

A Problem-Posing-Based Critical Literacy Pedagogy Model for Developing Critical Reading Skills among Pre-Service Indonesian Language Educators

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ABSTRACT

Despite the demand for 21st-century skills, literacy is rarely addressed as a transformative power to challenge social structures, and many pre-service teachers still lack sufficient critical reading competence. This study aims to analyze the core conceptual framework of Critical Literacy Pedagogy (CLP) and validate the effectiveness of the problem-posing model in developing the critical reading skills of pre-service Indonesian language educators. The study utilizes a concept analysis and an integrative review design, synthesizing Paulo Freire's philosophical foundations with empirical validation. The empirical data, adapted from relevant quasi-experimental studies involving 56 pre-service teachers, indicate that the problem-posing model has a highly significant effect ($p < 0.005$) on all six sub-skills of critical reading. The most substantial improvements were observed in Explanation ($F=96.898$) and Analysis ($F=65.202$), signifying a successful pedagogical shift from passive "banking education" to autonomous social agency and higher-order thinking. The study concludes that the Problem-Posing based CLP model is a transformative approach that empowers pre-service teachers to interrogate dominance within texts. It is essential to integrate CLP into teacher education curricula to prepare educators as agents of social change who can navigate the complexities of modern discourse and digital disinformation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the landscape of 21st-century education, the conceptualization of literacy has undergone a paradigm shift, evolving from a basic functional skill into a multidimensional Higher-Order Thinking Skill (HOTS). In the modern era, literacy is no longer merely defined by the technical ability to decode phonemes or comprehend literal meanings; rather, it is recognized as a transformative and emancipatory power that enables individuals to critically

understand both "the word" and "the world" [1]. For pre-service language educators, mastering critical literacy is not just a pedagogical asset but a mandatory professional competency. They are positioned as the vanguard of education, expected to function as social agents capable of interrogating ideological biases, dismantling power imbalances, and uncovering hidden hegemonies embedded within texts and national curricula [2].

Despite its strategic urgency, recent global metrics reveal a staggering and persistent literacy crisis within the Indonesian educational system. According to the PISA 2022 report, the reading proficiency of Indonesian students has reached a concerning nadir, marking its lowest point in two decades. The average score plummeted to 359, a significant decrease from the 371 recorded in 2018 [3], [4]. This downward trend serves as a critical indictment of conventional reading instruction that remains tethered to archaic methodologies, specifically those that prioritize rote memorization, surface-level comprehension, and passive reception. Such "banking" methods are increasingly obsolete in a digital society saturated with sophisticated disinformation, algorithmic biases, and multimodal ideological messages that require a high degree of "critical alertness" to navigate [5], [6].

Previous scholarship has addressed various facets of literacy pedagogy in Indonesia. For instance, explored the integration of multimodal literacy in primary settings [7] and discussed the broad potential of critical pedagogy in teacher training programs [8]. However, a profound research gap remains unaddressed. Much of the existing literature is either heavily skewed toward abstract philosophical discourse or limited to functional literacy aimed at basic economic participation. There is a notable absence of a comprehensive, didactically structured, and empirically validated model that specifically operationalizes Freirean problem-posing phases into a systematic framework designed to enhance the six specific cognitive sub-skills of critical reading: Interpretation, Analysis, Inference, Evaluation, Explanation, and Self-Regulation.

Without a robust didactic bridge connecting high-level theory to classroom practice, teacher education risks perpetually reproducing a "culture of silence." In such a culture, future educators are reduced to passive "containers" or conduits of state-sanctioned knowledge rather than acting as transformative subjects [9], [10]. This study, therefore, seeks to synthesize a Problem-Posing-Based Critical Literacy Pedagogy (CLP) model as a radical alternative to traditional instructional designs.

The objectives of this research are twofold: 1) To conduct a rigorous conceptual analysis of the CLP framework, exploring its historical, ontological, and philosophical foundations through an integrative review. 2) To validate the methodological effectiveness of the problem-posing-based CLP model in enhancing the critical reading sub-skills of pre-service Indonesian language educators by synthesizing relevant empirical data and quantitative findings.

