CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the foundation of research investigating the implementation of the Socratic questioning method in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking course to stimulate students' speaking skill and critical thinking. In specific, Section 1.1 elaborates the research background which covers issues concerning the teaching of speaking in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, the importance of critical thinking, the reasons to choose the Socratic questioning method in teaching speaking skill, previous research on the Socratic questioning method, and the position of the research in filling the gaps of previous research on the Socratic questioning method. Next, Section 1.2 presents the research questions. Section 1.3 states the objectives of the research. Section 1.4 states the significances of the research. Section 1.5 presents the research framework. Lastly, Section 1.6 clarifies the definition of terms used in this research.

1.1 Research Background

The teaching of English speaking skill is considered challenging considering its role as foreign language in Indonesia. EFL teachers in Indonesia face some barriers and challenges in improving their students' speaking skill. There are some features to support the mastery of speaking skill as Fauzan (2016) and Sayuri (2016) report that vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension are the language elements which influenced students' skill in speaking. In addition, Ariyanti (2016) affirms that psychological factors such as students' self-confidence, students' fear in making a mistake and low motivation affected their performance in speaking. These many language features and psychological factors are believed to burden students to speak English.

Furthermore, Irmawati (2016) investigated the external factors experienced by the students in improving their speaking skill. (1) students had many tasks from other courses. (2) speaking media was limited. (3) students' practice outside the

class was not optimal. (4) the teacher's innovation in teaching speaking was less. (5) speaking materials were not appropriate. (6) there was no synchronization of students' need. (7) the teacher's skill in speaking influenced students' performance, and (8) students' opportunity to speak and feedback affected students' motivation in speaking.

Theoretically, the hearth of foreign language learning is students ability to speak and use it (Luoma, 2004). She explains that the students can personalize, make self-image, obtain the world's knowledge, give reasons and show their thoughts through speaking in order to perform their oral ability in the foreign language. Developing students' speaking skill is considered not easy and time consuming. There are many things that the students need to know such as: English phonology, the use of appropriate vocabularies, and fluently translate the words in English from their first language.

One of the successes of language learning can be realized by teaching speaking, in which the students are wxposed to the speaking practice resulting in their effective communication effectively at school and in their life in society. Furthermore, teaching speaking covers linguistic aspects such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics. The students can use those skills to help them speaking by seeing the social context, listeners, condition, and the issue to arrange the idea based on the logical meaning steps, which can be done by functioning the language to show value and judgment, hence, they can speak fluently and confidently (Marie & Rohan, 2011).

Moreover, interaction is the key in speaking in which linguists and EFL/ ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers concern. The purpose of this interaction is to communicatively and collaboratively teach the language by considering speaking as real-life communication. The use of this method will provide the students exposures to communicate the target language well. Therefore, in its implementation, the classroom environment needs to be adjusted to provide the students a real-life situation to communicate and stimulate speaking through authentic activities and also an essential task that can be done collaboratively in groups (Richards, 2008).

In addition to speaking skill mastery, critical thinking is also an important skill that the students have to master. The curriculum in Indonesia, especially in higher education inserts critical thinking to its courses to sharpen students' reasoning skill and to be able to critically explore the materials (Permenristekdikti No 44, 2015). Reinard (1991) explains that critical thinking requires deliberate and careful efforts to link the proposition before making a decision. What a person has in mind is from information that has been evaluated thoughtfully such as the width of an issue in our proposition before a decision is made. Many options to react to the issue (acceptance, rejection, or suspension of judgment) are based on a proposition in people's mind. Scientific attitude is needed in order to think critically and push the current issue in making decision. These build arguments lead to judgment. Therefore, it is believed that the teachers have the responsibility to grow students' critical thinking skill.

In language teaching and learning, teacher have to integrate critical thinking in selecting teaching methods and materials. Teacher's target should not be merely on the achievement of students' language skills but the development of their critical thinking skill. Masduqi (2011) affirms that meaning-making is the goal of language learning and its integration of critical thinking. Djiwandono (2013) suggests that transformative learning such as explicit teaching, memory-based learning, rote learning, and focus group discussion can be used to facilitate critical thinking in the class. In relation, Indah and Kusuma (2016) assert that students' language proficiency affect students' critical thinking skill.

