



Teachers' Perceptions of the Concept of Critical Literacy Based on Critical Pedagogy in Sorong District

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe teachers' perceptions of the concept of critical literacy based on critical pedagogy in Sorong district. This research is motivated by teachers' understanding which is only limited to the traditional concept of literacy, namely reading and writing. There is still a lack of discussion about literacy as a force for transforming social structures. On the other hand, research on critical literacy is rarely carried out on teachers and is mostly carried out on students, so that student teachers are still in confusion about what the concept of critical literacy is. This research used a qualitative approach, and data were collected using structured interviews using Google forms consisting of 13 types of closed questions and three types of open questions. The respondents were sixty-three teachers in Sorong Regency starting from Kindergarten to High School teachers. The findings showed differences and inconsistencies in respondents' answers and that teachers' perceptions in Sorong Regency regarding the concept of critical literacy are still limited.

Keywords: *Critical literacy, critical pedagogy, perceptions.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The demands of the 21st century have a huge influence in all fields, one of which is education. Apart from that, the demands of the 21st century have also changed teachers' perspectives on learning, changed the nature of work from manual to computer-based, and required teachers to improve literacy competencies, both basic literacy and critical literacy. This development requires teachers to equip students with the importance of being critical in understanding information (Coffey, 2010; Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002).

Dealing with things based on this, critical literacy awareness must be applied at every level of school, to develop students' reading skills through critical attitudes and constructing critical ideas. In line with this, Alwasilah (2001) stated that to develop students' critical literacy, as a medium for minimizing social problems, education must be utilized.

The application of critical literacy should not only be focused on students but also on teachers because currently both teachers and students are all increasingly developing in the technological era which is of course influenced by technological modernization and human civilization. The application of critical literacy will encourage teachers to actively analyze texts and think critically but also allows teachers to produce and design ways to overcome or solve problems (Alwasilah, 2001). Teachers are not only passive consumers in receiving information but can also be active and critical. Critical literacy is expected to be an effective method for turning teachers into a generation of critical literacy who can face and challenge the modernization of information and technology.

Critical literacy is a person's ability to use their potential and skills in processing and understanding information when carrying out reading and writing activities (Morgan, 2002). Through critical literacy skills, a person not only gains

knowledge, but can also use his knowledge and experience as a reference for the future. According to research conducted by Lie et al. (2011), critical literacy is not autonomous, but situated and contextualized. This means that critical literacy does not only look at a text by considering and deciding with personal thoughts, but also looking at the existing socio-cultural context, linked to actual situations and conditions.

Critical literacy asks readers to position themselves to understand the information or problems contained in the text based on their personal point of view and the points of view of other people. This will make readers wiser in responding to the content of the information. One of the factors that influences critical literacy skills is critical thinking skills. According to Cahyana, Kadir, and Gherardini (2017), critical thinking is a directed and clear process used in mental activities such as solving problems, making decisions, persuading, analyzing assumptions, and conducting scientific research. Thus, literacy activities are very important for building a person's critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking is an intellectual thinking process because individuals deliberately assess the quality of information and make decisions by using all these skills effectively in the right context and type as well as in educational, social and political aspects (Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999). This is because critical thinking is understood as self-regulation based on a world view (Facione, 2011) which states critical thinking as self-regulation in deciding something that results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as exposure using evidence, concepts, methodology, criteria, or contextual considerations that form the basis of decision making.

Critical literacy competencies are increasingly emphasized when society moves more dynamically, has increasingly complex needs, thinks more critically, and has higher values. The demands of the human life process require teachers to have critical literacy skills in responding to information, be intelligent in processing information, and be skilled in managing information. This research is motivated by teachers' understanding which is only limited to the traditional concept of literacy, namely reading and writing, then there is still a lack of discussion about literacy as a force for transforming social structures. On the other hand, research on critical literacy is rarely carried out on teachers and is more likely to be carried out on students, so that student teachers are still confused about what the concept of critical literacy is. According to Gustine (2018) and Hidayat, Hidayat, and Umayah (2020), they found that most teachers are still confused about what critical literacy is and how to create a critical class. In fact, in implementing critical-based classes, the starting point is that teachers must have critical literacy to equip students to be critical. Furthermore, according to McDaniel (2006), to create an intelligent and cultured nation, critical literacy must be always applied to teachers as the main 'asset'. Therefore, teachers must have the right beliefs and understanding of critical literacy before implementing it in the classroom. The starting point is that teachers must have critical literacy to equip students to be critical. Furthermore, according to Riyanti (2021), revealed in his article entitled the importance of literacy in improving critical thinking skills, explaining five benefits of critical thinking skills, namely 1) increasing vocabulary knowledge; 2) optimize brain performance; 3) improve verbal abilities; 4) improve one's analytical and thinking abilities; and 5) helps improve a person's focus and concentration. So based on the many benefits, the ability to think critically will provide benefits for a person, namely that it can expand a person's insight to become broader. What is studied in critical literacy, according to Putri (2021), is a variety of skills in asking questions and skills in providing reinforcement for an argument about something.

