CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the area of the study that will be covered in some headings (1) The Background of this Study, (2) Statements of the Problem, (3) Objectives of this Study, (4) Significance of the Study, (5) Scope and Limitation, (6) Definitions of Key Terms.

A. Research Background

In this era, critical thinking is important for learners to gain the challenges of their life. It is not only in education, it is also useful in their social life. Surely, teachers expected the students be able to think critically. This cognitive thinking will require them to think critically for taking an idea from the situation around. They have the basic skill involved critical thinking. It is like working out whether they believe what they see and what they hear, taking steps to find out whether something is likely to be true, and arguing our own case if someone does not believe them. Another basic critical thinking skill that the students have will help them to live with their society and get better chances in many cases. Kanik argued that if students are to perform in a highly technical society, they must be prepared with life-long learning and critical thinking skill is necessary to obtain and process information in an ever changing world.¹Surely,

¹FigenKanik. Doctoral Dissertation. *An Assessment Of Teachers' Conceptions Of Critical ThinkingAnd Practices For Critical Thinking Development At Seventh Grade Level.* (Middle East TechnicalUniversity. 2010), 1.

the university will be more focused to increase the students that have ability in this quality.

Essentially, the critical thinking has many purposes in gaining their circumstances life. One of them will make the learners easier getting high proficiency of their lesson. They will understand deeply about the lesson because they create another process in their brain to make the information accepted or understood by them. For example in every single lesson, when the teachers give lesson to the students, they will accept and think deeply what is the important and the purpose of the lesson. It will make them recognize one thing, that this lesson give them information and new perception about something. If the students assume this kind of information is good, they will process this continuously. Conversely, they assume this kind of information is bad for them; it will process in their thinking in another way.

Critical thinking plays important role in education process. Therefore the teachers should care of this tool in order make the students easily in understanding the lesson. Thus, the students' cognitive thinking will process well in their brain. This is in line with Wallace that critical thinking skills should be embedded in the subject matter and woven into language education.² Since the critical thinking important for students, it acquire them to think naturally how the

² C. Wallace. *Critical reading in language education*. (Palgrave Macmillan. 2005) accessed on 15th June 2015.

information accepted by their brain. It proved by their work or exercise after whether the students have good critical thinking or not.

At university level, critical thinking skill is essential abilities in using intellectual tools by which one appropriately assesses thinking. In this case, by utilizing critical thinking skills, students can use the intellectual tools that critical thinking offers concepts and principles that enable them to analyze, assess, and improve thinking. They will be able to work diligently to develop the intellectual virtues of intellectual integrity, intellectual humility, intellectual civility, intellectual empathy, intellectual sense of justice and confidence in reason. To put it briefly, critical thinking skills are self-improvement in thinking through intellectual tools that assess thinking.³

The critical thinking skill will help them directly in any circumstances of information in their lesson caused by this cognitive thinking. One of the important characteristic of critical thinking identified by many sources is metacognition. Kurfiss argued that underlines three sides of critical thinking. Those are declarative knowledge (the facts and concepts of the discipline or field), procedural knowledge (how to reason, inquire, and present knowledge about the discipline), and metacognition (being able to evaluate the outcomes of the thinking process).⁴ Specifically, "Metacognition is being aware of one's

³The Critical Thinking Community. 2009. *Defining Critical Thinking*.

⁴ J. Kurfiss, (1988). *Critical Thinking: Theory, Research, Practice, and Possibilities*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2, 1988: ERIC.

thinking as one performs specific tasks and then using this awareness to control what one is doing".⁵ Without this kind of intellectual skill, the view of students about around them will be none. Occasionally, critical thinking influences people to process the information that they get. How they can know whether the information is right or not if cannot process the information in our cognitive process about what happen around.

Thus, when they write the information in a paper, the critical thinking skill persuades them to choose the information which they write on their paper. There are many factors in building their argument in the writing work. The important factor is covered by their social life. How the environment persuades their brain to accept the information. It will process to be one of the important things for them. When their environment is not supporting their brain to process the information, it will make the teachers difficult to identify the ideas which wrote by the students in their essay.

The concept of critical thinking increase more general questions about the nature of knowledge and reasoning. On the one hand, thinking and reasoning can be seen as a general cognitive processing ability that is readily transferable across different topics and contexts.⁶ On the other hand, thinking and reasoning

 ⁵ T. A. Al-Sharadgah, Dr., Developing Critical Thinking Skills through Writing in an Internet-Based Environment. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Vol. 4 No.1 January 2014.
⁶Liam, O., Carol, M., (2009). Measuring Critical Thinking, Intelligence, and Academic Performance

in Psychology Undergraduates. The Irish Journal of Psychology.Vol. 30 No. 3-4 pp. 123-131. Retrieved on 23th February 2016.p.124

can be seen as highly used in knowledge and disciplinary contexts such that it is only worthwhile assessing critical thinking as it relates to particular knowledge areas. Those areas are history of life, definitions about something around, problem of life, or anything around them.

