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Critical Thinking Based Instruction at Australian Primary Schools: Sociolinguistics Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study is to portray classroom interaction in the critical thinking based instruction at primary schools. Primary schools in Australia are considered to develop critical thinking based instruction as reported in some studies. Therefore the teacher and student interaction is investigated to see the features and construct of effective classroom interaction effective for developing students' critical thinking.

The kind of qualitative method chosen is exploratory case study. It aims at carefully revealing the development of student's critical thinking triggered by teacher and student interaction.

The result of this study shows that the instruction is characterized by inquiry based learning, project-based learning, problem-based learning, Socratic questioning, within integrated learning method and added by educational values such as character building and the implementation of social justice education. The finding also shows the politeness strategies portrayed in the teachers' modeling the 'respect' in the classroom interaction. Teacher plays a significant role for accurate modelling so that in critical thinking based instruction the education value become the main concern. Even from the earlier stage, shaping good identity is done through story telling to transmit the moral in social and humanity issues. Through the integrated learning process students can make analysis of the education values they learnt in their daily life.

Keywords: critical thinking, teacher-student interaction, politeness strategies, respect.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini memotret interaksi dalam kelas berbasis berpikir kritis di sekolah dasar. Sekolah dasar di Australia mengembangkan pengajaran berbasis berpikir kritis sebagaimana dilaporkan dari beberapa hasil penelitian. Oleh karenanya interaksi antara guru dan siswa dicermati untuk memahami karakteristik dan konstruk interaksi yang efektif dalam mengembangkan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa.

Jenis metode penelitian yaitu kualitatif dengan rancangan studi kasus eksploratoris. Tujuannya yaitu merunut perkembangan berikir kritis siswa yang didorong interaksi guru dan siswa.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengajaran dicirikan penerapan *inquiry-based learning*, *project-based learning*, *problem-based learning*, *Socratic questioning*, dalam konteks pembelajaran integratif yang dilengkapi nilai-nilai pendidikan untuk pembentukan akhlak serta implementasi prinsip pendidikan berkeadilan sosial. Temuan penelitian juga menunjukkan strategi kesantunan dalam pemodelan guru pada konsep ‘hormat’ dalam interaksi kelas. Guru berperan penting untuk memberikan model akurat agar dalam pembelajaran berbasis berpikir kritis nilai-nilai pendidikan menjadi perhatian utama. Bahkan sejak tingkat pendidikan dini, pembentukan identitas mulia diterapkan melalui dongeng di kelas untuk pematangan moral melalui isu-isu kemasyarakatan dan kemanusiaan. Melalui proses pembelajaran integratif, siswa dapat menganalisa nilai-nilai pendidikan yang diperoleh dari kehidupannya sehari-hari.

Kata-kata kunci: berpikir kritis, interaksi guru-siswa, strategi kesantunan, hormat.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The modern sociolinguistic perspectives deal with ethnography of language assessing patterns of successful communication. These can be done through documenting the communicative competence of speakers, that is, how humans achieve to communicate in appropriate way within a given speech community. In this study the main concern is on primary school teachers' interaction with students as the idea is describing the successful communication in educational context namely critical thinking based instruction.

Using the sociolinguistic approach is inseparable from the major contributions of Joshua Fishman's analysis of domains of communication. It emphasizes on the domains of "who speaks to whom in what way and how" shaped for successful communication (Fishman, 1975). Fishman's theory is basically relevant for applied sociolinguistics particularly on education. However, it has not been much explored in the research context particularly in primary education setting.

Teacher talk produced by teachers of primary schools become the main concern of this study from the sociolinguistics perspective. In a classroom as a speech community, teacher talk plays significant role to stimulate, guide and develop students' critical thinking. Identifying teacher talk in this study is done through the discussion of the formal and functional characteristics of language used in social settings which becomes an exploration of sociolinguistics theory (Stubb, 1980).

