CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The background of the study, research questions, purpose, scope, and significance are all revealed in this chapter.

1.1   Background

Indonesian education has already developed since the changes in our country's conditions. One of the changes is the Covid-19 phenomenon, which has transformed some elements of education, such as learning methods, tools, strategies, and the recast of the curriculum itself. During the Covid-19 pandemic, learning must not occur in classrooms or through *PTM* (Face-to-Face Learning).

The sudden change from online learning has provided new opportunities and unanticipated obstacles to children, parents, and teachers. In such unusual situations, there is a need to assess parental perspectives and beliefs toward online learning and the willingness and acceptance to make the transformation successful (Dong et al., 2020).

In addition to getting used to the readiness of students and teachers to use technology in class during online learning, the existence of these conditions also forces students to improve their digital literacy skills. This skill is essential to make ongoing learning meaningful. Being curious and critical of the development of digital changes could be a new opportunity for teachers to innovate with teaching materials incorporated with the digital world using existing technology.

The switched model from offline learning to online learning now becomes hybrid learning also affects the learning tools and strategy. The strategy is how educators can encourage the parents' beliefs towards their children to improve their children's awareness in becoming autonomous learners, and the strategy to adjust with the new principles of the reformed national curriculum.

The rearrangement of the curriculum in Indonesia matches the needs-based changes in the condition. Curriculum reformulation relating to the current situation goes from the KTSP to the K13 Curriculum and becomes the Emergency Curriculum. K13 Curriculum is an update, revision, and improvement of the prior curriculum. This curriculum is a replacement for the KTSP program.

Since the implementation of the K13 Curriculum was revised and got some simplifications due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the name of this curriculum changed to the Emergency Curriculum. On 11th February 2022, according to the Voi.id news, the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, with all considerations, launched virtually a new program that has been discussed for a long time, namely *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Wahyuni & Winardi, 2022).

Kurikulum Merdeka is a fresh reformulation for education fields; it was released by the government as a product update constrained by the Covid-19, and the implementation needs significant preparation to optimize the program applied. This curriculum was released as a learning design that allows learners to think more independently.

The students have the freedom to learn according to their abilities while emphasizing the freedom to think innovatively, critically, and creatively (Laila et al., 2022). This new curriculum emphasizes character development. It dawns on us,

as teachers, to educate students' character development. It is our responsibility as teachers concerning the development of our students' morale in the teaching process. Not only can characters be taught, but they can also be transformed into soft skills.

This new regulation, *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, is a new policy from the Ministry of Education and Culture that teachers may utilize to assist students and improve their character and competence. Previously, character development was not considered a part of the written evaluation form and was not expressly included in the written score system. The new curriculum specifies what kinds of characters teachers must assess and develop. There are six elements of characters in *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* according to the Ministry of Education and Culture's statement; (1) fear of God and having noble character, (2) global diversity, (3) self-reliance attitude, (4) mutual cooperative, (5) being able to think critically, and (6) creative.

Profil Pelajar Pancasila is necessary for the learning process not only because it is included in the curriculum but also as a part of character education to shape and improve the quality of human resources, according to Fahmy, Bachtiar, Rahim, and Malik (2015) research findings in Mirizon & Inderawati (2021), the young generation must be instilled with character education from an early age. Character education aims to develop a foundation for lifelong learning, reinforce effective relationships in all aspects of life, and strengthen personal values and virtues for active engagement in a globalized society (Yudha et al., 2020).

The government's effort to internalize these six characteristics of Pancasila values in the learning process can be incorporated into the learning material given to the students. In preparing the learning process, the syllabus must be made as the

first step to integrating *Profil Pelajar Pancasila.* The syllabus contains KD (*Kompetensi Dasar*), which changes its name to CP (*Capaian Pembelajaran*) or learning achievement. It will be broken down into IPK (*Indikator Pencapaian Kompetensi*) in this *Kurikulum Merdeka* called TP (*Tujuan Pembelajaran*) or Learning Objectives and then becomes ATP (*Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran*) or Learning Activities.

With the primary step in the learning process based on the existing syllabus, the researcher in this study wants to observe and analyze the integration of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila's* element, specifically critical and creative thinking, in learning materials following the needs of students in the 21st-century.

Critical and creative thinking becomes the limitation of this study because the researcher wants to bring up this character as a soft skill that can strengthen the vocational high school graduates' soft skills. This skill can be an essential reason for the employees to solve problems, increase sensitivity in managing and processing strategy, and get a better job. Besides that, job seekers can look for employees who have strong critical and creative thinking skills, such as the ability to recognize the significance of data and utilize it to guide their decisions, recognize the advantages of using today's technology to produce, make an innovation and an improvement from the previous idea or product and assess possibilities before making a decision.

According to Heard et al. (2020), critical and creative thinking as a skill is a form of some abilities such as using inference to build many probable interpretations, oriented to the detail when developing an argument or problem-solving exercise, can detect their intentions whether their assumption induces or

affected by bias in discussions or not, can look at an issue from many and creative perspectives, design a strategy and prepared to invest the time required to make crucial decisions with the explanations and supporting evidence.

