



CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN ELT PRACTICES FOR TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Encouraging students to reflect critical perspective of the use of English that is beyond the status quo creates globally compatible life skills and self-confidence. Indonesia, a non-English-speaking country, has faced several issues through the relation between critical pedagogy and teachers' professional development in ELT practices. It is proven that Indonesia has low competency score test in the aspect of English skills and proficiency level, pedagogic skills, subject knowledge, and general academic aptitude and. Therefore, the low level of human resources in education in Indonesia certainly gives unsatisfied outcomes to society's quality and ability.

Keywords: Critical Pedagogy, ELT Practices, Teachers' Professional Development

INTRODUCTION

In this twenty-first century era, a consummate language, namely English, has imperatively embraced many terms of globalization along with the growth of this language in such a way. According to Pennycook (2007), compared to other languages, English is closely attached to process of globalization. In other words, it is obvious that the existence of English in formal education system as foreign language cannot be taken for granted. As supported by Altbach and Knight (2006), he writes that English is the world's most broadly language that is learned as a second language. Consequently, this motivates non-English-speaking countries to get involve globally in the use of English.

In relation to this matter, Brutt-Griffler and Varghese (2004) states that the rising continuity of English as a global language accounts for an engaging correlation to the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Accordingly, Crookes (2013) states that teachers of English in non-English-speaking countries should consider a critical pedagogy in ELT as there are many of them who are reluctant to encircle their critical practices of their implementation that would be beneficial for their outcomes in ELT.

Moreover, as the role of teachers dominates to critical ELT in globalization era, teachers have to accomplish professional development. It is also believed that low quality of ELT is partially caused by a lack of sound teacher training and teachers' professional development (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Nunan, 2003). Teachers' professional development is a newly key concept in which teachers earn self-confidence, new view points, new knowledge, and new methods by critically assuming new roles during the process of formal and informal learning experiences throughout their careers from pre-service teacher education to retirement (Eraut, 1997; Fullan, 1991). Additionally, Richards and Farrell (2005) agree that teachers' professional development pursues to aid improvement of teachers' competence of teaching and themselves as teachers.

Previously described, considering a critical pedagogy and discovering teachers' professional development opportunities in critical ELT practices becomes more crucial in the countries that do not apply language as their first language. In this case, Indonesia, one of the countries that applies English as foreign language, should recognize critical pedagogy be one means to create EFL curriculum more purposeful and locally applicable to Indonesian students which could result in globally better language proficiency.

However, English Proficiency Level (EPI) (2018) shows that Indonesia is on the 51st place out of 88 participated countries in the aspect of English skills and proficiency level. Another fact indicates that Indonesia got low score of the standard of educators and education personnel (BAN, 2018). Compared with the other seven accreditation standards provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, educators and education personnel are included in the three standards with the lowest scores. This fact leads to conclusion that the quality of the teachers in Indonesia is still low that could give significant effect in professionally carrying out teaching and learning activities that are critical in the practices. By this fact, it can obviously be said that Indonesia is still on the low level of English in the aspect of English proficiency and the pedagogy of the teachers' professionalism becomes questionable.

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DISCUSSION

Critical Pedagogy in ELT Practices for Teachers' Professional Development

Crookes (2013) defines the word “critical” as applied education in critical ELT as a perspective on teaching and learning that are not limited to status quo. However, the subject must be critique and constructs alternatives in forms of practice and does not simply in the base of theories. Similarly, critical ELT is not about the content, but the teaching method implemented by the teachers are also important. In other words, critical ELT focuses on some possible ways in which English teachers can critically bring into their pedagogical context of teaching to meet students' needs that are student-based learning. In addition, Crookes (2013) emphasizes that teachers especially who focus on ELT and pursue to administer critical perspectives on education are not limited to their classrooms or even their school. Even more, critical ELT teachers can bring themselves out the classrooms and encourage to the public and policy makers for other beneficial programs on policy issues in relation to critical pedagogies.

Critical pedagogy in language teaching is a viewpoint in language curriculum theory and instructional practice that helps and promotes teaching and the study of language in ways that would advance social justice (Crookes, 2013). According to Pennycook (2001), the terminology of critical pedagogy refers to teaching with an attitude and it brings the transformation of society by means of education and language teaching. For this definition, critical pedagogy sets the classroom context into the broader social context. According to Baynham (2006, p.28), “what happens in the classroom should end up making a difference outside the classroom”. In other words, critical pedagogy in ELT represents the practice of involving the students in the social construction of knowledge and connecting the language with the world.

Critical pedagogy in ELT requires the teachers to examine their own practices in the process of building knowledge. According to Auerbach and Wallerstein (1987, p. 46), “It is important, therefore, to start with critically structured activities at the same time that you are creating an environment for student-directed learning.” Habermas (1984) also states that the teachers draw practical and technical knowledge together. For instance, the teachers are suggested to prepare knowledge and activities practically and technically. The material and environment surrounding the students should encourage the students to globally reflect the social justice. In the end, the students in critical pedagogy classrooms are motivated to engage in collective action, founded on principal social justice, equality and empowerment (McLaren, 2009).