Based on the explanation above, there is an urgent need to investigate teachers' perceptions of critical literacy. This research also tries to find hopes that teachers can relate to about how they can develop critical literacy-based classrooms based on critical pedagogy.

2. METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques through structured interviews using Google forms which consist of three types of closed questions and three types of open questions. The respondents who participated in this research were sixty-three teachers in Sorong Regency and were not limited to one school level, but all school levels, starting from kindergarten, primary schools, junior high schools, and senior high school teachers. The researchers' reasons for using teachers as respondents included their roles as motivators, facilitators, inspirers, informant, organizers, initiators, demonstrators, mediators, supervisors, and evaluators must have critical literacy competencies to equip students. Therefore, teachers are required to have an understanding and knowledge of critical literacy before implementing it in the classroom. Besides, much critical literacy research tends to be conducted on students and rarely conducted on teachers. In addition, researchers took all levels because the teachers in Sorong district are diverse and diverse and heterogeneous consisting of native Papuans, Maluku, Sulawesi, Javanese and Sumatran people who have lived in Sorong, and some of them were born and raised in Sorong district, so Researchers want to see the perceptions and perspectives of these teachers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings from the Google form results. The findings consist of three types of closed questions and 3 types of open questions as seen in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Types of closed questions

No	Question	Answer	
1.	Do you know the meaning of the concept of literacy?	Yes	No
2.	Do you know the meaning of the concept of critical literacy?	Yes	No
3.	Do you use a critical literacy approach to understand information?	Yes	No

Table 2. Types of open questions

No	Question	Answer
1.	What do you think is meant by the concept of literacy?	Explain
2.	In your opinion, what is meant by the concept of critical literacy?	Explain
3.	In your opinion, how do you understand information critically?	Explain

3.1. Literacy Concept

Based on Figure 1 regarding the meaning of the Literacy Concept, it is known that out of a total of 63 respondents, 57 or 90.5% know about the concept of literacy in general. Meanwhile, 6 respondents or (9.5%) answered that they did not know the concept of literacy.

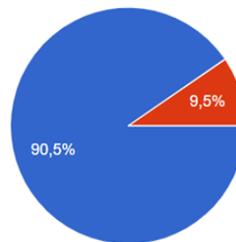


Figure 1 Knowing the concept of literacy.

3.2. Critical Literacy Concepts

Based on Figure 2 regarding understanding the concept of Critical Literacy, it is known that out of a total of 63 respondents, 49 or (77.8%) knew about the concept of critical literacy. Meanwhile, 14 respondents or (22.2%) answered that they did not know the concept of literacy.

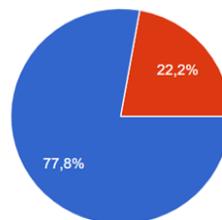


Figure 2 Knowing the concept of critical literacy.

Based on Figure 3 above regarding the Critical Literacy approach in reading information, it is known that out of a total of 63 respondents, 47 or (74.6%) used a critical literacy approach. In understanding information. Meanwhile, 16 respondents who answered that they did not use a critical literacy approach in understanding information or (25.4%).

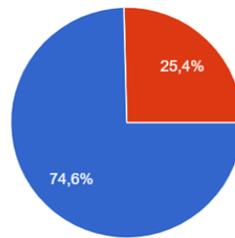


Figure 3 The use of critical literacy approach in reading information.

Based on the results showed in Table 2, it can be seen that the respondents' answers regarding the types of closed questions and the types of open questions are inconsistent. This shows that teachers' perceptions of the concept of critical literacy are still limited, because in the answer to open question number 1 about explaining the meaning of the concept of literacy, 37 respondents or (64%) did not answer, then 13 respondents or (22%) have the same answer. Meanwhile, 7 respondents or the same as (12%) had different answers. The following is the same respondent's answer "Literacy or literacy is a general term that refers to a set of individual abilities and skills in reading, writing, speaking, arithmetic and solving problems at a certain level of expertise required in everyday life."

