

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reveals some discussions related to the topic of this study, includes the background of the study, problem identification, research questions, purpose of this study, the scope and the significance of the study.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In this 21st century, students can be prepared to become involved in life and work by knowing beyond the demand of skills in 21st century such as acquire creative thinking, flexible problem solving, collaboration and innovative skills, and sophisticated technology. In other words, students need to acquire not only skills and knowledge but also information and communication technology as the expanding potentially aspects in this 21st century.

One of the crucial skills needed to confront the demand of 21st century is critical thinking skills. The concept of critical thinking skills is still developed. There are many ways to elaborate what critical thinking skills are. Critical thinking skills, or what some refer to as high order thinking skills help learners connect knowledge as they use information from many different sources and experiences to gain broader perspective and deeper understanding. Critical thinking defines an ability to analyze

information, to determine the relevance of information gathered and then interpret it in solving problems (Gagne, 1988: 387-390). On the other hand, Robert H. Ennis defined critical thinking as reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do (Ennis, 2011: 1). According to Partnership for 21st Century Skills, critical thinking and problem solving are the ability to analyze, interpret, evaluate, summarize, and synthesize all the information and perform the results to solve problem (Trilling & Fadel, 2009: 51-52).

The demand of critical thinking skills in 21st century is also supported by the fact based on the ASEAN Business Outlook Survey in 2014 Indonesia would be one of the most potential countries to be foreign infestations destination in ASEAN. This survey also indicated that Indonesia has less competent workforce than other country in ASEAN (Zubaidah, 2016: 2). Thus, it makes integrating critical thinking skills in the process of learning necessitated in Indonesia.

An study was conducted by Trilling and Fadel (2009: 7) showed that graduates from secondary schools, diploma, and high education level are still less competent in: (1) oral and written communication, (2) critical thinking and problem solving, (3) work ethics and professionalism, (4) teamwork and collaboration, (5) work in different groups, (6) technology literacy, and (7) project management and leadership (Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Zubaidah, 2017: 1). One of the less competent skills is critical thinking. This also transpires in Indonesia.

The government has issued Indonesian Qualifications Framework (here and after will be mentioned as Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia/ KKNi) as formulated in Peraturan Pemerintah No. 8 in 2012, as national reference to improve quality and competitiveness in human resource sector by achieving human resources qualification which is produced by education system and work training system and settled standard competencies (Jono, 2016: 57). KKNi also elaborates level of human resources qualification based on the learning outcomes in each level.

Universities as institution to produce graduate who are prepared to compete in this century, are required to consider specific learning outcomes which are formulated in KKNi qualification level and settled standard competencies. Bachelor degree program students are in the 6th level of this qualification. The formulas of learning outcomes based on KKNi are divided into attitude, cognitive mastery, particular skills, and common skills. One of the learning outcomes for students in 6th level is performing students' mastery and capitalising on their knowledge and skills in solving problems along with adapting toward every situation they faced (Attachment of Perpres RI No.8 KKNi, 2012: 2). It can be seen that critical thinking skills is one of learning outcomes which is important for students in solving problems.

The learning outcomes from KKNi may not mention explicitly 21st century skills, particularly critical thinking skills that students of bachelor degree program need to, but according to [dikdasmen.kemendikbud.go.id](http://dikdasmen.kemendikbud.go.id), skills of 21st century, particularly critical thinking, is mentioned clearly in three fundamental

agenda of Curriculum 2013 implementation. It means students in every education program study need critical thinking skills for being able to practice Curriculum 2013 which is valid in elementary, junior high, and senior high school's curriculum, not exceptions for students in English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) as English teacher in the future.

However, universities students are the closest one to confront the challenges in this century so that they need to perform critical thinking skills to be ready for real independent life and workforce challenges and so do the student teachers in order to facilitate their future students to be prepared for 21st century demands. In order to achieve students' learning outcomes to be critical in thinking and obtain to solve problems in competing in global society, student teachers must have performed critical thinking skills which are fundamental to thrive in 21st century.

