

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

A. Research Background

Listening is one of the fundamental skills in language learning and plays a crucial role in understanding spoken communication. It is often considered the first skill acquired in language development and becomes the foundation for other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. In EFL contexts, listening involves not only recognizing sounds and vocabulary but also interpreting meaning and understanding the speaker's intention (Field, 2008; Vandergrift, 2019).

In classroom practice, listening is not merely a passive activity but a complex cognitive process that requires learners to actively construct meaning from spoken input. According to Underwood (1989), effective listening instruction involves three stages, including pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities, which aim to support comprehension and deeper processing of information (Field, 2008; Vandergrift & Goh, 2020). However, in many EFL classrooms, listening activities are still focused on answering comprehension questions rather than encouraging students to interpret and evaluate what they hear (In'nami & Koizumi, 2022; Pei & Suwanthep, 2021; Jiang et al., 2021).

In addition to comprehension, listening also requires higher-order thinking skills because learners need to interpret meaning, assess arguments, and make judgments about spoken information (Vandergrift & Goh, 2020; Facione, 2015). In 21st-century education, critical thinking is widely recognized as an essential skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as learners are expected not only to understand information but also to analyse and evaluate meaning. (Yuan et al., 2022; Andreucci-Annunziata et al., 2023)

International frameworks emphasize that critical thinking enables learners to make rational judgments, evaluate ideas critically, and reflect on information in academic contexts (OECD, 2019; Facione, 2015). These skills become essential in EFL classes because listening activities require students to assess arguments and interpret the speaker's message rather than just memorize information. Therefore, developing students' ability to interpret and evaluate spoken texts has become a key goal of effective EFL listening instruction.

Research shows that learners with higher critical thinking skills tend to be more active and reflective. Marin and Pava (2017, as cited in Yan, 2021) found that EFL learners who think critically are characterized by their tendency to question assumptions, seek clarification, and connect classroom learning with real-life experiences. They can analyze and organize their thoughts effectively, expressing them clearly through speaking and writing. Similarly, Delmastro and Balada (2012, as cited in Yan, 2021) argue that critical thinking promotes learner autonomy, enabling individuals to evaluate their learning processes and outcomes more effectively. Therefore, promoting critical thinking in EFL classrooms is not only an academic goal but also a pedagogical necessity for developing independent and reflective learners.

However, in practice, listening instruction often does not fully support the development of these skills. In the context of EFL in Indonesia, demonstrating critical thinking remains a challenge for students, especially during listening activities. Fernandes (2024) and Ramadhana (2024) report that students often focus on remembering details rather than critically analysing or evaluating messages. Most listening lessons are still teacher-centered and emphasize accuracy of comprehension, leaving little room for reflection or reasoning (Arfiyanti, 2025). This limited engagement highlights the need for classroom strategies that go beyond literal comprehension toward interpretive and analytical learning.

This general pattern is also evident specifically at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, the site of the present study. In the Extensive Listening course observed

here, post-listening activity, when it takes place at all, is typically limited to question-and-answer checking: students confirm whether their answer matches the expected answer, without being asked to explain why that answer is correct, to compare it with an alternative interpretation, or to justify their reasoning to a classmate. This narrow form of post-listening activity leaves little room for students to practice exactly the skills that twenty-first-century EFL learning is expected to develop, namely analysing what they hear and evaluating competing interpretations of it, so that even students who complete the listening task successfully are rarely required to think beyond identifying a single correct answer.

Because critical thinking is increasingly regarded as essential for EFL learners at this level, this gap between what post-listening activity currently asks of students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung and what it should ask of them is a pressing concern rather than a minor pedagogical detail. Discussion after listening offers a direct response to this gap: unlike question-and-answer checking, discussion requires students to voice their reasoning, hear and weigh alternative interpretations from classmates, and, where their answer differs from others, decide which interpretation is best supported by the material. It is this potential of discussion to move students from simply checking an answer toward analysing and evaluating it that motivates the present study's focus on discussion as a post-listening strategy for fostering students' critical thinking.

