

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

Currently, critical thinking is an essential skill individuals should possess, particularly in educational contexts. According to Dewey (1910), critical thinking is an active process of thinking about something, asking questions, and independently finding relevant information. A widely accepted definition of critical thinking is a logical and reflective process that focuses on choosing what to believe or do (Norris & Ennis, 1989). Furthermore, Cottrell (2005) defined critical thinking as a complex process of deliberation that involves a wide range of skills and attitudes, including identifying, evaluating, recognising, reflecting, and drawing conclusions.

Critical thinking plays a significant role in education, enabling students to make rational decisions and solve problems effectively (Ennis, 2011). Similarly, Facione (1990) argues that critical thinking supports other skills needed in both academic and everyday life, such as interpretation, analysis, and evaluation. Jabar et al. (2025) explain that integrating critical thinking in education is important for helping students analyse, evaluate, and solve problems. Critical thinking can help students evaluate information critically (Paul & Elder, 2008).

The Merdeka curriculum in Indonesia includes critical thinking among its learning objectives, as outlined in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022). One of these is the high school-required English course, which places a strong emphasis on language proficiency and critical thinking. The purpose of this emphasis is to help students think critically and socialize (Jabar et al., 2025). A study found that high school English teachers believe that critical thinking is important in learning, for example,

in arguing, analyzing texts, or processing information (Anggraeny & Khongput, 2022). Moreover, as Sulaiman (2021) explains again, English learning in high school is aimed at developing communication skills.

Studies reveal that students' critical thinking abilities are rated low in many schools. This is evident in their struggles with in-depth analysis of information, construction of logical arguments, and problem-solving (Cahyani & Setyaningsih, 2024). On the other hand, teacher-centred approaches dominate learning methods, and students' lack of motivation limits the development of critical thinking (Hidayat & Devi, 2024). These limitations are evident in several aspects, including the pedagogical approach, which is dominated by teacher-centred methods, thereby preventing students from engaging in analytical and evaluative thinking (Wahyudi & Hidayat, 2023). Then, in terms of teacher-related factors, to institutional factors like time limits, a packed curriculum, or a lack of resources, teachers have a poor understanding of critical thinking (Wilson & Defianty, 2024).

Teachers in Indonesia face several challenges in teaching critical thinking. These challenges include traditional teaching methods, time constraints, assessment difficulties, inadequate teacher training, and cultural and social factors. Additional difficulties educators encounter while integrating critical thinking into the classroom include difficulties in managing student discipline and behaviour as well as resource limitations, such as access to materials and technology, that support critical thinking activities (Asfiranti et al., 2025).

Based on informal observations during the teaching experience, the researcher noted that students' participation in classroom activities requiring critical thinking, such as group discussions, text analysis, and problem-solving tasks, is limited. Therefore, this study is important for identifying and understanding effective strategies for learning English and developing critical thinking skills.

The concept of integrating critical thinking skills is that teachers prepare questions, and students then discuss them, or students observe and collect information for analysis from various learning sources (Hapsari & Prasetyarini,

2025). Similarly, Ilyas (2025), in their study, describes how to include critical thinking into EFL classes through other skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar. From this explanation, it can be concluded that critical thinking skills can be integrated into English language learning through various activities or skills. Other than that, teachers can incorporate critical thinking through lesson plans, class discussions, or assignments that require analysis.

In the field of teaching and learning, teachers' beliefs are a very important factor. As explained by Rokeach (1968) Beliefs are the foundation of everything and are then realised through actions, treatment, or words. Teacher beliefs are defined as teachers' perceptions, perspectives, or cognitions, where classroom learning is usually based on and influenced by teacher beliefs (Nishimuro & Borg, 2013).

Teachers frequently use critical-thinking instructional methods because they believe it is crucial to education. Meanwhile, teachers who do not consider critical thinking to be important in learning tend not to include critical thinking exercises in their classes. Therefore, a teacher's attitude toward critical thinking significantly impacts how they teach (Leibovitch et al., 2025).

Although many teachers acknowledge the importance of critical thinking in learning, its application remains limited due to a lack of assignments or activities that require analysis or evaluation. In addition, learning practices are often dominated by teacher-centred methods (Agustina et al., 2022). This creates a gap between teachers' beliefs about critical thinking and their pedagogical approaches, resulting in low levels of critical thinking among students.

