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UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' CRITICAL LITERACY IN THEIR SPEAKING SKILL

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a b s t r a c t

One way to communicate and expressing ideas are through Speaking. Speakers' capability in transferring ideas into oral presentation depends on their critical literacy's capacity. Thus, this research aims to investigate critical literacy demonstrated by students in their speaking performance. This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method. The samples of this research were 5th semester of 25 students from the University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang. In collecting the data, the researcher used a speaking test and an interview with a purposive sampling technique. The researcher found out that all critical literacy aspects occurred in the students' content through their speaking performance are varied. High students presented more critical literacy indicators than medium and low students. High students had good preparation and achieved all critical literacy indicators, middle students had little preparation and achieved half of the critical literacy indicators, and low students were lack of preparation and did not achieve critical literacy indicators. This study suggested that all stages of the speaking process, especially the pre-speaking stage, can help students to speak and stimulate their critical literacy better.

INTRODUCTION

University students may have a good literacy in the era of digital technology to conduct active and interdisciplinary learning. Learning at the University of Muhammadiyah for English study program, students are required to master the English skills, such as reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Brown, 2004a, 2004b). As the study program proposed in the mission and vision, speaking skills became one of the fundamental skills to be able to practice and use it comprehensively. English-speaking skill is one of the main skills that need to be mastered globalize in order to be able to contribute widely. The ability to speak English is not only a global communication tool but also a person's identity in showing his abilities in the form of ideas, ways of thinking, and socializing. (Zulfikar (2022)explained that speaking skill is a subject of universal interest and utility because speaking is the basis of culture and the basis of business. Without speaking, we cannot share our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and ideas wproperly==. Besides that, speaking can determine people's success. In fact, there is no seller who can sell anything unless he can explain the quality of his effective spoken words (Cooke et al., 2017; Shawer, 2016). Therefore, mastering speaking skills is important as this skill is a communicative skill to interact globally.

Since literacy is proposed by The New London Group in 1996 literacy pedagogy become a chore of teaching and learning pedagogy (Tan & McWilliam, 2009), in the other hand students are supported to have it practically and theoretically, because it is important for learners to help them in contributing as an active learner. Critical literacy is not only important in an educational context but also in the society or environment. Lifestyle changed rapidly in the digital age associated with critical literacy because critical literacy suggest human about life, ideologies, identities, and the value of life (Miller, 2015). When they think about something which wants to be done, they need to decide whether it is appropriate to be done or not. Critical literacy engaged human life and behavior. For this reason, students must think critically in order to have a better quality of self in school and in the society and environment.

Students who have joined a university are also required to be able to understand a system that applies to the institution, and to be able to understand it, critical abilities are required. The objective of understanding the existing systems, learning models, and social practices is so that students have a clear attachment to their institutions. Critical literacy is also able to develop the student's way of thinking so that he can understand every problem faced because this critical thinking literacy involves the ability to analyze the relationship between texts, language, social practice, the power of information, attitudes, and behavior (Miller & Schulz, 2014). Critical literacy is the ability to embed discrimination requires involving in-depth skills in analytical information.

Critical literacy is the highest thought level with some indicators such as being able to recognize problems, finding solutions to existing problems, collecting and compiling necessary information, recognizing assumptions, logical thinking, distinguish factual and nonfactual news, evaluate, express, draw conclusions from existing data (Goodrich et al., 2019), meanwhile, critical literacy is an individual competence in elaborating and utilizing the brain. Critical literacy plays an important role for students to help students weighing up with creative and best solutions for a problem in any situation and live a meaningful life, justify and reflect on our values and decisions in a global interaction and global competition (Tejedor-García et al., 2020). By having this skill, students are able to choose the best step or best way for their future life, to reflect on their life in the past, and to make their life better in the future by learning from their experiences in the past.

Critical literacy is not only affecting students' thinking skills but also affects their speaking skills because when students want to deliver ideas, they need to put the content that they want to say, and the content is produced when students have a critical dimension. In order to speak well, students need good content in their speaking get content, students must stimulate their critical literacy such as explore sentences to be developed, arranging the best words into a good utterance, making a conclusion, evaluating the information whether it is correct information or not, and they must analyze the sentences (Fairclough, 2021; Mohammadkhani et al., 2015). Furthermore, students also have activities that demand them to think critically before they are going to speak such as presentations, debates, discussions, etc. These activities need critical thinking, before students have to convey their opinion/idea in their activities, they need to explore information from some sources, understand it, analyze it, and then evaluate whether the information is true or not so that they can convey their idea with reason and evidence from the source that they have got before. As said by (Provenzo & Apple (2015a) that critical thinking helps them to make better and get more information about whether something is true, effective, productive, or not.

