USING DIALOGUE FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

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Introduction

The spread of the covid 19 virus throughout the world has brought many changes to people's lives such as in Indonesia. The danger of the virus being transmitted to many people makes all educational institutions including early childhood education such as kindergartens not allowed to use face-to-face learning. All schools must use distance learning. Therefore, almost all Indonesian educational institutions have used distance learning to conduct their educational processes. However, many parents still find it difficult to teach their children during distance learning. Even children feel that studying at home while learning distance is also boring since teachers only give assignments without giving any guidance (Putra, 2020). In this case, it seems that while trying to use distance learning, teachers are not trying to communicate with their students. Usually in using distance learning, teachers only give some tasks or assignments to their students.

Teaching needs two ways communication. Communication is important in education especially in distance learning since there is a distance between students and their instructors and also among the students themselves. Therefore, in thinking about communication for distance learning, we should think about dialogue since Freire (1970/2000) states that "Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education (p. 92-93)". Dialogue will help to build a meaningful communication among people since dialogue according to Freire (1970/2010) is the encounter between people, mediated by the world in order to name the world.

Dialogue is a crucial issue in education, with the belief that dialogue in education will help students to develop as human beings who care for others (Freire, 1970/2010; Burbules,1993; Vella, 2004; and Buber in Scott, 2011), develop students' thinking (Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Fisher, 2009), help students to grow, and help students learn (Vella, 2004). The importance of dialogue in instructional process also discuss by McCombs and Miller who reveal that learning is relational (cited in Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010) and Bingham and Sidorkin (2004) who view that teaching is relational in which developing and building relationship needs dialogue. Therefore, dialogue has been placed as a crucial aspect to help people build their relationship with others to construct knowledge.

There are some research studies on dialogue in education but there are still not many research studies about the spirit of dialogue as proposed by Freire (1970/2010) that have been applied in online learning an distance learning. Therefore, this paper will explain about what and how dialogue being important in distance learning especially for early children.

Distance learning

The term distance learning means a way of studying in which you do not attend a school, college, or university, but study from where you live, usually being taught and given work to do over the internet (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/distance-learning). Thus, in using distance learning, students and their teachers are not in the same room. Students have to study at their home while teachers also in their own home or at the schools. This fact will lead the students to feel alienation as a consequence of the separation. Therefore, the use of technology can be a way to reduce the separation and the alienation of the students while they are learning at a distance. The challenges of this kind of pedagogy is how to reduce the separation and the alienation while also maintaining students' independencies in their learning. Therefore, dialogue is needed to increase the interaction and reduce the distance (Putra, 2020, Sayre, 2014)

Moreover, the term *distance learning* means that the learning process is not done by face to face in a classroom, instead, in distance learning teachers and their students are separated. The students should be learn at home and the teachers teach from other places such as from their home or from schools. Then, the teaching and learning process is planned and is conducted from a distance by the help of technology. Now, distance learning also relates with online learning. For example, Universitas Terbuka (UT) as a university with distance education system conducts its teaching and learning process by using many media. The main media used by UT students is printed media (we used to call it the module) and non-printed media such as audio / video, computer / Internet, radio

and television broadcasts. To help UT's students learning at a distance there are many preparations that have to be done. In fact all of the UT's students are adults. The question is how distance learning can be implemented for early children? This paper will try to answer the question starting from describing about what is dialogue.

What is Dialogue

Dialogue is a term that has many definitions and perceptions depended on who the scholar is. For example, dialogue means the interchange of ideas between one sources and another or to such different processes as an individual reader grappling with the ideas in a book and negotiations between social groups or organizations (Mercer & Littleton, 2007, p1).

Freire (1970/2010) wrote that incorporating dialogue in this pedagogical process will help students engage and be active in their own learning in order to gain meaningful and productive learning. Through dialogue, teachers or instructors or tutors can motivate distant learners to express their perceptions as their own voices. Thus, providing dialogue will help learners to think and to speak for their own. This dialogical approach will stimulate students to think for themselves, and to act for their own purpose and for their works and hopefully for their community. In this case, dialogue can be a way to liberate learners. Dialogue, according to Freire (1970/2010), can also be a means for gaining multiple perspectives from the learners as well as from the teachers.