Several studies on critical thinking in secondary education, the first of which was carried out by Kummala et al. (2022), found that EFL teachers in secondary schools believe in the value of critical thinking and approaches to its development. Meanwhile, a second study by Anggraeny & Khongput (2022) provides evidence that the application of critical thinking in the classroom remains low and limited to certain stages, despite teachers in Indonesia understanding the concept well.

These results align with those of earlier studies by Agustina et al. (2022), who identified several obstacles to the optimal application of higher-order and critical thinking in English classes. These obstacles include a lack of teacher training, time constraints, and the prevalence of teacher-centred teaching techniques. The three studies mentioned above suggest a gap between teachers' understanding of critical thinking and its practice in learning, underscoring the urgency of further investigating the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching in secondary schools.

In addition, these previous studies show a notable difference between teachers' attitudes and the use of critical thinking, especially in secondary schools. Therefore, it is important and necessary for future research to identify the variables that affect this process and examine how critical thinking is used in the classroom. This study primarily aims to explain how the teacher integrates critical thinking skills into their teaching practices. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how critical thinking is incorporated into high school English language learning, as well as to generate suggestions for creating and using more efficient teaching strategies to improve students' critical thinking skills.

Given these explanations and circumstances, the researcher considers it necessary to carry out a study titled "The Integration of Critical Thinking Skills into English Learning Activities in Senior High School Classroom: Teacher's Belief and Practices."

B. Research Questions

This study aims to examine English teacher's beliefs about integrating critical-thinking skills into learning activities. To achieve this purpose, several research questions were developed regarding teacher's beliefs about critical thinking. These questions are outlined in two sections as follows:

1. What are teacher's beliefs and knowledge about critical thinking, and the integration of critical thinking skills in English teaching and learning?
2. How does the teacher integrate critical thinking skills into teaching practices?

C. Research Purposes

According to the research questions mentioned, the following are the objectives of this study:

1. To explore teacher's beliefs and knowledge about critical thinking skills, and the integration of critical thinking skills in English teaching and learning.
2. To describe how the teacher integrates critical thinking skills into teaching practices.

D. Research Significances

The findings of this study are expected to give beneficial information, which is divided into two categories:

- a. Theoretically, the results of this study can be useful for authors or readers regarding teacher beliefs and critical thinking. In addition, this study can also serve as a reference for further research. This study provides an overview of how the concept of critical thinking, as presented in the literature, can be understood and applied in the context of high school English language learning. Thus, the findings of this study can enrich our understanding of the relationship between critical thinking and English language learning practices in the classroom.
- b. Practically, the results of this study can provide useful knowledge and reading material for teachers, students, or parties involved in education. Thus, teacher beliefs play a crucial role in shaping how teachers understand, plan, and implement the learning process. Teachers' beliefs can influence how they set learning objectives, select activities, and respond to students' needs. In the context of critical thinking, teachers' beliefs regarding the importance of students' thinking skills can encourage them to provide opportunities for students to engage in activities that require analysis, reasoning, discussion, and drawing conclusions. However, the application of these beliefs must still be adapted to the learning context, students' abilities, and learning objectives. Therefore, understanding teachers' beliefs

is essential for recognizing how their perspectives are reflected in classroom teaching practices.

E. Research Scope

The main focus of this study is teacher's beliefs about critical thinking and the integration of critical thinking skills in English language learning, as well as describing how the teacher integrates critical thinking skills into classroom activities. Therefore, there are subjects, objects, and locations for this study. First, the subjects of this study are one English teacher teaching in high school. Second, the focus of this study is the beliefs and the integration of critical thinking into classroom learning activities. Finally, the study was conducted at SMA Labschool UPI in Bandung.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the assumption that teachers' beliefs about critical thinking are related to how critical thinking is understood and integrated into classroom practices. The conceptual framework connects three main aspects: teacher beliefs, critical thinking skills, and classroom practices.

