Recognizing the Diverse Perspective: A Critical Ethnography of Students' Recognition and Negotiation in Historical Learning

Reni Dikawati[1], Sariyatun[2], Warto[3]

[1]Reni Dikawati, S.Pd, Post Graduate Student at Sebelas Maret University
[2]Sariyatun, M.Pd, M.Hum, Professor at Sebelas Maret University
[3]Warto, M.Hum Professor at Sebelas Maret University

Abstract: This article elucidates the process of students' recognition and negotiation in historical learning. Critical ethnography was used in this research as an approach to understand the diversity of perspectives and epistemological dimension of students' knowledge. The subjects of research were the postgraduate students of History Education Department at the University of Negeri Yogyakarta with the narration of Tunggul Wulung as their learning material. The research result shows the process of recognition in which the students tried to understand the diverse perspective through interaction in the classroom. The students also tried to negotiate the new historical knowledge with psychological process. The recognition and negotiation can be defined as the two psychological models that provide a deep understanding of how the students accepted or rejected information during the learning process. The research highlights that those psychological models should be the focus of the historical learning research in the future.

Keywords: Recognition, negotiation, historical learning.

1. Introduction

Globalization has become a disruptive power as it provokes a political and socio-cultural development (Dieter, 1998) [1]. This era can be sensed into the term "VUCA" consisting of the acronyms for Volatulity, Uncertainty, Complexcity, and Ambiguity (Radha R, Shanmuka R, 2017) [2], that often embarks on conflicts of interest and values among society (Appadurai, 1996) [3]. In facing the VUCA, young generations should improve their living conditions, be aware of the volatile situations, and think critically (Radha R, Shanmuka R, 2017). Along with this condition, the position of absolute truth is threatened by the presence of alternative or possible meaning that has its own pragmatic horizon or meaning fields (Charles G Osood, George J Suci, Percy H Tannembaum, 1957) [4]. Dewey (1957) [5] marks this condition with the term "the crisis of representation" that does not entail totalizing relativism. Probably, the most sophisticated

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* Corresponding author. Tel.: 085869317693.
  Email: renydika77@gmail.com

expression of the mentalistic view of diverse perspective can be found in the Ogden and Richards statement regarding the meaning of meaning (1923). They clearly isolated the essential representational characters of the sign, the learning or experiential criterion, and the lack of any direct connection between signs and the object.

It is believed that, in facing the VUCA and destabilization of absolute truth, the young generation should be able to formulate their thoughts objectively, to ensure clarity, to be open-minded about alternative perspectives, and to be ready to deal with the contradiction. The contructivist theory has become fundamental because it stresses the importance of bringing each student's prior knowledge and experience to the classroom (Semali, 1999) [6]. Vygotsky's constructivism theory underpinned an active self-regulated learning (Joel M Magogwe, Lone E Ketsitlile, 2015) [7]. The process of thinking moves from stage to pre-reflection, to quasi-reflection, and finally to reflective thinking (Patricia M King, 2002) [8]. It covers the process of inter-text that affects the interpretation and plurality of views (Kohn, 2001) [9].

Plurality of meaning means that all participants have an equal position in the discussion regarding the proposed ethics, norms, and values. The pluralist discourse is founded in the form of the rules of reason. In Habermas's framework, the rules are: (1) every subject has the right to speak and act, and is allowed to take part in a discourse formation; (2) everyone is allowed to ask questions, to make assertions as well as to express his attitudes and desire; and (3) one would not be prevented by internal or external coercion (Heath, 2001) [10]. This means that the individual epistemological level does not solely play an important role in the negotiations; it underlies the normative beliefs of others' (Radigan, 2001) [11]. Normative claims take on an important role as the level of development that explains not only epistemological development, but also epistemological negotiation and the tacit normative claims that

underlie epistemological assertions (Habermas, 1990) [12].

Based on those theoretical frameworks, this study advocates the recognizing of the diverse views or the negotiating of the epistemology of knowledge in the classroom. The analysis focuses on the students' reconstruction in the historical learning, their recognition of the diverse perspectives, and the development of epistemological models. This research helps to more deeply understand the psychological process in the classroom, particularly, the students' psychological process.

2. Method

Critical ethnography was used in this research as an approach to understand the diversity of perspectives and epistemological dimension of students' knowledge. Critical ethnography provides an analysis of the nexus between the learning material and the existing knowledge (Kozhakmetova, Ortayev, Kaliyeva, Utaliyeva, Jonissova, 2015) [13]. The subjects of research were the post-graduate students of History Education Department at the University of Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia, who were enrolled in the intellectual history class in the first semester. The learning topic was the controversial narration of humanism religious of Kiai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung. The study focused on the classroom activities and interaction between the teacher and the student. Classroom observation and interviews were employed to collect the intended data. The interview data supported the normative-evaluative claims and expanded the analysis. The interviews were given a code according to the main categories, including binary opposition, metaphors, self-perception, and discursive belief; and finally by the common elements identified in the interviews.