To address these limitations, appropriate instructional strategies are needed, especially in the post-listening stage. One strategy that shows potential is the use of discussion as a post-listening activity, particularly in the form of reflective and guided discussion. Discussion encourages students to process listening input more deeply by articulating ideas, questioning assumptions, and considering alternative perspectives. Ilyas and Istaryatiningtias (2025) found that structured post-listening discussions improved students' reasoning skills and their ability to justify opinions using logical evidence. Similarly, Qasserras (2025) emphasized that reflective discussions after listening tasks bridge the gap between comprehension and critical evaluation. Such activities provide learners with the opportunity to move from

lower-level cognitive processes—such as remembering and understanding—to higher-level processes, such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating, as described in Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Not only in Indonesia, but also internationally, Li and Zhou (2022) assert that guided discussions after listening tasks encourage analytical engagement, as learners interpret the speaker's intent and assess the validity of arguments. Similarly, Tan and Zhang (2023) show that integrating critical thinking into listening and speaking instruction improves students' ability to evaluate perspectives and construct coherent arguments. These findings highlight that post-listening discussions are not only a tool for comprehension but also cognitive scaffolding that supports higher-order thinking.

Although post-listening discussion is commonly implemented in EFL listening classrooms, both in Indonesia and internationally, research has largely examined it as a communicative or comprehension-support activity. Many existing studies focus on how discussion facilitates understanding of listening texts or encourages student participation. However, less attention has been given to how critical thinking functions as the central analytical focus within post-listening discussions. In particular, few studies explicitly examine how students demonstrate critical thinking, such as analyzing ideas and evaluating arguments during post-listening discussion. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by investigating post-listening discussion not merely as a pedagogical activity, but as a cognitive space where critical thinking is enacted and observed in university EFL listening classes. This focus distinguishes the present study from previous research that primarily emphasizes discussion as a communicative activity.

B. Research Questions

According to the problem in the research background, the research questions are guided by the following:

1. How does the teacher implement post-listening discussion as a listening strategy in the EFL classroom?
2. What critical thinking skills are demonstrated by students during post-listening discussion?

C. Research Purposes

According to the research questions, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To explain the implementation of English teachers in discussion as a post-listening strategy in EFL classrooms.
2. To explore the critical thinking skills which are demonstrated by students during post-listening discussion.

D. Research Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes to understanding how listening activities can promote students' critical thinking skills in EFL classrooms. Recent research has highlighted that language learning should not only focus on comprehension but also help students analyze and evaluate information more deeply (Li & Zhou, 2022; Tan & Zhang, 2023). By examining discussion as a post-listening strategy, this study supports the idea that interactive talk helps students interpret meaning, clarify ideas, and think more critically about what they have heard.

This study also connects with the critical thinking framework of Paul and Elder (2014), which emphasizes that good thinking requires clarity, accuracy, relevance, and logical reasoning. By observing how these standards appear during

classroom discussions, this research enriches the theoretical picture of how students actually practice critical thinking in real learning situations.

In addition, Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) offers a useful lens to identify the levels of thinking students show during post-listening discussions. Recent studies suggest that communicative activities encourage higher-order thinking, such as analysis and evaluation (Rahimi & Soleimani, 2020; Hosseini et al., 2021). This study supports those findings by showing how discussion can move students beyond basic listening comprehension into deeper cognitive processing.

Practically, this research provides a practical application for English teachers who want to make their listening lessons more interactive and meaningful. The findings can help teachers design post-listening activities that encourage students to talk, reflect, and think more deeply about what they have heard. By using structured discussion after listening tasks, teachers can create a more student-centered classroom, support active participation, and guide students to use reasoning when expressing ideas. This approach can help teachers shift from traditional "answer the questions" listening lessons toward more reflective and analytical learning practices (Cui & Teo, 2023).

For students, participating in post-listening discussion can help them develop critical thinking skills through meaningful interaction. Discussion allows them to explain their ideas, compare viewpoints, and support opinions with reasons based on the listening material. This process trains students to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and respond thoughtfully to others. It also builds their confidence in expressing ideas and improves their communication skills. Moreover, discussion can increase students' motivation and help them take responsibility for their learning, as they are encouraged to participate actively and contribute to group meaning-making (Shamsi & Bozorgian, 2024).

