

## THE CASE STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CRITICAL READING STRATEGIES IN ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE

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**Abstract:** The aims of this study are to describe the implementation of critical reading strategies in the academic writing course and to what extent the critical reading strategies support the students' writing. The method used in this study is case study which involves as qualitative research. The participants of this study are fourth-semester students of the academic writing course which consist of four male students and eleven female students. The data collection techniques of this study are observation, questionnaire, interview, and document analysis. The results of this research show that critical reading strategies are effective to be implemented into the academic writing course, because this strategies support the students in understanding the issue of their writing and building the students' arguments and critics of an issue in the writing preparation. Moreover, the critical reading strategies are able to support the students avoiding the plagiarism in their essay because this strategies require the students to do paraphrasing before they write down the information from articles and books.

**Keywords:** *Case Study, Critical Reading Strategies, Academic Writing Course.*

### INTRODUCTION

Based on the Certificate of Directorate General of Higher Education Number 152/E/T/2012, one of the requirements to graduate from the undergraduate program is writing paper which published in a science journal publisher. The reason behind this policy is the number of papers from higher education in Indonesia less than other countries. It can be compared with Malaysia in 2012, the comparison between Indonesia and Malaysia in Writing paper is 1:7. In order to increase the number of writing paper from higher education, the government adds this policy as one of the requirements to graduate from the undergraduate program.

As one of the leading universities in Indonesia, Sebelas Maret University applies the policy to write a paper as one of the requirement for the students to graduate. It can be seen in Regulations of the Sebelas Maret University's Chancellor Number 582/UN27 /HK/2016 Section XI about Thesis or Final Project chapter 16 verse 12. After writing the thesis, the students of Sebelas Maret University must write an article which based on their thesis. The article must be published in the university home page or in another national journal web publisher.

Sebelas Maret University as one of the universities in Indonesia, it must apply a curriculum that called as KKNi. This curriculum is written on the Constitution Number 12 year 2012 chapter 35 about

curriculum. Also, it states that all of the higher education must follow that policy and each university can develop the application of this which refers to National Standards for Higher Education to the all faculties. English education as one of the majors in Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Sebelas Maret University follows that curriculum. Based on the curriculum, there are several courses which must be taken by the students of English education.

There are four compulsory skills courses, one of them is writing. The writing course is used to help and prepare the students in writing their future thesis and articles. In this academic year, the students of the fourth semester will get academic writing course. In this course, the students will write some kinds of writing which used as the assignment. Before starting to write the assignment, the students must do a brainstorming through reading some academic articles as their references and make the summaries of those academic articles.

The relation between reading and writing is important, Khrasan (1984) defines in increasing the students' reading has more effect in producing gain in the students' writing. Moreover, Lopez in Al-Sadaat (2004, p. 217) states in writing a text mean that the writer uses his experience and knowledge as a reader and in helping a writer becomes a good writer the first thing must do is making an improvement of the writer's reading skill. Pamuji (2015, p. 3) adds that based on the students' achievement in reading will affect the students' writing achievement because both of those skills are related. It means that having good reading will help the students have good writing.

However, Hermida (2009, p. 20) states that most of the students in university

got difficulties in reading an academic text because they use non-university strategies to read academic texts, which results in students taking a surface approach to read. Moreover, she stated that the university students must have a higher level in understanding the written text and the level of text difficulty provides in the university is higher than the high school.

There are various strategies to conduct reading in to the classroom, one of them is critical reading strategies. McDonald in Tomasek (2009, p. 127) states that critical reading is one of the alternative ways in reading which requires the students' understanding beyond the common approaches to read, such as information processing or personal response towards the text. Collins in Talebi (2015, p.1181) defines critical reading is a way or technique in teaching the students to think while they are in a reading activity. It is illustrated in learning how to evaluate, drawing the inferences, and making a conclusion based on the texts which have read.

According to Manarin et al. in Larking (2017, pp. 52-53), critical reading has several meanings, but it can be split into two terms, those are critical reading for academic purpose and critical reading for social engagement. There are several key skills in reading critically for academic purpose: (1) identifying the textual elements; (2) distinguishing between the main idea and supporting ideas; (3) evaluating credibility; (4) making judgement towards the text; (5) making relevant inferences about the text.

