A Social Science Perspectives on How Critical Reading Skills be Applied on Media Digital Information from Indonesian Context

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Abstract:- **This study aims to analyse how critical reading skill can be developed in a formal education environment through participatory learning processes. By shifting the role of student-centred education, educators must be able to present themselves as facilitators. In implementing educational praxis, especially at the upper secondary and higher education levels where students have been involved in social media a lot, learning with a critical reading approach will help students in explore and evaluate the reading products they consume. In the context of digital technology disruption, critical reading is very relevant in stemming false information that damages social life. By reading critically, students and social media actors will not be easily influenced by information that has not been verified and thus will not easily go viral the information they get. Critical reading is one of the syntheses of learning approaches in preparing future generations of people who are test-resistant, have character and are not easily provoked by information and certain trash reading sources from the internet.**

Keywords:- Critical Thinking, Reading Skill, Media Digital, Information, Social Science

I. INTRODUCTION

Critical reading skills are very important in evaluating and selecting digital media information today. Critical reading is a skill to understand textual content in the form of books, written documents, journal articles as well as press opinion and social media. With that critical power, every reader is not easily trapped in a lie that is very massive at this time(Sultan et al., 2018). However, in the context of its application, there are still a number of obstacles related to how critical reading can improve literacy skills among students, especially related to the ability to understand digital media information. With this skill, the reader community can accurately distinguish the content of media information, whether it is true and objective or just false information. A number of study results show that critical reading skills are still low among the school-age generation(Rochma, 2023). They are still trapped in the post truth era where the truth of an information is not criticized or taken for granted because of emotional closeness or just meeting the expectations of the reader on a particular issue. Through this study, it is necessary to move a number of

learning approaches in improving critical reading skills. One of them is the application of participatory learning that can improve critical reading skills, especially among students at school.

In a number of surveys and previous research results, the critical reading ability of Indonesian students is still relatively low compared to a number of other Asian countries. Therefore, it is important for education stakeholders in Indonesia to always and simultaneously train students in critical reading. This skill is also very relevant in criticizing digital media content that is so massively spread in today's digital information media. With critical reading skills, students are not trapped and influenced by digital media textual content which is full of falsehood and manipulation for certain political, economic and populist purposes(Bui & Nguyen, 2016; Setiawan et al., 2023).

The low critical reading ability among students is generally caused by two factors, among others: first, intrinsic factor; in this case there are several influential aspects in it, namely: lack of interest (motivation) in reading; low level of reading ability/skills; and reading has not become a necessity, lazy thinking and a tendency to easily spread social media posts to make them look up to date in the eyes of colleagues. Second, is the extrinsic factor; This includes a number of aspects, including: the unavailability of quality reading materials, the proliferation of social media platforms, the lack of support for the atmosphere and reading habits in the family, and an instant mentality of people who are reluctant to read. In addition to the two factors above, there is a phenomenon that occurs in several special causes, namely the proliferation of smartphone media with various choices of playing applications in it, so that most of the free time of students outside of formal study hours is used to play online games(Indah et al., 2022; Wiyono et al., 2021).

Facing this condition, it is important to again encourage the improvement of critical reading skills for students in schools. One way to improve reading skills is to apply a strategy in classroom learning. At this point, the teacher's role to motivate students to learn critical reading skills is urgent. In this study, according to the results of previous studies explored by the author, to improve critical reading activities it is important for teachers to implement participatory learning strategies in the classroom(Suwana,

2017). The essence of participatory learning is to want to place students as "main players" in every learning process. That is, students are given ample opportunity to find their own information, find facts or data themselves, or solve problems that will become the main topic of study of learning resources in a topic that is dissected and developed in the learning process.

II. METHOD

This paper uses a critical phenomenological approach framework. Theoretically conceptual phenomenology method is one type of qualitative research method used in order to reveal the similarity of meaning of a phenomenon that occurs consciously or unconsciously carried out by individuals or groups of individuals in the dynamics of their lives. The phenomenological approach is related to the understanding of everyday life, the intersubjective world or everyday social life(Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). According to the father of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl (Creswell, 2015), phenomenological research seeks to find things that are essential from the life experiences of a person or group of people, which can be read or interpreted from patterns of thought and behavior(Setiawan et al., 2023). This mindset and behavior can be done consciously or unconsciously. In this case, the post truth phenomenon which is supported by the weak critical reading ability of students based on a number of studies and observational observations is the objective basis of the analysis of this study, especially in looking at the correlation and relevance of critical reading skills in the midst of the onslaught of textual information on social media products of digital technology today.