The Socratic questioning method is one of teaching methods to develop critical thinking (Paul, 2006). This truth-seeking approach is the central concept of the Socratic questioning method in which the dialogue between the teacher and the students is used to facilitate and evaluate the assumptions of knowledge through deep and continuous questions (Michaelides, 2013; Nash, 2014; Nelson & Dawson, 2014; Roth, 2016). This method builds logical arguments through evidence and relevant data that can influence teacher-students' perspectives on the issue (Tofade et al., 2013). The process of communication becomes a crucial part where the engagement between the teacher and the students influence the learning process (Kühnen et al., 2012). Elder and Paul (2007) emphasize that active engagement,

thinking elements, thinking standards, and thinking system are the main focus of this teaching method in improving critical thinking.

Some previous research on the Socratic questioning method have been recorded and found that this method has given a positive result in improving students' critical thinking (Altorf, 2016; Babaii & Taghaddomi, 2015; Burns et al., 2016). However, studies on the Socratic questioning method have not been well researched in EFL teaching and learning in Indonesian. Based on this argument, the researcher seeks to address to gap by investigating the Socratic questioning method in teaching EFL, by exploring the on-going process of this method in teaching speaking. The effectiveness of this method in improving students' speaking skill and critical thinking skill and the teacher-students' perceptions of this method revealed comprehensively.

1.2 Research Questions

This research seeks to address the following questions.

1. How is the implementation of the Socratic questioning method in Speaking course?

2. Does the Socratic questioning method have any effect on students' speaking skill and critical thinking?

3. How is the implementation of the Socratic questioning method in the speaking course perceived by the teacher and the students?

1.3 Research Objectives

There are three objectives of this research.

1. To explore the explicit stages of the Socratic questioning method implemented in teaching speaking course.

2. To evaluate the effectiveness of the Socratic questioning method in teaching speaking course to stimulate students' speaking skill and critical thinking.

3. To investigate teacher and students' perception of the implementation of the Socratic questioning method.

1.4 Research Significances

This research is expected to provide benefits in the forms of theories, policy, practices, issue and social action.

1.4.1 Theories

This research theoretically provides input on the theory of teaching EFL Speaking skill, dialogic learning, the Socratic Method, and critical thinking.

1.4.2 Policy

This research in policy provides a whole understanding on the importance of critical thinking to be infused in speaking course and the benefits of the Socratic Method implementation to be considered by policymakers to develop curriculum, syllabus, and learning materials.

1.4.3 Practices

This research practically contributes to the ways of teaching speaking through the Socratic Method which has been found stimulating students' speaking skill and critical thinking.

1.4.4 Issue and Social Action

This research seeks to address the issue and social action related to the teaching of critical thinking, truth-seeking and meaning-making from dialogic learning, shifting from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning, fostering questioning habit, engaging learning through communicative interaction among teacher and students, and also reflective practice.