Based on the "The Writing Process" (2014), the result of the critical reading of undergraduate students is an academic writing. In writing the academic writing, the students need critical reading strategies and critical thinking. The students challenge is to

read critically, discover some of the major theories, concepts, and scholarship of various disciplines, analyze what they read and hear in class, and produce evidence of their mastery of facts, theories, methods, and academic genres.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Critical Reading

Wallace (2003, pp. 42-44) defines critical reading as the set of process which focuses more on the interpretation of the text and it involves to assume the main issue, find the strengths and weaknesses of the text, make a critique regards to the logic, argument or sentiments expressed in the text, and do analysis towards the text. Kress in Wallace (2003, p, 27), critical reading is an activity requires the readers to find the detail information, do analyze to the text by replacing the general message of the text with the reader personal interpretation, find the strengths of a text, its arguments, develop the students' thinking towards the main issue and make a critique relates to the issue. Koay (2015), critical reading as the process in which the readers must find the strengths and weaknesses of the text and the information contains in the text through a set of strategies.

Wallace (2003, p.43) provides the purposes of critical reading and he divides the purposes into three main purpose, those are linguistic, conceptual or critical, and cultural. Linguistic has some purpose, those are: involves helping the students to acquire an understanding the nature of ideological meanings which attach in the text and obtains the students' grammatical knowledge. Conceptual or critical has several goals, those are: It used to develop the student's epistemic literacy, which means the students are able to move beyond the text and develop a strong arguments towards the text and also helps the students

discuss the implications of the events which describe in the text and make cognitive and critical link to their lives. Cultural is used to promote perception into cultural assumption and practices, similarities and differences across national boundaries. The second of the cultural purpose in critical reading is the students have an opportunity to observe new culture and share the different cultural perspective.

There are some elements in critical reading which described by Wallace and Wray (2011, pp. 12-31), those are: trying to work out the author's aim, trying to work out the structure of the argument, trying to identify the main claims made, adopting a skeptical stance towards the authors' claims and checking that those claims are supported by appropriate evidences, assessing the backing for any generalizations made, considering how the authors define their key term and checking whether they are consistent in using them or not, considering what underlying values may be guiding the authors and influencing their claims, keeping an open mind, willing to be convinced, find the instances of irrelevant or distracting material, and for the absence of necessary material, and identify any literature sources to which the authors refer.

Meanwhile, Kurland (2000) in his site [www.criticalreading.org](http://www.criticalreading.org) defines some elements in critical reading, those are: interpretation and assertion of underlying the text meaning. The interpretation covers two terms, the first is recognizing a text as a presentation. It has several elements, such as: the existence of a beginning, middle, and end, the use of illustrations to explicate remarks, the use of evidence to support remarks, the use of stylish language to portray topics, and organization, or a method of sequencing remarks – such as whether chronological, different aspects of

the topic, steps in a logical sequence. The second is describing the elements embedded in the text, those elements are: the nature of the examples – what the examples are examples *of*, the nature of the evidence – what kinds of authorities are invoked, what types of evidence are provided, and the nature of the choice or terms– what types of terms are applied to what topics.

According to Peters (1991, pp. 11-12), critical reading strategies have four stages. They are (1) reading for comprehension (2) interpreting the text (3) judging the text and (4) writing. While Barnett and Bedau (2014, pp. 34-45) defines four stages in critical reading, those are mentioned there are four steps in critical reading process, they are previewing; skimming to find the thesis; reading with careful eye: underlying, highlighting, annotating, summarizing and paraphrasing.