Furthermore, university students in Indonesia, especially the University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang students are generally uncomfortable speaking English critically and sharing their ideas due to the critical literacy is need to be practiced properly and drill the

impact, the speaking performance is not performed as the expected (DeWaelsche, 2015). University students need to practice their communicative skills to enhance their critical thinking, and its way can be boosted by their habit to criticize the information and then represent their understanding in a discussion. This research will investigate university students' critical literacy through their speaking performance among their classmates, and find out what are the basic factors which make student's critical literacy still low.

Since English became language corpora, the basis of communication will be based on critical literacy. Having good critical thinking will impact the student's communication skills because they will have much information and ideas (Chollet et al., 2016; Kim, 2008). Hence, speaking with critical literacy will have a good perspective for upgrading academic values, and networking. The researcher assumes that this research will be able to show how the importance of critical literacy to support speaking and communicative skill in this digital era. In the next future, critical literacy is not only a substantial competence, but an urgent skill for the digital age generation to be able to interact among people globally (Luke, 2012; Pelajaran & Kewarganegaraan, 2017).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research about critical literacy and speaking skill is not something new if separated, but there will be lots of new understanding if critical literacy is investigated in someone's speaking skill because through this way people can see how smart and communicative is he during his/her speech.

Speaking as a tool to communicate

Speaking skill is considered the most essential part of an EFL course because the dynamic need for international communication in the information age has made many language learners to take a part to improve their speaking ability. Speaking skill as one of the language skills needs extra treatment to master it, just like drilling and practice (Arjulayana et al., 2021), furthermore speaking is a way to convey meaning orally. Speaking skill not only involves some skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency but also how to process information and language. Good speaking skills can be determined when the speaker can make the listener understand.

Speaking skill is not only about speaking aspects like fluency accuracy, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation but also about how to process the information and language. (Bruce Tillit & Mary Newton Bruder, 1999; Khamkhien, 2010)said that speaking ability as the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only knowing of language features but also having the ability to process information and language 'on the spot'. Meanwhile, Ur (1996) said that the success of speaking activity has characteristics such as 1) The language learners speak a lot, 2) All the participants get the opportunity to speak, 3) having a good motivation to practice speaking, 4) language production is acceptable and understandable (de Paola et al., 2021; Isaacs, 2016; khamkhien, 2010).

The main purpose of speaking is for communicating ideas to make a good relationship, without speaking it can be less effective when communicating with others. According to Leong & Ahmadi (2017) Speaking is one of the important skills to be mastered because humans communicate frequently use oral form more than written form. The oral communication will not be able to practice confidently without critical literacy, because through critical literacy people will have many ideas, able to use their minds properly, and think logically and analytically (Huh, 2016; Janks, 2013; Luke, 2012; Provenzo & Apple, 2015).

Classroom activities can support students in speaking critically through some steps, such as acting from a script, communication games, discussion, prepared talks, questionnaires, simulation, and role-play (Burns, 1967; Richards et al., 2008). All those activities can be improved with their critical and logical knowledge. Hence, this fundamental language skill is need to be practiced and supported by the other receptive language skills to boost the speaking skill critically.

Critical literacy

Critical literacy is a very important tool to make a conclusion, decision, or argument that has a good reason, and logical reason. Before people state an argument, they need to state it based on the evidence. Having good literacy will encourage many skills for human interaction, such as learning to think in critically analytical and evaluative ways means using mental processes such as attention, categorization, selection, and judgment. Hence, critical literacy is the individual competence involving some skills like categorizing, selecting, differentiating, comparing, and contrasting (Cope & Kalantzis, 1996; Horarik et al., 2018; Luke, 2012).

Furthermore, critical literacy is the ability to consider a range of information derived from many different sources, to process the information in a logical way, challenge it, analyze it, and finally consider conclusions that can be defended and justified. In conclusion, critical literacy is considered to use cognitive skills such as categorizing, analyzing, selecting, differentiating, comparing, and contrasting to make desirable outcomes (Huh, 2016; Janks, 2013).