There were some researches issued related with critical thinking skills, such as the perceptions of students to their critical thinking investigated by Aaron Orszag (2015), Rodzalan and Saat (2015), Murguia, et al (2011), Djiwandono (2013), and soon. There are also some theories emerged related to the critical thinking skills such as the descriptions of critical thinking skills and disposition by Facione (1990; 1992; 1998; 2004; 2006; 2011; 2013; 2015; 2018) and Belbin Team Roles Self-Perception Inventory (BTRSPI) (2013;2015).

There were some researcher who investigate students' critical thinking skills based on students' perceptions. For example, Orszag (2015: 3) examines Finnish university students' critical thinking skills and dispositions in self-reported method and the results indicate that Finnish's students are confident in their critical thinking ability but have a narrow view of the skills and dispositions that construct critical thinking. Whilst, in Indonesia, there was Djiwandono (2013: 32) who investigated the tendency of language students' critical thinking after given brief training in studying Business Correspondence. Both of those studies were used questionnaire to study undergraduate students' critical thinking skills by applying framework from Facione (1990). Another research which investigated students' perceptions on critical thinking among undergraduate students was Rodzalan and Saat (2015: 725). They were determined the differences between genders and academic disciplines on critical thinking skills from 2000 undergraduate students by using survey included eleven statements of thinking roles of Belbin Team Role Self-Perception Inventory (BTRSPI) (Belbin, 2013).

In this study, there are some novelties of this study comparing to the previous studies conducted by Orszag (2015), Djiwandono (2013), and Rodzalan and Saat (2015). The comparison of this study placed in the frequency rates which measured from students' tendency toward skills and dispositions in constitute their critical thinking. Meanwhile, the previous studies above were measured critical thinking perceived levels from students after filling self-reporting questionnaire and

brief training in advance of critical thinking skills measurement. This study makes used Facione's framework which broadly used in self-reporting method in order to measure students' perceptions toward critical thinking. This method was used in Orszag (2015) and Djiwandono (2013). The similarity of this research and the previous also found in the sample of the study. This study also targeted to undergraduate students in language education disciplines considering the demand of critical thinking skills included in the curriculum 2013 which student teachers would apply in the future.

## **1.2 Problem Identifications**

Referring to the previous studies, critical thinking is believed to be one of fundamental skills demanded in 21st century that students in language education should have for being able to apply the curriculum in teaching their future students. Critical thinking is constituted from skills and dispositions. The components skills includes in critical thinking is analyzing, making inferences, giving judgement and decisions, evaluating, and solving problems, while the ideal critical thinker is for whom having dispositions include open-mindedness, inquisitiveness, flexibility, truth-seeking, thinking in systematically and analytically, having self-confidence and maturity. Hence, these informations could become the parameter to rates the frequency of students' critical thinking.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates the research questions as follow:

1. How are ELESF students' perceptions toward critical thinking skills?
  - a. How do students describe critical thinking?
  - b. What kind of activities generates students' critical thinking?
2. How do students of ELESF rate their critical thinking skills and dispositions?

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

This study is purposely to investigate how ELESF students' perceived critical thinking and dispositions. It also surveyed the descriptions and activities that promote critical thinking skills among students and how students rate their frequencies of critical thinking skills and dispositions. It implied on students' preparations to be better graduates to thrive in life and work. It also contributes to arouse student teachers' awareness of demand skills in 21st century, particularly their critical thinking skills and dispositions so they will be capable to think critically and solve problems in competing, thriving in today's global society, and improving their proficiencies as education practitioners, English teacher, and ELT developer.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on critical thinking skills and dispositions which are developed by Facione's Framework of the core of critical thinking skills and

dispositions (1992; 2015) and how ELESP students rate their frequencies of skills and dispositions involve in critical thinking which proceeded among English Department students based on their perceptions during their learning process.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to provide information about students' perceptions toward critical thinking skills and dispositions at English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) of Universitas Negeri Jakarta during their learning processes as English student teachers. The differences in perceptions between students toward critical thinking skills and dispositions may reflect students' thought of critical thinking skills in learning during the process of language teaching and learning in ELESP. Thus the result of students' perceptions based on the survey will be useful to students as the one who apply the skills and lecturers who taught courses by conveying the skills in syllabus of some subjects in ELESP in study program and also to ELESP of Universitas Negeri Jakarta in order to improve quality of graduates to compete in global society.