**Prima Magistra:** Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan
Volume 7 – Number 2, April 2026, pp 391-402
https://doi.org/10.37478/jpm.v7i2.6950
*Open Access:* https://e-journal.uniflor.ac.id/index.php/JPM/article/view/6950

**ISSN 2721-8112 (print)**
**ISSN 2722-4899 (online)**

# EXPLORING CRITICAL LITERACY IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING AT THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

**Nurhidayah[1], Esti Swatika Sari[2]*, Beniati Lestyarini[3]**
[1,2,3]Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
**Corresponding Author:* esti_swatikasari@uny.ac.id

**Article History**
Received : 24/10/2025
Revised : 12/03/2026
Accepted : 13/04/2026
**Keywords:**
Critical literacy, Indonesian language learning, Junior high school.

**Abstract.** The increasing ease of access to information has the potential to introduce new challenges in selecting accurate information. Therefore, students need to be equipped with critical literacy skills to obtain accurate and reliable information. This study focuses on how critical literacy is introduced, trained, and/or practiced in the school environment, particularly in Indonesian language learning. This research is a narrative inquiry that describes all research experiences, including initial observations, research planning, and research results, in narrative form with more flexible sentence structures. The research was conducted in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The data used in this research are qualitative and were collected through interviews, document analysis, and observation. Focus Group Discussions were conducted with literacy and language learning experts and junior high school Indonesian language teachers. The research findings indicate that Indonesian language-teaching practices have begun to incorporate literacy skills but have not yet reached an optimal critical stage. Teaching involves understanding discourse, vocabulary, sentences, and texts; understanding explicit and implicit information in texts or intertexts; drawing conclusions and making connections between texts or intertexts; and conveying information from texts in other forms.

**How to Cite:** Nurhidayah, N., Sari, E. S., & Lestyarini, B. (2026). DIGITAL LITERACY LEVEL OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A DESCRIPTIVE QUANTITATIVE STUDY. *Prima Magistra: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan*, 7(2), 391-402. https://doi.org/10.37478/jpm.v7i2.6950

**Correspondence address:**
Jl. Colombo No.1 Karangmalang Yogyakarta 55281
esti_swatikasari@uny.ac.id

**Publisher:**
Program Studi PGSD Universitas Flores. Jln. Samratulangi, Kelurahan Paupire, Ende, Flores.
primagistrauniflor@gmail.com

## INTRODUCTION

Based on data from Puslitjakdibud (2019) on the reading literacy activity index in 34 provinces, the national Alibaca Index falls into the low literacy activity category, while at the provincial level, 9 provinces fall into the moderate category, 24 provinces fall into the low category, and 1 province falls into the very low category. This means that neither nationally nor provincially does any province fall into the high category.

This data serves as a reflection and evaluation for all parties involved in education, helping them consider how to improve literacy skills in the future. This step is important, given that reading holds a strategic position and role in human life, especially in today's era of advanced information and communication. Reading ability will always be related to thinking ability. If the Alibaca index is classified as low, cognitive ability is similarly categorized as low, often referred to as low-order thinking. This suggests that literacy skills may not yet be deemed critical.

Critical literacy is defined as the ability to analyze and express ideas. It can also be defined as the capacity to engage in active reading to enhance comprehension. This understanding process involves cognitive abilities, awareness, and experience. Critical literacy is a central thinking skill involving the examination and interrogation of ideas and texts. This text explores the relationship between language and power. This process entails the metalinguistic aptitude of critical literacy analysis, which facilitates the interconnection of language with its social function, text with context, theme with ideology, and discourse with society and culture (Freebody & Luke, 1990); Cho & Johnson, 2021). According to Freire (1988), one of the goals of critical literacy is to read words and read the world at the same time. In critical literacy, individuals are required to be more active and creative in addressing the issues they face. By thinking critically, individuals can effectively address a range of issues. Through critical literacy, individuals are required to think critically so they can play a role in their issues by offering solutions and applying them in daily life.

One place where critical literacy skills emerge and develop is school. As formal educational

institutions, schools are strategic places for honing these skills through various learning models. They are also places where agents of change are shaped and educated, contributing to greater equality, appreciation of differences, harmonious coexistence, and environmental protection. The various disciplines taught in schools help achieve these goals. This perspective is based on critical literacy, which, despite its roots in language education and literacy, can be applied across the entire school curriculum and in broader research (Janks, 2013).

In order to foster critical literacy skills, the national education system must incorporate a "literacy education" program into the school curriculum. This program should start with basic literacy in primary education and progress to higher levels in higher and professional education (Gillon et al., 2023). This paradigm is known as the literacy education paradigm. The critical literacy paradigm emphasizes the critique of texts or information related to issues of power, domination, and intergroup relations. In practice, literacy learning must be explicitly developed in a variety of ways depending on what students need to learn and the context of the learning process. Efforts to develop critical literacy should be carried out in an integrated, cross-disciplinary manner, while considering students' diversity and fostering critical thinking (Schroeder & Curcio, 2022). Critical literacy education is also important given the rapid development of technology. This development requires students to select the information they obtain so they do not fall victim to misinformation. This enables them to make appropriate decisions regarding the issues they face.

