

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to investigate the implementation of critical literacy in a private junior high school in Bandung. This chapter is started by brief explanation of background of the study and a general overview of why and how this study is conducted. The next part tells about general notions of research question, purposes of the study, significances of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the thesis.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

English as a Foreign language (EFL) classroom is assumed as an essential way to promote students' critical literacy ability which is highly required in the globalization era (Emila, 2010; Gustine, 2014). It is relevant with the aim of the English 2013 Curriculum which puts a strong emphasis on the development of students' competencies to think reflectively to solve social problems (Permendikbud No 67). It is further stated that the new concept of EFL teaching is important since English language teaching in Indonesia has been too much focused-on grammar memorization (Alwasilah, 2001; Emilia 2005). Therefore, the language teaching, EFL in this case, can be a way to encourage the students in perceiving the information from the texts with critical perspectives (Emilia, 2005; Ludwig, 2003). In this sense, the students need to be aware that the texts are not neutral and as simple as they see (Wallace, 2003; Wood, Soares, & Watson, 2006). This implies that EFL teachers need to incorporate critical literacy aspects in the teaching and learning process. It aims to raise the students' critical literacy ability and diverse ways of thinking in evaluating and criticizing any information from the texts (Ko, 2010).

Critical literacy is firstly grounded in the Frankfurt school by a Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire (1970) who stated that critical literacy focuses on the

engagement of students in questioning some texts. Critical literacy is also known as analysing some cultural, social, and political power by using text (Luke & Dooley, 2011). Moreover, critical literacy could be defined as a way in empowering students to improve critical stance or principals in learning a language (Gustine, 2013). Critical literacy is not only aimed to provide students' cognitive and functional skills but also act as the tools to criticize the social inequalities and injustices through students' varied contexts (Shor, 1999).

Although involving critical literacy seems to be motivating the students to be critically literate, the teachers are lack of knowledge on how to implement critical literacy in EFL classrooms (Gustine, 2018). It may happen since the Indonesian students are not encouraged to be critical readers and only focus on receptive reading (Setyaningsih, 2018). According to the study that is conducted by Central Connecticut State University in the United States, students' literacy ability in Indonesia is in the second-worst compared to the world's 61 most literate nations (*jakartapost.com*, 2018). More recently, the students also find difficulties in answering the "High Order Thinking Skills" questions in the 2018 National Exam since they did not have appropriate critical literacy ability (*Kompas.com*, 2018).

In a classroom context, in relation to this study, EFL has the potential to be integrated with some critical literacy aspects to make students to be a critically literate self. In a few last years ago, critical literacy has been widely implemented in classrooms in many countries in some levels of education (Gustine, 2014). The classroom also becomes the right place to enhance students' critical social awareness (Alwasilah, 2001). Furthermore, critical literacy encourages students to explore some various texts, visual images, and spoken texts (Freire & Macedo, 2005). Moreover, by utilizing critical literacy in the classroom, students are not only able to read some texts, but they also need to think beyond the meaning of the text.

According to the 2013 Curriculum, Junior High School students are expected to be able to understand the meaning and identify the information towards some texts (BSNP, 2013). There are five kinds of texts that should be achieved by junior high school students; 1) procedure, 2) descriptive, 3) recount,

4) narrative and 5) report (Permendikbud no 68). Regarding the implementation to the teaching and learning process, this present study utilizes narrative text which is also related to some critical literacy aspects (Lee, 2017). The narrative contains some aspects of social and cultural context where students can identify and discuss several values that related to their daily life (Schiffrin, 1996). Thus, students are required to have certain attitudes in which they can position themselves as readers, listeners, and viewers as they interact with the texts, namely critical literacy (Freire & Macedo, 2005).

The aforementioned explanation of critical literacy implies this notion is significant to be integrated into teaching instruction in Indonesia, especially in EFL classroom to raise students' awareness and to open their mind. There are several benefits of critical literacy, especially seen in its role as a learning approach. It helps students to read beyond the text (Ko, 2013), encourages students to gain not only language skills but also a sense of efficacy for social change (Lau, 2013), contributes to the students' development of voice and self-awareness (Izadinia & Abednia, 2010), leads students to be more critical, tolerant, and socially aware (Gustine, 2014), stimulates students' interest in asking some critical questions (Maully, 2011), helps the students to be more critical in reading some issues (Shin & Crookes, 2009), promotes critical engagement between students and the texts (Alford, 2001), boosts students' motivation (Ko, 2010), and develops students' meta-language (Emilia, 2005). Since critical literacy is open to multiple perspectives, it could be explained that people from different backgrounds society can use texts to get meaning and to participate in various social contexts (Cheah, 2001). From those reasons above, a framework of critical literacy ability should be included in the language education to involve students with analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of texts (Alwasilah, 2001). In addition, critical literacy also encourages students to be critically literate towards some sensitive issues in their environment that lead them to take an action on it (Dale & Magison, 2010).

As the concern on critical literacy, several recent studies have been conducted in the field of critical literacy. In the broader Asian EFL setting, there are a number of studies of critical literacy. A study investigated two Korean EFL

classrooms through critical dialogue (Shin & Crookes, 2009). The finding stated that students were able to handle and generate critical dialogue in English. An investigation on how critical literacy approach can be used in developing reading skills has also been explored (Izadinia & Abednia, 2010). The findings showed that critical literacy gave a positive impact on students' personal, social and educational development. It is relevant to the study that conducted in Hongkong secondary school (Pik-yu, Chi-wai, & Firkins, 2006). The study aimed to engage students with various texts through critical literacy approach. For example, a research about critical literacy and narrative that conducted in Greece (Archakis, 2013). This study was aimed to raise students' critical language awareness through narrative texts.