The language phenomenon in classroom setting as a discourse of particular speech community needs more exploration which entails the understanding of sociocultural theory and sociolinguistics (Bayyurt, 2013). It is important to note that the emphasis is exploring the sociolinguistic phenomenon to reveal the successful communication through the appropriate use of teachers' spoken manners. Whereas the successful communication meant is identified through the development of students' critical thinking. On a theoretical basis, the theory of communicative competence postulated by Hymes becomes the basis of understanding the sociolinguistic phenomenon occurring in classroom setting (in Bayyurt, 2013). Exploring the communication issues in classroom should include Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model (1962) consisting of setting, participant, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre

(in Wardhaugh, 1986). Hymes' model is relevant for this research as it leads to the breakdown of the principles of critical thinking based instruction as implemented in Australian primary school teachers' spoken manners.

Critical thinking skill is the competence on using reasoning and logic focusing on what to believe or do based on the mechanism such as conducting conceptual and argument analysis for problem solving and decision making. Unfortunately, after the reformation era in Indonesia, critical thinking is interpreted unwisely as the effort of finding fault of others particularly of government shown by sporadic action of demonstration conducted by students, labor or common people.

Critical thinking indeed has become an important cognitive skill to be acquired which involves logical thinking and reasoning. Developing critical thinking has emerged in international benchmark of education by the idea to add *reasoning* into the current 3R literacy (*reading, writing, arithmetic*). By having 4R basic competence (*reading, writing, arithmetic, and reasoning*), learners are equipped with skills needed to support their current and future life economically, socially and culturally (Hayat & Yusuf, 2010; Depdiknas, 2004). This issue has become more significant particularly in facing the more global world.

Critical thinking skills belong to the crucial outcome of higher education. This is in line with the Indonesian Government Regulation (PPRI) No. 70/2010 section 84.2 stating that one of the objectives of tertiary education is to develop human beings who are critical, innovative, independent, self-confident and entrepreneurship minded. Therefore the teaching of language, including writing skills, should incorporate the critical pedagogy.

Improving critical thinking has been a main concern for improving the quality of students' competence in Indonesia. In fact, activating students' critical thinking is still becoming teachers' difficulty. Referring to the result of international survey of Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2006, Indonesian students' reading competence are in the lowest position in East Asia with the literacy score below the average of international standard. Among the 50 countries surveyed, Indonesia is ranked 45. Students failed to understand the whole reading content, they only understood 30% of the text so that they get difficulties to answer reading comprehension and respond the reasoning prompt well (Hayat & Yusuf, 2010).

The course of reading and language in Indonesian school is considered sufficient but unfortunately it fails to increase the achievement in reading proficiency. There is a negative correlation showing that the more hours given for the course of reading and language, the more ineffective they were for developing the students' reading proficiency. It has been

discovered through studies that the fact deals with the small percentage of teacher with language education background (11%) and linguistics qualification (13%) (Hayat & Yusuf, 2010). In this case, the role of teacher is very significant for encouraging students' improvement in critical thinking skills which can be done through some questioning techniques. The questioning as well interaction in class belongs to the spoken manners which can benefit the students' development of critical thinking.

Current studies on critical thinking based instruction do not view the language phenomenon as the core concern. Some studies stress on improving literacy for better students' competence which can be done through critical thinking based instruction either in English as First Language or English as Second Language contexts (Bensley, et al., 2010; Hofreiter et al., 2007; McLean & Miller, 2010). While other concern with the critical thinking instruction which is blended in writing course to see the benefits (Deal, 2004; Quitadamo & Kurtz, 2007; Reed, 2008). Critical thinking skills can be taught implicitly through some teaching strategies experimented in some countries (Al-Fadhli & Khalfan, 2009; Crook, 2006; Ernst & Monroe, 2004; Sellnow & Ahlfeldt, 2005). These studies are corroborated with the empirical bases of the implementation of critical thinking based instruction in language classroom.

Current researches on spoken manners and more generally those integrating Fishman and Hymes' point of view are rarely done in educational setting. More sociolinguistic research deciphering spoken manners and their effects are done in non-educational context such as conducted by Susanto (in Ramiere & Varshney, 2006).