Critical literacy has become an essential skill, particularly in an era of information disruption characterized by the spread of fake news (hoaxes), ideological bias, and textual manipulation (Janks, 2014; Machete & Turpin, 2020). In Indonesian education, the Indonesian Language subject plays a crucial role as the primary instrument for instilling these critical literacy skills.

The Indonesian government has, in fact, initiated various literacy enhancement programs, such as the Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS) and the integration of literacy strengthening into the Merdeka Curriculum (Direktorat PAUD, 2021). However, a review of the existing literature indicates significant gaps in the implementation and modeling of critical literacy, particularly at the Junior High School level.

First, there is a bias toward basic literacy and reading comprehension. Most previous research on literacy in Indonesian language learning has focused on basic literacy skills, reading interest, and the comprehension of descriptive or narrative texts at the literal and inferential levels (Abidin, 2021; Harsiati, 2018). Second, there is a lack of proven, contextually grounded critical literacy teaching models. Several studies on critical literacy (such as Agus, 2019; Hardianti, 2024; Ningrum & Murti, 2023) have been conducted, but the majority focus on higher education or high school. Studies attempting to model critical literacy for junior high school students often merely adapt models from abroad (such as the Four Resources model by Luke & Freebody) that have not been calibrated to the socio-cultural characteristics of junior high school students in Indonesia or the current requirements of the Indonesian Language Learning Outcomes.

Third, there is a lack of research into teachers' pedagogical approaches to integrating critical literacy. A research study highlights the challenges Indonesian language teachers face in designing instructional materials that foster critical literacy without sacrificing core language content (Hidayah et al., 2023). There has been no in-depth exploration of which model would be practical, applicable, and well-received by teachers and pupils in junior high school classrooms. Based on these three gaps, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature by exploring and formulating a critical literacy model specifically designed for Indonesian language instruction at the junior high school level.

Critical literacy is the ability to understand information wisely. It can also be understood as a person's ability to actively read to better understand something. Ideally, the information received is factual, accurate, and reliable. Critical literacy provides students with tools for developing critical thinking skills. Historically, literacy has often been defined as the ability to read and write correctly. This implies mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary to read books and write sentences. Literacy serves as the foundation for the critical thinking skills necessary

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

for 21st-century learners living in a complex, global society. Literacy can also be understood as a critical and reflective process that requires understanding one's position in the world and reality. Critical literacy enables students to interpret diverse messages and information, make informed decisions, and take action to positively change society and the world for the benefit of others (Hasan et al., 2025; Molin et al., 2018).

Critical literacy involves the social, political, and cultural analysis of a text's purpose and values (Nieto, 2002). Critical literacy is not exactly the same as critical thinking, though some aspects overlap. Critical thinking begins with the principle that, as readers, we approach texts with inherent biases. Meanwhile, critical literacy begins with the assumption that all texts, from print to multimedia, serve to transmit knowledge and power. As a result, critical literacy is embedded in social criticism theory because critical thinking is duty-bound to ask certain questions of any text. Who created the text? Why and for what purpose was it created? Are there any distortions, falsifications, or even missing parts? Specifically, critical literacy explores media texts, images, and advertisements, both static and animated. These types of texts are abundant in readers' daily lives and most often convey messages and prejudices aligned with the concept of the era of disruption. This occurs more frequently with electronic communication. Compared to print media, electronic media is often irresponsible, and many texts are unedited, highly biased, and not attributed to the author. Therefore, from elementary school onward, students must be taught to critique texts rather than simply accept and absorb them. When processing both visual and written texts, it is important to examine what the texts represent and how connotative symbols are presented and interpreted. The critical literacy model offers pedagogical practices for methodically deconstructing and revealing these messages, through what Freebody & Luke aptly characterize as “interrogative practices." (Bull & Anstey, 2003).

Freebody & Luke (Freebody & Luke, 1990 ; Bull & Anstey, 2003) are important figures in the practice of critical literacy in the classroom. They have developed four textual techniques for reading that encourage different levels. In critical literacy practice, the model was developed with assessment instruments to address literacy demands and to meet “student needs, linguistic and cultural aspects, and students' future paths.” (Bull & Anstey, 2003). Each section allows students and teachers to explore alternative methods of designing review practices to meet ever-changing cultural, social, and economic demands. The following (Table 1) is the critical literacy model according to Freebody & Luke (Freebody & Luke, 1990 ; Bull & Anstey, 2003).

**Table 1.** Freebody & Luke's Critical Literacy Model

| Role | Ability |
|---|---|
| Code Breaker (Coding Competence) | Code Breaker uses prior knowledge to interpret the text. This includes awareness of phonemes and sounds, information about parts of texts, sentence structure, and layout and form. Readers can use this knowledge to understand texts. |
| Meaning Maker (Semantic Competence) | Meaning-makers read texts primarily to understand. They understand based on their knowledge of visual features, such as titles, labels, and diagrams. They look for clues in the author's or illustrator's work to find meaning. They investigate cultural meanings and seek interpretations. Readers draw from their schematic abilities. |
| Text User (Pragmatic Competence) | The goal of text users is to examine why a text was written and what readers should do with it. Users explore genres and explain why authors or illustrators choose to use them, considering cultural and social norms. |
| Text Critic (Critical Competence) | As text critics, readers evaluate texts, determining how authors or illustrators use bias to persuade. They examine the social and cultural influences behind the bias. Readers assess the author's intentions. |

The four models of critical literacy above provide a framework for critically understanding the various types of texts found today and the socio-cultural practices within them. Critical literacy is particularly valuable for understanding popular culture and visual literacy (Domínguez Romero & Bobkina, 2021; Losh, 2014). Goldstein (Goldstein, 2008) argues that, since we live in a visual society, we must "rehabilitate images and place them at the center of our attention" as teachers. This critical literacy model can be collaboratively and inclusively adapted in the

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

classroom. In this study, the four critical literacy models by Freebody and Luke serve as the foundation for exploring teachers' critical literacy practices, particularly in Indonesian language and literature education.

