

## **BREAKING THE ACEH CONFLICT MEMORY INHERITANCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to analyze the extent to which the Aceh conflict involving the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia is narrated in history textbooks. Therefore, the narrative about the Aceh conflict and its reconciliation efforts as a critical discourse to decide the memories of the Aceh conflict that were passed down in history textbooks will be discussed in this paper. This research uses a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques are carried out using literature review and documentation, with textbooks on the history of the national curriculum in 2006 and 2013. The results showed that the legacy of Aceh's conflict memory is still retained in grade XII history textbooks. Representations of the Aceh conflict are narrated in some ways, and even the narrative tends to be negative. For this reason, reconciliation efforts as a critical discourse are needed to decide the legacy of the Aceh conflict. One effort that can be done is through the transformation of the Aceh conflict over the history textbooks. However, this reconciliation discourse needs to be criticized because it is often used in social science and not in the field of history learning.

**Keywords:** *memory inheritance, Aceh conflict, GAM, Indonesia, historical textbooks.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Aceh is one of the provinces in Indonesia, located at the northern tip of the island of Sumatra. There are several nicknames attached to this Aceh Province, such as the Capital Region, Veranda of Mecca, and Tanah Rencong [the land of rencong]. However, along with the history of Indonesia, the Aceh is known as the land of conflicts. The conflict in Aceh began when expelling Portuguese occupation, followed by Dutch and Japanese occupation. Next, after Aceh declared to join the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Other conflicts that had occurred in Aceh were the Darul Islam / Indonesian Islamic Army (DI / TII) rebellion, the Cumbok War, and finally the resistance of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) with the Government Indonesia, which demands total independence in Aceh or separates itself from the territory of the Republic of Indonesia (Wahyudi, 2013: 63).

The last conflict in Aceh was an armed social conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Republic of Indonesia (RI). The Free Aceh Movement (GAM) first appeared since it was proclaimed by Tengku Muhammad Hasan Tiro on 4 December 1976 at Mount Halimun, Pidie District, Aceh Province, and lasted in 2005 (Jayanti, 2013: 50). The birth of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) is inseparable from the dissatisfaction and injustice of the people of Aceh against the Central Government which maltreats the people of Aceh in various aspects of social life, especially injustice in the economic field and the distribution of Aceh's natural resources that are exploited by the Central Government in total (Auliana, 2019: 84) so that this results in social inequality

and uneven regional development. As a result of these various problems, then gave birth to a secessionist movement under the banner of the Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF) or better known as the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), resulting in a dispute between the two parties (Wahyudi, 2013: 64).

Since it first appeared, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), founded by Hasan Tiro, was built on the ideology of Acehnese nationalism. Hasan Tiro believes that the historical glory of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam in the past needs to be re-understood by the people of Aceh, so that Aceh must stand on its own feet (independence) without having to depend on any party, including the Government of Indonesia (Auliana, 2019: 84). Besides, Hasan Tiro also took advantage of Indonesian people's occupation issues, especially the Javanese people, against natural resources in Aceh (Wahyudi, 2013: 65). In other words, Hasan Tiro carried out propaganda through the issue of colonization of his nation and the history of the glory of Aceh in the past to get sympathy and support from the people of Aceh to join the established organization to be more durable. This propaganda was successfully carried out by Hasan Tiro and made the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) developed to be a strong organization with a loyal community base, both in terms of its members and military strength (Chaidar et al., 1999: 7).

In its development, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) then went through three crucial phases, namely the first phase (1976-1989) The Free Aceh Movement (GAM) was still limited to a small organization, where its members were dominated by intellectuals whose numbers were also still limited. The second phase (1989-1998) was when the Central Government implemented the Military Operations Area (DOM) in Aceh. Moreover, the third phase (1998-2003) was that the Central Government continued to use a militaristic and violent approach in the face of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to foster a spirit of nationalism in Aceh within the people of Aceh (Ishak, 2008: 64).

