

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

As a universal language, many people worldwide speak English as their mother tongue, and speak it as a second language. Moreover, English is more widely used both spoken and written than any other languages in the world. Therefore, it is obvious that English is widely used as a lingua franca in the world. In Indonesia, English known as a foreign language, but it has become an important role in our daily life in the society. It can be seen in education in Indonesia. English is one of the important lessons or subject that taught for students from the very basic level to college. According to Damar et al. (2013), various techniques in learning English can potentially attract learners. This is a challenge for the teachers, especially English teacher. Teachers need to have more innovation to ensure that students involved and actively engaged in the learning process.

According to Kemendikbud (2019), the goal of Indonesia national education is to educate the nation both intellectually and psychologically. To achieve that goals, the nation's character must be developed. If the Indonesian nation has a strong character and identity, it will become a great and dignified nation. Character development, which is implemented in schools, helps to develop the nation's character. This is an effort to assist students in knowing, understanding, realizing, and applying social, moral, and ethical aspects as the foundation for acting and behaving in society. The Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, has introduced a new policy program initiative called "Freedom to Learn". The implementation of the independent learning policy in education represents a significant step towards achieving Indonesia's goal of cultivating Superior Human Resources, as reflected in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. There is also freedom of knowledge that is intended for primary

education and secondary education, such as SMP/SMA/SMK/equivalent (Vhalery, Setyastanto, & Leksono, 2022). *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar* introduced the concept of "Learning Independence" for students, designed to help them overcoming from the learning crisis (Nugraha, 2022).

According to (Kemendikbud, 2017), the Ministry of Education and Culture is committed to developing Pancasila students as a lifelong learner with global competence and behave in accordance with Pancasila values. *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* is a new policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is a reference for educators and teachers in building the character and competence of their students. *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* is an embodiment as a student profile throughout life with global competence and behave accordingly with Pancasila values, through six main characteristics. There are faith, piety to God Almighty and has noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independent, critical reasoning, and creative (Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020).

Character development is essential in the process of building a country. Only a strong and courageous country can rise to the heights of greatness and honor. Character education in schools aims to facilitate students to learn and respect social, moral, and ethical components to produce capable and competent graduates who follow to Pancasila norms (Maharani & Sari, 2021). Students have yet to internalize Pancasila's character, which represents the Indonesian nation. Character education does not include and not formally taught as the subject in schools. However, students can learn character education in school based on school rules and their interactions with other people in school environment, such as their friends, teachers or parents. According to Haryati (2017), character education can be integrated into the learning and teaching process in every subject in schools. Further, Haryati also states that the learning materials that connected to the values or norms in each subject need to be developed, and need to be linked to the context of everyday

life. From this statement, it can be concluded that English is one of the essential subject in Indonesian educational system, can also be a platform to implement character education for EFL learners in the classroom.

Critical and creative thinking is one of the criteria of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* and also the aspects of character education. Critical thinking includes mental activities related to problem-solving, hypothesis analysis, rationalization, evaluation, conducting research, and decision-making (Saputra, 2020). Creative thinking consists of a process (creative thinking) and results (creative products) (Henriksen, Mishra, & Fisser, 2016). These skills are important due to the close connection between knowledge and thinking as well as language learning and thinking processes. These skills are also important as the competency requirements that needs to be developed in the industrial revolution 4.0. People who have these skills are prepared to deal with a lot of information and problems for which it is not clear how to properly solve the problem (Angeli & Valanides, 2009). Teachers can promote critical and creative thinking by making interactive learning, encouraging and support from students' experiences since it can lead to effective learning. (Orakei, Durnali, & Aktan, 2019).

Syllabus is really important for teachers in the teaching learning process, because it covers learning objectives, method, technique, learning activities and tasks, learning materials and evaluation. A syllabus is a more than circumscribed document, usually one which has been prepared for a particular group of learners (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986). From the syllabus, teachers could decide what topics of learning activities that they are going to teach today. From the syllabus also, contents are selected and graded. The contents of the syllabus are gained from the curriculum. Then, the curriculum is gained from the learners' needs. Curriculum concerns general statements about language learning, learning purposes, evaluation and the role relationship between teachers and students. A curriculum may specify only the goals - what the learners will be able to do at the end of the instruction - while the syllabus

specifies the content of the lessons used to lead the learners to achieve the goals (Krahnke, 1987). On the other hand, syllabus concerns what actually happens in the classroom.

Syllabus is very important since it will guide students to achieve their goals in learning English. Syllabus will help teachers and learners to achieve the needs and the aims of the learners and activities in the classroom. In English syllabus, students will have general purposes in learning English such as for international communication. English syllabus will help teachers and students to accomplish the gap between what the learners have already known and the aims of the learner itself.

Therefore, inserting character education such as critical and creative thinking skills in the English syllabus and teaching for students can be the best approach to enhance students' problem solving learning skill. Furthermore, it is important to develop students' characters through practical in the learning and teaching process of English, because character education aimed at developing students' ability to make goodbad decisions, maintain what is good, and embody that goodness in their daily lives wholeheartedly (Ministry of National Education in Komalasari & Saprudi, 2022). Therefore, it can be concluded that character education plays an important role in teaching English for students, and teachers have a great responsibility, not only in teaching but also educating students.

