

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of study, formulation of research questions, the objective of the research, the significance of study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key term and organization of the study.

A. Background of the Study

In the high Education, Critical thinking is very important the students should mastering this skill for academic purposes. It is same with what goverment want for education in Indonesia. Based on Indonesian Government Regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia/PPRI*) No. 70/2010 section 80.2, which describe the aims of higher education is developing students' critical, innovative, independent, self-confident and entrepreneurship-minded

Students need to have 'good thinking' skills by using reasoning and logic focusing on what to believe or do based on the mechanism such as conducting conceptual and argument analyses for problem solving and decision making (Pithers & Soden, 2001). The word 'critical' originates from *kriticos* or discerning judgment and *kriterion* meaning standards which etymologically implies the development of discerning judgment based on standards (Pithers & Soden, 2001). In other hand critical thinking skill is describe as how fast students response or think about problem or material in learning.

Critical thinking in Indonesia context becomes buzzword especially after Reform era in 1998 which was characterized by massive demonstration in which

the freedom to express one's thought has become a crucial start to build critical thinkers (Emilia, 2010) in this era students of university use their Critical Thinking well so the problem in society can be control by them. The history was tell to us how important Critical Thinking it self nor in education or in society. Critical thinking skills is needed in Education as specially in language skills, two of them are linked for communication. Becoming critical thinker is characterized by effective communication (Paul & Elder, 2008).

The Relationship between critical thinking skills and writing are very strong, because arguments deal with probabilities, they must be qualified to convince readers (Hillocks, 2011). Readers its mean some one who read text, so the text is the result of the writing and in here the researcher chose an argumentative writing to asses the critical thinking skills of students. Argumentative writing is the best way to asses the critical thinking skills of student because in argumentative writing also include problem solving in the last paragraph. The critical thinking skills can be assessed on elements which are reflected from the main aspects namely argument, evidence, recognition of opposition, refutation, conclusion, references, and fallacies (Stapleton, 2001).

Students' writing performance is mostly indicated by the quality of the writing product, which focuses on its clarity, originality and correctness (Rahim et al, 2008). That also supported by critical thinking. During the process, students require the exploration of critical thinking skills in treating the information related to the issue to be developed into an essay (Crasswell, 2005). The writing and critical thinking skills are linked is supported by several studies showing the

advantages of incorporating critical thinking skills and writing in different courses (Iwaoka & Crosseti, 2008; Quitadamo & kurtz, 2007; Reed, 2008).

Writing cannot separate from the topic, if you can find the great topic you will get the great writing result. The link between writing and background knowledge emerges as the writing students need to find the model of argumentation through reading activities (Knott, 2009). With reading students will find many background of knowledge, after they fund the new background of knowledge they will be easy to write an argumentative writing, and they will understand the background knowledge better before they are not read it. That background knowledge will called familiarity of topic.

This familiarity of topic is the key of students writing an argumentative in this research. Despite the knowledge being transferred in class, studies show that not all students may be good at critical thinking skills; nor do some teachers appear to teach students 'good thinking' skills (Pitheres & Soden, 2001). There are some previous study, in Australian classroom are encouraged to take responsibility for their own writing based on what thy know (Emilia, 2010). So from this we can take underline that familiarity of topic is very important in writing skills and also critical thinking skills.

Topics to be used in essay tests need to be designed with great care because they initiate and direct the act of writing that produces the sample for evaluation. (Ruth & Murphy, 2014: 410). Topic can be used to evaluate how students writing and also it can evaluate how their critical thinking.

In this research, the researcher wants to know the correlation of critical thinking, argumentative writing and familiarity of topic. This research also has been conducted by Indah (2013) with the result; The writing performances in both student and teacher initiated topic record the highest contribution toward critical thinking skills. the type of topic chosen the higher the students 'writing performance the better reflection of their critical thinking skills will be. On student initiated topic, the more familiar the students with their topic, the higher their writing performance will be.

The differences between the research of the researcher and the previous research are the students and the teacher initiated in the research. In this research the researcher use students initiated only and try to avoid the teachers initiated, because the researcher just want to know how the students critical thinking if they chose the topic by them self. So, in this research, the researcher wants conduct research about the correlation of students critical thinking skill with familiarity of topic and argumentative writing ability.

B. Formulation of Research Question

Based on the background above, the research problem is formulated as follows:

1. Is there any correlation between familiarity of topics and critical thinking of 6th semester student at IAIN Tulungagung?
2. Is there any correlation between argumentative writing and critical thinking of 6th semester student at IAIN Tulungagung?

3. Is there any correlation among familiarity of topics, argumentative writing and critical thinking of 6th semester student at IAIN Tulungagung?

C. The Objective of the Research

Based on the research problem above, the objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To find out the correlation between familiarity of topics and critical thinking of 6th semester student at IAIN Tulungagung.
2. To find out the correlation between argumentative writing and critical thinking of 6th semester student at IAIN Tulungagung.
3. To find out the correlation among familiarity of topics, argumentative writing and critical thinking of 6th semester student at IAIN Tulungagung.

D. Research Hypotheses

The Hypotheses of this research will be stated as follows:

1. Null hypotheses (H0), there is no correlation of Familiarity of Topic, Argumentative Writing and Critical Thinking.
2. Alternative Hypothesis (H1), there is any correlation of Familiarity of Topic, Argumentative Writing and Critical Thinking.

E. The Significance of the Study

1. For the students.

The researcher hopes that this research will give knowledge about critical thinking and how they will use it in writing argument. The researcher also hopes the students use their critical thinking frequently in their life.

2. For the Institution.

The researcher hopes that this research useful for the institution to develop theaching syllabus, material and evaluating method in the teaching of writing. Since critical thinking is important for high education, the researcher hopes this research will being the underlying of development in academic achievement

c. For the next Researcher.

The result of this research can be used as a reference for those who want to conduct a research in English teaching – learning process.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Study.

The scope this study conducted in English Department at IAIN Tulungagung. This research focused on developing critical thinking, argumentative writing and familiarity of topics.

G. Definition of Key Terms.

The researcher will explain about what the meaning of critical thinking, argumentative writing and familiarity topic in this research. The purposes are to give the limitation on each.

1. **Critical thinking** is separated to many skills. Goal-directed, reflective, and reasonable thinking, as in evaluating the evidence for an argument for which all the relevant information may not be available (Cotton, 1997). The research will use the assessment of critical thinking which include argument, evidence, recognition of opposition, refutation, and conclusion.
2. **Argumentative Writing** is a part of writing, the argumentative writing also includes same with the critical thinking assessment, argument, evidence, recognition of opposition, refutation, and conclusion. The researcher use it because to measure the critical thinking skills and argumentative writing are same theories.
3. **Familiarity of Topics** is part of writing process and it will come up after reading process has been done. To measure or asses this skill the researcher use mind mapping to describe what knowledge the reader get from reading. The way is how write the familiarity of topic is create the concept of mind map, separated the concept to sub-concept, and find the content what the writer will write.