

Transformative Pedagogy of Multiliteracies and the Challenges of Cultural Constraint in Indonesia

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Abstract: This paper intends to see the literacy pedagogy in Indonesia from the point of view of transformative pedagogy of multiliteracies (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009). It can be argued that the educational change in Indonesia is moving away from the overt instruction (conceptualizing) orientation of literacy pedagogy to the transformed practice (applying) orientation of literacy pedagogy. Beside the convincing argument that this change is needed, there are several challenges in applying this practice in the classroom and one of it is the cultural constraint. This paper will try to describe Indonesian culture of learning as the basic argument of cultural constraint challenges and as an attempt to see the literacy movement in Indonesia from the sociocultural perspective of educational change. This description will then help framing the implications both for teachers as the agent of change and for government as on how to manage the change. Data and support written in this article are from secondary sources as this article intends to be a literature review. Suggestions coming from the literature discussed that a ‘collaborative work culture’ (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992) is the solution of the challenge in implementing a transformative pedagogy of multiliteracies in Indonesian context.

Keywords: *literacy pedagogy, educational change, cultural constraints*

TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY OF MULTILITERACIES

According to the New London Group (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009), language and literacy pedagogy nowadays will not be sufficient to be acknowledge as a single dimension, rather, it should be seen as related to various languages and modalities;

therefore, most suitably termed as ‘multiliteracies.’ In terms of the language dimension, multiliteracies pedagogy considers multiple ‘social languages’ (Gee, 1996) which is argued to be neglected in literacy pedagogy. The term ‘social languages’ that is used by Gee (1996), describes how language should be seen as social, cultural, and political practices and therefore, differs in meaning and style according to its context. From the linguistic point of view, style variety, either the standard or the vernacular one, are equal in status. Therefore, in terms of English language teaching, English as a world language shall not be taught based on singular standard.

From the point of view of modality dimension, multiliteracies pedagogy considers integrating multiple modes as the answer to the way social world has been transformed. Literacy as social practices nowadays does not only depend on written language, but also on audio-visual, gestural and spatial modes. Therefore, The New London Group believes that multiliteracies teaching should integrate ‘synaesthesia’ which is “The process of shifting between modes and re-presenting the same thing from one mode to another...” (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009). Another implication for multiliteracies teaching is that to be aware that students may have different preferences in using which mode to understand what they need to study and to express themselves. Therefore, multiliteracies teaching shall use various modes in order to accommodate these preferences.

In integrating the two dimensions of multiliteracies, The New London Group proposes a new form of pedagogy which they called as transformative pedagogy (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009), defining learning as a “process of self-re-creation” and aiming for “Cultural dynamism and diversity” (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009). Transformative pedagogy is based on four dimensions that deals with specific pedagogical acts; they are: (1) situated practice with its pedagogical act *experiencing*; (2) overt instruction with its pedagogical act *conceptualizing*; (3) critical framing with its pedagogical act *analyzing*; and (4) transformed practice with its pedagogical act *applying* (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009). The New London Group explains that the pedagogical acts are not a

sequential process but a possible dynamic moves, "...moving backwards and forwards across and between these different pedagogical moves..." (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009).

In terms of learning English, Cope and Kalantzis (2017) describe how these four dimensions can be integrated. Situated practice can be translated into some ideas such as: bringing text from students' own life and analyzing the text, or immersing students' with new kinds of text as long as it is within their zone of proximal development. Overt instruction can be translated into some ideas such as: learning the terminologies used for writing an argumentative essay and then to conclude how the terminologies or theory help build convincing arguments. Critical framing can be translated into the idea of understanding a text more deeply as to analyze its nature, purpose and interest. Transformed practice can be translated into the idea of making arguments that works effectively and or build creatively new form of argument structure which will better suit a certain context.

INDONESIAN LITERACY PEDAGOGY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF MULTILITERACIES

The four dimensions mentioned in transformative pedagogy (situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice) is not designed to be seen as a continuum. Rather, it is a learning design that supports each other. However, one can argue that analyzing the four dimensions as pedagogical acts, they could also resemble a process, putting situated practice/overt instruction as the first step and transformed practice as the last and as the goal. Therefore, one could also argue, that what happen in the classroom can be analyzed as activities that resembles the four steps or the four pedagogical acts. One classroom may show that it is moving away from the first step, closer to the last, which is the goal. The other classroom may be described as still further away from reaching the goal. In short, as a continuum that illustrate as a line, moving from left to right, situated practice/overt instruction stands on the left-end, and transformed practice is on the right-end.