However, according to a Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2022, Indonesia ranked 62nd out of 70 countries, indicating low literacy rates and limited critical thinking skills. Therefore, schools, as formal educational institutions, are also the main medium for developing critical literacy skills.

## RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the research method used is narrative inquiry. The concept of narrative inquiry is used in a study to describe all research experiences, including initial observations, research planning, and research results, in the form of narratives with more flexible sentence structures. In narrative research design, researchers describe individuals' lives, collect and recount people's life stories, and write narratives about individual experiences (Clandinin, 2007; Jha, 2018).

This study uses narrative inquiry to present its findings. The researcher will narrate their experiences during the research process. The purpose of the narrative is to share information about critical literacy model practices carried out by teachers and students in Indonesian language and literature learning. His research is conducted by narrating the observed subjects, Indonesian language and literature learning, learning materials, learning processes, and learning outcomes based on the four critical literacy models proposed by Freebody & Luke.

In the first stage of this research, a preliminary study of Feebody & Luke's critical literacy model was conducted. Then, a draft of the critical literacy practice exploration instrument was prepared by adapting the narrative inquiry research model to Feebody & Luke's four critical literacy models. The draft instrument was then validated by a focus group of literacy and language learning experts. The exploratory study was conducted in junior high schools in DIY. Four junior high schools in five districts in DIY were selected for the study using purposive sampling. These schools were located in Sleman District (SMPN 1 Sleman), Gunungkidul (SMPN 2 Wonosari), Bantul (SMPN 1 Banguntapan), and Yogyakarta City (SMPN 14 Yogyakarta). The selection of schools was based on two criteria: regional representation in DIY and active involvement in promoting literacy. The exploration used the narrative inquiry model with four critical literacy models by Freebody & Luke (Code Beaker, Meaning Maker, Text User, Text Critic). Teachers and students were also interviewed about challenges in practicing critical literacy.

The subjects of this study were teachers and students from four schools in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, namely junior high schools in Sleman Regency (SMPN 1 Sleman), Gunungkidul Regency (SMPN 2 Wonosari), Bantul Regency (SMPN 1 Banguntapan), and Yogyakarta City (SMPN 14 Yogyakarta). Each educational institution is represented by one educator and one class as participating subjects. The data collection methods employed in this study are designed to obtain detailed information. A variety of data collection methods are employed, including interviews, observation, and documentation. Observations are conducted to understand and document critical literacy activities in schools, particularly critical literacy lesson plans. Interviews yield more in-depth data, which can be further explored. Interviews gather data or information that cannot be obtained through questionnaires or observations. Documentation is conducted to collect more accurate evidence and data on critical literacy practices in schools. A meticulous examination is conducted on supporting documents, learning materials, and other elements that support literacy practices.

This study employed qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. Qualitative analysis techniques included data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing/verifying conclusions. Data analysis was conducted during and after data collection, including observations of critical literacy practices in the classroom, interview results, and document analysis. Analysis (interpretation) is conducted concurrently with data collection to sharpen the focus of observation, particularly regarding critical literacy practices implemented in Indonesian language and literature education.

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

This study involved conducting a validation test to assess the quality of the developed instruments. Validity was achieved through Focus Group discussions (FGD) involving literacy and language learning experts and junior high school Indonesian language teachers. Credibility was achieved through the researcher's long-term involvement with the participants and efforts to confirm and clarify the data obtained using participant/member checks (returning to participants after data analysis) and conducting panel discussions with experts/specialists to reanalyze the data (peer checking). Other activities, such as in-depth observation, were also necessary to enable the researchers to capture the social phenomena being studied as accurately as possible. Data triangulation was conducted to ensure data validity. Reliability, or dependability, in qualitative research is achieved through auditing the entire research process.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected included interview results, document analysis, classroom observations, and student self-evaluations. The interview results, as previously concluded, are as follows: (1) Teachers understand literacy, but have not yet developed critical literacy to its full potential. (2) Teachers still face challenges in finding functional texts and encouraging students to analyze them. (3) Designing multimodal–multiliteracies activities requires significant effort and time.

The observation results show that students are active when they are enjoying what they are learning, that students prefer to work in groups, and that literacy activities are still often treated as tasks rather than enjoyed. Meanwhile, the document analysis results show that teachers' skills in designing critical literacy learning activities need improvement. While the learning syntax aligns with the chosen model, activities supported by critical literacy resources are lacking and need improvement.

