

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the introduction which divided into five parts: background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In university, especially in Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), writing a research paper as academic writing product called *skripsi* has to be written by the students for completing their last examination scientific project before graduating from *sarjana* degree. However, writing a good *skripsi* is not easy. The students need to have deep knowledge of the elements and the aims of each chapters. Then, to produce a good *skripsi*, students should convey the ideas and persuade readers.

*Skripsi* consists of some chapters; one of them is the introduction. It becomes the reason why writer does the research which need serious attention in the background of the study. The background of the study gives an important role as a reasoning section doing such a worth investigation and should include the brief summary of relevant theories and researches (Kothari, 2004; Lestari, 2013). Ary et al (2010) gives additional information includes argumentative foundation to convey reasons and other supports in the background of the study systematically and logically (Pratama & Lestari, 2015). Thus, in the background of study, the researchers need a good skill in constructing argument systematically and logically.

Argumentation as a process to produce argument, should deal with critical thinking skills. Fisher (2001) as stated in Pratama and Lestari (2015) argues that there are 8 specific skills to make acceptable argument in the background of the study. They are identifying the case elements, identifying assumption, clarifying the problems, assessing claim's acceptability, evaluating the various argument, making judgment, making inferences, and creating argument.

As higher education students are expected to think critically, students need to apply their critical thinking to the practices. Chaffee (2009) as cited in Rachmawati (2015) stated that language reflects thinking, and students' critical thinking can be reflected in their writing. By writing, it can be seen how the students expresses their idea and transfer their thought well. This is because writing is a process through which students can practice and apply their critical thinking since it requires them to collect, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information (see Paul, 1990).

The theory of critical thinking poses more general questions about the existence of knowledge and reasoning. Liam & Carol (2009) stated that thinking and reasoning can be seen as general cognitive processing ability that is easily spread through different topics and contexts. In line with Anderson and Karthwohl (2001) revision of Bloom Taxonomy propose that critical thinking skills involve cognitive skills. It contains six levels of cognitive skills, those are remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. The products of cognitive processing are argumentative text, editorial, article, and academic essay (Sholikhah, 2016).

Critical thinking is related to reasoning or the capacity of rational thought (Cottrell, 2005). “Rational” means using reasons to solve problems. Reasoning comprises analyzing evidences and drawing conclusions. The focus of critical thinking is often referred to as the 'argument' (Cottrell, 2005). McPeck (1990) and Wilks (2014) in Emilia (2010) stated that the theory regards critical thinking, from the critical thinking movement, centering around critical thinking standards and some dispositions of critical thinking relevant to argumentative writing.

The close correlation between critical thinking and writing has long been recognized by scholars and educators. It is because through writing students can express what they think about. As thesis one of the types of argumentative writing, indicates the relation with the theory regards critical thinking. Berland and Hamer (2012) states a person has the argumentation ability through his acquisition in understanding the phenomena by expressing what he understands and then trying to convince people to accept his idea and to do this it is required sufficient knowledge and critical thinking ability. Widyastuti (2018) highlights the role of language as a way of thinking, judging and assessing. It seeks to investigate how the elements of critical thinking are displayed in students' essay so as to reveal the development of their critical thinking skills. She found the insufficiency of reasons and evidence in argument can caused the argument to be weak. Therefore, it is particularly relevant for argumentative writing in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, because to make an argumentative writing student need to have both higher-order thinking skills and higher levels of foreign language proficiency (see Atkinson, 1997).

Some researchers have explored students' ability and problems in writing a background of the study. One of them is Pratama and Lestari (2015), they found the background of the study of undergraduate thesis (*skripsi*) written by the English Education Study Program of UNESA lack of critical thinking aspects to build argument. Yusuf (2013) also found that undergraduate students in English Department of IAIN Surabaya have serious problems in three elements of research proposal including the introduction section. Each of problem has their own causes. Later, Maznun et. al (2017), he found that students confronted problem in writing the introduction and had difficulty in writing background of the study regarding claiming, indicating research gap, raising questions from previous research and continuing tradition.

Regarding to the importance of critical thinking in the background of the study of *skripsi*, university students are the most appropriate subject of this study. As stated by Murtado (2013), the most appropriate skill in language that could be developed by university students through critical thinking is writing skill since writing consist of arisen problem and data regarding the problem. This study aims to focus on describing the critical thinking of students in English Language Education of Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), particularly in their background of the study of *skripsi*.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background study above, the research will be conducted to discover the answer of these following questions:

1. What critical thinking elements are reflected in the background of the study of *skripsi* written by English Language Education undergraduate students of UNJ?
2. How are the argument as critical thinking elements used in the background of the study of *skripsi* written by English Language Education undergraduate students of UNJ?

### **1.3 Purposes of the Study**

Based on the research question, the purpose of this study is as follows:

1. To investigate critical thinking elements are reflected in the background of the study of *skripsi* written by English Language Education undergraduate students of UNJ
2. To describe the argument as critical thinking elements are used in the background of the study of *skripsi* written by English Language Education undergraduate students of UNJ

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

In this study, the writer focuses on analyzing critical thinking elements reflected in the background of the study of *skripsi* written by English Language Education undergraduate students of Universitas Negeri Jakarta.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretical benefit means this study can give beneficial information for other researchers who are interested to conduct further research in this area. The



researcher also expected to contribute special information for the students of their critical thinking skills in writing the background of the study of *skripsi*. Meanwhile practical benefit means that the researcher hopes this study will be able to help the readers on how to use critical thinking elements in the writing of a background of the study section of *skripsi* as the final research.

Furthermore, the result of the study is expected to inform all lecturers of English Language Education of UNJ in terms of students' critical thinking in writing the background of the study of *skripsi*. The finding of this study also will help the writer and the reader to get more knowledge about critical thinking.