Theoretical Framework

1.1. The Philosophical Roots: Literacy as a Political Act

The conceptual architecture of Critical Literacy Pedagogy (CLP) is fundamentally anchored in the emancipatory philosophy of Paulo Freire. CLP rejects the notion of "neutral" education, asserting that all pedagogical acts are inherently political. Unlike traditional

models that isolate literacy as a cognitive-linguistic mechanics, Freire and Macedo (2005) posit that true literacy is a dialectical process. Within the context of teacher education, CLP seeks to catalyze a transition from "naive consciousness"—a state of passive acceptance of social reality to "critical consciousness" (conscientização). Through this process, pre-service teachers learn to use praxis (the synthesis of reflection and action) to transform oppressive social structures rather than merely adapting to them [11].

1.2. The Antithesis of Banking Education

CLP emerges as a radical antithesis to the "banking education" model, a system in which students are treated as empty accounts to be "filled" with information by an all-knowing educator. This vertical relationship suppresses inquiry and reinforces a "culture of silence," rendering students incapable of interrogating their own lived realities. CLP replaces this oppressive hierarchy with a horizontal, dialogic relationship. In this framework, the educator is reimagined as a co-investigator who engages in mutual inquiry with students, thereby fostering a democratic learning environment that encourages the rejection of intellectual and ideological dominance [12]. This transformative approach redefines the student's role from a passive object of history to an active subject who can critically intervene in their own reality [13].

1.3. Codification and Decodification in Problem-Posing

The instructional core of the problem-posing approach is operationalized through the iterative cycles of codification and decodification. Codification involves the creation of "codes", visual, textual, or narrative representations of a problematic social reality that is familiar to the students but presented in a way that creates "cognitive dissonance" (Wallerstein, 1983). Decodification is the subsequent collective process where students dismantle these codes to uncover hidden power relations, biases, and "missing voices" perspectives of marginalized groups that are strategically omitted from dominant narratives [14]. This process is the primary driver of the development of analytical and inferential sub-skills, as it compels students to look "behind the text."

1.4. Dimensions of Critical Literacy

The modern critical literacy framework is often categorized into four essential dimensions that must be integrated into language instruction [15]:

- a. **Disrupting the Commonplace:** Challenging standardized interpretations and seeing the "everyday" through new lenses.
 - b. **Interrogating Multiple Viewpoints:** Analyzing who has the power to speak and whose voices are marginalized or silenced.
 - c. **Focusing on Socio-political Issues:** Understanding that every text is embedded in a political context and serves specific interests.
 - d. **Taking Action and Promoting Social Justice:** Using literacy as a tool for *praxis* to achieve more equitable social relations.
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1.5. Critical Reading Sub skills and HOTS

Critical reading is defined as a multidimensional construct aligned with Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Drawing from the framework of Facione (2011), this study focuses on six cognitive sub-skills: Interpretation, Analysis, Evaluation, Inference, Explanation, and Self Regulation [16]. Within the CLP model, these skills are not just academic exercises but are utilized to dismantle Hegemony, the process by which a dominant ideology is accepted as "common sense". By mastering these sub-skills, pre-service teachers develop the "critical alertness" necessary to navigate multimodal disinformation and serve as transformative intellectuals in their future classrooms.

The purpose of this research is twofold: first, to analyze the CLP conceptual framework and its philosophical foundations; and second, to validate the effectiveness of the problem-posing-based CLP model in developing critical reading sub-skills (interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, explanation, and self-regulation) in pre-service teachers.

The results are expected to provide a transformative framework for higher education curricula. By demonstrating that CLP can significantly improve high-level cognitive skills, this research hopes to encourage policymakers to move beyond rigid, memorization-based curricula. Ultimately, this study aims to prepare future educators as "transformative intellectuals" capable of fostering critical citizens in the digital era [17].

