



POWER RELATION IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY IN TEACHING ASSISTANCE OF *MBKM* PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia Ministry of Education has launched *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM). One of the programs selected by university students is teaching assistance at schools. The study investigated how the university student, as a teacher assistant, deals with teaching methods promoting critical thinking and problem solving and designing student center teaching activities. Critical thinking and problem solving and a student center are 21st-century students' life skills that should be embedded in teaching. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach is aimed at uncovering power relations in the English classroom. The researcher becomes a key instrument who cannot be delegated. The finding then is sufficiently reconstructed by keeping a natural setting, so the finding data can be depicted as the aims of the research are expected. The study was conducted at *MBKM* program by the English Literature Study Program, STBA Sebelas April Sumedang. In-depth observation and interview on teaching activities in the classroom and teaching documents (lesson plan) examination were performed toward a university student teaching English. The data finding then is interpreted by the Critical Discourse Analysis theory suggested by Fairclough (2001). The result shows that a teacher is dominant in teaching English, making it difficult for students to expose their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, collaboration, communication, and creativity.

Keywords : power, CDA, domination, critical thinking, MBKM

INTRODUCTION

Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM, freedom to learn, independent campus) was launched by Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. One of the program objectives is to provide university students experiential learning (Dikti, 2020). The students are faced with practical activities to enrich their soft and hard skills. Teaching assistance at school is one of the distinguished programs in MBKM. University students who have a passion in education help teachers in every school's levels from elementary to secondary. They assist teachers in dealing with teaching-learning activities. They are also expected to be able to handle learning activities both online and offline.

In facing a complex and competitive situation in the 21st century, a national curriculum in elementary and secondary schools are designed to cope with the new need in the current era. Meaning that tremendous changes in learning approach should be comprehended by university students. Students-centered learning (SCL) is an approach in learning to shift a traditional approach, teacher-centered learning (TCL). SCL is expected to promote skills needed in the 21st century. The skills are critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration and creativity (Yulistiana, 2020), overcoming some problems in TCL. The SCL approach focuses on students' needs rather than teacher's needs (Endrotomo, 2014).

University students joining the MBKM program are presented by the schools' interest in meeting their quality graduates. Teaching activities are designed to encourage students to be more independent, critical, and collaborative (Fadel, 2008) on one side, university students teach them to be equal, as a facilitator, since showing the power makes students more passive and feel discouraged on another side. It is a big challenge for university students to get involved in education when they do not particularly learn pedagogical subjects in university.

Being critical, students are expected to put forward their opinion, argument or view without being oppressed and dominated by teachers. They see a problem from many perspectives, collaborating with their partner's hand in hand to solve the problems. They do not depend on their teacher too much by researching to examine the problem with certain steps and carry out the solution. In this sense, teachers play a significant role to encourage and facilitate their students to expose their skills. If teachers are too dominant in classroom activities, the students tend to be more dependent and passive. So, the teachers are expected to be careful in using their authority in class.

In general, power is a part of human nature. It can be used by people to complete their needs. Power is an energy to control people's activity, attitude, and mindset (Mason, 2012) so that people believe and follow what the power holder wants. Power is the ability to produce intended effects (Heimans & Timms, 2018). Power is a social force that motivates people to things do together. Besides, power has the function to influence other people to do something. Foucault views power as an oppressed instrument from the authority to people (Budiharjo, 2008). The hegemony term, then, is introduced. Power relation accepts part of human life and is found in sort of life including in classroom activities. In other words, power is symbolic, a means to achieve the end (Triandjojo, 2014). The genesis of power is identified from six aspects: legitimate power, coercive power, reward power, expert power, referent power and connection power (Robbin, 2008).

Legitimate power is power owned by a leader in an organization or institution. In this position, the leader has the power to give instruction. The staff should listen and obey the leader's direction. For example, a principal at schools, chief of executive officers in a business company. Coercive power is power-based punishment and reward. A leader in coercive power has the authority to give punishment to those who disobey. The staffs know the consequences, then they have to follow the leader's direction. For example, in this case, a leader who can fire his staff whenever they break the rule. Reward power is power that gives a positive reward or achievement to the staff. Job promotion, good score or money are given to staff who can accomplish their obligation. Expert power is power-based expertise in a certain field, then the staff follow and believe in the leaders because of the leader's experience and knowledge. Referent power is power-based individual characters or personality traits. The staffs follow the leaders because they adore the leader. Connection power is power-based: the good relation or connection between a leader with an important and influential person in organization. A person who has leadership values tends to combine and use the genesis of power based on certain contexts to influence the people. He can use one or more powers in one time to make people believe and obey.

