

APPRAISAL AND NEWSPAPER IN EFL CRITICAL READING CLASS

Ribut Surjowati
English Department
Faculty of Language and Science Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University
Surabaya-Indonesia
Surjowati88@gmail.com

Abstract - This research attempts to present the collaboration of appraisal theory and newspaper, to practice the students to read the text critically and to find out the students' mastery in critical reading after appraisal theory and newspaper were implemented in their class. There were 19 students as the subjects of the research. The test was constructed based on Davine's five categories of critical thinking which are the students had to recognize the writer's purpose (1 item), note special point of view (2 items), evaluate of the writer's choice of language (1 item), evaluate the writer's argument (1 item), and evaluate inferences (1 item). The result shows that in the implementation of teaching critical reading to the fifth semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University, several steps were implemented including the preparation, presentation, and evaluation. It was done correctly except in pre activities, the lecturer did not tell the students the objective of the study. Meanwhile, the result of the statistic calculation says that the average score the students achieved was 58,15 which are categorized into poor skill. This means that the average score of critical reading class shows the students' ability to criticize the text is still low.

Key words: appraisal, critical reading, newspaper, critical thinking

I. INTRODUCTION

In real life, readers are largely exposed to written language, which are very often biased due to the complexity of the news institution or simply because of the writer's subjectivity, immaturity or limited ability. It is very important for the readers to realize that what they read must be written from a particular perspective, assumption, value and ideology; thus, it inevitably contains subjective opinion, value, attitude and ideology, which are implicitly or explicitly recorded. For this reason, readers need not only the fundamental ability to comprehend well, but also need to possess the ability to develop critical sense, a means of judging the worth of what being read (Milan, 1983:185).

So far, the students have just practised to comprehend the text only without trying to criticize it. As a result, they never grasp the texts author's goal represented in the lexical choice and grammatical structure they employ. To the **critical** reader, any single text provides but one portrayal of the facts, one

individual's "take" on the subject matter. Critical readers thus recognize not only *what* a text says, but also *how* that text portrays the subject matter. They recognize the various ways in which each and every text is the unique creation of a unique author (Kurland, 2000) and most students have difficulty in interpreting the message from the texts. Therefore, it is very important for lecturers to improve the Reading teaching method and develop some interesting and callenging reading materials.

The use of newspaper is popularly used in Critical Reading class for some pluses if it is used because newspapers have some characteristics, which enhance the purpose of critical Reading. Unlike textbooks, which are several years outdated by the time they get into students' hands, the newspaper comes alive with information. The newspaper expands the curriculum with an unlimited amount of information to use as background for learning activities (Newspaper Association of America Foundation, 2007). In newspapers, events that take place out there in the real world are expressed through the linguistics choices that reporters and editorials make. It is the effective reading material of enhancing students's ability to dig the writer's message from the news they report. Furthermore, Fowler (1996) says that language of the news is never neutral and articles within newspapers must be regarded as constructed stories told from particular point of view because it is pointed out that the language of the media has a role to represent and shape the society's values and opinions. In this case, the newspapers construction helps the students think critically because the students' critical reading will be best achieved if the right teaching media is used.

To help students reveal the message and the writers' attitude from the newspaper articles, lecturers must use a tool precisely. Appraisal theory which was put forward by James Martin at the beginning of 1990s is an extension of M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. It provides an analytical tool to better understand the issues associated with evaluative resources and the negotiation of intersubjective positions, and open a new area of interpersonal

meaning. There are three dimensions to an appraisal analysis: 1) *Attitude*, *Graduation* and *Engagement*. Instead choosing those three dimensions, the lecturer may use one such as the *attitude*. The *attitude* is the sub-system of *Appraisal* theory that, on the whole, covers feelings. The feelings meant here are the feelings that are either explicitly stated or implicitly stated. The implicit feelings – technically called inscribed attitude – are the feelings that are clear enough to be seen without employing interpretation. The second sub-category of Attitude, is used to evaluate ‘what people do, say or believe according to institutional values’ (Droga & Humphrey, 2002:79, Martin & Rose, 2003). Like affect, judgment can also be positive or negative. Unlike affect, however, judgment is attributed to the person being appraised rather than towards the appraiser (ibid).