Civil Emergency and Martial Law implemented in Aceh by the Central Government have caused various problems in Aceh, ranging from killing innocent civilians, burning public facilities, violence, robbery, kidnapping, and the occurrence of an economic crisis to people of Aceh (Amirullah, 2004: 88). This situation continued until Aceh was hit by a mega-disaster called the earthquake and tsunami on 26 December 2006, which had resulted in most areas in Aceh being devastated. The condition of Aceh, which was destroyed due to being hit by the mega-disaster, made international communities open and grieved so that the shipment of humanitarian aid continued to flow into Aceh. Although international attention was initially focused on humanitarian assistance, the aid gradually turned to administrative assistance, namely seeking peace between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of Indonesia, which had been fighting for nearly 30 years.

On the other hand, the Government of Indonesia will not remain silent in response to the emergence of the Aceh conflict. Various efforts and approaches have been made by the Government of Indonesia to resolve the Aceh conflict, ranging from a militaristic approach that led to the implementation of the Military Operations Area (DOM) in Aceh to take a political path by cooperating with international organizations that aim to conduct a peace negotiation process between representatives of the Government of Indonesia and Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Although various efforts and approaches made by the Indonesian Government in resolving the Aceh conflict had led to failure, which was caused by the resistance of the people of Aceh and the energetic principles held by the leadership of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the Aceh conflict was successfully resolved together through the negotiation process in

Helsinki, Finland (Auliana, 2019: 87). The Aceh conflict was declared to have ended after the negotiation and signing of the MoU in Helsinki on 15 August 2005 between representatives of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in Helsinki (Zuardi et al., 2010: 6).

The peace agreement signed by representatives of the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) on 15 August 2005 in Helsinki, later known as the Helsinki MoU agreement (Memorandum of Understanding Helsinki), received a warm welcome from the entire community. The achievement of this peace agreement received strong praise and support from the Acehnese themselves and the Indonesian community and the international community. So not surprisingly, the essence of the warm welcome is gratitude for the armed conflict in Aceh that has lasted for almost 30 years can be resolved through a dignified peace negotiating table (Sugeng et al., 2010: 73).

Achieving peace in Aceh is not an inexpensive and easy process. The history of conflict and peace in Aceh presents a very complicated picture. Everything related to a place, time, event, and human actors (both individuals, groups, governments, politicians, organizations, activists, students, and the people in general) contributes and should be calculated in history and every analysis. Textbooks must consider all the above aspects to make history lessons attractive and encourage students to learn from Aceh's peace. However, it must be recognized that this paper cannot realize the ideal and fair situation. Therefore, this paper will focus on narratives in textbooks used in learning at the high school level.

Jannah (in Nur et al., 2019: 116) said that one of the aids in the learning process in class is a textbook in the form of textbooks. Subject textbooks can serve as mandatory guidelines for teachers and students in learning in class. Textbooks are made as a guide used to facilitate the implementation of learning between teachers and students, taking into account the development of age and levels of education (Sjamsuddin, 2007: 195). Muslich (in Utami and Widiadi, 2016: 107) explains that textbooks have different characteristics from other educational books, both in terms of content, function, and layout. In this case, what is meant by a textbook is a history textbook.

Mulyana (2013: 79) said concerning the subjects of history, and textbooks are in the interest of historical education. Therefore, writing in history textbooks is a reconstruction process used as a tool for historical education. Writing history in textbooks is believed to accommodate the interests of education, and therefore, history as an educational tool is also influenced by state ideology, so writing history in textbooks has political power (Mulyana, 2013: 78). Writing history in textbooks can be understood as a critical discourse, given the existence of words, language, sentences, and explicit and implicit meaning. The meaning is seen as a truth (McCullagh, 1998: 15), namely in the form of truth from the interpretation of a historian influenced by the attitudes, assumptions, ideologies, and values they hold (Marwick, 1989: 212).

Critical discourse analysis departs from a critical approach that sees an imbalance of power in the communication process; therefore, critical discourse views discourse as a social practice. Rogers (2005: 370) says that in the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a discourse has been interpreted as the use of language and social practices. That is, discourse moves back and forth between reflecting and building the social world. If this is the case, then language cannot be considered neutral because it is trapped in a political, social, racial, economic, religious, and cultural vortex.

The conclusion from the above view of discourse as a social practice is that in understanding the text, one must also understand the social content.

