CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This opening chapter provides the necessary initial information regarding the conducted research consisting of five sub-chapters: background of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance, definition of terms, organization of the dissertation, and concluding remarks. In the background of the study sub-chapter, issues regarding the importance of incorporating Critical Pedagogy (CP) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are discussed briefly. It also provides the gap that is intended to fulfill by carrying out the research. The second sub-chapter lists the three questions addressed in the research. It is followed by the scope of the study as well as the research significances that are categorized into theoretical, practical, and for the policymakers. The definition of terms sub-chapter delineates the limiting definitions of attitudes, practices, and CPprinciples. The next sub-chapter is the organization of the dissertation which previews the overall contents of this research report and followed by concluding remarks sub-chapter. Each sub-chapter will be elaborated in the sections that later follow.

1.1   Background of the Study

It is stated that in general, social-political issues have not been adequately addressed by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers (Crookes & Lehner, 1998; Herrera-Molina & Portilla-Quintero, 2021). This phenomenon can also be found in the Indonesian, especially in the West Java Province, EFL classrooms (Yulianto, 2015, 2020). There is a tendency that numerous Indonesian EFL teachers in the region separate their teaching practices from the social and culturalcontexts of their students. One logical consequence of this is that the students view EFL lessons do not have direct connection with their actual daily lives. To some extent, this contributes to the low level of most of Indonesian primary, secondary, and tertiary students' English proficiency.

A lot of efforts have been executed not only by the government but also by various stakeholders to develop Indonesian students' English proficiency. At different school levels, various curriculums have been applied nationally

regarding EFL teaching at all levels of Indonesian school institutions. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Genre-based Approach (GBA), and scientific approach are three of the numerous approaches to teaching EFL in Indonesian schools. However, there is still an approach that has not been used and endorsed nationally to teach EFL to Indonesian students namely Critical Pedagogy (CP). Since the early 2000s, the use of CP as an approach to teaching EFL in Indonesia has been promoted by numerous experts (Alwasilah, 2004; Emilia, 2005; Mambu, 2009; Hayati, 2010). CP promises more meaningful educational practices not only for the students' distant future interests but also for their actual needs (Freire, 2005a; Giroux, 1997; Mochinski, 2008).

Considering the characteristic of EFL education that demands both teachers and students to comprehend language as a part of the broader cultural practice including social and political realms, it is suggested by Pennycook (1990) and Crookes (2022), that CP is urgently needed to be incorporated especially in the context of Indonesian higher education (Yulianto, 2015; Yulianto et al., 2024). Incorporating CP in the teaching of EFL in Indonesian higher education context is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, CP encourages students to question and challenge dominant discourses and power structures, fostering a more critical and reflective approach to learning (Canagarajah, 1996; Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 2003; Giroux & Giroux, 2006; Johnson, 2012). This is particularly important in Indonesia, where issues of social justice, inequality, and diversity are prevalent. Secondly, by incorporating CP in EFL classrooms, educators can help students develop a deeper understanding of global and local issues as well as perspectives, enabling them to engage more effectively in cross-cultural communication and collaboration (Shor, 1996; Macedo & Freire, 2005; Mochinski, 2008; Kincheloe, 2008a). Furthermore, CP can empower students to become active agents of change in their communities, encouraging them to think critically about social issues and take action to address them (McLaren, 2003; Freire, 2005b; Akbari, 2008). In the Indonesian context, where social and environmental challenges are significant, fostering a sense of social responsibility and activism among university students is crucial for creating positive societal change as from the CP perspective, the language classroom should be the place where social transformation started. By incorporating CP in the TEFL, EFL educators can help prepare students to navigate

complex global issues and contribute positively to their communities (Akbari, 2008; Mambu, 2011).