Assessment of critical thinking at university normally occurs when an academic analyses a student's written work on a subject specific topic for evidence of critical thinking. Occasionally, the teachers will know the students thinking in their writing work. The teachers are often see written work as an opportunity to show how much information they acquired about a particular subject rather than as an opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking thought. Moreover, it is often difficult for students to judge how much the evidence will be given to critical thinking with internal or external factors that students have in written work. This is in line with research from Anderson, Howe, Soden, Halliday, and Low that specifically analyses students' argument skills in essays shows that they rarely use their knowledge in an evaluation or critical thinking manner.⁷

Then, this case challenges the teachers as the one guider to make them show up their skill of critical thinking. However, just because the students can think critically this does not mean they do it in good way. This is to be expected,

⁷ T. Anderson, C. Howe, R. Soden, J. Halliday, & J. Low. (2001). *Peer interaction and the learning of critical thinking skills in further education students*. Instructional Science, 29, 1-32.

as the teacher does not need to employ the same level of critical thinking for everything they do because each student has different level in writing their critical thinking on paper. It means there are some students feel difficult in writing their essay because of many factors. The teachers could not expect all students has same idea of the information that they have to describe. The students' ideas are also could not make the teachers judge the students. Due to our mind has different cognitive processing or different skill in thinking. It depends on the teachers' explanation or the students' cognitive level. It can also come from their internal or external factors which makes them not confidence in their written. Those causes become the teachers' problem. In addition, the students has different life that makes them cannot understand each other about the thing that the teacher meant.

Irregularly, the students confused to describe something on the paper that actually they have known. For example when the teachers ask to them to describe the big problem of the university, this problem will make them confused to choose the case due to many problems happen around which they trust and entrust. They confused whether their written will be same idea with each other or not. It means they have not sure with their own written work due to the differences. They cannot imagine if what they though is negative as well as their friend though it. It will disturb them and make the written work to in trouble. Furthermore, this argumentative essay becomes one text to be observed due to those causes. Many teachers ask the students to write something with their own idea without knowing any consequences. Some of teachers think that all ideas are true but some of them say not. The same context will produce many kind of information because of this critical thinking. The level of the cognitive process in their writing will be seen clear enough. Additionally, teachers should know what the students thinking same as what they are writing on their paper.

Therefore, this thesis will help the teachers. How the students write their writing argumentative essay by understanding the factors and also those causes of the students' life. So based on those causes the researcher will help the teachers and also reader by thesis entitled: "An Analysis of the Students' Critical Thinking in Writing Argumentative Essay of Fourth Semester Student of English *Teacher Training Department at SunanAmpel State Islamic University Surabaya*".

B. Research Question

Based on the background of study above, this study intended to examine the question "What is the students' critical thinking level as appearin their argumentative essay?

C. Objective of the Study

Referring to the research questions above, the objectives of this study proposed research is to know what the students' critical thinking level as appear intheir argumentative essay.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is significant:

- For the teachers: The result of the study can use by the teachers to know the character of students' writing and their level of critical thinking and how to solve the students which have those differences.
- 2. For the students: The result gives them information to solve their problem of their character of though and can help them easily in writing showing their idea in writing.
- 3. For the readers: the result will give them further information about students' critical thinking and the factors in writing argumentative essay about around.

E. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on analyzing students' critical thinking level in students' writing skill in argumentative essay. The subjects of the study are the students in argumentative class of fourth semester in English Teacher Education Department at SunanAmpelState Islamic University Surabaya in the academic year 2016-2017. This study also aimed to know the factors and style of their critical thinking in writing argumentative essay.

F. Definition of Key Terms

a. Writing

Writing is acombination of process and product of discovering ideas, putting them on paper on paper and working with them until they are presented in manner that is polished and comprehensible to readers.⁸

b. Argumentative essay

Argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.⁹

c. Critical thinking skill

Critical thinking is the intelligently self-controlled skill process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.¹⁰

⁸caroline T. Linse, Practical English Language Teaching: Young Learners, (NY: McGraw Hill, 2006), p.98.

⁹Purdue Online Writing Lab. Online: <u>https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/</u>. Retrieved on April 14th 2017.

¹⁰H. Masduqi, 2006. *Critical Thinking and Meaning*. TEFLIN Journal, Vol. 22, No 2. Retrieved: 2 July 2011. P.186

d. Critical thinking level

Critical thinking level is a position on a real or imaginary scale of amount, quality, extent, or quantity where it measures the critical thinking or an amount of critical thinking where the critical thinking has their own position in building or creating something.¹¹



¹¹Linda E. & Richard P., *Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools*, (The Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2006), 4th Edition.