Primary schools in Australia are considered to develop critical thinking based instruction as reported by Emilia (2010). For a successful critical writing, learners at the primary level in Australian classroom are encouraged to take responsibility for their own writing based on what they know. Students were encouraged to participate actively in class discussion and develop their reasoning in their written report. It is part of the teachers' role to develop students' reasoning skill and critical thinking through the interaction in the class.

Furthermore, the critical thinking based instruction is as revealed in current practice of genre-based approach in the teaching of writing (Emilia, 2005). In the model of genre-based pedagogy, the Building Knowledge of the Field, Modeling and Joint Construction, and the Independent Construction, require the learner's ability to make analysis, inference and evaluation representing critical thinking process. Unfortunately, in Indonesia some teachers ignore the detail of the teachers' modeling of critical thinking implementation. Some problems reported which hinder the development of students' critical thinking deal with

limited time in the class and not ideal class size (Pudariati, 2009; Rahmawati, 2009; Wijayanti, 2009). This means that not all teachers are aware of the importance of the teachers' modeling in critical thinking based instruction which should be implemented through teachers' spoken manners.

Based on the above reasoning, the observation to Australian primary school teachers is significant to conduct. Therefore the current study is carried out as the collaboration research between UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and University of Deakin, Australia. The cooperation between the two universities has been started since 2008 with some annual projects such as the program of BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing) , Intercultural Program and Indonesia In Country Program.

Drawing on the magnitude of teacher-student interaction in critical thinking-based instruction, the present study investigates the pattern of teacher talk which is effective to develop students' critical thinking. The teacher talk is considered effective when it achieve expected students' responses, on task behavior and targeted achievement. The analysis also refers to explore the potential for transferring the model of ideal teacher talk in classroom interaction into the EFL context in Indonesia.

B. RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Based on the background explained above, the focus of the research is formulated in the research problems below:

1. How do the teachers present the critical thinking based instruction at Australian primary schools?
2. How do the teachers model the 'respect' in the classroom interaction?

C. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the problems formulated, the result of the analysis is to achieve the following research objectives:

1. Describing the critical thinking based instruction at Australian primary schools.
2. Portraying the teachers' modeling the 'respect' in the classroom interaction.

D. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the background and the theoretical basis explained above, the starting point of this study is to portray the teacher and student interaction in the critical thinking based instruction at Australian primary schools.

To understand the model of classroom interaction effective for developing students' critical thinking is important given that the issue is becoming significant due to the objective of the education in Indonesia. By reaching to an explanatory level, this study will be significant for shaping the learners' critical thinking development through the finest construct of classroom interaction.

The result of this study also brings important institutional and pedagogical contribution. Institutionally, understanding the portrait of teacher talk in classroom interaction happens to be an onset significant step to develop effective interaction in EFL classrooms. Since critical thinking skill belongs to autonomous learning skills required for academic purpose, pedagogically, developing this skill is equal to developing learners' academic achievement and their future academic success. In addition, the model of effective teacher talk in classroom interaction implementing critical thinking based instruction can be elaborated further in enlarged contexts such as in higher educational level such as secondary and tertiary levels not only in English but also in other languages used in class. Therefore, it requires follow up activities such as workshops for Indonesian teachers to implement critical thinking based instruction by using effective model of teacher talk.

E. RESEARCH SCOPE

Effective teacher talk in classroom interaction belongs to the topic discussed in sociolinguistics. Until recently, sociolinguistic approach focused on the role of language variation and linguistic interaction in the learning process at classroom setting. This becomes the result of the broadening of the scope of sociolinguistic inquiry. In accordance with this call and with recent developments in the field of sociolinguistics, the present study examines the issue that remains lacking of exploration namely teacher talk in critical thinking based instruction. The observed teacher talks are those produced by Australian primary school teachers to see the features and construct of spoken manners effective for developing students' critical thinking. The pattern of teacher talk in classroom interaction can be further used as a model to develop students' critical thinking in EFL context in Indonesia.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study employs qualitative design as the object is the real setting of writing process to understand the actual experience of teachers' spoken manners in the critical thinking based instruction at Australian primary school. In qualitative work, the intent is to explore the sociolinguistics perspective of the teacher's spoken manners. Therefore, in this study the interaction in the class implementing critical thinking based instruction becomes the basis to uncover what is specifically happening in the process of developing students' critical thinking triggered by teachers' spoken manners. By identifying 'how' and understanding 'to what extent' the teachers' spoken manners shape students' critical thinking, the study can result in a more comprehensive interpretation on the phenomenon on the dynamic of students' critical thinking skills through the interaction with the teachers.

