The Use of Critical Pedagogy Principles in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for Senior High School Students in Subang

Slamet Wahyudi Yulianto
Universitas Subang, Jawa Barat, Indonesia
slamet.wahyudi.y@gmail.com

Abstrak
Tiga pertanyaan penelitian ini adalah: (1) Bagaimana prinsip-prinsip pedagogik kritis digunakan dalam mengajar Bahasa Inggris untuk siswa SMA? (2) materi pembelajaran apa yang cocok dalam pengunaan prinsip-prinsip pedagogik kritis untuk mengajar Bahasa Inggris kepada siswa SMA? Dan (3) apa keuntungan dan tantangan dalam menggunakan prinsip-prinsip pedagogik kritis dalam mengajar Bahasa Inggris kepada siswa SMA? Untuk menjawab ketiga pertanyaan itu, beberapa teknik pengumpulan data digunakan, terdiri dari angket, observasi ruang kelas, wawancara, jurnal mengajar dan jurnal belajar. Data yang terkumpul setelah dilakukan triangulasi, dianalisis dengan mentranskripsi, mengkategorisasi, mengkoding, dan interpretasi. Diketahui bahwa ada 23 aktivitas yang dapat dilakukan ketika menggunakan prinsip-prinsip pedagogik kritis dalam mengajar Bahasa Inggris kepada siswa SMA. Diketahui juga bahwa ada empat syarat yang harus dipenuhi bagi materi pembelajaran sebelum bisa digunakan dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris yang mempraktekkan prinsip-prinsip pedagogik kritis. Ada tiga kategori tantangan. Ketiganya adalah: (1) kemampuan Bahasa Inggris yang terbatas, (1) masalah budaya, dan (3) kurikulum yang ketat. Sementara itu, terdapat empat jenis keuntungan: (1) pengalaman baru, (2) pemerolehan pengetahuan baru, (3) penambahan kesadaran bahasa, dan (4) peningkatan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: prinsip-prinsip pedagogik kritis, mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris, siswa SMA
INTRODUCTION

Considering the current rapidly changing local, regional, national, and global post-industrial situations, it is necessary for educational stakeholders in the 21st century to not only equip students with critical thinking skill, but also to raise their critical consciousness by applying critical pedagogy (hereafter CP) principles so that they are able to continually act and reflect for their own and community’s betterment (Freire, 2005a; Giroux, 1997; Mochinski, 2008). CP is a pedagogical approach firstly introduced by Paolo Freire in the middle of 20th century to offer an alternative in organizing the empowering adult literacy program among peasant and low-wage workers in Brazil (Freire, 2005b). Although often being criticized as the unrealistic and unimplemented teaching method (Breuing, 2011), nowadays, CP has been developed into more acceptable and adaptable educational theory and practice for every level around the world, including in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia (Mambu, 2011; Larson, 2014).

CP is strongly influenced by and deeply rooted in critical theory of Frankfurt School

Abstract

Three research questions are addressed are: (1) How can CP principles be used in teaching EFL for senior high school students? (2) What learning materials are suitable to be used in using CP principles to teach EFL for senior high school students? (3) What are benefits and challenges of using CP principles in teaching EFL for senior high school students? In uncovering the answers for those questions, several data collection techniques are employed, namely questionnaire, classroom observation, interview, and learning as well as teaching journals. The collected data, after being triangulated, were then analyzed by transcribing, categorizing, coding, and interpreting. It is revealed that there are 23 activities can be performed when using CP principles in teaching EFL for senior high school students. It is also uncovered that there are four conditions should be fulfilled by the learning material before it can be used in CP-principles-informed EFL classrooms for senior high school students. Additionally, there are three categories of challenges are (1) students’ limited English proficiency, (2) cultural problems, and (3) pre-determined curriculum. In the meantime, the four types of benefits are (1) new experience, (2) new knowledge acquisition, (3) increased language awareness, and (4) improved English proficiency.

