

The Profile of Critical Consciousness at Indonesia University of Education Students' on Educational Phenomenon

Babang Robandi, Dharma Kesuma, Arie Rakhmat Riyadi, Teguh Ibrahim

Department of Pedagogy
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
brobandi.upi@edu

Abstract- This paper aims to discuss the phenomenon of Critical Consciousness of Indonesia University of Education Students' on Educational Phenomenon. Critical consciousness is characterized by a critical understanding on issues of education, reasoning causality in the cause of education, transformative power of social action (praxis) and moral reasoning in fighting for the values of kindness. The method that used by this research is a transcendental phenomenology, the phenomenon of critical consciousness raised through conscientization based learning, then deepened through interviews with several students. This research has significance for mental revolution program in education launched by the Indonesian government. This study proved theoretically and practically about the profile of student or youth who have a critical consciousness.

Keywords: *Critical Consciousness, Conscientization, Phenomenology, Foundation of Education, Paulo Freire's Pedagogy*

I. INTRODUCTION

The crisis that hit education today is the alienation towards the goal of education as a process of humanization which causes some contradictory phenomenon that diffuses human humanity. One of the phenomenon's that prevail is the mindset of technocracy. According to Snijder (2006:79) "Technocracy is a way of thinking that promotes achievement, efficiency, income and consumption". Such mindset will produce "one-dimensional people" (Marcuse: 2002), where this means one that his or her consciousness is possessed by modernity, communication technology, and consumerism which turns off one's critical voices that leads to an identity crisis (Tilaar, 2012:218).

This situation is magnified in contradiction with philosophical objective of education which is to build the consciousness of humanity as man, as proposed by Muhmidayeli (2013: 73) "Consciousness is closely related to the functionality of mind and the human heart in viewing reality, consciousness efforts is an essential task for the world of education, because it is in direct contact with humanization existence itself". Proper functioning of the mind and the heart is the goal of humanization. The reality that is internalized with full consciousness would be looked and felt clearly, so that contradicting phenomenon of the mind and the heart of man will be addressed critically.

The author was inspired by Paulo Freire's concept of pedagogy towards the oppressed literacy education in Brazil; which is not just reading the word but reading the world. Freire's pedagogy's literacy project aims to develop a critical consciousness for the liberation of the oppressed from dehumanization. Paulo Freire's pedagogy is in tune with the discourse on "Mental Revolution" proclaimed by the Jokowi government. Education is an elemental key in efforts to revolutionize Indonesian societies mental that has began to fade away from the values of Indonesian character.

In accordance with the explanation above, the researchers plan to design a fundamental study entitled "Design of Critical Consciousness Pedagogy on College Level (A Phenomenological Study)". This study begins with examining the profile of students' critical consciousness regarding to the education phenomenon through conscientization based questions. After the said study, the research in the next year is to design critical consciousness pedagogy.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The method which used in this study is phenomenology. According to Creswell (2014, p.105) "phenomenological study is a research study that seeks to describe the general meaning of a number of individuals to various life experiences related to a concept or phenomenon". Such experiences in accordance to Van Mannen (1990) must be experienced with consciousness, for it is essentially that human consciousness is always intentional (fixed on something), as proposed by Husserl: "We understand under Intentionality the unique peculiarity of experiences "to be the consciousness of something" (1931, p.223). Consciousness is always fixed to an object, has references points which acts as subject reflection of the one who's aware. Intentionality can also be viewed as an act of the mind to direct itself to an object so that it may view the action as a meaningful experience. (Subandi, 2009, p.62). On the other hand, the main purpose of phenomenology is to reduce the phenomenon of individual experience into a description of the essence or universal meaning. (Creswell, 2014, p.105).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Consciousness is a manifestation of the human spirit which is very important. Through consciousness, people will be able to enhance his existential journey in the world with full of meaning, and vice versa without consciousness human will only be sculpture, adaptive, folding arms, and lost in reality which is constantly changing. Consciousness is very important in the process of humanization, therefore; to raise consciousness of human humanity is the main task of education. In line with Freire opinion (2008, p.14) "Consciousness is the core or essence of the educational process, because of within the growing of consciousness; one will be kept away the Fear of Freedom". Fear of freedom is a symptom of alienation towards reality, humans become unable of being an autonomous and responsible subject for the way of life he chose. Therefore Freire initiated the liberation pedagogy which aims to liberate humanity from all forms of oppression that alienate human humanity, so that human is able to free from ignorance, poverty, submission, and helplessness.

