

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Problem

Reading is an important activity that requires reader to understand and comprehend the text. Reading is not only translating word by word but also trying to understand the message and the idea of the writer within the text. Reading is a physic and mental activity to reveal meaning of the written texts, while in that activity there is a process of knowing letters. It means that reading activity is reader's effort to find out what the writer wants to deliver in their text.

Reading has an important role in language learning, especially in learning english as a second language. Students can develop their language skill through reading such as learning vocabulary from the reading texts, understanding grammar use in real context of communication, enhancing the students' speaking skill through the information that they read.

However, learning reading in foreign language especially English is not as easy as learning first language. Students will certainly face some problems in reading activity and make them poor in reading comprehension. The problems can come from internal factors and external factors; Internal factors such as lack of interest in reading and lack of vocabulary mastery. And external factors, such as teacher's poor teaching strategy and poor teaching learning environment.

As previously mentioned, lack of reading interest is an internal factor that affects the students' reading comprehension. The students do not really like to do reading because it is such as a boring activity, especially in technology era nowadays, many students prefer to spend their time using their gadget to use some application on it, such as games, social media, or music application.

Then, lack of vocabulary mastery also influences the students' reading comprehension, especially for english language learners. The students need to have good English Vocabulary mastery to understand information that they read. However, in some cases english language learners get problems in mastery the vocabulary, because they are not used to improve the vocabulary and practice it in their daily communication. hence, lack of vocabulary affects the students' reading comprehension.

After that, teacher's poor teaching strategy is one of problems which comes from external factors. for example, teacher's existence is a ghost for his or her students because the teacher has high tempered. It will make the students do not want to join the class and thinks that the teacher's class is not interesting. So, the teachers should be able to apply a correct strategy in teaching activities to help the students enjoy the class. In teaching reading, the teachers also need to teach reading in interesting ways. If the teachers can not provide interesting learning activities in reading class, so it is no wonder why the students do not like reading and have problems in reading.

Poor teaching learning environment also takes part in reading comprehension. Imagine if students have to read in a noisy room. The students will not be able to concentrate in reading activity. It will make the students can not get the information from the the text.

In this case, teachers have essential part to help the students to enjoy reading and have a good skill in reading. Basically, reading is not a simple activity, it needs critical reading skill of readers to comperhend the information that they read.

In reading activity, critical reading is the ability to realize that the ideas on the pages are placed there by a person whose aim to convince the reader about his or her ideas. It means critical reading demands reader to make judgements about the ideas in the text. According to Richards and Schimdt (2002), critical reading is an activity in which reader reacts critically to what he or she is reading through relating the content of reading material to she or he prior knowledge, going beyond within the text. Based on explanation above, critical reading ability means relating reader's prior knowledge with information from text in critical ways and giving a critical response to the ideas from the text.

The reader with a good ability in critical reading has many advantages to help them in comperhending the text. Beeing a critical reader means the reader is capable to understand writer's arguments from the text by it with reader's background knowledge and deciding whether the information from the writer is correct or not. Doing critical reading also helps reader to make opinions and

assumptions based on what they read and it involves the readers critical thinking, that will make the readers have to judge the ideas from the writer and create their own assumption about the text.

There are three core components to measure the ability of the students' critical reading such as analysis, evaluation, and understanding skills. In analysis skill, the readers need to think carefully about the language choices the writer has made when writing the text, such as vocabulary they choose and how they structure their ideas. In the other words, the students' have to focus on how the writer has expressed their ideas. The second is evaluation skill that requires thinking process about the effectiveness of both ideas and language, making up their mind about whether the writing convinces us about an opinion or an argument, get information across well, or succeeds in entertaining the reader. It means the readers must focus on how well the writing achieves its purpose. And the last is understanding skill that involve of process to make sense information in the text. It means the reader have to be able to get information shared by the writer in the text.

In university level, the students suppose to have a good critical reading ability. It will help them to understand the material that given by teacher by assesing the strenght of the evidence and the arguement by relating student's background knowledge.

In addition, the researcher in her observation found that the students of English Language Education at Universitas Islam Riau have to learn about basic

reading, extensive reading, and academic reading which required to have a critical reading skill to help the students in comperhending text. In addition, critical reading skill is also required to help the students to pass some english tests, such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System)

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a research on the title ,“ Critical Reading Ability of the Fourth Semester Students of English Language Education at Universitas Islam Riau”.

1.2 Identification of Problem

Reading is an important activity in most subject in university, especially in English Language Education Program. The students can develop their language skill through reading in learning vocabulary by the text, understanding the use of grammar in real context of communicatiton, enhancing students’ ability to speak through the information that they read. Reading also gives many benefits especially for the students. It helps them to master the material that will be given from the teacher. To enhance that capability, students must extend their reading habit. Reading such as textbooks, journals, or any articles are very important since it enhances their prior knowledge.

In reading, critical reading is required to enhance the students’ understanding about reading sources that they read. and after that, critical reading also involves the relevancy of the text by relating the ideas or the information

from readers' experience or problems and also need readers' cognitive ability such as knowing, comprehending, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Critical reading requires the cognitive ability of the readers which revised Bloom's taxonomy stated that there are six levels in cognitive domain that have been served to give a good conceptual framework for determining the cognitive levels and ability reflected in the test item they are remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

In remembering level, consist of two cognitive process; recognizing and recalling that relate to students' long term memory. Its demand the students to produce the right information from his memory. Then, in understanding level involve seven cognitive process, they are interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, explaining. The seven cognitive process will help students to make their own meaning from educational material such as reading and teacher explanations. Furthermore, in applying level occurs when executing and implementing cognitive process are needed. Students are able to apply or able to use some procedure that they have learned either in a familiar or new situation. Then, in analyzing level consist of three required cognitive process such as differentiating, organizing, and attributing. The students have to be able break a concepts down into its part and think about how the parts are relate to the overall structure. In addition, checking and critiquing are involved in evaluating level. Students are required to evaluate and also make a judgment based on the standard and criteria. And the last is creating level which consist of three cognitive process such as generating, planning, and producing. This required-

skills involves putting things together to make something new also recognize component of a new structure.

The six levels in readers' cognitive domains from revised Bloom's Taxonomy can help to classify the learning, teaching and assessing of the cognitive dimension of thought that is central to instruction in most subject areas.

1.3 Focus of the Problem

Since the students in university have to learn several English reading subjects such as basic reading, extensive reading, and academic reading. Through the subjects, they are expected to have a good critical reading ability to help them facing the advance level of reading activity.

In this study, researcher only focuses on three aspect of student cognitive ability, they are understanding, analyzing and evaluating cognitive domains to acquire the data of the fourth semester students' critical reading ability of English Language Education at Universitas Islam Riau.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the focus of the problem that stated above, thus the problem of this research will be formulated in the following research questions, how is the students' critical reading ability of the fourth semester students of English Language Education at Universitas Islam Riau?

1.5 Objective of the Research

The objective of the research is to find out how is the students' critical reading ability of the fourth semester students of English Language Education at Universitas Islam Riau.

1.6 Significant of the Research

By conducting this study, some significances could be expected in contribution to teachers, students and further research.

- 1.6.1 For the lectures, to give information about fourth semester students critical reading ability.
- 1.6.2 For the students, to develop their critical reading ability by knowing their ability to read critically.
- 1.6.3 for the reseacher to provide one of the requirement for the Bachelor Degree in English Language Education.

1.7 Definitions of the Key Term

Definitions of key term are needed to avoid misunderstanding about some keywords used in this study, the researcher use this following informations :

1.7.1 Critical reading is an effort to investigate and critique of the validity of arguements expressed in a text. Critical reading is not only read a text and understand. The reader should be able to critic and judge the information from the text (Walz, 2001).

1.7.2 Critical reading involves the relevancy of the text by relating ideas or information from readers' experience or problems and also need readers' cognitive ability such as, knowing, comprehending, applying, analysing, synthetising, and evaluating (Cheek et al,1989).

1.7.3 The six cognitive domain in the revised taxonomy are remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create (Bloom, et al., 1956)

1.7.4 Understanding is a reader's effort in making sense of the text and the writers' idea. It means in understanding, the readers have to know the ideas from the writers (Herriot- Watt University,2016).

1.7.5 Analyzing level is where students use their own judgment to begin analyzing the knowledge they have learned (Bloom's Taxonomy,2004).

1.7.6 Evaluating in critical reading means the readers consciously know about the text whether it convinces them about an opinion or an arguement (Heriot-Watt University, 2016)