Keywords: CP principles, EFL classroom, senior high school students
including Adorno’s theory about alienation in the late of capitalism and communication theory from Habermas (Giroux, 1997; Agger, 2009; Emilia & Safrina, 2010; Breuing, 2011; Kincheloe, 2011). CP, Freire (2005a) points, is centering its attempt in empowering and liberating both students and teachers, and aims to change society starting from classroom. CP expects students to be independent learners, thinkers, and doers (Riasati & Mollaei, 2012). Therefore, numerous experts mention that CP is a way of bringing critical literacy into classroom (Coffey, 2010; Gustine, 2013), and some others define it as a critical theory of education (McLaren, 2002).

However, CP is not a theory; it is a way of doing teaching and learning (Canagarajah, 2005).

Especially for the language education context, Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) identify CP as an approach to language teaching and learning which is concerned with transforming relations of the oppressive power that leads to the liberation of people. The critical language pedagogy is a place where a language pedagogue can relate grammatical knowledge and vocabulary mastery to knowledge of how to solve wider social problems (Riasati & Mollei, 2012). In other words, CP is a language teaching learning approach which is based on the acceptance of its socio-political implications and aims at transforming society by relating the grammatical knowledge and the wider social problems. This study, due to the similarity of English as a Second Language (EFL) education in Indonesia as the research context, adopts Emilia’s (2005, 2010; see also Emilia & Safrina, 2010) three CP principles. They are dialogic education, democratic classroom, and reading the word and the world. Each of those principles is elaborated in the following paragraphs.

In the educational practice, dialogue is crucial to be executed to generate the ideal teaching learning atmosphere for teacher and students can learn from each other. Moreover, dialogue is potential to avoid the existence of threatening and dominating teacher for the teacher students dialogic relation is based on hope, love, and faith (Shor & Freire, 1987; Freire, 2005a; Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010). Through dialogue, both teacher and students constructively learn and share their ideas and world views (Alvarez et al., 2012). Negotiation through dialogue plays a central role in the classroom that applies critical pedagogy (Mochinski, 2008; Larson, 2014). It should be implemented as a two-way process (Freire, 2005a) for every classroom activity. In such classroom activity, the teacher still and should have the necessary authority to ensure that the activity runs without restricting students’ freedom to participate actively in encountering the common knowledge forms and social relations (Shor & Freire, 1987; Giroux & Aronowitz, 1991; Giroux, 1997; Emilia, 2005). Consequently, the class becomes more open and unpredictable (Shor & Freire, 1987; Freire, 2005a; Mochinski, 2008). In the formal education that has rigid official curriculum, the classroom unpredictability may be a serious challenge.

Democratic classroom may only be executed by creating classroom conditions that are conducive to support individual freedom along with social empowerment and justice (Freire, 1998, Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 2003; Emilia, 2005; Thayer-Bacon, 1996). Consequently, without losing the needed authority, teachers should encourage their students to comprehend democracy by being involved in governance including arranging learning objectives, selecting learning materials, and forming their own groups (Giroux, 1997; Bowers, 2005). Therefore, it is important for teachers to be aware that they are not the ones who dominate classroom.
Along with the call for implementing CP principles in EFL classrooms (Akbari, 2008; Godley & Minnici, 2008; Jerayad & Harland, 2014), there have been numerous research conducted in order to promote the application of CP in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Indonesia. Several of them are Alwasilah (2004), Emilia (2005), Mambu (2009), Hayati (2010), and Yulianto (2016). However, most of them focused their study on educating university students or pre-service teachers. Therefore, this study aims at applying CP principles in teaching EFL for secondary school students in Indonesia, especially in Subang, one of the districts in West Java province.

Taking into account the aforementioned explanation, this research attempts to address the following questions:
1. How can CP principles be applied in teaching EFL for senior high school students?
2. What learning materials are suitable to be used in applying CP principles to teach EFL for senior high school students?
3. What are benefits and challenges of applying CP principles in teaching EFL for senior high school students?

