CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer presents: A) background, B) identification of the problems, C) formulation of the problems, D) objectives of the problems, and E) significances of the study.

A. Background

Teaching and learning process in this era must involve the 21st century learning skills, which is also known as 4Cs, namely critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication. First, critical thinking is related to how students can find a way to solve their problems. Based on Stauffer (2020), most students are too often becoming the passive information receptors. It does not happen because they are not smart. Usually, they do not know how to develop and apply their critical ideas. Unfortunately, one of the weaknesses in our education system is lacking of teaching critical thinking skills. Most students are seldom able to express their own ideas. They also lack of expressing their opinion or providing any sort of evidence. Lacking of critical thinking will surely give the impact on the students' ability (Flores et al., 2012). That is why teachers are now expected to be able to equip their students with critical thinking and communication skills (Braun et.al, 2012). Second, creativity is a way to make the students able to think out of the box. Albert Einstein once said, "Creativity is seeing what everyone else has seen, and thinking what no one else has thought." This skill is indeed important in this era because being creative helps people become a better problem solver in all areas of their life and work. In fact, developing students' creativity can come from all sides. Teachers can make an approach by broadening students' horizon and connecting the material taught across some academic majors. In fact, creative thinking can facilitate deeper cross-curricular learning. Creativity also helps people see things differently. Studies show that creative people can live with uncertainty better than just to have a flat life because they can adapt themselves using their creative mind. Third, collaboration means that teachers have to make their students get used to working with their peers and share what they

understand. In addition, communication skill is needed in order to make the other skills work well. These learning skills (the 4C's) can make the students understand the mental required to adapt and improve themselves so they can adopt a modern work environment.

LB-LIA is a language institution whose vision is to become the best learning center in Indonesia. It is spread all over Indonesia including Palembang. LB-LIA Palembang which is accredited "A" for almost 10 years always tries to create a pleasant learning atmosphere and fulfil the intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs. One way to make it true is by implementing the 21st century learning skills in class which involves the 4Cs.

LB LIA students vary from elementary school students to college students. In addition, there are also employees who study there. The programs offered are GEYL (General English for Young Learners) for Elementary School students, ET (English for Teens) for Junior High School students, GEA (General English for Adults) for Senior High School students and above, and ESP (English for Specific Purposes). In all those programs, the students are exposed with the 4Cs, namely communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. They are expected not only to understand English, but also to apply what they have learned in their daily life. This means that the students must be able to work with their peers by being communicative and creative as well as being able to think critically.

Based on the writer's observation when teaching in LB-LIA Palembang, most students, especially students of English for Teens (ET) 6 classes, still find difficulties to develop their critical thinking. It may happen because of lacking of the exposure from the teachers. Once the students think that they cannot answer the teacher's question, they tend to become passive. They feel reluctant to get involved since they feel that they will get stuck once they have to deal with questions that need deeper thought and understanding.

Actually, all students are expected to be able to answer not only lower order of thinking (LOT) questions, but also higher order of thinking (HOT) questions which require their critical thinking. That is why students who have been taught the grammar format still have to answer questions that require their critical thinking skills. They do not only create sentences using the correct form of grammar but also apply their critical thinking skills. This way is implemented to

all students from all programs, including English for Teens students. Although ET 6 students are still junior high school students, they are hoped to be able to answer questions such as:

- What would it be like if … ?

- What could happen if … ?

- What other outcomes might have happened?

- What would it be like if … ?

- What could happen if … ?

- What other outcomes might have happened?

- How would you solve ……..?

- What do you think of………..?

In fact, there are many ways that teachers can do to help their students develop their critical thinking skill. One of them is by asking them to give feedback to their peers' learning performance. Based on Michael Henderson, a Project Researcher from Monash University, feedback is a process where the students are able to make sense of information about their performance and use it to enhance their work quality and/or learning strategies.