### **Writing**

According to Nunan (1998, p. 88), writing is the process of thinking to establish ideas, thinking about how to express into a good writing, and arranging the ideas into statement and paragraph clearly. Brown (2000, p. 336) claims that the product of writing is often the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures which require specialized skill and also the focus of students in writing is how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final project. In the addition Brown (2000, p. 335) states the simply view of writing as the written language is simply the graphic representation of spoken language and the written performance is much like oral performance, the only difference lying in graphic. This is supported by Harmer (2007, p. 255) that writing includes to the

productive skill besides speaking, in which the language users are require the ability to produce language both spoken and written

Brown and Hood (1993, pp. 3-8) there are three main stages of the writing process, they are: preparing to write, drafting, and revising.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method used in this research is case study which categorized as the qualitative study. Goddard and Melville (2006, p.9) state that case study research is one kind of research which studies about a specific situation or condition either to observe if the situation or condition gives benefits to any general theories or to observe if existing general theories are borne out by the specific situation. Given (2016, p. 68) states case study is one of the research methods which studied in depth about one or some instances of an event. In qualitative case study research, the case or the event must be seen as the formation and/or path-dependent entities.

The research was carried out at the fourth semester of English education students at one of the universities in Surakarta the academic year of 2017/2018 during December 2017 until November 2018. The sample in this research is 15 students of class B1 from the fourth semester of English education which consists of four males and eleven female students. The writer used observation, questionnaire, interview, and document analysis as the instruments to collect the data for this study.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### The Implementation of Critical Reading Strategies in Writing Course

The critical reading strategies implemented in the academic writing course started from the second meeting that held on Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018. In each meeting of this course consists of two teaching (100 minutes).

The all stages of critical reading strategies did not implement in a meeting, but each stage of critical reading must be matched with the writing process in the academic writing course. However, there are three steps in writing, they are: preparing to write, drafting, and revising. While in critical reading strategies consist of four main stages, they are (1) reading for comprehension, (2) interpreting, (3) judging, and (4) writing.

Based on the observation result, the real teaching and learning activity in the academic writing course started at the second meeting that was hold on February, 27<sup>th</sup> 2018. In this first teaching and learning activity, the lecturer implemented the first stage of critical reading strategies that are reading for comprehension with the first step of writing that is preparing to write. As stated by Wallace and Wray (2011, p. 7), the combination between critical reading and writing is needed, the students' critical reading of others' work will usually do during the students' writing preparation.

Reading for comprehension is an activity in which to help the students get more understanding about the issues or topics of their writing assignments. Peters (1991, p. 11) states that critical reading will start with reading for comprehension because the need to comprehend and remember about the text the students read is a basic to any reading activities. Through

this step, the students start to gain some information, such as the issue or the topics and supporting information about the issues or the topic of the students' writing.

Then, the students should find the outward features of the academic article which cover the journal name, the title of the article, and the author. The activity continued to find some information such as the aims of the articles which could be done through spot-reading towards the text, the claims, the reasons, the evidence, and the findings and discussion of the articles.

The activity which has done by the students afer reading for comprehension is interpreting. According to Peters (1991, p. 31), the next step after reading for comprehension of critical reading strategies is interpreting. In interpreting the students must write down what they are thinking, give a response to the articles they have read, and the forms of it involve diary, notes, and essay. Based on the observation and interview had done with the students, they are interpreting through deliver their minds toward the articles they had read into some short summaries. So, the time to do this stage is the same as the reading for comprehension activity that is from the second meeting which held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018 until April, 10<sup>th</sup> 2018. Also, in this stage the students write their perspective of the research to their environment.

Before moving to the next stage of critical reading strategies that is judging, it is important for the students to do the interpreting. Through the interpreting stage, the students make sure about their understanding and information in the articles they read. One of the activities which can do by the students in this stage is rereading. The rereading is different with the reading at the first time. As stated by Peters (1991, p. 32), in interpreting includes rereading to

explore various aspects of the texts and selecting point for emphasis.

Judging is done after the two previous activities in critical reading strategies. The students of writing course give their critics toward the text that they have read. They deliver their personal thoughts to this stage. This stage is still implemented in the preparing to write and the result of this stage put on the summary writing that has to submit in each meeting. Through this activity the students express their opinion or point of view about the issue which appear in the text that the students have read. it is supported by Peters (1991, p. 11), the third stage of critical reading strategies is judging. Judging is the result of interpreting process. In this stage, the students act as a critic and deliver their opinion about the overall qualities of a text.

The last stage in critical reading strategies is writing. The students are encouraged to combine the three previous stages into writing. Peters (1991, pp. 11-12) states that writing is the activity in which three previous stages are combined. Through this last stage, the process of critical reading strategies are complete.