Bearing in mind the previous explanation, there is an urgency to integrate CP principles in the implementation of ELT in Indonesia just as has been suggested by numerous scholars over the last two decades (Alwasilah, 2004; Emilia, 2005; Hayati, 2010; Mambu, 2011; Gustine, 2014; Prahani et al., 2020; Waliyadin et al., 2023). However, CP has not been given proper academic attention and institutional supports, especially in the context of Indonesian higher education (Jeyaraj, 2014; Pessoa & Freitas, 2016). The lack of academic attention can be indicated from the phenomenon found that there are only a few numbers ofreports published on the topic of critical ELT pedagogy in reputable journals for the last five years. It is found that there are only several Indonesian ELT researchers who consistently publish their works under the CP theme. Two ofthem are Mambu (2009, 2011, 2014, 2018, 2022) and Gustine (2013, 2014, 2018).Regarding institutional supports it is evident that the inclusion of critical pedagogy in mainstream educational policies and curricula, resources, professional development opportunities for educators, and the integration of critical pedagogy principles into teacher training programs are still limited (Yulianto, 2015; Mambu, 2018; Prahani et al., 2020; Waliyadin et al., 2023). In many higher education institutions, the predominant focus has been on standardized testing and rote memorization, which often marginalizes CP.

From the research conducted by Mambu (2009, 2011, 2014, 2018, 2022) and Gustine (2013, 2014, 2018), it can be concluded that in the level of theory, Indonesian EFL practitioners are not resistant to most of the critical education tenets, but practically, they often faced difficulties and challenges in executing the tenets. Therefore, it is known that there is still a wide range of gaps in the field of CP research in the Indonesian EFL context that can be categorized into methodology, perspective, and population gaps. The methodology gap in this field is the absence of research that used a case study design. The perspective gap is that students as well as teachers' attitudes and the application of CP in EFL classrooms are rarely studied. The population gap means that there is still a lack of research in the field that is conducted in the higher education context.

Therefore, considering the urgency to integrate CP in the practice of TEFL in Indonesian higher education, acknowledging the lack of academic attention along with institutional supports, and intending to fill the existing research gaps, the present research was conducted. The emphasize of this research was on whether the EFL lecturers had the positive attitudes upon the CP principle-based classroom activities and how their attitudes reflected in their real daily teaching practices. Additionally, the focus was also given to the challenges and benefits of practicing the classroom activities that are based on the CP principles.

1.2   Research Questions

Bearing in mind the background explained in the previous sub-chapter as well as the research trend in the area of TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and CP, this research was conducted as an attempt to address the following questions:

1.   What are the attitudes of Indonesian EFL lecturers toward the CP principles-informed classroom activities and how are the attitudes reflected in their actual teaching practices?

2.   What are the benefits and constraints perceived by Indonesian EFL lecturers in implementing CP principles-informed classroom activities?

1.3   Research Purposes

Referring to the research questions elaborated previously, there are two purposes of this research. The first one is to uncover the EFL lecturers' attitudes toward the classroom activities that are based on the CP principles regardless of their familiarity with the terms and how the attitudes are reflected in their daily teaching practice. The second one is identifying the benefits and constraints perceived by the EFL lecturers in performing the EFL classroom activities that arebased on the CP principles.

1.4   Scope of the Study

In this initial chapter, it is considered essential to explicitly state the boundaries surrounding the current study. As this study focuses mainly on the Indonesian EFL lecturers' attitudes toward CP principles and their representation in their daily teaching practices, several boundaries are intentionally determined. Firstly, the Indonesian EFL lecturers refer two voluntarily participating EFL lecturers teaching

General English courses at two different higher education institutions in two neighboring cities (Bandung and Subang) in West Java province. The EFL lecturer in Subang teaches a General English course for Law Study Program students, while the other lecturer teaches a General English course for Machine Engineering Study Program students. Secondly, CP principles for this research that are the bases for the practiced classroom activities performed by the two participants are dialogue, problem-posing, praxis and conscientization. Thirdly, because this research emphasizes attitudes and practices, types of data collected for this research are limited to the form of participants' statements and their actualteaching practices. Fourthly, the challenges and the advantages of moderately practicing CP principle-based EFL classrooms identified in this study were interpreted as well as inferred from the perspective of both participating lecturers. Lastly, the data collection instruments in the present research were questionnaires,interview guidelines, and non-participatory classroom observation sheets utilized during the 2022/2023 academic year starting from June 2022, until August 2023.