E. Research Scope

This study is limited to examining how post-listening discussion is implemented in a university-level EFL listening class and how students demonstrate critical thinking during this stage. The focus is not on all aspects of listening instruction, but specifically on the activities that occur after listening tasks, where students clarify understanding, negotiate meaning, and respond to open-ended questions. The research investigates how the lecturer facilitates the discussion and how students display comprehension through explanation, interpretation, and inference. Likewise, the study explores students' critical thinking as reflected in their analysis and evaluation during discussion. The research is therefore concerned with observable behaviors and verbal responses, not with measuring improvement numerically.

The scope of the research is also limited to one lecturer and one intact class of fourth-semester students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. The study does not attempt to generalize findings to all university contexts nor evaluate the full range of students' listening proficiency. It does not use tests, scores, or quantitative assessments, and does not analyse pre-listening or while-listening stages. Instead, the study focuses only on how post-listening discussion provides opportunities for students to demonstrate comprehension and higher-order cognitive skills. With these boundaries, the research remains focused, context-specific, and aligned with the qualitative case study design.

This study is limited to the implementation of post-listening discussion in one university EFL listening class. It focuses on two types of discussion: reflective discussion and guided discussion. Furthermore, the study specifically examines two aspects of critical thinking, namely analysis and evaluation, as these represent higher-order thinking skills that are most observable during post-listening discussion. Other aspects of critical thinking, such as creation, are not included in this study to maintain focus and depth of analysis

F. Conceptual Framework

In this study, the conceptual framework is built around two main ideas that are closely related to the research focus: post-listening discussion. These concepts help explain how discussion can become a meaningful step after listening activities to enhance students' ability to think critically. In this context, critical thinking is considered part of higher-order thinking skills.

Listening does not end when students finish answering comprehension questions. In many classrooms, the listening stage is often treated as a passive activity, with students focusing only on catching specific information. However, recent perspectives highlight that the post-listening phase is an important moment for deeper processing. Through discussion, students have the opportunity to clarify what they understand, share their opinions, and negotiate meaning with others. This interactive space allows them to explore ideas rather than only recall facts from the text.

Critical thinking becomes central in this process because discussion naturally requires students to reason about what they heard. According to Paul and Elder's framework (2007), critical thinking involves using standards such as clarity, accuracy, relevance, and logic when forming judgments. These standards can be observed when students explain their opinions, question assumptions, compare viewpoints, or provide reasons to support their ideas during the discussion. Thus, post-listening discussion is not only a speaking activity, but also a space where students demonstrate how they process information at a deeper level. In this study, these standards are specifically used as observable indicators to examine how students demonstrate critical thinking during post-listening discussion, particularly in terms of how they interpret meaning (analysis) and justify their opinions (evaluation).

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) also helps explain the cognitive processes that occur in post-listening discussion. While basic listening tasks may involve remembering or understanding, discussion pushes students toward higher-order skills such as analyzing the speaker's ideas,

evaluating the strength of arguments, and creating new interpretations. In this way, post-listening discussion acts as a bridge between listening comprehension and higher-level thinking.

The relationship between these concepts forms the basis of this research. Discussion serves as the learning strategy used after listening tasks, and it is expected to create an environment where students can show their critical thinking skills. The more intentionally teachers guide the discussion—through open-ended questions, prompts for reasoning, or requests for explanation—the more opportunities students have to engage in thoughtful, reflective, and analytical thinking. Therefore, post-listening discussion (as the instructional practice) is directly connected to students' demonstration of critical thinking.