Meanwhile, the elaboration of the critical side of this approach is more of an effort to offer problem solving based on existing phenomena, starting from identifying the problem, looking at the root of the problem (cause), offering solutions and then designing real actions (Holsti, 1969). In the context of this article, a critical phenomenological approach is made with simple and concise stages. After knowing the cause (root problem) then a solution is offered, as well as designing real action (intervention).

Strauss and Corbin (translated edition 2009:4) define qualitative research as "a type of research whose findings are not obtained through statistical procedures or other forms of calculation". Qualitative research is not strong in data and statistical analysis, but in description. The ability of research to explain phenomena to capture meaning in depth. Thus, the orientation of qualitative researchers (Miller, 1997), which describes or analyzes the process through which social reality is constructed, and social relationships through which people relate or are linked to one another(Bahri, 2022).

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Teachers' Role as Facilitator

A teacher should act as a facilitator to motivate students in implementing participatory learning. With this role, he guides students in searching, finding, analyzing, interpreting various information, facts, data, and experiences they get from various sources. In the context of social media information, the teacher facilitates students in reviewing the content of written information to lead them to a critical assessment of whether the facts and data presented are objective or false information. Participatory learning is actually a suitable choice in a critical reading approach. In the perspective of Wina Sanjaya (2006), this approach is a form of learning with guided inquiry, namely the emphasis on seeking and finding the objective truth behind written information(Hervie & Winful, 2018). The role of students here is to find their own learning resources that match the theme of each study unit.

The teacher tries to facilitate students in finding relevant reading sources and from sources that can be trusted. Therefore, the important things to do in this approach are (Sanjaya, 2006:250): first, how to improve critical reading skills through participatory learning itself? Second, can the application of participatory learning strategies improve students' critical skills in understanding reading content? By starting from these two questions, the teacher can develop a number of tactical steps in motivating students to read a lot of literature. Generally, literature with a long presentation is in language teaching materials, history and other social humanities sciences(Eriyanto, 2020). The habituation of teachers providing opportunities to read and explore written discourse will help them to increase their learning curiosity and be active in making evaluative analyzes of the reading content they digest.

The more reading sources that interest and fulfill students' curiosity, the longer students will use the time to read. This habituation, of course, will have an impact on the higher interest in reading students and the more critical students are in understanding the content of the reading text. With the critical power they have, it is hoped that the wider the scope of their knowledge, and the higher the scientific insight they get. This of course will greatly affect the choice of reading used by students, especially in the development of teaching materials, as well as reading as a complementary need in filling their spare time. Critical reading skills will ultimately encourage students to critically analyze and evaluate media content obtained through chat applications and other information networks(Margaryan & Ryazantseva, 2021). At this point, the teachers have succeeded in instilling critical values in students so that they are not influenced or trapped in social media writings which often contain fake news or information (fake news/hoax).

B. The Nature of Reading and Critical Reading Skills

David Nunan in his book entitled Language Teaching Methodology (1991:72) says that reading is essentially a solitary process in which the reader interacts personally with certain reading texts in an isolated state from interaction with other people. The term "to read" in English itself also means "to understand". Indeed, the most important thing in reading is understanding the content. From the perspective of linguistics (linguistics) Anderson explained that reading is a process of encoding (recoding) which is different from speaking and writing which actually involves encoding. An aspect of decoding is connecting written words with the meaning of spoken language which includes converting written/printed into meaningful sound. In short, it is said that reading from a linguistic point of view is a re-encoding of written language with meaning in spoken language, namely the change of written form into sound form(Barkley & Major, 2020).

Based on some of the opinions above, it can be concluded that the essence of reading is understanding the content contained in the text which consists of constructions in the form of words, phrases, or clauses, sentences to discourse, both expressed and implied. Recoding from written language with meaning in spoken language, namely changing written form into sound and an activity that is easy to do without requiring many other equipment(Stronge, 2018)

In the context of this writing, critical reading involves digging deeper beneath the surface, an attempt to discover not only the whole truth about what was said, but also (and this is more important in later understanding) discovering the reasons why the author say what he does (Nunan 1991:90). Meanwhile, another context of understanding contained in the book written by Soedarso (2001) stated that critical reading is reading by looking at the author's motives and assessing them. In this case, the reader does not just absorb what is in the text, but he and the writer think about the problem being discussed (context). Critical reading means understanding the meaning and meaning behind what is written. Reading critically means we must read analytically and with judgment(Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020). Reading must be an interaction between the writer and the reader, both parties "influence each other" to form a new understanding(Susetyo et al., 2022).