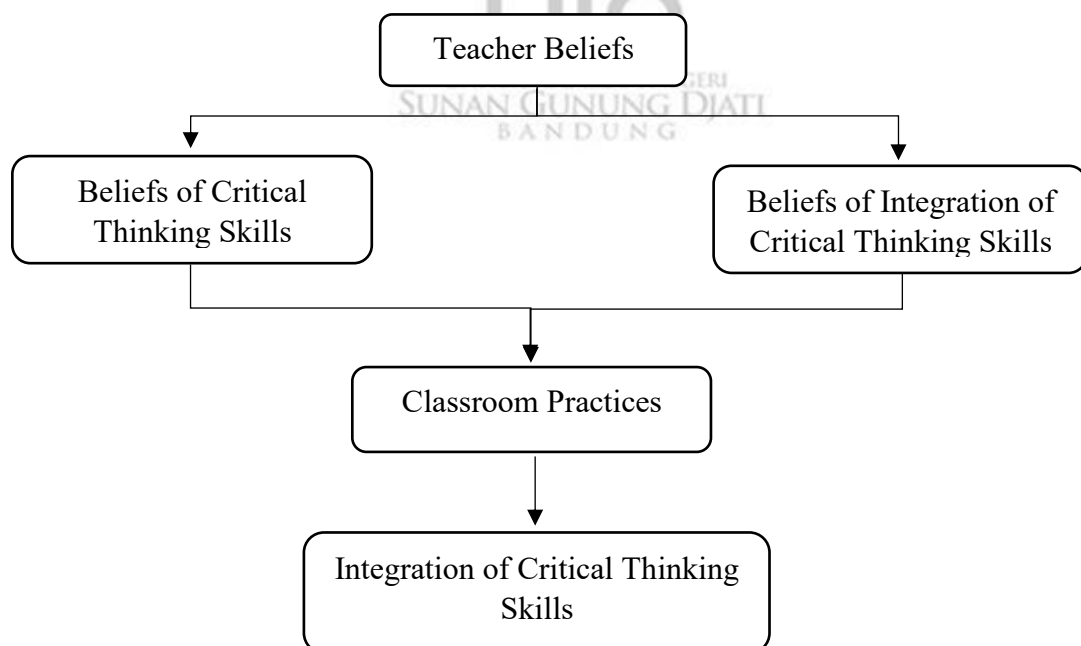


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

First, Rokeach (1968) defines beliefs as propositions that a person accepts as true, and that can be inferred from what a person says or does. In this study, Rokeach's perspective is used to examine the teacher's beliefs about critical thinking and beliefs about the integration of critical thinking skills in English learning. The teacher's beliefs are explored through the teacher's knowledge, perceptions, and statements about the importance and integration of critical thinking.

Second, the concept of critical thinking is based on Facione (1990), who describes critical thinking as involving cognitive skills such as interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation.

Third, Brown (2007) provides a basis for understanding language teaching practices. Effective English learning focuses not only on language structures but also on providing opportunities for students to comprehend, process, and use information meaningfully. Therefore, classroom activities can provide opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking while learning English.

Based on these perspectives, this study examines teacher's beliefs about critical thinking and the integration of critical thinking in English learning activities. The teachers' beliefs are first explored to understand how the teachers perceive critical thinking and its importance in English learning. These beliefs are then examined in relation to classroom practices to identify how critical thinking, particularly the skill of analysis, is integrated into English learning activities.

G. Previous Study

This study was designed to examine teachers' beliefs about critical thinking and its integration into classroom learning. This study aimed to determine the methods the teacher uses in the classroom to integrate critical thinking skills. Therefore, researchers concluded that several previous studies examined teachers' beliefs about critical thinking. The results of previous studies serve as a guide to addressing the gap in this study.

First, research by Kummala et al. (2022) examined teachers' beliefs about critical thinking and how to teach it to students. Data from this study were collected through questionnaires and interviews, using a mixed-methods design that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. There were two phases in this method, with participants being EFL teachers in secondary schools. The results of this study show that 85% of respondents believe that critical thinking skills and their teaching in secondary schools are important. Additionally, they think that teachers may help students enhance their critical thinking by offering exercises like problem-solving and debates. This study is similar to previous research in that it examines teachers' beliefs about critical thinking and involves secondary school EFL teachers. However, the study by Kummala et al (2022) focuses only on teachers' beliefs about improving students' critical thinking and does not examine how these beliefs are applied in the classroom.

Second, Ma and Liu (2023) examined teacher beliefs about the integration of critical thinking in foreign language. A total of 86 novice teachers and 100 experienced teachers participated in this study. The purpose of this study was to compare the perspectives of novice and experienced teachers' beliefs on the development of critical thinking in a foreign language setting. Data were collected via a self-reported questionnaire on teachers' beliefs, and three linear regression models were used to identify the influence of teaching experience on predicting teachers' beliefs about critical thinking. The results of the study show that while beginner teachers are more aware of the need for critical thinking, experienced teachers are better equipped to teach it in a foreign language context. The study by Ma and Liu (2023) is similar to this study because both examine teachers' beliefs regarding the integration of critical thinking into foreign language learning. However, this study used only a small sample and relied on self-reported data, without involving students as participants.

