

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents seven general points, including background of the study, the research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significances of the study, clarification of the terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Questioning is in line with the spirit of inquisitiveness in critical thinking. King (1995) asserts that a critical thinker is an inquiring mind who asks good questions to understand the world. Further, Rahimi & Sajed (2013) state that critical thinking is "... about questioning all the assumptions about what is true; to carefully and draw appropriate conclusions, and to distinguish between fact and opinion" (p. 43). From these two proposals, it is suggested that questioning is the essential element of critical thinking and shows the activeness of a person to understand the issue thoughtfully before choosing what to absorb and what to ignore (Barell, 2003).

Nowadays, In Indonesia, critical thinking becomes one of the goals in education that wants to be achieved besides problem-solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration (BKLM, 2018). The application in the learning context should be reflected and integrated into three domains that are: attitude, skill, and knowledge (Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2014). In skill domain, questioning is one of the aspects that should be applied by the students during the learning process. Despite the reform of an active learning approach in which students are encouraged to ask questions, the employment of questioning tends to focus on teacher's questions. Moreover, in terms of promoting critical thinking, questioning is often associated with the questions raised by the teachers (Taba, 1966; Browne & Keeley, 2007)

In regard to questioning in EFL context, it shows that the students are rarely given the chance to ask a question and express their opinion (Tung & Chang, 2009; Jie, Yuhong, & Yuan, 2015). This condition is also similar in Indonesian context since the instruction reflects the authority of the teacher and the passiveness of the students (Larson, 2014, p. 126). Thus, there should be more awareness from the

teachers to create active learning environment in the classroom to encourage the students to ask questions that contribute to their critical thinking. In this case, the questions that should be promoted are the ones which encourage the students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information that are categorized as higher-order thinking skills (Synder & Synder, 2008).

The example of an instruction that requires students to question is reading. It is because in understanding a reading text, it does not only about understanding what is written on the page but also understanding the message or meaning from the author's position (Brown, 2001). Thus, it implies that students should be able to question different kinds of information more than just what is explicitly stated in the text. For examples, the students could ask questions that involve inference-making and critical evaluation (Gray, 1960). However, the ability to ask good questions requires training as questioning skill is not an innate ability (Afzali, 2012). Hence, the teachers need to model their students to ask question, guide the students during practice, and evaluate student's ability in asking questions (Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996)

The reasons behind encouraging students to ask good questions or critical thinking questions are because of the advantages that it offers. Firstly, the student's critical thinking question develops reading comprehension as it involves different cognitive processes, such as to hypothesize and focus on detail and main ideas (Taboada and Guthrie, 2006, p. 4). It is as suggested by Wiggin (1993, cited in Afzali, 2012) who mentions that the student's question could exhibit their deeper understanding of the text than the teacher's question. Secondly, the student's question is considered as a creative way to develop the students' critical thinking. By employing a different and relatively new approach is found motivating for the students to read and think critically about the text (Afzali, 2012). Finally, as there is a term "good thinkers are good questioners" and vice versa (King, 1995, p. 13), it shows that student's question could exhibit the quality of student's thinking. Students do not simply ask critical questions during the learning process; in fact, they are encouraged to relate their questions to different elements of critical thinking and reading. The students also make connection between their thought and

their personal ideas and experiences which make their understanding on the text is better (Fahim & Sa'eepour, 2011). As the result, students are able to propose critical thinking questions that promotes divergent thinking processes to analyze, compare and contrast, make an inference, predict, and evaluate an issue (King, 1995).

Being acknowledged that student's critical-thinking questioning provides some advantages for student learning, some studies on this field have been carried out by the researchers. King (1995) shared her experience when she conducted an instruction that employed questioning to teach critical thinking. In her psychology classes, students were encouraged to ask critical thinking questions by using the list of generic question stems as their guidance. During the implementation of the instruction, the steps are; the teacher gave the lecture and instructed the students to generate questions which they did not know the answers by following the generic question stems. Then, students discussed their questions with their peers by asking and answering each other's question. The activity continued in the whole class context in which the teacher chose some of the questions from the students to be discussed further. The result shows that questioning activity was effective in promoting students' critical thinking since it built a high level of cognitive processes. Then, as students formulated the questions, it required students to think critically about the material. Hence, students were forced to identify the main ideas and think how each idea was related to each other. This activity also served a metacognitive role that gave a chance to the students to monitor their understanding.

Yang, Newby, and Bill (2005) conducted a study that focused on Socratic questioning that promote critical thinking through Asynchronous Discussion Forums (ADF) in distance learning. This study concerned on encouraging students to generate critical-thinking questions on their own in the context of distance education. This study was conducted in a university in America as sixteen veterinary distance students involved in the study. It was found after the instructor modeled questioning through online discussion to the students, this model of teaching helped them to demonstrate higher level of critical thinking skills. Then, the students became more critical in asking and answering questions and were able to negotiate meaning and identify areas of agreement or overlap among conflicting

concept. Moreover, there was significant improvement of critical thinking skills in terms of: relevance, importance, novelty, accuracy, justification, and critical assessment.