Furthermore, based on the process of critical reading proposed by Devine (1981:103-110), the questions that can enhance students’ critical reading are categorized into some inter-related parts: 1) recognizing the writer’s purpose. Devine (1981:103) and Heilman, Blair & Rupley (1981:292) say that an author may also have “hidden” purpose. Readers need to be aware of the possibility if the writer has a secret reason or controlling motive behind his article. They should also be conscious of the main points the writer tries to get across him. 2) noting special points of view. The readers also need to be able to distinguish between factual statements and statements expressing opinions, feelings and preferences (Devine (1981:110) and Heilman, Blair & Rupley (1981:292). 3) Being aware of the writer’s choice of language, evaluating the writer’s argument, and evaluating inferences. It is a fact that some words carry emotional “charge” (Devine, 1981, Goatly, 2000). Certain words may sound favorable while others are unfavorable. This is because those particular words have emotive “spin”, meaning that they share the same conceptual meaning but differing in emotive meaning. These words can spin positively, neutrally and negatively (example: slim, thin, and skinny). 4) Evaluating the Writer’s Argument. All writers make assertion or argument which force the readers to accept as true. . Hardcastle (1995) explains that an argument has two essential parts: a claim and support. The readers must check whether the support is appropriate to the claim and whether the statements are consistent with one another in order to determine if an argument is acceptable. 5) Evaluating Inferences. Readers must also have critical attitude toward the inferences made by the writer (Devine, 1981:110). They should critically question themselves whenever they feel their attitudes, beliefs and status are challenged (Hardcastle, 1995:1).

This research attempts to describe the implementation of appraisal theory and newspaper, to practice the students to read the text critically and therefore understand the message behind the text easier.

This research is also finding out the students’ mastery in critical reading after using newspaper as the media and appraisal system as the tool for analyzing the text.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is the collaboration between education qualitative research and quantitative research since this research was examining the implementation of newspaper and appraisal theory in the classroom and the students’ achievement in this critical reading subject. Regarding to the purposes above, the research instruments were the observation check list and students’ test result.

The group of subject of this research was the fifth semester students of English Department, Class C. There were 19 students who took Critical reading subject. These subjects did some reading test after the newspaper and appraisal theory were implemented in critical reading class.

To answer the research question 1, the data were collected from the observation and interview. While to answer the second research question, the data were collected from the students’ test result after they learnt criticizing editorials using appraisal devices.

The observations were done twice, the first one was to collect the information of the process in presenting this new media and technique while the second one was done to get the information about the assessment method.

To examine the students’ achievement in critical reading, the statistical formula was used. Mean calculation as follows;

M = means

ΣX = the sum of students’ score

N = the number of students

III. FINDINGS

The implementation of newspaper and appraisal system in Critical Reading Class

There are three main activities that the lecturer should do before starting handling Critical Reading. It is important to prepare the activities as well as possible in order to establish efficient teaching activities and lead the students the objective of teaching successfully. There steps did by the lecturer were as follows:

Preparation

There are several things that should be noticed before the classroom presentation. In this session, a lecturer should prepare the lesson plan which includes materials, types of assignment and classroom management skills.

a. Material Selection

Two selections were done namely 1) material selection which must be attractive for the students.

In this case, the lecturer chose editorials with the reason that in editorial it is easier for the beginners to examine the writer's attitudes because this kind of text consists mostly of evaluative words which can be evaluated by using appraisal system. 2) topic selection. If the topic is too difficult or not interesting, it will lead to the failure to achieve the goal in critical reading. In other words, the topic must be up to date and have degree of authenticity. On the observation, the selected material at that time, was editorial discussing about the conflict in Syria discussed in Washington Post editorial with the title *The Washington Times Editorial: Forcing Regime Change in Syria*.

b. Assignment Determination

For the assignment, lecturer provided the students with the editorials and gave them few questions related to the issues discussed. There were five questions prepared for them which include recognizing unstated purpose of the writer, identifying irrelevant information, identifying the writer's opinion, identifying the writer's tone, evaluating the writer's argument, and recognizing the writer's conclusion and giving opinion.

c. Classroom management skills

A well managed classroom will be able to motivate the students to learn (Kedir AT, 2005:22). At the time when the class was observed, the lecturer asked the students to form groups of 4-5. In this way, the lecturer expected better output from the class. The difficulty was minimized, because each student helped each other within groups.

Presentation

Pre-activities

1. Explaining the appraisal devices to the student because they would be used for the analysis
2. Introducing the students with the editorial *The Washington Post* to analyze the writer's ideology.
3. Introducing the students with the topic "*Forcing Regime Change in Syria*" and asked the students to reexamine the issue and the setting of conflict
4. Forming Group Work; the students were divided into 5 groups consisting 4 students each.
5. Distributing the newspaper to each groups

Main activities

After the students sat in groups, the lecturer began distributing some questions to the students. After the activities were completed, the students and lecturer then discussed the answers together. In this stage, each group is responsible for presenting their argumentation from one or two questions. The students were given 30 minutes to answer all the questions individually and

then discussed the answer with the other students. In this session, the lecturer did not take the students' mark. The exercise was just used to convince them that they have understood the way of analyzing the text critically.

