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Implementation of Critical Literacy Learning in Primary Education Through a Simple Research Writing Project

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Critical literacy skills are important for students to master. Literate students are students who have critical awareness of themselves and their environment so that they are able to critically and objectively solve problems. To form this mental attitude, the implementation of critical literacy learning needs to be constructed properly. Critical literacy learning is centered on texts and responses to texts that are realized through listening, reading, speaking, and writing tasks that are carried out in a balanced manner in a challenging task frame for students. Writing a research report requires objective analysis of the text and contextual problems found in the field, therefore research learning is one form of critical literacy learning. This research method is a qualitative method with an exploratory research type. This study aims to describe the implementation of critical literacy learning in elementary education. Data collection uses documentation, interview and observation techniques with the main instrument being the researcher himself. In collecting data on critical literacy learning planning, the researcher was assisted by additional instruments, the researcher used observation sheets, and semi-structured interview sheets with teachers and students. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and methods was used. The results of the study show that the implementation pattern of learning constructed in critical literacy learning is to expose students to various readings to construct theories with meaningful experiences, understand readings by reviewing them from various perspectives, find contextual problems, and discuss contextual problems based on theory and objectivity. The assessment carried out by the teacher is an assessment that uses various forms with representative instruments. In addition, student involvement in the assessment will determine objectivity. Of the 5 criteria proposed to measure critical literacy skills, students have only reached the third stage, namely analytical. This happens because the learning process carried out by the teacher has not met the requirements of good feedback strategies, representative assignments and maximum facilitation from the teacher.

1. Introduction

Literacy is important to be mastered by students. Students with high literacy skills will be able to develop themselves, behave, act, and make the right decisions related to the context of life and life (Oktaviandi Bertua Pardede, 2017; Pérez et al., 2017; Sari et al., 2023). Literacy in learning in schools can be seen as an approach, material, or program. Literacy materials are presented through systematic learning activities that are integrated into certain subjects. Language learning in schools is a concrete form of literacy as a material, but literacy skills are basically present in every subject (Huh & Suh, 2018; Mansyur, 2016; Novandi et al., 2019; Pasmiasi, 2011). The scope of literacy skills learning includes understanding information that refers to several activities including, collecting information, processing information, and communicating information (Behrman, 2006; Heny Subandiyah, 2015; Sari et al., 2023). School literacy is the skill of accessing, understanding, and using things intelligently through various activities, such as reading, seeing, listening, writing, and or speaking (Faizah et al; 2016). These four literacy skills are interrelated and important for students to master. Listening and reading as receptive skills underlie speaking and writing as productive skills. In learning, these 4 skills are explicitly found in language learning.

Language learning rests on texts that must be read critically and is known as critical literacy (Ariyati, 2017; Priyatni, 2014). The emphasis of critical literacy learning is to generate critical awareness in students (Magnus Åberg & Christina Olin-Scheller, 2017; "New Perspect. Teach. Work. with Lang. Digit. Era," 2016; Paulus Widiatmoko & Ignatius Tri Endarto, 2021; Rahman & Atjalau, 2019). Critical awareness is basically the sensitivity of individuals to think objectively about the content of the text by considering various points of view. Understanding the text is not only studying the content of the text but also taking a stance on the text (Hall & Piazza, 2008; Rahayu et al., 2012). So far, literacy learning has been built on the assumption that literacy is a social agreement. In this case, dominant institutions, including education, build literacy skills that lead to a general understanding of texts that disguise their ideological nature. Thus, power, ideology, and social context seem to be unrelated to the text (Janks, 2018; Paul Frye, 1997). Basically, text is something that is not neutral in nature. In this case, texts can be used to shape and influence individuals' views on social issues. Furthermore (Santoso, 2012) states that language is a social practice. Language as a social practice has implications for 3 things, namely: 1) language is part of society; 2) language is a social product; 3) Language is a process of social conditioning by society that is non-linguistic. Therefore, social awareness in individuals can be formed through language.