In discussing the literacy pedagogy in Indonesia, it can be generally argued, that the policy on English language teaching and learning curriculum in Indonesia is moving away from the overt instruction (conceptualizing) orientation of literacy pedagogy to the transformed practice (applying) orientation of literacy pedagogy. It is described through the curriculum document on K13 (Curriculum 2013), the current curriculum being implemented:

“The learning process is developed on the principle of active student learning through activities observing (to see, to read, to listen, to scrutinize), asking (orally and in written form), analyzing (to connect, to determine the relevancy, to build a story/ concept), communicating (orally, in written form, through images, graphics, tables, etc.)” (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013).

Unfortunately, implementation gap has been identified in Indonesia, that what happened in the classroom still depicted the application of a fully-grammar teaching and learning approach (Musthafa, 2001; Adi, 2011; Sholihah, 2012; Yulia, 2014; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). Interestingly, the same situation has also reported from different parts of the world (Kirkgöz, 2008; Prapaisit de Segovia and Hardison, 2008; Waters and Vilches, 2008; Canh, 2015; Gargesh, 2015; Humphries and Burns, 2015). Some of the causes mentioned are: the poor setting, insufficient support for teachers and cultural constraint. This paper, would especially focus on the third causes mention: cultural constraint. Moving towards multiliteracies pedagogy or towards transform practice means to implement an educational change. Then, what actually underlies the challenges from the point of view of culture?

THE SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

According to Fullan (1991) in Woysner (2004), the implementation of educational change involves ‘change’ in practice within its multidimensional nature. The aspects of its multidimensional are:

“...(1) the possible use of new or revised materials (direct instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies), (2) the possible use of new teaching approach (i.e. new

teaching strategies or activities), and (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g., pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programs)."

An important point that is drawn from the quotation is that educational change involves both the change of behavior and beliefs, or to put it in Fullan's words, it involves: "...in what people do and think..."

Developing Fullan's (1982) idea, Markee (1997) called the relationship between the dimensions above to be 'reciprocal' (p.54), which means the change of beliefs may not precede the change of behavior; it could be that the change of behavior which will caused the change of beliefs. One thing to be noted, however, is that it is more difficult to change someone's belief compare to changing their behavior. In addition, with the goal of changing the beliefs and behavior of the implementers, educational change required a 'deep change' which involves people's "...occupational identity, their sense of competence, and their self-concept". In addition to this, Fullan (1993) also mentions about the two cores in educational change for teachers, which is "...the development of new learning and new roles...". Between these two, it is the new learning core that is the hardest 'to crack' (p.49). Fullan (1993) relates this core to the term reculturing where teachers have to change their "...norms, habits, skills and beliefs".

Relating the idea of reculturing and the idea of continuum, where situated practice/overt instruction stands on the left-end, and transformed practice is on the right-end, teachers need to reculture themselves. Because what teachers are expected to think and do using a fully grammar approach is different with the expectation for teachers who have to use a more communicative approach. At this point, this discussion will need to consider a wider perspective other than the classroom. Because what teachers think (beliefs) and do (behaviour), which is the means of reculturing, is influenced by a macro context (Kennedy, 1988; Holliday, 1994) outside the classroom. This view also supports the 'sociocultural perspective on change' by Markee (1997) that educational change is affected by many factors such as: "...cultural, economic,

political, and other factors...” (p.4). Kennedy (1988, p.332) provides a diagram (Figure 1) to describe this.

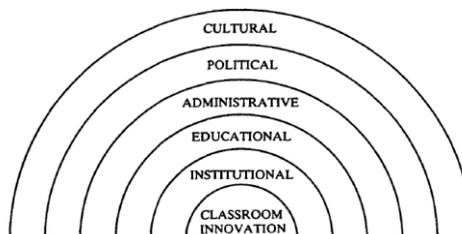


Figure 1. The hierarchy of interrelating subsystems in which innovation has to operate (Kennedy, 1988)

The most outer layer of the subsystems is the culture subsystems which Kennedy (1988) argues to be ‘the most powerful’ system (p.332) that affects the structure, behavior, values and beliefs of the other layers under it. At this point, the ultimate question will be: What is culture? What power does it have that it could affect the other subsystems? I would like to refer to Wedell and Malderez (2013) complex and thorough discussion that relate the definition of culture with the concept of invisibility, belief system, the fundamental of social behavior and a feature of a national group. Furthermore, Kumaravadivelu (2008, p.10, cited in Wedell and Malderez, 2013, p.36) stated that culture:

“... provides individuals and groups of individuals with psychological structure that guides various aspects of their life. It steers them in their intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development. It offers them a rationale for their behavior, a prism through which to see it, and a measurement by which to evaluate it. It presents them with a basis for identity formation.”

A part of the discussion on culture above is the ‘culture of learning’ that is discussed by Cortazzi and Jin (1996, p.169) who define it as:

“...taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether or how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education.”