Evaluation

The evaluation was given at the next meeting after the students did exercise and had communicated their problems with the students.

The student's Mastery in Reading Critically Using Newspaper and Appraisal Theory

After collecting the data from 19 students of the fifth semester as the subject of this research, the researcher took same steps to process the data of critical reading test. Below are the result of the test based on the Davine's criteria system. Firstly, based on the graph in the editorial writer's unstated purpose, the students are categorized to have poor skill because mean of this point is, 13,42 and the modus here is 20. The score above shows that most of the students still have difficulty in obtaining the editorial writer's purpose. Secondly, based on the graph about the irrelevant information which the students can grasp from the text, the students are categorized to have poor skill because mean of this point 8,3 and the modus here is 10. Most of the students get 10 score. Thirdly, based on the graph showing the students' competence in grasping the editorial writer's opinion from the language choice, they are categorized to have poor skill because the mean is 7,7 although most of the students get 10 score. Fourthly, the students' ability to find the editorial writer's tone is poor, since the mean is only 11,32 while the scores which are in high frequency are 10. Fifthly, from the writer's argument point of view, the students' level is poor. The students who get 5 is the biggest number. The mean of this point is 7,2. Lastly, the students' ability to evaluate the conclusion is poor. Although most them get 20 score, the mean calculation shows 14,2 which means performed poor skill. And the Mean = 58,15 (performed poor skill). This means that the average score of critical reading class shows the students ability to criticize the text is still low

IV. DISCUSSION

This research was done to answer the question of how the students' mastery in critical reading by using newspaper and appraisal theory and to examine the implementation of teaching critical reading using newspaper and appraisal theory.

The answer of the first question can be seen in the graphs 4.1-4.7 which illustrate the students' critical reading ability judging from their ability to deal with the six types of questions, while another graph is showing the average of students' ability in criticizing the text.

Precisely, in acknowledging the editorial writer's purpose, the irrelevant information, the writer's opinion, the writer's tone, the writer's argument and the writer's conclusion, the students are categorized as having performance poor skill which means that they still cannot comprehend and criticize the text well. The possible cause can be their ability to use the appraisal devices is not maximum since this theory is still new for them and the vocabulary used in the text is too difficult for them.

Examining the implementation of this media and theory in critical reading class, the researcher finds that the implementation is on the right path although there is one missing activity such as telling the objective of the study to the students. It is important for them because by telling the objectives the students will know the purpose of the discussion. Over all, the lecturer has implemented some activities supporting the interesting atmosphere of learning how to criticize the text

V. CONCLUSION

From the findings and analysis, the researchers conclude that the implementation of teaching critical reading to the fifth semester students of English Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University is done in several steps which include the preparation, presentation, and evaluation. In the preparation, the lecturer selected the topic for discussion, decided the type of assignment and classroom management. In this session, the objective of the study was not delivered by the lecturer. In presentation session, the lecturer started to apply the real activity of teaching critical reading started from reminding the students to appraisal theory, discussing the text and exercising. Finally the evaluation is given a week after the meeting to let the students have more time to read the text.

The result of the statistic calculation say that the average score the students achieved was 58,15 which are categorized into poor skill.

REFERENCES

- [1] Devine, T G. *Teaching Study Skills: A Guide for Lecturers*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1981
- [2] Droga & Humphrey. *Getting Started with Functional Grammar*. New South Wales: Target Texts, 2002
- [3] Fowler, R. *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London: Routledge, 1996
- [4] Goatly, A. *The Language of Metaphors*. London: Routledge, 2000
- [5] Hardcastle, A. Creative and Critical Thinking in Language Classrooms. *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 6, June 2000. <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/CriticalThinking.html>
- [6] Kurland, D. 2000. *What is Critical Reading?* Download in Februari 2013 in <http://www.criticalreading.com/criticalreading.html>.
- [7] Milan, D. *Developing Reading Skills*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991
- [8] Martin, J.R & Rose, D. *Working with Discourse: meaning Beyond the Clause*. London: Continuum, 2003
- [9] Newspaper Association of America Foundation. 2005. *Newspaper in Education*. Download in February, 2013 in <http://media.gatewaync.com/cit/NIE.Page/HowtoUseTheNewspaperintheClassroom.pdf>. el. *Instructional Development for Training Lecturers of Exceptional Children*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.