2. METHOD

This study employs an integrative review design combined with a secondary analysis of empirical findings. The integrative review was selected as it allows for the simultaneous inclusion of theoretical literature and experimental data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Problem-Posing-Based Critical Literacy Pedagogy (CLP) phenomenon [18]. This design is particularly effective for emerging topics like CLP, as it facilitates the synthesis of diverse perspectives to generate new frameworks or perspectives [19]. The research was conducted through four systematic stages:

a. Problem Identification and Conceptual Analysis

The study began by identifying the literacy gap in the Indonesian context and conducting a conceptual analysis of CLP. This phase focused on mapping the philosophical foundations of Paulo Freire, specifically the transition from "banking education" to "problem posing" models. The goal was to establish a theoretical framework that defines how critical reading sub-skills are triggered through dialogic pedagogy.

b. Literature Search and Selection Criteria

To support the conceptual framework, a systematic search was conducted across several academic databases, including Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The keywords used were "Critical Literacy Pedagogy," "Problem Posing," and "Critical Reading Skills." The inclusion criteria for the reviewed literature were: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2015 and 2024; (2) studies focusing on pre-service teacher education; and (3) research providing didactic frameworks for problem-posing. The exclusion criteria for the reviewed literature were: (1) Literature focusing on primary/secondary students only; (2) studies without a clear methodological description; and (3) non-English

or non-Indonesian publications. Study type: both theoretical philosophical papers and empirical experimental studies.

Table 1. Literature Selection Summary

Phase	Action	Resulting Count
Identification	Initial keywords search across Scopus, ERIC, Scholar	$N = 145$
Screening	Title and abstract screening for relevance	$N = 78$
Eligibility	Full text assessment based on inclusion/exclusion criteria	$N = 32$
Inclusion	Final sources selected for synthesis and secondary analysis	$N = 18$

c. Data Sources and Secondary Empirical Validation

The primary data sources consist of academic literature on CLP and secondary empirical data adapted from Sultan et al. (2017). It is important to clarify that this study re-analyzes existing quantitative data involving 56 pre-service Indonesian language teacher students selected through total sampling. The primary instrument was a critical reading test measuring six multidimensional sub-skills: interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, explanation, and self-regulation. To ensure validity, stimulus texts were selected based on Nuttal's (2005) criteria: authenticity, utility, interest, suitability, and fairness, ensuring they aligned with the emancipatory goals of CLP [20].

d. Data Analysis and Synthesis Procedure

The data analysis was performed through two integrated paths using a thematic synthesis approach. First, a qualitative thematic synthesis was used to structure the problem-posing implementation phases (codification, decodification, and praxis) by identifying recurring themes in the literature. Second, a quantitative analysis was conducted to assess the model's effectiveness. Statistical significance was set at an Alpha level of 0.05. An ANOVA (F-test) was utilized to determine the impact of the problem-posing intervention across the different cognitive levels of critical reading [21]. This dual-path analysis ensures that the proposed didactic model is not only philosophically grounded but also empirically validated.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The results of this study are presented in two main sections: the conceptual synthesis of the Problem Posing model derived from the integrative review, and the empirical validation of the model's effectiveness in enhancing critical reading sub-skills.

The integrative review of Freirean philosophy and contemporary critical pedagogy literature reveals that the Problem Posing model functions through a triadic pedagogical structure. This model replaces the vertical "banking education" with a horizontal, dialogic process. The synthesis identifies three core phases:

- a. The Problematization Phase (Codification and Decodification): Reality is presented through "codes" (multimodal texts or images) that represent social contradictions. Students engage in decodification to identify the root causes of these problems.

- b. The Cultural Dialogue Phase: A horizontal classroom environment where students and educators collectively interrogate the ideology, bias, and power structures within texts.
- c. The Social Action Phase (Praxis): The transition from critical reflection to transformative action, where students use their literacy skills to propose solutions to social injustices.