1.5   Significances

Focusing on the lecturers' viewpoints on CP principles and how they bring to life their attitude in the form of teaching-learning practice in the EFL classroom, it is expected that the findings of this study are beneficial for the quality improvement of both CP and EFL theory, practice, along with policy-making, especially in the Indonesian higher education context. The detailed expected benefits of this study for each of the three categories are delineated in the following paragraphs.

Theoretically, the result of this study is expected to enrich the literature on the theory of CP and how CP principles are perceived as well as implemented by EFL lecturers, especially in the context of Indonesia. Additionally, practically, as one of its purposes is to unearth the practices performed by lecturers to bring CP principles into life in the EFL classroom, this study is supposed to be beneficial for any EFL practitioners who are willing to integrate CP principles into their context by considering the unearthed payoffs and pitfalls. It is also imagined that further researchers who have specific interests in researching Teacher Professional Development (TPD), CP, and EFL, can use this study as the practical guidance in doing so. Meanwhile, for policymakers, it is expected that the findings of this study provide sufficient and sound argumentation for them in both national and regional

governments to start investing adequate resources to promote the CP implementation in order to develop the quality of EFL practices as well as to pursue a more just society. In addition to that, it is also supposed that the findings of the present study are able to convince the educational decision-makers to improve the quality of Emancipated Learning policy by integrating the contextualized theory and practice of CP.

1.6   Definition of Terms

To avoid the occurrence of misconception regarding specific terms exploited in this study, it is necessary to include the limiting definitions in the early section of this study. Those are CP, CP principles, CP principle-based classroom activities, teaching practices, attitudes, challenges, and benefits. The definitions of those terms are displayed in the following paragraphs.

CP is a pedagogical theory and practice that is intended to reconstruct a more just and democratic society by focusing on the relationship between knowledge and power, education and politics, and language and social problems (McLaren, 2002; Canagarajah, 2005; Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Riasati & Mollei, 2012). Additionally, CP covers two aspects consisting of pedagogy along curriculum with pedagogy focusing on method and curriculum emphasizing teaching content (Clark, 2018). However, in this study, CP is defined as an educational theory and practice that is integrated into teaching EFL in the context of Indonesian higher education that aims to relate the EFL lessons with the real-life issues encountered by both students and lecturers personally, socially, and academically. There are four CP principles synthesized in this study: dialogue, problem-posing, praxis, and conscientization.

CP principle-based classroom activities is a phrase that refers to a series of teaching-learning procedures that can be carried out by teachers to incorporate selected CP principles in their classes. Synthesizing from the relevant contemporary publications and broken down from the four selected CP principles (dialogue, problem-posing, praxis, and conscientization), CP principles-informed EFL classroom activities in this study are defined as a set of doable actions that are categorized into twelve classifications that are (1) negotiating classroom decision (Giroux, 1997; Shor & Freire, 1987; Freire, 2005a); (2) encouraging and appreciating students' opinion (Kaufman, 2010; Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Cho,

2013); (3) using students first language (Canagarajah, 1999; Alwasilah, 2004; Hayati, 2011; Muro, 2011); (4) presenting and discussing students' real problems (Shin & Crookes, 2005; Larson, 2014); (5) connecting learning materials to students' life (Nixon-Ponder, 1995; McLaren, 2002; Mochinski, 2008); (6) using students' prior knowledge, experience, and local culture (Freire & Macedo, 2005; Akbari, 2008; Emilia, 2005); (7) inviting students to take action based on classroom discussion (Mochinski, 2008; Ko, 2013; Mambu, 2014); (8) assisting students to reflect on their learning activity (McLaren, 2003; Emilia, 2005; Gustine, 2014); (9) encouraging students to continually act and reflect (Freire, 2005a; Mambu, 2014; Yulianto, 2015); (10) incorporating problematic sociocultural and political issues (Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 2002; Freire, 2005b);

(11) asking students to think critically (Akbari, 2008; Cho, 2013; Kincheleo, 2011; Kim, 2017); and (12) promoting justice and equality (Giroux, 1997; Kincheleo, 2008; Leal, 2018). In the meantime, teaching practices are defined in this study as the activities executed by the two participating EFL lecturers, Andi and Meli, in running the observed first four of their classes in the first semester of 2022/2023 academic year.

