

Critical Language Awareness Development: A Pedagogical and Identity Engagement

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Abstract— This paper aims investigating the engagement of critical language awareness in pedagogical context and how it can develop student's identity. As every day students contact new-varied language and culture products from social media, these may contain ideologies, values, and cultures that are foreign to students. Students need to understand the linguistic features beyond the discourse since behind every text there is ideological goal that may unconsciously influence student identity and it can be evaluate through critical language awareness. Critical language awareness itself is an approach in applied linguistics and language pedagogy which helps students understand language function and the way language works. Critical language awareness focuses on how language represents the world and social construction. It is in line with one of language function, to shape speaker's identity - in this case, the students. Students may display their identity through how they write and speak. Critical language awareness makes students understand their own language. Critical language awareness cannot be directly taught through the textbooks, but rather, the students build awareness by themselves. Nevertheless, the teacher can ease it through linguistic learning activities. Those linguistic learning activities can also sharpened student's identity.

Keywords—critical language awareness, pedagogy, identity

I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of disruption, realtime informations are developing so fast where the flow of information received is also unlimited as well. Everyone can be a source of information and discourse; he also can be the person who spreading it. Therefore everyone should know the information and whatever behind those informations well. The received discourse has a purpose behind the existing text whose existence is not always realized by the reader. In addition, openness and ease in exchanging discourse also allow a person to be a source of disseminated discourse. As a result, a discourse can be easily disseminated to various parties. In this case caution is needed by both the producers of discourse and users. Students as one of the consumers who are closest to the media and information,

need to be equipped with an awareness of the language used, both by others and themselves.

One effort that can be used as an antidote is critical language awareness. Critical language awareness is an active and critical awareness so that the language user is aware of the language function being conveyed. During this time, the practice of linguistics in the field, especially in learning and teaching has not succeeded in inserting critical language awareness into the Indonesian Language curriculum in schools. This is proven by limited source about critical language awareness activity in the classroom. Nevertheless, Indonesian in the latest curriculum is designed to help students develop the language competencies needed in real life (Kemendikbud, 2017). This has been a good start for learning that involves the study of critical language in the hope that it will equip language learners to understand things that happen outside students.

Critical language awareness as part of language education teaches students how to analyze the language used by themselves and others. Therefore, critical language awareness is not only to be mastered by Indonesian language teachers. It also needs to be mastered by other subject teachers. This certainly requires theory, practice, and knowledge development so that there can be an increase in awareness of critical language in a professional manner.

Critical language awareness is the initial process that forms the basis of critical discourse analysis. Good critical language awareness will prevent language users from things that have the potential to cause noise over the expression of the language used by it. The lack awareness of critical language can cause problems. One of its current example was when one of the officials in Indonesia delivered a sentence about earthquake victims from one region in east Indonesia. He said that the population should return home because if they remain in refugee camps it will add to the burden on the government (Kompas, 2019). Although the official finally delivered an apology, the statement had caused a reaction from the

community concerned. It shows how critical language awareness is needed in daily basis, especially at this time Indonesia is facing a high sensitivity of SARA in the community where if such a thing is not controlled, it is feared that it will lead to SARA conflicts that threaten the integrity of the nation.

This study aimed to see how critical language awareness engages in pedagogical context. It can be seen through activities that can be done by both teachers and students to improve their critical language awareness. This study also aimed to see how critical language awareness in the classroom can affect students identity. This paper discusses at the level of the idea of the relationship between critical language awareness and language teaching and the formation of language learners' identities. This article use library research method to explores the role of critical language awareness, especially in relation to education and identity.

II. CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS AND PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXT

A. *Critical Language Awareness in Language Classroom: Previous Study and Future*

In terms of education, Indonesian language functioned as the facilitator of science. It means every school subject and material is delivered in Indonesian language. Therefore, Indonesian language must be mastered, not only by Indonesian language teachers, but also by other subject teachers (Andangjaya, 2016). Thus, it is hoped that all teachers can participate in correcting students' language errors. Of course this cannot be done without the mastery of language awareness by the teacher.

Previous study of critical language awareness have been carried out by Hwia (2008) who discuss the analysis of critical discourse and critical language studies in BIPA teaching. In his study, Hwia used the term critical language studies to refer to linguistic rules and practices that are often not realized. Thus the study of critical language is meant more on the awareness of critical language. The study emphasizes AWK thinking in relation to the study of critical languages in teaching a foreign language.