**METHODOLOGY**
In addressing the three research questions, the case study was exercised as research design for this study as it is suitable to conduct the in-depth and detailed investigation that is intended to reveal the process and the meaning of particular event and its context employing various data collection techniques and resources (Yin, 2011; Fraenkel, et al., 2012). This research was conducted in the form of teaching program consisting of ten meetings in 2018-2019.

This research was executed in one public senior high school in Subang, West Java. The participants of this research are one group of eleventh grade students. For the purpose of ethical issue, the names of both teachers and students are displayed in pseudonyms.

There are primary and secondary data collection techniques in this study. The primary ones are classroom observation and questionnaire, while the secondary ones are interview and learning as well as teaching journals. Those different data collection techniques are employed in order to make sure that the collected data is valid as well as to reduce possible weakness possessed by each data collection technique.

The accumulated valid qualitative and quantitative data were systematically transcribed, organized, coded, looked for patterns, thematically categorized, synthesized, interpreted, and concluded to answer the research questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Silverman, 2005; Yin, 2011; Alwasilah, 2012; Fraenkel et al., 2012). The data analyses were performed both during and after collecting the data (Bogdan, & Biklen, 1992; Silverman, 2005). The ongoing analysis was executed for data that were assembled using classroom observation (Silverman, 2005) and the rests were analyzed after the data had been collected.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**How to Apply Critical Pedagogy Principles in Teaching EFL for Senior High School Students**

After analyzing the data that have been collected, it can inferred that CP principles are able to be applied in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for senior high school students by executing the following activities:

1. Negotiating classroom decision making,
Those twenty-three activities are in line with experts’ opinions and findings of relevant research report (Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 1997; Freire, 2005; Emilia, 2005; Wallace, 2003; Shin & Crookes, 2005; Mochinski, 2008; Akbari, 2008; Emila & Safrina, 2010; Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Muro, 2011; Swandarini, 2011; Cho, 2013; Ko, 2013; Larson, 2014).

**Learning Materials that are Suitable for Using Critical Pedagogy Principles in Teaching EFL for Senior High School Students**

Taking into account the collected data and relevant research reports including the theories mentioned by numerous experts, it can be concluded that not every learning material proposed in the syllabus by The Ministry of Education are suitable to be used in the EFL classroom that is intended to apply critical pedagogy principles. Only particular materials fit the objectives of the lesson. There are conditions to fulfil by the learning materials selected by teacher. Those conditions are:

1. Containing problematic relevant day to day issues for students,
2. Encouraging students to act and reflect critically,
3. Providing social and political topics to be discussed, and
4. Presenting authentic language used in real-life.

Those four conditions are in line with what have been promoted by several practitioners and researchers including Freire (2005a), Wallace (2008), Emilia & Noorman (2010), Swandarini (2011), Aliakbari & Faraji (2011), and Larson (2014).

In order to fulfil the mentioned conditions for learning materials used in teaching EFL for senior high school students, there are three activities can be done. The first
one is adopting the existing materials whether the authentic or the unauthentic ones. The second one is adapting from the already made materials by considering the context in making it useable for teaching learning activity. The last one is making the learning materials that can be employed both inside-classroom and outside-classroom. However, the result of the third way in providing materials in the unauthentic one.

Challenges and benefits of using critical pedagogy principles in teaching EFL for senior high school perceived by the students

Taking into account the collected and analysed data in the form of journals, questionnaire responses, and interview transcripts, it is revealed that there are three categories of challenges and four types of benefits of using CP principles in teaching EFL for senior high schools students. Those three categories of challenges are (1) students’ limited English proficiency, (2) cultural problems, and (3) pre-determined curriculum. In the meantime, the four types of benefits are (1) new experience, (2) new knowledge acquisition, (3) increased language awareness, and (4) improved English proficiency. Both challenges and benefits are elaborated in the following sections.

