

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, scope of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

In recent years, the majority of all school units have seen rapid progress in terms of facility purchases and improvement, teacher quality, and curriculum reform. As a result, secondary vocational schools have undergone many adjustments in an attempt to improve (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020). Various majors taught in vocational high schools, such as technology and engineering, information and communication technologies, accounting, marketing, and office administration, will increase students' chances of thinking critically and creatively.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has created a framework for developing the skills, aptitudes, and attitudes necessary for success in the workplace and in 21st century society (González-pérez & Ramírez-montoya, 2022). It categorizes competencies into three categories: (1) learning skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration), (2) literacy skills (information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy), and (3) life skills (flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and intercultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility). As it is established, critical and creative thinking skills are vital in preparing students for challenges of the modern world. Because of the rapid growth, students are more likely to use higher order thinking skills. Future teachers should be able to solve problems in order to assist students through the teaching-learning

process and help them develop their problem-solving skills. According to several experts, critical thinking requires using higher level analytical skills to analyze a problem and work toward a solution (Belecina & Ocampo. Jr, 2018). Furthermore, creativity is recognized as an important component in problem solving (Khalid et al., 2020).

In order to interpret, analyze, and evaluate information, arguments, or experiences with a set of reflective attitudes, skills, and abilities to inform our thoughts, beliefs, and actions, we must engage in critical thinking (Kivunja, 2015). While in producing something new or pay attention to novelty, we must engage to a dynamic activity that involves mental processes and the brain consciously, as known as creativity (Widiana et al., 2017, as cited in Yustina et al., 2020). Critical thinking (CT) and creativity (CrT), or the two are related, encompass cognitive abilities that are frequently linked to problem-solving. (Halpern & Dunn, 2021; Bonk & Smith, 1998; Paul & Elder, 2019, as cited in Silva et al., 2022). While Sternberg (2003) argues that analytical or practical thinking and creative thinking are relatively different as skill sets, decisions and critical assessments are always made by both participants and observers throughout any creative process (cited in Robson, 2014). Someone's creativity may be impacted by how they approach a subject from several angles (Vernon & Hocking, 2014, as cited in Hidayati et al., 2019).

When it comes to teaching, English as one of the learning subjects in vocational high school is regarded as quite important. Unlike in junior and senior high school, teaching English at vocational high school is expected to be strongly tied to the students' major study (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020). Some language skills

in English education, such as receptive and productive language abilities, must be taught in conjunction with 21st century skills. Furthermore, the usage of 21st-century skills and associated issues have also been covered in relation to both language skills (Akyildiz & Celik, 2020; Şahin & Han, 2020, as cited in Tok et al., 2022). When students are expected to be able to use a variety of meaningful communication expressions to their intended interlocutors and readers, more difficult obstacles emerge. Hence, using language abilities critically and creatively is one strategy to encourage language learners to use language to the fullest extent possible in connection to future demand. It encourages students to develop essential abilities that will help them succeed in school and survive in the real world in addition to being able to communicate with others to gain a global perspective. In a study conducted by Şahin (2020), the majority of EFL teachers claimed that teamwork, communication, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and media literacy are necessary abilities to cultivate in 21st century EFL lessons. Consequently, Tsai (2013), as cited in Tok et al. (2022), asserts that it is important to promote the growth of critical and creative thinking and in order to advance, instructional designs at all language education levels must support the development of these skills.

The successful teaching that enhance critical thinking for English language learners as well as the recognition of criticality and linguistic competency in language learners have both been supported by a number of academic works. These academic works discuss a few instructional techniques for imparting this expertise. For instance, reading literary materials like poetry and prose frequently offers greater opportunity for developing critical thinking abilities (Ahmad et al., 2019;

Küçükoğlu & Arikan, 2011). Students are encouraged by literature that involves cultural components to pay attention to details, suspend conclusions before analyzing assumptions, make decisions based on those judgments, and search for potential answers and alternatives. In EFL classrooms, alternative teaching method like flipped learning and digital technologies have the ability to enhance and promote language learners' active learning, learner-centeredness, and critical thinking abilities (Alsulami, 2016; Kong, 2014). By emphasizing student-centered learning and integrating technology to support a hybrid or blended learning design, it has the ability to overcome issues with listening and the lack of critical thinking skills (Boucher et al., 2013). Moreover, one powerful positive force working to assist EFL learners in transforming into more competent, careful, and organized writers is the problem-based learning approach, which has more positive influential impacts on learners' overall writing skills progression in terms of reasoning, synthesizing, and organizing abilities (Othman and Shah, 2013, as cited in Wijaya, 2022).

Regarding the development of creative thinking abilities, numerous academic works have examined the effects of various teaching techniques that encourage creativity in the context of language learning. Ibnian (2010), as cited in Rababah & Melhem (2015), carried out a study in Jordan in an effort to determine how the story-mapping method affected the development of the short story skills of EFL creative writing students in the 10th grade. According to the findings, the narrative mapping method influenced Jordanian tenth graders' growth of short story writing skills in terms of content and structure, writing mechanics, language use, and creative talents (i.e. fluency, flexibility, novelty and elaboration). Cosgun &

Atay's (2021) additional research also shows the benefits of problem-based learning in promoting creativity. The results of an investigation into the critical thinking and creative capacities of 68 Turkish tertiary-level EFL students before and after participation in a PBL program show that the PBL course had a favorable effect on the students' critical thinking and creativity. Furthermore, Cho & Kim (2018) provided pedagogical advice for implementing five different kinds of language play in L2 classrooms using CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) methods. They contend that by encouraging students to express their thoughts and increasing their metalinguistic awareness, language play helps fostering the creativity of L2 learners. Language play can help teachers develop their students' verbal skills and create an environment that inspires creativity and experimentation in them.

