

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Since the rapid changes of information, communication and technology (ICT) have affected many sectors of life, it makes the world today's more globally and digitally connected. Cited from Johansen (2007) this change caused the world to become volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. In previous years, it was enough to master the "Three Rs" (reading, writing, and arithmetic) however; in this more complex world those skills are no longer relevant (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). In order to compete and contribute, it is a must for young generation to keep pace with changes, mastering the career skills needed for this global and digital era.

Critical thinking skill is one of the top lists of career success skill needed for new millennium learners which meets the urgent demand of new living era along with communication, collaboration, creativity and problem-solving (National Research Council, 2010). The necessity of integrating critical thinking skill in English language curriculum becomes current trends in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. In order to be able to read beyond the literal, to write convincing essays, to express their ideas with adequate supporting evidence, and to challenge other people's positions thus learners need the ability of critical

thinking (Zhao, Pandian, & Singh, 2016). As reviewed by (Dede, 2010), International Society for Technology in Education ICT Skills in 2007 claims the critical thinking skill domain required students to use critical thinking skill “to identify and define authentic problems, plan and manage activities to develop a solution, collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions, use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions”. Alongside with statement from (Trilling & Fadel, 2009), critical thinking and problem solving are considered as a new basis for 21st century learning. It is reflected metacognitive process that consists of a number of sub-skills such as analysis, evaluation, and inference which can increase the chance of producing logical conclusions for an argument or solution to a problem (Dwyer, Hogan, & Stewart, (2014). Having critical thinking skills becomes highly important since it will enable learners to gain a more complex understanding of the information they had and promote their good decision making and problem solving in real world applications to thrive in this sophisticated world.

The utilization of critical thinking skills has been widely developed in the field of education throughout the world including the United States and Asia. Based on Mok (2009) over the last decade, critical thinking has been the focus of curriculum reforms in Asia such as Singapore (National University of Singapore 2003) and Hong Kong (EC 2000). Some several studies related to syllabus analysis and implementation of critical thinking was conducted. The study was Developing Students’ Critical Thinking in Hong Kong Secondary School English Writing Classes at University of Hong Kong (Mok, 2009). The study aims to

investigate whether the 1999 critical thinking syllabus is translated into the classroom practices of two teachers through classroom observation. The finding revealed that the 1999 critical thinking syllabus was not translated into the classroom practices and students were constantly deprived of the opportunity or time to engage in critical thinking processes. The learning atmosphere did not seem to value critical thinking with no other critical thinking activities. Another study was an analysis of Higher Order Thinking and BRT in Language Skills Syllabus at English Literature Study Program of Universitas Negeri Jakarta conducted by Ulum, Bahrul (2019). His study aims at analyzing the higher order thinking skill in the learning outcomes of English language-skills syllabus at ELSP Universitas Negeri Jakarta. The result showed High Order Thinking Skill at the level C6 (Create, Procedural Knowledge) for 18% have been incorporated in syllabus of all courses.

Genre-based approach which is commonly known as one of the approaches to teaching writing through a text tend to be necessary and is closely related to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills including critical thinking skills. Hyland (2004) as cited in Hyland (2007) summarized some advantages of genre-based approach. Those advantages mentioned as explicit, systematic, needs-based, supportive, empowering, critical, and consciousness-raising. The most highlighting feature is that genre-based writing instructions offer students an explicit understanding of how target texts are organized and the reason why those texts are written that way. This happens to make students have critical thinking skills in order to understand and analyze in more complex ways of thinking. As Kusumaningrum (2015) stated

in her study, genre based approach facilitates students to reflect and criticize the ways of knowledge and information are organised and constructed in English in the form of argumentative text. A research by Rodriguez (2018) revealed a positive result of using critical thinking tasks in a genre-based environment to enhance the Intercultural Communicative Competence for higher education students.

According to curriculum adjustment in higher education nation-wide from Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia *No. 3 Tahun 2020* about regulation of the national standard of higher education in terms of curriculum, syllabus, learning material, learning activities, and also assessment which stated that holder of a bachelor's degree are required to have competencies to able to apply logical, critical, systematic, and innovative thinking in development's context or implementation of science and technology. Also, in order to meet the new demand of 21<sup>st</sup> century era, Indonesia government creates Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia (KKNI) or Indonesian Qualification Framework (IQF) whereas bachelor degree should be on the 6th IQF level (Republik Indonesia, 2012) which is expected to:

1. *Mampu mengaplikasikan bidang keahliannya dan memanfaatkan ilmu pengetahuan, teknologi dan/atau seni pada bidangnya dalam penyelesaian masalah seta mampu beradaptasi terhadap situasi yang dihadapi. Menguasai konsep teoritis bidang pengetahuan tertentu secara umum dan konsep teoritis bagian khusus dalam bidang pengetahuan tersebut secara mendalam, serta mampu memformulasikan penyelesaian masalah procedural.*

2. *Mampu mengambil keputusan yang tepat berdasarkan analisis informasi dan data, dan mampu membarikan petunjuk dalam memilih berbagai alternatif solusi secara mandiri dan kelompok.*

*3. Bertanggungjawab pada pekerjaan sendiri dan dapat diberi tanggung jawab atas pencapaian hasil kerja organisasi.*

Based on curriculum adjustment and IQF, the profil of graduates should involve those competencies. English language education study program at Universitas Negeri Jakarta is still in the process of developing such educational reform. Several studies have been conducted in terms of classroom observation yet there is study in analyzing the academic documents of the course. In order to contribute to curriculum adjustments and fill the gap by focusing on analysis of syllabus document, learning materials, and learning activities of English for Popular Science Communication as one of genre-based course at ELESP UNJ, this study will try to describe whether or not critical thinking skills which are one of the most essential skills in the 21st century have been incorporated in syllabus, learning materials, and learning activities of English for Popular Science Communication course. Since the study considering the relationship between popular science as genre that can promote learners' critical thinking, this recent study will add more reference to the current information for curriculum adjustment of ELESP UNJ.

### **1.2. Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study, this research tries to answer the two research questions as follow:

- 1) What aspects of critical thinking skills are addressed in the syllabus of the course?

- 2) What aspects of critical thinking skills are supported in the learning activity(s) of the course?

### **1.3. Research Purpose**

According to the research questions, this study is conducted to describe which aspects of critical thinking skills that have addressed and supported in the syllabus, and learning activity(s) in the English for Popular Science Communication course at ELESP UNJ.

### **1.4. Scope of the Study**

This study will be focused only on describing what aspects of critical thinking skill in the syllabus document to portray teacher's intention, and learning activity(s) to describe the implementation in English for Popular Science Communication course at English Language Education Study Program Universitas Negeri Jakarta. Alongside with the research questions, this study will try to identify the critical thinking skill aspects that have already addressed in that particular course.

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This present research is expected to give insight of the 21st century teaching and learning in the field of language education as well as contribute in providing further insight to syllabus revision as one of educational reform at ELESP UNJ. The study is carried out to establish a description of what aspects of critical thinking skills are addressed and supported in syllabus, and learning activity(s) in English for Popular Science Communication course which genre based context

used. The result of the study is expected to pioneer further research and development program related to the issue of 21st century teaching and learning process in English language education context.

