

Critical Thinking, Language Learning Strategies and Reading Comprehension Among EFL Senior High School Students

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Critical thinking is the ability to criticize something by their own thinking. Students need to use their critical thinking to comprehend the reading. Reading comprehension is the major of reading activity which is the readers building an understanding of the text. The goal is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences. Students need to know their learning strategies. Language learning strategies is one of the way to know their learning style. Furthermore, applying the students' critical thinking is important because it enhances the students reading comprehension to solve the problems that they got. To measure the students' critical thinking, the researcher used Pearson' Thinking Critically.

Using SILL Strategy Inventory for Language Learning is used to know the students learning style. Then used Reading Comprehension Assessment to know how well the students reading comprehension. The result was there was low correlation between critical thinking, language learning strategies and reading comprehension among EFL seniorhigh schoolzstudents. Thezresult was $0.247 < 0.050$. The hypothesis testing was accepted in low correlation. The contribution of critical thinking and language learning strategies was 6.1% and 93.9% from another factors.

Keywords: critical thinking, language learning strategies and reading comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking have the important role in educational life. According to Bailin (2002) critical thinking is defined as thinking of a particular quality - essentially good thinking that fulfills the specified criteria or standards of adequacy and accuracy. It is a very important concept in education and also

it's defined as the ability to think rationally and make a good decision in believing something (Ennis, 2011). It includes the special skills to identify the problems, analyze, and solving the problems. Some of the students in the senior high school have some problems with criticizing a passage. The students must well understand the meaning of critical thinking and their application in their life.

The characteristics include; being open-minded and mindful of alternatives, attempting to be well – informed; able to judge well the credibility of sources, able to identify; conclusions, reasons, and assumptions and able to judge the good quality of an argument, including its reasons, and assumptions and evidence. He also stated that critical thinkers would be likely to be able to develop and defend a reasonable position; ask clarifying questions, formulate plausible hypotheses, plans experiment well, define the terms in a way appropriate for the context and draw the conclusions when warranted.

In supporting the previous definition, Facione and Facione (2007) define critical thinking as reflective decision making and thoughtful problem-solving of what to believe and do. According to Elder and Paul (1997) stated critical thinking is best understood as the ability of thinker to take charge of their own thinking. They develop the sound criteria and standards for analyzing and assessing their own thinking and routinely use those criteria and standards to improve its quality. Chafee (1998) stated critical thinking is our active, purposeful, and organized efforts to make sense of our world by carefully examining our thinking, and thinking of others, in order to clarify and improve our understanding. While according to Halpern (1999) stated critical thinking is purposeful, reasoned and goal-directed. It is kind of thinking involved, in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions. It can be part of problem-solving.

Learning strategies define by Oxford (1990) stated operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information. According to the research of O' Malley, Chamot and Kupper (1989) stated the effective listeners used three specific strategies: self-monitoring, elaboration, and inferences while ineffective listeners were concerned with the meaning of individual words.

Since the earliest of the 1980s, a series of the research has focused to find out the characteristics of a good language learner. The result showed that a good language learner has a different characteristic from another learner in the process of language input and producing the output (Rahimi and Katal, 2012). Language learning strategies are conscious actions that learners use to learn a foreign or second language. These strategies are different and dependent on learners' personality (Derakhshan, Tamaskani and Faribi, 2015). Indeed, Alfian (2016) states that one of the focuses of language learning strategies research was to measure whether students' learning proficiency influenced by the used of specific learning strategy of the used of students' own strategies. Learning strategy includes the used of the methods and the utilization of the various resources or the learning strengthen.

Oxford (1990) was classified into six categories, *Memory strategies* are like combining and organized reviewing as cognitive. It helps learners remember and generate new information effectively. For example, the students use new vocabulary to make sentences. *Cognitive strategies* manipulate incoming information in the form of summarizing, deduction, inference, note taking, induction and translation to make learning effective. It allows the students to comprehend and create a language using mental process. For example, the students scan and skim to get the main idea briefly in reading. *Compensatory strategies* are the learner use guessing and inferring, because of insufficient language proficiency. For Example, the learner uses the gesture to express his/her feeling. *Metacognitive strategies* let the students' plan, monitor and evaluate student' own learning process and consider most effective in their language learning. For example, the students prepare academic achievement goals for language learning. *Effective strategies*, like self-encouragement and high motivation, use to control one's emotional state and anxiety level. It helps students to aware of their feelings, motivation and anxiety, regulate better ways in a target language. For example, the students, encourage him/her before the performance in the target language. *Social strategies* are like asking for help, questioning and sharing worries show the cooperative attitude of learners. It allows the students to interact and learn from others. For example, the students collaborate with more proficient friends while doing assignments in the target language.

