

Students' Perception of Critical Thinking in Constructing English Argumentative Writing at Eleventh Grade of SMK Pelayaran Padang

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Abstract: *The indication that the students have limited critical thinking as reflected in their writing. This research aimed at finding out the students' critical thinking at eleventh grade of SMK Pelayaran Padang, concerning, students' critical thinking, students' critical thinking reflected in argumentative and students' perception of using critical thinking to construct English argumentative writing. The sample in this study was taken using purposive techniques. The students used their critical thinking to construct argumentative writing well especially in choosing the topic, organizing the arguments, and resolving problems that they experienced in constructing the writing. In conclusion, the students' critical thinking was well applied in the writing of argumentative writing.*

Keywords: student perception, critical thinking, English, argumentative writing

1. Introduction

Writing is one of English skills that should be learnt by the students in senior high school as stated in the curriculum. As a skill, writing can be learnt like any other skills. The aim of learning writing skill is to make students able to write many types of writing in English such as narrative, descriptive, expository, recount, and argumentative. Writing is also to make students able to communicate and to share their ideas, opinions, point of views, and information in written form. They can write it in an essay, journal and final project.

Nowadays, writing is used in high school. Therefore, the students who do not know how to express themselves in writing, they have difficulties to put the idea into a written form. More importantly, the success of the students in learning is often influenced by writing skill. That is why the students in high school are expected to have a good writing skill because it is needed in doing the test, writing an essay and conducting, research or any other activities in the process of teaching and learning.

There are many aspects that should be mastered by students to produce a good writing, namely content, vocabulary, idea, organization, language use and mechanics. However, critical thinking seems to be the most significant component affecting the writing process. It is because in every stage of writing the writer uses their thinking to create, investigate and revise their idea. It means that they require critical thinking in writing.

Writing does not only require linguistic mastery such as grammar, vocabulary, intonation and, pronunciation but also the conceptual judgment and critical thinking. As stated by [4] the writing skill is complex and sometimes difficult to teach. Requiring mastery not only grammatical and rhetorical device but also of conceptual and judgment elements. Then, critical thinking will help students to decide the information that will be used to support their idea and organize their writing to be more accurately and logically.

At work or school at any levels, writing is essentially needed in many aspects. Writing could be one of the ways to develop critical thinking [6]. Through writing, the students show how they articulate things. Likewise, it will show how they think. They will be required to actively and skillfully conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information to reach an answer or conclusion. Therefore, the ability to think critically is very important in writing. According to [1], a high advance thinking skill in a various number of complex ways that involve knowledge and attitudes. It goes beyond the memorization of facts. It does not only reach what the facts are or what the arguments are since critical thinking is a cognitive process that is correlated with using mind. Furthermore, [1] states that critical thinking shows how the facts are sustained, how the arguments are constructed and how the conclusions are attained

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Definition of Critical Thinking

Thinking is a mental activity that can not be separated from human life. Critical thinking of each individual is different from each other and need to grindstones early. Thinking occurs in every human mental activity to formulate or solve problems, make decisions and look for excuses. Critical thinking is a systematic process that allows students to formulate and evaluate their own belief and opinions. Critical thinking is an organized process that enables students to evaluate evidence, assumptions underlying logic and language of other person's statement.

Critical thinking is about analyzing, evaluating and it all relation with knowledge, information, issues, and problem. According to [5], the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it. Critical thinking skills are chosen because these skills can facilitate the activity of thinking in other contexts [3].

According to [6] critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally. It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking; the ability to decide what to do or what to believe. It means that after we use critical thinking so we can distinguish between facts and opinions.

2.2. The Use of Critical Thinking in Argumentative Writing

In writing text, especially the text that consist of argument the writer have to do more than simply find relevant argument an information. The writer has to be able to engage the ideas, argument in a way that supports his view convincingly. Moreover, the writer has to link the fact, knowledge, evidence with the issue. It means that, the writers' critical thinking is needed because in doing this process, the writer should be able recognize an issue that will be talked about. It also supported by [5], he stated that students who think critically use writing as an important tool both communicating ideas and for learning.

Composing writing not only needs good language proficiency, but also needs to be critical as the writer examine viewpoint, arguments or ideas, facts and synthesize. According to [9], writing is more than a medium of communication. Its means that a way of remembering and then a way of thinking as well, when we write something we use our thinking to find ideas and argument while remembering pattern and language

3. Method

To choose the source data, the researcher used by using purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique means taking sample based on the certain purpose. Two classes were determine as the participants of this study based on the average both have. In this cases 20 students from XI NKNA and XI TKNB class were selected and being the subjects of this study. In the data collection, the researcher distributing the critical thinking questionnaire. The data was used to classify the students who have high critical thinking and low critical thinking on writing ability. The students were guided how to answer the questionnaire.

4. Result and Discussion

The questionnaire result shows that the students chose the topic from different sources and different perspectives based on their point of view. They selected the topic from their own experience, daily observation, social media and electronic. Some of the students also selected the topic that was considered as an interesting topic for their writings. It was also found that most of the students selected the topic that is debatable. It is related with the theory of [8] that the topic of argumentative writing should be debatable. Since an argumentative essay tries to adjust the way people think thus it must be focused on a debatable topic. The topic should be narrow enough and not too broad since it will help the writer to develop ideas and to present convincing support while

also providing the strength and the weaknesses of opposing arguments. Moreover, the topic should be interesting.

While in organizing the reasons, the students mostly stated the reasons orderly as the organization of the argumentative writing. At last, it was found that the students had different problems in constructing their writing such as making grammatical error, finding the right topic, looking for more evidences, and providing and refuting opposing arguments. Furthermore, most of them stated that they were able to resolve the problems. It is in line with the theory of [5] about resolving problems. He states that critical thinking should be reflective since it comprises thinking about problems at different points and it demands appropriate methods to solve the problems. Thus, a problem requires thinking hard to find the solution for it. To solve the problem may require analyzing the problems, thinking the best approach to find the solution and thinking about the appropriate way to employ the approach.

Student' perception questionnaire was administered to the sample to gain the data of the students who had high and low perception of critical thinking. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire had been analyzed before distributed to the sample. The mean of students' perception of critical thinking in constructing argumentative writing is 165.3. Then, the highest students' perception 304, while the lowest score is 59, with std. deviation is 119.2 and variance is 146.1.

Based on the data above, the students' perception of critical thinking in constructing argumentative writing with moderate critical thinking.

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings described in the previous chapter, this study comes to the conclusion that there is significant relationship between critical thinking and argumentative writing of the eleventh grade students of SMK Pelayaran Padang. It reveals that the student who has good critical thinking, has good argumentative writing: whereas the student who has poor critical thinking tend to have argumentative writing as well.

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