

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of this present study. In particular, the foundational background along with the overview of the theories and several related studies are elaborated in this chapter, specifically, in section 1.1, this chapter introduces the importance of developing students' critical literacy in this digital era, issues related to the implementation of critical literacy approaches, the four resources model as a recommended critical literacy approach to teach EFL students and elaborates the current study's position in relation to prior research endeavours. Then, in section 1.2, research questions are then presented. Section 1.3 elaborates the aims of this study. Next, section 1.4 delineates the significance of the study as an attempt to address the problems. And then, section 1.5 provides clarification of key terms. Meanwhile, section 1.6 presents the organization of the paper.

### 1.1 Background

Critical literacy can be considered as a crucial ability since it enables people to construct, critique or examine issues from multiple perspectives through an interaction with any forms of communication that convey meaning (including written words and visual images) within the context of socially situated practices (Frankel, et.al, 2016; Wallace & Wray, 2021). The notion of critical literacy is seen to be relevant to current situation as nowadays we live in disruptive era filled with technological advancement and diverse forms of media which provide various information. To take an example, consider the case of social media platforms, where a multitude of voices and perspectives converge, imagine encountering a viral post claiming breakthrough cure for a prevalent disease. Critical literacy encourages individual to scrutinize such information by assessing its credibility, evaluating the source's expertise, checking for potential biases, and verifying scientific evidence.

The ability to think critically can be seen as a major goal of teaching and learning process. In language classrooms, the connection between literacy learning

and critical literacy is fundamental (Serpa & Santos, 2020). Literacy appears as a concept that involves acquiring reading, writing, and communication skills, while critical literacy goes beyond foundational literacy skills since it enhances individuals' abilities to navigate, interpret, and respond to the complexities of today's information and to engage critically with texts. The critical literacy approach recognizes that language enables us to produce work in order to manage our position (Roberge, 2013; Loannidou, 2015).

Within the field of education, it is probably safe to say that today's era has reshaped the landscape of information that influences critical literacy learning (Becker, 2018). In relation to this, in order to navigate learners in this era effectively, it is necessary to combine critical literacy as well as critical thinking, digital literacy and adaptability to stay informed and educated in this rapid changing world. In addition, it aligns with *Kurikulum Merdeka* (The Emancipated Curriculum), the newest curriculum in Indonesia launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which aims to facilitate students to become lifelong learners who have a profile of Pancasila students, including faith, noble character, critical, creative, mutual cooperation, and global diversity (Kemendikbud, 2021). In particular, Project Profile Pancasila in the Emancipated Curriculum is an initiative to integrate the teaching of Pancasila, the foundational philosophical framework of Indonesia, into education system by emphasizing critical thinking, social justice and inclusivity. In relation to this, it is safe to say that critical literacy goals align with Project Profile Pancasila within the Emancipated Curriculum by encouraging students to critically analyse, question, and understand the ideological, societal, and historical dimensions of Pancasila and its implications within the Indonesian context. Relevant to this, developing individual's critical literacy is considered crucial.

Therefore, critical literacy needs to be taught in today's education because it helps learners to link certain issue or information provided in a text with their experiences (Janks, 2014). Specifically, critical literacy may encourage pupils to learn and explore beyond the surface level of language learning since it deals with cultural context embedded in certain text and it empower pupil to actively

participate in language learning through questioning or analysing information. In addition, the need to integrate critical literacy in language learning can be considered relevant to today's information era as it assists learners to be able to critique and comprehend texts (Molin, Godge & Lanz-Andersson, 2018). Apart from that, it is necessary to support the government in equipping more English-competent Indonesian employees (Gustine, 2018; Renandya et al, 2018). Due to this demand, it encourages educators to integrate elements that assist learners to promote their critical literacy and creativity in the learning process.

In language classrooms, although critical literacy is becoming increasingly known in educational field, the integration of critical literacy is often unclear (Johansson & Limberg, 2017). Many educators are still unfamiliar with how critical literacy is enacted (Yoon & Sharif, 2015; Gustine, 2018). Therefore, there is a need to illuminate the integration of critical literacy practice in language classroom.

To help students in developing their critical literacy, there are various approaches that can be applied. In the context of language classroom, one of the approaches that can be employed is The Four Resources Model (Firkins, 2015; Setyaningsih, 2019). This model emphasizes the four major learners' role that can help the language learners to think critically and encourage them to analyse and question texts (Luke & Freebody, 1999). Knowing this approach, it can be said that this model offers robust framework for teaching critical literacy in language classroom since it addresses the complexities of literacy learning while fostering critical thinking, cultural awareness and engagement with text.

Although critical literacy is not a new concept in EFL classroom, arguably, it remains highly relevant in this digital age, where there is a focus interest in integrating ICT in literacy classroom to respond to the demand of this era. In the context of technology in English language teaching, many studies have been carried out (Zhang & Zhu, 2016). However, prior research conducted by Kurniawati, Maolida & Anjaniputra (2018) within the context of ELT in Indonesia showed that language teachers or educators commonly utilized only a single mode of meaning making in their classrooms. Meanwhile, there is a demand to organize creative and

innovative language learning activities which involve the combination of audio, visualization and/or motion (Nowell, 2014; Suherdi, 2020).