In the context of classroom activities, a power relation appears between teachers and students. It is an issue deeply discussed by Fairclough (2001). The use of language in classroom instruction between teacher and students is not a means of communication. The power relation is inserted in the language since the language plays a significant role in building and maintaining social relations. The variation of language use is not an individual choice, but it is a social product such as social identity, social setting and social perspective (Fairclough, 2001). Furthermore, as a part of society, the language is used by a member of society to speak, listen, write and read. People do this to respond to social interaction. The way people use language, then, is determined by aspects of social life. The famous quote in Indonesia "*Bahasa menunjukkan bangsa*" indicates that language represents a social interaction.

Language has also a tight connection with knowledge. The knowledgeable can be an expert power when he uses a language (Foucault, 2002). He can control turn-taking, dominate the conversation and choose certain diction or words. This represents the power of language (Hamdan, 2019). Foucault (2002) states "Knowledge linked to power not only assumes the authority of the 'truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge once applied in the real world, has effects and in that sense at least 'become true'. Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraining, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, 'there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge, that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relation'".

Foucault (2002) focused on discursive activities as a representative system of language since discursive is a set of statements that make language be used to discuss a certain topic and context, so discursive is knowledge product through language. Social practices make meaning and the meaning shapes and influences people (Hamzah & Ningsih, 2015). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used to find the underlying ideology in the social practices (Fairclough, 2001; Hamdan, 2019; Hodge & Kress, 1993). By using CDA, the ideology and also the power behind discourse are uncovered. The level of discourse is divided into three layers. They are socio-cultural level, discourse practice, text production and consumption and the text.

Discursive practices also happen in classrooms. The discursive practice is a text (Halliday, 2014). Teachers and students are involved in the social practices in the classroom. The power relation in this study is focused on teacher and students interaction by detecting the discursive process. Teacher and student interaction is the representation of social practices in the real world. Power relation in teacher and students interaction is aimed to encourage students to be more active in communication and the English lesson. Moreover, the lesson is English which should be mastered by students as a means of communication. The discursive process will be involved (a) a discussed topic; (b) the way of interaction; (c) how to start the interaction; (d) turn taking control; (e) the conversation domination. By the explanation and rationale above, this study is aimed at uncovering the power relation in English classrooms and expressions used in representing the power.

METHODS

The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach is aimed at uncovering power relations in the English classroom. The qualitative is used because the study detected the expressions, words, discursive process and social practices. They are not a statistical number and cannot be quantified. Hence the qualitative approach is appropriate with this study (Creswell, 2007; Moleong, 2005; Sugiyono, 2005). A case study is used as a research method since the writer deeply investigated one person in the power relation topic. This method is used to describe an individual situation, identify the key issues of the power relation case, analyze the case using relevant theoretical concepts and recommend a course of action for the particular case (Creswell, 2007). The participants of the study is a university student of *Sekolah Tinggi Bahasa Asing Sebelas April Sumedang* who joins the MBKM program in teaching assistance at the school model. The university student is called a teacher in this study.

A school where the MBKM program took place is Al Jauhar Vocational School, Wado, Sumedang, Indonesia. The teaching assistance program was from February 1st until June 1st, 2021. The teacher taught an English subject in 2nd grade. There were 20 students in the class. The teacher made a lesson plan for every meeting. The lesson plan was submitted to the writer and discussed before and after teaching. Since Al Jauhar Vocational school was in a green zone of Covid 19, the teaching activities were offline. However, the writer observed and discussed the teaching activities online. The activities were recorded and observed

carefully. The conversation between teacher and students was transcribed. The transcription was classified and identified.

The library research was conducted to find relevant references. The books and international and national journals were taken as sources. The in-depth interviews with the teacher were carried out to clarify the intention of the teacher and also to give feedback in the teaching activities. The teaching activities record was analyzed to find out the power relation in the teacher and students interaction. After the data were collected by using library research, in-depth interviews, syllabus and lesson plan documents and observation, the data, then, were analyzed by using Critical Discourse Analysis to detect the power relation suggested by Fairclough (2001).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The power relation in the classroom is detected by identifying the conversation between teacher and students. The social practices in the classroom are observed in (a) teacher and student talking time; (b) topic control; (c) giving instruction; (d) closed question; (e) giving correction; (f) diction.