The growth of social awareness in students can be carried out by criticizing social injustice

that occurs in the surrounding environment (Frye, 1997; Rogers, 2013). In the context of critical literacy learning, students are encouraged to question various issues related to issues that arise in social disparities motivated by socioeconomic status, race, class, gender, social orientation, and so on (Braga, 2007). Being "literate" critically means mastering the ability to read and criticize messages in text (Roza, 2015). The focus of critical literacy skills development is centered on reading and writing skills oriented to in-depth discussions about texts as well as challenging writing tasks with the approach of Dialogic Strategy Instruction abbreviated as DSI (Åberg & Olin-Scheller, 2018). Early literacy learning is closely related to the formation of literacy in universities which contains analytical writing skills, extensive study of literary texts, technical aspects of careful writing, and complex speaking skills as evidence of broad compound thinking skills that have an impact on democratic attitudes when individuals become leaders (O'Quinn, 2005). Furthermore, it was found that literacy learning is closely related to character formation (Saribas et al., 2017). Surveys show that language skill development has a close relationship with students' mental formation (Dawe & We, 2016). In addition to the mental dimension, critical literacy skills related to information literacy are also closely related to student learning achievement in various fields (Ratna Khaerati Armas et al., 2019). Critical literacy skills shape individuals to read, see, and act in the world. In this case, the text has a social effect for each reader, therefore in critical literacy, the reader's task is to understand the author's position to decide whether or not the reader agrees with the author's opinion (Janks, 2018b). Starting from these various explanations, mastery of critical literacy is important for students.

Critical literacy learning in students is carried out with an active and challenging approach to reading and textual practice (Luke, 2012; Fisher, 2008; Ghannoum & Cooper, 2020; Huh & Suh, 2018). Basically, critical literacy involves analyzing and criticizing the relationship between texts, language, power, social groups, and social practices. This leads individuals to see written, visual, oral, multimedia and performance texts as materials to question and challenge the attitudes, values, and beliefs that lie behind a text (Janks, 2018b; Weng, 2021). The learning of critical literacy skills can be realized through the activity of examining the meaning in the text, considering the purpose for the text and the motive for writing the text, understanding that the texts are not neutral, questioning and challenging the ways in which the text has been constructed, analyzing the power of language in contemporary society, emphasizing some readings, directing students to respond to a problem, giving students the opportunity to consider and clarify their attitudes, as well as giving students the opportunity to take social action based on their chosen attitudes. In accordance with the explanation above, critical literacy is centered on texts and responses to texts. Analysis of texts as one of

the main parts of critical literacy activities, is contained in reading and listening skills. In this skill, students are required to understand the text presented as material to determine attitudes towards the content of the text. Text comprehension activities are contained in the basic competencies of reading comprehension and intensive listening. Furthermore, the activity will continue in response activities as well as providing solutions to problems in the text. This activity is explicitly carried out on speaking and writing skills with basic competencies in responding to problems orally and in writing.

Related to the national education policy in Indonesia, in general, the education that is held must refer to Pancasila as the philosophy and foundation of the State of the Republic of Indonesia. This means that the learning substance developed in schools must be in line and must not contradict Pancasila. Explicitly, the policy is contained in the National Education Law No. 20 of 2003 article 2 which reads "National education based on Pancasila and the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945" and article 3 which reads "National education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation's life, aiming to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear the nation. God Almighty, noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and a democratic and responsible citizen". Thus, critical literacy learning in schools in Indonesia, of course, has special characteristics.

Basically, every individual has potential and opportunities to develop according to their potential. For this reason, schools as one of the educational institutions are obliged to facilitate the development of each student by considering this potential (Wahidah, 2019; Yusri & Ritmi, 2013). The implication is that schools should focus on learning on the learning process and individual development as outputs rather than inputs and outcomes. In this regard, currently the minister of education carries the concept of independent learning which contains the following policy points; 1) National Standard School Examination (USBN); 2) National exam (UN); 3) Learning Implementation Plan (RPP); 4) New Student Admission Regulations (PPDB) zoning. Of the 4 policy points, one of the policy points that invited a wide reaction in the community was the zoning PPDB issue. In 2019, many national media reported rejection of zoning for various reasons, ranging from a system that was considered complicated, did not facilitate outstanding students, to the confusion of parents who could not get advanced schools for their children due to difficult access. On the other hand, state-status schools that originally implemented a new student admission system based on the results of the National-Based School Final Exam (UASBN) tended to be pessimistic about being able to manage the

diversity of initial abilities of zoning-based students, so that in the process of admitting new students after the elementary school level provided a quota for achievement pathways. This shows that the school does not have enough confidence in the uniqueness of each student and the importance of the process to develop it. Starting from this, research on the construction of good learning, especially in the realm of critical literacy, needs to be carried out.