Cortazzi and Jin (1996) explain how Chinese culture of learning for example, values teaching as to provide knowledge and apply rote memorization learning approach which both of them seems to be derived from the traditional Confucian

beliefs. Therefore, when Western teachers intend to apply communicative approach which expects students to be active in the class, this approach does not work well. Another example of how communicative approach with its Western-like culture of learning is found to be a mismatch is provided by Chick (1996) and LoCastro (1996).

Chick (1996) describes how difficult it was for teachers and students of a classroom in a KwaZulu area in South Africa to implement communicative approach which requires students to be voluble and teachers to be taciturn because it opposes the “culturally-specific KwaZulu interactional style” that teachers are supposed to be more talkative and students are expected to be passive. LoCastro (1996) also found that the practice of negotiation of meaning in communicative approach is not suitable to be applied in Japanese context as it opposes the ‘permissible behaviour’ of Japanese culture which does not expect to have student-teacher interaction in the classroom.

The three examples above can be said to support Holliday’s (1994) ideas of the harm in transferring BANA (Britain, Australasia and North America) methodology without the concern of the cultural appropriateness in the intended country. This concern also appointed by Markee (1997) that sociocultural context, in this term the “systemic and ethical constraints” along with “the personal characteristics of potential adopters” will be one of the factors affecting the implementation of curriculum change. The next question will be, what is Indonesian culture of learning? Is there a possible cultural constraint? The discussion about this will be provided below.

INDONESIAN CULTURE OF LEARNING

To discuss the Indonesian culture of learning, the researchers would refer to the article composed by Dardjowidjojo (2001). He argues that Indonesian students have cultural-embedded belief towards education that the transfer of knowledge comes from teachers to students and that this is a “...fundamental values and traditions which, whether we [Indonesian] realize it or not, have shackled our ways of thinking and behaving”. He also discussed that the Indonesian belief of education is interrelated to

three Javanese philosophies, such as *manut-lan-miturut*, *ewuh pekewuh*, and *sabda pendita ratu*.

The first philosophy stated is *manut-lan-miturut* philosophy, which in general it means that “good behavior” of children is to obey their parents. Djardjowidjodjo (2001) explains that “[Indonesian] do not encourage [their] children to express their views, especially those that are different from their elders”. The second philosophy is the *ewuh pekewuh*, which means “uncomfortable and uneasy feeling” especially in discussing controversial issues, questioning the words of elders, or disagreeing with them which makes Indonesian could not be direct in expressing their opinion. The last philosophy mentioned is *sabda pendita ratu* which is interpreted as the “...attitude where an elder or a leader is not willing to admit any wrong saying or doing”.

These three philosophies, in return, influenced the classroom behaviour in Indonesia. Teachers were seen as the substitute of parents at school, they should be obeyed and were always right. Students, resemble the children, should not criticize the teachers, and shall accept whatever the teachers say. Therefore, it is common to have teacher who explains the lesson in front of the class and nominates the student to speak up, while students sit orderly at their desks and be passive.

From the teacher’s point of view, Bjork (2004) conceptualizes similar idea. He argues that, especially for public school teachers, teachers are obliged to the parents and the students and it is emphasized by the government. Therefore, the teachers’ duties as civil servants produced a culture of teaching that obedience valued more than behaviors. Educators are not for their instructional excellence or commitment to their craft. Instead, they get rewards by following the orders of their superiors (Bjork, 2004). Having discussed the challenges of educational change from the cultural challenges point of view, it is clear that the culture of learning needed to accommodate an implementation of transformative pedagogy in Indonesian context will need a reculturing from the side of the teachers. Being aware that reculturing is important for teachers, another question

need to be answered then “how to manage the change so that reculturing will be achieved?”

MANAGING THE CHANGE

Understanding that an educational change would need the role of the national and local government along with the educational institutions so that the implementation could be nation-wide, this research is restricted if not simple in its analysis. This article proposes a discussion about the educational change at the local level, which is the teacher. Why teacher? In a direct sense, we could say what the teachers’ perception or belief towards “*being a teacher*” in the classroom could unintentionally affect their behavior in the classroom. Regarding to this matter, they need to increase their capacity dealing with the development of English learning pedagogy. As a consequence, if they don’t want to change, they are going to be victimized by the relentless intrusion of external change forces (Fullan, 2016).

Moreover, it could be stated that the professional capacity level of the teacher is strongly influenced by the interaction with others and others providing technical help, such as among teachers within the school. Fullan (1991) in Woyshner (2004) also states that significant educational changes in beliefs, teaching style, and materials could come *only* through a process of personal development in a social context. Ideally, it could be achieved by participating in skill-training workshops, but more than that, they also need to have one-to-one and group opportunities to receive and give help and more simply to converse about the meaning of pedagogical change, or it is academically called as professional learning community, or what Fullan refers as “*collaborative work culture*” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992).

