

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents several points to reveal an accurate discussion of the main problem of the research. This chapter elaborates the background of the study, statement of the problem, limitation of the problem, research question, and purpose of the study. The significance of the study is also presented in this chapter.

Background of Study

Writing is one of important skills for communication. In a business field for example, when people want to apply for a job, they need to write a curriculum vitae and an application letter to persuade the manager of the company where they want to propose. In addition, in an academic field, writing a thesis is one of the obligations to graduate from the university. It means that writing skill plays a role in communication. Hence, students have to master writing skills to support their academic performance.

Based on the researcher's experience as a student, writing is the most complex and difficult skill in English language learning for students. It is because students need a long process to create their product of writing. Students should pay attention in creating idea, using grammar, arranging sentence structure, using vocabulary in a right context, and organizing paragraphs. In this case, writing effectively means that the ideas or information should be developed into good

organization, the error in writing should be minimized, and the writing must be understandable to the reader.

At English Education Department (EED) of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), students take Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Writing class as a compulsory subject in semester two. Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Writing is an important subject in EED UMY to improve students' ability in writing argumentative text, and mini research papers. In that class, to encourage students in writing, the teacher designs various activities for them. One of the activities is to write an argumentative article. In this activity, students have to be a critical reader and they have to interpret texts. After the students read and interpret the text, the lecturer asked them to write an argumentative article.

In writing argumentative articles, students need to be critical in expressing ideas. They also have to organize sentences to be good and structured. Students are also demanded to choose appropriate words to express their ideas to make information understandable. Writing argumentative text is conducted to enhance students' ability in argumentative writing.

Based on the researcher's experience, several students sometimes cannot develop their idea in writing to produce text. The skills that is included in writing were linguistic and analytical. In this case, several students' found difficulties on analytical skills. The researcher found it in one of students writing task, for instance *such as on the story*. The italic words are not a sentence, but is a phrase. However, students use the phrase as a sentence. This case is one of analytical cases showing that the students are stuck in this part, and the students cannot

continue the phrase. This problem also happened to students in sixth semester who had passed Interpretative Reading and Argumentative Writing in their second semester. It indicates that students cannot develop the idea of a phrase to be a correct sentence.

Several students at EED UMY still do plagiarism. Based on researcher's experience, the lecturer found several students were submitting an entire document written by another author as students' task. This case will be decreased when the students are able to think critically and are able to express their argument logically and comprehensively based on their own perspective. In writing argumentative texts, students need to develop their perspective about the content of writing. When students are lack of critical thinking skill, they are not able to develop their perspective to convince their argument. Hence, students who do plagiarism to fulfill their task are not quite critical to analyze problems found as an idea in writing.

Based on the above background, the researcher is interested in investigating the effect of student's critical thinking toward students' writing skill in writing argumentative texts.

Identification of Problem

Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Writing Class focuses on students' ability to present logical reasons and strong convincing arguments as well as critical analysis. Judgment in the form of argumentative essays and mini research papers is also needed. Based on informal interviews to the students of

2015 via *What's App*, the researcher found several problems that emerged in Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Writing Class. The problems are students' lacked of understand in writing. It is because students do not understand the issue or topic that will be discussed in argumentative writing, and students are lack of critical thinking.

First, the problem of Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Writing Class is students' inadequate knowledge of writing. There are several things needed to produce writing effectively. Those are organization of ideas, grammatical pattern, and sentence structure in writing. In fact, there are some students at EED UMY who lacked of awareness of those conditions as they were writing. In this case, they only focus on topic that will be discussed in their text.

Second, some students do not understand the issue or topic that will be discussed in the argumentative writing. This case was found in several students that do not read a lot of the material or subject. Without reading a lot, the students cannot produce good writing. It is because in argumentative writing, students need to read and interpret the text.

Third, some students are lack of critical thinking skill. There are two points for creating critical thinking. Based on Duron, Limbach, and Waugh (2006), critical thinking is the ability to analyze and evaluate information. However, many students in second semester are still lack of critical thinking in writing ability. Based on interview with one of student, the student have inadequate knowledge of the subject matter of their writing. The student still confuses to criticize an article. This problem becomes basic problem for student to

write an argumentative text. It is because the student cannot criticize, analyze, and evaluate an article. It is probably become a cause of students to be stuck in their ideas in writing argumentative texts.

Limitation of Problem

This research is limited on students' critical thinking skill related to students' skill in writing an argumentative text. The researcher chose this topic because based on the problems above, one of the students' problem in writing argumentative texts is critical thinking. The students need to think critically before they write an article. Without critical thinking, the students could not give strong evidence in argumentative texts.

To make this research more specific, the researcher focused on writing texts in Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Writing Class. The researcher also limits this research to investigate the effect of critical thinking toward students' skill in writing argumentative text. It discussed the significant effects of critical thinking skill on improving students' skill in writing argumentative texts.

Research Question

This research is intended to investigate the effect of students' critical thinking toward students' skill in writing argumentative texts. Thus, there are three main questions that are addressed in this research. The research questions of this study are:

1. How is the EED UMY Batch 2015 students' critical thinking skill?
2. How is the EED UMY Batch 2015 students' skill in writing argumentative text?

3. How does critical thinking skill affecting EED UMY Batch 2015 students' skill on improving writing argumentative text in Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Writing course?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study are:

1. To find out the EED UMY Batch 2015 students' critical thinking skill.
2. To find out the EED UMY Batch 2015 students' skill in writing argumentative text
3. To find out the effect of EED UMY Batch 2015 students' critical thinking on improving students' skill in writing argumentative text in Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Writing course.

Significance of Study

The researcher hopes that this research can give some benefits for several parties including the researcher, students, teachers, and other researchers.

The researcher. The researcher knows the effect of critical thinking toward students' skill in writing argumentative texts. Additionally, the finding of the research will be expected to help the researcher in the future to prepare strategies to improve students' critical thinking skill and writing skill. So, it can help the researcher in accelerating achievement to think critically.

The students. The result of this research will give the students information and reflection in terms of their effect critical thinking toward their writing skill. This finding is also expected that students can increase critical thinking skill by practicing writing argumentative texts.

The teachers. This research provides valuable information about the effect of critical thinking toward students' writing skill in argumentative texts. It may encourage teachers to prepare teaching strategies in improving students' writing skill in writing argumentative texts.

Other researchers. The researcher expects the information in this research can be a reference for other researchers in the future who want to conduct related study. This research provides a literature and discourse related to critical thinking and writing skill that might help them do research in the same field.