

History Teachers' Representation of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*: A critical discourse analysis

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Abstract—This research elucidates the history teachers' representation of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* that contains a paradoxical meaning between unity and diversity. Critical discourse analysis with the socio-cognitive approach was used to analyze the teacher's interpretation and objectification. The subjects of the research were 25-history teacher of Senior High Schools at three provinces: Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta. The authors found two models of representation: valuing and contextualizing. Based on those models of representation, teachers tended to interpret *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in the form of "unity above diversity". This interpretation is then objectified in several terms such as nationalism, patriotism, unity, and sovereignty. From critical perspectives, the finding of research shows that the unity is posited above the diversity. Considering these findings, the authors indicate the problem between nationalism, unity, and diversity, in which those ideologies are posited in an unequal position.

Keywords—*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*; history teachers; unity, diversity

I. INTRODUCTION

The problem of unity and diversity has been marked as the irresistible and contestable issue for Indonesian society. This problem is commonly understood in the term of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* that literary means "unity in diversity" that entangles the dimension of politic and social integration. Historically, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* was derived by Soekarno from the text of ancient manuscript of the Majapahit Empire, *Kakawin Sutasoma* [1]. Soekarno politically established this term for national myth and promoted the values of active pluralism during his reign from 1945 to 1966 [2,3]. In the later periods, the New Order Government had reinterpreted this term to establish the political condition through the discourse of harmony and unity [4]. During the reign of New Order from 1967 to 1998, this term had been institutionalized as a cultural strategy and integrative ideology [5,6]. After the fall of the New Order and the rise of democracy in Indonesia, the term of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is adopting continuously as the Indonesia's national motto and the part of nation building and integration discourse, even in some cases this term conversely produce a political problem [7].

Along with those historical processes, the education has mainly become the reservoir for the process of production and reproduction of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Through education, the government has disseminated and determined the form and the meaning of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* [8]. The trace of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* can be found in the documents of Indonesian National Curriculum 2013 that has been revised in 2017. The document of Curriculum 2013 has mentioned the awareness of cultural diversity as one of the skills that should be mastered by the students from historical learning. The documents also mentioned that the problem of national integration could be solved through the students' awareness. Considering the importance of education, the contemporary researchers have discussed the role of education in the production and reproduction of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. The researchers commonly emphasized the analysis of the role of textbooks [9], the practice of learning in the classroom [10], the intervention of classroom activities [11], or the revitalization of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* through local wisdom [12]. Meanwhile, some researcher has focused their analysis on the school environment and the students' interpretation [13,14]. Beside of those studies, the authors believe that the study of teachers' representation, particularly about the interpretation and objectification of teacher, should be considered as the locus of research to understand more deeply the form of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in the educational field.

Based on those descriptions, this article elucidates the teachers' representation of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* that contains a paradoxical meaning between unity and diversity by focusing to the teacher's interpretation and objectification. The teachers' interpretation and objectification refer to the two modes of social representation. On one side, interpretation means the process of internalization of the new knowledge to the mind of the teachers. Meanwhile, the objectification can be defined as the teachers' actualization towards the internalized knowledge [15]. In the authors' perspective, the interpretation and objectification of teachers determined the form of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in the learning process. In the other words, teachers are the architect of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. They become the agent of production or reproduction of discourse. Therefore, it is necessary to study more deeply about their interpretation and objectification toward the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*

Ika. The study of teachers' interpretation and objectification will be useful to understand, at the micro level, the role of agent in the process of reinterpretation *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. In order to reveal the teachers' interpretation and objectification, the discussion will be laid on the structural dimension from Curriculum, textbooks, and teachers' stand point.

II. METHOD

Critical discourse analysis with the socio-cognitive approach was used as a research method by emphasizing on the analysis of teacher's cognition perimeters: interpretation and objectification [16]. The research participants were 25-history teacher of Senior High Schools in three provinces in Indonesia: Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta. The authors used a purposive sampling to select the teachers. The authors believe that those teachers lived in the same epistemic community of history teachers in Indonesia, thus, their knowledge or argumentations represent the collective understanding of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* [17]. The data collected through interview and open questionnaire. The data were analyzed in textual and socio-cognitive analysis. The textual analysis was then elaborated with the socio-cognitive analysis that focuses on the teachers' interpretation and objectification, which employed the analysis of discourse processing, knowledge, and attitude and ideology of teachers.

III. FINDINGS

A. Teachers' Interpretation and Objectification

In general, the authors found the diverse interpretation of teachers to the term of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. The authors found that the teachers' interpretation of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* could be summed up into the term of "unity above diversity". The teachers commonly posited the nationalism and unity above the problem of diversity. When the teachers interpreted the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, they commonly used the term "unity", "nationalism", and "integration" to articulate their definition about *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. However, they never referred to the terminology of cultural and religious diversity in their articulation. The terminological usage shows that the teachers tended to emphasize the importance of unity above diversity.