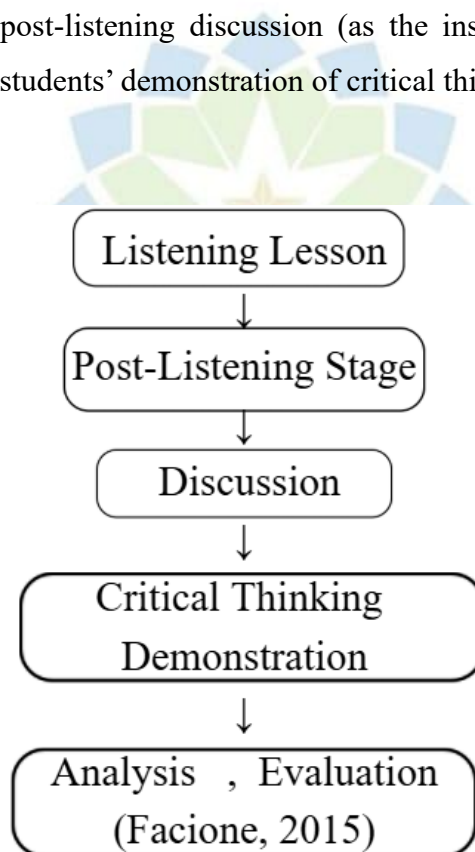


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

The research scheme illustrates the conceptual flow of this study. It begins with listening activities conducted in university EFL listening classes, which serve as the instructional context of the research. These listening activities are followed

by post-listening discussion, which functions as the central pedagogical practice examined in this study. Through post-listening discussion, students are encouraged to process spoken texts more deeply by sharing interpretations, responding to ideas, and engaging in reasoning.

The outcome of this process is reflected in students' listening comprehension and critical thinking. Rather than positioning discussion as a cause-and-effect variable, this study views post-listening discussion as a learning space where critical thinking can be observed and analysed. To examine this process, classroom observation, interviews, and documentation are employed as research instruments. These instruments are used to capture how post-listening discussion is implemented and how students demonstrate critical thinking during the discussion process. Thus, the research scheme represents the logical relationship between classroom practice, instructional strategy, and students' cognitive engagement.

G. Previous Study

Previous studies have examined critical thinking in EFL settings and generally highlight that active learning and reflective tasks encourage higher-order thinking. Research by Fernandes (2024), Yan (2021), and Marin & Pava (2017) demonstrates that reflective and communicative activities foster analytical reasoning among language learners. However, these studies mainly focus on speaking or general classroom participation rather than listening-specific contexts. Extending this line of inquiry to the Indonesian context, Gunawan et al. (2023) examined critical listening practices among fourth-semester EFL learners in higher education and found that critical listening activities successfully helped students develop both language skills and critical thinking; yet, their study focused on in-class listening competencies broadly, without isolating the role of post-listening discussion as a distinct instructional phase. Recent Indonesian and international studies likewise emphasize teacher facilitation, questioning, dialogue, and discussion as important conditions for making critical thinking visible in EFL learning (Andania, 2021; Masadeh,

2021; Kubo, 2024; Defianty & Wilson, 2024; Li, 2023). Additional evidence from Indonesian and international contexts includes work on university-level CT assessment (Andania, 2021), dialogic discussion in EAP (Kast, 2023), questioning strategies (Hermansyah et al., 2024), EFL speaking activities (Maulana et al., 2022), and textbook-based CT opportunities (Soe, 2024).

Listening comprehension research (Ramadhana, 2024; Tan & Zhang, 2023) reports that learners struggle with inferential and evaluative understanding, but these studies do not investigate how classroom discussion can support deeper interpretation of listening texts. In the Indonesian context, Purnamaningwulan (2022) investigated how listening journals as post-listening tasks in a Critical Listening and Speaking course affected students' critical thinking skills, finding significant improvement after implementation; however, this study focused on written reflective tasks rather than oral discussion as a structured pedagogical stage. These findings collectively suggest that while post-listening tasks can promote critical thinking, the specific role of structured oral discussion in this phase remains underexplored.

Studies on discussion-based learning (Arfiyanti, 2025; Li & Zhou, 2022; Ilyas & Istaryatiningtias, 2025) emphasize that discussion enhances reasoning and engagement, but the discussions examined are not situated specifically in the post-listening phase. A systematic review by Qasserras (2025) further indicates that empirical studies connecting listening comprehension and critical thinking through structured post-listening discussion remain limited. In the Indonesian context, most studies investigate critical thinking broadly or examine discussion as a speaking activity, not as an integral part of the listening lesson cycle. Therefore, a gap remains in understanding how post-listening discussion can serve as a structured pedagogical stage to foster students' comprehension and critical reasoning. This study fills that gap by focusing specifically on how post-listening discussion is implemented in a university listening class and how students demonstrate both listening comprehension and critical thinking during this stage