



## Implementation of Critical Thinking Values in Grade IV Indonesian Language Textbooks of The Merdeka Curriculum : A Content Analysis in The Application of The Pancasila Student Profile

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**Abstract:** This study aims to elaborate on the implementation of critical thinking values in several textbooks used in Indonesia as an essential aspect of the Pancasila Student Profile. The research approach utilized a qualitative content analysis method to examine elements of critical thinking in four Grade IV Indonesian Language textbooks within the Merdeka Curriculum, published by Erlangga, Yudistira, Bumi Aksara, and Kemendikbudristek. The findings showed that Grade IV Indonesian Language textbooks from these four publishers clearly implemented critical thinking characteristics, each with different emphases. Erlangga focuses on "Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas," Yudistira emphasizes "Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes," while Bumi Aksara highlights "Considering and Solving Problems." Lastly, the textbook from Kemendikbudristek also placed more focus on the "Considering and Solving Problems" element. Nevertheless, each textbook adopts a unique approach in fostering students' critical thinking and character development. Conceptually, the implementation of this study's findings underscores the importance of varied approaches in teaching critical values, while practically encouraging educators and the curriculum to formulate balanced strategies for developing students' skills in line with the Pancasila Student Profile.

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## Introduction

In Indonesian language learning, textbooks play a central role in delivering lesson material, enriching vocabulary, and developing language skills (Andini et al., 2024). However, beyond merely conveying information, textbooks also shape students' character (Danawati et al., 2020). Therefore, the role of textbooks in Indonesian language learning is not limited to academic aspects but also encompasses character development. In line with this, education is fundamentally the primary foundation in shaping the character and quality of the nation's future generations (Wahyuni et al., 2023; Faiz, 2022; Taufik, 2020). In pursuit of this goal, the Merdeka Curriculum has become an important milestone, granting schools the freedom to design curricula according to the needs and characteristics of their students (Gumilar & Permatasari, 2023).

One aspect that must be considered in character building is critical thinking values (Chowdhury, 2018). Critical thinking is a crucial foundation for forming a generation capable of processing information carefully, developing sharp questions, and evaluating arguments logically (Mahanal, 2019). The presence of critical thinking values in Indonesian language



textbooks reflects a commitment to educating students to become independent, critical, and creative thinkers (Mustadi et al., 2021).

The Pancasila Student Profile—as the primary guide for shaping students' character—highlights the importance of critical thinking as one of six key aspects (devotion to God Almighty, independence, creativity, collaboration, global diversity, and critical thinking) (Fauzi et al., 2023; Mustari, 2022). In Indonesian language learning, textbooks aim not only to deliver lesson material but also to facilitate the development of students' critical thinking skills through the selection of material, teaching methods, and relevant learning activities.

The fourth grade marks the beginning of the upper-level stage in elementary school (Harlina et al., 2020; Septianti & Alfiani, 2020). This grade level is typically taken by students aged 9-10. At this age, students begin to implement more complex knowledge and are ready to face greater academic challenges (Paus et al., 1990; Samokish, 2019). Instilling critical thinking values at this level is essential as it is a critical phase in shaping students' thought patterns. Scientifically, there are several reasons supporting the urgency of instilling critical thinking values in Grade IV students. First, at this age, students' cognitive development reaches a level where they begin to understand abstract concepts and develop more complex analytical abilities. Second, at this age, students tend to be more open to new learning and are more capable of questioning the world around them. Third, instilling critical thinking values at this level can provide a solid foundation for students' academic and social development in subsequent levels (DeNigris & Brooks, 2018; Wente et al., 2020).

Previous studies on critical thinking aspects in the application of the Pancasila Student Profile in Indonesian language learning have been conducted by Hadi & Nadlifah (2023), Anggraini (2019), Juliansyah (2023), and Saputro et al. (2021). The study by Hadi and Nadlifah (2023) illustrates critical thinking values in the Pancasila Student Profile in elementary school thematic subjects. Anggraini (2019) discusses visual literacy in enhancing children's critical reasoning. Juliansyah's (2023) study at SD Negeri 198/I Pasar Baru describes teachers' strategies for First Grade in Indonesian language teaching. Finally, the study by Saputro et al. (2021) examines thinking skills in Grade X Indonesian Language Textbooks of the 2013 Curriculum from a HOTS perspective.