Having good critical literacy will drive our pattern of thinking in a good scaffolding, hence critical literacy is able to bring good change for this generation due to their capability in analyzing, understanding, socializing, and creating (Kustini et al., 2020; Setiawan et al., 2019).

Assessing Critical Literacy

Since 21st-century learning is known globally, critical literacy seems associated with critiques of language concepts which is begun to be used in academic settings, meanwhile, this literacy also always be associated with social culture in social life (Felipe Fajardo & Felipe, 2016; Provenzo & Apple, 2015; Rowland et al., 2014). In the digital age, most of the young generation prefer to socialize digitally, finally, the skill of socialization, and interaction with a real human in real life is poor, meanwhile, through critical literacy, they will understand how importance of real-life socialization to support their humanities in the digital age (Ersoy & Güneyli, 2016)

Tasmanian Department of Education (2013) in (Schulz, Samantha. Miller, 2017) said there are 8 things that can be used as a reference in understanding critical literacy, namely; 1) Able to understand the meaning of the text, 2) Able to determine the purpose and text's purpose, 3) Understand the text in depth to persuade other's opinion, 4) Criticize the arrangement of an informational text, 5) Emphasizes more reading text comprehension in providing actual issues, 6) Able to analyze the power of language in contemporary social, 7) Providing students to have opportunities in clarifying and change existing attitudes and values, 8) able to take part in social activities.

Concerning the theory that the researcher uses to assess students here, although there are lots of theories stated about critical indicators, this research will adopt 6 criteria: involves the questioning and examination of ideas, and requires you to synthesize, analyze, interpret,

evaluate, and respond to the texts you read or listen to (Janks, 2013; Luke, 2012; Provenzo & Apple, 2015b)

METHOD

The method of research is a very crucial step, due to synchronization between the data collection, sample, and data analysis. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. 5th-semester students are called senior level in the university because they have learned for almost 3 years in the university, meanwhile, their speaking skills are encouraged to be better, in line with this reason, this researcher took 25 students from 5th semester of the English department from Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang to be the sample.

The data collection is taken from 2 research instruments; an Interview and a speaking test. The interview consists of 10 questions with a scoring scale from 1 to 5. The level of 1 means strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 means neutral, 4 means agree, and 5 means Strongly agree. The interview question related to students' understanding of critical literacy and their experience in speaking performance with critical literacy. The speaking test is given through different topics with a minimum of 3 minutes duration and a maximum of 15 minutes duration. The data analysis refers to 8 criteria adopted by (Miller, 2015), such as 1) understanding the text, 2) the ability to determine the text's purposes, 3) understanding the text in depth to persuade other's opinions, 4) Criticizing the arrangement of information, 5) emphasizing the actual issues in discussion and presentation, 6) Able to analyze the power of language in contemporary social, 7) having a good attitude and opportunity to appreciate everything, 8) able to take part in social activities (Miller, 2015a).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Concerning the data analysis based on speaking test and interview, the data can be elaborated based on the limitation of the problems:

University student's critical literacy through their speaking performance

The results and discussion should be presented in the same part, clearly and briefly. The discussion part should contain the benefit of the research result, not the repeat result part. The results and discussion part can be written in the same part to avoid extensive quotations. University students of the English department from Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang learned speaking from 1st semester until the 8th semester in the different names of lessons, such as conversation, group discussion, speaking for advance, public speaking, and academic speaking. Meanwhile, the ability to perform their speaking skill is considered at a good level. In line with that, their speaking performance is suggested to use critically to show their best performance.

The data show that 85% of respondents knew that critical literacy is important because in this digital age, students need to criticize the information due to hoax information is spread easily in Indonesia (DeWaelsche, 2015; Goodsett, 2020; Mohammadkhani et al., 2015). Students recognized that critical literacy is speaking is very important this can be shown from their responses for 80% of students agree with this statement. Luke, (2012) that literacy will drive people into the most valuable life and knowledge because without critical literacy people are not able to socialize and understand the situation around them. University students need to interact globally with English and to be able to communicate critically it should be associated with all the information and situation (Huh, 2016).