### Description of Literacy Activities and Knowledge of Literacy as a Starting Point for Implementing Critical Literacy

The most important thing for schools to know is which literacy activities have been carried out. As a first step, data were collected from five sample schools. This information was obtained through direct observation of literacy activities in schools and interviews with teachers and students. From observations at SMPN 2 Wonosari, it is evident that literacy activities have not been carried out optimally and have not become a habitual practice among students. Literacy initiatives are currently limited to following government instructions, such as reading for 15 minutes before class time. According to teacher interviews, only a few students can demonstrate effective reading comprehension. However, some students read and write independently, producing works such as short stories, poems, and other writings that they upload to social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. These literacy activities have not yet become a conscious, independent routine that students find enjoyable. Nevertheless, the school has consistently encouraged students to be active in literacy by striving to provide facilities to support it. This aligns with the results of student interviews. In terms of literacy habits, students admit that they often use technology to access information and share information and works. Nevertheless, technology and its features can facilitate the creation of a literacy culture (Freire, 1988; Gillon et al., 2023; Jenkins et al., 2009). It should be noted that the majority of students at SMPN 2 Wonosari come from middle- or lower-class backgrounds, meaning they sometimes lack family support.

In addition, observations at SMPN 2 Wonosari indicate that literacy has been implemented by students and teachers. SMPN 2 Wonosari has been implementing the Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS) since 2015 and has formed a permanent Literacy Team (TLS). The TLS was formed and appointed by the school principal and consists of teachers actively engaged in literacy activities. This is evidenced by teachers' work, such as modules, books, and papers, as well as their active participation in literacy competitions at both local and national levels.

The implementation of literacy activities varies from school to school. At SMPN 1 Banguntapan, for example, the GLS was launched in 2016 and is still in the initial phase of assessing initial responses. The School Literacy Team has not yet been clearly established by the school, so the responsibility for school literacy activities is placed on the Indonesian language

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

teacher. Students' interest in reading and producing literary works has increased since the establishment of the GLS. However, students still need substantial guidance and support from teachers. Students have not yet become independent and aware of how to utilize literacy resources and use them for personal and community development.

Surveys were conducted at three schools in Yogyakarta: SMPN 1 Banguntapan, Bantul, SMPN 1 Sleman, and SMPN 14 Yogyakarta. The surveys focused on literacy activities and students' literacy skills. At SMP 1 Banguntapan Bantul, literacy work was evident in the form of highly creative and regular bulletin publications, as well as active school literacy teamwork. SMPN 1 Banguntapan Bantul and SMPN 1 Sleman have been producing school bulletins for more than 2 years, published every 6 months, which are the result of students' work. At SMPN 14, literacy activities have been integrated into the learning process through the creation of various products, including student magazines, infographics, and presentation videos.

In these activities, students work in teams, covering news, capturing phenomena both within and outside the school to serve as subjects for bulletin content, and providing solutions to existing issues in the bulletin's sections, as shown in Figure 1. The students' written works are used by the school community in particular and the general public. They also understand how to produce and publish their works in print and online media (the bulletin has been published on the school's website). This indicates that students have understood the diversity of multimodal texts. This activity aligns with the concept of critical literacy, which enables children to engage in transmedia experiences and even digital literacy (Djonov et al., 2021; Kumpulainen & Gillen, 2019). Here is an example of a student bulletin in Figure 1.




**Figure 1.** Collection of bulletins and infographics

**Overview of Indonesian language learning with critical literacy integration**

Indonesian language learning has been implemented with the principle of strengthening students' literacy. In addition to considering students' initial abilities, teachers also apply literacy-based learning. Observations were made on the implementation of Indonesian language learning, focusing on several aspects, including understanding text codes, interpreting texts, using texts functionally, and critically analyzing and transforming texts.

Understanding text codes relates to students' ability to interpret discourse across a range of vocabulary, sentence structures, and texts. These three things are always part of learning. This aspect is the beginning of critical literacy and code-breaking when implemented correctly. Students are expected to understand and use the code system in texts, including the alphabet, sounds, spelling, and word structure. These elements are present in the vocabulary material for learning Indonesian. The words that students learn are related to the type of text they are studying. This includes standard and non-standard vocabulary, as well as basic, derivative, and technical vocabulary. Teachers often teach both standard and non-standard vocabulary. Teachers and

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

students have also agreed that students should write one standard word in each session. Teachers often use standard or non-standard words in a quiz at the start of a lesson or to review what students have learned. The results from the first quizzes show that students still need to learn more about standard and non-standard vocabulary. Students sometimes still find it hard to identify the type of word.

Thus, indirectly, students become familiar with standard vocabulary useful for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Starting with this understanding of vocabulary, students become accustomed to recognizing and using a variety of sentence structures. Students often use this ability when writing. Based on students' writing, they often use simple sentences. Students still have difficulty using compound sentences in writing activities. This is due to students' limited access to reconstructing texts in their own language, as stated in several studies that the obstacle in incorporating critical perspectives into the classroom is the tendency to use conventional methods, thereby limiting opportunities for critical discussions about texts that consider the interests, experiences, and perspectives of particular students (Schmidt, 2013). Therefore, students' understanding of texts is also limited. Meanwhile, when it comes to text genres, students can identify and understand the various texts taught. Although some students find it difficult, such as poetry and drama.

