class is lively and filled with discussions among the students.*

Mrs. Anna highlighted that teaching listening should go beyond fostering critical thinking; it ought to benefit others, as she clarified in the following excerpt.

*Teaching listening skills should not be limited to developing students' ability to think critically. It should also aim to influence others positively. This can involve encouraging students to use their listening skills to contribute to discussions, support their peers, and engage constructively with the world around them. By doing so, the impact of effective listening extends beyond the classroom, fostering a more collaborative and empathetic community. (Anna/interview)*

She encouraged her students to link their listening activities to real-world issues, explaining that she welcomed any topics to be discussed in the classroom

*I motivate my students to relate what they listen to, such as podcasts, news, interviews, or any form of audio content, to real-world problems and situations. I invite students to bring any relevant topics or issues they find important or absorbing into the classroom discussions. This approach is intended to make the listening activities more meaningful and appropriate to the students' lives, fostering an environment where diverse and significant real-life issues can be explored and discussed openly. (Anna/interview)*

In sum, lecturers in this study understood how to teach listening more critically make listening classrooms more engaging, and relate teaching listening to real-life issues. This teaching practice was relevant to the principle of critical thinking, which empathized with engaging students critically with social issues, as suggested by Freire.

### **Developing Horizontal Relationships to Be Active Listeners**

A horizontal learning pattern involved recognizing everyone's knowledge and backgrounds, where learners' contributions and perspectives were valued equally to the teacher's. Mrs. Dynar revealed that the power of relation matters was significant in teaching listening. She argued that students should have more agency and influence in the classroom than the teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

*My teaching style is centers on power relationships; I empower my students and express my appreciation when they can effectively argue verbally. (Dynar/interview)*

*Giving students the ability to choose the listening materials they engage with, whether through selecting topics or formats that interest them, you empower them within the learning process. This autonomy fosters a sense of investment and responsibility in their learning, thereby establishing a more balanced power relationship between teacher and students. (Eka/interview)*

The interview with Mrs. Dynar revealed his commitment to fostering a horizontal relationship between lecturer and student. She often referred to her students as friends in class to build an egalitarian atmosphere. Initially, students found this approach awkward, but they gradually accepted it. Mrs. Dynar believed that creating an equal relationship enhanced student engagement in onsite discussions, although she acknowledged that student motivation also played a role. Similarly, Mrs. Eka, the youngest lecturer in this study, tended to develop close relationships with her students and frequently participated in student-organized activities. Overall, the participants in this study prioritize establishing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students.

### **Developing Students' Critical Consciousness to Engage with What They Hear.**

Based on the component of critical pedagogy, Freire (2000) suggested the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, critical consciousness, and transformative education. Mrs. Siska argued that critical consciousness could be employed by engaging students in discussions that critically analyze the content. This process required students to go beyond merely understanding the content by considering the context, purpose, and perspective of the speaker. Understanding the context, such as the time, place, and situation surrounding the message, helped students grasp why and how the information was being communicated, influencing its meaning and relevance. Similarly, recognizing the purpose helped students evaluate the speaker's intentions, and understanding perspective allowed students to consider how the speaker's personal context and worldview influenced the content and how it was delivered.

Mrs. Dynar also suggested that engaging in dialogue after students understood the listening material was pivotal in developing critical consciousness. Through dialogue, students shared diverse experiences and perspectives related to the content, fostering empathy and deepening understanding of societal issues. It encouraged students to challenge assumptions, critically analyze multiple viewpoints, and collaboratively construct knowledge. For example, students were studying a podcast about climate change. After listening to the podcast individually, Mrs. Dynar divided the class into small groups. Each group discussed different aspects of the podcast, such as the causes of climate change, its impact on communities, and possible solutions. During these discussions, students shared their insights and raised questions about how societal norms contributed to environmental issues. They used reflective journaling to note their thoughts on what they learned and how they felt about the topic. This process empowered them to reflect on environmental issues critically and consider actions they could take to address them, fostering a learning environment that encouraged transformative thinking and social responsibility.

### **Establishing Critical, Democratic, and Participatory Assessment**

According to Crookes (2021), assessment in education should embody critical, democratic, and participatory principles. Interviews with participants revealed a preference for assessments emphasizing practical outcomes over mere comprehension testing. They advocated for assessments requiring students to apply their understanding and critical thinking abilities to generate novel knowledge. For instance, Mr. Ariz asked students to listen to a news podcast episode talking about “social media impact on mental health among teenagers”. Listening to it, they worked in pairs to identify key arguments in the podcast. Each pair then prepared a brief oral presentation where they critically analyzed how the podcast portrayed the relationship between social media use and mental health issues. This assessment promoted critical listening skills, evidence-based analysis, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with current issues in the media.