Freire's Pedagogy involves not only reading the word, but also reading the world. It involves the development of critical consciousness (A process known in Portuguese as conscientização, and as conscientization in English). According to Kesuma (2013, p.35) "Development of critical consciousness makes people question the nature of their social and historical circumstances – to read their world - with the aim to act as subjects in the construction of a more democratic society". Based on Kesuma's opinion it can be deduced that conscientization is an effort to revive the functionality of mind, heart and action through facing the problems of socio-historical in which humanity being implicated and threatens. Conscientization is an effort to raise human critical consciousness to be always keen in looking for *the reason of being* from social reality that greets them, and hone the ability of human beings to reflect which culminated powerless transformative actions.

This study attempted to resuscitate (conscientization) the participants' educational problematic phenomenon. Based on the data of collected interview transcriptions, obtained a variety of verbal expression of the participants who represent their critical consciousness. Important participants' statements will be presented on the basis on the structure of critical consciousness rising. As for the structure of critical consciousness builder are 1) the understanding of social experiences (what), 2) the reasoning of causalities (why), 3) social actions (how), 4) moral reasoning (should). (Freire 1974, Smith 2008, Mustakova 1998)

The structure which forms critical consciousness which formulated by Mustakova is referring to the definition of a critical consciousness proposed by Freire:

Critical consciousness represents "things and facts as they exist empirically, in their causal and circumstantial correlations . . . Critical consciousness is integrated with reality. The critically transitive consciousness is characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; by the testing of one's

"findings" and by openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old just because it is old—by accepting what is valid in both old and new. (Freire, 1974, p.14)

Based on Freire explication above, the author concluded that humans with critical consciousness are able to think in the empirically observed facts, and are integrated with reality, so that all phenomena are always flooded his/her consciousness empirically. Individuals with critical consciousness are also able to interpret problems with the explanation of principle causality; the explanation is not rooted in magical things. The owners of critical consciousness are thorough in testing inventions, avoid presumption in analyzing problems, and are very open and avoid distortions. His/her ability to analyze problems makes he/she refuses to be passive, he/she is aware of the role where he/she must be involved in any behavior of creation and naming of the world through dialogues with healthy arguments, then he/she also posses a self-identity that makes he/she constantly reflect on all actions that lead to more democratic social change.

Students at the level of critical consciousness possess several special features: the sharp ability of causality, capable of thinking radically in analyzing education issues with systemic approach, not only focused on individual errors, in addition, they refuse to be passive, and wanted to be involved in actions of improvement and has transformative power. Researcher will present an example of student with critical consciousness profile which has SN as his/her initials. When researchers asked about the problems that hit the Indonesian education, participant responded with radical thinking and systemic approach. Participant views the human resources robot-likeness in Indonesia as the educational problem, and the cause is the system of education such as curriculum, teachers, and learning styles of individuals. The following pieces of important statements are as presented below:

Researcher : "Are there any other phenomenon? As told by your friend back then, SN got angry once in the class, in accordance with SN's action, that yesterday all of you acted like robots. Why did SN say that you all acted like robots?"

Participant : "I did not attend the course. The lecturer came and gave tasks, the lecturer then gone. When I asked them "what are you up to?", "I don't know. I'm confused?", instead of giving proper answer, they said that. "so why are guys doing something without benefit, something you can't understand?", "it is the score which is important!", They said".

Researcher : "Many of your friends think so?"

Participant : "Yes!"

Researcher : "So, what kind of paradigm these youth have?"

