

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the thesis through the background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, state of the arts, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent times, media literacy and critical thinking skills have been perceived by English language education scholars as substantial skills to be acquired by students. In Indonesia, this is reflected in the emergence of studies that examine the implementation of the pertinent skills (Hidayat & Lubis, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2021; Nida Winarti et al., 2022; Raturahmi et al., 2021; Rindu et al., 2022; Yanti et al., 2024). Not only the scholars, but the Indonesian government has also been showing its efforts in leveraging the skills' development through their programs (5th Critical Thinking Championship, 2025; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020; Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). Thus, this paragraph implies the awareness of Indonesian scholars and the government in developing media literacy and critical thinking skills.

Experts also highlighted the importance of media literacy and critical thinking skills for students. For instance, McNelly & Harvey (2021) stated that the swift media and technology development compelled students as responsible community members to consume, share, and produce media content critically and wisely. They continued that media literacy can help students cope with the overflowing media intake through the comprehension and analysis of the accuracy and bias occurring in media content, as well as having the consciousness of the media's influence. Moreover, De Abreau (2019) highlighted the lack of ability to be critical towards media contents, for instance differentiating sponsored articles and real new stories, concerning where an online photo was taken and whether the context is acceptable, differentiating real news articles and seemingly ones, biased news and independent news sources, etc., is detrimental to students' views towards the world around them. Furthermore, media literacy hinders students from being

manipulated by media as well as motivates them to be competent at participating in a democratic society (Kellner et al., 2019). In brief, media literacy promotes students' ability to be well-informed and critical of the media content that they consume, share, and produce. The ability to be literate about media content shapes their perceptions of their environment and makes them better democratic society members. This implies the need for media literacy for the acquisition of the benefits mentioned previously.

With regards to the infusion of media literacy in English as Foreign Language (EFL) speaking classrooms, media literacy has been regarded as one of the vital skills to be embedded in learning. Idayani et al. (2022) tested the possibility of implementing news and media literacy for speaking practice in an Indonesian university. Turned out that there was a moderately positive change in the student's speaking performance. The researchers elaborated that they encourage the achievement of news and media literacy skills for enhancing students' use of technology by finding information online using English. By that, students not only acquired insights but also improved their use of advanced vocabulary for speaking. An experimental research in Bogotá, Colombia, embedded media literacy that focused on English speaking in an upper-intermediate course. The study revealed that their media literacy model allowed EFL students to enhance their speaking skills while reflecting on their realities, views, and attitudes. Further, the EFL students obtained various techniques to discourse media sources' messages, convey their opinions, and collect supporting information (Neiva Montaña, 2021). Another study integrated media literacy into the learning activities of Korean EFL low-proficiency learners' focusing on their speaking and listening skills. The study found that the learners speaking vocabulary and discourse elements as well as listening were successfully enhanced. With some considerations, the activities are also able to enhance the student's critical thinking skills and further media literacy abilities (SoHee Kim, 2018). Shortly, the involvement of media literacy in EFL speaking classrooms was studied. However, the study that studied media literacy in EFL speaking classrooms of eleventh graders has been scarcely apparent.

Some scholars have highlighted the practice of media literacy among senior high school students. For instance, Bastani et al. (2019) designed and tested media

literacy module for tenth and eleventh graders of Iran. The media literacy module focused on three indexes, of media knowledge, namely economic, political, and cultural knowledge. They found that among the three indexes, only economic knowledge had a weak relation with media literacy. Another research by Feucht et al. (2021) concentrated on the exploration of news media literacy among twelve high school students in the United States. The study's findings suggested the necessity for highlighting the nature of science and scientific news literacy in education planning. Additionally, Leyn et al. scrutinized the media literacy initiatives at school and everyday media literacy discourses through high school students' reflections. Through in-depth interviews, the study discovered that most of the participants were highly concerned about media literacy. From the research mentioned, we can imply that media literacy is feasible to be implemented for high school students, especially eleventh graders.