Teacher Student Talking Time

During teaching activities, a teacher dominates the classroom activities. A teacher's talking time is 93% while students are only 7% during 45 minutes. A teacher likes talking as described in the following table:

Table 1: Teacher and Student Talking Time

No	Teacher Talking Time	Student Talking Time
1	<p><i>"I'm fine good alhamdulillah. Robbana srohlana sudurona wayassirlana umurona wahlul ukdatammillisanina yafkohu qaulana, robbana tubillahi robba wabil islamidina wabimuhammadinnabiyya warosula, robbana zidna ilman nafiaan warzuqna fahman.</i></p> <p><i>Okay, alhamdulillah hari ini kita bisa bertemu lagi, mudah mudahan semua dalam keadaan sehat walafiat dan mudah mudahan di setiap hari kita Allah selalu memberikan kita kemudahan, dan kelancaran serta yang terpenting adalah mudah mudahan allah selalu memberikan kita ilmu yang bermanfaat ya. Okay, hari ini kita akan melanjutkan materi kita setelah di minggu sebelumnya kita membahas materi yang berkaitan tentang pronoun. Nah, hari ini kita akan masuk ke materi baru, cuman sebelum masuk, bapak akan mengabsen dulu kehadiran dari kalian (pinjem pulpen sebentar), hadir semua hari ini?"</i></p>	<i>Hadir</i>
2	<p><i>"okay, nah, hari ini kita akan membahas materi yang baru ya, materi yang berkaitan tentang talking about self. Yaitu materi tentang memperkenalkan diri bagaimana kalian memperkenalkan diri ke orang yang baru dan juga mungkin Ketika kalian bertemu seseorang di suatu tempat atau bahkan mungkin Ketika kalian di situasi yang menuntut kalian untuk memperkenalkan diri, seperti itu. Nah, nanti bapak akan putar video yang berkaitan tentang materi tadi jadi di mohon kalian untuk memperhatikannya materi yang akan bapak sampaikan karena talking about self ini menjadi materi yang sangat penting dimana setidaknya kalian bisa menyampaikan dan menginformasikan tentang diri kalian. Siapa nama kalian</i></p>	<i>(Students are silent)</i>

<p><i>dan juga berapa umur kalian, dari mana asal kalian, dan juga mungkin hal hal yang ingin orang lain tahu seperti hobi kalian apa, kalian sedang menempuh Pendidikan apa, apakah sma/smk atau mungkin sudah kuliah atau mungkin kerja, dll. Ya seperti itu, dengan adanya materi tentang talking about self bapak harap kalian bisa lebih percaya diri, nanti mungkin di suatu hari atau di materi- materi yang akan datang kalian bisa lebih percaya diri memperkenalkan diri kalian dengan Bahasa inggris yak arena mau bagaimanapun kemampuan berbahsan inggris menjadi salah satu kemampuan yang sangat penting di bidang apapun untuk sekarang untuk saat ini. Kita gak akan pernah lepas dengan yang Namanya Bahasa inggris. Oke, kita langsung aja bapak akan putar videonya, video ini yang berkaitan dan menyangkut tentang talking about self ya”</i></p>	
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In the opening activity (no.1), the teacher uses *bahasa Indonesia*. He started with pray (in Arabic), and he translated it in *bahasa Indonesia*, after that he goes to the topic pronoun. He checks the attendant’s list by asking “*hadir semua hari ini?*” The students replied, “*hadir*”. In the beginning, the expert power is used by teacher by using the Arabic prayer, and the Indonesian prayer and hope. The teacher does not give room to respond the teacher except replying “*hadir*”, not more than “*hadir*”. Expression (no. 2) shows that the teacher again spends talking time much by describing the use of introduction expression, the benefits of English and by encouraging students to be more confident by using English. The students keeps silent during teacher’s speech. It happens since the teacher does not invite students’ response by giving elicit questions. The teacher can lead students to answer the question if the teacher wants to open the conversation. For example, “what do you think if you tell your hobby or your dream to people?” Students will answer similar with the teacher’s speech in no.2, such as we can be more competence, more confident. The teacher talking time shows that the teacher is very powerful but he cannot use his power to persuade students to be more involved in-class conversation.

Topic Control

A teacher controls the topic of conversation. However, the students do not respond to the topic well. The students are silent, looking at the teacher.

