

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background that explains why this research is fascinating to be conducted and elaborates on several theories.

A. Background

It is believed that the character of the 21st century is the development of internet technology and the abundance of information is widespread rapidly. According to Niklewicz (2017), the information mostly emerges on social media which is becoming the dominant source of information for significant parts of societies. Moreover, Zhang at al. (2019) said that the use of social media as a place for spreading fake news has risen significantly. It negatively affects the public debate, such as the spreading of fake news and the creation of ‘echo chambers’ of like-minded users who become isolated from alternative opinions (Schackmuth, 2018).

In the 21st century, students of higher education are challenged to distinguish between fact and fake news and understand the issues in social media since they live in a time in which online media, online news, and online communication have an unprecedented level of social, political and economic relevance (Rehm, 2018). Added by Leeder (2019), the active users of social media are students of higher education. Moreover, Barthel, Mitchell, & Holcomb (2016) explained that A survey was conducted by Pew Research Center found that nearly a quarter of American adults (23%) admit to sharing fake news in the past, either knowingly or not.

Regarding fake news, Haryati & Hidayati (2017) stated that fake news always refers to negative perception, such as fakes, lies, frauds, and pranks. Added by Rehm (2018), fake news often refers to numbers of misinformation around online news production and manipulation. Fake news is intentionally fabricated and disseminated by stakeholders to mislead the readers’ opinion.

According to Allcott & Gentzkow (2017), among the most prominent concerns is the impact of false or misleading information.

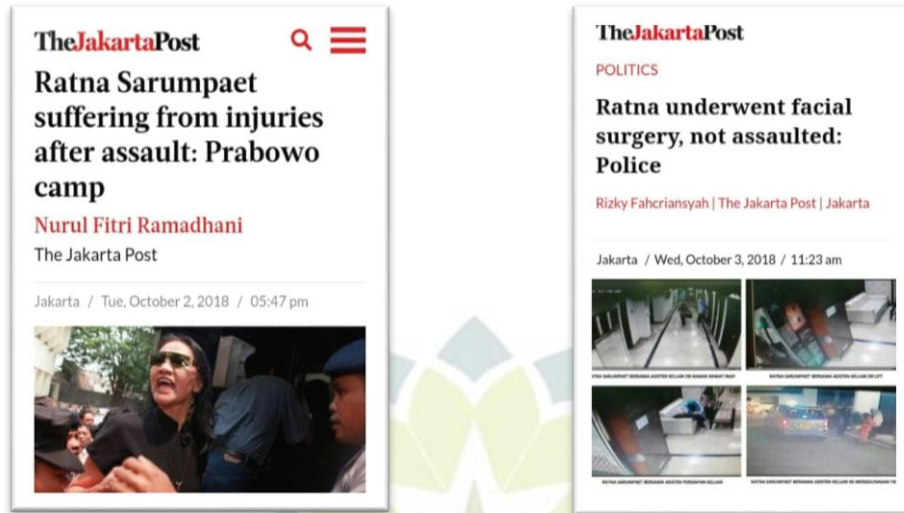


Figure 1.1. Example of fake news and fact news.

One of the suggested ways to identify the news is that the readers have to read another resource and then compare them. Such as the news above, the researcher identifies the first news (left) and then the researcher read another resource (right) to compare to the first news, and it can be concluded that the first news is fake news.

Facing this phenomenon, students need to have good critical thinking skills to prevent misinformation. According to Haryati & Hidayati (2017), critical thinking is one of the cognitive domains that increase problem-solving and decision-making skill. Moreover, Barnet & Bedau (2011) added analysis and evaluation skills. Analysis means finding the parts of the problem and then separating them, trying to see how things fit together; and evaluation, judging the merit of claims and assumptions and the weight of the evidence in their favor.

Critical thinking is an important aspect which is learned in the university in the United State (Nicholas & Raider-Roth, 2016). Zivkovic (2016) stated that critical thinking is one of the main objectives of the contemporary curriculum. The teaching of critical thinking in the university fosters students to sharpen their ability to identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and explaining. Therefore, Haryati & Hidayati (2017) explained that by using critical thinking, students are capable of sharing their idea and be accepted by others. It is because students who have higher order thinking can deliver their idea in another perspective.

Unfortunately, a limited observation conducted by the researcher in one of the universities in West Java – Indonesia found that students get difficulty to think critically such as analyzing the issue of the text, discussing (questioning and answering) to the text, and solving the problems. It can be proven when the teacher stimulates them to think critically by asking them to analyze the text and give questions to the text, only 10 from 35 students could practice these skills. This is serious problems, because comprehending the issue of the text may save them from being attacked and spread misleading information.

