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TWOFER: USING CDA IN THE CLASSROOM FOR ENHANCING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS AND CRITICAL THINKING

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, through technology, information spreads very rapidly. When something happens in one place, in a second it can be known by other people in other faraway places. Unfortunately the information is not always true. Many irresponsible people create misleading information and spread it massively which is known as hoax. This misleading information can provoke many bad effects even sometimes it is dangerous. The hoax can contain hatred, false health information, untrue disaster warning, and so on. This phenomena cannot be ignored. There have been many victims. To protect people from hoax can be done by training their critical thinking ability. One of the ways to make people able to think critically is through the implementation of critical discourse analysis (CDA). This research is aimed at building students' critical thinking and also improving their English skills through the use of CDA. The method employed in this study was action research which was also completed by a focused group discussion. The research result shows that the students could improve their English skills and became more critical in writing a response to a text given by the lecturer by analyzing the text using the principles of CDA, not merely relying on their own opinion.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Thinking Ability; English Language Skills.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is not the country's second language, yet it is the first foreign language. That is why Indonesians are not exposed much to English language. English can be acquired through watching TV programs in English (which are only a few), reading international newspaper and magazines, and of course learning it at schools. Some people can improve their English skills through joining some courses, but not so many people can do that regarding the cost that they have to spend. Hence, schools are still the most expected places where people can learn and master English.

In order to meet the expectation, school boards especially English teachers have to think of effective teaching methods to train the students to master English. The teaching and learning situation has to be non-threatening yet fruitful for the students. Fruitful here means that the students have good English skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). However, there is another problem: what about the content? Should the content be about something that

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they like? Or something that are beneficial for them? How if the materials are boring for them? Will they have motivations to learn if the materials are boring?

Therefore, the duties of the English teachers are not only about the method used, but also the materials delivered. For the teaching of English at schools, materials related to students' interests are probably still easy to find since there is no requirement for school students to be critical. But what about students at university level? Many people believe that students of university level have to be agents of change. Meaning that they have to be aware and critical in facing the reality. It means that the lecturers have another duty which is to build the students' critical thinking ability.

The urge of building students' critical ability also comes from today's situation where hoaxes or fake news are at large. Without the ability to think critically, students will be easily driven by the hoaxes. That is why the research is important to conduct. In this research, the researcher who is also the lecturer implemented critical discourse analysis in teaching response writing class.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Van Dijk, 2001 in Hashemi, 2012). CDA considers language as a representation of a role which is able to create a certain subject, themes, and strategies. The analysis is used for revealing power or something that is hidden in language processes.

CDA appeared in the 1980s as an approach toward the unification of language studies and social theory (Fairlough, 1992 cited in Hashemi 2012). Fairlough (1995) cited in Hashemi (2012), a pioneer in modern CDA defined it as the kind of discourse analysis which has a purpose of finding the relations between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes; to investigate how such practices, events, and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

According to Fairlough (1995) cited in Hashemi (2012) there are three dimensions of critical discourse analysis. They are: Text, interaction, social context. Text covers the linguistics features (vocabulary and grammar) and organization of discourse (cohesion and text structures). While interaction means that critical discourse analysis does not only focus on sentence structure and the meaning of the text but also on how people utilize the text to do a real social interaction (Austin 1976) cited in Hashemi (2012) even some other people use language as a tool for mediation (Norris and Jones, 2005 cited in Hashemi (2012). It can be inferred that critical discourse analysis discusses not only about the language but also language and its use.

Critical Discourse Analysis in Language Learning

CDA is an activity of discussing text to find hidden meanings and to uncover the relationship between discourse, ideology, and power which seems to be one of such techniques that can be used by language teachers to equip students with critical thinking ability.

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Critical discourse analysis has been proven to be effective to train students' critical thinking and help teachers to step out of their everyday routines so that the class is always interesting for students (Harman, Ahn, and Bogue, 2016). Another benefit of using CDA in the classroom is also for expanding and improving communication (Catalano and Moeller, 2013).