Challenges

The three classifications of challenges faced during the teaching program are evident in the interview transcripts, responses to questionnaires, observation, and journals. The first category or challenges is the students’ limited English proficiency. According to the observation sheet in meeting three, five, and seven, unfamiliar words for the students used both in written and spoken language produced and used by the teacher during the lesson made students confused and the lesson flow delayed. Moreover, this challenge is also indicated in the several students’ responses toward open-ended questionnaire. One of them is displayed in the following Yola’s excerpt:

“Saya sering tidak paham dengan materi yang disampaikan dan apa yang diucapkan guru menggunakan Bahasa Inggris. [I often didn’t understand the discussed materials and what teacher told using English]”

The second challenge category is related with what has been recognized by a huge number of practitioners and researchers that Indonesian students, especially the senior high school students, tend to be more passive and reluctant to participate during the lesson. This problem may not only students’ weakness, but also resulted from wider context such as society. A tendency to be passive made the lesson using CP principles moved slowly for being critically participate in democratic classroom and dialogic education require participants to be active. This challenge can be seen in the following Indra’s interview transcript:

*Saya mendapatkan cara pembelajaran yang berbeda dari sebelumnya [I’ve got new way of doing learning different before]*

This Indra’s answer for question what he gets from the teaching program indicates that he never received the similar teaching program. This possibly because in his experience, he usually learnt passively and acted only as the receiver of the knowledge given by the teacher.

The pre-determined curriculum, especially the English subject for senior high school level with particular strict objectives and allocated time, according to teaching journals and observation sheets for the second, fourth, and sixth meetings caused numerous problems such as paused or even stopped discussion when huge number of students were involved.
Benefits

The first benefit perceived by the students is new experience. It is indicated in the interview and learning journals data. Doing classroom discussion when every student was given the opportunity to tell whatever they think in the moment about the lesson topic and doing outside-classroom observation by visiting tourism attraction are two of numerous new experience acquired by the students during the teaching program as told by Rian in the semi-structured interview.

The second benefit, new knowledge, was acquired by the students as a consequence mainly of discussing the classroom topics which were brought by both the students and the teacher. There were two types of knowledge which were perceived by the students after joining the teaching program. They were knowledge about themselves and about English as their major. In Aya’s response towards the open-ended questionnaire, it is written “Ada sedikit penambahan wawasan dan pengetahuan yang saya peroleh [there is the additional knowledge and information that I’ve got].”

Concerning the third benefit, Andi wrote in her learning journal for the fifth meeting that after attending the meeting, “Saya tau bahwa bahasa inggris itu tidak sesusah yang saya pikirkan [I know that English language is not as difficult as I thought].” Additionally, in structured interview, Rian said that “Saya diberikan pencerahan kalau bahasa inggris itu mudah kalo mau belajar [I was enlightened that English is easy when I am willing to learn].”

The fourth benefit called improved English proficiency can be seen in Eri’s learning journal for fourth meetings “Dapat menjelaskan suatu tempat dengan menggunakan bahasa inggris [I can describe a place using English].” It is also indicated in interview transcript with Denya who said “Saya jadi mampu meningkatkan kemampuan dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris [I become able to improve my skill in English speaking].”

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that comparing with Yulianto’s (2016) research findings when he conducted research on the use of critical pedagogy principles to teach EFL reading for college students in Bandung, there is a lot of similarities on how those principles are applied. It is possibly because of the identical participants’ background who are Sundanese and live in West Java although the study in different levels of education. Furthermore, the learning materials that are suitable to be utilized both in teaching EFL generally and teaching EFL reading, are not too different.

There are three categories of challenges and four types of benefits of using CP principles in teaching EFL for senior high schools students. Those three categories of challenges are (1) students’ limited English proficiency, (2) cultural problems, and (3) predetermined curriculum. In the meantime, the four types of benefits are (1) new experience, (2) new knowledge acquisition, (3) increased language awareness, and (4) improved English proficiency.

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