This study complements previous research that has examined critical thinking aspects in the application of the Pancasila Student Profile in Indonesian language learning. Through an analysis of critical thinking elements in Grade IV Indonesian Language textbooks, this study provides a richer understanding of the implementation of critical thinking values in several textbooks used by schools in Indonesia. Thus, the findings of this study broaden teachers' perspectives in enriching strategies and practices in Indonesian language teaching that support students' critical thinking skills to achieve the noble values of Pancasila.

The urgency of this research is based on the premise that critical thinking values are key to shaping a generation capable of facing the complex challenges of the modern era (Khasanah et al., 2023). Through an in-depth analysis of the implementation of critical thinking values in Grade IV Indonesian Language textbooks of the Merdeka Curriculum, this study provides insights into how comprehensively these books assist students in developing critical thinking skills. The results of this research can offer valuable input for curriculum development, textbook preparation, and classroom learning practices, thereby enhancing the quality of education and forming a generation that is more independent, critical, and ready to face the dynamics of the modern world.



## Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a content analysis method. Content analysis is an approach used to systematically and objectively analyze the content of texts, images, or other media (Ahmad, 2018; Rozali, 2022). The purpose of this method is to understand, categorize, and interpret patterns that emerge within the material being studied. Content analysis began by selecting relevant material samples related to the research topic. Next, the researcher developed a conceptual framework or categories to analyze the content, which may include themes, ideas, emotions, or other relevant variables. Following this, the researcher conducted structured coding or documentation of the material content based on the established categories, which in this case are aspects of critical thinking, either manually or using specialized software to support the analysis process (Ahmad, 2018; Rozali, 2022; Sitasari, 2022; Riffe et al., 2019; Kleinheksel, 2020). The elements of critical thinking include: 1) obtaining and processing information and ideas, 2) analyzing and evaluating reasoning, 3) reflecting on thought and thought processes, and 4) decision-making (Kemdikbud.go.id, 2020; Irawati et al., 2022).

The objects of analysis in this study were Grade IV Indonesian Language Textbooks under the Merdeka Curriculum, consisting of four books published by various publishers. These four publishers were selected due to their dominant use in elementary schools across Indonesia. Additionally, these publishers employed varied approaches to teaching critical values aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. The first is a book by Erlangga, published in 2022 and authored by A. Indradi and Rahmah Purwahida, covering Chapters I to VIII. The second is a book by Yudistira, First Edition, First Printing in July 2022, authored by Aira Kimsela and Rinasti Amalia, covering lessons one through eight. The third is a book by Bumi Aksara, copyrighted in 2022 and authored by Rohmiyatun, containing Chapters I to VIII. Lastly, the book by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, published by the Book Research and Development Agency of the Curriculum and Book Center, first printed in 2021, and authored by Eva Y. Nukman and C. Erni Setyowati, covering Chapters I to VII.

## Results and Discussion

The elements of critical thinking encompass a range of essential cognitive skills in the process of rational and informed thinking. First, obtaining and processing information and ideas, which is a competency involving the individual's ability to gather information from various sources carefully and filter relevant information. Second, analyzing and evaluating reasoning, which is the ability to identify premises, assumptions, and conclusions in an argument, and to assess its validity, soundness, and relevance. Third, reflecting on thought and the thinking process is an individual's ability to question assumptions, recognize biases or stereotypes, and evaluate the effectiveness of the thinking strategies used. Lastly, decision-making is the ability to make rational and informed decisions based on careful evaluation of existing information and arguments and to consider the long-term implications of such decisions (Irawati, 2022; Ismail et al., 2020; Ibad, 2022). This section will describe the content analysis of these four elements.