The aspect of interpreting text can be seen from the ability to understand explicit and implicit information in the text or intertext. During the learning process, this ability is usually developed through students' activities as they understand the teacher's discourse. Teachers design learning activities that encourage the development of this ability. This can be seen in the following example of a learning activity design for reading observation report texts in Figure 2.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pertemuan Pertama**<br>1. **Orientasi peserta didik terhadap masalah**<br>Peserta didik mencermati berbagai kasus di lingkungan sekitar. Guru memberi pertanyaan pemantik berupa:<br>a. Bagaimanakah kasus tersebut bisa terjadi?<br>b. Bagaimanakah data dan fakta terkait kasus tersebut?<br>c. Bagaimanakah solusi untuk kasus terssebut?<br>d. Bagaimana aksi nyata yang dapat kalian lakukan untuk membantu menyelesaikan/mengurangi kasus tersebut?<br>2. **Mengorganisasikan peserta untuk belajar**<br>a. Peserta didik duduk berkelompok sesuai pembagian guru. Kelompok dibagi berdasarkan hasil asesmen awal kemampuan membaca peserta didik.<br>b. Peserta didik mencermati LKDP yang disiapkan guru. | Main Activities<br>First Meeting<br>1. **Student orientation toward problem**<br>Students observe various cases in the neighborhood. The teacher asked a lighter question in the form of:<br>a. How did the case come about?<br>b. What are the data and facts regarding the case?<br>c. What is the solution to the case?<br>d. How are the real actions you can take to help resolve the case?<br>2. **Organize participants to learn**<br>a. The students are grouped according to the teacher's division. The group is divided according to the preliminary assessment results of students' reading ability.<br>b. Students take a closer look at the LKDP prepared by the teacher. |

**Figure 2.** Learning Design that Encourages the Ability to Understand Text Content

Figure 2 illustrates a project-based learning activity. The figure shows the first step, orienting students toward the problem, and the second, organizing students for learning. These two steps aim to encourage students to understand both the explicit and implicit content of the text; this constitutes a critical literacy activity—developing an understanding of the text's content both factually and inferentially (Freebody & Luke, 1990). This activity combines subject matter with the students' environment, in this case, observational report texts. Observational report texts are a fundamental genre used to document, organize, and present information about a specific subject, object, or phenomenon (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). An object can be classified by grouping or creating categories. Classification can be technical or general, depending on the object being described. To recognize and understand such texts, they must be contextualized within the surrounding environment to facilitate student comprehension by examining real-world cases in their immediate surroundings. Thus, students not only grasp the content textually but also contextually.

In addition to encouraging students to understand the text's content, the lesson plan also encourages them to select relevant information. This is illustrated by the lesson plan shown in Figure 3.

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. Membimbing penyelidikan individual dan kelompok<br>a. Peserta didik mengidentifikasi informasi dalam teks LHO yang berisi kasus tertentu dari berbagai sumber.<br>b. Peserta didik menelaah data dalam teks LHO.<br>c. Peserta didik merefleksikan informasi yang diperoleh dalam teks LHO dengan kehidupan sehari-hari. | 3. Guiding individual and group investigations<br>a. Students identify information in the LHO text that contains specific cases from various sources.<br>b. Students review data in the text of the LHO.<br>c. Students reflect the information obtained in the text of the LHO with daily life. |

**Figure 3.** Learning Design that Encourages the Ability to Select Relevant Information

In Figure 3, activities were designed for the third phase to encourage students to select information relevant to the learning topic. In this case, the teacher implemented this by allowing students to access information from various sources. The teacher also provided several multimodal texts related to the learning topic. This is shown in the student worksheet in Figure 4.

