

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the background of the problems, identification of the problems, formulation of the problem, objectives of the research, uses of the research, scope of the research, and definition of terms.

### **1.1. Background of the Problems**

Language is a means of communication which is very important for us to adapt to the society. Language is used by human beings to interact with others and to express feeling and thought. It is their tool for carrying on their affairs, working, trading, and living together. So, we can say that language is very important to individually to live in a society in order that they can survive.

As it known, language is an important tool used by the people in the world to communicate each other. English is one of widely spoken languages in the whole world, that is the reason today English becomes an international language. As an international language, English is used in many fields all over the world. It is also a fact that English is widely needed by people, for example to transfer new modern science, technology, and information. Transferring new modern science, technology, and information can be done through reading process.

Meanwhile, reading is the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. When people read, they use eyes to receive written symbols (letters, punctuation marks and spaces) and they use brain to convert them into word, sentences and paragraphs that communicate something to them. Reading plays an important role in developing knowledge, through reading students can absorb all the information, experience and ideas provided in books.

Reading text is also providing some benefits in improving students' skill and language teaching as well. It helps students to find new vocabulary in real context, English grammar, punctuation and become good models for English writing, when teacher teaches the skill of writing he/ she will need to show students models of what he/she is encouraging them to do. Moreover, good reading texts can introduce interesting topics, which can stimulate discussion.

According to Davenport (2007: 61) as quoted by Dewi (2013), common types of question found in reading comprehension are included as follow:

1. Identifying main idea, main point, author purpose or an alternate title for the passage.
2. Recognizing the tone of the passage or identifying the style.
3. Comprehending information directly stated in the passage (finding supporting detail).
4. Answering relational questions about the researcher's opinion, even if not stated directly.
5. Recognizing the structural methodology employed to develop the passage, for example sequence, vocabulary, and represent pronoun (reference).

6. Extended limited information given by the researcher to a logical conclusion using inference (inference meaning).

From the types of question found in reading comprehension, the researcher is used reading test. This research is focused on critical thinking on the objective in this research by using critical thinking test.

Based on the pre-observation in SMPN 3 Natar Lampung Selatan, the teacher was found several problems in reading. The researcher found the students still got difficulties in students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension, such as understanding the content of the paragraph, difficulties in understanding the idea, and the difficulties determining main idea. Realizing to the phenomenon, the researcher interested in conducting further research relating to the students' problems in using critical thinking. To find out the students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension, the researcher gave a critical thinking test to measure their critical thinking that contained 40 questions and reading test to class IX C students that contained 40 questions.

Critical thinking is a skill that requires instruction and practice. Business education instructors at both the secondary and post-secondary levels can enhance students' critical thinking skills by using instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process rather than relying on lecture and rote memorization, focusing instruction on the process of learning rather than solely on the content, and using assessment techniques that provide students with an intellectual challenge rather than memory recall. In the same line, Watson and Glaser (2002), the authors of Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, define

critical thinking as a composite of attitudes, knowledge and skills. They point out that this composite includes: (1) attitudes of inquiry that involve an ability to recognize the existence of problems and an acceptance of the general need for evidence in support of what is asserted to be true; (2) knowledge of the nature of valid inferences, abstractions, and generalizations in which the weight or accuracy of different kinds of evidence are logically determined; and (3) skills in employing and applying the above attitudes and knowledge. Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and valuating information gathered or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a guide to belief and action. The purpose of critical thinking is to achieve understanding, evaluate viewpoints, and solve problems. Therefore, since all three areas involve the asking of questions, we can say that critical thinking is the questioning or inquiry we engage in when we seek to understand, evaluate, or resolve.

Most formal definitions characterize critical thinking as the intentional application of rational, higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, problem recognition and problem solving, inference, and evaluation. Critical thinking is the ability to think about one's thinking in such a way as 1. To recognize its strengths and weaknesses and as a result, 2. To recast the thinking in improved form.