1.5 Research Framework

The figure 1.1 depicts the framework of this research that begins from reviewing previous research, analyzing the research gaps, developing theoretical framework, selecting research method, designing objectives, research title, research questions, problem statements, research significances, the methodology used, conducting pilot test, developing research instruments, designing sampling technique, and analyzing the data.
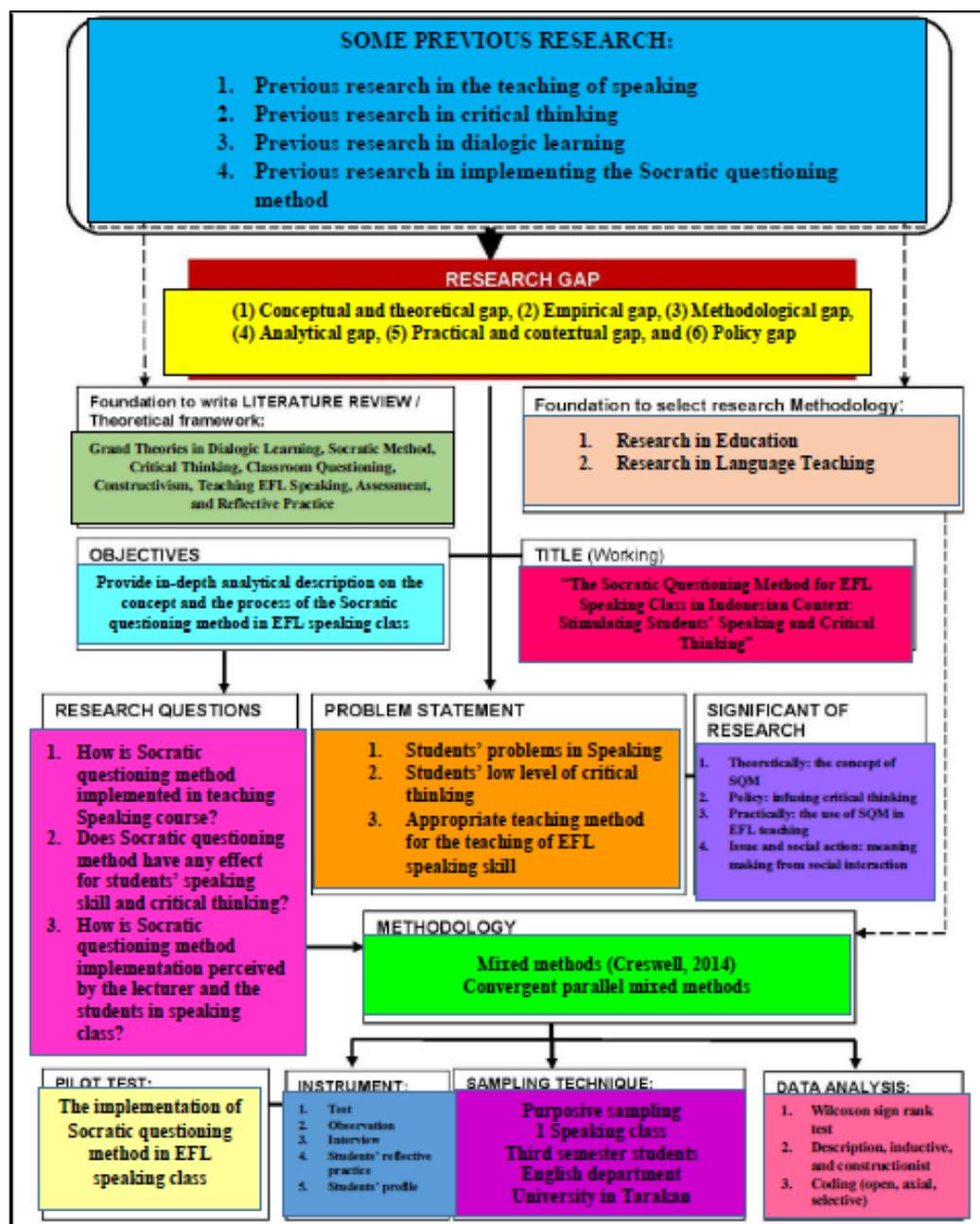
Figure 1.1 Research Framework

The research framework above depicts that the researcher began this research by reviewing the previous research to find out the research gaps, which was used as the foundation to develop theoretical framework and decide the research method to answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives. The problem statements were derived from the research gaps found in

the previous research. This research was expected to provide significances in the forms of theory, practice, policy, issue and social action in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), especially the teaching of speaking skill. This research used Convergent parallel mixed methods by focusing on the implementation of the Socratic questioning method in EFL speaking course. Furthermore, this research employed purposive sampling by involving one teacher and thirty-eight students of English department of one state university in Tarakan, North Kalimantan as the research participants. The data were collected using test, observation, interview, reflective practice, and students' profile. The quantitative data were analyzed by using the Wilcoxon sign rank test while the qualitative data were analyzed through description, inductive, constructioninst, and coding.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The terms used in this research are described as follows.

1. The Socratic questioning method is one of teaching methods, which firstly introduced by the great philosopher Socrates, which signifies the concept of meaning-making and truth-seeking through questioning.

2. Speaking skill is one of the language skills, which involves active and productive in the interactive process by involving the acceptance, construction, and convey meanings through the spoken form of words.

3. Critical thinking is thinking a skill to assess information from all angles using reasoning skill which is supported with evidence and intellectual standards (clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, and fairness) to help solving problems and making decisions.

4. Dialogic learning is learning through dialogue where the question and answer session lead the teacher and students to evaluate the given information with logic reasoning, which provides new understanding from different perspectives.

5. Constructivism is a thought that knowledge, understanding, and meaning are constructed in the teaching and learning process through observation and scientific study, in which previous knowledge and experiences influence the construction.