3. Findings

3.1. Recognizing diverse perspectives

The observation analysis marked several distinctive types of perspectives recognition by categorizing some interactive sequences in the classroom. One type of interactive sequences might be reflected in the individual commentaries and questions. This form of interactive sequence could be defined into the term "comment-support". These sequences frequently enabled an individual to clarify his thought and position in the discussion. A further analysis of the interactive sequences revealed that the students expressed both individually and socially as they contributed to the discussion. Individualization is a communicative act in which one student poses a unique thought or interpretation that may or may not counter the others' ideas in the classroom. Individualization might be expressed through a statement that resists the implications set forth by the text. Moreover, individualization might be seen as a communicative act, a concurrence or resistance. Meanwhile, the socialization refers to a comment that makes a connection to the collective development. During the learning process, the students also reacted to changes in their perceptions. The changes came from the retroactive or the feedback that leapt beyond judgment and value. In a particular case, some learners became active and confined their activities. The students brought their existing experience to estabilish new relationships, to change the program of activities and in one way or another, to manipulate the situation or return it to the status quo. This finding proves that the students carried multiple perspectives. The observation also shows that the students actively constructed and negotiated their perceptions about how to participate in the modelling practice. Thus, their epistemological dimensions were closely related to how they discussed, evaluated, and articulated their arguments in a logical way. Those activities tended to negotiate the epistemological knowledge that had been constructed by other students.

These research findings should be discussed in terms of the constructivist approach. Vygotsky (1962) makes a crucial analytical distinction in the development of conceptual dimension through the complexity of pseudo-concept and empirical concept. According to Vygotsky, these representations of the early stages of the child language use development persist into adult life (Robin Usher, Richard Edwars, 2003) [14]. What is being argued is that the authoritative status of representations/discourse is dependent on the appropriate production of others' discourse, the two are intrinsically and not just temporally connected**.** There is, however, such a thing as relativeness, that is, relational-universality (Rattansi, 1992) [15]. The actual conditions and occasions of human life differ widely with respect to their comprehensiveness in range and in depth of penetration (Feinberg, 1985) [16]. From the position here taken, reconstruction can be nothing less than the work of developing, of forming, of producing (in the literal sense of that word) the intellectual instrumentalities which will progressively direct inquiry into the deep and inclusively human, that is to say, moral facts of present scene and the situation (Dewey, 1957) [5].

The contructivist theory also underscores the focus of this study because it stresses the importance of bringing each student's prior knowledge and experiences to the classroom. This includes students from different linguistic and cultural background. According to Vygotsky's theory, constructivism underpins active and self directed learning and learning is viewed as being active and not an absorptive process. It also focuses on designing a learner and knowledge centered learning environment. According to Vygotsky, contructivists believe that students can relate to the subject matter and consequently generate an interest and ownership subject matter. This creates a

connection between what is learned in the classroom and what is already known as indigenous literacies provide an important database for any follow up learning. Freire (1972) in Joel Magogwe and Lone E ketsitlie research, rightly indicates that allowing students to bring their indigenous knowledge empowers them greatly and this helps preserve such knowledge (J M Magogwe, L E Ketsitlile, 2015) [7]. As a subject, learners create and re-create through the stories that are told and in which they figure as the characters (Sceflen, 1974) [17]. That implication in the whole pedagogy is designed to permit reconstruction of psychological figure in the classroom. Repositioning the psychological figure, who brings a local wisdom and value to models of teaching, can be made potential to do. It could also give a stimulus to the students' daily life.

2.2. Negotiating the epistemological dimension

In the classroom, the learning process occurred through intervention and negotiation of the students' perception and knowledge

through interconnection relationship among them. This interconnection formed the students' epistemological and positional framing to understand their learning through interactions in collaboration activities. Furthemore, in the collaborative group activities, the power relationship among students sometimes hindered the students' productive participation in the epistemic discourse. The students constructed an epistemological frame through the process of interaction, interpretation, and contextualization in a social situation. This frame was the result of interaction with other students, and it affected their judgement and decision. The next level of framing was the shared perception among the students in a social context. Students could provoke a reconstruction or negotiation towards other students through interaction (Rattansi, 1992) [15]. The discussion helped the students to posit among the others in the mutual understanding. The table below shows the students' interactions and participation in the discussion.

Table 2. Student's interactions and participation in the discussion
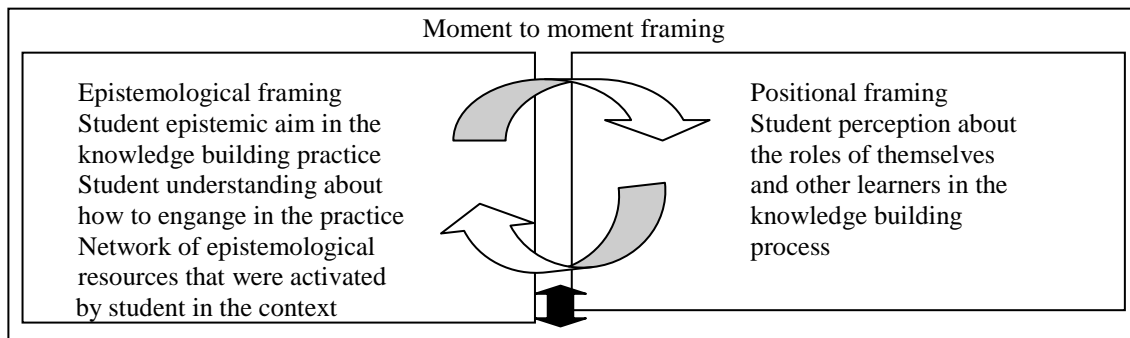
2.3. Student's interactions and participation in the discussion