Fairclough (1998: 25) says discourse involves social conditions, which can be determined by social conditions of production and social conditions of interpretation. Moreover, these conditions are closely related between discourse with three levels of social organization, namely the level of the social situation, the level of institutions, and the level of society as a whole. Fairclough (1998: 26) continues, because discourse is a social practice, so in analyzing critical discourse not only text, production processes, and interpretation, but also analyze the relationship between text, process, and social conditions. In this regard, Eriyanto (2001: 8-14) outlines several characteristics of critical discourse analysis, namely action, context, historical, power, and ideology.

Discourse as a social practice often appears in the form of ideological practices. Darma (2009: 56) tries to limit ideology concerning the analysis of critical discourse as a value system owned by a particular group. Meanwhile, discourse as an ideological practice often produces unbalanced power, as expressed by Eriyanto (2001: 74-75), that discourse limits our views, issues something different within predetermined boundaries. When the rules of the discourse are formed, the statement is then adjusted to the limits and lines that have been determined.

Discourse in history textbooks can be seen as an ideological practice to produce unequal relations between groups in society. The State, in this case, seeks to establish its influence and affirm its position in the textbook and get rid of those who oppose it. Therefore, readers of textbooks are invited to follow the storyline and accept the discourse as fairness (Utami, 2012: 10). Although ideology produces unbalanced relationships, this shows that ideology controls the text and its social context.

This study aimed to analyze the Aceh conflict involving the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia that is narrated and passed down in history textbooks. The analysis also focused on the narrative of the reconciliation process to protect the reoccurrence of Aceh conflict in the future, bearing in mind that the Aceh conflict has been resolved in a meaningful manner.

For this reason, it is necessary to examine the history textbook in-depth and critically discuss the Aceh conflict. The study of history textbooks is carried out to aim that memories of the Aceh conflict will not be inherited continuously, which is feared to create historical resentment in the future. Besides, the most important thing, both for academic and practical purposes, from a number of these questions is how to design learning materials for students so that they are not involved in armed conflict and do not fall into the same mistakes.

## **METHOD**

This paper is qualitative research using critical analysis discourse method, especially the analysis of representation from Roger Fowler, with history textbooks as its material subject. Discourse is a language that is often used in social practice. Fowler (in Eriyanto, 2001: 137) said that language is limiting in nature, and invites thought to understand it and not anything else. Of course, the choice of words and language will affect a person's perspective of understanding and meaning of events, in this case, historical events.

The history textbooks that will be examined in this study are two history textbooks for grade XII used in the Indonesian national curriculum, namely the curriculum implemented in 2006 and 2013. The historical events examined in the textbook will be focused on the latest historical events, namely the armed conflict in Aceh between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia (RI).

Data collection in this research was carried out using a literature review and documentation. Researchers in this case not only examine textbooks, study the results of previous research, and record the contents of documentation, but also look for implied meaning. The legacy of Aceh's conflict memory is constructed and represented in historical textbooks through some words, languages, and sentences. Next, the research data collected will be analyzed by following the critical discourse analysis technique developed by Fairclough (1998), which consists of description, interpretation, and explanation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The history of the Aceh conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia (RI) can also be referred to as military history because the two parties alike use military equipment and fight in battle, as revealed in the results of Latifah's research (2018: 85) that military-themed history can be interpreted as historiography about the armed forces and war behavior. In the development of military history writing, military history writing stands out from the logistical aspects of war and military operations, but it has also has developed into social, economic, geographical, and psychological aspects. Therefore, military or war history can be seen from various aspects, and for this reason, the history of conflict between GAM and RI fulfills these criteria and elements.

Some of the themes represented in history textbooks are related to the Aceh conflict, such as resistance in expelling Portuguese, Dutch, and Japanese occupation. Meanwhile, after Indonesia's independence, other themes raised in history textbooks were the Darul Islam / Indonesian Islamic Army (DI / TII) rebellion, the Cumbok War, and the resistance of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) with the Government of the Republic of Indonesia (RI). Indeed, the Aceh conflict theme is more raised in textbooks, both in the 2006 national curriculum history textbook and the 2013 curriculum. In this case, the Acehnese gets a negative stigma that makes them always trapped in the current conflict and war.