In Indonesia, almost all the schools started to using the *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar* as it is a new program from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. However, the implementation just started from 2022 and only applied for 7th grade of SMP and 10th grade of SMA or SMK. The learning process in *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar* improves students' ability to think critically and creatively. In *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar*, students are required to grow and develop into productive, innovative and creative to compete in the 21st century. One of the education levels that implemented the *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar* is Vocational High School

(SMK) especially for the 10th grade students. However, the implementation of creative and critical thinking skills in Vocational class is still rarely discussed for further study. These skills are very necessary for students to prepare themselves to develop problem solving skills that they will face. It can have an impact on vocational students' learning outcomes as a provision to increase the chances of graduates getting jobs in competitive fields.

Some studies in regard to critical and creative thinking in vocational high school has been conducted prior to this present study. The study conducted by Johar Maknun (2019) focus on the development of critical thinking skills of vocational high school students indicates that vocational high school students gain critical thinking skills by the learning activities they are engaged in. It shows that essential for them to have critical thinking skills to continue their education and enter the world of labor. Moreover, vocational high school teachers need to make a good learning approach or learning activities that capable of improving student's higher-order thinking skills.

Study conducted by Natalia Larraz-Rábanos (2021) explained the development of creative thinking that skills should be integrated in the various areas of the curriculum as a competence in a specific way. In order to develop creative thinking skills, it is crucial to eliminate barriers and actively incorporate creative abilities in the problem-solving process. The goal is to produce creative products through the use and application of creative strategies intentionally in the teaching-learning process. Another study conducted by Hakan Turkmen (2015) showed that the creative learning should be applied more in vocational high school students to stimulate their creative thinking.

Therefore, the present study attempts to fill the gap of the previous research by investigating the integration of critical and creative thinking in English syllabus since syllabus is a guide for both teachers and learners to achieve the needs and the goals of the learning process. The study will be focus on investigating the integration of critical and creative thinking skills in English syllabus, specifically for vocational high school students that are expected to

produce graduates that can compete in work field or or competitive field with their competences and 21st century skills such as critical thinking and creative thinking skills. This study wants to investigate whether the English syllabus or now known as *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP)* contains the critical and creative thinking skills or not. The result of this study will help teachers to improve and develop their English syllabus to be more effective and help students in the learning process, by integrating critical and creative thinking skills.

1.2. Research Questions

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

1. What are the indicators of critical thinking skills that integrated in English syllabus for vocational high school?
2. What are the indicators of creative thinking skills that integrated in English syllabus for vocational high school?

1.3. Purpose of The Study

The purposes of this study are as follows:

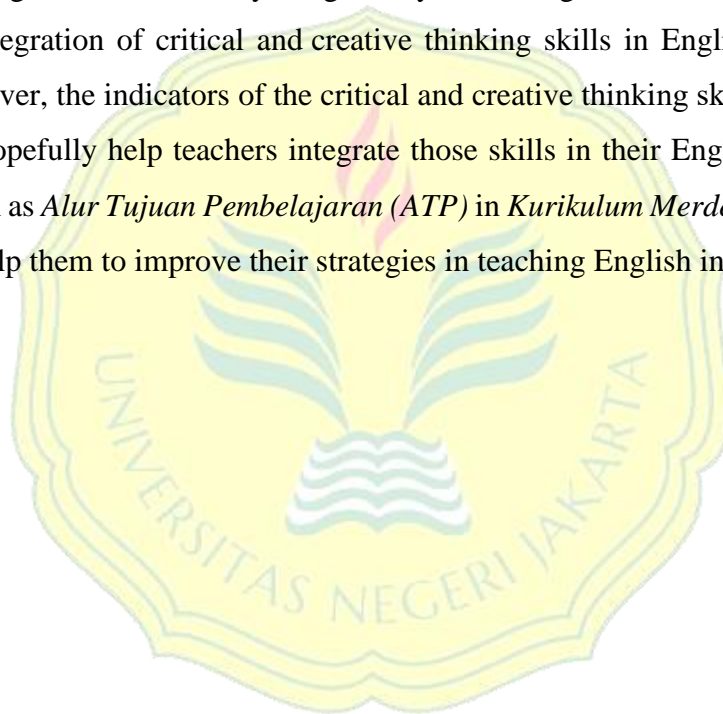
1. To investigate the indicators of critical thinking skills that integrated in English Syllabus for vocational high school.
2. To investigate the indicators of creative thinking skills that integrated in English Syllabus for vocational high school.

1.4. Scope of The Study

The scope of this study focuses on investigating critical and creative thinking in English language syllabus based on *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar* in 10th grade students of three Vocational High Schools in Jakarta in 2022/2023 academic year.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be useful for future researchers who are interested in exploring on how the integration of the critical and creative thinking skills in the learning process, especially for vocational high school. This study also expected to be useful for teachers and students of English Language Education Study Program by increasing their understanding about the integration of critical and creative thinking skills in English syllabus to. Moreover, the indicators of the critical and creative thinking skills' integration will hopefully help teachers integrate those skills in their English syllabus or known as *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP)* in *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar* that can help them to improve their strategies in teaching English in the classroom.



*Mencerdaskan dan
Memartabatkan Bangsa*