

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents rationales behind the selection of the topic of this study. It is composed of background of the study, questions of the study, purposes of the study, scope of the study, significances of the study, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

Since the 1980s, numerous practitioners and researchers have initially discussed the connection between power, social, culture, politic and some other human issues with pedagogy. Freire firstly articulates the notion of critical pedagogy viewing that education is never neutral; it is a political act (2005a). It means that in teaching, it is essential for the teacher to develop students' ability to think and act critically, to be a role model for the students, and to be the agent of change. This theory has grabbed the attention of language practitioners all over the world including practitioners of English Language Teaching (ELT) such as Akbari (2008), Bahruth (2006), Benites (2002), Canagarajah (2005), Crookes (2013), Crowford (1978), Northon and Toohey (2004), Pennycook (1990), Phillipson (1992), and Shin and Crookes (2005). Their major concern is on how English language teaching should go beyond the teaching of English language features such grammar, vocabularies, semantic, syntax and some other features.

There are some issues dealing with English Language Teaching (ELT) on which some language practioners concern. Pennycook (1994) concerns on the dominant issue in ELT in which English is superficially represented as a universal language and a tool of communication. He is optimistic about the possibility that ELT might not reduce its foci to teaching English features, socio-psychological motivation or teaching methodology, but it could expand the foci by incorporating socio-economic, socio-cultural and political aspects that cannot be left out the classroom. Bahruth (2006) supports the notion that language is not only an object

of analysis, it is also a tool to explore and promote relationships of human lives across cultures, races, social classes, gender, and some other aspects. Thus, the

vitality of language in empowering human lives should be considered to be brought out in language education.

In education, especially language education, teacher has fundamental roles not only to develop students' competence of the language but also to develop students' critical awareness. Lipman (2003) insists that teachers have responsibility to develop students' critical thinking rather than pushing them from one educational level to the next. Brown (2001) also argues that teachers should be aware of the objective of English curriculum which is not merely to develop students' linguistic competence as it should also be designed to achieve the goal that goes beyond the development of linguistic features and the dimensions of critical thinking and critical awareness. Pennycook (1999) extremely suggests English teachers to be aware of any issues under the shelter of ELT since he believes that there will be no change without the awareness of "it is necessary". Based upon this, English teachers are highly demanded to be apprehensive about problems encountered by students covering problems inside and outside the classroom, and issues of inequalities in ELT as well as issues associated with it.

In Indonesian context where English holds the status of foreign language, some scholars of Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) have begun to engage themselves to support the principles of critical pedagogy. In line with the aim of critical pedagogy articulated by Freire (2005a,2005b) and Giroux (1988), Suherdi (2012) states that English should be considered as a tool to empower the user as individual and to promote and to communicate values and culture and even to contribute to be the agent of the world change. Gustine (2014), Larson (2014) and Mambu (2014) spotlight that EFL should be considered as a media not only to help students build their critical thinking, but also to develop their social and critical awareness of their environment and the world they live in. Hayati (2010) also encourages all EFL practitioners to view English as a tool to empower the non-native of English speakers' language, their culture, society, and identities. Therefore, based on the significances and nature of critical pedagogy in EFL

classroom in Indonesia, there are three rationales basing this study to be conducted: theoretical, practical and empirical rationales.

Theoretically, there are some principles and a foundation regarding English language teaching in Indonesia which are in tone with the principles of critical pedagogy. Firstly, to cope with culturally and linguistically diverse learners strongly colouring picture of education atmosphere in Indonesia, several principles integrated with critical pedagogy principles have been proposed such as: English language learning encourages respect to all learners; students have fund of knowledge and experience to be incorporated into classroom; teachers need to have critical educational experiences to assist students to make informed decisions about their participation in language, literacy, and life; students need to be taught to be critical users of language; crossing cultural boundaries; and teaching as political act (National council of Teachers of English, 2005). Secondly, some principles of Curriculum 2013 that has been implemented in Indonesia are in line with critical pedagogy principles including promoting student-centeredness, transformative teaching and learning process, and active and critical learning, and using relevant material (Larson, 2014). In line with this, Sundayana (2015) affirms that the Curriculum 2013 encourages an active learning process that can assist students to develop their skills including thinking skills. Lastly, the basic form of critical pedagogy found in the educational philosophy of Indonesia that is developing people's lives now and, in their future, (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013a) also reflects the aim of critical pedagogy in which education should advance human empowerment (Giroux & McLaren, 1986). Thus, it can be implied that critical pedagogy is not in contradiction with the concerns of National Council of Teachers of English on the linguistically and culturally diverse learners, with the Curriculum 2013 implemented in Indonesia and with the philosophical foundation of education in Indonesia. Hence, it might be safe to say that there is a space to implement critical pedagogy by English teachers in Indonesia. If so, how these principles and foundation support the implementation of critical pedagogy in teaching English as a foreign language.