In the case of the feasibility of infusion of critical thinking in EFL speaking classrooms, some studies have been employed. A study in an Ecuadorian EFL classroom identified the impact of critical thinking learning activities to enhance learners' speaking skills. The mixed study revealed that critical thinking learning activities have a positive impact on students' speaking skills, specifically in terms of grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation (Pinza-Tapia et al., 2021). Another study experimented with the effects of teaching critical thinking on the speaking skills of EFL learners of adult intermediate students at Respina Talk (i.e., Iran-Canada) language school. The researcher discovered a noteworthy relationship between the enhancement of critical thinking and EFL learners' speaking skills (Arfae, 2019). In addition, a study in Thailand investigated the influence of using the literature circle learning activities on EFL learners' CEFR B2 English-speaking skills and critical thinking skills. The study found that the learning activities improved their speaking abilities, achieving the CEFR B2 level. In terms of critical thinking skills, the research that the students had successfully improved critical thinking skills after receiving the study's treatment (Matmool & Kaowiwattanakul, 2023). To summarize, the studies mentioned indicated the possibility of infusing critical thinking into EFL speaking classrooms. Unfortunately, there is an insufficient amount of study that designs speaking

learning materials that are infused with critical thinking skills for Indonesian EFL eleventh graders.

The incorporation of critical thinking skills among eleventh graders' has been a concern for scholars. Fostering critical thinking skills for eleventh graders through Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-based learning materials is suggested in many studies (Fakhira & Iskandar, 2020; Hartini et al., 2020; Rizkiani, 2022; Tyas et al., 2020). Several studies also focused on a particular strategy to enhance eleventh graders' critical thinking skills, such as reading questioning answering (Asmara et al., 2023), and debate activity (Hadi et al., 2021). Moreover, critical thinking-focused efforts are also apparent in learning model-focused studies, for instance through case-based learning (Rihadatul & Nani, 2022), constructivism-based learning (Hidayati et al., 2021), and inquiry-based learning (Burhan et al., 2023). To summarize, the abundance of critical thinking skills-focused studies in the context of eleventh graders' learning implies the feasibility of incorporating critical thinking skills for eleventh graders' learning, encompassing various learning elements such as learning materials, strategies, and learning models.

It is a common knowledge that English serves as a lingua franca. It carries a major role in many disciplines including engineering, medicine, education, technology, business, etc. Not only that, people across nations use English to access the internet, software, and websites. While it is important to master reading, writing, listening, and speaking to access information and carry communication, speaking is prominent when it comes to delivering messages in a well-rounded, efficient, and effective manner to run smoothly in any system (Kadamovna, 2021). Not only that, but well-carried speaking also projects the mind clarity of a speaker which is not only beneficial for professional advancement but also for personal life (Hameed & Jawad, 2024; Kadamovna, 2021). Despite of the importance of English speaking skills, scholars pointed out that Indonesian students has been encountered various problems in developing the skills such as xomprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, effects of the first language, nervousness, motivation, anxiety and fear of making mistakes, passivity in class, topics that are not engegaging enough, ignorance, practicing with peers influence, and practicing

with media influence (Franscy & Ramli, 2022; Pratolo et al., 2019). Overall, this paragraph pinpoints the need for studying English speaking because it is undeniably important for learners but at the same time still challenging to be obtained.