Paulo Freire (1970/2010) argues that "dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world (p. 88). This definition means that by dialogical approach, teachers and students can develop a relationship based on mutuality that can empower both students and teachers. The relationship will help students to learn about content and the connection between students and the material learnt, to name their problem, to reflect (to think about what they do and will do about the problem), and to act accordingly toward what students can do to solve the problems. Is this what Freire meant by mediation?

Dialogue according to Freire (1970/2010) should be based on love, humility, trust, faith, and hope. It is shown when teachers care about students. Teachers provide dialogue because they love their students and want them to have a chance of engaging in dialogue. The engagement is aimed to motivate the students to express their thinking, and their beliefs, then, to act based on their belief. In this case, providing dialogue will lead the students to have power because the students know that they can think and can have power to solve their problem. Dialogue will not happen if the teachers are arrogant and not humble, or if the teachers or the students themselves do not trust each other.

Students will express their feelings to their teachers and their friends because they trust the teachers and their friends. Students trust and have faith and hope that participating in the learning process will help them grow in freedom. A dialogical approach will also show that teachers respect their students and accept them as human. Dialogue that is used by teachers can help students realize that they are part of the world, and they have to relate themselves with their environments and community. Dialogical approach will also show that teachers have hopes for their students. Teachers give students hope that students have the power to think and to do action to name the world, which mean that the students can contribute their thinking and their action to their community. Embracing a dialogic approach sends an important message to the students, that their life is meaningful to themselves and to their community. In this case, the students can learn that their existence in the world has meanings, has purposes to help themselves to be independent and also to support their communities. By doing meaningful contribution not only to themselves to their environment, can also mean that students are related to their world. It means that they live with the world, not only live in the world (Freire, 1970/2010). This is what Freire (1970/2010) means by becoming "fully human."

Freire (1970/2010) proposes dialogue in teaching and learning process since he defines education as the practice of freedom (p. 81). Freire (1970/2010) finds that the teaching and learning process usually makes students feel oppressed by the teacher. In this kind of education, teachers always dominate the whole process. Freire (1970/2010) opposes the concept of banking education, which only transmits information to students without giving them the chance to ask, to speak, to think, and to relate themselves to the world. Freire proposes that teachers can apply problem- posing education. Problem-posing education can empower students. Problem-posing education allows students or others to "develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves" (p. 83). Problem-posing education is a liberating praxis (p. 86) that can help students to transform the information and create knowledge based on the students' own perceptions. In transforming knowledge, students should reflect and engage action in order to name the world: the combination of reflection and action is what Freire terms "praxis". This praxis is also a form of critical pedagogy that requires dialogue. It is why for Freire (1970/2000), dialogue should also include critical thinking as a way to transform and build knowledge together with their teachers and with their friends by involving students to do critical thinking for learning the topic, or

for sharing, understanding, and creating meaning together. Hence, by dialogical approach teachers help their students to learn actively not only receiving and memorizing information from the teachers. In sum, dialogue is a way of relating us to others and the world; it allows us to learn from others and the world by engaging responsively with them.

To understand dialogue in education, this paper will use Paulo Freire's notion of dialogue that is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. In this dialogical approach, students are stimulated to think about the meaning of the topic they learn for themselves, and to act for their own purpose and for their works and hopefully for their community. In this case, dialogue can be a way to liberate learners since learners have to listen, to think and to name or to express what they understand about the topic. Dialogue according to Freire (1970/2010) can also serve as a means for gaining multiple perspectives from the learners, as well as from the teachers.

Vella (2002) defines dialogue as certain kinds of relations between people. Vella (2004) defines dialogue education as a form of constructivism and can be a means for transformative learning. Vella (2002) said that adult learning is best achieved in dialogue. According to Vella (2004) by using dialogue, teachers or facilitators will learn how to listen, to understand, and to learn how to teach students, especially adult learners. The use of dialogue in education, will not only limited to face to face pedagogy but also in many educational setting such as in distance education (Vella, 2004).