In terms of practice of critical pedagogy principles, some scholars have tried to examine the practicality of critical pedagogy such as Morgan (2004) examining how grammar teaching could be conceptualised through historical construction, Shin and Crookes (2005) investigating students' capability in participating dialogic learning, Yulianto (2015) finding how critical pedagogy principles used in teaching reading helps students develop their critical thinking, and Ikhtiar (2016) discovering strategies of an English teacher in practicing problem posing, dialogue and conscientization in classroom. The major findings of their studies depict that critical pedagogy could be implemented in EFL classrooms. However, as previously stated that even though the notion of critical pedagogy in EFL classroom have widely been addressed by some scholars across the nation, as found by Dardjowodjojo (2000), large-sized classes, English teachers' low English proficiency, and insufficient teacher education mostly hinder English teachers in Indonesia to avoid the use of "banking concept"-the main characteristic of traditional approach which extremely contradicts critical pedagogy principles-in teaching EFL. Hayati (2010) also observed that English teachers are often not attentive to the political and sociocultural aspects of their teaching and are trapped in the banking concept of education where they articulate ideas transmission to the students related to English with narrow space for dialogue and negotiation. For English teachers in Indonesia, Mambu (2011) found that the absence of specific training or program of critical pedagogy for teachers in Indonesia affected the lack of practice of critical pedagogy. Jeyaraj (2014) also found that the ten teachers that he examined lacked practice of critical pedagogy because of some challenges such as: the complexity of critical pedagogy and teachers' lack of knowledge of critical pedagogy. It can be said that some studies have been conducted to investigate how critical pedagogy was practiced in EFL classroom and challenges that hampered the teacher to practice it. Nevertheless, studies regarding teacher's strategies and challenges in implementing critical pedagogy in EFL classroom are still needed, especially in Indonesian context.

The empirical rationale behind the selection of this topic of study is the emergence of various alarming social issues in Indonesia (e.g., Injustice, inequality, hoax or conflicting information in social media, racial issues, gender, stereotyping and so forth). In the site of this study, Lombok, these humanitarian issues which can engage students identical to the foci of critical pedagogy often appear, such as: *merariq kodeq* (early marriage), violence, illegal migrant workers, social caste (noble), gender inequality, street crime, and so forth. These issues are identical to the foci of critical pedagogy such as democracy, justice, ethic, and socio-cultural aspect (Freire, 2005s). Moreover, he also states that critical pedagogy encourages education to promote and appreciate diversity including the learners' diversities. The area of this study also meets the criteria of diversity as the students are culturally and linguistically diverse. It is because this school is located near to the coastal area where some ethnic groups live such as Sasak with Sasak language as mother tongue, Bajo ethnic group with its Bajo language, Mandar ethnic group with its Mandar language, and Samawa ethnic group with Samawa language. Therefore, it is challenging to identify whether or not the English teacher bring the issues into EFL classroom, if so, how the teacher brings them. Moreover, in terms of themes of critical pedagogy principles, studies that consider the learners' diversities (culture and language) are rarely found especially in Indonesian context where students are linguistically and culturally diverse.

Thus, considering the aforementioned theoretical, practical and empirical rationales, this study was conducted to investigate how EFL teachers employ strategies of implementing three principles of critical pedagogy in EFL classroom in a secondary school in Lombok, Indonesia. The three principles are democratic classroom, dialogic education, and reading the word and the world. This study also investigates the challenges that the teacher faces in employing strategies of implementing critical pedagogy.

## 1.2 Questions of the study

Grounded in those aforementioned rationales above, this study formulates two research questions to be answered as follows:

1. What are the strategies employed by the teacher in a secondary school in Lombok in implementing critical pedagogy in an EFL classroom?
2. What are the challenges the teacher encounters in implementing critical pedagogy?