Reading comprehension is the major of reading activity which is the readers building an understanding of the text. It is the process of making meaning from text. Therefore, the goal is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences. It develops the notion that reading comprehension is a flexible and ongoing cognitive and constructive process (Woolley, 2011). There are some categories of comprehension, Brassell and Rasinski (2008) described there are three levels of comprehension, these are literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, and critical comprehension.

To support reading comprehension, Ness (2009) has shown that many teachers are not implementing reading comprehension instruction in their classrooms. In his study to investigate the extent between teacher and students to integrate the reading comprehension instruction in class, he found that only 3% of 2400 minutes of instruction time was spent on reading strategies. Even more annoying, the students received no instructional time devoted specifically to reading comprehension strategies.

In this study, the writer focus on the students' critical thinking, language learning strategies and reading comprehension among EFL senior high school students. critical thinking is the logical thinking. Students need to critic something before they conclude or deliver the result to their friends. Not all students aware with their own learning strategies because the teachers do not apply well or do not guide the students in applying the students language learning strategies.

Some researchers have been conducting the same research according to Nikoopur, Farsani, and Nasiri (2011) to identify the relationship between critical thinking and the use of direct and indirect language learning strategies by Iranian EFL. The result of the research is a significant relationship between specific direct and indirect language learning strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive, and social with critical thinking. It can be concluded that the utilization of language learning strategies can help the students to enhance their way to of thinking, in other words, to think more critically. While other research of Mohammadi, Heidari, and Niray (2012) in their research to identifying those categories of reading strategies (cognitive, metacognitive and compensation) that are mostly used by Iranian EFL learners. The result of this study is a low positive significant correlation between learners' critical thinking ability and their overall use of reading.

In another research of Mall-Amiri and Ahmadi (2014) in their research stated that EFL learners' of critical thinking and the used of metacognitive strategies showed that a significant correlation was not unexpected since critical thinking can influence the different aspects of students' characteristics regarding using special strategies in learning a language. Therefore, the researchers took 135 students as their sample to complete the questionnaires as their instruments to collect the data. While, Ghafournia (2014) in his research of language learning strategy use and reading achievement, the result was the learners' ability were improved, they more inclined to choose the strategies to facilitate reading processing, which was reflective of greater autonomy for language learning. So that, it implied the appropriate employment of language learning strategies can foster individual autonomy and hence reduce effective filter to process reading text inefficient ways. Albeckay (2013) finds that critical reading has close links to EFL students' competence in reading comprehension. EFL learners' must be exercised and trained regularly and frequently with critical thinking skills and various types of texts.

Bagheri (2015) in his research the positive relationship between critical thinking and language learning strategies were found. The participant of the study includes 256 freshmen students from four departments at a leading university in China. For the speaking and listening examination, the positive correlation was significant, but for the reading and writing examination, the positive correlation was weak which would be due to the test itself. Besides, the correlation between critical thinking abilities and the use of language learning strategies also proved to be positive. Another research of Boroushaki (2015) in his dissertation there is no statistically significant relationship between learners' scores on critical thinking skills test and their use of vocabulary learning strategies the participants find out whether learners' use more strategies as their critical thinking ability increases. It was found to be no relationship between participants' vocabulary learning strategy use and their critical thinking ability. This indicates that learners do not apply their thought critically while using strategies for learning vocabulary.

In another hand, according to Marzban and Barati (2016) in their research stated that critical thinking ability, language learning strategies and

reading comprehension of male and female intermediate EFL university students found out that there was no significant relationship between male and female learners. The critical thinking ability was measured by using CCTST (California Critical Thinking Skill Test), language learning strategies were measured by using SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning), while Reading Comprehension was measured by TOEFL test. The participants of the research were 100 students that majoring in English translation and English teaching at the Azad University of Tehran. There were 60 students of male and 40 students of the female. In this research, the participants did not get the best acceptable score because gender is not an influential factor in students' critical thinking and the used of language learning strategies.

The researcher conducted the research at SMAN 1 Pace Nganjuk, the population and sample of this study were the second-grade students. Based on the explanation of the teacher, many students do not aware of their critical thinking, language learning strategies and reading comprehension. They cannot develop the learning strategies in criticize the reading comprehension. The teacher of SMAN 1 Pace Nganjuk gets difficulty to identify students' critical thinking, language learning strategies and reading comprehension because of big size class and some students have lack of the three variables.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher wants to find out the correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension, the correlation between language learning strategies and reading comprehension, and the correlation between critical thinking, language learning strategies and reading comprehension among EFL senior high school students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study aimed to determine the correlation between critical thinking, language learning strategies and reading comprehension. The research method which used in the research is a quantitative approach. Specifically, the research was conducted through correlational research. The population was the subject which was determined as the target of research. The researcher was used the second-grade students who studied in SMAN 1 Pace Nganjuk in the academic year of 2018/2019 as the population of the study. There were 180 students as the population. Random sampling is a technique for determining samples based on coincidence, the sample in this study amounted to 90 students of SMAN 1 Pace Nganjuk.

