

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, and benefits of the study.

A. Background of the Study

To face nowadays challenge, the existence of English is obviously considered necessary in many fields such as politics, economic, business, tourism, technology, social and culture. It has become major media as the bridge of international communication. The role of English is delivering the language learner become easier to unearth knowledge, network, and connection. The communication among nations in the world will be intensive and highly engaged to English. The role of English teacher is to give adequate skill for student to face the challenge.

English is not delivered only in a spoken form but also written form. Indonesian students who want to be recognized as competent students in international world, at least, need to understand how to use English in a spoken and written form. It is a difficult job for teachers that they have to prepare students to be able to compete with International world and posit Indonesia in a better place. The emergence of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) also requires Indonesian students to be ready for a healthy competition in careers, business, economy, education, and so on.

English is taught in Indonesia for all grades, kindergarten until high school level. There are four skills that must be mastered by Indonesian English learners; listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Moreover, the national examination also encompasses those four skills. Consequently, the mastery of them is necessary. It is not an easy work to do. A teacher still needs to face students' different learning styles and strategies. In addition, different teacher has different teaching style and strategy, even students can feel it. Thus, a teacher must have a belief she holds

tight in their mind about English teaching-learning that is reflected in their classroom practices.

When a teacher comes to a class they must have something in their minds about what they are going to instruct the students. Any of decisions teachers make is affected by their beliefs about the subject they are going to teach. The way the teachers deliver the materials, the way they instruct the students, the way they give feedback, any of decisions are affected by their beliefs. Therefore, teachers' beliefs in a teaching learning process are crucial. What teachers have in their mind about teaching and learning is called teachers' beliefs.

Beliefs are "propositions individuals consider to be true and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and resistant to change" (Borg, 2011: 370-371). Teacher's beliefs play an important role in teaching-learning process in which any of decisions made by the teacher is influence by their beliefs. Teacher's beliefs can make a totally different learning environment for the learners, their motivations, and achievement in learning (Fauziati, 2015: 53). Moreover, Kuborzka (2012: 102) also added that "teachers' beliefs influence their goals, procedures, materials, classroom interaction patterns, their roles, their students, and the schools they work in". Therefore, revealing teachers' beliefs in teaching is necessary since they contribute to the affection of teacher's instructional decisions.

Borg (2001) defined teachers' beliefs as "teacher's pedagogic beliefs, or those beliefs of relevance to an individual's teaching". Later on she defined teacher's belief as "what the teachers think, know, and believe" (2006). Kuborzka (2011) defined teachers' beliefs "Teachers' beliefs are thought to have a profound influence on their classroom practices. An understanding of this relationship is important for the improvement of teachers' professional preparation and the successful implementation of new curricula." To sum up, teachers' beliefs in teaching-learning context are what teachers hold to be true in teaching learning process and they influence any of decisions made by the teachers in real classroom practices.

There is no consensus about what exactly distinguishes beliefs from any form of knowledge (Yigitolu: 2011). Furthermore, beliefs are affected by personal experiences and information and also affect a broader dimension called cognition (ibid). Therefore, the term belief gives an effect to a broader dimension that it cognition which is directly related to teachers' beliefs.

As Richard and Lockhart indicated that instructional teaching practices are influenced by teachers' beliefs, knowing teachers' beliefs in teaching writing is essential because teacher is the one who can help students to develop their writing skill and those beliefs can show how teachers apply their beliefs in classroom practices. Noe (2004) stated that beliefs have a close relationship with actions and practices. Borg (2003) mentions those teachers' beliefs have been revealed to have an important influence on teachers' practices. Furthermore, Liao (2007) mentioned that understanding teachers' specific beliefs about English teaching can inform researchers and teacher trainers about how teachers are likely to implement their teaching, and how to provide appropriate teacher education programs.

Kuborzka (2012: 102) added that "teachers' beliefs influence their goals, procedures, materials, classroom interaction patterns, their roles, their students, and the schools they work in". This means revealing teacher's belief in teaching is important and, therefore, revealing teachers' beliefs in teaching is necessary since they contribute to affecting teacher's instructional decisions.

There are four skills taught in English as a foreign language. Moreover, English is a compulsory subject in Indonesia which means from the early stage of school Indonesian English learners has been taught English. Each skill has its own difficulties. The difficulties usually come from the productive skills, speaking and writing. Usually, teacher does not pay much attention to writing skill of the learners. Besides, writing skill is not tested in National Examination. However, writing skill is important as means of communication. It has goals to get much information from someone who cannot talk, to solve problem, to store memories more than what human brain can do.