The role of dialogue for developing relationship also was proposed by Martin Buber (in Scott, 2011). Martin Buber (in Scott, 2011) emphasizes the importance of dialogue for people in the world since dialogue is the important factor for creating relationship. For Buber (in Scott, 2011) dialogue is a "meeting," between I and the others. If the "I" respect and care to the others so the "I" will see the others as "thou", which means I will relate to the others with awareness, openness, questions, assertions, respect, and presence. But, if the "I" does not care and does not respect the others so, I will see the others as "it". For Buber (in Scott, 2011), the others are very important, therefore, the "I" should be aware and care to the others. In the teaching learning process, the I perhaps is the teachers or instructors should be aware to 'thou" who are students, or if students take the position of the "I", they have to be aware of their teacher and their other friends. To be aware of the students can make teachers always try to find ways that can help students learning. To be aware to others can also make the teachers and also the students feel connected to their world.

In line with Freire, Vella, and Buber, Burbules (1993) points dialogue is necessary for building relationship in pedagogy. Therefore, Burbules (1993) defines dialogue as pedagogical, communicative, and relational. Dialogue as pedagogical is "an activity directed toward discovery and new understanding, which stands to improve the knowledge, insight, or sensitivity of its participant". Burbules then also writes that "dialogue represents a continuous, developmental communicative interchange through which we stand to gain a fuller apprehension of the world, ourselves and one another (p.8)". More Burbules (p.7-8) says that "dialogue involve two or more interlocutors" and they will build "an open participation by any of its partners, who put forth a series of alternating statements of variable duration (including question, responses, redirections, and building statements"). Burbules also writes that "dialogue is guided by a spirit of discovery", and "it involves a commitment to the process of communicative interchange itself, a willingness to " see things through" to some meaningful understandings or agreements among the participants" (p.8).

As stated by Burbules dialogue as communicative will include the ways in which we communicate our language, our reasoning, our morality, and our social organization. Moreover, Burbules (p.10-14) explains that in dialogue, we use language as the means to dialogue and to hear the echoes of others. In dialogue we use our reason as our capacity for thought, especially our ability to solve problems, to think sensibly toward conclusion, to weight competing considerations, and to choose reasonable courses of action. In dialogue, we use our morality as our self-conception and within this conception dialogue is frequently invested with an ethical imperative of its own. The concept of dialogue then connotes an egalitarian spirit and an open-mindeness about considering other points of view that are fundamentally admirable.

According to Burbules (p.14-15), the etymology of the term dialogue as relational comes from Greek which means "dia" means more than simply two, and and the key idea is spanning or connecting. "Logos" is a term used not only for word or speech but also for thought, reason, and judgment. Further, the conception of "logos" then, connotes the negotiated, it situates meaning and truth not in transcendent criteria, but in the practical attainment of understanding and agreement between persons that can also be fail. This insight suggests that effective dialogue depends on the establishment and maintenance of a particular kind of relation among its participants. What underlies and shapes the pattern of interaction in a dialogue are the attitudes, emotions, and expectations that participants have regarding each other and the value of dialogue itself. What sustains a dialogue over time is not only lively interchange about the topic at hand, but a certain commitment to one's partner; a commitment that might not precede the dialogue, but arises only gradually in the spirit of the engagement (p.15)

Burbules (p.25) then explains that in the context of difference (cultural, racial, gender, or class), dialogue does not assume up front that people are the same, speak the same way, or are interested in the same issues. It only assumes that people are committed to a process of communication directed toward interpersonal understanding and that they hold or are willing to develop, some degree of concern for, interest in, and respect toward one another. Within this relation, there is a great deal that people, however different they might be, can do to pursue ways of speaking with and understanding one another.

Burbules then mentions that dialogue include concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affection, and hope. Concern to other, also have to trust others, have to respect others, since respect for other can sustain the relation even in the face of sharp differences in knowledge, value, or belief, we also have to appreciate others. Appreciation is an important factor in the context of difference, culturally or otherwise. Other emotion that a person should do to use dialogue is affection. As the educator, teachers have to commit to offer every student a common level of effort, regardless of their personal feeling. The emotions that teachers will use in doing dialogue will create a connectedness that underlies certain conversational encounters, especially where participants make a special effort to listen sympathetically to what their other participants have to say. The last emotion that teachers should consider is hope, as a general goodwill toward one another, that can make teachers and their rticipants give the interaction time to succeed (Burbules, p.36-41)

