

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is an important indicator of a nation. The more effectively education is carried out, it shows the quality of human resources. In recent years, the Minister of Education, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, initiated the *Merdeka Belajar* Program as a form of improving Indonesian education with the aim to increase its human resources. One of several programs is the change in the 2013 National Curriculum to become the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. *Kurikulum Merdeka* formulates policies for education units to implement the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* into learning. *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* is divided into six dimensions including faith, fear of God Almighty, and have noble character, global diversity, mutual assistance, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity. The *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* focuses on aspects related to identity, ideology and aspirations as well as the challenges of the Indonesian nation in facing the industrial revolution 4.0 (Satria et al., 2022).

With the rapid development of technology, English is increasingly used. English inevitably becomes the key to survival (Pertiwi & Pusparini, 2021). In Indonesia, English is one of the subjects that students must follow as one of the educational efforts to prepare Indonesian youth to be able to compete globally.

Students must be accustomed to dealing with various situations and life problems that are dynamic. As Lau (2011) said that we need good thinking and creative ideas to coordinate efforts to solve an increasing range of complex problems that can impact the whole world. Specifically, we need critical thinking and creative thinking skills. This is also in line with the statement from Prakoso et al (2021) that having the ability to think critically and creatively will have an impact on students developing and optimizing themselves.

The importance of implementing critical and creative thinking skills in learning is needed, as also stated in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. Critical and creative thinking will provide students with provisions when they face life after graduation, especially Vocational High School students who will face directly into the world of work after graduation by working according to the field they are studying at school. Therefore, students need to get learning experiences and simulations that are similar to the habits of someone who uses thinking skills at work. Critical thinking will help students when they find a problem so that they can formulate and make decisions about the situation at hand (Iskandar, 2015). Creative thinking will train them to create new ideas and problem-solving (Kusmanto et. al, 2021). Critical and creative thinking skills will help students when they encounter problems related to their work later.

Assessment means an activity in collecting data and getting information to evaluate and decide the students' learning needs (Anggraena et al., 2022). Assessments in language classrooms are used to obtain information related to the extent to which students can achieve language learning goals and who has difficulties and problems in learning it so that it can be used as an evaluation to

determine effective techniques in learning a foreign language (Tosuncuoglu, 2018). Conducting assessments will help teachers to check the progress of students' learning to reach objectives. Teachers need to design assessments that contain and reflect the critical and creative thinking that students need when facing life and work after they graduate.

Based on the statement above, measuring critical and creative thinking skills needs to be conducted by teachers through an assessment designed. However, the reality in the schools revealed that there are still many teachers who have not implemented it. This is evident from a study that conducted interviews with Al-Hasra High School teachers which revealed that teachers still do not have the understanding to integrate critical thinking skills. This is because they do not have guidelines for developing assessment instruments that focus on the implementation of critical thinking (Harahap et al., 2020). A study by Hidayat et al (2019) also revealed that teachers do not conduct assessments that integrate critical and creative thinking skills. This is because the learning process has not stimulated students to think critically and creatively optimally.

Learning and assessment is a unit that should not be separated. Educators and students need to understand the intended competencies so that the whole learning process is sought to achieve these competencies. Educators can conduct assessments to determine the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved by students. (Anggraena et al., 2022). In practice, in the lesson plan or the *Modul Ajar* of some of the Vocational High Schools observed, the teachers mention the ability to think critically and creatively as a learning objective and *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* target but does not explain how critical and creative aspects will be

measured. This indicates the possibility of teachers do not understand or they miss embedding guidelines for measuring creative and critical thinking skills. If the lesson plan is used with other teachers, the teachers will have difficulty conducting the assessment. Therefore, it is necessary to include information about what and how to measure the achievement of learning objectives that are focused on critical and creative thinking skills.

Therefore, the researcher attempts to fill the gap by analyzing the integration of critical thinking and creative thinking skills in the English assessment based on the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* of Vocational High Schools. This study aims to describe the aspects of critical and creative thinking skills that are integrated into English assessment of Vocational High Schools.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher formulates the following research questions:

1. What aspects of critical thinking skills are integrated in English assessment tasks of tenth-grade vocational high schools?
2. What aspects of creative thinking skills are integrated in English assessment tasks of tenth-grade vocational high schools?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To describe aspects of critical thinking skills integrated in English assessment tasks of tenth-grade vocational high schools.

2. To describe aspects of creative thinking skills integrated in English assessment tasks of tenth-grade vocational high schools.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Based on the problems found above, the researcher decides to limit the problems to describing the aspects of critical and creative thinking skills integrated into the English assessment tasks of Vocational High School. This research will focus on the use of English assessment tasks for tenth grades. This research is limited to three State Vocational High Schools in East Jakarta.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to language teaching:

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to be used to increase knowledge and insights related to critical thinking and creative thinking in the teaching and learning process, especially in conducting assessments. It is also expected to be a means of developing knowledge and its application for language teachers, school principals, teacher education institutions as well as language education students as prospective teachers.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this study is expected to be used to provide information on the assessment designed by the teacher, whether critical and creative thinking skills have been integrated into learning or have not been implemented so that teachers can do reflection and evaluation to make further learning strategies that focus on

student learning needs. This study is also expected to provide an overview of teacher education institutions as a provision in preparing teacher graduates to be able to design learning activities according to students' learning needs.