From preliminary studies in several excellent schools, it was found that SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar is one of the educational institutions that does not require special requirements during the recruitment process of prospective students. As a private school that has the right to make selections according to the foundation's policy, this school accepts all prospective students who register. The educational background, initial abilities, and characteristics of students at this school are diverse. The educational pattern at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar adheres to the principle that every child is great and special, while school is a means of self-development for students to be able to solve problems well and wisely by considering many aspects. SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar is under the auspices of the Nurul Aqobah foundation based on Islamic boarding schools. If viewed from the background of the patron foundation, the managerial principles used as the basis for school management are certainly religious-based, which in the view of the general public leads to doctrine and obedience. However, the results of the interview with the chairman of the foundation show that SMPIT was actually developed based on the concept of a liberating school where students' awareness of themselves, the environment, and their role in the environment is explored through a democratic learning process. This is evidenced by the freedom of students to communicate with teachers both in terms of learning, classroom policies, assessments and personal problems. Students at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar can propose a place to study that is chosen according to the class agreement, protest the grades that are considered inappropriate to the teacher by submitting objections orally and attaching supporting evidence.

Some important points that can be concluded from the results of the preliminary study on learning management at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar are that the school adheres to the principle of liberating in the management and implementation of learning, every student has potential and is able to excel as long as it is directed appropriately, in managing learning teachers are facilitators as well as partners for students, teachers as facilitators in learning must have the same vision and mission as the vision and mission institutions and manifest in their every action. Maximizing learning outcomes is pursued by utilizing all student potentials with meaningful learning, meaningful learning is carried out with the principle of process to produce real work. One of the implementations of these principles is manifested in the form

of research learning as a special subject developed as a school curriculum. In this activity, teachers who teach research subjects form groups of students in the classroom and then assign simple research through observation of problems related to subject matter in accordance with the teacher's field of study. The final results of the research are written in the form of a report presented at the munaqosah event and assessed by the team.

A simple research report is one of the learning products that relies on critical literacy. To produce a good report, students need to do analytical critical listening and reading activities then analyze and write the results of their analysis in the form of a simple research report.

The principles of research learning applied at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar are in line with the principles of critical literacy learning. Interestingly, critical literacy offers freedom of thought which in quotation marks is not restricted, but SMPIT is clearly tied to a religious-based foundation that develops in Indonesian culture. In addition, the school is bound to the national curriculum even though it is only used as a condition for obtaining a formal diploma for students. Thus, the implementation of critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat AL-Anwar through writing simple research is an interesting topic to research.

In order to obtain accurate information about the implementation of critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar through simple research, this research is focused on how the learning process of writing simple research is constructed by the 8th grade teacher of SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar. With the focus of this research, the purpose of this research is to describe the learning pattern of writing simple research reports in grade 8 of SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar.

2. Method

This study aims to describe the implementation of critical literacy learning through writing a simple research report. To find the construction of critical literacy learning in schools, information exploration is focused on the implementation of research learning as a form of critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar. Starting from the focus and objectives of the research, this research is an exploratory qualitative research. In this study, a qualitative approach is used where the data to be collected is in the form of words in the form of sentences (John W. Creswell, 2015). Considering that the object of the research is critical literacy at the elementary level, the chosen research location is SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar, Jombang, Indonesia while the research subject is grade VIII students in research subjects. The selection of research venues and subjects is based on the consideration that the study of

critical literacy at the previous level (SD) is not so visible in the curriculum. In accordance with Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 17 paragraph (2) that basic education is in the form of Elementary Schools (SD) and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) or other equivalent forms as well as Junior High Schools (SMP) and Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning SISDIKNAS, 2003). Another consideration is from the results of the preliminary study obtained the uniqueness of SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar which refers to the school of liberation where this is in line with the principle of critical literacy.

The subjects of this research are 2 research teachers and all students of grade VIII of SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar who participated in the research class. In this case, the researcher did not set a prerequisite so that all students both in the girls' class and in the boys' class were involved as research subjects. Furthermore, students from classes A, B, and C were divided into research groups by teachers where each class consisted of 3 groups with heterogeneous abilities. In each group, the teacher assigns the group leader as the driving force by selecting students whose abilities are initially considered high. Based on these considerations, for the purpose of collecting data with interview techniques, the group leader is considered to represent his members.

In accordance with the focus of the research, the data taken in this study is data on the implementation of critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar.

3. Result and Discussion

The strategies used by teachers in critical literacy learning are divided into activities before learning, during learning, and after learning. Before learning, teachers make an initial diagnosis of the class's understanding of the research, group students according to their abilities, provide information about the outline of the project and research activities, then assign students to read independently, readings related to the topic to be raised in the research. During learning, the teacher explained the material followed by activities with students to carry out research in a guided manner according to the target, write a draft report, revise the draft according to input and feedback, make a power point for the sake of the final presentation and practice the presentation in class. After learning, students present a report on the results of group research at the munaqosah event, then revise their papers as a graduation requirement in research subjects.