Furthermore, respondents' answers to open question number 2 regarding the meaning of the concept of critical literacy were also the same. The data shows that 5 or (10%) of the 49 respondents had different answers regarding understanding the concept of critical literacy, then 17 or (34%) had the same answer regarding understanding the concept of critical literacy, and 27 or (55%) respondents did not answer the question regarding understanding critical literacy concept. It is the same answer "*Critical literacy is a person's ability to develop literacy skills, both reading and writing, in order to discover social gaps that represent abuse of power, oppression, marginalization and discrimination*".

Meanwhile, respondents' answers regarding open question number 3 about how to understand information critically turned out to be the same as questions number 2 and 3. Where the data shows that out of a total of 47 respondents, there were 4 people or (8%) who had various or different answers, then 20 or (42%) respondents had the same answer, while 23 respondents or (48%) chose not to answer. Here the same answers are displayed "1. Practice active listening. Active listening is the foundation of effective critical thinking. 2. Ask lots of questions. Ask a lot is asking questions about what you are listening to. 3. Try to understand other people's points of view. 4. "Consider the future. 5. Understand your mental processes. 6. Have a mentor." Based on the explanation above, the researcher believes that the majority of teachers in Sorong Regency do not understand the concept of critical literacy and tend to understand literacy as limited to reading and writing.

Apart from teachers' perceptions and understanding of critical literacy based on critical pedagogy, another response to this question is the way teachers relate critical literacy to reading and writing. Almost all respondents associated critical literacy with reading and writing. Respondents stated that critical literacy is the ability to read and understand the meaning of text. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that almost all the teachers who were respondents in this research still define literacy as limited to reading and writing skills. on the other hand, critical literacy has experienced a significant movement from reading and writing skills (Kalantzis, Cope, Nobel, & Poynting 2012), towards a learning process where we learn how to create and understand meaning to changing the way we think and see the world.

Today, the ability to create meaning embedded in critical literacy is facilitated using various modes such as those originating from the internet, videogames, images, graphics, and layout (Peters & Lankshear, 1996; Frechette, 2002; Yoon, 2015). Based on previous research conducted by Hidayat, Hidayat, and Umayah (2020), teachers lack in knowledge and understanding of the term critical literacy even though their teaching history has been more than one year or even fifteen years. Therefore, the implementation of critical literacy for students is very doubtful because of limited knowledge and understanding regarding critical literacy. Similar things were found by researchers that teachers' understanding of critical literacy was still lacking or it could even be said that they did not know what critical literacy was. Likewise, with the knowledge they have about critical literacy as well as knowledge and understanding of critical pedagogy. This can be seen from their answers on the Google form which tend to define literacy and critical literacy separately in traditional contexts. However, when faced with the term critical literacy, they only answered with a

combined definition of the two terms previously asked. They only define the terms "critical" and "literacy" without knowing the true nature of critical literacy. Therefore, only a small number of teachers approach the intended definition of critical literacy. The findings above occurred because teachers were not familiar or had never even heard of what critical literacy was, so they were still confused about the meaning of critical literacy. Teacher beliefs about implementing critical literacy in the classroom. In contrast to the answer to the first question,

Furthermore, the results of this research were strengthened by previous findings indicating the need of training and counseling activities regarding critical literacy for teachers. Leiliyanti, Irawan, and Saputra (2021) found that teaching experience and teacher training do not show a real positive correlation with grammar skills their basis. Critical literacy training in drawing conclusions and predicting possibilities sequentially are required in narrative texts. In addition, Jumadi and Faradina (2021) found the changes towards better perceptions and competencies of junior high school teachers in Banjarmasin City regarding critical literacy learning. After the counseling was carried out, the teachers had a very positive perception of the implementation of this counseling. Most of them consider this counseling important and worthy of being followed up with further critical literacy learning activities.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the majority of teachers in this research do not fully understand the nature of critical literacy. They tend to define critical literacy traditionally, namely reading and writing, so that teachers have not implemented critical literacy in the classroom because they do not have a clear picture of critical literacy and critical-based classes. All respondents linked critical literacy with reading and writing. Respondents stated that critical literacy is the ability to read and understand the meaning of text. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that almost all teachers who were respondents in this research still define literacy only as reading and writing skills. Most teachers are still confused about what critical literacy is and how to create a critical class. In fact, in implementing critical-based classes, the starting point is that teachers must have critical literacy to equip students to be critical. Furthermore, to create an intelligent and cultured nation, critical literacy must be always applied to teachers as the main 'asset'. Therefore, teachers must have the right beliefs and understanding of critical literacy before implementing it in the classroom.

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