The learning topic about the critical ethnograpy study of Kiai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung religious humanism has challenged the students to use reflective and rational thinking to interpret and evaluate the information in order to derive a judgement. The cognitive

process of critical thinking offered an alternative perspective. Reflextivity becomes an important process because it supposedly influences or contaminates the learner outcomes as truthful representation and valid knowledge claims. Related to this finding is the distinction between interpersonal and group process. This behavioral dimension is underpinned by a shift in self-conception from personal identity (one's

conception of self as unique and distinct from all other humans, and/or in terms of unique interpersonal relationships) to social identity (one's conception of self in terms of the defining features of self-inclusive social category that renders self stereotypically distinct from outgroup members). This indicates, according to the learner's intepretation, that despite their different political outlooks and their gross difference in the meaning of particular conceps of Kiai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung's reigious humanism as a study material, ingroup employ essentially the same frame of reference in making political judgements.

As the classroom becomes increasingly diverted, it is essential for educators to create inclusive learning environment that promotes learning outcomes for all the students. The students have diverse views and political judgements that, among others, shape their experiences within the classroom. The students brought their identities, minds, logics, cultures into the classroom, to which the broader society had already ascribed meaning and given status and power. They realize that engancing issues of diversity in the classroom became important. It can include diverse perspectives into the course content addressing only one aspect of creating inclusive learning environment to recognize diverse views and negotiated epistemological knowledge in the classroom under discussion. It was also recognized that similarities that were shared accross the human culture, regardless of the differences that exsited among individual culture and groups. These include, but are not limited to desire for safety, love and belongingness, self esteem (feeling for worthiness), and the ability to pursue and achieve the potential, respect the benefits of diverse values.

Education, like all cultural activities, is immersed in and formed by significations. Students bring meanings from their life contexts with them. There is context of meaning in which they engage through the process of learning and a conflict of meaning between the experiential, the pedagogic and the cultural codes transmitted through the curriculum. When we think of the "reality" of education, it is often as being either about socialisation or individuation. In other words, the text of education in all its various forms is constructed and therefore understood in terms of binary opposition of repression/liberation. It is arround this opposition that the political debate over education is repetiously polarised: the educational conservative stresses the socialisation/repression pole of domestication while the educational progressive stresses the individualition/liberation pole of emancipation. Education, therefore presents two faces and neither is any more authentic nor genuine than the other. In effect, there are two separate but interlinked education discourses (Robin Usher, Richard Edwars, 2003) [14]. One is do with control, maintenance, and reproduction of the social order, the transmission and insulation of the norms of cultural authority. The other is to do with the realisation of agency and autonomy through developing the capacity of reason.

In other words, the diversity was introduced into the classroom subsumed by the teleological goal of a radicalized democracy. Brah (1992) argues that "it is evident that the concept of difference is assosiated with different meaning in different discourse" (Rattansi, 1992) [15]. This also reminds of Foucult's view that the recognition of difference does not nessecarily result in the displacement of modern disiplinary power but rather in its further refinement. The impact on education is to emphasize the importance of the university as an educational instution in which academics are provided with the freedom from outside influence to persue knowledge as they see fit, guided by the movement towards speculative unity and totalization of knowledge. Here the emphasis is not on legitiming the denotative utterances of sciences as truthful, but on legitimating prescriptive judgements over what is just. The proliferation with its own logic and prescriptions actually impacts upon what can legitimately be called knowledge.

3. Conclusion

The paper argues that the student should diminish the etnocentricism or ethic judgement in the practice of historical learning. The teacher and the student need a higher variance as well as a program of behavours that tolerate the multiple definitions of object and situation. Within this framework, the teacher acts as an educational practitioner, rather than being the source or producer of knowledge. The teacher should become the facilitator of knowledge production by helping the student to engender and interpret the knowledge and acknowledge the others. The shift of the teacher's role from the discursive (the word) to the figural (the image) immerses rather than detaches appreciation. This can be seen in the shift away from book learning to the experiential learning or learning by doing. The role of the teacher is no longer as the producer who articulates the situation and who is given greater importance. Rather than being seen as a problem or a source of error and confusion, the fluidity of the world and its constantly changing image are identified as pleasurable, as something to be enjoyed. The cultivation of desire and informality is an aim to be pursued without a sense of the experiential being given primacy over the rational. Finally, it gives value to the experiental and the learning engagement as part of everyday life, and the claim being made is that there is no single point of "right" and "wrong" judgement, all will depend on a person's situatedness in the social formation and the sense that a person brings to and takes from it.

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