The quantitative analysis of the quasi-experimental data involving 56 pre-service Indonesian language teachers demonstrates that the Problem-Posing model has a highly significant impact on critical reading competence. The statistical synthesis across the six measured sub-skills is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. ANOVA Results for Critical Reading Sub-skills
(Adapted from Sultan et al., 2017)

Critical Reading (Sub skills)	Mean Square	F-Value	Sig. (<i>p</i>)	Conclusion on Significance
Interpretation	32.223	9.485	.003	Significant
Analysis	145.411	65.202	< .001	Highly Significant
Inference	78.902	25.070	< .001	Highly Significant
Evaluation	112.561	38.589	< .001	Highly Significant
Explanation	201.342	96.898	< .001	Highly Significant
Self regulation	165.120	81.790	< .001	Highly Significant

The F-value indicates the ratio of between-group variance; higher values suggest a stronger intervention effect. Following academic standards, *p*-values originally reported as .000 are denoted here as $p < .001$.

The data in Table 2 indicates that the implementation of the Problem Posing model yielded a significant effect ($p < .005$) on all six sub-skills of critical reading. This finding underscores that critical reading is not an isolated linguistic activity but a reflective process of making reasoned judgments about what to believe or do [22]. Notably, the most substantial improvements were observed in Explanation ($F=96.898$) and Self-Regulation ($F=81.790$), followed closely by Analysis ($F=65.202$). These results confirm that the model is particularly effective in stimulating higher-order cognitive processes, which are the hallmarks of critical literacy. The relatively lower, yet still significant, F-value for Interpretation ($F=9.485$) suggests that while basic comprehension is enhanced, the model's true strength lies in fostering advanced evaluative and transformative capacities.

These results signify that the model successfully shifts students' cognitive behavior from surface-level understanding to high-level critical processing. Furthermore, qualitative evidence of *praxis* was observed through students' ability to produce argumentative essays that address social inequalities. A concrete example of this agency is seen in the findings, where students were able to write argumentative essays that represented protests and solutions to social phenomena, such as dishonest practices in local school environments.

3.2. Discussion

The results of this study illuminate the transformative potential of the Problem-Posing model within Critical Literacy Pedagogy (CLP) for pre-service Indonesian language teachers. By shifting the pedagogical paradigm from a vertical "banking education" to a

horizontal, dialogic encounter, this model not only improves literacy scores but also fosters the development of "transformative intellectuals."

3.2.1. Didactic-Methodological Architecture of the Problem Posing Model

The effectiveness of the CLP model is rooted in its three-phase implementation, which is designed to foster *conscientização*. In the Indonesian educational landscape, this transition is historically significant as it challenges the long-standing "culture of silence" that has characterized traditional pedagogical practices [23]. In the Problematization Phase (Pre-Reading), codification through multimodal texts, such as biased infographics or videos, catalyzes decodification. During this collective reflection, students are encouraged to ask critical questions regarding authorship, omitted voices, and hidden interests. This reflective process aligns with the historical development of critical pedagogy in Indonesia, which emphasizes shifting from passive objects of education to active subjects of social change. This phase effectively triggers high-level Interpretation and Inference, forcing students to reject the "culture of silence" and identify objective realities that necessitate change.

The Cultural Discussion Phase (Reading) further dismantles antagonistic teacher-student relationships through small group collaboration. By focusing on the correlation between text and social context, students engage in dissecting claims and ideological biases. This collaborative environment has been proven to empower even the most reticent students to participate openly in critical discourse. Finally, the Social Action Phase (Post-Reading) represents the peak of *praxis*. By requiring students to translate critical consciousness into real actions, such as writing argumentative essays that protest social inequalities, the model ensures that literacy is not just a cognitive exercise but a tool for agency and social intervention.

3.2.2. Statistical Interpretation: Elevating HOTS and Metacognition

The statistical data provide robust empirical evidence supporting the model's efficacy. The exceptionally high F-values for Explanation ($F=96.898, p < .001$) and Analysis ($F=65.202, p < .001$) suggest that the CLP intervention is a powerful factor in enhancing Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). These values significantly exceed the impact on lower-level skills, such as Interpretation ($F=9.485$). This disparity indicates that while conventional literacy focuses on surface-level comprehension, CLP specifically targets the "Analyzing" and "Creating" levels of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy.