When speaking with critical literacy there will be involved all skill, because to criticize the literacy of reading, academic, listening, speaking, and digital literacy (M. F. Fajardo, 2016; Farrelly, 2015). Meanwhile, in response to this statement, 80% of students agree due to the implementation of critical literacy will be supported by the others' literacy. Although students knew that critical literacy is involved all literacy skills, they still difficult to practice it in their speaking performance. This argument can be seen from their responses that 70% of them stiff having difficulty to speaking critically, due to the lacking of drilling and practice (Richards et al., 2008).

To deliver the speech easily and smoothly critical literacy is really helpful, that is why critical literacy is suggested to be adopted in every single university lesson, especially in reading, writing, and speaking because to be criticized is need to be drilled and to be literate need to have lots of reading and understanding the situation and condition (Hussain Jafri et al., 2013; Marzal & Borges, 2019; Street, 2006).

In critical literacy practice male and female university students are the same because the fundamental is not about their gender to perform their speaking skill critically, but their awareness to enlighten and drill critically. To be criticized it needs to interact with different perspectives Barnet & Bedau, 2011; DeWaelsche, 2015; Goodsett, 2020). This perspective can be seen based on the responses, it represents 50% of the respondents agree that speaking practice critically is not based on gender, male or female but depends on the awareness of the critic's literacy and speaking ideas.

Furthermore, there will be lots of obstacles if students are illiterate to criticize something because critics come from an idea without any ideas the ability to criticize is nothing. In line with this statement, it can be seen from the representation for 50% of respondents do agree with this statement. University students majoring in English education department Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang still have many problems performing their speaking skills smoothly and critically, due to their incompetence in analyzing the information and comprehending the importance of reading (Farahani, 2018; Yakut, 2020). Meanwhile, critical literacy will arouse socialization skills, having good critical literacy automatically will not getting problems in social interaction (Becker, 2021; Lazar, 2017; Provenzo & Apple, 2015b). This can be seen from the representation of about 50% who have critical literacy and they will have no problems in social interaction. in accordance with this, university students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang majoring in English department still need to drill and practice their critical literacy, due to the ability to understand the information which needs more comprehending still get problems, it can be seen from the data that 30% from 20 students still stuck on the comprehending the information, and this condition also impacts to their speaking practice critically with 30% of the respondent still hard to speak critically due to their ability to understand the information (Huh, 2016; Ugwudike, 2015; Wallace, 2003).

The data analysis of university's speaking critically can be seen from the interview result, and it represent that half of university students have already had their critical literacy, they just need to practice more in line with their social interaction capability.
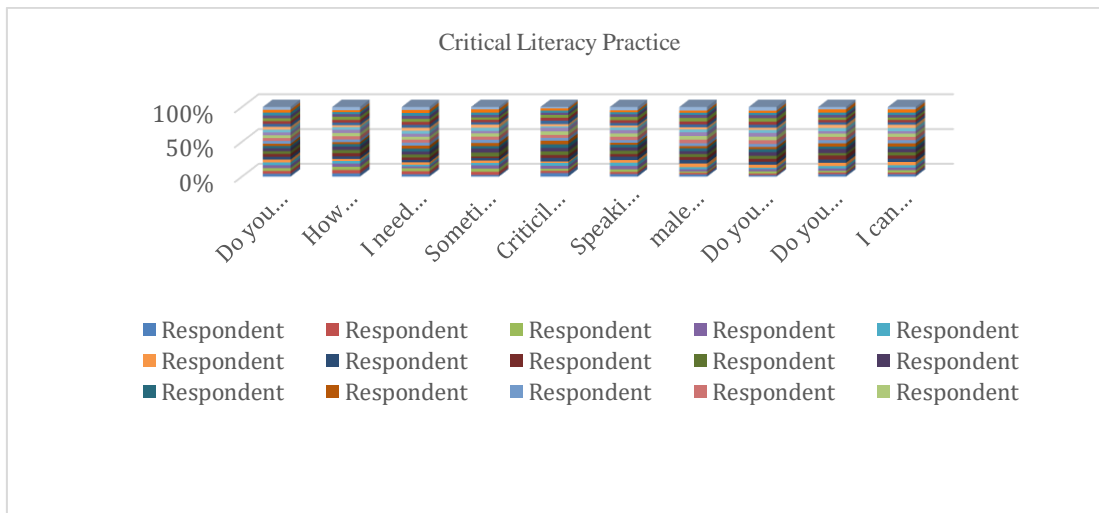
Picture 1: student's respond on critical literacy and speaking practice