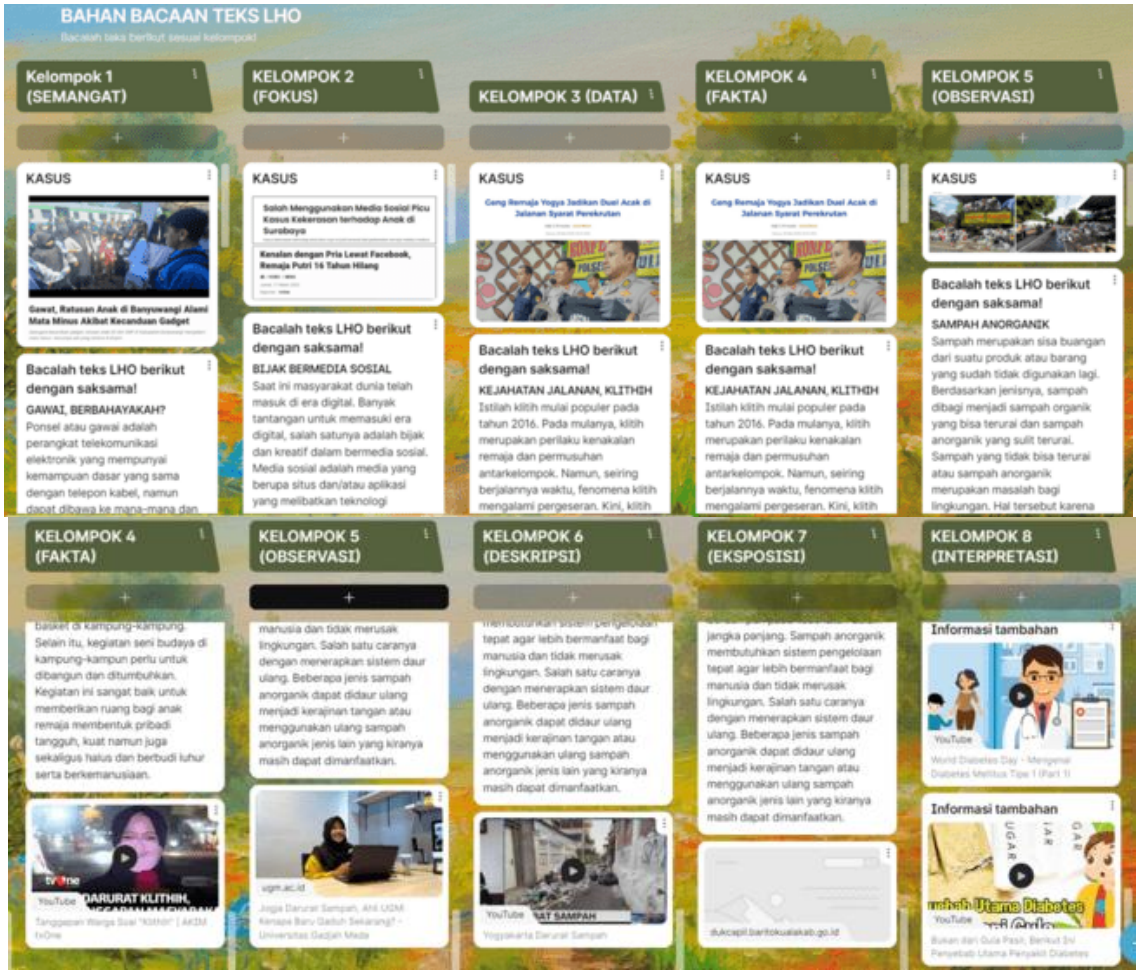



**Figure 4.** Student Worksheet that Encourages the Ability to Select Relevant Information

Figure 4 shows the students' work using the Student Worksheet on the Padlet platform. Padlet is an online platform (website and app) that functions as a virtual bulletin board or interactive wall for real-time collaboration (Md Deni & Zainal, 2018). Padlet allows users to upload, share, and organize content such as text, images, videos, and links on a single shared screen, making it a popular tool for learning and discussion. Using the Padlet application is part of the effort to foster critical literacy.

In the learning activities using Padlet, each group receives two to three texts related to the case being discussed. Thus, students must first identify both explicit and implicit information. Afterward, students must select and connect the information relevant to the case under discussion. This activity reinforces critical literacy through textual and inferential understanding (Freebody

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

& Luke, 1990).

The students' worksheet contains various relevant pieces of information. In this learning activity, each group receives two to three texts related to the case being discussed. Consequently, students are required to locate both explicit and implicit information. Subsequently, students are required to select and connect pertinent information to the case under discussion.

These learning activities also address the functional use of texts, as evidenced by students' ability to draw conclusions, make connections within and across texts, and convey information from texts in other forms in a contextual manner. As shown in Figures 3 and 4, students are expected to be able to relate the content of various texts. In other words, students can draw conclusions and make connections across texts. This is consistent with the concept of instructional design that accommodates students' literacy skills—particularly those of junior high school students—which holds that teachers should design lessons by taking into account students' prior competencies and characteristics (Fälth et al., 2019). Studies have shown that literacy instruction should be tailored to students' needs, rather than being prescriptive (Moore, 2005; von Börtzell-Szuch et al., 2024).

The following products (Figure 5) were created by students as a result of learning to understand the contents of observation reports using the problem-based learning model and case method.