However, critical literacy studies in Indonesian EFL context are very few. Emilia (2005) in her doctoral thesis, conducted research about the effectiveness of Genre-based Approach on the development of students' writing which also involves critical literacy. The findings stated that critical literacy can improve students' meta-language for discussing critical reading and writing. Critical literacy stimulated students' interest in asking critical questions, discussing questions collaboratively, and writing a summary response (Kuo, 2013). Furthermore, a research has been conducted in a secondary school in Bandung (Gustine, 2013). Different from the previous studies, this study focuses on the teachers' development in critical English teaching. Her findings stated that critical literacy can develop students' writing and motivate them during the learning process.

In response to the issues explained, research in critical literacy in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is still limited (Huang, 2012). In order to address this gap, this study was conducted to develop literature on the implementation of critical literacy in the EFL classroom as well as students' critical literacy ability. Thus, this present study also aimed to investigate how critical literacy can promote students' critical literacy ability through narrative texts. Along with this, the study was intended to identify advantages, challenges, and barriers that students experience during the implementation of critical literacy learning approach. This study incorporated a critical literacy framework to the

English teaching program to examine the enhancement of eighth-grade junior high school students' critical literacy through narrative text. Therefore, the four-resource model of critical literacy was applied during the teaching and learning process (Luke & Freebody, 1999). This study also applied practitioner research in which the researcher also plays a role as the teacher. Besides, it also investigates the benefits and challenges found during the teaching program regarding the teacher and students' perspectives.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

To achieve its purposes, the study attempts to address these questions:

1. How does the teacher assist junior high school students to be critically literate through the teaching of narrative text?
2. What are the benefits and challenges found in promoting critical literacy through narrative text from the teacher and students' perspectives?

### **1.3 Aims of the Study**

As mentioned in the background above, the present study aims to:

1. To investigate how the teacher, assist junior high school students' to be critically literate through narrative text
2. To canvass the benefits and challenges in promoting critical literacy through narrative texts from teacher and students' perspectives.

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

Relevant to the purposes, the present study explores critical literacy theories to promote and encourage students' critical literacy ability through narrative text. Moreover, students will relate their personal experiences with their critical literacy ability as well as find out the benefits and challenges encountered during the teaching and learning process.

### **1.5 Significances of the Study**

The present study is expected to give meaningful contributions to several areas. Theoretically, the study seeks to enrich the literature on how critical literacy

is promoted through narrative text and its usefulness in improving students' critical literacy. Therefore, the present study contributes to the literature in this field by providing a synthesis of relevant frameworks to support the previous theories and researchers that have been conducted. Practically, the results of the study can be used as a useful guide for both teachers, curriculum developer, and practitioners in English language teaching, especially in promoting critical literacy and critical thinking. Furthermore, the result of the study may be included in the need analysis process in order to design an appropriate learning approach that suits learners' need and expectation. Finally, from professional perspectives, the results of this study are expected to contribute the professional development to the teachers, particularly in promoting students' critical literacy ability in the classroom through narrative text.

### **1.6 Clarification of Operational Terms**

For the purpose of clarification, the important terms used in this study have been defined. The following terms are:

- 1. Critical literacy.** Critical literacy involves the developmental engagement by learners with the major texts, discourses, and modes of information (Luke, 2012). Moreover, critical literacy explores all varieties of text from print to multimedia. Critical literacy in this study refers to four resources model of critical literacy that proposed by Luke and Freebody (1990) and still developed until the 2000s. This critical literacy model consists of breaking the code, participating in making meaning of the text, using the text functionally and critically analysing the text. This model is also expected to develop students to be critically literate towards four resources model of critical literacy and some narrative text which relates to their everyday life.
- 2. Narrative text** is a text that entertains readers with an annual story or imaginary experience with some problems which lead to climax and then turns into a solution to the problem (Thai, 2009; Emilia, 2011; Suherdi 2013). This study uses fable stories as one of the parts of narrative texts.

### **1.7 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis will be organized into five chapters. Each chapter consists of several subtopics related to the topic of this study. The organization will be as follows:

### **1. Chapter I**

The first chapter is an introduction to what the research project is all about, which comprises of the information about the background of the research, research problems, the purpose of the research, significance of the research, definition of terms, and organization of the research proposal.

### **2. Chapter II**

The second chapter contains a review of related literature to understand the whole idea of what the projected study is trying to communicate. The chapter will include the theories and some related research on critical literacy and narrative text

### **3. Chapter III**

The chapter will provide the elaboration of the designed research methodology. It will mainly contain the description of the research design and details of data collection and data analysis procedure to conduct the research.

### **4. Chapter IV**

This chapter consists of findings and discussions which present the results of the research, involving an overview of how critical literacy is promoted through narrative text and four resources model. Furthermore, this chapter provides the benefits and challenges encountered during the teaching and learning process.

### **5. Chapter V**

This chapter addresses the conclusions, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research direction.

## **1.8 Concluding Remarks**

This first chapter has presented the background theory and burning issues that are considered as the basic foundation of this study. Furthermore, this chapter also provided the statement of the problems, the purpose of the study, the theory used in the research, the research methodology, and the organization of the study.

Therefore, the theories of this study will be explained further in the Chapter II, whereas the research methodology will be discussed clearly in Chapter III.