Actually, there are some kinds of writing that should be done by the students during the writing course. The first is write a note which has two type, they are page annotation and research note. The students have done to write the page annotation when they got the importance or interesting information in the text. The second type of note is the research note. The students write the research notes from the articles that they have read in their blog. in this research note, the students not only write the theories about the variables of the research, but they write the findings of the research too. This research note was started at the second meeting and ended in the seventh meeting.

The students report their research note to the lecturer in each meeting through send the link of their blog. The students write the research note through a direct quotation which indicates with the quotation marks and make a summary to the last two part of the research note above. Actually, in writing the summary towards the students understanding of the academic articles that they have read, the students were encouraged to write their opinion and perspective about the issues which are embedded into the text. The students' lists started with the identity of the journal articles, the main theory used, the findings, and it ended with writing the students' opinion towards the implication in their present or future environments.

The second kind of writing that done by the students in that writing course is an essay. The essays are submitted at the end of the course and it is used as the final project of the writing course. The students do critical research essay which must be submitted at the last of this course that held on the May, 29th 2018. In writing this critical response essay, the students can put the information that they have got from reading for comprehension, interpreting, and judging activity into an essay. Also, before they submit the final essay, the students submit the draft first in the middle term and consult their writings to the lecturer. It used to make sure what the students have written is arrange properly.

### **To What Extent the Critical Reading Strategies Support the Students Writing**

This second issue relates to what extent critical reading support the students in the academic writing course. Wallace and Wray (2011, p. 6) state that the combination between reading and writing has some advantages if the students did it, those

advantages are: the first is that the combination between critical reading and writing could improve the students' understanding about the topic of the written text and the students are able to make a plan of their writing which is inspired by the writer. The second, the students are able to identify the research's gaps and the last is having reading for many written sources will give good effect to the quality of the students' writing. It is in line with the students' condition in the academic writing course. Through the first and second stage of critical reading, those are reading for comprehension and interpreting, the students are able to have more understanding towards the topics of their writing. Since the students read some sources which have the same variable on them and differentiate some aspects of the text which they need.

There are some elements in the critical reading which are suitable to the elements of writing those should be gained by the students through reading for comprehension stage. Before the students start to write, they should make sure that the information which put into the students' writing is valid and trusted. The students need to include the elements of critical reading as the component of their writing assignment. Based on the questionnaire result the students are able to gain those elements of writing through reading for comprehension in critical reading strategies. It can be seen on the questionnaire result that the students give positive response in indentifying and finding the elements. The average of percentage in finding and identifying the elements of critical reading is 78,5%.

In order to use the articles as their sources, the students must choose which articles are suitable with their topics. This is another benefit from doing critical reading in the article, because the students are able

to analyze whether the information and the data provided are suitable or not. This activity could be done while the students interpreting the text that they read. Because through this step the students not only making a simple summary but they should have more understanding to the aspect of the texts. This condition is in line with the statement provided by Wallace (2003, pp. 42 - 44), he defines critical reading as the set of process which focuses more on the interpretation of the text and it involves to assume the main issue, find the strengths and weaknesses of the text, make a critique regards to the logic, argument or sentiments expressed in the text, and do analysis towards the text. So, before the students make critique to the articles they read, it is important to do interpretation to the articles firstly. It is supported by Rosdiana (2016, p. 68), critical reading and writing are two tools for teaching and learning. The reading activity is not the passive activity, but it relates the interaction between the text and the reader. So, when the students are reading the text they are not only taking some sentences in the text, but they should interpret and think about what they have read through writing.

After doing the interpretation, the student do judge or critic to their interpretation towards the article. In order to build the students' argument is not easy because to make the argument become valid and strong, it must be organize properly with the suitable information that support it.

By doing judging to the text that the students read, it means that they are able to make an opinion about the topic or issue which is arising in the texts that they read. This stage is very helpful to the students because one of the assignments in the class is to make an argumentative essay. The students are able to use their judgment in

their drafts as their opinion about the topics in the students' writing. Most of the students in the writing course do judging towards the text that they read.