The history of Aceh needs to be understood not only as a history that contains conflict and war but also as a long and dynamic process of history. Likewise, the narrative of Aceh's history in textbooks, that Aceh's history is a long process, starting from the existence of ancestors, the influx of Islam, the Islamic kingdom in Aceh, the national movement, to Aceh's contribution in filling the struggle period both before and after gaining Indonesian independence. Said by Ibrahim et al. (1991: 2), Aceh, as one of the provinces in Indonesia, has historical complexities and has shown its role in history, which has invited many researchers and writers of the Indonesian nation.

### **The State Ideology and Narrative of the Aceh Conflict**

The armed conflict in Aceh between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of Indonesia in the sense of this paper is how the legacy of the Aceh conflict is narrated in history textbooks for high school levels in the 2006 and 2013 curriculum. In the 2006 curriculum, the history textbook consists of 4 chapters, namely chapter 1 discusses the development of Indonesian society during the New Order, chapter 2 discusses the development of Indonesian society during the Reformation, Chapter 3 discusses the relationship between the development of science and technology with World War II and the cold war. Chapter 4 discusses the development of science and technology in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the narrative about the Aceh conflict is represented in chapter 2 in the textbook. The Aceh conflict was discussed as a problematic

area, and therefore, the Central Government must be aware of the problems in Aceh, given the historical experience of the escape of East Timor from Indonesia. Indeed in the textbook, the narrative of the Aceh conflict involving the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) was not discussed at length, but the legacy of conflict memories and negative stigma against Aceh was still maintained. The Central Government's suspicion of Aceh narrated in the history textbook is evident in the display of military and physical war narratives.

The narrative of the Aceh conflict is also represented in the book *History of Indonesia for grade XII 2013 Curriculum 2013 revised edition 2018*. From the results of the study of the history textbook, this book consists of 6 chapters namely chapter 1 titled the struggle against the threat of national disintegration, chapter 2 titled the system and political-economic structure Indonesia during Parliamentary Democracy (1950-1959), chapter 3 titled the system and structure of Indonesia's political-economy during Guided Democracy (1959-1965), chapter 4 titled system and structure of Indonesian political-economy during the New Order (1966-1998), chapter 5 titled the system and structure of Indonesia's political-economy during the Reformation (1998-present), and chapter 6 titled Indonesia on the world stage.

From the six chapters of the history textbook, the narrative of the Aceh conflict is discussed in almost all chapters, although not explicitly. However, in chapter 4, the narrative of the Aceh conflict is very prominent and even discussed almost all during the reign of the President of Indonesia. The elements related to the Aceh conflict's negative stigma implicitly colored the writing of the revised edition of the *Indonesian History for grade XII 2013 Curriculum 2013*. However, narratives about negotiating and resolving the Aceh conflict were also mentioned in the book.

The influence of ideology in the structure of historical writing in the two textbooks is quite dominating, especially concerning the Aceh conflict's narrative. Some of the vocabulary and language used in the textbook material, such as threatening the Republic of Indonesia's sovereignty or the disintegration of national integrity, is sufficient to indicate that ideology and the State have significant influence over the history books related to the narrative of the Aceh conflict. From this perspective, is following Gardiner (1988: 4-6), the crucial characteristics of military history are the history of military forces, war, and combat. The same thing was stated by Purwanta (2013: 91) that in history textbooks, the presence of military interests is the prominence of narratives about physical conflict.

The description of the resolution of the Aceh conflict between the Free Aceh Movement and the Central Government in Jakarta was also dominated by several Indonesian Presidents, ranging from Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Soekarno Putri, and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. This will of reconciliation shows that the President of the Republic of Indonesia, who served during the Aceh conflict, contributed to the Aceh settlement and peace. The presence of the President of Indonesia, in the process of settlement and peace in Aceh, was elegantly narrated by the author of the 2013 edition for grade XII book *Curriculum 2013 2018*. The dominance of ideology and the State over the textbook, while parties from Aceh and outsiders do not highlight. Like the author of the 2006 Curriculum history book, the author of the 2013 Curriculum history book also presents a narrative about the negative stigma against Aceh. In other words, negative memories of the Aceh conflict are still bequeathed to these two history books.