As the study investigates the portrait of ideal model of teachers' spoken discourse in critical thinking based instruction, the kind of qualitative method chosen is exploratory case study. Exploratory case study is used because it aims at carefully revealing the development of student's critical thinking triggered by teachers' spoken manners. Further, it will involve ethnographic school-based research involving direct collaboration with academic staff at Deakin University as research partner.

B. DATA AND DATA SOURCE

The data needed for revealing the model of implementing critical thinking based instruction are in the form of the result of the observation on the interaction and communication process during the course at Australian primary schools. In so doing, beside the observation checklist required, conducting field notes to record the situational context during the teaching process is also needed. The other instruments used in collecting the data cover the documents supporting the implementation of critical thinking based instruction covering the lesson plan, learning assessment, and students' work.

C. SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The research involved four teachers teaching in different level in primary school. The classes observed were preparation class, year 3, 5 and 6. The teachers were chosen based on their experience as reported by the school principles. They came from two different schools to see the possible variation might occur in their spoken manners when interacting with their students.

D. DATA COLLECTION

As stated formerly the design of this research is qualitative therefore the key instrument is the researchers. The data collection method was observation, in-depth interview, and documentation. The observations used the observation checklist/explanation, and the field-notes. In observation, the field notes were used to convey alternative information in the form of description of activities and events which happened in the class. The field notes were made at every classroom practice observation. The interview used an audio recorder. The interviews protocol was done with the school principals and the primary school teachers. The interviews were carried out to get the information about the general perception of the practice of critical thinking based instruction in the classroom. The documentation method used the administrative documents. These were collected and studied as the secondary data.

E. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis began with the review of the data obtained from the observations, the interviews and the documentations. The data were described based the contexts of instructions. The component analysis includes the aspects of critical thinking based instruction and the spoken manners. The data analysis moved in a cycle process, repeated again and again to identify the differences and similarities of the pattern of teachers' spoken manners used by the four teachers (T1, T2, T3, and T4) in certain contexts of the instructions.

In this research triangulation is used to convey the idea that to establish a fact the researcher needs more than one source of information to get the trustworthiness of data. This method is done to eliminate the researcher's opinion, prejudice, and bias toward the data that were obtained from many methods. In this research, the trustworthiness of data was done by a

cross check data obtained from observations with the data gained from the interviews with the school principals and the teachers and the documentations or on the way around.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

This chapter concludes the result of analysis and presents some suggestions for some parties relevant with the findings of this study.

5.1 Conclusions

By referring to the review of literature explicated in the background, findings of research and the discussion on the result of data analysis, the researchers can draw the following conclusions.

The critical thinking based instruction at Australian primary schools is characterized by inquiry based learning, project-based learning, problem-based learning, Socratic questioning, within integrated learning method and added by educational values such as character building and the implementation of social justice education. It is clear that almost all of the instructional contexts make use of inquiry based learning which mainly characterizing critical thinking-based instruction.

The implementation of inquiry based learning is always followed by the use Socratic questioning in teacher and student interaction. The questioning strategies are meant to guide students' understanding on the topic discussed. To see the progress of learning, student's assessment is also a particular concern which is applied through both self and/or peer assessment. The self assessment and peer assessment are used in both problem based and project based learning. For task based or structured task, peer assessment is also helpful. The whole instructional contexts do not stand alone as there is integrated learning between the subject and study skills. The subject discussed can also be integrated to other subjects as the immediate outcome. Meanwhile, as the indirect impact, the learning results in the cultivation of character building education. In addition, there is also an implementation of social justice in education practised in the class.

