CRITICAL QUESTIONS IN THE FOUR DIMENSIONS MODEL OF CRITICAL LITERACY PEDAGOGY TO ENHANCE CRITICAL AWARENESS

Indah Arvianti, Sri Wuli Fitriati, Januarius Mujiyanto, Widhiyanto
Language Education of Languages and Arts Faculty
Universitas Negeri Semarang
Semarang
indah072003@students.email.ac.id

Abstract

The objective of this research is to develop language learning tools through the four dimensions model of critical literacy pedagogy to uncover power, domination, and social systems in text. Due to the influence of the mass media editor, political elites, lawmakers, educational designers, and other text producers, language preferences can be used to oppress common people. Readers should be sensitive to all texts. Critical literacy pedagogy will be a device to reveal injustice and unequal relationships in text and to enhance critical language awareness for students to have the ability to critically examine the word and the world. The teaching framework that will be explored more is the Four Dimensions Model which possibly raises students' competence. Those dimensions are disrupting the commonplace, considering multiple viewpoints, focusing on the sociopolitical system, and taking action. To explore the dimensions, asking critical questions may trigger students to be critical learners, which is crucial for their ability to behave responsibly in social situations.

Keywords: critical questions, four dimensions model, literacy

Introduction

Language is not only communication tool, but also a control tool to dominate other parties. Media, as an embodiment that has power, possess a control in spreading news, from language uses to language preferences. With the power of the mass media editor, political elites, lawmakers, educational designers, and others as text producers, the language preferences can be used to dominate common people. Therefore, readers should have critical sensitivity to all texts so that they are not dominated by the media (Santoso, 2015, p. 229). In addition, a news consumer should be able to respond wisely to the language use from the writer's perspective. In a political context, one should be able to identify persuasive languages that highlight the superiority and victory of a party. Whereas in gender discourse, one should be able to reveal the penetration of men against women in their language use, and likewise, one should be able to examine from women's perspective

as the dominated party which is reflected in their language.

But in contrast, the awareness of language analysis in Indonesia has some obstacles. Based on a study conducted in Indonesia, UNESCO stated the low language analysis ability that shows how worrying the society's interest in reading is, only 0.001%. Meanwhile, according to research conducted by Central Connecticut State University in 2016, Indonesia was ranked 60th out of 61 countries with low literacy levels. Furthermore, research by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Human Development Index (HDI) of education in Indonesia was low, at 14.6% (Anisa et al., 2021). Meanwhile based on the Human Development Index Ranking 2019, Indonesia was ranked the one hundred eleventh out of one hundred eighty nine countries (Pramana et al., 2021). Indonesia also held the fifty fourth educational rank in 2022 among seventy eight countries investigated by World Population Review (2023). The low

literacy in Indonesia shows that a formula for learning instructions needs to be developed.

The poor literacy of Indonesians is aggravated by the rise of massive illegal media spreading in the online world. Based on the Media Indonesia.com e-paper, according to the Chairman of the Press Council, Prasetyo, almost 80% of the media in Indonesia are fake, which present untrue and unaccountable news to the public (Machmudi, 2019). The data showed that many media have certain concern behind their news and have the potential to simply attract people's interest to read the media by presenting bombastic, controversial, and even misleading news, for example during the general election, Ahok blasphemy case trial, and provocative remarks directed at social media activist, Ade Armando causing social chaos. The blasphemy allegation comes from language analysis which only looks at the meaning textually, without examining the context. Those social conditions in exacerbate community who are not smart and critical in choosing news and are careless in receiving news without further crosschecking the truth.

The social chaos may arise from the community and students' lack of language in understanding and interpreting when responding to news and mass media. Interpreting the language in the mass media and further exploring the truth of a news by examining the context of the situation, institution, or culture is essential in understanding the meaning of a text. Critical analysis are necessary as an analytical tool to teach students the importance of critical language awareness in responding to text in media to avoid social chaos that has the potential to cause horizontal clashes in society. From the explanation regarding the lack community/student critical language awareness skills in some cases in Indonesia which have an impact on social clashes in society, it shows that a learning device

formula is needed that needs to be developed.

critical To enhance language awareness, critical literacy is a pedagogy of reading the word and the world as the teaching method to stimulate students to have critical thinking, problem-solving, and action in the social environment in their life. Critical literacy is the ability to understand texts critically and analytically, which enables readers to read texts from a variety of points of view, concentrate on socio-political issues, act on texts they have read, and find their own voice and ethical responsibility to better the world (Beck, 2005, as cited in Abdenia, 2015, p. 77). Ideologies infiltrated and shaped the critical literacy lessons as they were implemented them (Weninger, 2020, p. 2). Literacy is socially created and rooted in context, as evidenced by the transition from an autonomous to an ideological point of view context (Lundgren, 2013, p. 216). In the framework of her educational research, the terms dominance, access, variety, and design are used to characterize a critical literacy approach research (Janks, 2000; Wilson-Lopez et al., 2017).