### Critical Thinking Values in the Grade IV Indonesian Language Textbook Published by Erlangga

The Erlangga publisher demonstrates the implementation of critical thinking values in Indonesian language learning as an important aspect of the Merdeka Curriculum. This can be seen in the data below.



**Table 1. The elements of critical thinking in the textbook published by Erlangga**

No	Text Form	Page	The Elements of Critical Thinking
1.	Story about Cici helping Hani by giving her candy when she feels spicy.	8	Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas
2.	Story about Heri advising his friend to conserve water to protect nature and save energy.	3	Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas
3.	Question asking students, "What is meant by growth in humans?" encourages students to reflect.	6	Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes
4.	Story about children saying "mask" as a first word because they hear it frequently.	16	Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas
5.	Question asking students to choose the correct conjunction to connect two simple sentences into a complete sentence.	30	Analyzing and Evaluating Reasoning
6.	Story explaining the importance of reforestation, with an open-ended question about its reasons.	34	Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas
7.	Invitation text to encourage reading interest by introducing electronic books as a solution to low reading interest.	59	Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes
8.	Conversation between an elephant and a turtle where students are asked to find the main topic and idea.	86	Analyzing and Evaluating Reasoning
9.	Question asking students to identify the meaning of the word "captivating" in the context of a sentence about Mount Bromo.	104	Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas
10.	Text encourages students to understand the importance of actions like handwashing, wearing masks, and social distancing as health decisions.	135	Decision-Making
11.	Story about Riza forgetting to brush his teeth and getting a toothache. Students are asked about character, problem, cause-effect, and solutions for this habit.	140	Decision-Making

The analysis of the Erlangga textbook indicates that most text forms, such as items 1, 2, 4, 6, and 9, focus on the element of obtaining and processing information and ideas. For instance, item 1 illustrates Cici giving candy to Hani after noticing her discomfort from spiciness, demonstrating a quick response in information processing. Many texts guide students to understand meaning in the specific contexts, such as considering actions or understanding words within a text, which encourages critical thinking in information reception.

Several texts also highlight the element of reflecting on thought and the thinking process, such as items 3, 7, and 11, which invite students to contemplate concepts holistically, like the question about human growth in item 3. The element of analyzing and evaluating reasoning appears in items 5 and 8, such as in texts asking students to select the correct conjunction to connect sentences. Lastly, the element of decision-making is evident in items 10 and 11, such as instructions on health practices and problem-solving in daily life that encourage students to make appropriate decisions in maintaining health, as exemplified by the character Riza.

The analysis of the Grade IV Indonesian Language textbook published by Erlangga shows that this book is fairly dominant in implementing critical thinking values through understanding information, thought reflection, reasoning analysis, and decision-making. Students are encouraged to identify word meanings, conclude main ideas, choose appropriate conjunctions, and answer reflective questions about human growth, environmental preservation, and reading culture. This book also emphasizes the importance of decision-making in daily health practices, thus contributing to the development of students' critical thinking in line with the Merdeka Curriculum.



## Critical Thinking Values in the Grade IV Indonesian Language Textbook Published by Yudistira

The Yudistira publisher, in developing the Grade IV Indonesian Language textbook of the Merdeka Curriculum, also demonstrates the implementation of critical thinking values. This can be seen in the data below.

**Table 2. The elements of critical thinking in the textbook published by Yudistira**

No	Text Form	Page	The Elements of Critical Thinking
1.	Story about Dodu thanking Uncle Danu for the map given and saying goodbye carefully.	56	Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes
2.	Advice from Sister Gita to her younger siblings on the importance of taking care of flowers to keep them alive and fresh.	31	Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas
3.	Story about a trip to Curug Mantra surrounded by traffic signs for road user safety.	45	Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas
4.	Question asking students to choose the correct example of energy-saving behavior, like turning off lights during the day.	115	Analyzing and Evaluating Reasoning
5.	Story about rice advising coconut to be humble, and coconut promises not to be arrogant anymore.	26	Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes
6.	Story about Danu trying to learn to walk on stilts despite often falling, showing perseverance.	52	Considering and Solving Problems
7.	Invitation to maintain body health by keeping clean, exercising, and eating healthy food.	161	Considering and Solving Problems
8.	Information text on the importance of fruits and vegetables for health, followed by a task to create questions with question words.	167	Considering and Solving Problems
9.	Questions asking students to draw a line connecting questions with the correct answers, like the reason for Roni's illness.	21	Decision-Making