Given that the ability to communicate in English can increase the competitiveness of SMK graduates, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, through the Directorate of the Development of SMK (*Direktorat Pembinaan SMK*), is adamant that English is one of the fields that receives the top priority to be developed (Taufan et al., 2022). Regrettably, the average SMK student's English language proficiency still falls short of expectations and cannot keep up with modern workplace demands. The implementation of traditional teaching methods, such as a teacher-centered approach, prevents students from receiving the learning experience they deserve and from developing their multiple intelligences (Bas, 2008, as cited in Susanti et al., 2020). Other factors include teaching materials that are inappropriate for the needs of specific groups of students because publishers are reluctant to produce material (Marjanovikj-Apostolovski, 2019, as cited in Nurjannah & Ridwan, 2022).

As the leading sector that plays a critical role in improving the quality of human resources, the Minister of Education responds to this issue by releasing *Merdeka Belajar* as it is a start to correct and improve our monotonous system. In a recent curriculum, the Merdeka curriculum formulates student profile so-called Character of Pancasila Students (*Profil Pelajar Pancasila*). The Pancasila student profile has six dimensions, and two of those dimensions—critical reasoning and creativity—are listed (Brata et al., 2022; Yanzi et al., 2022). Additionally, more student-centered, interactive, and collaborative teaching and learning activities are included in the new curriculum, which is defined by constructivist learning. It implies that real-world problem-solving and knowledge creation in legitimate professional contexts are opportunities given to student teachers. One of the curriculum's characteristics is project-based learning to enhance students' soft skills and character in keeping with the Pancasila student profile (Kemendikbudristek, 2022, as cited in Norawati & Puspitasari, 2022). Additionally, case-based learning (Sklyar, 2020; Yu, 2020; Gebhard, 2005; Topperzer et al., 2022; Hou, 2019; Büchler et al., 2021) and project-based learning (Dewi et al., 2012; Denuga & Nkengbeza, 2022; Dag & Durdu, 2017; Alrajeh, 2021) have been regarded as effective and prominent learning models for a multitude of learning environments (Norawati & Puspitasari, 2022). More cognitive processing is encouraged by student-centered teaching styles, as evidenced by students' creativity, self-control, and problem-solving skills.

Since the *Merdeka* curriculum is applicable to all academic institutions, including vocational schools, it is imperative to teach students about English components that are directly connected to their major studies. It is anticipated that

English will be taught in vocational schools and that it must be done in accordance with the teacher's ideas and instructional methods because it is a vital factor in the entire teaching process and classroom decision-making (Mulyah & Aminatun, 2020). In addition, Irawan et al. (2022) claimed that in order to achieve the aim of ELT instruction, one feature of ELT methodology must be taken into account. Teaching methods comprise the entire process of incorporating elements of teaching for the successful accomplishment of teaching tasks. Teachers also should emphasize on selecting the best teaching methods for their subject areas while also taking into account their own teaching styles, their classroom's technical and environmental requirements, and their overall teaching objectives. When teachers use the right teaching strategy for a certain classroom scenario, they can achieve certain objectives in their subject areas (Kennedy, 2011, as cited in Idris, 2012).

Furthermore, there are only few academic studies that cover the stimulation of critical and creative thinking in English teaching learning process, especially in vocational high school. The current study is focused on critical and creative thinking skills stimulation in English teaching learning process in vocational high school. The aim is to identify critical and creative thinking skills that are stimulated in teaching learning process held by the English teachers in vocational high schools in East Jakarta.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What are the critical thinking skills as the element of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* stimulated in teaching learning process in English vocational class?

2. What are the creative thinking skills as the element of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* stimulated in teaching learning process in English vocational class?

1.3. Purpose Of The Study

1. To identify what critical thinking skills as the elements of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* are stimulated in teaching learning process in English vocational class.
2. To identify what creative thinking skills as the elements of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* are stimulated in teaching learning process in English vocational class.

1.4. Scope of the Study

In this research, the writer has limited the study and it is impossible for the research to grip all problems. The researcher focuses on the stimulation of critical and creative thinking elements of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* in English teaching learning process based on *Merdeka Curriculum*. This research involves the critical and creative thinking stimulation in English teaching learning process for 10th grade students of vocational high schools in East Jakarta in the second semester of academic year of 2022/2023.

1.5. Significance Of The Study

This is significance of the study the first theoretical significance and practical significance. The researcher hopes some benefit from this study:

1. Theoretical Significance

- a. The English teacher knows and understands about what critical thinking skills and creative thinking skills as elements of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* that are stimulated in teaching learning process in English vocational class.
- b. The research can be useful to other researchers who want to conduct a research related to the theme that is the critical and creative thinking stimulation in English teaching learning process in vocational high school.

2. Practical Significance

- a. For teacher, the writer will help teacher to understand what critical thinking skills and creative thinking skills that should be possessed by students in English vocational class.