Related to power, ideology, domination, and social construction, the four dimensions model explores the pedagogical model and analytical tool of critical literacy. The dimensions are disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action (Batista-Morales et al., 2019; Chafel & Neitzel, 2012; Lewison et al., 2002). Based on Lewison et al. (2002), the four dimensions model can be used both as a basis for pedagogical suggestions making teachers and as an assessment tool for analyzing EFL in the classroom (Hayik, 2016, p. 410). This model is chosen because it contains and synthesizes important insights from influential scholars in critical literacy, such as Freire (1970, p.15) in practice reflection and action, Fairclough (1995, pp. 208-211) in learning a language to analyze how it forms identities, builds cultural discourses and supports or disrupts the status quo, Freebody and Luke (1990, pp. 13-14) with the importance of multiple perspectives in reading, and Janks (2010, p.176) on how language can be used to analyze hegemony and injustice. Those linguists inspired Lewison et.al of their four dimensions model to investigate critical literacy as an analytical tool and instructional approach.

Through the four dimensions model, teachers may ask students questions that encourage them to share their opinions and explore how they perceive the text. This helps students develop their ability to analyse texts critically, which is one of the main goals of teaching critical literacy. Throughout the teaching and learning process, the teacher poses a number of important questions related to critical literacy proposed by some scholars (Abdenia, 2015; Alford, 2021; Govender, 2019; Huang, 2011a; Kuo, 2014). Posing a question encourages students to consider what they should focus on and provides an opportunity for them to voice any critical thoughts. A number of EFL researchers assert that constructive outcomes can be obtained through discussion and critical response writing in journals, papers, and essays (Huang, 2011a; Izadinia & Abednia, 2010; Park, 2011). These kinds of exercises help students develop their critical awareness.

Therefore, the objectives of this research is to develop language learning tools through the four dimensions model of critical literacy pedagogy to uncover power, domination, and social system in text. Critical questions may enhance students' ability to be critical learners, which is crucial for their ability to behave responsibly in social situations.

Methodology

The method of the research is a case study since it produces an in-depth, multifaceted understanding of a complex problem in the actual setting. A case study examines the unique features and

complexities of a single instance, gaining insight into its actions within significant contexts (Stake, 1995, p. xi). Creswell and Creswell (2018, chap. 1, par. 21) added that a case study is an investigative technique wherein a researcher explores deeply into a program, event, activity, procedure, or one or more people. The object of the research will be taken from the Advanced Reading class of English Literature Study Program at Universitas AKI 2023/2024 academic year. The consideration of the chosen object is Advanced Reading class explores more to the written text, as the main source of critical literacy.

The methods of data collection are observation and artefacts. Observation is the systematic noting and recording of firsthand information. These observations can take the form of events, behaviours, and objects. In this study, the researcher also takes the role as the class teacher during the participatory observation. Artefacts in this study refer to any written works that were produced during instructions either in class (worksheets and discussion notes) or out of class (assignments). The documents, then, can also be referred to as class artefacts. The data to search in these documents included students' answers to questions. students' questions, and summaries/reviews. The method of data analysis examines the data by getting an explanation of students' responses to questions or students' reasons for asking certain questions and students' artefacts that indicate their engagement in critical literacy.

Finding Critical Questions of the Four Dimensions Model

Throwing critical questions within class discussion will be one of teaching method in the four dimensions model of critical literacy pedagogy. To encourage student involvement, the teacher asks a simple question to students related to debatable and interesting topic such as beauty contest. The teacher leads students

to the stereotype discussion by showing an ads or picture performing Miss Pageant competition from a website because the topic is authentic material. This preliminary step leads to the more complex questions that will emerge in the students' critical thinking awareness. Teacher asks students to share what they think about the competition such as "what do you know about the competition?", "why are the candidates beautiful, tall, and slim woman?", or "is it common that the beauty standard are beautiful, tall, and slim?" After this warmup activity, the teacher asks students to discuss further to explore their critical awareness related to beauty standard.