The patterns of classroom interaction identified in learning include interactions between teachers and students that take place in one direction and two directions changing roles. Interaction between students takes place in both directions. One-way interaction occurs when the teacher delivers the material. Two-way interaction of changing roles occurs in the consultation process. In the interaction between students, there is a two-way interaction when students discuss in groups and practice presentations in class.

Broadly speaking, there are 6 tasks that students do in critical literacy learning, namely; 1) find the basic concept of the research; 2) find problems to be discussed in the research; 3) find theories relevant to the research; 4) writing research reports; 5) making research presentations; and 7) presenting the results of the research.

There are two common patterns found in the structure of material presentation by teachers in critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar. The first pattern that can be concluded is that the teacher presents examples of research results, gives analysis tasks to find concepts, then applies concepts to real works. The second pattern that can be concluded is that the teacher assigns students in a structured manner to explore insights, explain research concepts, apply the concepts found, provide feedback on the work and carry out finalization as the final revision.

The learning media used in critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar is diverse, including power points containing basic research materials, previous research reports, theories contained in online scientific articles and books, and teachers. The learning media used by teachers is relevant to research theories but does not always contain the topics that students are researching. Thus, the learning media used is general and can be drawn analogy to student research in particular.

From the explanation above, it is known that in carrying out research learning as a form of critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar, teachers apply the following policies.

- a. The strategy used before learning is dividing students into heterogeneous groups, explaining research material, and exposing students to various readings with free reading assignments.
- b. Strategy during learning, carrying out consultations according to weekly targets, providing general feedback and providing logical consequences if student groups do not achieve weekly quantitative targets.

- c. The strategy after learning is to carry out finalization by improving linguistic aspects and making power points
- d. The tasks carried out by students include independent tasks to find articles related to the topic and read freely. Apart from that, the teacher gives structured tasks to groups of students to find problems, consult, carry out research, and report results with the teacher's guidance.
- e. The material in research learning includes basic and applied material which is presented as factual, conceptual, structural and metacognitive material. To present the material, the teacher uses 2 main patterns, namely: i) presenting examples of research results, giving analysis tasks to find concepts, then applying the concepts into real work; ii) the teacher assigns students in a structured manner to explore insights, explain research concepts, apply discovered concepts, provide general feedback on the work and carry out finalization as final revision
- f. Interactions that arise in learning include 1-way interactions between teachers and students when explaining material, 2-way interactions between teachers and groups of students and between students that occur in the discussion and consultation process.

Based on the outline of teacher policies in implementing learning above, research findings that can be put forward regarding research learning as a form of critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar are, teachers construct learning implementation by implementing strategies for grouping students heterogeneously, exposing students to research theory, limited freely selected reading according to the topic, general feedback on student group writing drafts during guidance, open interaction on the learning process and policies as well as factual, conceptual and structural material according to the topic discussed.

Broadly speaking, there are four fundamental principles that must be implemented by teachers when implementing critical literacy learning, namely, involving students' thinking, guiding students' thinking, expanding students' thinking, and reflection (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004). Jank (2013) suggests that critical literacy can be realized through several activities including: 1) examining the meaning in the text; 2) consider the purpose of the text and the motive for writing the text; 3) understand that texts are not neutral, that they represent certain views, silence other points of view and influence people's ideas; 4) question and challenge the ways in which the text has been constructed; 5) Analyze the power of language in contemporary society; 6) emphasize some reading of the text; g) ask students to take a stand

on the problem; 7) give students the opportunity to consider and clarify their own attitudes; 8) attitudes and values; j) give students the opportunity to take social action (Janks, 2013). In line with Janks' opinion, in critical literacy classes there are six categories of tasks that students can carry out, including: 1) reading supplementary reading; 2) read a lot of texts; 3) reading from a resistant perspective; 4) produce counter text; 5) conduct research on student choices and; 6) carry out social action (Behrman, 2006).

Thus, in theory, the activities carried out in critical literacy classes are activities that expose students to many texts, examine texts from various points of view, and respond to texts and follow up by taking a stance on the texts. Implementing critical literacy learning in the classroom must consider the use of diverse texts. The selection of this text is based on problems that are appropriate to the student's level of development, requires critical responses while challenging students to express their opinions and arguments about the problems contained in the text used. To provide responses to a text, students can do so in writing or orally in conveying ideas and concepts objectively regarding a problem.

In the implementation of research learning as a form of critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar, it was found that teachers construct learning implementation by implementing strategies for grouping students heterogeneously, exposing students to research theory, freely chosen reading limited to topics, general feedback on student group writing drafts during guidance, open interactions in the learning process, as well as factual, conceptual and structural material according to the topics discussed.