The study was conducted by Hernandez & Rodríguez (2015). They investigated students' critical thinking through the transactional reading approach. Their study was participated by with 32 EFL learners in eleventh grade (14 males and 18 females) who were 15 to 18 years old. This study used three kinds of collecting data such as note which focused on EFL learners' critical comments on the events and characters of the stories as well as their commentaries on their own lives and experiences; interviews were also used. Interviews established dialogues with the participants by asking questions to elicit information that was not otherwise possible to be observed, including thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, and feelings about the experience; and the third data collection instrument consisted of the worksheets that the participants completed during the pedagogical intervention. These worksheets served as artifacts. Artifacts are the materials used or manipulated by the participants during the research process. The result was found that using transactional approach to

reading could be a useful method in the EFL classroom in that it encouraged learners to build critical thinking skills as they established individual transactions with the texts and social transactions with their partners.

To fulfill the gap, the previous research concerned on using transactional reading approach to emerge students' critical thinking skills, while in this research the researcher used fake news as an authentic material to foster students' ability in identifying through the teaching of critical thinking since fake news consists of lied, unreal, and manipulated information.

B. Research Questions

From the description above, this research is intended to answer the two following questions:

1. How is the process of teaching critical thinking implemented by the teacher to foster students' ability in identifying fake news?
2. What are the cores of critical thinking skill achieved by the students seen from students' answers related to the fake news?

C. Research Objectives

From the research questions above, this study is aimed at obtaining the two following objectives:

1. To find out the process of teaching critical thinking implemented by the teacher to foster students' ability to identify fake news'
2. To explore the cores of critical thinking skills achieved by the students seen from students' answers to the fake news.

D. Research Significances

Theoretically, this research is significant for the readers, particularly teachers and students, to acknowledge information about critical thinking skills in critical reading class. Practically, this research can provide an alternative media in teaching critical thinking to foster students' ability to identify fake news.

E. Research Framework

Talking about critical thinking, Fisher (2011) defined critical thinking as the ability to interpret, analyze, and evaluate ideas and arguments. Moreover DeWaelche (2015), critical thinking is related to the ability to assess, judging, or evaluating the problems. On the other hand, Facione (2010) stated that critical thinking is cognitive skills, including interpretation, analysis, evaluation, explanation, and self-regulation.

The teaching of critical thinking in critical reading class would be the best strategy to enhance students' critical thinking skills (Haryati & Hidayati, 2017) since it is one of the courses offered by the university. In this course, students are firstly demanded to discuss facts from the text, then it moves to the analytical phase, and the final stage students can interpret to what they have read. Thus, Tabačková (2015) explained that critical thinking and critical reading are two distinct concepts that cannot be separated. Critical reading should be understood as an active reading which enables the readers to find specific information in a text such as understanding the organization of the text, extracting the main ideas, checking comprehension, and etc. While critical thinking enables readers to reflect on what they have read shaped by discussing the text, questioning to the text, and interpreting of the text related to the real life.

Moreover, fake news is used as authentic teaching material to enhance students' critical thinking skills and avoid them from misleading information. As a matter of fact, fake news refers to lies presented as news in such a way that the readers might believe that it is legitimate news articles (Mustafaraj & Metaxas, 2017). However, fake news is being produced and the problem of social polarization is becoming serious. according to Jang et al. (2018), it is essential to identify the origins and evolutions of fake news.

F. Previous Studies

There are a lot of researches related to the topic of this study. The first is coming from Bernstein & Isaac (2018) who investigated critical thinking components of online discussion and how to use them in evaluation rubrics that guide the structure and content of these discussions; and formulate assessment of online discussion. His research used a sequential exploratory, first is mixed-method study that consists of qualitative focus group research. The objective of the focus group discussion was to generate critical thinking descriptors for the seven evaluative criteria related to critical thinking that were identified in the literature review. And the second is quantitative survey research. A survey questionnaire was developed from the seven criteria and 21 descriptors. The survey data were loaded in an SPSS data file, and reliability analysis and factor analysis procedures were performed on SPSS 23 software in order to test the internal consistency of the 21 descriptors as a composite index for a comprehensive model of critical thinking. The participants of his research are thirty faculty members from 29 colleges and universities across the United States and Canada. The online survey was distributed through the Survey Monkey program to 90 faculty members at a private, nonprofit, southeastern university. Forty-eight faculties responded to the first two questions about teaching online; we suspect that faculty who do not use online discussion in their courses did not complete the questionnaire. Thirty-five respondents completed the questionnaire. However, due to missing values, the number of “complete” respondents was reduced to 29. And the result shows 63% of the participants represented logic and evidence perspective.

The second research is from Khalili Sabet at al. (2017). His study was investigated the effect of teaching critical thinking through problem solving on Iranian male and female EFL students’ reading comprehension. The selected participants in his study were twenty male and twenty female. They were aged between seventeen and twenty-six. The data gathered in the current study were quantitative and using a quasi-experimental with a factorial design. There were

two groups of control and experimental and their reading comprehension scores of pre-test and post-test were compared. Instructing CT had a statistically significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension and teaching CT brought better understanding of the text. However, there was no significance difference between male and female performance regarding their CT ability. In fact, this result showed there was no relationship between CT and gender.