Caspi, Gorsky & Trumper (2004), and also Capsi and Gorsky (2005, 2006) urged that when student learn they used intra personal and interpersonal dialogue. Intrapersonal dialogue is dialogue when students use their mental process to engage in their learning, such as when students read the self-learning books or module, view educational video, or when solve problems to do the assignments. The learning materials (books or module, and video), and the assignments are a structural resources which enables intrapersonal dialogue (Caspi, Gorsky & Trumper, 2004). Whereas, interpersonal dialogue is dialogue between students – teachers or facilitators and between students – students as a form of socialization and for learning the subject-matter content by "hypothesizing, questioning, interpreting, explaining, evaluating, and rethinking issues or problems at hand (Gorsky & Caspi, 2005)".These dialogue are also called by Caspi and Gorsky as instructional dialogue.

Given to these various perspectives on dialogue above, in this paper the concept of dialogue more focus on Freire's dialogue (1970/2010) due to some reasons. First, Freire's definition of dialogue emphasizes more on building and developing a good relationship with students and with the world. In this important point, Freire's dialogue works toward deepening understanding. Thus, dialogical engagement intents to make positive changes both in the participants as well as in their world. Second, Freire's dialogue is not differ, even supports Buber's dialogue (in Scott, 2010), Burbules's dialogue (1993) and Vella's dialogue education (2002, 2004) who contend that dialogue can be used as a key factor to promote collaborative learning. Third, Freire's dialogue also concern to give empowerment or liberation to students by thinking critically about themselves and their world in praxis (reflection and action) to name the world. The dialogue approach which has Freire's spirit will be used by following some practical concepts from Vella's idea of dialogue education. Dialogue approach then, will also be viewed in term of intra and interpersonal dialogue from Caspy and Gorsky.

Teaching as a two ways communication

Generally, the common instruction that is primarily used in many Indonesian schools is one way instruction. This kind of instruction can be called transmitting knowledge or transmitting paradigm (Bento, 2005). This paradigm happens when the instructor decides some information and methods to be passed on to the students. In this transmitting paradigm, student participation will be measured by their possession of the knowledge being transmitted by the instructor. The transmission paradigm is similar with Freire's "banking model" of education (Bento 2005). This model is often happen in teaching and learning situation. Education is usually conducted in monological way even though this way can also be used as a way of delivering as much information. Although the students become familiar from what has been delivered by the teacher, teachers will not know whether their learners truly understand and can use the knowledge they received in a real context. In this model, students' participation is low since only the teachers or the instructors are much more active than their students in transmitting knowledge. This is different, if learning is done by dialogue.

Freire (1970/2010) states that dialogue can be a way to help students to establish a transformative form of learning to name the world by finding the true word by action and reflection. For example, if teachers only give learning materials and students only receive the information without trying to think deeper and relate the information to the students' reality or situation, so students have been learned passively. There can be no transformation in students if they only

receiving the materials without trying to reflect and act upon what they learn. For example, in learning science, when learners are given the chance to try, to ask, to discuss and to convey what they understands, then learning science is dominated by the learners. This could occur because learners are actively involved in the learning process by means of dialogue. There are things that they had received, felt, and conveyed when undergoing education. This is what makes learning science, help students get a lot more than just receive it from what has been delivered by the teacher.

Freire (1970/2010) explores as well that education is for liberation and the main characteristic of a liberating education is a dialogical education. In this model, according to Freire's (1970/2010) teachers or instructors can liberate students by giving voices to students, and let the students think for themselves. Students need to be listened to, to have a chance to speak and express their feelings and ideas. In this case, dialogue education can be a way to empower them. To empower students, teachers should urge students to think by themselves, and to act, and not to receive passively what teachers say. This is important so that learners can better understand a problem in more depth. Thus, the easier it is for students to be a well-criticized-as well as finding solutions when dealing with problems in their life. Here, teachers can use critical pedagogy in their teaching, and teachers can discuss the subjects being taught to relate to and to give meanings to students. Furthermore, dialogue will enable students and their teachers to gain not only the learning content but also the meaning of what they learn.