In Indonesian context, the research of student's questioning was employed by Sunggingwati and Nguyen (2013) that focused on the implementation of self-questioning by three teachers in East Kalimantan in their classroom. They taught 11th grade from three different secondary schools. As self-questioning was implemented to the students, it was found each teacher had different way of introducing questioning levels of Bloom's taxonomy that were used in this self-questioning. Hence, at the beginning of the session, it showed that the teacher still had difficulty in introducing Bloom's taxonomy which indicated that they had not fully comprehended the question levels. As the result, students experienced lack of confidence in generating higher-level questions. Fortunately, in the following sessions as the teachers had more understanding in teaching question levels and encouraged students to ask questions, the students started to be more confident in asking questions and they became more engaged and involved in the implementation sessions. In the interview, students perceived this self-questioning positively as it improved their critical thinking skills and helped them to generate higher-order questions.

From the previous studies on student's questioning, it is observed that teaching the students to ask critical thinking question in reading is important as students become more aware in asking information that is not explicitly stated in the text. Further, by asking different kind of higher-level questions that are categorized as critical thinking questions, it could demonstrate student's different levels or skills in critical thinking. However, it seems that the studies on student's critical thinking questioning are rarely connected to a certain text type. Then, insufficient explanation of how the questions that are generated by the students show their critical thinking also become the concern for the current study.

Hence, this study is intended to investigate students' critical thinking questions in learning to read a narrative text. Specifically, the investigation focuses on the types of questions that the students ask that is done by categorizing the

students' questions based on their function and level. Besides, the students' questions are also investigated in terms of how the questions show the students' critical thinking by assessing the question based on critical thinking skills.

1.2 The Research Questions

This study is designed to answer the two following research questions:

1. What types of questions do the students ask in learning to read a narrative text?
2. How do the types of questions asked show the students' critical thinking?
3. How does the instruction for questioning helps the students to be critical thinkers?

1.3 Aims of the Study

Relevant to the research questions, this study aims to:

1. Find out types of questions that the students ask in learning to read a narrative text.
2. Explain in what way the questions that the students ask show their critical thinking.
3. Investigate how the instruction for questioning helps the students to be critical thinkers.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The coverage of this study is limited to the investigation of the questions that are proposed by the 9th grade students in a classroom. The questions only focus on what the students write based on four narrative texts that are given by the teacher.

The investigation of the students' questions includes the analysis of the students' questions which primarily based on the categorization of Bloom's taxonomy levels and critical thinking skills. The investigation also occurs to find out the extent to which critical thinking instruction helps the students to be able to ask and answer critical thinking questions. As this study is conducted qualitatively, this study is not valid to verify the result of the treatment in conducting certain teaching method.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The present study is expected to give significant contribution theoretically, practically, and professionally.

Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to enrich the literature about students' critical thinking questioning in a narrative text, especially for Junior High school level.

Practically, this study is expected to be beneficial for teachers and researchers who are interested in critical thinking questioning in English language teaching. Specifically, it is expected that this study contributes to give understanding of how students' critical thinking questioning in learning to read a narrative text is implemented, especially in Indonesia context. The implementation of this study provides information of the students' questions in relation to four narrative texts that are taught which in turn is expected to give reflection for teachers about organizing the instruction to teach critical thinking questions to the students.

Professionally, this study is expected to give information to policymakers about the aspects that should be developed in regard to the implementation of student critical thinking questioning. Hence, it is expected that they put more awareness of the teachers' competencies in implementing a teaching method that put students as the central focus.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misconception, the following is the main terms that are mentioned in this study.

The first term is critical thinking. It is reasonable, reflective thinking that is aimed at deciding what to believe or what to do (Ennis, 1987, cited in Hunter, 2009).

The second term is reading. Reading is a process of communication between reader and print and as a process of meaning making (Setiadi and Piyakun, 2012, p. 41).

The third term is narrative text. A narrative is a genre text which its basic purpose is to entertain the readers (Emilia, 2011; Derewianka, 2004). This genre tells and shows how a person or groups respond on something which reflects their social and cultural values (Emilia, 2011).

1.7 Paper Organization

This paper is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is Introduction which comprises of the background of the study, the research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significances of the research, clarification of terms, and paper organization. The second chapter is Theoretical Foundation that presents relevant theories and previous studies that support this study. The third chapter is Research Method which delineates the techniques of how the data are collected and analyzed. The fourth chapter is Findings and Discussion that presents, elaborates, analyzes, and discusses the result of the study. The fifth chapter is Conclusions and Recommendation that provide the summary of the study and suggestion for further related studies.