Oral History and Dialogic Education in History Learning

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Abstract: Dialogic education is a teaching and learning approach that aims to engage students in classroom dialogue filled with equality, collectivity, reciprocity, and accountability. In history learning, dialogical education is carried out by accommodating alternative narratives in the classroom. So, what are the practices and ideas for developing dialogical education in history learning? With this in mind, this paper aims to (1) analyze the practice of dialogical education in history learning. (2) Initiating innovation in dialogical education in history learning with oral history. This study uses a phenomenological approach to history teachers at public high schools in Central Java. The study results show that dialogical education has several relevances in history learning. It is demonstrated by developing a more flexible curriculum and making students the benchmark. It is also driven by the government's policy of implementing an independent curriculum that impacts differentiated learning. One strategy for implementing dialogic education in history learning is through the application of oral history. Oral history is interpreted in two ways: as an alternative source and as a method of collecting historical knowledge.

Keywords: Dialogical Learning, Oral History, History Learning

Introduction

Dialogic education is a teaching and learning approach that aims to engage students in classroom dialogue filled with equality, collectivity, reciprocity (reciprocity), and accountability (Cui & Teo, 2021, p. 1). In a dialogical atmosphere, students can express their points of view, and criticize the opinions of others, to develop their mental capacity. Through dialogical education, the learning process encourages teachers and students to critically analyze the topic of study, express and listen to different voices and points of view, and create respectful and equal classroom relationships. (Lefstein & Snell, 2014) Therefore, dialogical education can be seen as a viable approach to developing students thinking and knowledge and preparing students for the demands of the 21st century (Cui & Teo, 2021, p. 1).

The theorization of dialogical education was attributed to Paulo Freire (1921-1997) through his work entitled Pedagogy of the Oppressed and was further developed in other books such as Pedagogy for Liberation, which was co-written with Ira Shor (Skidmore & Murakami, 2016, pp. 1–2).

Freire developed a theory of dialogical pedagogy further in A Pedagogy for Liberation. In a discussion with Shor presented in this book, Freire emphasizes that dialogical pedagogy is not a mere technique but an epistemological process based on a shared understanding of the process of "knowing" as a social activity. On the one hand, dialogical activity is a political practice, as it opposes the traditional form of the teacher-student relationship, in which the teacher is the one who "knows" and transfers this knowledge into students' minds by telling them what he or she knows (Skidmore & Murakami, 2016, pp. 2–3).

Paulo Freire (2008, p. 63) offers a method of education by developing awareness towards openness, namely the educational process consisting of "teacher who is a student" and "student who is a teacher" and the realities of the world. Proper education must become a force of awareness with liberation, namely "problem-facing" education. "Problem-facing" education is a process of codification and documentation, cultural discussion, and cultural action. With such an approach,

teachers and students are brought to the proper dedication, namely the ability to understand critically about themselves and their world (Dananjaya, 2005, p. 58).

Freire thinks dialogue as liberation is one of the paradigms that build the construction of dialogical education. In understanding dialogical practice, Lefstein & Snell as quoted by Alexander (2019, p. E3), propose six paradigms of dialogue, namely (1) dialogue as voice interaction (Bakhtin), (2) as criticism (Socrates), (3) as thought. Together (Vygotsky), (4) as interconnected (Buber), (5) as empowerment (Freire), and (6) as interactional form. These paradigms show that various thoughts influence dialogical education.

Dialogic education is one of the flexible educational approaches that can be applied in all lessons. Therefore, this paper intends to analyze how dialogical education through oral history is applied in history learning.

Methods and Research Design

Methods. This paper is a literature review. According to Mestika Zed (2003), a literature study is a series of activities related to collecting library data, reading, taking notes, and processing research materials. As data sources, literature studies rely on library research materials, such as books, journals, encyclopedias, or magazines. As a literature review, the data is derived from physical and digital textual references.