As we live in this digital age, utilizing technology for critical literacy instruction can be seen as an alternative way in today's classroom. The idea of connecting critical literacy learning with technology was reinforced by some scholars, such as Robinson & Robinson (2020); Ragen (2012); Collins, (2014); and Sala & Valios (2016), in their investigation into how learners learn reading and writing skills by using technological devices within the context of second or foreign language classroom. In relation to this, offering digital video creation experiences as a means of promoting students' critical literacy can be seen as a viable alternative to language classrooms (Gura, 2014; Mills, 2016).

Additionally, it is noted that the creation of digital book trailer or story trailer in conducting literacy teaching and learning process has been practiced in English classrooms (Gura, 2014). To give an example, a book chapter written by Neary (2014) showed that creating book trailers helped students in demonstrating their knowledge about the given books. The above study was conducted in senior high school within the context of English as first language. In addition, intended to develop students' reading comprehension as well as literacy competence, an experimental research conducted by Sala & Valios (2016) revealed that book trailer became a tool to promote reading and to develop students' literacy development in an interactive way.

Although some studies have focused on the production of digital book trailer in literacy classroom, as mentioned above, however, the student-created digital story trailers project in critical literacy practice within the context of EFL classroom has not been extensively investigated (Mills, 2016; Nikonova & Zalutskaya, 2021; Prinsloo & Sasman, 2015). Hence, in order to contribute to this growing topic, this present study is intended to foster EFL students' critical literacy development by using the Four Resources Model and to explore EFL learners' experiences in designing digital story trailers in order to reflect their literacy development. To address the gap, this study attempted to incorporate a critical literacy aspect by having students present reviews related to the given texts in video trailers as a

strategy to showcase their points of view. Moreover, this study is intended to augment the body of literature on the student-created digital story trailers in promoting their' critical literacy especially in EFL context.

## 1.2 Research Questions

In order to reach the purpose of this present study, therefore the following research questions are formulated:

1. What do the students know about the use of digital technology in literacy field?
2. How does the use of a critical literacy approach, *Four Resources Model*, help EFL students' critical literacy development?
3. How does the production of digital story trailer provide evidence for the development of students' literacy skill in EFL classroom?

## 1.3 The Aims of the Present Study

The aims of this study are to find out:

1. Students' knowledge on digital technology within literacy field.
2. How the critical literacy approach, *The Four Resources Model* help students' critical literacy development in EFL classroom.
3. To examine the role of digital story trailer production in providing evidence of students' literacy skills development.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

It is worth to conduct this present study since it is expected to provide theoretical, practical and policy benefits. **In terms of theoretical benefit**, it is worth to conduct this study since it provides future researchers and readers with empirical evidence on students' engagement in EFL teaching by applying critical literacy-based instruction and technology integration in order to enrich the body of literature on the student-created digital story trailers in promoting their' critical literacy especially in EFL context.

In addition, **in terms of practical benefits**, it is hoped that the results of this study provides valuable contribution in developing students' critical literacy within the context of EFL classroom. Besides, the research findings are expected to be useful for students to gain self confidence in expressing their ideas during the learning activities. Moreover, the implementation of critical literacy oriented activity by integrating digital technology is expected to give innovative way for teaching English as foreign language.

Apart from that, **in terms of policy making**, this study is expected to give information that can be useful to the establishment of the English curriculum especially which is tailored for English language teaching and learning at tertiary level in Indonesia. That is to say that the policy should be explicitly concerned with the integration of digital tools and critical literacy approach(s) in language classroom. With regard to the curriculum which involve critical literacy learning and the integration of technology, it is hoped that the results of this study can be seen as a great significance.

### **1.5 Clarification of Terms**

To avoid misconception, clarification of terms in this study is provided, as follow:

**Literacy learning:** Literacy learning is the process in which students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to read, write, comprehend written language, cultural awareness and adaptability to communication technologies.

**Critical literacy:** Critical literacy can be seen as a rational effort where language students are invited to ask and respond analytical questions about certain issue or message of a text (Papen & Peach, 2021). Besides, critical literacy encourages the students to explore multiple perspectives and voices in texts. In this present study, it deals with critical thinking which implemented to the process of reading and writing activity (Emilia, 2005; Sala & Valios, 2016). The present study employed the four resources model proposed by Freebody & Luke (1999) in comprehending

a short story. The activity covers code breaking, text meaning, text participating and text analysing.

Digital short story trailers: student-created digital story trailers to demonstrate their knowledge about and understanding of the given texts. It can also represent students' responses or opinions on the content of the given stories. Students in this study were asked to make digital story trailer video to interpret their understanding by visualizing and presenting the excerpt of the given short story. In this present study, the elements of digital story trailer, covers images, content of the story in the form of captions or voice-over, language aspect and the choice of music.

Digital age: is the period of human history characterized by the widespread integration of technologies into various aspects of daily life, including education that makes online learning and digital resources widely available.

## **1.6 Organization of the Paper**

This paper is organized into five chapters, as follows:

### Chapter I: Introduction

This section contains introduction which covers the background, research questions, aims of the study, the scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, and the organization of the paper.

### Chapter II: Theoretical Foundation

This part is concerned with reviewing relevant theoretical foundation of the present study with critical literacy oriented activity in digital era as the main issue.

### Chapter III: Methodology

This section elaborates the research method utilized in the present study that covers the research design, site and participants, data collection techniques, research procedures, and the data analysis.

#### Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the result of the present study.

#### Chapter V: Conclusion, Implications & Recommendation

In chapter 5, the conclusion and recommendation in accordance with the study are presented.