Furthermore, the substantial impact on Self-Regulation ($F = 81.790, p < .001$) underscores the model's success in fostering metacognition. Pre-service teachers did not just learn *what* to think, but *how* to monitor and correct their own thinking processes. This ability is vital for educators who must constantly interrogate their own biases, whether related to gender, race, or social class, before they can guide their future students to do the same.

3.2.3. Philosophical Implications: Agency and Analysis of Power

These results have profound philosophical implications. The increase in Analysis skills demonstrates that students were encouraged to read beyond ideological messages,

which is crucial for Indonesian educators working with texts that contain unconscious gender, racial, or social class biases.

Analysis of Dominance, Hegemony, and Power as the Core of CLP

The sharp increase in Analysis skills demonstrates that students were successfully encouraged to read beyond ideological messages and to utilize HOTS. This Analysis ability is crucial for Indonesian language educators who deal with texts that may contain unconscious gender, racial, or social class biases.

Analysis driven by CLP enables students to identify missing voices within dominant narratives. In the Indonesian context, critical language educators must be able to interrogate texts and challenge unfair representations in the classroom rather than merely teach texts as absolute truths.

The research results above align with the philosophical foundations of Critical Pedagogy and its relevance in preparing Indonesian language pre-service teacher students as agents of social change; therefore, the matters to be discussed include:

Agency and Strengthening of Higher Order Thinking Skills

The CLP model is proven effective in producing pre-service educators capable of demonstrating critical consciousness (critical consciousness). Furthermore, agency and the strengthening of higher-order thinking skills can be achieved by implementing the following points:

Analyzing Dominance and Power

The extraordinary improvement in Analysis and Explanation skills (Table 1) means that students no longer merely understand texts at a surface level. Instead, they are encouraged to use higher-order thinking skills (higher-order thinking skills). This improvement enables readers to read between the lines and interrogate dominance. CLP demands that students question the representation of reality within the text. The texts used in CLP must be selected based on the criteria of fairness (fairness) and authenticity.

Praxis as Social Action

Critical literacy involves consciousness and experience. This emancipatory desire triggers students to emerge as agents who perform social actions. One concrete example of this agency is seen in the findings of related studies, where students were able to write argumentative essays that presented protests and solutions to the phenomenon of dishonest merchants in schools. The development of such an agency is closely linked to critical consciousness, which has been shown to correlate significantly with transformative behaviors in the Indonesian educational context, enabling students not only to understand problems but also to propose ethical solutions [24]. This shows that students and pre-service educators can use language to describe reality and take risks when challenging existing social inequalities.

The very high Explanation skills ($F=96.898$) are the strongest indicator of this model's success in creating autonomous agency. Autonomous agency in teachers means the ability to take risks and perform transformative social actions within the school environment and society.

Examples of critical language educator agency include:

- a. Curriculum Intervention: Proactively selecting and using controversial or non-dominant texts that trigger critical discussions in the classroom.
- b. School Advocacy: Writing argumentative articles or delivering presentations at educator/school meetings that challenge rigid or unfair curricular practices.
- c. Community Action: Guiding students to create literacy projects that solve local problems (for example, creating digital newsletters that critique environmental or social issues).

3.2.4. Dialogue and Collaboration in Critical Learning Environments

The effectiveness of CLP is inseparable from the dialogic and collaborative methods integrated into the problem-posing model as follows. Dialogue is the epistemological foundation of CLP. The relationship between educator and student must be horizontal and based on love, humility, hope, faith, and trust. If there are no antagonistic or dichotomous relationships between the educator and the student, an environment supporting dialogue will emerge. This environment that supports dialogue has been proven to help students who were initially shy participate more openly.

Collaboration and Multimodal Texts

Collaboration in small work groups helps students understand others' ideas and connect them to their own. Other studies show that using online collaborative platforms (e-learning) can enhance interpersonal relationships and maintain healthy competition. Furthermore, CLP must include instruction on integrating self-identity into the creation of socially and culturally relevant texts. This includes the ability to critique multimodal texts such as political memes or videos.