Critical Thinking Ability

Critical thinking is considered as a skill for a lifetime which individuals have to own for making choices in their personal, academic, and social lives (Hashemi, 2012). CT is also viewed as a basic survival skill (Facione and Facione, 1996; Wright, 2002; Moon, 2008 in Hashemi, 2012). A shift has occurred from viewing learning primarily as rote learning to conceptualizing learning as a constantly evolving process of discovering, questioning, and reformulating hypothesis (Pennycook, 1994).

Today, teaching is directed to train students' higher order thinking skills. What it means by higher order thinking skill is educating students to have argument in facing a problem.

Response Writing

According to Flemming (2018), response writing is a piece of writing that is constructed after the writer reads some texts. In this kind of writing, the point of view is usually the first person. The writer can add his or her personal reaction and impression. The steps for completing the reaction or response are: 1) observing or reading (or probably watching and listening) a piece of information; 2) marking interesting statement(s); 3) rereading the marked piece and reflecting on it/them; 4) recording the thoughts; 5) developing a thesis; 6) writing an outline; 7) constructing the essay.

Cahill and Killborn (2017) writes that response writing is a piece of writing which is composed after the students receive some information. After reading the information, the next steps are to think of the answers to the following questions: 1) how do you feel about what you are reading? 2) what do you agree or disagree with? 3) can you identify with the situation?; 4) what would be the best way to evaluate the story (or the information)?

Unfortunately, since response writing uses the first person point of view, some students are found to write their opinion which is only based on their own assumption without looking for other arguments. However by using the steps of critical discourse analysis, it is expected that the students can read, listen, and discuss more on the case so that they can respond to a piece of information with rich and critical reasoning.

Action Research

Action research is also known as Participatory Action Research (PAR is an approach normally employed for enhancing conditions and practices in a range healthcare environments (Lingard et al., 2008). It encompasses healthcare practitioners carrying on systematic enquiries to help them improve their own practices, which in turn can enhance their working environment and the working environments of those who are part of it – clients, patients, and users. The purpose of undertaking action research is to bring about change in specific contexts, as Parkin (2009) describes it.

In educational institutions, action research is also needed to enhance the teaching and learning practice. Meyer (2000) cited in Lingard (2008) maintains that action research's strength lies in its focus on making solutions to practical problems and its ability

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to empower practitioners, by getting them to engage with research and the subsequent development or implementation activities.
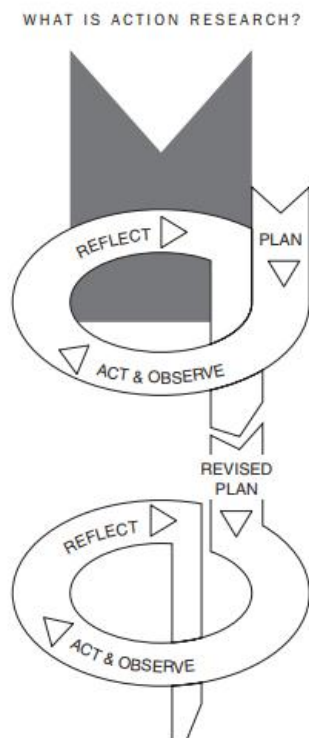
Pict 1 Kemmis and McTaggart's action research spiral

RESEARCH METHOD

Respondents

The respondents involved in the research were 25 students who were in the fourth semester of English Language Education Study Program of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences Faculty, Pakuan University. They were taking the class of Response Writing.

Instruments

The instruments used to collect the data were students' works, observation notes and list of questions for the focused group discussion. The students' works were assessed using the scoring rubric for writing adopted from Maggosh Essay Rubric for GRE and GMAT.

