

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the study. It covers the background of the study, research questions, research purposes, research significance, rationale, and previous studies.

A. BACKGROUND

This study is aimed at paving the way to improve EFL students' CT skills in analyzing pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories text. Students in higher education face difficulties in distinguishing between true and false news and comprehending social media challenges. It is conducted to investigate the usage of hoax news in teaching critical reading. According to Din (2020), "when you read critically, you're responding to what you're reading critically. It is the process of connecting what students reading particular values, attitudes, and standards". Moreover, critical thinking is an example of high-order reasoning. To develop students' analytical thinking skills and provide alternative solutions to the current situation, graduates need to be able to think critically to face the dynamic life (Seventika, 2017).

To avoid being misled and then confronted with this subject, students must be able to think critically. Moreover, critical thinking is vital for graduates in facing a dynamic life to strengthen their analysis ability and provide an alternative solution to the current problem (Beaulieu, 2016). However, students find many difficulties in critical reading analysis. They cannot differentiate the hoax news because their critical thinking skills are rarely used (Din, 2020b). Moreover, Seventika et.al, (2017) conclude that critical thinking is the skill to review and analyze certain information, identifying supportive evidence, and applying various strategies to conclude

based on judgment standards.

Based on the writer's limited observation at a college in Bandung, students in the third semester still have the low ability in critical thinking skills, such as analyzing and interpreting the text. They should be introduced to the concept of hoax news and how to identify it. The English teacher should relate each of the standards with a piece of hoax news and show them how each of the standards reveals more doubtful pieces of information in the news.

Critical reading is different from reading in common, the highest level of reading comprehension is critical reading. This activity needs a high intelligence of thinking involving the critics of hidden analysis beyond the text Familia (2018). Critical reading happens once literal and interpretative comprehensions have been acquired (Crawley and Mountain, 1995). Al-Furqon (2017) defines critical thinking as the ability to analyze, criticize, judge, and advocate clear ideas using inductive or deductive arguments. Students have many reasons to critique hoax news, which has become a popular topic in society as reading materials. Haryati & Hidayati (2017) points out that hoax news is defined as a negative perception of the current quality of news reporting.

Here are presented three previous types of research with issues related to students' critical thinking towards pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories after critical reading subject. The first is the research of Oliveras et.al, (2014) about students' attitudes toward hoax news on social media and critical reading in the newspaper. Their study was participated by 32 EFL learners in eleventh grade (14 males and 18 females) who were 15 to 18 years old. This study used three kinds of collecting data as notes which focused on EFL learners' critical comments on the events and characters of

the stories as well as their commentaries on their own lives and experiences; interviews were also used. Then, the second is the research of Haryati & Hidayati, (2017) is about hoax news promoting students' critical thinking. Their study has participated 31 students consisting (6 males and 25 females) students in a critical reading class for the fourth semester. This study was conducted under collaborative classroom action research which applied planning, acting, observing, and reflecting In addition, the last is the research of Rofiudin et.al, (2017) about critical responses to text Reading attitudes of the University students in Indonesia learning context. However, the research on students' critical thinking towards pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories after reading the subject is still limited. Hence, this research investigates how "students' critical thinking towards pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories after reading subject: a case study at Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung".

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

From the description above, this research is intended to answer the following question:

1. What is EFL students' CT skill in analyzing pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories texts?

C. RESEARCH PURPOSE

From the research questions above, this study is aimed at obtaining the following objective:

1. To figure out what is EFL students' CT skills in analyzing pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories texts.

D. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCES

This research is expected to provide an information source about how is students' critical thinking towards pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories after critical reading class. Critical reading can help improve students' critical thinking or hoax news and then to give some understanding to the teacher to put more attention to the learning activity of critical reading and critical thinking. Practically, this research gives significance to:

1. Students

This research result is expected to help improve students' critical thinking skills in facing the dynamic life to strengthen their analysis ability and provide an alternative solution to the current problem.