Implementing collaborative work culture aims to provide teachers who were considered to be successful in implementing the innovation to directly figure out and share what works and what doesn’t work. Under these situations, we can argue that teachers would be able to comprehend why they need to develop the innovation and also why they need to reject it as well. In short, Fullan (2005) assumes that strong

teacher communities can be effective if they want to collaborate to make breakthroughs in learning.

DEVELOPING TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY OF MULTILITERACIES APPROACH

What has been discussed in earlier chapters are touching the more philosophical realm dealing with idea and concept. In this chapter, a more practical discussion is trying to be presented. Here is the demonstration of how to develop a lesson plan which is based on transformative pedagogy of multiliteracies. However, cultural constraint is also taken as a major consideration on it. This mini lesson plan would be about teaching reading in an elementary grade student.

Transformative Pedagogy of Multiliteracies Principles	Language Instruction	Pedagogy
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. situated practice (<i>experiencing</i>); 2. overt instruction (<i>conceptualizing</i>); 3. critical framing (<i>analyzing</i>); and 4. transformed practice (<i>applying</i>) 	<p>Attention everyone!</p> <p>“Do you love fishing? Have you ever done it before? Where do you usually do fishing? What kind of fish do you get most? How do you feel about it?”</p> <p>Now, let’s read the fable story we have here. The title is The Fisherman and His Wife. Now, look at the text on a page...”</p> <p>Teacher gives deep comprehension about the text, and asks the students how the sequence of the story begins, in order to reveal their consciousness towards the generic structure of the text.</p> <p>Teacher will then ask the student to pay attention on the subjects of</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. situated practice (<i>experiencing</i>) <p>In this process, teacher asks the students’ familiarity experience about their activity. Moreover, this process also asks the learner to observe unfamiliar thing immersed in a new situations or condition.</p> <p>➤ Learner answers the teacher’s questions and reflects what they experience with unfamiliar things they learn from the teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. overt instruction (<i>conceptualizing</i>) <p>In this process, students will evaluate what they comprehend with other students’ perspective in order to measure their understanding towards the content of the text and teacher will lead them to analyze the text deeply.</p> <p>➤ Students are asked to identify the structure of the text.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Critical framing (<i>analyzing</i>); <p>➤ Students underline the subject and the verb on the story, and let them analyze how subject and verb relate each other.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. transformed practice (<i>applying</i>)

	the text, and the verb phrase which is influenced by the tense and the context of the story.	
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Table 1. The example of a lesson plan based on Transformative Pedagogy of Multiliteracies Approach

Moreover, to achieve continuous improvement towards the innovation, purposeful interaction with other teachers is very essential to be done. After assuming that belief could be changed, what kind of belief that should be changed in terms of pedagogical paradigm?

We currently have already been in the era where language teaching paradigm has constantly in a change from linguistic competence to communicative competence. Literally, it changes the sentence as the central unit of focus to be replaced by a focus on language in use with the emergence of the notion of communicative competence. In recent issues, in teaching and learning process, preparing the Indonesian students with the ability of being literate has already been more reasonable to be implemented.

In addition to that, Kern (2000) also stated that by practicing literacy in a non-native language, students learn not only about vocabulary and grammar, but also about discourse and the processes by which it is created. The goal is certainly to engage students in activities, not only at the advance level of study, but at introductory level as well. However, the argument related to the literacy-based curriculum discussed earlier contradicts with the teacher’s cultural belief towards how to teach English in Indonesia. Most of them still believe that grammar plays a controlling influence on a language teaching. This cultural belief, forming sentences to create different kinds of meaning, is significantly opposite with the development of literacy-based methodologies to replace the grammar-based methodologies. In this regard, participating in skill-training workshop and having purposeful interaction, *collaborative work culture*, is the key term to manage the change. However, these cultural constraints during the teaching and learning process can be hindered by developing a curriculum that comes up with the understanding of Indonesian culture of learning.

CONCLUSION

The world is changing and different needs are forcing us to meet the new challenge. Implementing a transformative pedagogy of multiliteracies approach is an option yet it is very appealing to support the movement as it shades the urgencies in the nearest future. The cultural constraint described in the previous chapters has hopefully made aware for both the decision-makers and the teachers on the implementation challenge of this approach. This paper has propose one solution on this issue, which is the “*collaborative work culture*” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992) along with a clear lesson plan implementation. Furhter analysis and research needs to be made in order to present various solutions to meet the need of different context.

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