For the main activity, teacher show the controversial topic by shaping students' engagement in the four dimensions framework by posing some questions. The examples of disrupting the commonplace as the 1st dimension in critical literacy are: "how are they trying to position X?", "which party is viewed more important than others?", or "do you think that X is common phenomena in the society?" In multiple viewpoints considering questions such as "whose voice are heard?", "whose voice are missing?", or "can you identify different perspective?" may put readers to stand on the other's position and actively seeking out the marginalized voices, analysing opposing narratives, and crafting counter narratives. The 3rd dimension, focusing on the sociopolitical system, can be explored further by asking questions such as "how could the unequal power relationships happen?", include "does activity create opportunities for subordinate group(s) participation?", or "can you find power of the author in his/her text?". Taking action is the ultimate goal of critical literacy that use the language to exercise power to improve everyday life, to challenge practices of privilege and injustice, and to promote social justice can be represented in questions like "what action will you take

based on the text you have learnt?" or "do you move from spectator to actor roles?"

Disrupting the commonplace

Teacher invites students to discuss the common view of beauty standard since Beauty Pageant is an event where a number of women in a certain age range compete with each other to win the title of beauty queen by showing their physical beauty, modelling skills, talent, intelligence and social spirit. Students disrupt the usual phenomena in the social life about beauty standard by expressing their opinion. For example:

- Miss Universe finalists should have a distinct focus. current common knowledge, and the ability to teach others about different cultures and customs. It was believed that women's beauty was not limited to outward appearances; rather, it encompassed an dynamic, and passionate intense, discourse on "Inner Beauty." The idea behind the proposition is that women should be brave and strong, able to serve as role models for others and exhibit love and caring.
- We shouldn't be concerned much of that Everyone various standard. from countries has their own beauty standards, but my perspective on a woman's beauty standard is not only what looks like a perfect physique. So, it important to make everyone understand that beauty is be yourself and accept yourself, understanding that the concept of beauty is diverse. And most importantly, love yourself and accept yourself must also be kept in the mind.
- A person's self-quality cannot be judged solely based on subjective standards such as physical appearance alone. Moreover, there have been many studies that show there is no relationship between physical appearance and a person's competence and performance.

Critical literacy involves questioning natural or common beliefs in order to problematize all subjects of study and understand existing knowledge as a historical product. This process is known as disrupting the commonplace. Students can view the world through new lenses, recognizing that women are valued for their intelligence and ability to positively influence others rather than for their "beauty standard".

Considering multiple viewpoints

This 2nd aspect of critical literacy is taking into account multiple points of view, which requires readers to actively seek out marginalized voices, analyse opposing narratives, and create counter-narratives. Critical question such as "do you have contradictive perspectives of beauty standard?" will be student's consideration to view certain case not only from his/her point of views, but learner should examine other way of thinking.

- Miss Universe not only judges contestants on their looks, but also examines how well they speak, and their personality. They're also starting to care more about what contestants stand for and their impact on society.
- I think, the standard for women participating in pageants can vary as the example in the text. Even though you are transgender or have lots of moles you can still have a chance to join the pageants, but traditionally they have been expected to embody ideals of physical beauty, confidence, intelligence, talent, and charisma.
- In pageants, women should have that kind of standard. However, apart from that standard, women can also become contestants even though it is quite difficult.
- In my opinion, beauty is not only about physical appearance but also related to behaviour and attitude. Outer beauty and inner beauty must be going together and should be balanced.

Another critical question is "whose physical appearance of the pageant are missing?" Their responses such as "those who are not part of the list of traditional beauty standard" and "women who don't fit the usual beauty standard (like those with

disabilities or different body types) aren't seen as much." represent the students understanding that they should consider other point of view in certain case. Students can also get the reference that against the beauty standard by giving an example such as "Winnie Harlow's achievements in fashion shows that she is valued just as much, although not meeting traditional beauty standards with her vitiligo" and "in 2012, transgender model Jenna Talackova made history by being the 1st trans gender who compete in the Miss Universe Canada pageant. Talackova didn't win the title, but she did finish among the top 12, CNN reported".