The analysis of the Grade IV Indonesian Language textbook of the Merdeka Curriculum published by Yudistira shows variation in the application of critical thinking elements. Text forms in items 2 and 3, for example, reflect the element of obtaining and processing information and ideas, such as in text number 2, which highlights the importance of caring for plants and the impact of picking them. This text encourages students to understand the consequences of actions on the environment. Additionally, texts in items 1 and 5 emphasize reflection on thought, such as in text number 5, which demonstrates a character's awareness of humility and the value of modesty.

Other texts emphasize the element of considering and solving problems, such as items 6, 7, and 8. These texts encourage students to consider situations and seek appropriate solutions, like the text about Danu learning to walk on stilts in item 6. Meanwhile, text number 4 develops students' abilities in analyzing and evaluating reasoning by inviting them to choose examples of energy-saving actions. Lastly, the decision-making element is evident in text number 9, which asks students to connect questions with the correct answers, thereby developing decision-making skills in everyday activities.

The analysis of the Grade IV Indonesian Language textbook of the Merdeka Curriculum published by Yudistira indicates a focus on developing students' critical thinking through texts that invite them to consider aspects of environmental sustainability, perseverance, and conceptual understanding. This book encourages students to think about the impact of actions on the environment and fosters perseverance and creativity in facing challenges. With its in-depth narratives and dialogues, this book teaches students to consider, analyze, and evaluate information critically, in alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile.



### Critical Thinking Values in the Grade IV Indonesian Language Textbook Published by Bumi Aksara

The publisher Bumi Aksara, as one of the publishers of the Grade IV Indonesian Language textbook of the Merdeka Curriculum, also demonstrates the implementation of critical thinking values. This can be seen in the data below.

**Table 3. The elements of critical thinking in the textbook published by Bumi Aksara**

No	Text Form	Page	The Elements of Critical Thinking
1.	Father's advice to Haikal's motorcycle rider to obey traffic signs and wear helmets for safety.	44	Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes
2.	Question asking students to answer the cause of allergies based on information from the text "Want But Can't."	9	Analyzing and Evaluating Reasoning
3.	Story about Haikal diligently saving pocket money in a chicken piggy bank to buy a bike, showing discipline.	103	Considering and Solving Problems
4.	Invitation for students to discuss in groups about household and school tasks and write down the results.	29	Considering and Solving Problems
5.	Group discussion text where students discuss effective ways to quickly save up their savings, practicing planning.	115	Considering and Solving Problems
6.	Explanation text on the benefits of breakfast for the body, with questions inviting students to think about breakfast's effect on concentration.	185	Considering and Solving Problems
7.	Instruction from Alia's father on dengue fever prevention by applying the 3M approach to avoid standing water.	173	Considering and Solving Problems
8.	Invitation to discuss with seatmates about their opinions and experiences regarding transportation tools.	49	Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes

The analysis of the Bumi Aksara textbook shows how critical thinking values are applied in Indonesian language learning for Grade IV elementary students under the Merdeka Curriculum. Most text forms support the development of students' critical thinking through reflection, reasoning analysis, and problem-solving. For instance, the element of reflecting on thought is evident in texts numbered 1 and 8, which invite students to reflect on their actions regarding traffic and transportation. Additionally, the element of analyzing and evaluating reasoning is demonstrated in text number 2, where students are encouraged to identify the causes of allergies.

The element of considering and solving problems becomes a focus in several texts, including numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, directing students to develop concrete strategies, such as saving money or preventing dengue fever. However, the element of analyzing and evaluating reasoning is not heavily emphasized in the text. This finding suggests that Bumi Aksara places less emphasis on students' ability to evaluate arguments. This could be an area that needs strengthening to help students develop more comprehensive analytical skills.