Table 2: Examples of Topic Control

No	Example of Topic Control by Teacher	Students’ Response
1	<p><i>“Nah berarti sudah, setiap pasangan yah, sudah menyampaikan conversation nyah, nah sekarang bapa akan, kita akan bareng-bareng ngucapin ini, conversation dari beberapa expresions yang bisa digunakan dalam introducing your self atau talking about self.”</i></p>	<p>Silent, paying attention at teacher.</p>
2	<p><i>“nah, (melihat tulisan) ketika kalian menemukan kata seperti ini adalah singkatan dari “ I would ” cara bacanya gimana pak? Digabungkan “I’d” repeat after me, “I’d” “ I’d like to” “I’d like to introduce myself” nah seperti itu yah, jadi kalau nemu kata seperti ini gak usah bingung lagi, nah ini tadi beberapa percakapan atau expressions digunakan untuk memperkenalkan diri”.</i></p>	<p>Silent, some of them nod their heads.</p>

3	<p><i>"Yah, misalkan kalian guru yah, atau misalkan dosen yah, atau mungkin keorang tua karena lebih tua misalkan yah, atau kita ketemu dengan orang yang bener-bener baru liat yah, baru ketemu, lebih pantasnya kita pake excuse me jadi seperti itu, perbedaannya sebenarnya seperti itu simple nah jadi itu jawaban dari pertanyaan yang itu"</i></p>	<p>Silent, students are listening the explanation.</p>
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As can be seen in Table 2, the topic of conversation is controlled by giving a certain issue or instruction, such as a conversation about introducing self as example no.1. A teacher determines that students are ready with the task's activity, and asks students to pronounce certain expressions together. The expert power has appeared when the teacher clarifies "I would" and "I'd". The teacher simply insists that the students should not be confused with "I would" and "I'd". However, the teacher does not ask the students whether they understand or not. The teacher also widens the discussion of excuse me in self-introduction self by setting the situation in the level of age or politeness. The teacher finally concludes that it is simple to distinguish when students should say excuse me or not.

The three examples show that the power relation appears when the teacher explains the material. The teacher does not give his student a chance to argue. The teacher's domination in controlling topics does not encourage students to speak. The students even are silent, meaning that the students are (1) still confused with the explanation, (2) are not interested in the topic, (3) do not think the topic is important or (4) being dominated by the teacher.

Giving Instruction

A power relation in teacher and students conversation can be seen by observing the way the teacher instructs as described in the following table.

Table 3: Examples of Giving Instruction

No	Teacher's Instruction	Students' Responses
1	<p><i>"...Bapak akan kasih tau pronouciationnya dan kalian ulangi "I will read this exspressions and you will repeat after me" jadi bapa dulu mengucapkan baru kalian ikutin yah, disini kita pake namanya john oke, repeat after me, "hello, my name is john"</i></p>	<p><i>They repeat teacher's utterances.</i></p>
2	<p><i>"...sekarang bapa akan mengelompokan kalian dengan berpasangan yah, untuk nanti tugas selanjutnya, nah ini bapa udah punya nomor undian ada sekitar 6 angka yah, berarti 12 dibagi 6 berarti dua orang-dua orang berpasangan yah, sok mulai dari dian (lanjut yang lain mengambil nomor undian ke depan) nomor 1 siapa? Sama siapa satu lagi? sama Dian. Berarti Ani pindah kesini nomor2? Nomor 3? Kedepan berarti nomor 4? Nomor 5?"</i></p>	<p>Two students follow the teacher's instruction.</p>
3	<p><i>"...sok sekarang silahkan kalian buat percakapan tentang "talking about self" percakapan yang simple aja jangan terlalu panjang yang penting disitu ada beberapa ekspresi yang tadi sudah disampaikan yah, oke silahkan!" Bapak akan mengasih kalian dengan kertas.</i></p>	<p><i>Students make conversation</i></p>

From table 3, the instructions from a teacher are using direct command. A teacher asks students to do something. A teacher does not confirm whether they understand or not. A teacher also does not use another expression like "Let us say 'Hello, my name is Jhon'" or "Why don't we make a group" or "Please, ask your friend's hobby". The expression "let us...", or why don't we..." is inclusion. It is more equal, the teacher does not make distance with students. In example no.1, the teacher only gives direction. Confirmation from students is not needed. In example no.2, the instruction "... *sok mulai dari Dian* (start from Dian)" indicates the teacher uses his power in the decision without giving his students a chance to move to the next chair. In example no. 3, a teacher's command "...*jangan terlalu panjang yang penting di situ ada beberapa ekspresi*" shows the coercive power to limit students' activities in making sentences. It indicates if the students do not follow the teacher, then the students are punished.

Closed Question

Power relations are also shown when a teacher makes closed questions. The question "*udah?*" (done?) means that the students tend to respond "yes", "no" or "done". The reason is not important in the type of questions. It is different if a teacher uses different expressions when asking questions like, "How if we do this task in 5 minutes?" The question is more equal than strictly saying "done?". The question in negotiation form puts a teacher in an equal position towards students.