Focusing on Socio-political Issues

The 3rd dimension, focusing on the socio-political system, aims to redefine literacy as a form of cultural citizenship and politics, question the unquestionable legitimacy of unequal power relations by examining the relationship between language and power, and use literacy to engage in day-to-day politics. Such question like "what language that shapes the identity of the pageant?" will lead learners to find the power of one party against another. The phrases showing the domination are:

- Words like "beauty", "grace", and "intelligence" are often used to describe what the pageant stands for.
- Beauty in the pageant world is based on a bikini-ready body, healthy hair and flawless skin. The Beauty Pageant is a forum that shapes people's perceptions and opinions that beauty must be white, tall, slim, sharp, smart, and other things that can be said to make a perfect woman.
- Pageants have taught us that beauty in the pageant world is based on a bikiniready body, healthy hair and flawless

In socio-political system, learners can identify the social system in our society that put beautiful women get higher position than others.

- The social system may emphasise on physical beauty as a marker of status, desirability and success, potentially contributing to the perception of beautiful women having advantages or privilege over other.
- The social system always puts beautiful women who are good looking always in a higher position, even in finding a job a candidate must good look as one of the criteria that companies are looking for to be accepted. However, ordinary people can also be in the higher position when they have advantages in terms of competence, knowledge, and skills, so beauty is not a reference for being in the higher position.
- Yes, often society gives more attention and better opportunities to people who are considered beautiful.
- Beautiful women often find it easier to get a job, have smooth career advancement and higher salaries compared to women who are considered less attractive in appearance.

In this dimension, students revisit the notion that education is an impartial activity and discover that it has the potential to discriminate against certain groups. As a result, literacy and social and political ideas shouldn't be taught in isolation. One strategy to question power dynamics is to read critical literature.

Taking Action

The 4th dimensions, or the ultimate objective of critical literacy is taking action. It involves confront privileged and unfair practices, and advance social justice. This dimension is the supreme aims to learn critical literacy in which students take an action based on the text they have read or based on the world they have observed in their daily life. Questions like "do you have any experience to fight the standard?" explore the students' experience against the common things.

 Having tan skin makes a comparison with women who have white skin, because in Indonesia one of the beauty standards has white skin like oriental

- Asian women. So I went against beauty standard by increasing my confidence and courage to fight completely unrealistic beauty standard.
- To show that we are valued beyond the beauty standards is by showing our talents, intelligence, kindness, accomplishments, characters, and contributions to society. As a good example, if I have knowledge and have a deep understanding of that knowledge, I will share it and it can be useful for others in need, so that I will be considered as a woman without regard to existing standards.

Students also learn that the method of reading teaching that explore more about the authentic material related to the real life and asking critical question nourishes their critical awareness.

- I learned that beauty is not everything, to be beautiful and be recognized as beautiful is not always just from physical appearance, but there are other aspects that are more important so that a woman is beautiful as she is.
- Change beauty standards to include everyone.
- It is importance to recognizing and challenging narrow, unrealistic and exclusionary beauty ideals. Embracing diversity, promoting self-acceptance, advocating inclusivity, celebrating and uniqueness can help reshape perceptions of beauty.

Discussion

From Traditional to Revolutionary Reading

When we discuss power, ideology, and dominance, all have been connected to critical literacy pedagogy. Critical literacy with the four dimensions model is the ability that assists information seekers in understanding texts critically and analytically that empowers them to read texts from various points of view, change perspectives that are commonly used, focus

on socio-political issues, take action on texts that have been read, and discover their own voice and ethical responsibility to improve the world. When we can read and write critically, we examine our ongoing development and reveal the subjective positions in which we understand and act in the world. So far, the teaching method of text/reading subject asks conventional questions such as the topic of the text, the similar meaning of the vocabularies, the reference to the text, and so on and so forth. To implement the new method of teaching as the requirement for twenty first-century skills, providing critical questions to students is a teaching pedagogy that mixes between the traditional and critical text since so far the reading instruction in our curriculum is still focused on a traditional reading method. The new approach is in line with the findings of Hoesny and Darmayanti (2021, p. 123) who stated that the teacher's job is to facilitate learning by creating a flexible strategy, an open assessment model, and other engaging activities for students. They must also be open to receiving criticism from students in order to foster an environment of creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, communication during the learning process. Iyer (2010, p. 4425) provided more supporting research, arguing that most teachers find it difficult to teach critical literacy because it requires a shift from a traditional text-based pedagogy to one that prioritizes a student-centred approach. Teachers indicate a wish to move toward strengthening critical thinking as significant in teaching and across the curriculum with the new learning style that centres critical thinking.