The fact is that producing a good writing in a foreign language is quite hard for English Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Most of students still depend on the

teachers. Students actually need to be provided with adequate trigger activities that can stimulate the students to develop their writing skills. Therefore, teachers play an important role in building students' understanding in writing. In other words, students depend on teachers for instruction and support (Urquhart and McIver, 2005: 58).

Richard and Lockhart (1994, as cited in Fauziati, 2015: 55-57) provided guidelines for researchers attempting to investigate teachers' beliefs, namely: belief about English, belief about learning, belief about teaching, belief about the program and curriculum, belief about teaching as profession.

Gebel and Schrier (2002) also mention that teachers' stated beliefs correspond with what they do in the classroom, and there is evidence that the two do not always coincide. On the other hand, not all teachers' beliefs are fully represented in classroom practices. For example, a lesson plan carefully designed by the teacher to be applied in classroom, sometimes, does not run as it is planned; they cannot be fully done because of some problems, like the students' behavior or limited time, and so on.

The beliefs that teachers hold in their minds are not instantly shaped. They are formed as a result of a long process since the teachers became an English learner until they become a language teacher. Borg (2003: 94) stated the factors contributing in shaping teachers' beliefs in language teaching, namely: parents, principal's requirement, the school, society, curriculum orders, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardized test and the availability of resources may hinder language teachers; ability to carry out instructional practices reflecting their beliefs. The results of teachers' experiences inside and outside of school contribute to the shaping teachers' beliefs in language teaching.

The way teachers teach is different from one to another. There are many factors that affect this teaching style, such as, teachers' experiences as students, their education or trainings they get, etc. The beliefs the teachers hold sometimes are not fully implemented because of some factors. These beliefs are sometimes not reflected in their classroom practices. They want to do something but there are unavoidable obstacles they have to face, so this becomes the consequences.

Teachers sometimes make a different implementation in classroom practices which is not related to their beliefs. Research has shown that tension does exist in the implementation teachers' beliefs in classroom practices. (Frede, 2012; Malketo, 2012; Shulin, 2013; Uddin, 2014, Alvita, 2015, Salteh & Sadegi, 2015). This happens because of many factors like students' behavior in classroom, time management, school regulation and etc.

Since there are many factors that affect teachers' implementation of their beliefs in teaching practice, it becomes crucial to investigate the affected factor in the implementation of teachers' beliefs in real practices in teaching writing. Additionally, most of research in the same field with the current research was done in university level. Since writing is also taught in high school level it is important to examine teachers' beliefs in teaching writing because students' achievement in high school level will also affect their achievement in university level.

Some of schools in Indonesia taught English for only 5 hours of lesson in a week. According to O'Malley (1996) for a school environment which is not fully English, it needs more than 9 years or more to be fluent in speaking. But, writing is much more complicated than speaking. If we learn speaking means we learn a daily conversation, something more practical. But, writing needs more than that. We need to develop abstract ideas in our head into real form, written text. To make them into an effective writing is not a simple thing. There are many things to consider in writing, in this case writing for academic purpose. Therefore, writing is a long process.

In Addition, writing is not a requirement for passing the national examination for all school level (elementary & secondary level). This problem also becomes a big question why teachers should teach writing if it is not tested for National Examination? This also becomes the reason why many teachers only focus on grammar and reading because these two skills are tested in National Examination.

The boarding school which became the object of the current study has a regulation that English is taught separately by different teachers in which each unit of school also has its own regulation in distributing these lessons to teachers.

There are three units for high school levels in Assalaam Islamic Modern Boarding School. In *Madrasah Aliyah* (Islamic Senior High School), English is taught by 3 different teachers; English teacher (grammar & listening), Conversation and Reading teacher; Composition teacher (writing). In Senior High School, English is taught by 2 different teachers; Conversation and Composition teacher, and grammar teacher. In Vocational High School, all skills are taught by the same teacher. In short, there is a separated subject for writing skill in this school for High School and Islamic Senior High School.

From the description about English lesson separation above, we can see that writing skill is considered important in this boarding school. The proof is that in this boarding school there is a special subject for writing skill named Composition. The unit chosen for this research is the Islamic Senior High School. The reason is because the writer is teaching in the same unit but different subject. The level chosen is grade X, XI, and XII of Islamic Senior High School. There are two English teachers who will contribute in this research, one is teaching composition in grade X and XI for female students and one is teaching grade XII for female students.