Based on the description and context of the study above, the context of understanding the approach to learning to read critically is not just how to deepen the written text of a discourse but especially regarding how to involve the affective-emotional aspects of the reader in the process so as to improve the ability to analyze and provide an assessment of the content. the reading. In its application in the context of learning, the improvement of students' critical reading skills must reach the intellectual capacity to understand the contents of the reading. The capacity referred to here is being able to analyze and provide an assessment of the facts and data contained in the text, whether it is in accordance with the actual reality, whether it is objective, and whether it is factual which in the end deserves to be consumed as true knowledge(Weninger, 2018).

In analytical studies related to policy and implementation of learning in educational units, especially higher education today, the emphasis on aspects of HOTS skills (higher order thinking skills), is an important theme in a number of educational assessment procedures. Assessment standards in schools should be oriented to efforts to improve high thinking skills(Téllez & Mosqueda, 2015). This is in line, of course, if the thread is drawn from this topic, with the idea of a critical reading approach in social studies, linguistics and history in learning in schools. According to experts, the emphasis on critical reading skills is one of the aspects that characterizes HOTS achievements. In her book entitled A Practical Approach to Teaching Reading, Dorothy Rubin (1993) states that critical reading skills refer to high-level reading skills because they are not only related to the literal content of reading but include the skills to interpret and evaluate the inherent context of discourse in it (Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen, 2018).

Two researchers, namely Betty Roe and Ross Ellinor (1991) put forward more or less the same perspective in their work entitled Developing Power in Reading. According to both, they agree that critical reading skills are a process that requires efforts to find depth and evaluate the objective basis of a discourse text in which skills are required to interpret the contents of the text literally(Fenner & Snyder, 2017). Thus, critical readers have a number of characteristics in common regarding understanding how to question, how to analyze and how to evaluate texts in their evaluation tools. Readers here will also try to find the cause of a problem and thereby be able to develop their capacity to distinguish fact and opinion in the written text.

Regarding critical reading, Soedarso (2001:72-72) elaborates it in four important steps in the process of developing critical reading which, according to him, can be done by: (1) understanding the content of the reading; (2) examine the author's sources; 3) there is interaction between writer and reader; and (4) accept or reject. First, understanding the content of the reading means recognizing the facts and interpreting what is read, which means understanding the main idea correctly, knowing the facts and important details, and being able to make conclusions and interpretations from those ideas. Second, examine the reading sources used by the author in developing the ideas and ideas contained in his writing(Mehdiyev, 2020). In this context, the critical reader may question whether these sources can be trusted? Likewise, are the sources of information and data accurate enough? Furthermore, readers will also criticize whether the author is competent in his field?

Third, there is interaction between writer and reader; here the interaction is associated with the need to assess the content of the reading by comparing it with our own knowledge. Finally, fourth, a critical reader has the attitude to accept or reject what the author has stated in the discourse based on the perspective of knowledge and judgment he does(Dehghayedi & Bagheri, 2019). To refuse in this context means that there are a number of premises or ideas in the writing that are not in accordance with factual conditions, contradict the truth and or are not in accordance

with current theories related to the topic discussed(DiYanni & Borst, 2017).Thus, in critical reading, the reader is directed to a special characteristic that must be able to make judgments for himself on the one hand and on the other hand must also be open to the ideas of others.

C. Improvement of Critical Reading Skills

As stated earlier, the critical reading approach is more appropriate to be applied to the context of learning at the high school (SMA/SMK) and higher education (student) levels. This needs to be emphasized because reading here involves students' thinking, reasoning, emotions, and attitudes towards the topic and type of reading they encounter. However, it does not rule out its application at the primary and secondary education levels, which of course must be based on the general condition of students and the context of mediation and creativity carried out by the teacher(Morrison, 2020). Here, the idea of participatory contextual education is an open learning approach system and its application is possible for all levels of education and learning.

Turner quoted in Alexander Estil's work (1988) entitled Teaching Reading, suggests that understanding reading as an essential goal of the reading process has three levels, namely the level of literal understanding, the level of inferential understanding, and the level of evaluative understanding (1988:170-172). A similar view is present in Barett's thinking as stated in the work of Ronald Carter and Mickael Long (1991) in their book entitled Teaching Literature which divides reading comprehension levels into four taxonomies, which include: (1) literal understanding, (2) conclusive (inferential) understanding, (3) evaluative understanding, and (4) appreciative understanding (1991:36). Starting from these two literatures, it can be concluded that the skills of learners can actually be improved by using a discussion that refers to the taxonomy proposed by Barrett, namely literal, inferential, evaluative, and appreciative understanding(Kozlarek, 2021; Kozlowski, 2021; Ryan, 2011).