Since the traditional method of teaching reading is still implemented in the majority of educational institutions, teachers are unable to directly teach students critical reading as the new method of reading, but they may begin to combine both. To emerge critical thinking awareness, the teacher provides short and simple text of critical literacy to initiate

reading text critically for example advertisements or news taken from websites. Ads or news are considered to be chosen data because usually it consists of a few sentences only, and it is a simple text. According to Kuo (2014, pp.129-131)'s research, this new approach can be used gradually. So the chosen text can be started gradually from the simple text to more advance text.

In teaching critical literacy. educators should teach flexibility in order students can think critically analytically. So, the sources that are taken as data are authentic material, for example beauty standard topic, since it relates to students' daily life. Focusing on authentic material—words found on TV, mailboxes, billboards, cafeteria menus, clothing labels, etc.—or popular texts in the classroom such as gestures, attire, and accessories like personal technology is a trend in critical literacy curricula and pedagogy (Vasquez, 2004, as cited in Johnson & Vasudevan, 2012, p. 34).

Asking critical question may trigger to be the critical learner. Discussion around the definition of critical literacy-oriented will not leave behind the questioning. This key component has been part of nearly any studies on critical literacy implementation but has not been internalized at the core of the teaching. Since the traditional method of teaching reading is still implemented in the majority of educational institutions, teachers are unable to directly teach students critical reading as the new method of reading, but they may begin to familiarizing students with critical literacy, for example a two-side coin/money as a warm-up activity. Invite students to share what they think about describing money, such as "why do I ask you to do this?", "what do you learn from this?", or "why do I show different coin/money for each group?" Asking critical questions to raise students' critical awareness is in line with several academic studies (Abdenia, 2015; Alford, 2021; Govender, 2019; Huang, 2011a; Kuo, 2014). Posing a question

encourages students to consider what they should focus on and provides an opportunity for them to voice any critical thoughts.

The implementation of the four dimensions model proposed by Lewison et al. in this study is relevant with a study carried out using the model. Gustine (2014, pp. 203-204) investigated the planning and execution of critical literacy in an Indonesian secondary school through an action research project involving 39 students and an English teacher. Teaching critical literacy in an EFL class is promising, despite certain obstacles and constraints. According to the research, critical literacy pedagogy assisted teachers in switching from a "banking" approach to "critical pedagogy", which shapes learners into more socially conscious, tolerant, and critical thinkers.

The way how students can observe other points of view relates to Kuo's (2014, pp.129-131) research asserted that critical literacy instruction can enhance rather than replace traditional education incorporating personal concerns and identities into the ELT curriculum. This will motivate students to use English as a tool for research and self-expression. It is not possible to apply critical literacy immediately without first developing traditional abilities. The usefulness of critical literacy instruction, he added, is seen at "critical moments" when learners have differing viewpoints on a shared experience. Kuo's study which promotes multi-perspective thinking, is an important component. This study also supports Lie's (2010, p. 390) assertion that students who are multilingual and from varied cultural backgrounds can develop critical thinking skills by using the critical literacy educational framework to examine their multiple identities. The topic of power in the text and speech is starting to be considered, questioned, and challenged by the learner.

The final objectives of critical literacy is students' social awareness in

their daily life. By asking critical question to students, it aims that they take action after reading the text critically. The students acted out the dual roles of language learners and social agents when engaging in critical literacy tasks (Kuo, 2014, pp.129-131). Another example of critical language awareness is elementary school kids in a lower-to middle-class, mostly white town in a tiny American intermountain that willing to take action, such as creating a petition for a gender justice agenda, in order to create a supportive school climate (Lee, 2017, p. 211).

Conclusion

Critical literacy is a teaching approach that involves reading the word and the world to encourage students to think critically, solve problems, and take action in their social environments. Its goal is to improve students' critical language awareness. The four dimensions model is one critical literacy approach. Disrupting the commonplace, considering the various point of view, concentrating on sociopolitical concerns, and acting are the dimensions. The dimensions move from revolutionary traditional to teaching method, such as asking conventional critical questions questions to prioritizes a student-centred approach, teaching flexibility in order students can think critically and analytically by using authentic material, and gradually teaching from simple to advance text. Asking thoughtful questions can help learners develop their critical awareness, which are essential for acting appropriately in social settings. The way how students can observe other points of view, how they explore the social system, and how learners do an act after reading the text are the major aims in the four dimensions model in critical literacy pedagogy.

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