Procedures

First of all, the lecturer conducted the first cycle which was started by planning, doing and observing, then reflecting. After having the reflecting session, the lecturer and the observers made another planning for the second cycle. Next, the doing and observing sessions were conducted and the lecturer checked the students' works. After being

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checked, analyzed, and scored, the students' work was concluded.

The next step after the action research, the researcher conducted a focused group discussion. She invited the observers and all of the students to talk about what happened in the class sessions. Each of the students shared their opinion about the use of Classroom Discourse Analysis steps to help them improve their English skills and critical thinking ability.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed by first scoring and checking the students' works. Then it was crosschecked with the data gained from observation notes. Those procedures were done both in the first and also in the second cycles. Those data were then crosschecked again with the data gained from the result of focused group discussion.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first cycle of the action research

Planning

The planning session was conducted by the researcher and two observers. The researcher and also the observers were a teaching team of response writing class. In the first cycle, the students were planned to be given two texts with the same topic. One of the texts contained hoax and the other one was the true news. Students would be asked to choose one

which was the truth and found some sources to support their arguments. The arguments had to be written in the form of response writing.

Acting

The acting was conducted in a class which had been chosen by the researcher with the consideration that the class had a problem in the previous writing class. The class was considered to have a problem to be solved. The acting session was carried out by the researcher who was also the lecturer, the students who joined the class of response writing and two observers. What happened in the acting session was the same as what it had been planned.

Observing

The two observers were also lecturers teaching at other classes. They wrote a note in the class. They observed what happened in the class and the students' reaction towards the teaching and learning process.

Reflecting

In the last session of the first cycle was reflecting. The reflecting session was attended by the lecturer, the observers and some representatives of the students. From the reflecting session, it was found out that the students' response writing was not so critical. The students had not used the principles of critical discourse analysis yet. Mostly, the students merely wrote their own perception. Hence, the principles of CDA needs to be emphasized again.

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The score gained by the students in the first cycle

Table 1
The list of the students' writing score in the first cycle

No	Initial	Score	No	Initial	Score
1	FTH	62	13	NH	84
2	FRD	63	14	SS	71
3	EV	72	15	RA	83
4	MY	60	16	YA	74
5	RA	64	17	HR	82
6	SM	64	18	RE	65
7	NM	72	19	BM	80
8	DD	62	20	MW	70
9	EA	63	21	EL	65
10	FH	62	22	LG	82
11	H	73	23	SS	65
12	TS	62	24	HS	75
			25	FL	65

The Second Cycle

Planning

Since the score of the students in the first cycle was not really satisfying, the researcher and the observers planned to guide the students again in composing a piece of response writing. The principles of critical discourse analysis were explained again and the lecturer would emphasize about the consideration of the text, context, interaction, and ideology of the text. Unlike in the first cycle, in the second cycle the lecturer would have a discussion first about the topic without influencing the students to choose which text was the truth. The lecturer would also stimulate the students to pose their opinion which was their background knowledge (since they had not explored the issue yet by reading or listening to some sources).

Doing

In the doing session, the planning was done. The lecturer passed on two pieces of news printed on a paper. The students had to read the news and decided which news they would believe to be the true one. After all the students finished reading the news, the lecturer opened a discussion on the topic and invited the students to share their opinion. After the discussion, the lecturer elucidated again about the principles of CDA. She reminded the students to include the analysis of the text, the use of the wordings and grammar; the context, by connecting the content and today's condition; the interaction by finding out the hidden purpose of the news writer; and the ideology enclosed in the piece of the news.

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Observing

From the note taken by the observers, it was found that the students used their gadget to find some sources related to the news. They also downloaded several videos discussing the topic. Some students were also caught discussing with their friends about the news. No one was seen to be passive. Everybody was seen to be busy doing something.

Reflecting

The reflecting session was conducted three days after the last doing-session. It was due to the scoring and analyzing of the students' writing. From the result of the students' writing, it was found that the quality of the writing had improved. Most of the students did no longer merely write their opinion but there was discussion about the language use, the assumption of the ideology, the connection with the social context and the interaction. Their response writing was more qualified.