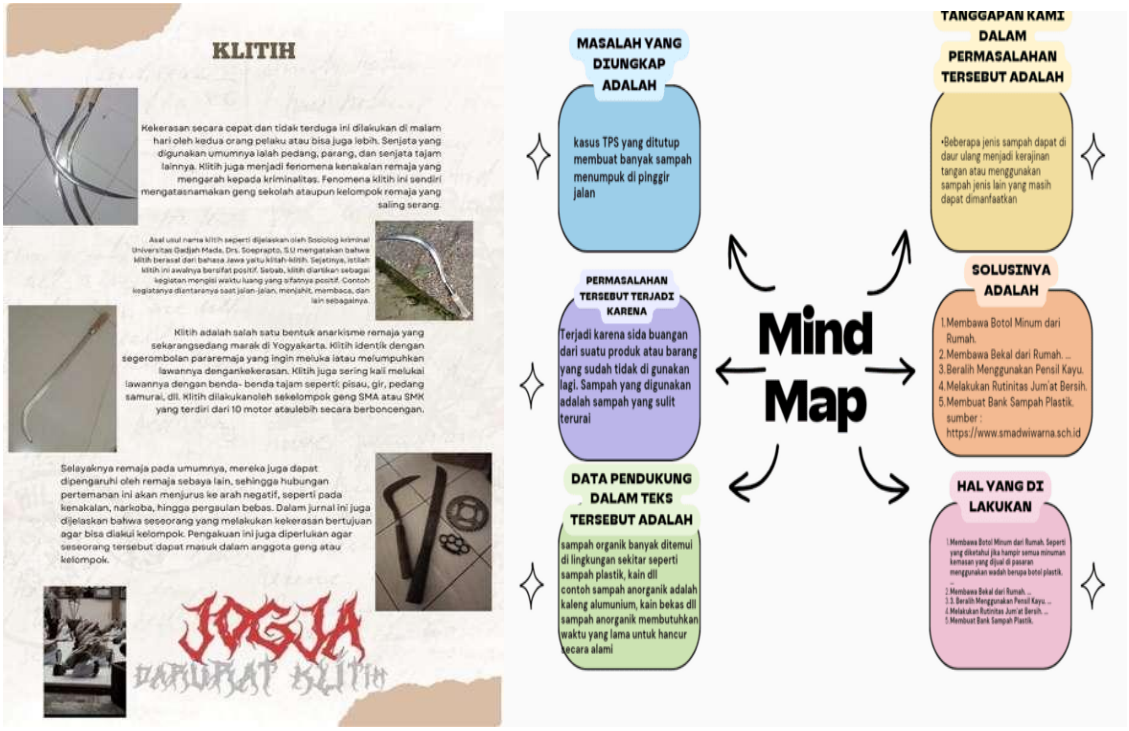



**Figure 5.** Student Products from Reading Activities

The products also demonstrate students' attempts to interpret information from multimodal texts and apply it to their daily lives. Multimodal texts are understood as unified wholes that integrate various semiotic systems—such as linguistic, visual, auditory, gestural, and spatial—to construct a message. According to Forceville, (2010), each mode in such a text not only serves as a complement to the written text but also possesses independent meaning that often cannot be conveyed by words only. Figure 5 shows students' work after they explored information about local issues, such as garbage and 'klitih' (a type of street crime committed by a group of children). It appears that students are trying to interpret these two events through several visual products. In terms of results and products, students are already demonstrating their understanding and creativity in literacy. However, students can still explore the content of their interpretations by providing other arguments, such as the urgency, solutions, and real, immediate impacts on their lives.

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Thus, at the junior high school level, Indonesian language learning, which also aims to strengthen students' literacy skills, has been implemented with efforts to accommodate critical literacy, albeit only in coding and semantic competence. These two elements were applied during the planning and implementation of Indonesian language learning.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study reveals that the use of critical literacy in Indonesian language learning in junior high schools is still in its early stages. Critical literacy is integrated into lesson planning and implementation, including the design of lessons that introduce several multimodal texts. Meanwhile, during the learning process, the implementation of learning is at the stage of understanding discourse through various vocabulary, sentences, and texts; understanding explicit and implicit information in texts or intertextuality; drawing conclusions, making connections between texts or intertextuality; and conveying information from texts in other contextual forms. The critical literacy domain is still at the Coding Competence stage, which involves understanding texts literally, and the Semantic Competence stage, which involves interpreting information using various multimodal texts. This study recommends efforts to develop literacy competencies by incorporating critical literacy for teachers through various structured and incidental activities so that teachers can apply critical literacy in all preparation or planning and implementation activities.

## REFERENCES

Abidin, Y., M. T. & Y. H. (2021). Pembelajaran Literasi: Strategi Meningkatkan Kemampuan Literasi Matematika, Sains, Membaca, dan Menulis. Bumi Aksara. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=M_UrEAAAQBAJ

Agus, I. (2019). Efektivitas guided discovery menggunakan pendekatan kontekstual ditinjau dari kemampuan berpikir kritis, prestasi, dan self-efficacy. Jurnal Riset Pendidikan Matematika, 6(2), 120–132. https://doi.org/10.21831/JRPM.V6I2.14517

Bull, Geoff., & Anstey, M. (2003). The literacy lexicon (Literacy as engaging with new forms of life: The "four roles" model). Prentice Hall/Pearson Education Australia. https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1313&context=ajte

Cho, H., & and Johnson, P. (2021). "We have to focus on improving our and our next generation's rights!" Exploring critical literacy in a third space for Korean female high school students. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 18(2), 174–202. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2020.1805612

Clandinin, D. (2007). Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452226552

Direktorat PAUD, D. dan D. D. P. D. dan D. (2021). Buku saku tanya jawab kurikulum merdeka. https://doi.org/https://repositori.kemendikdasmen.go.id/24917/1/Tanya%20jawab%20Kurikulum%20Merdeka.pdf

Djonov, E., Tseng, C. I., & Lim, F. V. (2021). Children's experiences with a transmedia narrative: Insights for promoting critical multimodal literacy in the digital age. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 43, 100493. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.DCM.2021.100493

Domínguez Romero, E., & Bobkina, J. (2021). Exploring critical and visual literacy needs in digital learning environments: The use of memes in the EFL/ESL university classroom. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 40, 100783. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TSC.2020.100783

Fälth, L., Nordström, T., Andersson, U. B., & Gustafson, S. (2019). Assessment Support as Part of Teacher Duties in the Subject of Swedish at the Elementary Level. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 18(4), 85–103. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.18.4.5

Forceville, C. J. (2010). The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis: Carey Jewitt (Ed.), Routledge, London, 2009, 340 pages, ISBN 13: 978-0-415-43437-9 (hbk). Journal of Pragmatics, 42(9), 2604–2608. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.PRAGMA.2010.03.003

Freebody, P., & Luke, A. (1990). Literacies programs: Debates and demands in cultural