Commonly, feedback is given by the teachers. Teachers need to know that feedback which is given must not only be aimed to grade the students but they have to focus more on improving the students' performance. As Hattie, et.al. (2014) stated that feedback tends to make sense more when it is aimed to improve the students' performance than just grade them.

Unfortunately, the feedback given by teachers can sometimes demotivate the students. It may happen because students consider feedback as a judgement of what they have done (Boud, et.al., 2013). This is another thing that the writer also realizes. Another challenge faced by teachers of junior high school students is that the students seem to be demotivated all the time (Zamboni, 2019). Even feedback from teachers can also demotivate them. That is why the writer thinks that it will be better if the feedback is given by their peers.

Peer feedback which is also called as peer assessment means a process in which the students evaluate or are evaluated by their peers (Van Zundert, et.al., 2010). Applying peer feedback or peer assessment can directly promote the development of evaluation skills,

critiquing abilities, communication skills and also students' self-awareness. According to Cho and MacArthur (2010), feedback which is given by many students can be more advantageous compared to feedback given by the teacher only. Nicol (2015) also stated that students are actually able to support and evaluate one another. In addition, Brown (2004) mentioned that peer-assessment is considered as one kind of many tasks and procedures which focuses on student-centered and collaborative education.

Thus, some studies also show that peer feedback is also important because teaching and learning is actually a two-way process that involves both teacher and students. Unfortunately, not many teachers, especially the elementary and junior high school teachers, are willing to ask their students to give peer feedback because they think that self-reflection in their teaching process is a difficult task to conduct. They may also feel that their students are not ready to give an informative assessment which can support their learning.

Besides helping students develop their critical thinking, asking students to give peer feedback can also increase their motivation to perform better. Pearce,et.al (2009) stated that feedback can motivate and improve students' performance. For this purpose, it is important that teacher provide effective and appropriate way in giving feedback. Furthermore, a study conducted by Falchikov (2001) has also proven that peer feedback is advantageous to improve students' learning motivation because it emphasizes on students' involvement during the process of giving feedback. Besides, it also shows that all students have equal status among themselves and it also comes as an alternative of promoting collaborative learning (Van Gennip, et.al, 2010).

Most studies which have been conducted usually focus on peer feedback given to college or university students in order to improve their writing skills. In the researcher's point of view, peer feedback can also be given to secondary level students to improve not only their writing skills but also their speaking skills. Many students commonly have problems in speaking, especially young learners. This can make them reluctant and unmotivated (Sanacore, 2008). It may happen because they are afraid of making mistakes which can make their friends laugh at them, or they are lack of vocabularies, etc. If the teacher asks the

students to give feedback on their friend's speaking performance, both the giver and the receiver will get benefit. They can assess their own ability as well as their friends'. Thus, they will become more aware with their own mistakes (Rizal, 2008).

Judging from the above illustration, the writer then decides to conduct an action research related to how giving peer feedback can improve ET 6 students' critical thinking. In this study, the writer wants to find out whether there is a significant increase in students' critical thinking after they are asked to give peer feedback. The writer carried out her study in LB LIA Palembang, especially in English of Teenager-6 (ET-6) students. She chose junior high school students because peer feedback is usually given to higher level students, like university students. Besides, there is no previous study discussing about giving peer feedback to lower level students, especially junior high school students. She wanted to know whether peer feedback given to junior high school students would also give similar impacts, like on higher level students.

Based on the data got from the observation, she found out that some students of hers found it difficult to answer higher order of thinking (HOT) questions although they had been guided with lower order of thinking questions. As what Anderson, et.al. (2001) stated that a teacher must start with lower order of thinking questions first to lead the students to higher order of thinking ones. If we jump directly to HOT questions, it will make them frustrated since they are suddenly expected to answer questions which need deeper understanding. Based on the observation when she taught in class, she found out that most students faced difficulty when answering some HOT questions. The following data show the result of students' level of critical thinking.

