

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background

This study is intended to discover students' ability in utilizing their critical thinking to comprehend the text they read, particularly in teaching reading activity. It is widely known that critical thinking is an important issue which has significance part in modern education and nowadays numerous teachers are interested in developing and encouraging critical thought in their classes (Asgharheidari & Tahriri, 2015). Moreover, critical thought has been regarded as a crucial part of education because it is associated with quality thinking that provides students the more adept way of interacting with other people, getting new knowledge, and dealing with ideas, beliefs, and attitudes (Vdovina & Gaibisso, 2013).

In the English learning activities, numerous teachers involve students in their tasks to critical thinking. Although the teachers do not teach critical thinking directly in the learning material, the teachers give students the tasks that demand students to think critically about working on it. Therefore, the teacher should develop the students' critical thinking skill because the ability to think critically is an important and essential skill that language learners need to develop for their academic life (Asgharheidari & Tahriri, 2015). As Junining (2016) says, critical thinking skill is not only necessary for the academic life, but also for the tight competition in every single fieldwork during this era which requires people to

have critical thinking skills to increase educational quality, innovate in technology, and to produce outstanding human resources.

Although thinking must surely be at the heart of education, it is not often explicitly taken into consideration in pedagogy (Moon, 2008). In fact, the teachers, who still think that students' responsibility is simply to accept the subject material from the teacher, neglect to incorporate critical thinking in the learning activity because they do not aware of its importance. In addition, some teachers are probably not able to decide what activities should be involved in a learning activity to encourage the students to think critically.

There are several research results regarding the implementation of critical thinking in teaching English. One research is provided by Asgharheidari & Tahriri (2015) that is conducted to 30 EFL teachers who taught English at different institutes in Tonekabon, Iran. The result indicated that most of the teachers had a clear idea toward the concept of critical thinking and believed that it is an important part of their job as a teacher to increase learners' critical thought. Research is also conducted by Djiwandono (2013) to a group of language learners who were studying Business Correspondence in Ma Chung University Malang, Indonesia. The researcher carried out a brief training on critical thinking skill to the learners that resulted in the students' tendencies to ask more critical questions with higher frequencies. It is concluded that the brief training has improved the students' critical thinking skill in their language class.

From the previous research, it is obvious that critical thinking should be considered as a part of students' skill that must be inculcated by formulating the instructional plans incorporated in the classroom activity. Furthermore, the teacher could provide various assignments that demand the students to think proficiently so that the students can think critically.

Since the previous study of critical thinking is still rare and it is worth conducting thus this research proposes the distinctive way of developing students' critical thinking skill in the classroom activity. Therefore, the research is conducted in teaching reading class and uses Jakarta Post online article as the material to improve the students' critical thinking.

The central feature of the critical thinking subject is the study of arguments: how to analyze and evaluate them (Brink-Budgen, 2007). The urgent need to be selective in the arguments embrace is essential for the successful daily living in encountering numerous frustrating dilemmas that will surely plague our future together (Browne & Keeley, 2007). Arguments are usually found everywhere in our daily life such as in the Jakarta Post online article. The purpose of those arguments is attempting to get people to believe one thing or another. In conclusion, critical thinking is needed particularly by the students so that they can be selective in absorbing the news they read and also to argue their logical arguments.

Furthermore, this research aims to investigate the students' ability in understanding the arguments in Jakarta Post online article. Jakarta Post online article is used as the authentic material of teaching reading to stimulate the students' critical

thinking skill. Some reasons are addressed to the use of Jakarta Post, i.e., it is an online media that provides recent news and information in English and is also popular for the English learners and educators. In addition, Jakarta Post online article also provides controversial issue which is useful for the students to form active and effective citizens in national and global societies (Iglesias et al., 2016). The students are given the questions related to the topic in the article in order students can think critically in comprehending the article by providing the assignments using that article. Finally, the researcher titles this research “THE USE OF JAKARTA POST ONLINE ARTICLE IN TEACHING READING TO IMPROVE THE STUDENTS’ CRITICAL THINKING SKILL.”

## **B. Research Questions**

From the description above, this study is intended to answer two following research questions:

1. How is the process of teaching reading by using a Jakarta Post online article to improve the students’ critical thinking?
2. What core of critical thinking skills proposed by Facione (1990; 1998) emerges in students’ answers to the questions related to the article?

## **C. Research Objectives**

From the research questions above, this study is aimed at obtaining two following objectives.

1. To find out the process of teaching reading by using a Jakarta Post online article to improve students’ critical thinking.

2. To find out the cores of critical thinking emerge in students' answers to the questions related to the article.



#### **D. Significances of The Research**

The study is significant at least in three areas including theory, practice, and professional aspects. Theoretically, the result of this study can increase the wide knowledge of critical thinking for the reader, particularly, the teachers and the students. Practically, this research can provide an alternative material in teaching English and assessing critical thinking. In addition, by the use of the complex article, it will increase the students' ability in understanding the implicit meaning of the text. Professionally, this study is also expected to the teacher to be creative in selecting the appropriate material to engage the students in critical thinking activity and to assess the students' critical thought.

#### **E. Rationale**

People are determined by their thinking for whatever they are doing, whatever they feel, and whatever they want is built on their quality of thinking (Paul and Elder, 2002). Therefore thinking could not be separated from the everyday life of human being. Furthermore, the term thinking is also defined by the researcher in different meaningful dimension. Frensch & Funke (2002) define thinking as the cognitive process of internal memory representations that may appear consciously or subconsciously and may not always follow the laws of logic. Moreover, John-Laird as cited in Frensch and Funke (2002) argued that thinking is goal-oriented, does not follow a predetermined series of mental steps, and has no precise starting point. Thus thinking could be defined as the mental process of a human being functioned as the idea to produce an action.

One of thinking skill that needs to be acquired by students is critical thinking. Numerous experts have defined critical thinking variously. According to Ennis (2011), critical thinking is reasonable, and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. Moreover, Fisher (2001) as cited in Moon (2008) defines that critical thinking is a kind of evaluative thinking which involves both criticism and creative thinking and which is particularly concerned with the quality of reasoning which is presented in support of a belief or a course of action. Another expert defines critical thinking as self-guided, self-disciplined thinking which attempts to reason at the highest level of quality in a fair-minded way (Paul & Elder, 2014).

Facione (1990) argues that the good critical thinkers have to meet the cognitive skills that should be involved in the way they think. Therefore, he characterizes certain cognitive skills as the core of critical thinking skills. The cores of critical thinking skill are interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation.

To improve the students' critical thinking skill, this research focuses on reading class. Reading is an act of communication in which information is transferred from the writer to the reader (Collins & Smith, 1980). Reading is also defined as the activity to understand the meaning in a text which enables the reader to find the information needed (Sahardin, Mukarramah, & Hanafiah, 2015).

Additionally, Jakarta Post online article is used as the authentic material to stimulate the students' critical thinking skill. Authentic materials can be interpreted as exposure to real language and its use in its own community (Kilickaya, 2004 cited in

Sari, 2016). Types of material could motivate the students' interest in the learning activity.

Therefore, this study used Jakarta Post online article as the material in teaching reading to improve the students' critical thinking skill. The Jakarta Post is a daily English language newspaper in Indonesia which provides recent news both in Indonesia and foreign countries. Besides it provides news and information in English, it also often provides the hot news with a controversial topic. It is targeted at foreigners and educated Indonesians. The virtue of The Jakarta Post is its several awards, and it has been described as being "Indonesia's leading English-language daily."

## **F. Research Methodology**

### **1. Research Designs**

Research designs are the specific procedures consists of data collection, data analysis, and report writing involved in the research process (Creswell, 2012). This research used case study based on Cresswell (2012) theory that a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system such as activity, event, process, or individuals based on extensive data collection. The case study is used because this research focuses on obtaining a deep description of the process of teaching reading and exploring the students' critical thinking skill toward Jakarta Post online article.

This study is concerning with the cores of critical thinking skill demonstrated by the students in answering the questions related to the article and the process of teaching reading using Jakarta Post online article to improve the students' critical

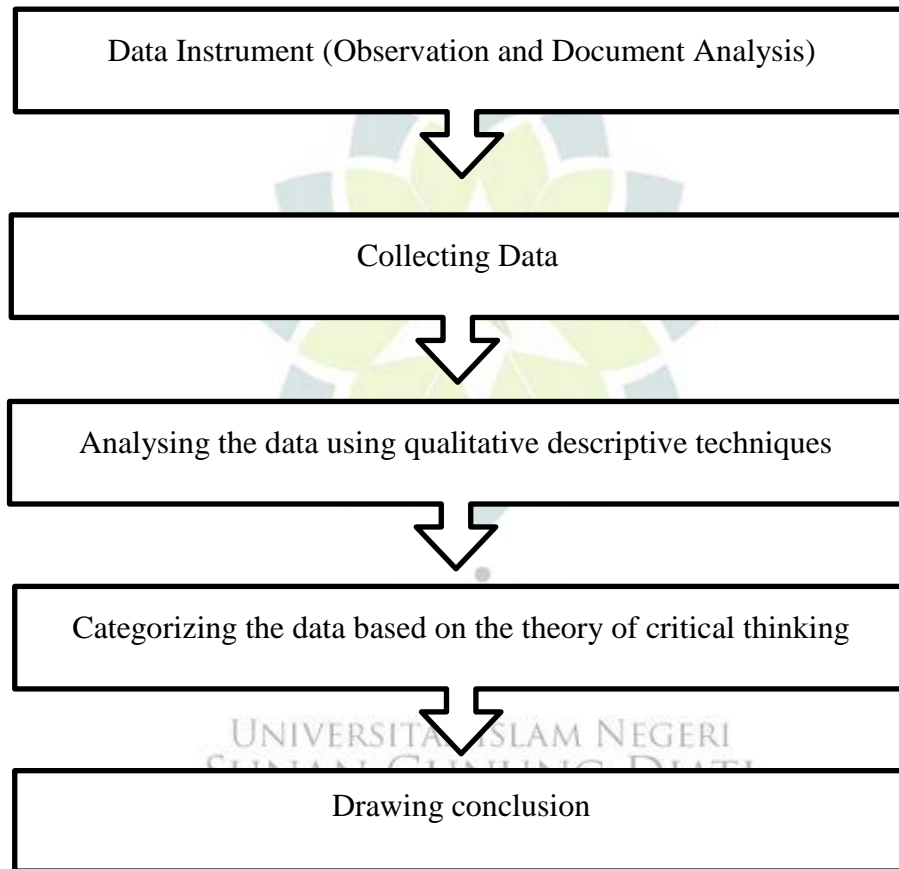


thinking skill. In other words, the method used in the research is a qualitative method. According to MacDonald & Headlam (1986), a qualitative method is associated with the evaluation of social dimensions. In addition, the qualitative method also provides results that are usually rich and detailed, offering ideas and concepts to inform the research (MacDonald & Headlam, 1986). In the qualitative method, the researcher explores a problem and develops a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). A central phenomenon is the key idea, concept, or process studied in qualitative research (Cresswell, 2012). The central phenomenon in this research is exploring the students' ability to think critically in teaching reading process. Whereas the material used in teaching reading is the article adopted from Jakarta Post online article.

## **2. Research Procedure**

After collecting the data from observation and document analysis, then the researcher analyzed the data using qualitative descriptive techniques to answer the research questions. A qualitative descriptive technique is used to gain the detail information of the data collection. Afterwards, the researcher is categorizing and coding the data according to the theory of cores of critical thinking skill proposed by (Facione, 1998). Finally, the result of the analyzed data is concluded to discover the process of teaching reading by using Jakarta Post article and the students' critical thinking ability toward the article.

The procedure of this research can be drawn as follows:



**Figure 1. 1 Research Procedure**

### **3. Research Site**

The research is carried out at the English Education Department of State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung-West Java, Indonesia. In the research site, the students from the fourth semester are involved. There are two reasons why this research site is selected. First, the researcher is familiar with the institution where the research is carried out. According to Emilia (2005), as cited in

Rohayati (2014), the familiarity between the researcher and the research site tends to lead to a more natural research conduction, that it avoided any students' unnatural behavior performances. Despite their awareness of the study and the fact that the class was set up for research.

Second, the students at this level have experienced with critical thinking in their reading class since their first semester. As a result, they can think critically as their minds develop through their social and educational environment. As Brookhart (2010) states that an educated citizen is someone who is regarded to understand personal, civic, and professional issues and to exercise wisdom in deciding what to do about them.

#### **4. Research Participants**

Cresswell (2012) states that in qualitative research, the researchers identify the participants and sites on purposeful sampling based on people and places that can best help them understand their central phenomenon. He adds that in purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. In an ideal situation, Cresswell (2012) also argues that we could select a sample of individuals who are representative of the entire population.

In this research, the populations of fourth semester are three classes which start from PBI-A until PBI-C. The researcher was aware that the populations are the students who study reading class using Jakarta Post online article. In preliminary, the reading class A showed more active students compared to two other classes. Regarding that, the researcher involves nine students from class 4-A. They are

classified into three classifications based on their score in the final examination test. These three classifications are high, middle, and low achieving students. From the sample above, it concludes that the researcher uses purposeful sampling to verify that the respondent meets the criteria for being in the sample.

## **5. Techniques for Collecting Data**

### **a. Observation**

Observation is the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site (Cresswell, 2012). The observation is conducted to one lecturer and the member of fourth-semester students at English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati. In the observation, the researcher acts as a nonparticipant observer within the classroom activity. A nonparticipant observer is an observer who visits a site and records notes without becoming involved in the activities (Cresswell, 2012). By the observation, the researcher records the process of teaching reading in the classroom.

### **b. Document Analysis**

Another source of information in qualitative research can be in the form of a document. Documents consist of the private and public record obtained by the qualitative researchers to discover a site or participants in a study. The types of the document include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals, and letters (Cresswell, 2012). The students' answer to the questions related to the text is the data source for finding the core of critical thinking skill demonstrated by the students.

## 6. Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2012), there are six interrelated steps involved in qualitative data analysis and interpretation.

### a. Preparing and organizing the data for analysis

In this step, the researcher organizes the data obtained from observation and document. The researcher is transcribing the dialogues in the observation, typing the field notes from the documents, and analyzing the data by hand.

### b. Exploring and coding the data

The data is analyzed by reading through the data to obtain a general sense of the data. Also, the researcher codes the data by examining the data according to what is needed to answer the research questions.

### c. Coding to build description and themes

The coding data is used to develop a description of the students' critical thinking in their answers and the classroom activities.

### d. Representing and reporting qualitative findings

The finding is reported in narrative discussion to describe the teaching reading process and represent the cores of critical thinking in a visual display that includes tables.

### e. Interpreting the findings

From this reporting and representing of findings, a qualitative researcher interprets the meaning of the research. This interpretation consists of advancing personal views,

making comparisons between the findings and the literature, and suggesting limitations and future research.

f. Validating the accuracy of the findings

To check the accuracy of the research, the triangulation data is employed as the validation procedures. As Cresswell (2012) says that validation intends to have participants, external reviewers, or the data sources themselves provide evidence of the accuracy of the information in the qualitative report