Research Design. The strategies used are (1) formulating research topics, (2) seeking supporting information, (3) strengthening the focus and organizing reading materials, (4) searching and finding the required materials, (5) organizing materials and doing research notes, (6) review and enrich reading materials, and (7) reorganize materials/notes and start writing (Zed, 2003, p. 81).

Results and Discussion

In the context of historical education, dialogical education is very suitable for overcoming the problem of historical silence that arises from subalternity in history. In history, the term people without history is often heard. This phenomenon illustrates that historical narratives are deliberately not raised so that the stories of the human past are not recorded (Nordholt, 2004, p. 11). Because

their voices are lost and unheard, they belong to the subaltern. Their voices were not heard, thus giving birth to the silence of history.

In history, the subaltern has not been able to voice because the primary reference in historiography comes from official government discourse. On the one hand, the highlighted actors are still struggling with the elite, both the political elite and the military elite. Subaltern voices have not been accommodated in historiography. Even if there is, their voices are marginalized by the big narrative pushed massively by the authorities. Thus, the hegemonic power has tried to form a uniform historical knowledge. It causes a lack of appreciation of alternative historical writings and thoughts and creates a tendency to engineer history for the benefit of certain parties. Bambang Purwanto (2001, p. 111) explains that Indonesian history is defined as the result of social and political machines rather than the result of academia.

In Freire's perspective, this condition gives rise to the dichotomy of the oppressor and the oppressed. Rulers act as oppressors, meanwhile, teachers, students, and the community are included in the oppressed group. The oppressor carries out a "taming" process through a "patterning" process by forcing choices and developing false consciousness. Here, the oppressed group becomes subaltern and is afflicted with silence. Therefore, dialogical education in historical education needs to be sought to change the situation and break the silence so that subaltern voices can be heard.

Issues of historical education that can use a dialogic education approach related to textbooks, for example, relate to alternative narratives and subalternity. A feature of national historiography formed during the New Order was the centrality of the state embodied by the military (Nordholt et al., 2008, p. 14). National history is equated with military history, and the state and the military recognize the production of history. According to this historical view, during the 1950s, the military saved the nation from disintegration by ignoring that the military played an essential role in rebellions in the regions.

As a result, uniform historiography emerged as a product of a single interpretation of the past, thus maintaining the rulers' domination and tending to harm the people and the nation in general (Purwanto, 2008, pp. 21–27). Thus, it can be concluded that historical writing, including educational historiography, still does not accommodate subaltern voices. It can be seen, among other things, from the militaristic narrative and the heroification of military figures. On the other hand, the role of civil figures was negated and drowned out. (Purwanta, 2013) This study is in line with the findings of Mulyana (2013) that militarism is a part of an ideological nation in textbooks.

Discussion and Recommendations

In the classroom learning context, a dialogical approach is suitable for building an active learning atmosphere. According to Freire, this is because of the tendency to apply the "bank style still" education model, which places students as a place to store historical information. It can happen because learning is not contextual and does not involve students in the learning process. As a result, learning becomes passive, and history is only judged as rote knowledge.

So, how is dialogical education done to overcome these problems? Efforts to realize dialogical education are first carried out by realizing recognition—first, mutual recognition of the roles of teachers and students. Here there needs to be an acknowledgement that the teacher has a recognized authority. Nevertheless, on the one hand, students also have a recognized role. Recognition to students includes recognition in (1) expressing their learning needs, (2) jointly determining the direction of learning, and (3) acknowledging to participate in building knowledge. Second, recognition of one's abilities (strengths and weaknesses) and respect for the authority of others. Third, the recognition of alternative narratives.

Therefore, dialogical education manifests itself in two spheres. First, it is dialogical in the aspect of the method. The method here refers to how the framework of thinking and methods are dialogical. In this case, dialogic is defined as a method that provides opportunities for teachers and students to analyze the topic of study, express and listen to various voices and points of view, and create respectful and equal class relationships. Second, dialogical in the aspect of

learning resources, which means using various learning resources, including alternative narratives in history learning.