Similarly, Mrs. Eka requested students to listen to a recorded short speech by a community leader addressing the issue of homelessness in their city. After listening, students worked individually to analyze the speech critically. They identified the strengths, such as compelling personal stories, statistical evidence, or motivational language resonating with the audience. They also identified weaknesses, such as potential biases in the presentation of information or logical inconsistencies. Students then wrote a reflective essay summarizing their analysis, discussing how effective the speech conveyed its message, and proposing additional considerations or actions enhancing the impact of addressing homelessness in their community. She also conveyed that this assessment encouraged students to apply critical listening and analytical skills and to reflect on the complexities of addressing social issues through persuasive speech.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings reveal that while lecturers lack formal awareness of critical pedagogy, particularly its theoretical definition, their teaching practices prove elements of this approach. This aligns with Freire (2020) philosophy that the essence of education lies in fostering critical thinking by addressing real-life problems. The lecturers aim at cultivating students' critical thinking skills in listening classes, even though their understanding of the term 'critical pedagogy' remains limited. This is consistent with Abdolrezapour & Ghanbari's (2021) research, which reveals that critical pedagogy indicators often manifest in classroom practices without explicit acknowledgment of the concept by educators. Wiley's observation that "they just don't know what they know" aptly represents this phenomenon. The lecturers' implicit adoption of critical pedagogy likely stems from the inherent need to address students' struggles with listening skills, as the subject is perceived to be particularly challenging. Incorporating real-life contexts and encouraging critical engagement, they align with Freire principles. This highlights a practical implication: professional development programs should bridge the gap between practice and theory, enabling lecturers to employ critical pedagogy and maximize its transformative potential consciously.

The research reports that lecturers integrate critical pedagogy by emphasizing active knowledge creation rather than passive knowledge acquisition. This approach reflects Freire (2020) the notion of education as a process of reinventing and recreating knowledge. Similarly, Rezai et al. (2023) and Rocha et al. (2022) argue that learning should involve active engagement with materials, letting students to construct their realities through social interactions rather than rote memorization. The study suggests that listening to material connected to real-life issues improves students' engagement and motivation. This corroborates the findings of Zhang et al. (2023), revealing that relating educational content to authentic contexts fosters deeper learning. However, challenges persist due to students' varying expectations; for example, some students' view language learning primarily to improve test scores. This disconnect underscores the need for a pedagogical shift toward fostering critical thinking and social transformation, as suggested by (Ipek, 2020; Jia & Hew, 2021; Kabir & Zealand, 2024). Theoretically, these findings validate the importance of Freire's principles, such as dialogue and critical consciousness. Conceptually, they highlight the need to redefine listening pedagogy to include critical and reflective dimensions. Integrating authentic materials and participatory assessments address students' misconceptions about language learning, enhancing the significance and transformation of lessons (Ngo, 2019; Ozcelik et al., 2020)

One major challenge is the passive nature of students, often attributes to cultural factors. Lecturers declare that hierarchical classroom dynamics, prevalent in East Asian educational contexts, hinder open dialogue and critical engagement. This observation is in line with Baturay (2020) and Wang & Chen (2024) researches, critiquing rigid classroom hierarchies as barriers to applying critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, Ha (2021) challenges the generalization that East Asian students are submissive, suggesting that educators' own practices play an essential role to establish classroom dynamics.



Notably, lecturers in this research actively challenge traditional hierarchies by fostering horizontal relationships with students.

Another obstacle lies in students' difficulties with accents and pronunciation during listening activities. These issues hinder their ability to engage with materials, particularly those featuring different linguistic backgrounds. This is relevant to a research held by Fajriyah et al. (2021), Rohaniyah (2021), and Saed et al., (2021) who highlight the evolving nature of critical thinking as an ongoing challenge, emphasizing the need for continuous exploration of pedagogical strategies, such as critical discourse analysis. Theoretical implications of these challenges include the necessity of adapting critical pedagogy to diverse cultural contexts. Conceptually, they underscore the importance of redefining classroom roles to empower students. Practically, professional training for lecturers should address strategies to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers, ensuring that critical pedagogy can be effectively implemented.

## **5. Conclusion**

Critical pedagogy is implemented in the English listening class through various strategies that enhance students' engagement and critical thinking. Firstly, it transforms listening from a reproductive skill into an active process where students comprehend, reconstruct, and apply information in diverse contexts. This approach fosters more profound understanding and encourages students to connect listening activities with real-life issues, making learning relevant and meaningful. Additionally, a more egalitarian learning environment is created by developing horizontal relationships between lecturers and students, where student agency and contributions are valued. Moreover, critical pedagogy promotes students' critical consciousness by encouraging dialogue that analyzes content contextually, purposefully, and from multiple perspectives. Assessments are designed to be critical, democratic, and participatory, emphasizing practical outcomes and applying critical thinking skills. However, challenges in implementing critical pedagogy include cultural norms affecting student participation, language barriers impacting comprehension, and the evolving nature of critical thinking itself, requiring ongoing lecturers' reflection and adaptation. Addressing these challenges ensures that critical pedagogy in the English listening class remains effective and inclusive, fostering linguistic proficiency and critical awareness among students. The research faces challenges such as low student engagement due to cultural norms, language barriers to understanding materials, and the need for lecturers to adapt to students' evolving critical thinking skills. These issues limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Future research should explore strategies to solve cultural and linguistic barriers, examine the long-term effect of critical pedagogy on students' critical thinking, and create professional training programs to support lecturers effectively employing critical pedagogy.

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