It means, essentially, teachers prolonged the meaning of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in the form of unity above diversity. This meaning could be traced into the Curriculum and the content of the textbook that construct the diversity under the problem of national integration. The curriculum as well as textbooks mainstreamed the position of unity than diversity. From the teachers' perspectives, there is no problem regarding the unequal position of unity and diversity. In more detail, they referred to the main goal of history education to elevate the nationalism. Moreover, the teachers believed that the nationalism covers the problem of awareness of diversity. The form of teachers' interpretation has shown a linear understanding and meaning of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* that structurally derived from Curriculum into the classroom.

Along with this interpretation, the teachers also objectified the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. The authors found several forms of teachers' objectification. From those objectifications, in general, the spirit of unity became the main theme of teachers' objectification. The spirit of unity prolonged into another form of objectification such as the independence, sovereignty, nationalism, and democracy. The citation below mainly represents the teachers' objectification towards *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*:

"The main value that I gathered after reading that material (narration) is regarding the importance of unity spirit. The Youth Pledge was seen as a fundamental recognition of a nation in the making. The youths by understanding the long history of Indonesia's struggle, have developed a deep awareness of the importance of unity. Without the spirit of unity, it is impossible for the nation of Indonesia to be free from colonization"

From above citation, the authors highlighted the importance of the spirit of unity. It means, along with the teachers' interpretation, the term unity and nationalism has been reproduced. The authors found that the importance of unity is the main theme of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* objectification. The prolonged objectifications entangled with the spirit of unity were the independent values, identity values, sovereignty, nationalism affirmation, and democracy. The citation below represents the prolonged objectification:

"The value that I delivered is the unity values, independent values, identity values, sovereignty or nationalism affirmation, also democratic values. Those values I put to relevance with the unity values in the present time, which have started to fade. Furthermore, I put to relevance with daily live activities, so that the students will be able to understand and applied those values in their society."

From those citations, the authors conclude that the teachers tended to interpret and objectified the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in the form of "unity above diversity". Meanwhile, in the process of objectification, the teachers tended to prolong their interpretation in the spirit of unity, independence, sovereignty, nationalism, and democracy. Beyond these findings, the authors highlighted two modes of teachers' objectification that shows the psychological process of objectification.

B. Teachers' Valuing and Contextualization

The authors found two modes of teachers' objectification: valuing and contextualizing. The valuing means teachers try to extract the interpretation of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in some practical values. The process of valuing employed psychological mechanism in which the teachers tried to understand the meaning of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and at the same time they also tried to articulate their interpretation into the existing values such as nationalism and democracy. This mode is set to legitimate their interpretation or objectification.

Another mode of teachers' objectification was contextualization. The mode of contextualizing refers to teachers' activities to link the values of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* with the social and political problems. The process of contextualization demands the schemata and the discourse

practices that affect the teachers' objectification. This mechanism of contextualization has made the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* closely related to the social and political problem such as independence, sovereignty, or democracy.

Those modes of objectification have shown the psychological process of teachers' production or reproduction of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Based on those modes, the authors pointed out that the objectification determined by teachers understanding about political and social situation.

IV. DISCUSSION

From the finding of research, the authors highlighted that the teachers interpreted as well as objectified the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in the form of "unity above diversity". The teachers' interpretation commonly emphasized to the importance of unity. Meanwhile, the teachers tended to prolong the importance unity in their objectification even they were also trying to valuing and contextualizing the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. In sum, the authors marked the unequal position between unity and diversity inside of the interpretation and objectification of teachers. The findings of research reflect the cognitive dimension of Indonesian people. It indicates the root of the discourse of "unity above diversity" in the ideology of Indonesian people [16]. The teachers' confirmation reflects that they already had knowledge of unity above diversity. This mental condition could reflect the social structure of Indonesian society, since the education became an arena of production and reproduction of narration of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

The unequal position between unity and diversity reflect the problem between nationalism, unity, and diversity. The unequal position brought paradox meaning in which the people should dispose to integrate in one nation but in the other hand, they also held their local identities and, in certain degrees, local aspirations [17]. The paradoxical meaning resulted crucial problems in society, particularly the problem of minority intolerant in the society [18]. The problem lies in the unequal position between unity and diversity. The unity is getting a privilege, and on the opposite, the issue of diversity has marked by negative perceptions towards the term ethnicity such as ethnocentrism. The worst consequence of this problem was the annihilation of the discourse and narration of ethnicity [19]. The problem of unity and diversity become more complicated because of multiplicity frameworks of the nation construction between unity and diversity as well as between ethnicities and religiosity [20]. From this point of view, the authors postulate that there is a problem between nationalism and diversity, particularly towards the presence of others in Indonesian society.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on those discussions, the authors sum up that the teachers tended to interpret the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in the form of "unity above diversity". This interpretation is then objectified in several terms such as nationalism, unity, sovereignty, and democracy. The authors also highlighted two modes of teachers' objectification: valuing and contextualizing. Those modes were determined by the teachers' schemata and

the teachers' understanding of political as well as situation. From critical perspectives, the finding of research shows that the unity is posited above the diversity. Considering these findings, the authors indicate the problem between nationalism, unity, and diversity, in which those ideologies are posited in an unequal position.

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