First, related to the literal understanding taxonomy; The main procedure in this process involves all efforts to improve students' ability to understand the reading content in two ways, namely by describing what is written in the text and by interpreting the meaning contained in the text. Second, related to inferential understanding; here the subjective status of the reader is to draw conclusions on the content of the discourse studied, namely: (a) comparing the facts with the author's interpretation; (b) identify hidden assumptions; (c) identify possible bias (undirected wide perspective) in written statements; (d) classifying words, phrases, or questions with certain analytical criteria; (e) predicting implicit qualities, assumptions or conditions; (f) presenting the pattern, arrangement, or arrangement of the material by using criteria such as relevance, causality (cause and effect), the sequence of ideas between parts of the writing; and lastly is to predict the point of view, terms of reference, and the purpose of the material read(Karaca & Oguz, 2017).

Third, related to the taxonomy of evaluative understanding; Here the active actions of readers that can be directed are to improve their abilities in terms of: (a) summing up deduction, induction, and argumentation strength; (b) evaluate the accuracy of a work or document; (c) evaluate each other between assumptions, evidence, and conclusions; (e) evaluate a work by comparing it with other relevant works; (f) evaluate a work using the criteria that are set and explicitly revealed. Fourth, related to the taxonomy of appreciative understanding; At this stage, the important thing that the reader must pay attention to is how the reader's level of achievement is in two important aspects, namely providing an emotional response and being able to identify the character of the writing and the reactive power of the language component used by the author to further present the imagination about the contextual spectrum of the reading(Gao, 2019).

Assessment of learning to read at the appropriate level of education must also be classified into three domains, namely: the cognitive domain, the affective domain, and the psychomotor domain. Measurement of the improvement of reading skills in the cognitive and psychomotor domains should be carried out with test criteria or testing; while for the affective domain using non-test criteria(Schneider et al., 2016). From the understanding of these three criteria, educators can then conduct further field studies to measure the level of critical reading skills of students. In this case, reading ability can actually be influenced by two factors, namely subjective factors (reader's perception) and objective factors (reading material).

In the subjective aspect of the reader, many factors become the background for forming the reader's perception, including the level of intelligence, verbal attitude, background knowledge and other experiences that have settled in his mind. Meanwhile, related to the objective aspect, reading material is an important element that determines the quality and truth of the knowledge information in it(Ozensoy, 2021). For this reason, these objective factors must meet important prerequisites, including related to sentence structure, punctuation, diction, sharpness of meaning and a number of description patterns that make up the presentation scheme and its systematization.

IV. THE RELEVANCE OF CRITICAL READING IN THE POST TRUTH ERA

The phenomenon of disruption is the basis of thought in analyzing social movements that change the learning paradigm of the digital era which is triggered by the massive presence of digital libraries that can be easily and cheaply obtained. As a reading source that is easily accessible, of course, a filtration process related to reading content in the digital library is needed. There are various publications contained in a number of blogs, websites, journal sites, cloud storage or google-drive, and others, most of which do not go through a review or editing process, such as publishing book manuscripts, documents and printed articles. Because it is almost certain that anyone can post any writing to these sites, except those contained in

accredited online journals, from general writers who have special motives and intentions, whether for economic-business interests , influencing the reader or just storing it temporarily before being reprocessed by the author for publication purposes(Din, 2020; Irmawati et al., 2021). With this condition, the general reader will definitely find it difficult to ascertain whether the written sources spread across a number of online media platforms are scientifically valid and correct or are raw materials that require further verification and clarification processes. This is where the critical reader finds its momentum.

The indication of false information or fake news in a number of previous studies (Suharyanto, 2019) that is milling about in online media today is an important precondition that must be understood by the public, news readers or internet reading reference seekers. That, not all publication content, whether in the form of books, articles, documents and news contained in the network media, is scientifically valid or objectively as information. Critical readers will easily find that the news distribution contains manipulative elements because it comes from waste products that are deliberately published for populist needs or to incite and influence public opinion(Belet & Dala, 2010). Not infrequently of them are patterned incite and lead opinion. Just pay attention to the phenomenon of media orchestration that was launched for certain political interests in the last two decades in Indonesia, especially in the political celebration of democracy in the presidential, legislative and regional elections.