The analysis of the Bumi Aksara textbook shows a strong emphasis on developing students' abilities to consider and solve problems. The content was shaped with various text forms that encourage students to think practically to find solutions in everyday situations. Although other elements, such as reflection and reasoning analysis, are present, the main focus remains on practical skills, making this book suitable for training students in real-world problem-solving rather than deep reflection or complex analysis.

### Critical Thinking Values in the Grade IV Indonesian Language Textbook Published by Kemendikbudristek

As the leading educational institution in Indonesia, it is only fitting that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) serves as a role model in developing the Grade IV Indonesian language textbook of the Merdeka Curriculum that implements critical thinking values. This is represented in the following data.



**Table 4. The elements of critical thinking in the textbook published by Kemendikbudristek**

No	Text Form	Page	The Elements of Critical Thinking
1.	Conversation between Sani and her sister Lita about opening windows for coolness without a fan, saving electricity, and the importance of unplugging cables.	40	Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas
2.	Story about teachings on protecting coral reefs as a marine habitat and a friend named Maruna who bravely warns tourists about littering.	133	Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes
3.	Explanation on the benefits of saving with the saying "prepare an umbrella before it rains" to meet urgent future needs.	120	Considering and Solving Problems
4.	Text inviting students to discuss water transportation options for rivers or seas and find commonalities among these transportation methods.	61	Considering and Solving Problems
5.	Group discussion text about Ela Pelatuk making wooden money in various sizes and Sa Angsa writing numbers on the money, introducing the concept of change.	104	Considering and Solving Problems
6.	Invitation for students to research information about volcanoes, including causes of eruptions and their impact on residents.	148	Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas
7.	Story about Dimas wearing soccer shoes on a futsal field and getting injured, emphasizing the importance of choosing the right equipment.	197	Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes
8.	Exercise text on prefixes where students are asked to complete words with the prefixes "ber-" or "ber-an" to form correct sentences.	64	Considering and Solving Problems
9.	Explanation of diversity in Indonesian society, teaching that although people come from various ethnic backgrounds, they remain proud to be Indonesian.	159	Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes

The data above describes the text forms from the Kemendikbudristek textbook, classified based on relevant critical thinking elements. First, the element "Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas" is reflected in texts numbered 1 and 6. Text number 1 emphasizes awareness of the importance of electricity conservation and environmental care, while text number 6 invites students to seek information about volcanoes and conceptualize it. Second, the element "Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes" is represented by texts numbered 2, 7, and 9. Text number 2 shows the importance of reflecting on the impact of human actions on the marine environment, while texts numbered 7 and 9 encourage students to reflect on the decisions they make in certain situations.

Lastly, the element "Considering and Solving Problems" is the focus in several texts, namely texts numbered 3, 4, 5, and 8. For example, text number 3 invites students to consider the benefits of saving, while text number 8 provides exercises to solve problems by adding prefixes to given words. However, one element, "Decision-Making," does not explicitly appear in the presented text forms. This suggests that the textbook may place more emphasis on developing students' critical thinking through reflection, analysis, and problem-solving rather than on explicit decision-making processes.

The analysis of the Grade IV Indonesian Language textbook from Kemendikbudristek shows a primary focus on the element of Considering and Solving Problems, with many texts encouraging students to think critically when facing various situations and finding solutions. Although other elements, such as "obtaining information" and "reflecting on thought," are also included, greater emphasis is placed on problem-solving. This indicates that the textbook



is designed to train students to face challenges. It supports the development of practical skills in solving everyday problems, in line with the Grade IV learning objectives.