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

context. *Prospect: an Australian journal of TESOL*, *5*(3), 7-16. https://eprints.qut.edu.au/49099/7/DOC090312.pdf

Freire, P. (1988). The Adult Literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 40(2), 205–225. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.40.2.q7n227021n148p26

Gillon, G., McNeill, B., Scott, A., Arrow, A., Gath, M., & Macfarlane, A. (2023). A better start literacy approach: effectiveness of Tier 1 and Tier 2 support within a response to teaching framework. *Reading and Writing*, 36(3), 565–598. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-022-10303-4

Giselsson, K. (2020). Critical Thinking and Critical Literacy: Mutually Exclusive? *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 14(1). https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2020.140105

Goldstein, Ben. (2008). Working with images. Cambridge University Press. https://id.scribd.com/document/992422810

Hardianti, M. (2024). Indonesian higher education students' perception on critical literacy. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 11(2), 111–123. https://doi.org/10.22373/EJ.V11I2.20003

Harsiati, T. (2018). KARAKTERISTIK SOAL LITERASI MEMBACA PADA PROGRAM PISA. *LITERA*, 17(1). https://doi.org/10.21831/LTR.V17I1.19048

Hasan, Dr. Md. K., Azad, Dr. Md. A. K., & Hossain, Dr. Md. S. (2025). Developing Critical Thinking and Reading Skills in ESL Classrooms: Strategies, Challenges, and Innovations. International Journal of Social Science and Human Research, 08(05). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v8-i5-79

Hidayah, N., Sumarno, S., & Dwijayanti, I. (2023). Analisis bahan ajar terhadap kebutuhan guru dan peserta didik kelas V. Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar, 10(2), 128–142. https://doi.org/10.30659/PENDAS.10.2.128-142

Janks, H. (2013). Critical literacy in teaching and research. *Education Inquiry*, 4(2), 225–242. https://doi.org/10.3402/edui.v4i2.22071

Janks, H. (2014). Critical Literacy's Ongoing Importance for Education. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(5), 349–356. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.260

Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K., & Robison, A. J. (2009). Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture. The MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8435.001.0001

Jha, S. K. (2018). Narrative Texts in Narrative Inquiry: Interpretive Voices to Better Understand Experiences in Given Space and Time. *Open Journal of Leadership*, 07(04), 237–249. https://doi.org/10.4236/ojl.2018.74014

Knapp, Peter., & Watkins, Megan. (2005). Genre, text, grammar : technologies for teaching and assessing writing. Sydney: UNSW Press. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=6VP1slspP7oC

Kumpulainen, K., & Gillen, J. (2019). Young children's digital literacy practices in the home. In The Routledge Handbook of Digital Literacies in Early Childhood (pp. 95–108). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203730638-7

Losh, E. (2014). From Authorship to Authoring: Critical Literacy, Expert Users, and Proprietary Software. *Computers and Composition*, 33(C), 40–49. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.COMPCOM.2014.07.004

Machete, P., & Turpin, M. (2020). The Use of Critical Thinking to Identify Fake News: A Systematic Literature Review. *Responsible Design, Implementation and Use of Information and Communication Technology*, 12067, 235. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45002-1_20

Md Deni, A. R., & Zainal, Z. I. (2018). Padlet as an educational tool: Pedagogical considerations and lessons learnt. *ACM International Conference Proceeding Series*, 156–162. https://doi.org/10.1145/3290511.3290512

Molin, L., Godhe, A.-L., & Lantz-Andersson, A. (2018). Instructional challenges of incorporating

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

aspects of critical literacy work in digitalised classrooms. *Cogent Education*, 5(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1516499

Moore, M. (2005). Meeting the Educational Needs of Young Gifted Readers in the Regular Classroom. *Gifted Child Today*, 28(4), 40–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/107621750502800410

Nieto, S. (2002). Critical literacy: a collection of articles from the Australian Literacy Educators' Association. *Language Arts*, 79(5), 430. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/critical-literacy-collection-articles-australian/docview/196849546/se-2

Ningrum, A. W., & Murti, R. C. (2023). Contextual Learning Models in Improving Elementary School Critical Thinking Skills. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA*, 9(5), 48–53. https://doi.org/10.29303/JPPIPA.V9I5.2360

Puslitjakdibud. (2019). Indeks Aktivitas Literasi Membaca 34 Provinsi. https://repositori.kemdikbud.go.id/13034/1/Puslitjakdikbud_Ringkasan%20Indeks%20Alibaca%2034%20Provinsi

Schmidt, C. (2013). The question of access and design – Elin and Hassan walk the line of the four resources model. Education Inquiry, 4(2), 301–314. https://doi.org/10.3402/edui.v4i2.22075

Schroeder, S., & Curcio, R. (2022). Critiquing, Curating, and Adapting: Cultivating 21st-Century Critical Curriculum Literacy with Teacher Candidates. *Journal of Teacher Education, 73*(2)*,* 129–144. https://doi.org/10.1177/00224871221075279

von Börtzell-Szuch, D., Allodi, M. W., & Szabo, A. (2024). Students with advanced literacy skills and related literacy instruction: a scoping review. *Gifted and Talented International*, 39(2), 137–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332276.2024.2425847

*Copyright (c) 2026 Nurhidayah, Esti Swatika Sari, Beniati Lestyarini.* This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.