

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter firstly explain the background, the research question raise in this study, the aim of the study, scope of the study, and the significance of the study. Besides, the clarification of some terms used in the study and the organization of the paper will be presented and explained in the end of this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Critical thinking has become a great concern among educators and educational theorist nowadays, especially in the way to teach it. Teaching critical thinking is debatable in the sense of uncertainty about the possibility taught to students (Forood and Farahani, 2013). However, believing that critical thinking is teachable was shared by Feng (2013). This is in line with another believe that it is possible for teachers helping students to think critically which stated by Brookfield (1987). On the contrary, critical thinking is seen as a skill-based approach, it is deficient since critical thinking would not transfer well (Dunn *et al.*, 2008). There are many arguments about the possibility of critical thinking taught to the student, nevertheless, it is possible to critical thinking taught to the students although teaching critical thinking is still debatable.

Pierce (2004) added the definition of critical thinking which means sound thinking needed by the thinker (in this research are students) in an academic discipline: accurate, relevant, reasonable that is used in analyzing, synthesizing, generalizing, applying concepts, interpreting, evaluating supporting arguments and hypotheses, solving problems, or making decisions. Another definition comes from Facione (2006) who stated that critical thinking is thinking with a purpose. Moreover, critical thinking according to Paul & Elder (2007), is a mode of thinking in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by putting or improving their intellectual standards in thinking about any subject. Furthermore, Willingham (2007) stated critical thinking is not a set of skills that

can be deployed at any time, in any context. It is a type of thought that even 3-year-olds can engage in—and even trained scientists can fail in. By critical thinking, people are expecting to be able to make well-informed judgments, be able to explain their reasoning and be able to solve unknown problems (see Thompson, 2011; Golpour, 2014).

Critical thinking is an important factor that has a direct relationship with language learning. It is a very important component of education in this century (Lai, 2011). A learner who has a critical thinking ability can ask appropriate questions, gather relevant information, efficiently and creatively sort through this information, reason logically, and come to reliable and trustworthy conclusions (Qing, 2013). Therefore, based on the previous explanation, it is important for teachers to foster critical thinking in the classroom when teaching a subject, especially in a language teaching.

Critical thinking in the Indonesian context has been applied in the newest curriculum that is known as the latest 2013 National Indonesian Curriculum (*Kurikulum 2013*). This curriculum is expected to bring significant changes in Indonesian education through emphases in the importance of critical thinking or higher order thinking skills which closely related to language learning (Gustine, 2014). It brings an importance to introduce critical thinking in Indonesian education (Gustine, 2014), especially at the high school level (Hove, 2011). High schools need to be a place that involves students in rich, authentic, collaborative work; that takes responsibility for building 21st century skills (Coughlin, 2010, as cited in Hove, 2011). Learning critical thinking leads students to develop the ability to analyze and creatively adapt to new situations that are needed when students entering the next stage of life, either entering college or works (see Paul & Elder, 2008; Hove, 2011).

One of the subject required in curriculum for Senior High School is writing in argumentative essay, such as Exposition text. As language reflects thinking (Chaffee, 2009), students' critical thinking can be reflected through their writing. Fisher (1990) stated that:

Literacy, the ability to read and write, encourages a more abstract form of thinking, it brings greater precision to the definition of terms, and it allows us to refer back, to think about our thinking, to weigh arguments, to supplement memory, ..., to communicate with

others, and to learn in autonomous ways. No wonder such a powerful form of intelligence provides the key to success in school and beyond (1990, cited in Emilia, 2005).

Ability to transforming or organizing abstract form of thinking can help student to make a meaningful decision and argument. Write an argumentative essay is significant for the students because it will generate the students' critical thinking so they can get the access to be a powerful society and they are ready to be a competitive person (Bizzell :1992, cited in Emilia: 2005). However the focus of this study is not on the students' writing but on how the teacher fosters critical thinking in the classroom. And from the previous explanation can be seen that argumentative essay could be used as media and setting to foster critical thinking.

There are still few studies investigating about critical thinking at the senior high school level and how important to foster it. A study was conducted by Emilia (2005) about the critical genre-based approach to teaching academic writing in a tertiary EFL context in Indonesia. The study was conducted to 18 students in semesters six of a Bachelor Degree for 11 weeks in a tertiary EFL context in Indonesia. It reveals that the students' argumentative writing skills in English improve the achievement of the argumentative essay, which indicates their development in critical thinking. Nevertheless, it has a similar context with this study in which the study was done in Indonesian context and investigating critical thinking in argumentative essay even if not in senior high school level.