Students' score list of the second cycle

Table 2

The List of Students' Writing Score in the Second Cycle

No	Initial	Score 2
1	FTH	75
2	FRD	77
3	EV	80
4	MY	70
5	RA	70
6	SM	75
7	NM	75
8	DD	72
9	EA	72
10	FH	70
11	H	80
12	TS	70
13	NH	90
14	SS	75
15	RA	90
16	YA	75
17	HR	90
18	RE	70
19	BM	90
20	MW	80
21	EL	70
22	LG	88
23	SS	70
24	HS	82
25	FL	75

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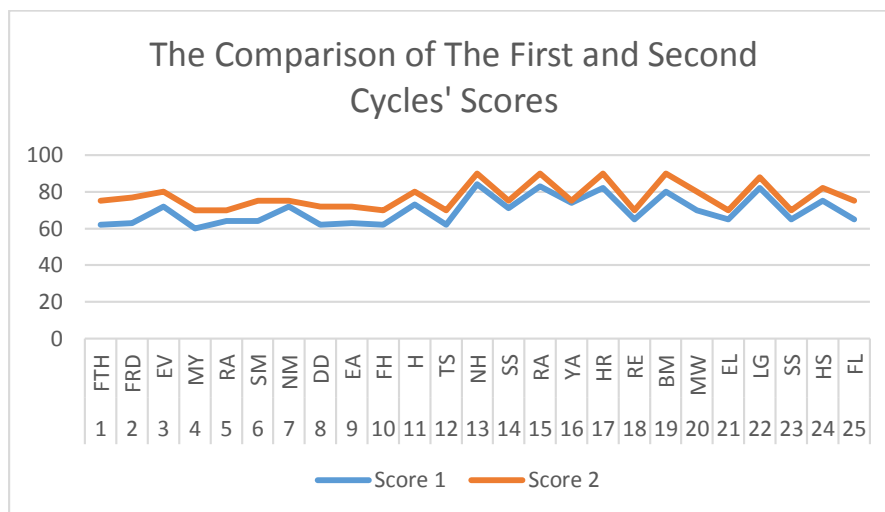**The comparison of the first and the second cycles' scores**

Figure 1. The comparison of the first and the second cycles' scores

The Result of Focused Group Discussion

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Classroom Improves Students' English Language Skills

In the focused group discussion, the students stated that they gained better skill in reading since they were exposed to many sources, many reading texts.

Excerpt 1

Kemampuan membaca menjadi lebih baik karena eeeee…… banyak membaca. Kan kalo ga baca respon writingnya jadi kurang bagus.

[my reading skill is better now because mmmmm…. I read a lot. If I did not read a lot, my response writing quality would not be good]

Excerpt 2

Jadi senang membaca karena semakin banyak membaca, pengetahuan saya menjadi bertambah. Dengan banyak membaca, keterampilan membaca saya jadi semakin bagus

[I love reading now because I read a lot. My knowledge increases. By reading a lot, my reading skill also improves]

The students feel that their reading skill improves and they love reading more than they did before. Besides reading skill, their listening skill also gets better.

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Excerpt 3

Terkadang saya lebih banyak mendownload video yang berisi topic yang sedang dibahas. Saya dengarkan dengan hati-hati supaya saya bisa mengerti maksudnya. Semakin sering mendengar akhirnya kemampuan mendengar saya menjadi lebih baik.

[Sometimes I downloaded videos more containing the topic being discussed. I listened to them carefully so I could understand the meaning. The more I listen, the better my listening skill becomes.]

Excerpt 4

Karena sering mendengarkan video, jadi banyak vocab baru yang saya dapat. Sekarang saya menjadi lebih paham kalo mendengarkan sumber dalam bahasa Inggris.