Other critical language awareness studies were delivered by Sayuti, Swatikasari, & Lestyarini (2011). The title of their article was *Critical Language Awareness Reception in Fiction Writing Activities by Teachers and Students*. Research conducted on teachers and high school students throughout Yogyakarta Special Region shows that the reception of critical language awareness of teachers and students in writing fiction is reflected in both the process and the results. It also found teachers are still less than optimal in developing methods, using media, and choosing assessment systems in learning writing fiction. Most of the students' work also has not revealed the importance of language strength and self-position.

Another study on critical language awareness was also done by Santoso (2015), who stated that the critical discourse (and its part) was seen as an important thing to be developed in teaching Indonesian in order to achieve critical language awareness. Critical language awareness is expected to lead to the emergence

of user sensitivity to the use of language in various contexts. In the article, Santoso (2015) revealed the study of critical discourse analysis as a vehicle to achieve the development of critical language awareness. The article emphasizes how critical discourse studies are viewed in terms of emancipation so as to develop critical language awareness.

The difference between this article and the study by Santoso lies on different points of view. Santoso's article (2015) was written from the side of emancipation, namely in terms of how a society has freedom as a member of society from linguistic colonization. Meanwhile, this article was written from the perspective of the formation of critical language awareness in terms of the relationship between the education side and the formation of identity. In the article, the author explores the role of critical language awareness, especially in relation to education and identity formation. The teaching of the Indonesian language which functions as a attractor of knowledge should be developed on the basis of the study of critical discourse so as to raise critical language awareness.

Social changes that are currently happening put language as one of the prerequisites for effective state life (Fairclough, 2006; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2007). Critical language awareness is the basis of education because it forms the basis for critical discourse analysis and can be a source of survival in applicable ways of living. Besides, critical language awareness enables language learners to have a sensitivity to the use of language in diverse contexts.

Critical language awareness is the initial foundation for the development of the practice of critical discourse analysis or other critical studies in the classes (Taylor, Despagne, & Faez, 2017). Awareness is a product of linguistic phenomena or the phenomenon of discernment that either in general or specifically can reflect certain behaviors that can be identified through the linguistic features used.

Critical discourse analysis is used to raise awareness of critical language. Critical language awareness is different from language awareness. Language awareness is a concept that is only limited to knowledge of language (Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič, & Martin - Jones, 1991). Meanwhile, critical language awareness seeks to bring learners to aspects of language use in the invisible social environment. Even critical language awareness can involve self-identity which needs to be made aware and built through education.

B. *Critical Language Awareness in The Classroom Practice*

Critical language awareness is the initial foundation for the practice of critical discourse analysis or other critical studies in the classes development (Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič, & Martin - Jones, 1991). Consciousness is a product of linguistic phenomena or discernment in general or specific phenomenon that can reflect certain behaviors identified through the use of linguistic features. Critical discourse analysis is used to raise awareness of critical language. Critical language awareness is different from language awareness. Language awareness is a concept that is only limited to knowledge of language. Meanwhile, critical language awareness seeks to bring learners to aspects of language use in the invisible social environment

(Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič, & Martin-Jones, 1991). Furthermore, critical language awareness can involve self-identity which can be built through education.

In the context of education, critical language awareness is formed and developed from language skills that are already possessed and from students' experiences (Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič, & Martin-Jones, 1991) include:

- Students identified the implied meaning of what they are able to do. They also identified their experiences in meeting obstacles from what they do.
- Teachers offer students (provide alternatives to students about things they might be able to do) to structure their own experiences and label themselves on their knowledge.
- The knowledge; it is the object of understanding so students can be more aware of social factors in discourse

Those activities can be done by teachers who collaborate with linguists or language practitioners to bring those activities to the classroom. The teacher must first know the theory, practice, and construction of knowledge from critical language awareness. For the initial step, research is needed on how the condition of critical language awareness of teachers. Afterwards, language researchers can design experiments to increase critical language awareness in teachers through a series of activities and find out the changes made through qualitative descriptions. Researchers can find out the changes in language production delivered by the teacher. It is hoped that teachers and students can be more critical in understanding texts that are produced and produced.

When studying a material, especially written material, students not only find out about what information is conveyed, but also about how the information is conveyed. In the future, efforts to increase critical language awareness by teachers can be initiated with the delivery of language theory and tools to analyze the conversation and meaning behind the choice of language used in learning (Carpenter, 2015). Discussion about the representation, orientation, and organization of the construction of a text can be done to find out the perspective, bias, and explanation.