The geopolitical and economic interests of media leaders behind the production of information are very influential in order to gain votes in elections or simply compete for influence in gaining the sympathy of the voting community, this is reported in the results of research by Zulfa Aulia and Raffles (2021) related to the concentration of mass media ownership in Indonesia. According to them, the mass media in Indonesia today tend to be owned by certain business groups and generally have affiliations with power or political parties. In this research article, both of them discuss the centralization of mass media ownership based on constitutional law and business competition law. They build the argument that business and political privatization of public information through mass media, although impossible to avoid, needs to be minimized. This is because the mass media is part of the pillars of democracy, which also determines the democracy of a nation. Even though ownership of the mass media itself is part of the expression of (some of the elite) citizens in carrying out tasks guaranteed by the Constitution, it is necessary to try to limit their ownership, because this field of business uses limited public space as a means of carrying out its business and its inherent democratization function. In the situation and condition of ownership of mass media centered among certain business actors, citizens actually do not get a variety of information choices, even though it seems as if there are many media that citizens can choose from.

The same thing was reported in an article published by Bennett, Lance W. and Steven Livingston (2018) entitled The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions. According to them, many democratic countries are experiencing an upsurge in the level of false information circulating through social media and political websites which in many aspects try to imitate the format of journalism. In many cases, this disinformation is linked to a number of socio-political movements of a number of parties radically mobilizing their supporters against the moderate parties and the mainstream press that carries their message. Furthermore, the results of their study stated that the spread of disinformation can be traced to the problems of legitimacy that develop in many democracies. In this condition, citizens trust in trusted institutions that provide official information in the news and influence public opinion on alternative sources of information. These sources are often associated with nationalist (especially right-radical) and foreign strategies to destroy.

A clear example of the product of fake news is the Brexit campaign in the UK and the election of President Donald Trump in the United States. Both are real examples of how campaigns are ridden by certain political interests by amplifying false information. This will gradually become more and more prominent which is intended to disrupt the normal democratic order, but many other countries are showing similar signs of disinformation and democratic disruption in a number of ongoing democratic political celebrations. The origins of this problem and its implications for political communication research explored by a number of other researchers in various countries are increasingly finding the same problem (Barnhart & Ferse, 2023; Vossen & Schulpen, 2019; Waloyo & Jarum, 2019). The strengthening of media framing in amplifying fake news and hate speech is an important indication of the strengthening grip of the flow of influence of social media and mass media interests in the post truth era.

Without obscuring the meaning of a number of other valid and objective sources of information, of course, readers, especially students, need to get guidance and literacy in order to be able to cultivate positive-constructive social attitudes and behaviors in the midst of the onslaught of fake news and misinformation in the post-truth era(Blanch et al., 2013; Duran, 2013). At this point, it is very important for the world of education to apply a critical reading approach to learning in schools. In addition to improving the quality of their skills in the field of science and technology, but especially to shape their identity or character in entering the current of social dynamics that is changing so rapidly in the post-truth era with its increasingly strong disruptive impact. In this context, the implementation of participatory education and learning with a critical reading approach, including character education in shaping students' attitudes and social behavior needs to be carried out consistently and simultaneously in the formal, informal and non-formal education sectors (Siswati, et. al., 2018). Here, the post-truth era is a node of social phenomena that occurs in the midst of the unpreparedness of the world community regarding the flood of information in the

networked era. The choice to strengthen critical stance and character based on truth values over falsehood is an important matter that must always be the center of attention and focus of social improvement in ensuring a more peaceful and harmonious social life in the future.

V. CONCLUSION

Critical reading skills that can be developed in a formal education environment through participatory learning processes are an important strategy that can be carried out by teachers. By shifting the role of student-centred education, educators must be able to present themselves as facilitators. In implementing educational praxis, especially at the upper secondary and higher education levels where students have been involved in social media a lot, learning with a critical reading approach will help students in explore and evaluate the reading products they consume. In the context of digital technology disruption, critical reading is very relevant in stemming false information that damages social life. By reading critically, students and social media actors will not be easily influenced by information that has not been verified and thus will not easily go viral the information they get. Critical reading is one of the syntheses of learning approaches in preparing future generations of people who are test-resistant, have character and are not easily provoked by information and certain trash reading sources from the internet. Here, educational institutions, communities and the state through educational curriculum policies are important to always encourage all tactics and solutions for the benefit of the nation in the future by equipping the younger generation in a positive-constructive manner. Undoubtedly, the post-truth era with all its symptoms and social impacts will have more benefits than harm now and in the future.

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