Turning now to the evidence on the difficulties of learning English speaking for Indonesian EFL students. Eleventh graders perceived their silences during speaking were attributed to low self-confidence, afraid of making mistakes and being criticized, feeling nervous and embarrassed when speaking, difficulty in comprehending the text materials, and most importantly the lack of vocabulary mastery and management, low grammar comprehension, as well as lacking pronunciation competence (Pratama et al., 2021). Another study illustrates the difficulties faced by eleventh-grader Indonesian EFL learners and found that shyness and low self-confidence affected the student's higher level of speaking anxiety (Maulidia et al., 2022). Furthermore, Pratiwi & Andriani (2021) highlighted the psychological factors that influenced students' speaking performance, such as being poorly motivated, feeling anxious, low confidence, shyness, fear of making mistakes, learning environment aspects, and some performance conditions. Next, a study found that unsuitable teaching strategies used, unfitting curriculum, personal factors, and environmental factors were perceived by students to contribute to their challenges in speaking (Andriani Putri et al., 2020). Moreover, students perceived their psychological conditions during speaking were influenced by low motivation, shyness, fear of making mistakes, and low confidence. The study continued that the difficulties were contributed by zero awareness of learning English, lack of interest in learning English, perceived less importance of English, low English vocabulary and pronunciation mastery, inappropriate responses from teacher and peers, and students' dubious beliefs of their English skills (Leoni et al., 2023). To sum up, there are a lot of factors to be concerned in teaching and learning EFL in Indonesian eleventh graders. This implies teachers consider students' psychological factors such as confidence, motivation, fear of negative responses and making mistakes, anxiety, shyness, etc., appropriateness of teaching method and curriculum, students' prior knowledge and mastery of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, students' comprehension of the materials being used, as well as the meaningfulness of learning such as students' interests and understanding the importance of learning

English. Thus, the previous statement indicates the need to design speaking learning materials for Indonesian EFL learners of eleventh graders.

Having elaborated on the background above, some problems have emerged. First, the studies imply the need for media literacy. Second, there is a need for a study that infuses media literacy into EFL speaking classrooms of eleventh graders. Third, there is an insufficient amount of study that designs speaking learning materials that are infused with critical thinking skills for Indonesian EFL eleventh graders. Fourth, it is undeniable that there is a need for the study that design speaking learning materials for Indonesian EFL eleventh graders. Therefore, there is a valid justification to conduct a study that designs English speaking learning materials that are infused with media literacy and critical thinking skills for Indonesian EFL eleventh graders.

This research covers five chapters, namely introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and discussions, and conclusion and suggestions. In the first chapter, the researcher elaborates on the whole context of the study. The second chapter encompasses the review of literature that is related to this study. In the third chapter, the researcher presents the study's design, data, data source, instruments, data collection, and data analysis procedures. The fourth chapter encompasses the presentation of the data along with the elaborations and discussions. Finally, the fifth chapter concludes the research through conclusions and suggestions.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background presented above, this study emerges a main research question that was answered through four sub-research questions as follows:

Main research question:

How is the design of media literacy and critical thinking-infused English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders?

Sub-research questions:

- 1) To what extent do the existing English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders have media literacy and critical thinking skills-infused?
- 2) What are the procedures for designing media literacy and critical thinking skills-infused English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders?

- 3) How is the design of media literacy and critical thinking skills-infused English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders?
- 4) How are the validity of media literacy and critical thinking skills-infused English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

In alignment with the main research question and sub-research questions above, the purposes of the study are as follows:

Main research purpose:

To design media literacy and critical thinking-infused English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders.

Sub-research purposes:

- 1) To analyze the existing English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders are media literacy and critical thinking skills-infused;
- 2) To explain the procedures for designing media literacy and critical thinking skills-infused English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders;
- 3) To design media literacy and critical thinking skills-infused English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders;
- 4) To measure the validity of media literacy and critical thinking skills-infused English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study aims to design media literacy and critical thinking-infused English speaking learning materials for eleventh graders. The learning aspect being designed is learning materials in the form of multimodal learning materials that are focused on speaking skills. The target competence is the eleventh graders or the second-year students of senior high school who attend English language subjects. This study uses competence statements from the Merdeka Curriculum, relevant CEFR levels, as well as an adaptation from media literacy (e.g. Kellner & Share and Lee's) and critical thinking (e.g. McGregor and Lin, Cambridge, and Krathwohl's) skills indicators. In addition, this study infuses media literacy and

critical thinking as cross-cultural competencies in English speaking learning materials. Thus, the end product is a prototype of English speaking learning materials that are infused with media literacy and critical thinking for eleventh graders. The use of the prototype can be on-site or hybrid adjusted to the learners' needs.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study offers significance in terms of theoretical and practical standpoints.

Theoretically, this study promotes a deeper exploration of eleventh graders' EFL speaking learning materials, media literacy, and critical thinking skills. Moreover, this study provides additional information for the repository of media literacy, critical thinking, and speaking learning materials for EFL teachers and learners.