To result students who have globally compatible life skills and self-confidence, the development of teachers' professionalism is indisputable. Ricards & Farrell (2005) state that English teachers' professional development denotes that there are factors which exist and is a necessity for teachers' competence to rise. Day (1999) showed that inspiration (sharing visions), exposition, discussion, opportunities for cross reference of standards, training in new skills, opportunities to experiment, and coaching are included as seven general factors of successful professional development for the teachers. Moreover, fundamental components of effectual professional development has been obtained from different perspectives. For instance, from a teacher's point of view, improved practices, presentation and publication, and career enhancement could be included in professional development outcomes. (Wyatt & Ager, 2017)

Furthermore, learning practices supporting by the teachers' critical knowledge and skills, attitude and practice take into account to learning achievement of the students. Incorporating in professional development activities, involving knowledge with the current issues, doing the tasks properly, and establishing commitment in teaching practice at school form teachers to have good expertise in ELT practice (Sockett, 1993; Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005). Therefore, to empower their role as professional teachers, the teachers need to hold learning opportunity in the development of teachers' professionalism that in relation to the purposes of education in positively setting knowledge, skills, and attitude in society for global context.

The Case of Indonesia

According to research done by Mambu in 2018, the critical pedagogy in Indonesia have increased actively since 1998 yet he acknowledges that critical pedagogy in ELT in Indonesian context is still inadequate. To anticipate the lack of the ability in practicing critical pedagogy in ELT, the government invests some aspects in 2013 curriculum that are complementary to critical pedagogy. According to Kementerian Pendidikan dan Budaya (2013), in order to be developed, materials should be expanded and the materials must be relevant to the students. The materials used in critical pedagogy should be relevant to the students to ensure more meaningful education.

Lastly ideas that form the basis of critical pedagogy can be found in the educational philosophy that was proclaimed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the new 2013 curriculum. The philosophy behind the new curriculum aims to “develop the lives of the people now and in the future” (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Budaya, 2013). As can be seen above, many of the ideas that are central to critical pedagogy such as student centeredness, transformative education, relevant materials, and active and critical learning are also found in the new 2013



curriculum that was just instituted in Indonesia by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Therefore critical pedagogy should be tried out on a wider scale in Indonesia as it is not in conflict with the new curriculum.

In Indonesian context, teacher professionalism based on the national policy related to the ability of teachers in conducting their role and function and how they behave at school and in society context. The Law of Teachers and Lecturers No. 14 Year 2005 mandates teachers as professional educators with the primary task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students on early childhood education, formal education, primary education, and secondary education. authorize to regulate matters relating to the task of teacher professionalism.

However, human resources quality and field of education enhancement still becomes the major challenge of the Indonesian nation (Kemendiknas, 2010). According to United Nation Development Program (UNDP) in 2011, Indonesia is put in the 124th place out of 187 worldwide countries for human development index. This result depicts to the low level of education in Indonesia that certainly gives certain unsatisfied outcomes to society's quality and ability. The 2012 data of Indonesian Education Ministry indicate that teachers have low competency score test on subject knowledge, pedagogic skills, and general academic aptitude. Even though this test is not nationally scale, the average teachers only scoring below 50 percent. In addition, a serious concern of Indonesian teachers is the low level of professional knowledge, skills, motivation, and efforts. All the cases above associated with more responsibility, commitment, and self-learning behavior, and the ethic obedience of teachers.

Formerly, Sudarminta (2000) had exposed the weaknesses of some teachers in the class room such as lack of mastery of the material being taught, mismatch between teachers' subject areas studied and taught, lack of effective ways of teaching and authority in front of students, low motivation and dedication to become a real educator, lack of emotional maturity, independence of thought, and attitude determination of being educators, most teachers are still only serves as a teacher and not as an educator; relatively low intellectual level of students entering teacher candidates LPTKs (Institute of Personnel Procurement) compared to those entering the university.

In addition, the policy makers might not realize that teachers are working in a poor work environment. An indication was reported by Ali (2000) where teachers felt to be pressured by Ministry of National Education to cover and to transfer the prescribed curriculum and content-subject. Another research by Misbahuddin (2013) found that the factors inhibiting the development of teacher profession in South Sulawesi, namely; the lack of awareness of teachers in developing the profession continuously, felt had sufficient capacity so as not serious in the training, less benefit for the development of competence in teaching because the participants have irrelevant basic skills, and lack of attention from local government to the activities of Teacher-Subject Forum or MGMP.

IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

From the explanation regarding critical pedagogy and teachers' professional development, it can be considered that being a professional, teachers have to learn and sharpen this skill in achieving good outcomes for students. Having low pedagogic skills in teaching make teachers are difficult to sustain student attention in learning to develop different students learning styles, and to engage into cognitive challenging and relevant curriculum. It also involves how to develop strategies for sustaining and gaining the interest of students, enabling to learn in fully capabilities, and encouraging disaffected. How teachers lead their students to mastery high order thinking skills, integrate or connect the knowledge, and involve the students actively in learning without pedagogic skills. That is why pedagogic competence needs to be recognized as broader talent and skills for the successful teaching and learning.

Critical pedagogy is not in conflict with the ELT approach and curricular objectives supported by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. Although the government provides some evidences to strengthen the the critical pedagogy itself, the human resources applying the pedagogy are still below expectation. Previously described, there are some problems regarding the teachers in developing their professionalism. All the facts will lead to the outcomes that will be produced by the teachers and critical pedagogy cannot be successfully implemented.

Other efforts to bring teacher achieved professional status and effective professional learning activities are supporting with accountability bureaucratic system of local and central government through the policy of welfare and facilities based on their needs. Related to teacher competences, knowledge, and skills, various learning activities in professional development must be strengths and supported. The seriousness and commitment from stakeholders sometimes become a big question because it is only on white paper. The consistency in supporting teachers encourages the innovation in teaching practice for the improvement of personal and career as the member of school communities. The assurance, security, and guarantee from all parties stimulate teacher creativity to change in practice at the level of individual, school organization, and social life.



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