There are two types of writing that have been done by the students of the academic writing course, they are making a summary and writing an essay. The writing summary activity is started from the second meeting. The summaries were written after the students do the reading activity and interpretation. In their summaries, they added a critique towards the issue of the journal articles. The summary result could be used by the students as one of the information sources in their writing final assignment. Based on the questionnaire which has been distributed to the students, before the students write their summary on the blog, 73 % of students write down their ideas and information they got in a note.

In making a summary, the students relate what they have understood with their social environment condition. The students thought the effects if the method or techniques used in the articles they have read is implemented in the students' environment. The example of students' interpretation could be seen in their summary report. After they explain about the contents of the text use their own language, they make an interpretation about the topic and relate it to their social perspective. One of the examples comes from student with initial GD. In his interpretation, he explains about the effect of a new activity which is implemented in the class will give good effect to the students.

The second assignment is essay. The essay is used as the final assignment of writing course. The students compile the whole information that they have drafted into a good essay. Before submitting the final essay, at the middle exam the students

submitted the draft of their essay, then the lecturer checked the students' draft and gave suggestion about what information that the students should add into their final essay.

In finishing the writing of a summary and an essay, the students should do paraphrase because summary and paraphrase cannot be separated. Paraphrasing is writing the sentences or information that the students get into their own language. So, the students should think about what they read and transfer it into their own language as explained by the lecturer in the course that paraphrasing is needed in academic writing course.

## IMPLICATIONS

The use of critical reading strategies could support the students in the writing process, especially in the pre-writing stage in which the students need to prepare for what they are going to write. In order to produce good writing, the students should organize their ideas, opinions, and supporting information in writing properly. The critical reading strategies as one of the ways to help the students organize their ideas, opinions, and the supporting information. The critical reading strategies not only help the students understand the sources of the students' writing but also help the students to develop their mind beyond the understanding. The students are able to make a critique and judgment toward the texts which are used as the students' writing sources. Also, through the critical reading strategies, the students do paraphrase into their writing and use some quotation in some relevant theories or research that they used. The students can be avoided from plagiarism, because the students write their sentences use their own languages. However, the use of critical reading in writing course can give new experience to the students during the teaching and learning



process, develop the students' reading and writing abilities, and support the students in the writing process, especially in the writing preparation.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research finding and discussion, the implementation of the critical reading strategies has a big role during the writing preparation activity of the writing process. In the reading for comprehension the students not only understand and comprehend about the main content of the text, but the students must know the whole information and the elements of the texts, the students are able to identify the elements of the text such as identify the claims, express the reasons, and find the evidence towards an issue. The Judging activity provides the students are to deliver their point of view and opinion about the issue or which embedded in the text. The writing activity encourages the students to write, not only in a kind of writing but in three kinds of writing. Also, the students learn how to do a paraphrase and quote during the implementation of critical reading strategies in writing course and the students are aware to not do a plagiarism into their writing, because they have learned how to paraphrase and quote other's theories. Although, there are some problems arising in using critical reading strategies in writing course. From the lecturer points of view: the first is to implement the critical reading needs long time and process, because to build the students understanding a topic or issue is not easy. Second, combining the critical reading and writing for the first time to the students need more attention. The students might get more pressure in doing the assignments.

As it has been known that critical reading strategies is helpful for the students in the writing process. So, designing the

writing course which combines to the critical reading strategies is good decision of the lecturers. Through the critical reading strategies which used during the writing process, the lecturer is able to help the students to have an activity which support them to do their assignments. However, in producing the writing the students should not do a plagiarism. Besides checking the students' writing by herself, it is better to the lecturer to give an instruction for the students to check the plagiarism into an application and report the result before submitting their assignments.

Moreover, it is better for the institution to make a program which combines between reading and writing into a lesson. Because through that program the students' understanding towards an issue that they will write is developed properly. The students read what they want to write. In addition, by designing such kind of program will help the students to produce better writing and they will have better knowledge towards the issue of their writing.

For the other researcher, the writer suggests to find and investigate what are the factors which make the students get difficulties when the lecturer implements the critical reading strategies in writing course. Hopefully, it will gain the variety of strategies in teaching and learning activities of a writing course or other fields.

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