[Since I listened more from the videos, I got much new vocabulary. Now I can comprehend more on sources speaking in English language].

Finding sources for supporting their arguments were sometimes done by downloading videos from the internet. Hence, the more they listen (watch), the more vocabulary they get and it helps them comprehend what they listen to in English language.

The next skill is speaking. Even though it was not clear whether the increase of speaking skill was in English language or in the students' mother tongue, but the following excerpts prove that the students could increase their speaking skill.

Excerpt 5

Terkadang dapat sumber yang meyakinkan bukan dari bacaan atau dari mendengarkan, tetapi dari berdiskusi dengan orang yang saya anggap menguasai topic tersebut. Saya merasa keterampilan berbicara saya menjadi lebih baik karena sering berdiskusi.

[Sometimes I find discussing with someone whom I believe understands the topic is more convincing than reading a text or listening to some videos. I feel like my speaking skill gets better since I discuss a lot]

Excerpt 6

Sebelum diskusi kan baca dulu, jadi pas diskusi ngomong saya lancar. Jadi menurut saya keterampilan berbicara saya semakin baik.

[Before having a discussion, I usually read first, so when I was discussing, the discussion flows smoothly. So I think that my speaking skill increases]

The last but not least is writing skill. The students think that their writing skill gets

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better than it was before. This fact is not only gained from the discussion with them but it can also be proven by their works.

Excerpt 7

Saya menulis respon setelah membaca, berdiskusi, dan menonton video dengan topic yang sama. Jadi tidak buntu lagi kalo menulis. Sepertinya kemampuan menulis saya semakin baik.

[I wrote my response writing after reading, discussing, and watching video with the same topic. Thus I did not encounter a dead end anymore when I was writing. I think my writing skill is better now]

Excerpt 8

Karena harus mencari sumber-sumber terlebih dahulu sebelum menulis, saya jadi banyak mendengar vocab baru, lalu saya cari tahu artinya, jadi saat menulis pun saya merasa lancar saja karena perbendaharaan kata saya sudah cukup banyak.

[since I had to look for sources before I wrote my response writing, I got much new vocabulary, then I looked for the meaning. Hence, I felt like I did not have any inhibition while writing because my vocabulary has been adequate].

It can be inferred that the use of critical discourse analysis in the classroom is able to improve students English language skills. This is in accordance with what was stated by Minakova (2014), Jalilifar, Khazaie, & Kasgari (2014).

Critical Discourse Analysis Improves Students' Critical Thinking

As it can be seen from the result of the first and the second cycle of the action research, there is significant improvement of the students' writing. The highest improvement is in the field of 'content'. In the first cycle it was seen that the students' response writing merely contained their opinion which was still shallow since it was not supported by sources. Only several students who could analyze the text according to the principles of critical discourse analysis. However in the second cycle, the students' score improved because their content became a lot better. They wrote their response while also including their analysis on the text, context,

interaction, and ideology of the writer. Therefore the students become more critical and cannot easily be driven by hoaxes. This finding is in accordance with Catalano and Moeller (2013), Harman, Ahn, and Bogue (2016), and Hashemi & Ghanizadeh (2012).

CONCLUSION

From the action research conducted in two cycles, it is proven that critical discourse analysis can improve students' ability to think critically because they did not merely respond to the news using their shallow opinion but they did research first. They read, discussed, and listened to some sources prior to writing their response. By so doing, they could analyze the text according to the principles of critical discourse analysis which are analyzing the text, context, interaction, and ideology.

From the focused group discussion, it is clear that the students think that their English

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language skills improve. The improvement happens because they are exposed to not only written but also spoken English and at the end, they were also required to write. However, there is shortcoming in this research. The shortcoming is that the increase of the students' English language skills is only seen from what the students said in the focused group discussion and their works. The result would be better and convincing if the students were tested objectively to find out their improvement of the English language skills especially reading, speaking, and listening.

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