The study also uncover the politeness strategies portrayed in the teachers' modeling the 'respect' in the classroom interaction. There were a number of respects appeared during the class interactions that can be analyzed by using sociolinguistic approach, which include students' respect (bowing a shoulder when walking in front of other people) and teachers' respect (giving rewards, disciplining the class, teaching how to say politely).

Teachers in teaching respect use verbal and tangible reward. Verbal reward means praises expressed verbally while tangible reward means praises in the form of small gifts. From politeness perspective, it confirms to negative politeness as they did not want to threat students' negative face as they have a right not to be imposed upon by, for example, teacher's ignorance of expressing gratitude. The teachers tried to avoid discord and seek to minimize the imposition of face-threatening speech acts on the hearer's face. Teachers were so helpful and showing friendship to the students. Sympathetic approach can be done through communication between the student and the teacher to achieve better atmosphere for a classroom environment. The teachers tried to be humble and created teaching situation more than usually dependent on verbal communication, in which the use of language is not only for "telling", but also for managing interpersonal relations in a way that must take account of the "face" needs of the students. It was also observed that the teacher never said "wrong" not even show their disappointment to build the students' confidence and maintained the student's face which can be classified as positive politeness because the teacher oriented it towards the students' desire for approval. The teachers tried to promote a concord, express interest, sympathy and approval through accurate modeling during the classroom interaction.

The teaching and learning of respect through teachers' modeling politeness strategies aims at shaping good identity. Teacher as an integrated education practitioner plays a significant role for accurate modelling so that in critical thinking based instruction the education value become the main concern. Even from the earlier stage, shaping good identity is done through story telling story to transmit the moral in social and humanity issues. Through the integrated learning process students can make analysis of the five values they learnt in their daily life covering hope, grace, truth, love, faith.

5.2 Suggestions

Having reviewed the result of the study, the researchers are of the opinion that there are some learning methods supporting critical thinking based instruction establishing education values to shape the students' identity such as teaching respect as part of character building. This holds important suggestions or recommendations. The recommendations refer to several groups of people including teachers, institution and researchers.

Teachers are suggested to provide students since primary level with instructions leading to critical thinking without leaving the emphasis on character education. This can be done through effective modelling during the teacher student interaction. This study provides the empirical evidence of the model of classroom interaction effective for developing students' critical thinking. Teachers should adapt the interaction model to their classes as the issue of critical thinking based instruction is becoming significant due to the objective of the education in Indonesia. Teachers' understanding of the learning method and their ability to model it in class are significant for shaping the learners' critical thinking development through the finest construct of classroom interaction.

The result of this study also brings important institutional contribution. Institutionally, understanding the portrait of teacher talk in classroom interaction happens to be an onset significant step to develop effective interaction in EFL classrooms. Therefore, for the relevant institution with education particularly on Islamic education, the objective for shaping learner's critical thinking as well as moral should stay as the education emphasis. The reason underlying this is that critical thinking skill belongs to autonomous learning skills required for academic purpose, pedagogically, developing this skill is equal to developing learners' academic achievement and their future academic success. In addition, the model of effective teacher talk in classroom interaction implementing critical thinking based instruction can be elaborated further in enlarged contexts such as in higher educational level such as secondary and tertiary levels not only in English but also in other languages used in class. Therefore, it requires follow up activities such as workshops for Indonesian teachers to implement critical thinking based instruction by using effective model of teacher talk.

As this study examined the teacher student interaction in critical thinking based instruction regarding the politeness strategies involved in the setting of primary school, the next researchers can identify the interaction in another setting for instance in secondary and tertiary education levels. Furthermore, it is suggested that researchers conduct studies deciphering other themes of moral education such as honesty, dignity and others to see whether there is different finding. On a theoretical level, scholars need to continue their efforts at exploring the field, with the goal of a broad, unified concept of critical thinking based instruction. The relationship between the reflection of critical thinking in everyday reasoning and that in various fields of expertise also needs further research.

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