Another study, a case study, was done by Xu Qing (2013) in China, which talked about fostering critical thinking competence in EFL classroom. The study shows if one wants to become proficient in oral English, the student must be creative in his production of ideas and critically support them with logical explanations, details, and examples. The study suggested that English teachers supposed to foster critical thinking by following the teaching principles, establishing equal relationships with students and encouraging the students to participate actively through new approaches. The study has a similar topic but on a different level, which is in university level.

In addition, study about critical thinking in high school level was done by Hove (2011) in America. The study is about developing critical thinking in the high school English classroom. The study provides information about students

will perform better critical thinking ability if they were given an explicit critical thinking instruction. Hove, in the result, showing that high school classes provide an ideal opportunity for students to learn and practice critical thinking skills. The Hove's study was focused on the students and develop critical thinking in their reading, in a different focus, this study is focusing on the teacher and the way she/he fosters critical thinking in the classroom. Furthermore, Hove suggested that there are literature and skills that need to be taught, but how it is taught, that is really important.

We have know about critical thinking and the importance of critical thinking for educational context, but how a teacher should foster critical thinking in the classroom? Since the study of critical thinking at the level of senior high school is still rare and there is no study that investigates the way teacher fosters critical thinking in the classroom when teaching argumentative genre yet. Based on the previous explanation, it can say that this study is crucial to be conducted. The study aims to understand and describe how does the teacher fosters critical thinking in the classroom when teaching argumentative essay in high school level.

1.2 Research Questions

To lead the study to be more specific elaboration, the study is conducted to answer the following question: "How does the teacher foster critical thinking in the classroom when teaching argumentative essay in high school level?"

1.3 Aims of the Study

Regarding the issues mentioned earlier, the aim of the study is to understand and describe the way teacher fosters critical thinking in the classroom when teaching argumentative essay in high school level.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on understanding and detail description about the way the teacher fosters critical thinking in the classroom when teaching argumentative essay at the senior high school level. The students' writing will not appear in data analysis because the focus is only on the process of teacher foster critical thinking

in the classroom. In addition the analysis of this study focuses on the approach used by the teacher to foster critical thinking, instruction used by teacher indicating fosters critical thinking, and the way teacher used argumentative essay in her teaching stages to foster critical thinking. The analysis will be based on the theory of broad approaches to teach critical thinking by Ennis (1992, in Emilia, 2005; Talaska, 1992), critical thinking instruction by Paul & Elder (2007) and Bloom's (1956), and the teaching stages used by Emilia (2005).

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is expected to give theoretical, professional and practical significances benefits. In terms of theory, the findings of the study will contribute to research sources about critical thinking in EFL contexts, in Indonesian high school. The study attempted to give an understanding and give a clear description of an example of the way the teacher fostering critical thinking in the classroom during teach argumentative essay. Besides, this study also tries to raise the awareness of the importance of critical thinking to high school students.

In terms of practice, this study is expected to give benefit to the researcher, teachers, students and readers who are interested in the topic. For the professional benefits, the finding of this study will contribute to the professional sources in the teaching of English as Foreign Language in Indonesia in particular. Moreover, the findings will provide some constructive suggestions in the teaching argumentative essay at the high school level.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and misjudgment toward some concept presented in this study, this section will clarify the following terms:

- **Argumentative Essay**

Argumentative genre or also known as argumentative essay is a piece of writing involving arguments, facts, evidence, reasons and explanation in order support the side being argued and use reference or evidence to make the writing seems indisputable and to make the reader believes what is written (Emilia, 2005).

- **Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking is a mode of thinking in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by putting or improving their intellectual standards in thinking about any subject (Paul & Elder, 2007).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

The paper of the study is organized into five chapters. Each section is provided by subsection to give an insight to the topic under investigation. These chapters are namely:

- **Chapter I Introduction:** This chapter of this study introduces the nature of the study. In detail, this chapter consists of the background of the study, research questions, aims of the research, significances of the research, research methodology, clarification of related terms, and organization of the paper.
- **Chapter II Literature Review:** This chapter discusses some theories related to the critical thinking in education. In detail, this chapter elaborates theories of the critical thinking, critical thinking elements, argumentative essay and teaching critical thinking, and previous related studies to the fostering critical thinking in the classroom.
- **Chapter III Research Methodology:** This chapter of this study presents the research methodology that focuses on the methodology employed in conducting the study. This chapter deals with the research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis.
- **Chapter IV Findings and Discussion:** This chapter portrays the findings and discussion of the study. It is divided into two main parts which are the finding of the research that elaborates the results of data analysis, which answers the research questions formulated previously and the discussion which interprets the data of this research.
- **Chapter V Conclusion and Suggestions:** This chapter concludes the result of the study, which obtained from the collected data. It also gives the suggestions for the better improvement of the next research.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented some aspects underlying the study, including the background of the study, the statement of the problems, aim of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of the key terms, and organization of the paper. The next section will present some theories relevant to the study.