

Chapter One

Introduction

Background of The Study

Education is a way to reach a better life and success. However, higher education degree is not being the sole criterion for obtaining a job. According to Khatib, Marefat, and Ahmadi (2012), people who have the ability to produce new ideas are preferred by companies than those who are not able to absorb the information and then use it to create new ideas for problem solving. This indicates that a graduate ability which only has a wide knowledge without the ability to use it to solve problem will not help them to compete in the work life.

Related to the fact that graduates need to have a good ability in problem solving, educational institution seems to have a responsibility to stimulate the students to perform their ability in problem solving. Therefore, the students will have the opportunity to be qualified job seeker as prioritized by current companies or institution. Furthermore, Gokhale quoted by Scott (2010) stated that the ability to solve complex problem, communicate effectively and think critically become the consideration for employers to value employees. These indicate that the educational institution do not only need to help the students to be able to do problem solving but also have a good communicative skill as well as the ability to think critically. The ability to think critically is also become the important consideration as the thinking

skill which is necessary to be owned by the students. As stated in Moore (2004), developing critical thinkers is fundamental to good education in order to employ the students as active citizen of our world. In line with that, Duron, Limbach, and Waugh (2006) said that critical thinking is a natural process owned by everyone, but if it is not directed it will cause any bad impact toward students' thinking skill such as a tendency to have negative thinking toward something without considering it through any logical thinking. Therefore, excellence in thought must be refined.

In teaching and learning process, teacher plays an important role in developing students' thinking skill. According to Thompson (2011), as facilitators, teachers are required to support students to analyze, interpret, and evaluate argument. There have been many instructional activities examined by many researchers to support critical thinking development, for example, employing written and audio taped dialogue journals (Khatib et al.,2012), weekly journal (Saaraway,2014), peer feedback (Farrah, 2012b), and reflective journal writing (Farrah, 2012b). However, it seems that these kinds of instructional activities have not been known or adopted maximally by many teachers. Scott (2008) stated that there were still many college students who did not think critically, and not all courses included critical thinking as their learning goal.

It is very regretful if the teacher does not help the students to develop their critical thinking, whereas the teacher can actually engage them into some activities that have been examined by many critical thinking researchers. The example of such

problem is actually happening in language learning as well. There are still many EFL teachers who rely on traditional learning style in writing activity. The activities only lead the students to write or copy what they have read instead of using their thinking skill to develop it. Consequently, the students' ability to deliver their own idea in writing, constructing argument, making reasoning statement is very weak (Barnawi, 2011).

Beside the above problems, based on the researcher's experience, after joining writing courses conducted in the first and second semester, there were still many students who complained that accomplishing the assignment by writing in a particular topic e.g. reflective writing in thousand words was really difficult. The students said that they were confused about what should be written on it. Therefore, the researcher want to conduct this study on the students' perception on the critical thinking-oriented activity applied in their writing class at EED UMY.

Statement of the Problem

As one of important language skills, writing does not only require critical thinking in its process but also can be used as the tool to develop critical thinking if the writing activity is made in a proper way. However, there are still many schools which are not implementing appropriate writing activity to promote critical thinking. The teacher only asks students to write without trying to include critical thinking on it. Consequently the students cannot develop their thinking and their writing quality is

automatically weak especially when they face a little more complex writing task. Besides, in EED UMY, there are many students who complain that they feel difficult when they need to accomplish a written assignment by writing thousand words. Even though they were only asked to write their reflection toward the material they had learned, the students felt difficult to develop their argument on it.

This study were conducted to explore the students' perception on the critical thinking-oriented activities applied in writing class in EED UMY. The data gathered were about the kind of critical thinking-oriented activities applied in Basic Reading and Writing course at EED UMY based on the students' information. This research will also gather the students' perception toward those critical thinking-oriented activities which is emphasized more on the students' achievement toward the intended skill of the critical thinking-oriented activity.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study are:

1. What are the critical thinking-oriented activities applied in writing course at EED UMY?
2. How do the students perceive the critical thinking-oriented activities in writing course at EED UMY?

Purposes of the study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To find out the critical thinking-oriented applied in writing courses at EED UMY based on students' perception
2. To know the students' perception on critical thinking-oriented activities applied in writing class at EED UMY.

Significance of the study

There are some advantages of this study for the researcher, lecturer, the students, as well as for other researcher:

For the researcher

Firstly, the researcher can add knowledge about critical thinking. Secondly, as a prospective teacher, the researcher can apply the critical thinking-oriented activity in the future learning.

For Teacher

The first benefit got by the lecturers is that they do self-evaluation after knowing the students' perception about the activity they have implemented. The second benefit is an English teacher involved in the task of teaching writing in EFL contexts can make use the findings of this study to their writing class.

For students

As prospective teachers, the students of EED UMY can imitate their lecturers' successful critical thinking-oriented writing activities to teach critical thinking to their future students.

For other researchers

This study also gives some benefits for other researchers. Firstly, the other researchers can develop deeper or more specific research as the follow up research. Secondly, the other researchers can use the research as the reference when they try to develop a research that has a correlation with this research.

Outline of the Research

This research report contains five chapters. The first chapter is introduction. It defines some problem that underpins the researchers' decision to conduct the study. The second chapter explains about literature review. It will give explanation about two parts namely theoretical framework as well as literature review. Theoretical framework consists of fundamental theories that underpin this research, while literature review tends to explain some studies that support the study. The third chapter consists of methodology. This chapter discusses the method, instrument; the procedure in data collection as well as the steps of data analysis will be used. The fourth chapter contains finding and discussion. The result of data analysis is

discussed in this chapter. The last chapter is conclusion. It will draw conclusion as the general answer of the research questions.