### **1.3 Purposes of the study**

Referring to the research questions addressed, this study was conducted:

1. To discover the strategies employed by the teacher in a secondary school in Lombok in implementing critical pedagogy in an EFL classroom.
2. To discover the challenges the teacher encounters in implementing critical pedagogy.

### **1.4 Scope of study**

Critical pedagogy principles in this study are: theories of critical pedagogy including definition, principles and theme proposed by practitioners of critical pedagogy. The definition of critical pedagogy used in this study is the definition firstly articulated by Freire (Freire, 2005s; Freire & Macedo, 2005) which is developed into three basic principles (democratic classroom, dialogic education, and reading the word and world). These three principles are extracted and synthesized into four themes, namely: 1) promoting democratic classroom; 2) challenging students to think and act critically; 3) learners' L1 as a source of knowledge; 4) incorporating students' real-life concerns and local cultures.

### **1.5 Significances of the study**

1. Theoretical

Theoretically, the result of this study is expected to meet the needs of sources related to the implementation of critical pedagogy by an EFL teacher in secondary school in the Indonesian context. Moreover, the result of this study might be used as a reference to conduct a study related to critical pedagogy.

## 2. Practical

Practically, the result of this study is expected to be used as a reflection for English teachers to keep promoting the implementation of critical pedagogy. This study will also potentially be helpful to develop teachers' awareness of critical pedagogy and will lead them to consciously implement it in classroom. By the implementation, teachers and students can enhance their critical consciousness towards the social and cultural reality as what this approach emphasizes on (Freire, 2005). In addition, this study is also beneficial to be used as the view of critical pedagogy related to its principles to be made used by practitioners who are attracted to the use of critical pedagogy as a teaching approach.

## 3. Professional

Professionally, the result of this study might be a beneficial source or reference for educational stakeholders in constructing policies related to teaching approach and practice of critical pedagogy in EFL classroom context. This study can also be considered as a reference to develop a program such as training for English teachers in order to build their pedagogical competence required by government and develop their critical pedagogy knowledge and competence.

### 1.6 Clarification of terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misconception, several fundamental operational terms frequently mentioned in this study should be clearly defined as follows:

Critical pedagogy in Language Teaching: An attitude to language teaching grounded on critical theory implemented to empower teachers and students' critical thinking and social awareness of the power, social structure, cultural aspect, justice, political aspect, democracy and knowledge. (Akbari, 2008;



Breuing, 2011; Canagarajah, 2005; Mambu, 2014; Pennycook, 1990; Shin and Crooks, 2005)

Critical pedagogy principles: in this study, three main basic principles of critical pedagogy namely 1) Democratic Classroom; 2) Dialogic Education; and 3) Reading the Word and the World (Freire, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Freire & Macedo, 2005) are used as basic theory. Four themes of the implementation of critical pedagogy are extracted grounded in the aforementioned principles, namely: 1) promoting democratic classroom; 2) challenging students to think and act critically; 3) learners' L1 as a source of knowledge; and 4) incorporating students' real-life concerns and local cultures.

English as Foreign Language: referring to Gebhard (2006), EFL is defined as a study of English by people living in a place or environment where English is not used as a means of their first language to communicate.

### **1.7 Organization of the study**

This study is organized into six chapters as follows:

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This study begins with chapter 1 presenting several notions including rationale or background of the study, purposes and questions of the study, scope of study, significances of study, clarification of terms and organization of study.

#### **Chapter II: Theoretical Framework**

This chapter lays out and elaborates theoretical foundation and dimensions which are relevant to this study. This foundation was used as the basis references to keep this study being in line. It was also used as the foundation to develop instruments of this study, to guide data analysis and data collection and to draw a conclusion of the result of this study.

#### **III: Research Methodology**

This chapter provides the research design employed to answer the research questions in this study. It consists of formulation of problem, research design, participants, data collection and data analysis.

#### Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

This chapter explores the whole finding and discussion discovered in this study based on the data obtained through all techniques of the data collection of this study and analysed based on the framework of this study (See Chapter Two)

#### Chapter V: Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendation

This chapter covers the conclusions derived from findings and discussion of this study. The limitations as the weaknesses of this study were also floored in order to be used as the reflection to offer recommendation for the pedagogical practice and further study regarding the topic of this study.