In conclusion, the requirements to be a critical and creative thinker are logical, reasonable, responsible for the information obtained, have good communication, not only stick to one point of view but also consider the views of others, and be detail oriented.

Critical and creative thinking skill is one of the thinking constructions which has already dealt with the needs of the times in this 21st-century era. Technology is essential when dealing with 21st-century learning to support the teaching and learning process that can be incorporated with critical and creative thinking as the elements mentioned in *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*.

Integrating creative and critical thinking in teaching materials is crucial for developing problem-solving skills. According to Lewis and Smith (1993), Black (2007), Lai (2011), in Heard et al. (2020), psychological theories of critical thinking emphasize the application of analysis and assessment to solving problems and making decisions in contexts rather than forms of knowledge or debate.

Critical thinking is defined as cognitive processes that are goal-oriented and purpose motivated. The goal can be to solve a problem, support a theory and models or statement, make a decision, and many more. Since the *Kurikulum Merdeka* requires students to "learn how to learn" and collaborate in groups to find solutions to problems in the real world.

Teachers can work around this through the learning materials and prepare them with learning strategies such as problem-based learning and project-based

learning. The purpose of providing a problem in learning material is to stimulate students' interest in the lesson at present. Before they understand the concept or topic related to the situation, students are given problems to solve (Safitri et al., n.d.).

The skills presented believe that critical thinking is more than just reflective thought. Other abilities, such as metacognition, problem-solving, and digital skills, have links and relationships that have led to constructing definitions of critical thinking. Halpern (1998) cited in Heard et al. (2020) mentioned that critical thinking is essential for problem-solving, logical analysis, probability assessment, and decision-making. Indeed, many definitions of critical thinking include a component of decision-making or problem-solving.

Meanwhile, the role of integrating creative thinking skills in improving students' problem-solving skills following Parnes, Noller, and Biondi (1977) cited in Munandar's (1985) statements which suggested a creative approach to solving problems by giving an example if there is a chaotic situation in which something is interfering, but the problem is still unclear. The root of the issue is unknown. Numerous steps must be addressed while solving problems creatively: acquiring information, problem identification, brainstorming stage, and seeking solutions.

Based on the background above, the researcher examines more deeply the implementation of critical and creative thinking in learning materials at the vocational high school levels, specifically at 22, 26, and 48 Jakarta Vocational High School by the model of learning in the 21st-century era and this research is focused on learning material in English subject because the research which focuses on English learning material that meets the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* specifically just

for critical and creative thinking elements as a skill at Vocational High Schools is still limited.

The recommendation from Samani et al. (2019) research article on this area is that there is a need to optimize the learning materials in further study. So that vocational high school students can enhance their analytical and reflective abilities to be critical and creative thinkers, and further study may come up with a more significant number of participants.

Therefore, the present study attempts to fill the gap by analyzing English learning materials that exist whether the existing English learning materials resources have been updated and optimized and to see if they relate to critical and creative thinking skills, which can increase aspects of analytical, skeptical with the changes and always looking for any possible benefit of the utilization new technologies and understanding problems in the part of problem-solving abilities.

Thinking critically consist of interpretation skills, followed by analysis, evaluation, and explanation skills, and thinking creatively consist of grasping new ideas from the collection of concepts. Students, however, still need help with their making-inference, giving various possibilities answers and self-regulation skills. The aim is to provide insight into applying *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, specifically critical and creative thinking elements, in the existing learning materials.

The importance of English language skills as the fixed subject under this study is related to the statement from Safira and Azzahra (2022) in their book entitled "*Addressing the Employability of SMK Graduates through Improved English Curriculum"* Improving the English language proficiency skills of Vocational high school students is crucial for Indonesia to upskill and raise the

competitiveness of its human capital for a contemporary business environment so that the potential benefits of the country's current "demographic bonus" are fully realized through the improvement of English language start from learning materials that will be combined with the urgency of integrating the elements of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* in *Kurikulum Merdeka,* especially for critical and creative thinking element.

1.2   Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, this research came up with the questions:

1.2.1 What indicators of critical thinking skills are integrated with English learning materials of vocational high school?

1.2.2 What indicators of creative thinking skills are integrated with English learning materials of vocational high school?

1.3   Objectives of the Study

The objectives relate to the research questions in this study are:

1.3.1 To analyze the integration of critical thinking indicators (Interpretation, Analysis, Inference, Evaluation, Explanation, and Self-regulation) in the learning materials for 10th graders of vocational high school students.

1.3.2 To analyze creative thinking indicators (Fluency, Flexibility, Originality, and Detail Elaboration) in the learning materials for 10th graders of vocational high school students.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The data retrieved are restricted to three vocational high schools in Jakarta; SMKN 22, 26, and 48 Jakarta.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute significantly to critical and creative thinking skills as the element of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. Theoretically, it can be used as a foundation for future research on integrating critical and creative thinking skills, particularly in English learning materials. The indicators arranged by the researcher can also be utilized by the education stakeholders to investigate the materials that integrate critical and creative thinking.

Practically, the existence of this study can be used by teachers in arranging learning materials appropriately following the syllabus and governments regulation and still suitable for schools' principals. Then it can be used to raise the student's awareness of the importance of developing their critical and creative thinking skills in learning English for their career development in the future.