Third, Davies and Willing (2023) investigated New Zealand high school teachers' beliefs about critical thinking instruction and learning and how these beliefs compare with those of teachers in other countries. The focus of this study

was to ascertain the extent to which educators agree that critical thinking ought to be taught in schools and to identify the factors they consider barriers to its implementation. Using a mixed-methods approach through Qualtrics questionnaires and qualitative analysis, this study found that most teachers believe critical thinking is an essential skill that should be taught in the curriculum. The study by Davies and Willing (2023) is similar to this study because both examine teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning critical thinking at the high school level. However, the main barriers to its implementation are a lack of teacher training in critical thinking and time constraints in learning.

Fourth, Li (2023) examined the gap in understanding the conceptualization and practice of critical thinking among EFL teachers. A total of 182 teachers were surveyed using a questionnaire, 12 were interviewed, and 3 were observed in their classroom instruction. The results of the study show that teachers use cultural genres to embody critical thinking in their conceptualisations. Teachers also demonstrated interactive strategies to enhance critical thinking. Li's (2023) study bears a strong resemblance to this study, as both examine EFL teachers' understandings or beliefs regarding critical thinking and its application in teaching practice. Both studies also employed several data collection techniques, including questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. However, Li's (2023) study focuses on the conceptualisation and practice of critical thinking from the perspectives of teachers' cognition and sociocultural context, whereas this study specifically examines the application of critical thinking skills in English language learning, based on Facione's (1990) framework.

Fifth, research by Amale and Gebretsadik (2024) examines teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach critical-thinking techniques and skills in reading classes. Data were collected through a descriptive survey study using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach, with 40 EFL teachers as participants. Qualitative data from classroom observations indicated that most critical thinking strategies were rarely practiced when students were engaged in reading lessons. However, teachers' strategies in responding to students' answers were more

effective than other strategies. The use of these techniques in the classroom was positively correlated with teachers' self-efficacy. Thus, while teachers with strong self-efficacy may find it easier to apply these methods, the use of critical thinking abilities does not always ensure successful implementation of these approaches. The study by Amale and Gebretsadik (2024) is similar to this study because both examine teachers' perceptions or beliefs and the application of critical thinking strategies in EFL instruction, and both use classroom observation to examine teaching practices. The difference is that the former study specifically focuses on the application of critical thinking skills in reading instruction and its relationship to teachers' self-efficacy.

Sixth, Shafer's (2025) study examined secondary school teachers' critical thinking practices. Data were collected through observations of critical thinking and a thematic coding guide to analyse teacher interviews about their beliefs and critical-thinking practices in secondary schools. The study involved 28 teachers from five schools. The results of the study indicate that the thematic framework for critical thinking provides a basis for exploring teachers' beliefs and teaching practices through a mixed-methods approach across various school contexts and subject areas. Shafer's (2025) study is similar to this study because both examine teachers' beliefs and critical-thinking instructional practices at the secondary school level and employ interviews and classroom observations. However, Shafer's study involved teachers from various subject areas and utilized a thematic framework and an observation instrument developed to identify critical thinking practices.

Finally, research by Leibovitch et al. (2025) examined teachers' beliefs about critical-thinking education within a program. This study employed a multi-case action research design, analysing the reflections of 12 active teachers across several cycles. Informal teacher reflections were collected at several points during the professional learning program, and formal teacher reflections were collected at the end of each action research cycle. The results of this study, based on teachers' reflections, show that teachers' views on critical thinking can increase student engagement and academic outcomes. These teacher reflections resulted in a change

from initially maladaptive beliefs to adaptive beliefs. The study by Leibovitch is similar to this study in that both examine teachers' beliefs about critical thinking education. However, that study focused on changes in teachers' beliefs through professional development programs and used teachers' reflections as a data source. In contrast, this study focuses on teachers' beliefs and their application of critical thinking skills in classroom teaching practices.

Based on previous studies, it is evident that critical thinking has been extensively examined in relation to teachers' beliefs, perceptions, conceptualizations, and practices in various learning contexts. Some studies have focused more on teachers' beliefs and perceptions about the importance of critical thinking, while others have examined its application in teaching practices.

Nevertheless, there are still differences in research focus, learning contexts, instruments, and theoretical frameworks used to identify critical thinking skills. This study aims to bridge that gap by specifically examining English teachers' beliefs about critical thinking and how those beliefs are reflected in the application of critical thinking skills in English language instruction. In addition, this study employs Facione's (1990) framework, which identifies six critical thinking skills: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation.