

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Students in the modern era are discovered to have extraordinary abilities, knowledge, and skills of higher order thinking, which is referred to as critical thinking ability. One of the most important goals of education is critical thinking. This is a necessary skill for living and functioning effectively in all aspects of life. (Hashemi, 2004:121) critical thinking is higher order thinking skills that play a role in moral, social, mental, cognitive, and scientific development.

Critical thinking is a cognitive process related to the application of reason that is shared by all humans. When someone learns to think critically, they employ mental processes such as attention, categorization, selection, and judgment or conclusion. Critical thinking is the ability to provide proper advice in one's thoughts and activity, as well as the ability to accurately determine relationships with other things. As a result, critical thinking skills are required for problem solving or solution seeking, as well as project management. The development of critical thinking skills entails the integration of numerous abilities, including observation, analysis, reasoning, judgement, decision-making, and persuasion.

In general, critical thinking serves a variety of purposes in the pursuit of better living conditions. One of them will assist kids in improving their learning abilities. They will fully comprehend the lesson because other mechanisms in their brains enable them to receive and comprehend information. Critical thinking is the process of assessing ideas using logic. Critical thinking isn't about working harder, but about working smarter. A person who improves his critical thinking skills is likely to be intellectually curious. So far, there are two methods for assessing others' critical thinking: speaking and writing.

Speaking is one of the fundamental abilities that English learners must know and perfect. Speaking is the ability to express one's beliefs, ideas, or thoughts verbally; it entails making a series of organized verbal utterances in order to transmit meaning to the person with whom one is conversing. Critical thinking is required to meet all of the aforementioned criteria.

Like speaking, writing is a part of the skill that requires critical thinking to develop ideas in writing. Learning writing skills is very necessary for students because writing skills are one of the important part of communication. By writing, students can transfer information and knowledge in their minds and share their ideas with others. As stated by Heaton as quoted in Hasanah (2015), "Writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requires mastery of not only grammatical and rhetorical devices, but also conceptual and judgmental elements."

Theories of thought enquire more broadly about knowledge and reasoning. According to Liam and Carol (2009), thinking and reasoning can be viewed as a simple general cognitive ability that can be applied to a wide range of topics and contexts. According to Anderson and Karthwohl (2001), Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, critical thinking skills include cognitive abilities. It includes six levels of cognitive skills: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, developing, and creating. Argumentative texts, editorials, articles, and academic essays are examples of cognitive learning products (Sholikhah, 2016).

According to Kuleksi and Kumlu (2015:2), Reasons why students need to develop critical thinking skills include the fact that students who do not practice critical thinking skills miss out on opportunities to adapt to the global workplace, broaden their horizons, and become members of the international community as creative individuals who like to ask questions. Thus, students can use the potential of the mind optimally to become careful readers as creative writers in broaden their horizons and empathiz with their environment through thinking critically.

However, critical thinking ability or competence has not been fully perfected. According to the findings of a study conducted by Vivi Aulia and Kuzairi

(2021), the critical thinking skills of STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin pupils are still severely weak. Only two students out of twenty demonstrated critical thinking skills in the essays they wrote for the focus component and supporting reasons, four students demonstrated critical thinking skills in the reasoning component, and one student demonstrated critical thinking skills in the organization component. Based on these findings, it is possible to conclude that the majority of students are still unable to apply critical thinking when writing essays. The lack of references, information, and student insights in exploring and exploring written essay ideas needs to be improved so that they can produce good and informative essays.

In practice, the teaching and learning process does not promote the development of critical thinking skills. The curriculum, which is generally designed with a broad target material so that lecturers are more focused on completing the material, and the lecturer's lack of understanding of teaching methods that can improve critical thinking skills are two factors that cause critical thinking to not develop during education. The majority of students have poor cognitive ability. Students continue to struggle with absorbing information, analyzing data, and solving provided issues.

In addition, based on pre-observation by researchers when the students received critical thinking assignments in the public speaking course given to the stamp 2018 English Educational Department Students, most students have low cognitive abilities. Students still have difficulty understanding information, analyze data, and solve problems which is given. Based on the results of student work, researchers can also see difficulties experienced by students. Students have difficulty in analyzing problems, and apply the concepts or knowledge they already have to solve the problems given. Thus, researcher was find some problems, what are the factors students unable to think critically?

Education students, as prospective educators, must be capable of critical thinking and problem solving. This critical thinking capacity can assist potential educators in solving or resolving numerous types of difficulties presented in the educational environment. Furthermore, critical thinking abilities assist potential

instructors in developing new concepts so that they may grasp the course. This is what motivates researchers to examine the key competencies of students majoring in English education.

According to Oshima (2006:142), Writing an argumentative essay is the most appropriate level for developing critical thinking based on several levels of writing. An argumentative essay is one in which the researcher uses several reasons to support their point of view on a topic with which they agree or disagree. Writers must extend the reasons to support their point of view in an argumentative essay, as well as state the problem of opposing reasons as evidence of falsehood. It aims to make judgments on all issues in order to demonstrate the authors' reasonableness and open-mindedness. All stages of writing argumentative essays necessitate critical thinking on the part of the writer.

Students are the most appropriate subject in this study when it comes to the importance of critical thinking in argumentative essays. Writing skills, according to Murtadho, are the most appropriate language skills that students can develop through critical thinking because writing consists of several problems that arise, data about problems, and analysis or evaluation that directs problems into effective solutions (Murthado, 2013:533).

At universities, critical thinking assessments are typically conducted through academic analysis of student writing on a subject-specific topic for evidence of critical thinking. The teacher may be able to deduce the students' thoughts from their writings at times. Teachers frequently view written work as an opportunity to demonstrate how much knowledge they have about a particular subject rather than as an opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking. Furthermore, it is frequently difficult for students to predict how much evidence will be provided for critical thinking. Consider internal or external factors that students may have when writing. This is consistent with Anderson, Howe, Soden, Halliday, and Low's research. Analyzing students' essay argument skills revealed that they rarely used their knowledge in evaluation or critical thinking.

Based on the explanation above, to find out and reveal further information and empirical evidence about the problem, in particular critical thinking skills have a relationship with writing skills. This argumentative essay becomes one text to be observed due to those causes. This modified assessment is expected to be used to test students' critical thinking skills through essay tests. It is hoped that the format will then used to assess students' critical thinking through essay tests on learning. Based on the phenomena above, the researcher is interested in conducting a research entitled "Critical Thinking Skill of English Educational Department Students in Writing an Essay"

1.2 Identification of the problems

From the research background, the researchers set the formulation of the problems as follows:

1. The ability of students is still low
2. Students who still have difficulty understanding information and analyzing data
3. Students who still have difficulty in applying the concepts or knowledge they have to solve problems.

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1.3 Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problems above, the focus of the study is the analysis critical thinking skill of english educational departement students in writing an essay at seventh semester.

1. 4 Research Questions

Based on the background of the problems above, the problems will be in the forms of question which are presented as follows:

1. How student's ability at critical thinking by writing essay?
2. What's the problem faced by students in critical thinking skills?
3. Why do the students' get difficulties in critical thinking when they are writing?

1.5 Objective of the Study

In accordance with the formulation of the problem, the findings of this research are expected to achieve the objective presented are:

1. To describe the problems faced by students in learning critical thinking
2. To describe student's ability at critical thinking skills in writing essay
3. To describe students' difficulty in critical thinking by writing essay

1.6 Significance of the Study

1. For the students, the results of this study will provide students, especially english educational department students of State Islamic University of North Sumatera of reflection and information in terms of their critical thinking skills in writing their essays.
2. For the teachers, the results of this study will be useful for teachers, especially teachers in the universities where the authors do this research, as a consideration and concern for designing courses that can facilitate their students to explain more about critical thinking through writing.
3. For the readers, the results of this study will be useful for other researchers as a consideration as well as a recommendation in case they will carry out any further studies in the same field.