Dialogical education textbooks are not the only reference. For this reason, it is necessary to decolonize historical knowledge sources used in education. So far, the critique of history material in class has focused on history in a global scope. Therefore, learning needs to accommodate micro-narratives. Microhistory is a part of social history that observes phenomena microscopically. Burke (2003, pp. 59–60) explains that microhistory is a trend in studies focusing on microsocial analysis. In simple terms, micro-history is defined as a historical study that focuses on a narrow unit of analysis, such as certain events, rural communities, families, and individuals.

Muir (2006, p. 619) explains that microhistory focuses on individuals or small groups over a relatively short period and sudden changes. Due to its narrow scope, the micro-history analysis was conducted in depth.

Microhistory provides benefits in modern historiography and education. There are at least five benefits of studying micro-history. First, through micro-history, the detailed aspects of society are known on a small scale. So far, these detailed aspects are rarely known and recorded in documents. Second, enriching alternatives and perspectives on one problem from another perspective in depth. Third, being able to explore people's lives more vibrantly and diversely. Fourth, provide a study of a problem more humanely so that there is no longer the term history without people. Fifth, it provides an opportunity to study subaltern societies so that there is no longer the term people without history.

The second effort to present a dialogical narrative in learning resources is to strengthen oral history in learning. Oral history is a study and method for obtaining historical information from individuals, community groups, events, and daily activities using interviews. The use of oral history is done by exploring the experiences of the subaltern to be written down. Oral history is a medium for subalterns to speak out. The voices can come from victims who have lost the opportunity to speak.

In the Indonesian context, the use of oral history to connect subaltern voices, such as the project undertaken by Roosa et al. (2004) in a book entitled The Year That Never Ends. This book contains essays written using the oral history method to victims or their families who witnessed firsthand the dark events of 65-66. Through this book, the narrative of the dark events of 1965-1966 has been successfully raised and widely read.

In addition to voicing subaltern narratives that have been silent so far, oral history can also voice ideas from teachers and students (Gardner, 2003). Teachers and students can act as subalterns because they are considered consumers of historiography products. They and their families also have stories that can be told in history learning. Telling the past from teachers and students makes history learning more contextual and alive. Engaging narratives emanating from teachers and students through oral history is a simultaneous attempt at introducing microhistory in the classroom. Of course, their stories must be related to a broader context so that the connection between one event and another can be seen.

The use of oral history thus becomes one of the opportunities to voice the subaltern's narrative. Through oral history, an emancipatory pedagogy will be realized, leading to transformation (Lattimer & Kelly, 2013, pp. 476–477). Oral history engages students in the process of narrative transformation from historical records that provides a vision for a more peaceful future. In Paulo Freire's concept, oral history plays a role in raising awareness (Conscientization).

The use of oral history and micro-history can be done with two strategies. First, oral and micro-history as elaborative-comparative objects. Students are trained to read alternative narratives to discover an event's various perspectives. Students are invited to look not only from the side of the "winner" as recorded in official history but also to see from the side whose voice has not been heard so far.

Second, using oral history and micro-history can also be done by applying resource-based learning (learning based on information retrieval, such as inquiry). Here, students are invited to listen directly to the voices of the subaltern. Students can explore and construct the narrative they hear from the subaltern. It aims to enrich students in seeing events from various perspectives. On the one hand, it

helps students hear narrations from sub-alterns and voice their voices in learning. Thus, the learning process can become more dialogic.

Along with developments in dialogical education, Alexander (2018, p. 6) formulated several principles to develop a dialogical atmosphere in education: (1) Collective, where a classroom is a place of learning and joint investigation. (2) Reciprocity or reciprocity, where teachers and students listen to each other, share ideas and consider alternative points of view. (3) Support or support each other. Participants are encouraged to express ideas freely without risking embarrassment over the 'wrong' answers, and they help each other to reach a common understanding. (4) Cumulative, participants build on each other's contributions and then direct them into a coherent line of thought and understanding. (5) Aiming, meaning that even though the conversation is open and dialogical, it is still carried out in a structured manner to achieve a particular goal together.

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