Although writing school is not tested in National Examination, this boarding school still assigns each unit to have a separated subject for writing skill. Same level of school but taught by different teachers will have different feeling to students. Moreover, this boarding school assigns all third grade students to make a scholarly paper, in which, the students are free to choose either Arabic or English paper. Therefore, elaborating teachers' beliefs in writing skill is necessary, since it is not tested in National Examination and not many teachers outside of this boarding school considers the importance of writing skill for students, which consequently when they come to university level, if they do not have adequate understanding in how to cite a quotation or how to put someone's idea into their writing, it will be a big problem. Therefore, exploring teachers' beliefs in teaching writing is necessary.

The writer has conducted a preliminary study on December 2015 at Assalaam Islamic Modern Boarding school by doing an interview with English teachers

teaching in Islamic Senior High School named teacher AW and teacher PS. The result showed that there is a target in Assalaam Boarding School before graduating from senior high school level that is the students have to make a scholarly paper, either in English or Arabic. The existence of Composition subject is aimed at helping students to arrange the scholarly paper, however, this scholarly paper material is given in fifth grade. Moreover, the teacher mentioned the materials given to each grade as follow: In Grade X students are taught to compose descriptive text, announcement, recount text, and narrative text. In Grade XI the students are taught narrative text, procedure text, biography text, report text, hortatory exposition, analytical exposition, and scholarly paper lesson. In Grade XII, the students are taught how to write an application letter, caption, review text, news item, and discussion text.

Based on the explanation from the teacher above, the materials given by the teacher is following the 2013 curriculum, but there is a separated subject for writing. Moreover, based on the standard made by this Boarding School that the students have to make a scholarly paper, there is additional lesson which helps the students in making that scholarly paper. In fact, the separated subject is not only writing, but there is conversation subject and structure subject. Meanwhile, the curriculum implemented in Academic Year 2015/2016 is for grade X and XI is 2013 Curriculum and for grade XII is School-Based Curriculum (*KTSP*). To conclude the result of this preliminary study, Assalaam Islamic Senior High School has a separated subject for English skills and there is additional lesson about scholarly paper which helps the students to make a scholarly paper before graduating.

In line with the goal, writing skill is a skill which needs to be noticed. Writing skill is an important skill which needs a long process to master. A writing teacher needs to facilitate the students in developing their writing. Therefore, it is important to identify teachers' beliefs in teaching writing because teachers' beliefs in teaching writing will affect teacher's instructional decision in their teaching. Thus, this study focuses on elaborating teachers' beliefs in teaching writing and

finding factors that influence the shaping of those beliefs and how those beliefs are reflected in classroom process.

B. Problem Statements

The current study encompasses research questions as follow:

1. What are English teachers' beliefs in teaching writing?
2. How are those beliefs reflected in classroom practices?
3. How is the discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching writing?
4. What factors contribute to shaping teachers' beliefs in teaching writing and its practices?

C. Objectives of the Study

The goal of this study is to find out English teachers' beliefs and practice in teaching writing. Specifically, this project has the following aims:

1. To reveal English teachers' beliefs in teaching writing.
2. To find out how those beliefs reflected in classroom practices.
3. To find out whether there is discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching writing.
4. To find out the factors contribute to the shaping those teachers' beliefs and the practices if those beliefs.

D. Limitation of the Study

In order to be focus on the objectives of the current study, the writer limits the beliefs in teaching writing. The limitation is based on what exist in the teacher learning process, namely: lesson plan, learning objectives, teaching method, classroom procedure, classroom techniques, instructional materials, teachers' roles and learners' roles, and assessment. Therefore, the current study elaborates teachers' beliefs and practices in the mentioned components of teaching writing.

E. Benefits of the Study

The writer really hopes that this research on teachers' beliefs in teaching writing has benefits. The benefits of this study will be distinguished into three benefits:

1. For the researcher herself, the research conducted will result empirical data which give the researcher deeper understanding on teachers' beliefs in teaching writing.
2. For the teachers, the finding will hopefully contribute to them with useful insight for their future teaching practices, especially in understanding what the learners need and how this information help English teachers to help English learners in facing difficulties in English learning.
3. For further researchers who want to conduct a research on this related areas, this research provide additional information to the existing studies about teachers' beliefs in teaching writing.