Practically, the end-product of this study is expected to benefit learners, teachers, future researchers, and educational institutions. Learners can obtain media literacy and critical thinking skills through EFL speaking learning materials to be more responsible and socially aware citizens. Consequently, teachers are hopefully adopting the end product to facilitate students with media literacy and critical thinking skills that are essential for this post-truth era. Meanwhile, future researchers can promote EFL eleventh graders' speaking skills, media literacy, and critical thinking. This research also implicates future researchers to study the design of media literacy and critical thinking skills-infused speaking learning materials for eleventh graders. Additionally, educational institutions can consider using the end-product of this study to promote eleventh graders' media literacy and critical thinking skills.

1.6 State of the Arts

This section elaborates on the development of the fields of this study, namely (1) the implementation of media literacy in EFL speaking classrooms, (2) the implementation of critical thinking skills in EFL speaking classrooms, and (3) the relationship between media literacy and critical thinking skills.

In the previous studies, researchers focused on media literacy in EFL speaking classrooms (Idayani et al., 2022; Neiva Montaña, 2021). A study experimented with the feasibility of news and media literacy for speaking practice in an Indonesian university. The researchers found a moderately positive change in the students' speaking skills in terms of vocabulary through finding out information online using English. (Idayani et al., 2022). Another study infused media literacy to see its impact on a Colombian upper-intermediate course. The study discovered that their media-literacy model enhanced EFL students' speaking skills while reflecting their realities, views, and attitudes (Neiva Montaña, 2021).

Previous studies also suggested their focus on critical thinking and EFL speaking classrooms (Matmool & Kaowiwattanakul, 2023; Pinza-Tapia et al., 2021). A study in Ecuador identified the impact of critical thinking learning activities to enhance EFL learners' speaking skills. The study revealed that critical thinking learning activities have a positive impact on students' speaking skills, specifically in terms of grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation (Pinza-Tapia et al., 2021). Moreover, a study investigated the influence of using the literature circle learning activities on Thai EFL learners' speaking skills and critical thinking skills. The findings indicated that critical thinking-based learning activities improved the students' speaking abilities and critical thinking skills (Matmool & Kaowiwattanakul, 2023).

Media literacy and critical thinking-focused studies have been identified as well (Hazaea & Alqahtani, 2020; YÜZGEÇ & SÜTÇÜ, 2020). Yüzgeç & Sütçü (2020) investigated the correlation between the critical thinking dispositions and new media literacy levels of pre-service English teachers. The results showed a positive relationship between the two abilities. Hazaea & Alqahtani (2020) researched to examine the digital online media literacy skills in a Saudi University and its correlation to the students' genders. The study indicated students' adequate competence in digital online media literacy and there was no significant difference in the competency in male or female students.

From the previous studies, it is apparent that there is an ongoing interest in studying media literacy and critical thinking skills in EFL speaking classrooms. However, the study that designs English speaking learning materials that are infused

with media literacy and critical thinking skills for EFL eleventh graders has not been visible. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap in the related field.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To prevent misconception, the following are the technical terminologies that are used in this study:

1. EFL stands for English as a foreign language. This term is usually used in English-teaching discipline to refer to the position of whether a person is not using English as his or her first or second language (Alefesha & Al-Jamal, 2019).
2. Media literacy refers to the ability to consume, share, and produce media content in a well-informed manner (Kellner & Share, 2019).
3. Critical thinking represents the ability to use cognition actively that is manifested through higher-order thinking activities such as application, conceptualization, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and creation (Cambridge, 2020).
4. CEFR stands for Common European Framework of Reference. In this study, the researcher uses CEFR for Languages formulated by the Council of Europe. It is an international measurement published by the Council of Europe to describe the levels of language skills in multiple contexts and can be used for all languages (Council of Europe, 2020).
5. Eleventh graders are referred to as the students who attend the second year of senior high school. Commonly, their age ranges from 16-17 years old (Rivanda, 2022).