The strategies used by teachers at SMPIT Misykat AL-Anwar basically meet the criteria for critical literacy learning, however, regarding the details of reading assignments, teachers do not consider using selected and appropriate texts in building student objectivity towards problems. This is caused by unclear instructions in independent reading assignments and a lack of control over the content of the reading students read.

In the process of implementing learning, interactions inevitably occur between teachers and students and students with other students. The interaction process and instructions given by the teacher influence students in the process of responding to the text. Teachers with open interactions and specific instructions have a greater opportunity to develop students' critical literacy skills. This is in line with research in Scotland which found that the way teachers encourage students to respond to a text is one of the keys to the success of critical literacy learning (Blixen & Pannell, 2020). In research learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar, the class interaction patterns identified in learning included interactions between teachers and

students taking place in one direction and two directions changing roles and being open. Openness was demonstrated by students who dared to ask questions and protest against the teacher team's policy of *munaqosah* even though there was no agreement within the students themselves.

In general, there are 6 tasks carried out by students in critical literacy learning, namely; 1) find the basic concepts of research; 2) find the problem that will be discussed in the research; 3) find theories that are relevant to research; 4) write research reports; 5) make research presentations; and 7) present the research results. This form of assignment is based on considerations of meeting students' learning needs, where to be able to make research reports and present them, students must practice directly under the guidance of the teacher. In working on assignments, students are given a weekly target and must go through a consultation and revision process. Research findings show that SMPIT teacher Misykat Al-Anwar uses assignment strategies to students to discover basic research concepts. When writing reports on research results, the strategy applied is general feedback given during weekly consultations. If during the consultation process, students do not achieve the target, the teacher assigns the target to the following week. There is a gap between assignment practice and feedback strategies used by SMPIT teacher Misykat Al-Anwar and theory. Independent assignments given by teachers should be clear and directed. Teachers should give instructions that provide guidance in carrying out assignments, for example when students are asked to find a problem the teacher should give the command "find an interesting problem to research by completing a guided worksheet" so not just giving verbal orders to observe and record the results of observations in the field then take it into the consultation process. Likewise with the feedback given, teachers should provide detailed comments by considering aspects of format, content and language and examine student assignments in detail during the consultation process. Not just providing general feedback and checking the achievement of quantitative targets.

The next finding related to the implementation of critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar is regarding the structure of material presentation and the type of material presented in learning. There are two general patterns found in the structure of material presentation by teachers in critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar. The first pattern that can be concluded is that the teacher presents examples of research results, gives analysis tasks to find concepts, then applies the concepts into real work. The second pattern that can be concluded is that teachers assign students in a structured manner to explore insights, explain research concepts, apply discovered concepts, provide feedback on work and

carry out finalization as final revision. The types of material discussed in learning include factual, conceptual, structural and metacognitive material. In relation to material, in theory educational material is the educational content and curriculum provided to students to achieve predetermined educational goals. Thus, educational goals will not be achieved as they should be without providing students with educational materials (Cahyani, 2010; Sabarudin, 2018; Vukić et al., 2020) . In the learning context, learning materials are selected as optimally as possible to help students achieve competency standards and basic competencies. In selecting learning materials, teachers should consider the type, scope, sequence and treatment of the learning materials

The learning media used in critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar varies, including power points containing basic research material, previous research reports, theories contained in online scientific articles and books, as well as teachers. The learning media used by teachers is relevant to research theory but does not always contain the topics researched by students. Thus, the learning media used is general and can be drawn by analogy to student research specifically. In this case, the learning media used by teachers and representatives is to provide students with the information they need related to research. Teachers use a variety of learning media in accordance with the principles of critical literacy learning. Learning media is an important aspect in knowledge construction. Learning media helps strengthen understanding of curriculum content. Learning will take place effectively if it uses multimodal reinforcement where learning media is one of the aspects contained in it. Effective use of media will help teachers convey learning material while making it easy for students to understand learning material (Batubra et al., 2023; Sartika et al., 2022; Setyawan, 2021) .

4. Conclusion

The teacher's learning implementation pattern, in research learning as a form of critical literacy learning at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar, is to expose students to various readings to construct theories with meaningful experiences, understand reading by reviewing it from various points of view, find contextual problems, and discuss contextual problems based on theory and objectivity. The research teacher team at SMPIT Misykat Al-Anwar does not collaborate with subject teachers who discuss linguistic and cultural aspects.

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