Beside a teacher using a short and closed question type, the teacher also asks "*Kenapa manusia tidur?*" (why do humans sleep?). Even though it is an open question, the answer is determined by a teacher. The answer is tired. Since the answer is determined, it shows that the teacher exercises his power to agree upon his opinion.

The utterance "*Dari yang Bapak jelaskan, kira-kira apa yang dapat disimpulkan?*" expects that the students respond to various answers. However, the students directly answer "everything needs to reason" and the teacher approves the answer. The conversation indicates that the teacher successfully leads the students to give an appropriate conclusion. The students correctly guess the teacher's conclusion in mind.

Giving Correction

Power relation has appeared when a teacher gives correction, as shown in the following sentences.

Sentence 1.

Teacher: "*Ok, Bapak akan compare, akan gabungin jawaban dari Sri dan Ila. Jadi semua didunia ini ada sebab akibatnya. Dalam bahasa Inggris disebut cause and effect*"

Students: (no response).

Sentence 2.

Teacher: "*Apa?*"

Students: "cause".

Teacher: "Cause and effect".

In sentence 1, a teacher gives correction by stating that he compares and combines students' answers. The teacher does not give feedback or appreciate students' responses by saying "good, correct, nice answer, or very closed". Giving students feedback is important to motivate them giving opinions without being shy. Appreciation exists if the teacher gives feedback. However, the feedback is not found during teaching activities. In sentence 2, a teacher asks students by saying in Bahasa Indonesia "*apa?*". Students reply to incomplete answers. A teacher, then, adds the answer "cause and effect" straightforwardly without acknowledging students' incomplete answer.

A teacher shows his power in giving corrections directly. He does not give other students to correct or give comments on their friend's answers. The discussion or two ways of communication does not happen when the teacher directly corrects the student's answer.

Even the teacher does not give appraisal words. Lack of the praise indicates that the teacher does not use his power to encourage students to participate in the classroom.

Diction

The linguistic/word choice to deliver the information is observed to detect the power relation. It is found that some words indicate the higher bargaining power is shown by a teacher. The utterances like “*Bapak*”, “*sok (please)*”, “*sok mulai dari Dian, lanjut yang lain mengambil nomor undian ke depan, nomor 1, siapa?*”, “*Kalian*”, “*Anak-anak*”. *Bapak* is used by a teacher to show that a teacher puts his unequal position. The “*sok*”, “*kalian*”, “*anak-anak*” expressions in the context of classroom instruction that a teacher makes distance with students. The high teacher’s domination in a class makes students passive. Students are not giving verbal responses. They keep silent during activities. Only follow the instruction without enthusiastically confirming, asking or giving comments/opinions during activities.

From a class activity, the power relation is practiced by a teacher. Teacher spends a lot talking time in presenting the lessons, the teacher also controls the topic, gives instructions and corrections, uses a closed question and chooses the diction. The expressions used in representing the power are diction like “*Bapak*”, or “*anak-anak*”, which emphasizes the difference of age. The use of instructing by saying “repeat after me” clearly exposes the teacher’s domination towards students.

Promoting the 21st life skills that students should have such skills as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration and creativity, the teacher should use the power in encouraging them to be more independent, critical and creative. The teacher should learn more about how to manage the power in supporting students to have 21st life skills. The pedagogical method and the use of language are important to be mastered, then the teacher can set the social practices in class to be more equal as SCL approach wishes. In brief, the university should make preparation or teaching training before it sends the students to MBKM programs. The training covers the pedagogical method, language use and SCL approach.

CONCLUSION

The present study aims to investigate power relations in the English classroom between the university student, as a teacher assistant, who dealt with teaching methods promoting critical thinking and problem solving and designing student center teaching activities and the students in the English Class. In order to examine the power relation in the classroom, this study identifies the conversation between teacher and students. There are some social practices in the classroom that are observed, including (a) teacher and student talking time; (b) topic control; (c) giving instruction; (d) closed question; (e) giving correction; (f) diction. The findings of this study indicates that the teacher is too dominant in exercising the power relation. As a result, it makes students are difficult to expose their critical thinking, problem solving skills, collaboration, communication and creativity in joining the learning activities. However, the teachers are invited to evaluate their power in conducting teaching and learning process so that they can encourage the students to develop their 21st century life skills. In addition, it is also important to manage the teaching training for students who will participate in teaching assistance program so they can conduct the more effective instruction in English class.

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