Critical thinking identifies 8 characteristics. Critical thinking involves asking questions, defining a problem, examining evidence, analyzing assumptions and biases, avoiding emotional reasoning, avoiding oversimplification, considering

other interpretations, and tolerating ambiguity. Beside that, critical thinking has many aspects. There are:

1. **Dispositions:** Critical thinkers are skeptical, open-minded, value fair-mindedness, respect evidence and reasoning, respect clarity and precision, look at different points of view, and will change positions when reason leads them to do so.
2. **Criteria:** To think critically, must apply criteria. Need to have conditions that must be met for something to be judged as believable. Although the argument can be made that each subject area has different criteria, some standards apply to all subjects an assertion must be based on relevant, accurate facts; based on credible sources, precise, unbiased, free from logical fallacies, logically consistent, and strongly reason.
3. **Argument:** Is a statement or proposition with supporting evidence. Critical thinking involves identifying, evaluating, and constructing arguments.
4. **Reasoning:** The ability to infer a conclusion from one or multiple premises. To do so requires examining logical relationships among statements or data.
5. **Point of View:** The way one views the world, which shapes one's construction of meaning. In a search for understanding, critical thinkers view phenomena from many different points of view.
6. **Procedures for Applying Criteria:** Other types of thinking use a general procedure. Critical thinking makes use of many procedures. These procedures include asking questions, making judgments, and identifying assumptions.

Applying critical thinking skills can help to improve reading comprehension by enabling the reader to take a more dynamic role in the reading process. An active

reader engages himself or herself in the reading process, which eases much more understanding of the issues. Contrary to the active reader is a passive reader who reads the words in the book, but takes no positive movement to guarantee the material is being understood or applied. All of the students who create critical thinking skills are more dynamic and able to:

1. Get better scores
2. Become independent
3. Develop knowledge
4. Evaluate and challenge in society.

## **1.2. Identification of the Problems**

Based on the pre-observation the students, there are several problems that can be identified, that is:

1. Students get difficulties in mastering the text well.
2. Students do not have big motivation to read the text.
3. Students tended to be a passive learner without participating actively.
4. Students topic of the text is not suitable for the students.
5. Students are bored to read long texts.
6. Students could not comprehend the reading text well.
7. Lack of Students' confidence to use critical thinking.

### **1.3. Formulation the Problems**

Dealing with issues presented in the background, the research questions in this research are:

- Is there any significant correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability at the third grade of SMPN 3 Natar Lampung Selatan?

### **1.4. Objective of the Research**

The objectives of this study were:

- To investigate whether there is any significant correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability at the third grade of SMPN 3 Natar Lampung Selatan.

### **1.5. Uses of the Research**

The uses of this research were as follows:

#### 1. Theoretically.

This research presented here attempts to evaluate and to extend finding from previous research to the context of English foreign language learners in Indonesia.

#### 2. Practically.

- a. To give to English teachers about critical thinking and their importance or contribution to students' reading comprehension.

## 1.6. Scope of the Research

This research was quantitative correlation study. It was conducted at the third grade students of SMPN 3 Natar Lampung Selatan which consists of 35 students in academic year 2014/2015. The researcher choose one class as the sample. This study was specially aimed as investigating whether critical thinking test significantly correlated with students' reading comprehension. The measurement of critical thinking skill was based on The Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA) was measured by critical thinking test. The students' reading comprehension ability was measured by reading test.

## 1.7. Definition of Terms

There are some terms used by the researcher and to make them clear and to avoid misunderstanding, they are clarified as follows:

1. **Reading** refers to a process in which the reader makes sense of the written text in order to get information and knowledge from the text.
2. **Reading Comprehension** refers to an activity of understanding printed text through making sense a written text by relating written language to wh? already know and to what we want to know.
3. **Critical thinking** skill refers to think clearly and rationally. The skill is used to help the students to understand the logical connections between ideas, identify construct and evaluate arguments, solve the problems systematically and identify the relevance and importance of ideas.