Table 1. ET-6 students' level of critical thinking

NO	NAME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	REMARK
1	STUDENT A		√	√					28%
2	STUDENT B		√	√				√	42%
3	STUDENT C	√	√	√			√		57%
4	STUDENT D	√	√	√	√		√	√	85%
5	STUDENT E	√							14%
6	STUDENT F	√	√		√			√	57%
7	STUDENT G		√						14%
8	STUDENT H	√	√						28%
9	STUDENT I	√	√		√				42%
10	STUDENT J	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	100%
11	STUDENT K	√							14%
12	STUDENT L	√		√					28%
13	STUDENT M	√	√		√				42%
14	STUDENT N								0%
15	STUDENT O	√							14%
16	STUDENT P	√	√	√					42%

Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Rubrics-of-Critical-Thinking-Test_tbl2_323233673/

Ban descriptor used to measure students' critical thinking:

1. Able to interpret evidence, statements, graphics, questions, literary elements, etc. accurately and thoroughly.

2. Able to analyze and evaluate key information, and alternative points of view clearly and precisely.

3. Able to examine beliefs, assumptions, and opinions and weigh them against facts fair-mindedly.

4. Able to draw insightful, reasonable conclusions.

5. Able to justify inferences and opinions.

6. Able to address and evaluate thoughtful major alternative points of view.

7.   Able to explain assumptions and reasons thoroughly.

Based on Table 1 above, only four students out of 16 students could fulfill more than 50% criteria of having good critical thinking skills. While the rest got below 50%. This has motivated the researcher to help her students develop their critical thinking skills. She planned to do this by implementing peer feedback.

B. Identification of the Problems

It is necessary that the researcher put attention on certain aspects in this research study. Thus, she focused on the problems and attained the research objective accurately. Based on the background of the study above, the writer could identify the areas of the problem, they are:

1.   Most ET 6 students find themselves difficult to develop their critical thinking skills. When they must answer higher order of thinking (HOT) questions, they usually wait for each other. They are lack of the initiative of expressing what they have in mind and think out of the box. They are not used to thinking critically because they are lack of practicing. They need more exposure to make them get used to thinking critically.

2.   ET 6 students are mostly demotivated when the teacher gives them feedback. They think that the teacher judges what they have done although the teacher does not mean to grade them when giving feedback.

3.   ET 6 students are rarely taught to give peer feedback because most teachers are afraid that they will not be able to do that. That is why most of them feel reluctant when they are asked to give feedback to their peers.

C.   Formulation of the Problems

Based on the proceeding identification above, this study presents the typical problem of English for Teens (ET) 6 students concerning their critical thinking skills in learning. This study also wants to find out the solution of how to increase the students' critical thinking. Hence, the problem of this study is formulated as follows:

How can the application of peer feedback improve English for Teens (ET) 6 students' critical thinking?

D.   Objectives of the Problems

The objective of this classroom action research is to improve English for Teens (ET) 6 students' critical thinking by the application of peer feedback in LB-LIA Palembang.

E.   Significances of the Study

This study will hopefully give meaningful contribution to the increase of English for Teens-6 (ET-6) students' critical thinking by the application of peer feedback in LB-LIA Palembang. Those benefits are specified as follows:

1. For the teachers.

   The findings of this study are expected to give useful information about how to increase the students' critical thinking through the application of peer feedback. Thus, teachers can continue asking students to give feedback to their peers.

2. For the students.

   The result of this study will show the students that giving peer feedback can actually improve their critical thinking. Hence, it is hoped that the students will continue giving feedback to their peers. In addition, it will also help them improve their way of behaving.

3. For the writer.

   This study can broaden her horizon about the importance of asking the students to give peer feedback because it can help them improve their critical thinking skills.

4. For the university.

   The University can get the outcomes from this classroom action research so they can improve the extension of strategy in teaching and it can be considered one of the institutional teaching references in the field of English language learning and teaching environment.

5. For the institution.

   The institution can get the outcomes from this classroom action research. It can be infected to other teachers so that they can use these outcomes to improve the students' critical thinking.