The basic factors of student's critical literacy are still low

The data of speaking was critically assessed based on Miller (2015) and adopted speaking scoring based on (Luoma, 2004) than the indicator consisting of 8 domains which the scoring start from 1 to 5. The lowest score is 1 and the highest score is 5 (Luoma, 2004). This data can be seen based on the picture below;
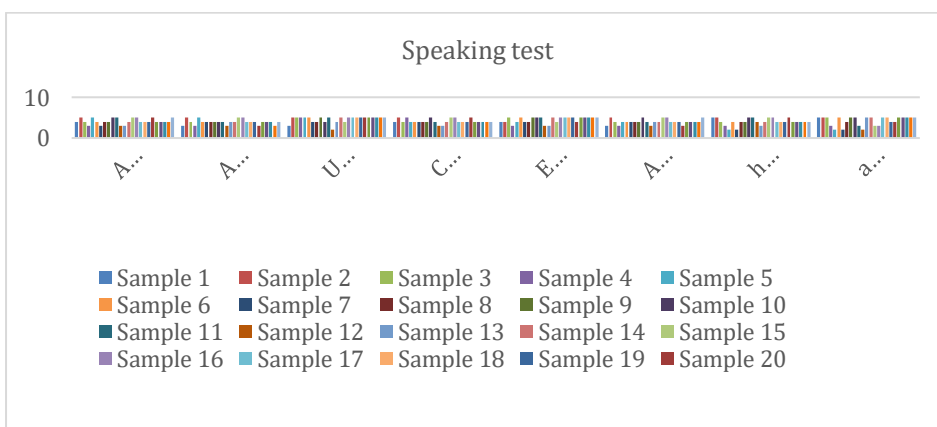
Picture 2: student's critical literacy on their speaking skill

Critical literacy in students' speaking skills can be stated in three levels low, medium, and highest (Provenzo & Apple, 2015a). The highest critical literacy represented their speech and it gains 20%, this means, university student's critical literacy during speaking still needs to be developed, meanwhile critical literacy is really associated with self-awareness on practicing and drilling (Huh, 2016; Provenzo & Apple, 2015a). in the other criteria related to social interaction, the highest level did not have any problems, due to their ideas to start communicating and discussing with others also better (Bancroft, 2016; Gu, 2018; Prasetya, 2017). During hybrid learning speaking practice is accommodated in 2 ways, online with video record and offline with speaking practice in Infront of the class. To practice the speech critically sometimes they have lots of stuck in delivering the ideas, meanwhile, 35% of them are in the

medium level. It can be understood because they still hard to understand the text, and delivery the factual issues in accordance to change the listeners' opinion (Elsner, 2011; Prasetya, 2017).

Speaking as one the fundamental skill in the global era is suggested to be mastered by the students to contribute internationally and critically (Arjulayana et al., 2021a; Bruce Tillit & Mary Newton Bruder, 1999). Furthermore, critical literacy in speaking will encourage the speakers to become attractive because it will involve all skills, they had (M. Fajardo, 2016; Janks, 2013; Zhang et al., 2021). In line with this the ability to give a factual issue and having a good attitude to appreciate everything, 80% of the respondents agree that to be a good speaker needs to know the factual issues and appreciate the information critically (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Nagrani et al., 2020; Patrona, 2006).

CONCLUSION

The result of this research reveals the university students' critical thinking in their speaking skills which can be highlighted into 3 levels; high, medium, and low. Otherwise, this result cannot be generalized to the other populations with the entire university students in Indonesia. The high-level student's critical literacy can be seen from their competence in accordance with 8 indicators based on (Miller, 2015b). students will have a strong understanding of the text, context, socialize, and have a good perspective critically. While at the medium level of this critical literacy, students will have a curiosity about the information around them, but to understand the text and context need to be driven by others. At the beginning of speaking practice, delivering the ideas in good chronological order with powerful ideas and representing the information understandable will help this level to be the highest level of critical literacy (Kaur & Sidhu, 2014; Xi, 2007).

Low critical literacy will impact social competence because they do not have the ability to understand the text, context, and information sufficiently (Rogers, 2014). Considering these reasons, critical literacy practice for university students in their speaking is suggested to be accommodated by all educators during teaching and learning, and in doing this educators also need to have good critical literacy. Critical literacy competence can be seen from the educator's view, explanation, and facilitating their students to have an interactive and class performance activity (Rogers, 2014; Skerrett, 2010).

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