Participant	: “what kind (of paradigm)?”				regime. Every time the regime change, so is it! The identity also changed”.
Researcher	: “A robot-like, yes! What does it mean to be robot bro?”	Researcher			: “Regime, right?! So, it is included within the curriculum. Please answer! If the cause is curriculum, how are you feeling about the constant change?”
Participant	: “They are only programmed to do something systemized”.				
Researcher	: “Have you done the task, SN?”	SN			: “Every curriculum is warranted to change! Back then, KTSP changed into 2013. It is obviously clear that 2013 is improvement of KTSP, but many teacher and education implementer are not ready. It is unknown the reason behind the un-readiness. Whereas it is written or obviously real that the 2013 is lighten the burden of teachers”.
SN	: “I’ve done the task, but I understood what the lecturer intended”.				
Researcher	: “Is it?”	Researcher			: “how does it lighten the burden?”
SN	: “But when other are being asked (they said) “what’s important is I attend the class, whether I understand or not; it’s up to what will happen later.”	SN			: “Suppose like the years of KTSP. The KTSP is clearly fettering. We have to act based on the existing reference. The 2013 on the other hand lets the teacher to have more freedom! More or less it gives freedom how to explain; how to develop the potentation of the students. It’s all up to the teacher”.
<p>Based on the interview above, we can conclude that the participant SN was describing a radical problem of education. Participant SN explained that the problem which is being implicated in Indonesian education is that the human resources behave like robots. In the comprehension of participant, the friends he met in UPI academic environment, many of them who, interpret the lecture as a mechanistic activity which ends with academic score. Based on the confession of the participant, once upon a time at a group discussions, he gave an innuendo towards his friends who learn like a robot. This term was interpreted by participant from the phenomena he studied of his friends obedience towards the commands of lecturers without exploring the covered essence of the material. So, for participants today students are like robots that have been programmed to perform systematic, practical, and mechanistic tasks. After participant named the problem, researcher tried to dig the reason of being from the phenomenon described by the participant.</p>		Researcher			: “Now, according to your very own experience. If you really mentioned it as a curriculum! How did you experience that? Why we call it a problem? Can you give the explanation?”
Researcher	: “Okay, this problem is in linkage towards human. Your friend with such mechanistic behavior, they are the product of education in elementary, junior, and senior high school. Indonesian who’s easy to be fooled, who work as laborers; as workers, we can say that they are the output of education”. In your opinion why does this happen? Give your answer!”	SN			: “Yes, actually! For example is the teaching material”.
		Researcher			: “Yes, teaching materials!”
		SN			: “teaching materials of...for example, I was a vocational school student. So, I studied what I didn’t need”.
		Researcher			: “Like?”
		SN			: “Such as chemistry. I learned about chemistry. Suppose it is an instrumentation vocational school”.
		Researcher			: Instrumentation “electro”?
		SN			: Yeah, nearly similar to electro. I thought, what’s the purpose of learning chemistry? Hehe...
SN	: “May I explain it broadly?”	Researcher			: Is it?!
Researcher	: “Please!”	SN			: Yeah, like “ah, what the hell is this! It’s like learning something unimportant for my future”
SN	: “The support of education is curriculum”.				
Researcher	: “Curriculum! Why did you say so?”	Researcher			: Is it?!
SN	: “Because every time the government being repositioned, we change the curriculum. There’s no single permanent curriculum”	SN			: and the National Exam material. Suppose the subject that being tested nationally, such as math, Indonesian, English and vocation. There are eight subject of vocation. The one that used as testing subject was only one. So,
Researcher	: “Yes?”.				
SN	: “The identity (of education) is following the period. Education follows the governing				

- what was the meaning of other subjects in the past four years?
- Researcher :how was the learning itself?
- SN :in the learning activity itself, this is a discussion right? What else besides discussion?
- Researcher :yeah, this is something special. Not an attempt in order to seek for boil. So, that's what was happening in your vocation. How's the lecturers managing the lecture?
- SN :Yeah, just like lecturers in general, from other department. They only tell us to divide into groups, give tasks, learns your group's part, end with presentations. In retrospect, what's the purpose of doing so? It is automatically that every student would prioritize their own material to be learned.
- Researcher :their own materials, right?!
- SN :Yes, they would automatically forget other materials. Yeah, they would only remember their part. And such thing happened during last mid exam, for example, like that. Many of them only answer what has given as their part. About other materials, they know not.
- Researcher :that's the mid exam?
- SN :Yeah, it was the last mid exam! Then, what's the purpose...?
- Researcher :Haha...what's the purpose?! Ok, it is actually chronic, right? So, LPTKs (Educational Personnel Education Institution) which want to sculpt the manpower itself...
- SN :still work this way!
- Researcher :is it so? It was the lecture right?! So, according to you "what's the purpose of such group presentations?"
- SN :Yes.
- Researcher :what happened than at the question session?
- SN :questions and answers!
- Researcher : what was it tend to?
- SN :Haha... commonsense!
- Researcher :Commonsense, yeah.
- SN :So, they (ask questions which are) not based on the presentation materials. Their question was based on what was stuck in their mind.
- Researcher :only things that stuck in mind!
- SN :from the reality, my own experience. Whereas if (their questions are) exposed from the material point of view (their questions) has no relevancies. haha...
- Researcher :Oh, so your experience?! "my experience, in my opinion" like this, like that, yeah. Most of students act that way, right?
- SN :Yeah.
- Based on the interview above, we can conclude that participants SN interpret the causes of the problem of education is the curriculum that change oftenly, regime, absence of teachers, irrelevant teaching material towards students' potential, as well as the "not ideal" learning process. Freire insists that "critical consciousness considers all the facts as they are empirically in correlations with causality and the environment". (Freire, 1974, p. 44). According to Freire in (Kesuma, 2013, p.124) "critical comprehension, does not stop at the textual knowledge (dictionary), which only contains descriptions of phenomenon, but attempts to capture the reason of being/raison d'être of a phenomenon, and does not switch to mind- narrowing processes (technicalities)". Bin accordance to Freire comprehension, it can be concluded that students at the level of critical consciousness have a critical comprehension capabilities and are able to capture the reason of being (wherefore meaning) of a phenomenon experienced. Furthermore, they are (critical consciousness) focused on the system. They consider the rules, events, relationships, and specific procedures merely as an example of systematic institutionalized injustice. (Smith, 2008, p. 83). After the participant are able to understand the reflective phenomenon of unequal education, the next step is to take the transformative power on rise. Participants confessed that when he was disappointed with the lecture, he decided to form a group which is persuasive in nature. The aim of the group is to discuss the lecture material that is considered as material he which he cannot comprehend during the group presentation in the class.
- Researcher : are there any form of protest towards lecturer or negotiation with your consentient friends, are there any?
- SN :yesterday I told them to form groups. Group to discuss (the lectur) with Amel, it was yesterday. Then we formed a group "if the situation during the lecture does not support us (to comprehend the lecture), we will then discuss it later." It was yesterday.
- Researcher : is it?! So, you'd rather chose friends with the same point of view. If you do not understand the lecture then just leave it. Why did you do that?
- SN :because I have different way of thinking apart from their goals. There are think of grade. I tend to think anarchically. Such as demonstration or else. Why don't we follow the existing rules, but with our own interpretation.
- Reflection without action is merely verbal, therefore the students at the level of critical consciousness will take action which leads to social change. In accordance with the opinion of Leistyana, (2004, p.17) that:

“Conscientization (i.e., critical consciousness, or what I refer to as “presence of mind”) is the ability to analyze, problematize (pose questions), and affect the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural realities that shape our lives”.

Based with the opinion of Leistyna can be concluded that students with critical consciousness are capable of performing praxis in their life. They are able to think reflectively about unequal social phenomenon, problematize it as a challenge to be solved by the actions of emancipatory transformative power.

IV. CONCLUSION

Critical consciousness is a manifestation of the soul that is valuable to humans. Through critical consciousness humans are able to understand social reality critically. For people with critical consciousness problematic situation is a problem that needs to be challenged. They refuse to be spectator. For them, reality is to become history; therefore imbalances in reality must be changed. People with critical consciousness has the ability to analyze the radical educational problems, finding causes with systemic approach, not limited to that, they are able to reflect which then results in actions with transformative power bandaged with humanity and moral values.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to thank the Directorate of Higher-Education, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic Indonesia, which has provided funding of this research.

REFERENCES

- [1] Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design : Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Yogyakarta : Pustaka Pelajar
- [2] Freire, P. (2008). *Pedagogy of The Oppressed*. Jakarta : LP3ES
- [3] Freire, P. (1974). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. ed. baru: 2004. Translated and edited by Myra Bergman Ramos. London: Continuum
- [4] Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Translated by Boyce Gibson: Unwin Brothers
- [5] Kesuma, D. (2013). *Fundamental Structure Of Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy And Its Relevance To Pedagogy Of Indonesia*. Bandung : Disertasi UPI
- [6] Kesuma, D & Ibrahim, T. (2016). *Fundamental Structure Of Pedagogy (Dissecting of Paulo Freire’s Thinking)*. Bandung : Refika Aditama
- [7] Leistyna, P. (2004). *Presence of Mind: Education and the Politics of Deception*. Boulder. CO: Westview Press
- [8] Marcuse, H. (2002). *One Dimensional Man : Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. London : Routledge Classics
- [9] Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage
- [10] Muhmidayelli, (2013). *Philosophy of Education Bandung : Refika Aditama*
- [11] Mustakova, E. (1998). *Critical Consciousness: An Alternative Pathway for Positive Personal and Social Development*. Bulgaria : Journal of Adult Development, Vol. 5, No. 1
- [12] Smith, W. (2008). *The Meaning of Conscientizacao (The Goal of Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy)* Yogyakarta : Pustaka Pelajar
- [13] Snijder. A. (2006). *Philosophy of Antropology : Paradoksal and Calling*. Yogyakarta : Pustaka Filsafat
- [14] Subandi (2009). *Pshycology of Dzikir (A Phenomenological Study)*. Yogyakarta : Pustaka Pelajar
- [15] Tilaar, H. (2012). *Social Change and Pedagogy. (Transformative Pedagogy for Indonesia)*. Jakarta : Rineka Cipta
- [16] Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experience*. New York : State University and New York Press