Based on research conducted by Carpenter, et. al. (2015) increasing the ability to reflect on what and how to understand the meaning of a text requires a different understanding of the origin of the formation of meaning. In addition, it also requires an in-depth understanding related to the practice of literacy that is relevant and allows for a variety of disciplines, for example regarding text analysis, text production, and others.

There are three aspects that need to be considered in an effort to integrate critical language awareness in the design of an educational curriculum (Clark, 1991), namely: social awareness about a discourse, critical awareness of diversity, and awareness and practice of change. Social awareness about a discourse is related to oral and written discourse that is formed and shapes the social context that exists in society. In addition, the social awareness of discourse also relates to how examples of discourse can influence the relationship between power and domination and how it contributes to the reproduction of power

or the transformation of power. Social awareness about discourse also relates to how the selection of linguistics used by the author can give significantly different meanings in a social discourse.

The second aspect that must be integrated is critical awareness of pluralism (Janks, 1999). This aspect is related to the answer to the question why some languages or language variations are considered to have more value than other languages or language variations and are seen as more appropriate and prestigious languages for certain interests. This aspect also relates to how language variations including language standards currently exist in society.

The third aspect is about awareness and practices of change (Janks, 1999). In this aspect it can be developed how changes in existing languages can result in social change and change existing power relations. This aspect also looks at the possibilities that arise as substitutes under certain conditions and what is forced on the changes that occur. The third thing is about how useful language practices are for bringing about change.

III. CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS AND IDENTITY

At a certain point, critical language awareness is related to identity and identity formation (Fairclough, 2010). A person's identity is not something that necessarily exists, but is formed through a series.

To bridge the realization of critical language awareness and the unfolding of identity in students writing, the chosen topic should be topics that meet the following criteria (Janks, 1999), a) involve discussion about the family and identification that exists at social origins and students can see themselves as social subjects, b) provide opportunities for students to convey the experiences they have experienced of processes that occur in someone's life.

A. Critical Language Awareness and Identity in Classroom Practice

During learning using the critical language awareness approach, students can construct various identities where those identities can change according to the new discourse they face. One of the studies about the change of students is a study conducted by Janks (1999). Janks (1999) conducted research on the formation and change of identity while participating in learning that involves critical language awareness. The assessment used to find out these changes is by ask students to write a journal periodically for a certain period of time with a variety of different learning themes.

Students are asked to write a journal every time they finish attending a learning activity, after reading, or after watching information on television or in a newspaper. Students are asked to arrange conversations with themselves about what is felt and thought. Students are also asked to be aware of the shift in the way they think. To find out about identity changes that occur,

students can be asked to write a journal with the following criteria (adapted from Janks, 1999):

- Student's ability to choose reading materials
- Student's ability to reflect, feel involved, and ask questions that are read. The ability to read diverse texts with different depths of meaning, depending on the intended reading goals.
- The ability of students to map progress during learning activities (difficulties, experiences experienced, things successfully passed, views, and obstacles that must be faced.
- The ability of students to relate learning to practical needs that are present or that might emerge later.
- The ability of students to apply learning to text outside of learning (newspapers, advertisements, announcements, or conversations).

B. Identity on Students Writing

Based on the results of research by Janks (1999), identities that can be obtained from student journals include:

- Identity as a learner
- Identity as a language user
- Identity as a journal writer
- Identities conflicts written in journals
- Identity under threat
- An identity that does not appear in the journal

Based on the journals written by students, it can be seen how a learning impact on student identity as well as the difficulties faced by students in learning new discourses. The teacher can use the journal to find out the intellectual journey of students. From this intellectual journey, it can be seen that students' tendencies towards issues related to identity include class, race, gender, nationality, sexuality and ethnicity.

IV. CONCLUSION

Critical language awareness is important for students to face this world, not only in academic world, but also in social and professional work. Therefore, critical language awareness should be developed through language learning (especially Indonesian Language). Developing critical language awareness

also has an impact on students identity through their concious processes of reading and writing. Thus, there is strong engagement between critical language awareness, language learning, and student's identity. Both students and teachers can force themselves to pay more attention on what they have read and written and how they will impact or change their own identities. Further work and research by teachers and researchers have to be carried out to propose a better approach in order to make critical language awareness courses more applicable for both teachers and students.

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