Meanwhile, attitude is defined as a participant's disposition to react with a certain degree of favorableness and unfavorableness to an object consisting of cognitive, affective, and conative aspects which are indicated with beliefs, positive or negative feelings, and a state of readiness to take action (Ajzen, 1993; Crano & Prislin, 2008; Hogg & Vaughan, 2010). In this present study, attitude refers to the Indonesian EFL lecturers' cognitive and behavioral beliefs consisting of positive and negative ones. Additionally, challenges refer to the factors that possibly restrict the practices undertaken in implementing CP principles from the perspective of both participating EFL lecturers. In the meantime, benefits in this current research are defined as the possible impacts on students' competency afterattending the CP principle-based EFL classrooms perceived by the tworespondents.

1.7   Organization of the Dissertation

The coverage of this dissertation consists of five chapters namely (1) introduction, (2) theoretical framework, (3) research methodology, (4) findings and discussion, and (5) conclusion, limitation, and recommendation. The contents of those chapters contribute differently to the wholeness of this paper. Each of the previously listed

chapters is delineated in the subsequent paragraphs.

The first chapter, introduction, provides the initial information necessary about the research and its report. This information contains the rationale behind the early decision taken in the early period of research including the topic selection, question formulation, expected implications, and operational definition. The introductory chapter is classified into seven sub-chapters that are (1) background of the study, (2) research questions, (3) research purposes, (4) scope of the study, (5) significances, (6) definition of terms, (7) organization of the paper, and (8) concluding remarks.

The second chapter contains the underlying theories used to frame the current study. It sheds light on the two broad different yet intertwined theoretical traditions; critical pedagogy and attitude study. The massive literature review was performed by reading, selecting, paraphrasing, and synthesizing the related references to compose chapter two. In organizing this chapter, the contents are written into three main sub-chapters that are critical pedagogy, attitude, and relevant research reports.

The elaboration about how the study was carried out starting from the employed research design, selected research context, and participants, to how the collected data were analyzed is provided in the third chapter; Research Methodology. This Chapter three covers methodological and practical considerations related to the procedure performed to answer the formulated research questions. The chapter consists of six major sub-chapters that are (1) research design, (2) research context and participants, (3) research instruments, (4) research procedure, (5) data analysis, (6) ethical issues, and concluding remarks.

The next chapter, Findings and Discussion, is the section where the results of the study are presented and discussed. Furthermore, the identical, different, and even contradictory previous related findings conducted by other researchers are highlighted and compared to attain a clearer understanding of the studied topic. This research is organized into two main sections based on the two research questions. Those are Indonesian EFL lecturers' attitudes towards as well as the practices of CP principles. Additionally, it also includes the challenges they faced as well as the benefits they perceived when implementing the CP principle-based

EFL classroom activities.

The last chapter, the closing one, provides the conclusion drawn from the data and its interpretation, numerous limitations of the current study, and the recommendations proposed after considering the findings of the study. The conclusion consists of two major sections referring to the two research questions addressed in this study. Limitation covers three main points related to the context, duration, and methodology of the study. Recommendations offered are directed to higher education EFL practitioners, further researchers interested in conducting identical and replicating the current research, and Indonesian educational policymakers.

1.8   Concluding Remarks

The basic information regarding the rationale of why the research was conducted, the purposes and scope of the study, and the expected significances have been elaborated in this chapter. Additionally, the chapter has also provided the operational definitions of the employed specific terms in the present research and the preview of how this dissertation is organized. The next chapter delineates the theoretical framework necessary in performing the research including CP, CP principles, attitudes, and the previous related studies.