The first step was taken a permission letter from the campus. Then, the letter was given to the school as the research location. After being permitted by the headmaster, the researcher gathered the data by giving the test of Pearson Thinking Critically, a questionnaire of SILL and test of reading comprehension to the students. Before giving the three kinds of instruments, the researcher search for information about the total of students especially in the class XI. Before it, the researcher search information and observation of the teacher and the students about the test of critical thinking, a questionnaire of SILL, and test

of reading comprehension that it is suitable for EFL students in SMANz1 Pace Nganjuk especially for XI grade, and the data were also real. This research did for eleven days.

The first research in 15 until 18 October 2018, the researcher came to the classes that were chosen as the subjects of the study and gave the test of Pearson Thinking Critically in XI-1, XI-2, and XI-4 classes. The researcher gave 90 minutes to complete the test of critical thinking. To distribute the test of critical thinking, the researcher was helped by Ms. Sri Hastutik.

The second research in 19 until 22 October 2018, the researcher came to class to give the questionnaire of SILL in XI-1, XI-2, and XI-4 classes. The researcher gave 45 minutes to complete the test. The researcher still was helped by Ms. Sri Hastutik to distribute the questionnaire of SILL to the students in the three classes.

The last research in 21 until 25 October 2018 the researcher came to class to give the test of reading comprehension in XI-1, XI-2, and XI-4 classes. Next, the data were computed and analyzed using SPSS version 20 to find out the relation between the three variables (X1 and X2 correlate to Y).

To analyze the data. The researcher used Multiple regression on SPSS program 20. It is because the data were normally distributed. The researcher is able to use this method.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted this research on 15-25 December 2018. She took the score of students critical thinking and language learning strategies as variable X using 25 items questionnaire from 90 students at second grade of SMAN 1 Pace Nganjuk and students' reading comprehension as variable Y using Read Theory of Reading Comprehension test.

The result of critical thinking and reading comprehension is $0.033 < 0.050$. It means that there is low correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension. While the significant result of language learning strategies and reading comprehension is $0.456 < 0.030$. It means there is moderate correlation between language learning strategies and reading comprehension. The result of the correlation between critical thinking and language learning strategies among reading comprehension was 0.247. It means that the low correlation between the variables. Then the contribution of critical thinking, language learning strategies and reading comprehension among EFL senior high school students is 0.061 or 6.1% while 93.9% from another factors. It means that the low correlation between critical thinking, language learning strategies and reading comprehension among EFL senior high school students.

To support the research, the previous study of Marban and Barati (2016) stated critical thinking ability, language learning strategies and reading comprehension of male and female intermediate EFL University students found

out that there was no significant relationship between male and female learners. The critical thinking ability was measured by using CCTST (California Critical Thinking Skill Test), language learning strategies are measured by using SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning), while Reading Comprehension is measured by TOEFL test. The participants of the research are 100 students that majoring in English translation and English teaching at the Azad University of Tehran. There were 60 students of male and 40 students of the female. In this research, the participants did not get the best acceptable score because gender is not an influential factor in students' critical thinking and the used of language learning strategies. Another previous study revealed that Marzban and Barati (2016) a positive relationship between critical thinking ability and reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners in general. Moreover, a positive relationship was observed between Iranian EFL learners' between their language learning strategies and reading comprehension. In this research, CCTST (California Critical Thinking Skill Test) and TOEFL become the test. The level significant of this research was .307. It is difference between the test of critical thinking and reading comprehension. Also there the different result of the research.

Another previous study was conducted by Cesur (2011) to investigate the relationship between Turkish University students' language learning strategies and their achievement in reading comprehension skill. The subject of the research is 368 participants from eight Universities in Istanbul. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used in this research. The results of this study showed a significant correlation between language learning strategies such as cognitive, memory, and compensation and students' achievement in reading comprehension in the foreign language. Learning strategies have influenced reading comprehension. While according to Ghafournia (2014) stated that the results of this study using a reading test, questionnaire, and parametric statistical analysis, the findings yielded up discrepancies among the participants in the implementation of language-learning strategies concerning their reading achievement. The participants comprised 307 Iranian BA students doing a general English course at the Teacher-Training University of Mashhad. The results suggest that as the learners' reading ability improves, the learners are more inclined to choose strategies to facilitate reading processing, which is reflective of greater autonomy for language learning. Thus, the results imply the appropriate employment of language-learning strategies can foster individual autonomy and hence reduce effective filters to process reading texts in an efficient way.

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