### **Reconciliation Discourse**

Reconciliation can be interpreted as an effort to solve problems and improve social relations; the ultimate goal is to obtain peace (Nugraha, 2019: 244). After reconciliation, the next stage is conflict transformation, as revealed by Wahyudi (2013: 262) that after reaching the reconciliation stage, it needs to be transformed into the process of building a culture of peace; therefore the reconciliation stage is made as to the initial stage of the conflict transformation journey. So, in this case, the reconciliation effort referred to is the reconciliation of the contents of the history textbook material that narrates the Aceh conflict in order to obtain justice.

Efforts to reconcile Aceh conflict material in historical textbooks can be made by using conflict transformation theory. Conflict transformation is a conflict resolution concept that arises after conflict resolution, as has been applied in Aceh conflict resolution. Although the theory of conflict transformation is often used in the application of social science, discourse using this theory should be considered and criticized again when used in the realm of history education, namely the reconciliation of Aceh's narrative conflict in textbooks on Indonesian history. The concept of conflict transformation is often popularized in Lederach (1995, 1997, 2003) works, who assume that the tides of social conflict are opportunities for constructive social change to reduce acts of violence and increase justice. The purpose of conflict transformation is to overcome the more comprehensive sources of social and political conflict and transform the negative forces of war into positive social forces.

Just as representatives of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of Indonesia conducted negotiations and culminated in a collective agreement to make peace with dignity, the narrative of the Aceh conflict in a history textbook also needs to be reconciled so that memories of the Aceh conflict do not emerge and give birth to historical revenge in the future prolonged. Therefore, the offer of reconciliation as a discourse on the material of the Aceh conflict is very likely to be needed in the interest of narrative textbooks on Indonesian history. By narrating reconciliation on history textbooks, the Aceh conflict would not continue to be produced and bequeathed. Because during the conflict, many parties were severely harmed, and the people of Aceh suffered greatly in a state of poverty, fear, and depression in all aspects (Jayanti, 2013: 62). The same thing was expressed in the KontraS report (2006: 1) that during the Aceh conflict, some political policies, legal measures, acts of violence, and violations of human rights were carried out. However, as previously predicted, the political policy did not work effectively.

In the transformation of conflict as a discourse of reconciliation of Aceh conflict material, several elements must be considered by the authors of historical textbooks. For example, negative stigmas such as rebels and separatist that are often inherent in the people of Aceh, because they are regarded as regions that are always involved in conflict and war, can be eliminated to a minimum. Therefore, special attention needs to be paid to all parties, especially those appointed by the Central Government in writing history textbooks, so that they are careful when choosing words, languages, and sentences when representing the Aceh conflict in Indonesian history textbooks. However, according to Wahyudi (2013: 222), the Aceh conflict has left deep scars and bitter memories. For this reason, reconciliation is expected to eliminate negative terms. Mitchel (2012: 12-15) revealed several vital elements in transforming conflict, namely the first transformation process that includes the level of participation and focuses on current issues, trauma, and pain due to injustice. Second, personnel transformation is the formation and understanding

of conflict issues. Third, structural transformation, namely changes in centralized political systems to decentralization, regional autonomy, and the distribution of power. Fourth, the transformation of relationships, namely relationships that were previously not peaceful to be peaceful and harmonious.

## CONCLUSION

Representations of the Aceh conflict involving the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of Indonesia were narrated negatively in grade XII history textbooks, both the curriculum 2006 and 2013. This can be seen from the use of words, languages, and sentences that give and problems in Aceh. Representations of the Aceh conflict are listed in the history textbook's theme, as during the Reformation.

The study results of the two history textbooks also found elements related to the negative stigma of the Aceh conflict, implicitly enough coloring in the writing of the History of Indonesian textbook grade XII 2013 revised edition 2018. The emergence of ideology in the structure of historical writing and the content of the material in the two textbooks is quite dominating, especially with the narrative of the Aceh conflict. This is indicated by the presence of almost all Indonesian Presidents in resolving the Aceh conflict.

The right way to break the Aceh conflict's memories is to reconcile the transformation of conflict into historical textbooks. The discourse of reconciliation and transformation of Aceh's conflict in history textbooks needs to be criticized again because it is usually applied in social science.

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