2. Teachers

This research could suggest to English teachers consider teaching and learning critical reading by using hoax news to improve students' critical thinking ability.

Theoretically, this study can be a piece of beneficial information for curriculum planners as an evaluation to create improvement for students in the knowledge.

E. RATIONALE

Reading is the most important skill to be mastered for students who are learning English. According to Harmer 2007, as cited in Par (2018) reading is crucial because of two main reasons. First is to provide benefits to the readers of personal life, by reading English text the students' will get great feedback on their ability to increase reading skills and understand the text correctly. Second, the benefits of reading will improve the student's skills in

writing, spelling, and vocabulary as language acquisition. literacy learning which can provide a bridge of interpretation of one's thought into meaningful written records Daffern(2017).

Critical thinking is the use of cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is purposeful, reasoned, and goal-directed is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems Haryati & Hidayati (2017). Critical thinking as the heart of the key focus of university requires students to be not only smart but also creative, innovative, and communicative. They need to develop their critical thinking to share their ideas to be accepted by others (Wilson, 2016a). Using critical thinking in critical reading class would be the best practice for this skill. The fact that most students in the university just read or learn the surface of the learning subject without finding beyond it is also able to be an essential reason (Akin 2015).

Accordingly, applying critical thinking skills in the critical reading class is appropriate. Students need to employ the skills when analyzing the texts being discussed, indeed the analysis should be based on strong evidence. Discussing with others will also be meaningful through the actual based-judgment (Nurhayati 2014). However, students face difficulties when they identify the text, especially in critical reading. Critical reading requires a process of active communication where comments and evaluations on the text are conducted. In critical reading, the text being read forms the basis for other readings while reading of various text form the basis of the text being read at the time, and besides through the reading process ends the meaning transmission of the text is still in progress (Akin et.al, 2015).

Practically, there is still debatable what kind of appropriate materials and methods is used to teach critical thinking since teaching this thinking

needs to engage teachers to be able to be informative and intellectual (Wearmouth 2017). The teacher has to provide relevant material promoting students to construct the knowledge as well as be active participants. Also, the teachers need to give a model of how to apply critical thinking skills to students (Molin et.al, 2018).

To full fill this gap, hoax news is chosen to be a learning material to promote students' critical thinking in this study this news consists of unsolvable ideas which are believed to be able to encourage students to think critically since students can share their opinion when criticizing it (Machete & Turpin, 2020a). In addition, the news is categorized as authentic material that can use as a good learning source in the teaching and learning process. Using hoax news material the students' ability to interpret, identify, analyze, evaluate, justify, and explain the arguments or opinions in the text are expected to develop (Machete & Turpin, 2020a).

F. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Previous research on the issue of EFL students' CT skill in analyzing pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories texts. The first is research by Haryati & Hidayati, (2017) about promoting students' critical thinking in critical reading class. This study employed a classroom action research design. The subject of the study was the 31 students joining the critical reading class. The second is the research of Harida & Pd (2016) that talks about the investigation by applying hoax news to promote students' critical thinking. It is experimental research with 30 third-grade participants. In addition, the experimental research of Din (2020) examined critical thinking ability as reflected in their critical reading skill: a study at the bachelor level in Pakistan. The present study has set two research objectives which include understanding university students' attitudes toward critical thinking and their

language proficiency concerning their critical reading skill and their performance in the critical reading test.

In the advance, researchers conducted experiments on using fake news to improve the students' critical thinking ability in critical reading class are: First, the research of Horn & Veermans(2019) about critical thinking efficacy and transfer skills defend against fake news at an International school. Then, the second is the research of Machete & Turpin(2020) that studied the use of critical thinking to identify fake news that focuses on the use of information literacy to assist people in critically accessing online information and news.

However, the research on EFL students' CT skills in analyzing pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories texts remains limited. Thus, this research investigates the effectiveness of students' attitudes towards pandemic hoaxes and conspiracy theories after critical reading class at Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