The role of dialogue in distance learning

Dialogue is important for distance learning since dialogue can develop relationship between learners (instructors and students). Learning needs interaction. When students learn, they interact, they communicate with themselves, learning materials, friends, teachers, and their environment, including people and community. To communicate, people need dialogue; as Freire (1970/2000) states: "Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education (p. 92-93)". Without dialogue in the teaching-learning process, people will feel alienated from others, and probably, they will feel alienated from themselves, as well. Alienation makes people lose awareness of others and their environment.

In this paper, dialogue is considered as a form of communication that can enable persons to talk and listen to other people (Stern, 2009), and as a communicative form that can give students hope, can empower them, and can connect them with their world (Freire, 1970/2000). Dialogue in the teaching and learning process or dialogic education is a reason why we became educators or teachers (Arnett, 1992) that is to help students and ourselves as the teacher to learn.

Teaching and learning in the context of a school depends on a specific mutual transformation of human relations (Sidorkin,2002, p.6) since education is social relation. And the heart of the social relation is dialogue. Why? Because Freire (in Burbules,1993, p.5) said "dialogue is the sealing together of the teacher and students in the joint act of knowing and re-knowing the object of study....instead of transferring the knowledge statically, as a fixed possession of the teacher, dialogue demands a dynamic approximation towards the object". Freire (in Burbules, 1993, p.6) emphasized that teaching learning activity should be dialogical because teaching and learning activity should be a process of shared inquiry, not the transmission of truths from a knowledgeable expert to a passive recipient. It means that dialogue will make the instructional activity as transformative. This transformative instruction will help students to become actively involved in learning any learning materials and learning in their own environments. As well, in dialogue there is a shift of power to the students such that they feel more engaged as equals in a process of inquiry. Dialogue is not about simply transmitting knowledge to students, but more importantly about transforming students through their engagements with their lived realities and with each other as stated by Freire (1970/2010).

Online learning in distance learning can be divided into asynchronous and synchronous. Executing synchronous is rather difficult compared with asynchronous. If doing a synchronous online learning, all participants have to arrange the same time in order to make them can meet to each other directly. Therefore, asynchronous online learning program has often been used.

Using dialogue in Early childhood education (ECE) settings

The dialogical approach can be applied in early childhood education institution such as in kindergartens. In the difficult situation like the spreading of virus covid 19, ECE teachers have to have more deeply developed understanding about their works and their young students. Moreover, it is also believed that providing dialogue in online learning can help student teachers engage in their learning and can empower student teachers to value the urge of their role as early childhood educators for their early learners. ECE student teachers hopefully, will try to listen more carefully to their young students, and to interact communicatively with the parents as well.

Since ECE educators use dialogue in their interactions with young children, it makes sense that their own education should include and be based in dialogical philosophies, methods, and practices. Providing dialogue can help close the gaps and deepen understanding between students and teachers and between students themselves—and ultimately between ECE teachers and the children they will work with.

As ECE educators, we have to respond to the young children and understand their needs and desires. This can only be done by developing close relationships with them, where we can learn about them and help them learn about themselves and the world. Dialog will help the ECE educators to build close relationship with their young students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, applying dialogue approach, hopefully can help the teaching and learning processes to be meaningful in order to help students engage in their learning. This dialogue approach is also hope can support students' empowerment, using praxis, and link the students with their community. The dialogue approach in online learning hopefully can help the teachers, the parents and the early students who participate in the online learning tutorial to explore how dialogue really means besides an interaction, and what principles and procedures should be developed to support dialogical instructional modes. Further through my study I can answer my own question about what kind of (organizational and) academic cultures and norms should be nurtured and learner support system should be provided to facilitate and promote dialogue and collaborative learning. Thus, in this study I want to learn how dialogue approach in online learning tutorial can have impact for the students and the tutor in closing the gap as mentioned by Moore's transactional distance.

It is hoped as well that with dialogical engagement, students and teacher can learn more about things that matter to them. In addition, it is hoped that the dialogue approach incorporation in kindergartens online learning will help the teachers and the students, and also help the parents to learn and to understand themselves, as for Freire (1970/2010) teaching and learning is a process to both students and teachers to learn and to understand about themselves, the contents that they learn and teach, about their own voices, feelings and perceptions about the contents, about the meaning of what they learn to themselves and to their own communities or their works, and about the meaning of themselves to their surroundings.

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