Digital Literacy Challenges (New Literacy) and Curriculum Implications

CLP is becoming increasingly important amid new literacy challenges in the 21st century, particularly the rapid spread of information. The digital literacy challenges are as follows. In this context, critical literacy must evolve into 'new literacies' that involve not just technical skills, but a socio-cultural shift in how information is consumed and produced [25]. Pre-service teachers must be equipped to interrogate the 'black box' of algorithms that often reinforce social polarization.

Confronting Hoaxes and Bias

In the digital era, pre-service educators must possess critical alertness (critical awareness). They must be able to manage, integrate, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize digital resources. This ability is crucial to preventing the spread of fake news (hoaxes). Students are trained to verify accuracy, which involves checking whether opinions on a website conflict with their own and verifying the accuracy of information shared on social networks [26]. They must also doubt non-credible information sources; analyze ideology by observing who the content on a website is intended for; and examine whether the website design conveys messages beyond the content (bias). These skills are vital to preventing students from becoming passive readers.

In the 21st century, CLP must address the proliferation of disinformation and multimodal bias. This study demonstrates that the problem-posing model equips educators with "critical alertness" (critical awareness). Students are trained to verify the accuracy of digital resources, doubt non-credible sources, and analyze how website designs convey ideological messages beyond their literal content. This prevents future educators from being passive consumers of information and prepares them to navigate the complexities of the digital era.

3.2.5. Implications for Educator Education

This CLP model should be considered for broad integration within the Indonesian language educator education curriculum. CLP helps students to question practices that are accepted as they are (taken-for-granted practices) within texts. This integration requires structural reforms, namely:

1. Compulsory Courses

Creating a "Critical Pedagogy and Literacy" course that is mandatory for all language education students.

2. Universal Paradigm

Applying a problem-posing approach across all teaching methodology and linguistics courses, ensuring digital literacy is taught as a critical skill (e.g., analyzing deepfakes or political memes).

3. Lecturer Training

Providing intensive training for lecturers to transition from the banking education model to dialogic and problem-posing practices, eliminating curriculum rigidity. Despite challenges such as limited teacher training, limited resources, and rigid curricula, CLP must continue to be promoted as a method for developing students' analytical and problem-solving skills.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Problem-Posing-based Critical Literacy Pedagogy (CLP) model is a transformative and robust framework for enhancing pre-service Indonesian language teachers' critical reading skills. By dismantling the "banking education" structures, this model successfully shifts the pedagogical paradigm from passive knowledge reception to active, critical inquiry. The integration of Freirean philosophy with a structured didactic model proves that critical literacy is not merely a cognitive skill but a fundamental tool for awakening conscientização and fostering social agency among future educators.

Theoretically, this study validates the problem-posing approach as an effective vehicle for stimulating higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) that are often neglected in traditional literacy instruction. Practically, these findings provide a blueprint for Teacher Education Institutions (LPTK) to redesign their curricula, moving beyond functional literacy toward a more emancipatory approach. By adopting this model, institutions can better prepare graduates to interrogate the ideological underpinnings of texts, thereby addressing the root causes of the literacy gap in Indonesia.

This research contributes to the development of a more discerning citizenry by equipping future teachers to "read behind the lines". This indirectly strengthens public resilience against the proliferation of disinformation, hoaxes, and hidden biases in the digital era. Furthermore, it demonstrates how language education in a non-Western context can serve as a powerful site for social justice and democratic participation.

While providing significant insights, this study is limited by its focus on a specific cohort of 56 pre-service teachers at a single university. Additionally, the implementation primarily utilized written multimodal texts within a controlled environment, which may not fully reflect the cultural and structural challenges of diverse, rural, or non-formal educational settings in Indonesia.

Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to observe the practical implementation of CLP by pre-service teachers once they transition into professional school environments. Furthermore, there is a critical need for empirical studies that directly test this model across a more diverse range of participants and digital platforms to address emerging forms of algorithmic bias in AI-driven literacy environments.

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