## Discussion

The Grade IV Indonesian Language textbooks from four different publishers—Erlangga, Yudistira, Bumi Aksara, and Kemendikbudristek—implement critical thinking characteristics with varying emphases. Erlangga focuses on "Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas," Yudistira places more emphasis on "Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes," while Bumi Aksara highlights "Considering and Solving Problems." In contrast, Kemendikbudristek attempts to cover all critical thinking aspects, including obtaining information, reflecting, and problem-solving, indicating an effort to create balance in developing students' critical thinking. From this comparison, it can be observed that each book has a unique approach to cultivating students' critical thinking and character development. Erlangga emphasizes information processing, Yudistira focuses on thought reflection, Bumi Aksara on practical problem-solving, and Kemendikbudristek on balancing the various aspects of critical thinking and character.

The importance of critical thinking elements in Grade IV Indonesian language textbooks as an early step in elementary school should not be overlooked. As an integral part of learning, critical reasoning forms a foundation for developing sharp thinking, analytical skills, and problem-solving in students (Ongesa, 2020; Butcher et al., 2019; Jaenudin et al., 2020). For example, in these textbooks, the element "Obtaining and Processing Information and Ideas" enables students to receive and process information more effectively, broadening their understanding of their surroundings and grasping new concepts. Meanwhile, the element "Reflecting on Thought and Thought Processes" provides students with opportunities to consider the actions and decisions they make, allowing them to understand the implications of each step they take in daily life.

The learning process that integrates critical thinking not only enriches students' knowledge but also prepares them to become critically thinking and responsible citizens in line with Pancasila values. By implementing critical thinking values, students are encouraged to become active agents of change in society, considering common interests and acting wisely (Unwakoly, 2022; Hayati & Setiawan, 2022). By practicing values such as cooperation, equality, and justice in decision-making and problem-solving contexts as embodied in textbooks, students learn to respect diversity, advocate for common interests, and internalize these values as an integral part of their character and identity.

Furthermore, the significance of critical thinking elements in Grade IV Indonesian Language textbooks is also related to the application of the Pancasila Student Profile. In this context, a teaching method that emphasizes social problem-solving, promotes student collaboration in finding solutions to complex issues, and encourages reflection on values underlying student actions and decisions can be practiced in classroom learning. This is relevant to previous research findings, which suggest that by integrating critical thinking values into every aspect of learning, teachers can create a learning environment that supports students' character development in line with the spirit of Pancasila (Rohmah et al., 2023; Irawati et al., 2022).

The implementation of this study's findings on critical thinking values in Grade IV Indonesian language learning can be described both conceptually and practically. Conceptually, these findings enhance the understanding of the importance of varied approaches in teaching critical thinking values at the primary level to shape critical thinking students in alignment with the Pancasila Student Profile. Practically, these findings provide a



reference for educators and curriculum developers in integrating more balanced strategies in textbooks, allowing students' character and academic abilities to grow effectively as critical-minded generations.

### Conclusion

The conclusion derived from the findings of this study is that the comparison between the four Grade IV Indonesian Language textbooks of the Merdeka Curriculum (Erlangga, Yudistira, Bumi Aksara, and Kemendikbudristek) reveals variations in the critical thinking values emphasized. Each publisher highlights different elements. Nonetheless, the overall analysis underscores the importance of developing students' critical thinking from an early age, as this is a fundamental step in preparing them to become critically thinking, responsible, and positively contributing citizens in society.

The integration of critical thinking values in Grade IV Indonesian language learning within the Merdeka Curriculum also reflects the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile. By strengthening the understanding and practice of Pancasila values through learning, students are not only shaped to be academically skilled but are also prepared to become individuals of integrity, ethics, and contribution to national progress. Therefore, a learning approach that combines critical thinking values as an embodiment of Pancasila values is essential in building a resilient, intelligent, and well-rounded future generation.

### Recommendation

The development of future Grade IV Indonesian Language textbooks within the Merdeka Curriculum could benefit from a more balanced approach to teaching critical thinking elements. Textbook publishers in Indonesia could evenly emphasize various aspects of critical thinking, such as reflection, reasoning analysis, and decision-making, so that students are skilled in obtaining information and capable of analyzing, evaluating, and making wise decisions. Additionally, training for teachers on implementing critical learning strategies is also needed to optimize the implementation of these values in the classroom.

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