

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Background of the Study**

In this globalization era in so many countries all over the world including in Indonesia, English is considered to be an international language which is used to communicate with people from different parts of the world. According to Dardjowidjojo (2003), Huda (2000), Renandya (2000), and Simatupang (1999) as cited in Lauder (2008), in Indonesia, English is used 'as a means of international communication in practically all fields or walks of life'. Besides, English is also used 'as a medium through which scientific knowledge, and new technologies can be implemented, as a source of vocabulary for the development and modernization of Indonesian, and as a way to get to know native speakers of English, their language, culture and literature, or as a means of expanding one's intellectual horizons'. Additionally, Sadtono (2013) said that nowadays those who graduate from schools

without having ever learned English would find it difficult to read and understand texts in most Indonesian newspapers or magazines since those texts may contain a lot of English loanwords. He concluded this as the implication of the phenomenon of English hegemony in Indonesian, where Indonesians, whether they are willing or not, have to learn English.

Realizing the importance of English in the globalization era, the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendiknas) through its 2006 School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) ordered English to be taught for 2 hours a week in elementary schools from grade 4-6, 4 hours a week in junior and senior high schools. Not so long ago, however, Kemendiknas launched a new curriculum called as Curriculum 2013 where in this new curriculum, English is not taught at elementary schools, but it is still taught for 4 hours a week in junior high schools and for 2 hours a week in senior high schools, for students majoring in social and science programs.

For students majoring in language programs, they have 3 hours a week of English subject in grade 10, and 4 hours a week in grade 11 and 12 (Kemendiknas, 2013). Kemendiknas (2013) stated that Curriculum 2013 was implemented only in grades 1, 7, and 10 in 2013. Then, in 2014, it was implemented in grade 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, and 11. After that, in 2015, Curriculum 2013 was implemented at all levels of education. In the first academic year of 2013-2014, the in-service teachers, who had the required qualification to teach, were assigned to implement Curriculum 2013. Those who did not should take an in-service teacher development program for a year until they reached the required standard and could start teaching using Curriculum 2013 in 2014.

Despite the curriculum change, what remains the same is the fact that the teaching of English in Indonesia is not always done in environments where English is spoken by all individuals involved. Thus, it is not widely used for communication. Many students consider English only as a

means for passing exams, entering universities or colleges, getting a job, or studying abroad. Looking at this situation, we can see that what becomes an important issue among practitioners of the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Indonesia is the purpose of teaching English itself as the basis for the development of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia. Based on their purpose of teaching English, teachers play an important role in providing teaching materials and delivering those materials to the students. Therefore, teachers are expected to always enrich their teaching methods or approaches, so in class they can give the students the best language learning experience.

Indonesia has experienced several changes in curriculum with different language teaching approaches from Grammar-Translation Method (GTM hereafter) and Audio-lingual Method (ALM hereafter) to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT hereafter) approach, which was then regarded as the most popular teaching approach (Dardjowidjojo, 2000

and Nur, 2004). English language teaching in Indonesia in 1945 during the colonial era followed the GTM as it was suitable for large classes, cheap and only required grammatical mastery of the language. From the early 1950s, Indonesian government started to introduce audio-lingual approach which later led to audio-lingual based curriculum. In 1975, Indonesian government launched a revised curriculum which was still oriented to the audio-lingual approach with teaching guidelines which covered all curriculum components such as teaching objectives, materials, approaches, and evaluation arranged more systematically (Tjokrosujoso & Fachrurrazy, 1997). The 1984 communicative approach curriculum was launched as the impact of dissatisfaction with the previous audio-lingual curriculum. This new curriculum encouraged the mastery of English communication both receptive and productive skills. Although the 1984 curriculum was proclaimed to be communicative, in reality it was still a structure-focused communicative curriculum. Thus, in 1994, the meaning-

focused communicative curriculum was launched to replace the 1984 curriculum. The underpinning approach of the 1994 curriculum was meaningfulness approach or communicative approach which involve the development of the ability to communicate in the four skills, the linguistic mastery as only one part of communicative abilities, the use of a range of syllabi such as functional, situational, skills-based, and structural, and the use of integrated and communicative assessment. This 1994 communicative approach curriculum was revised in 2004 through the launching of the 2004 competency-based curriculum which still used communicative language teaching as its underlying approach in its implementation. This curriculum was claimed to contain more systematic competency to be achieved in any level of education in Indonesia. Due to the urge from many teaching practitioners and educators for the presence of the local authority role in designing the curriculum, the 2006 School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) was published to replace the 2004 curriculum. The

goals of the English teaching in KTSP, according to Kemendiknas (2006), are (1) to develop communicative ability in the target language, both in oral and written form (i.e., communicative ability consists of listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill, and writing skill), (2) to stimulate students' awareness of the importance of the mastery of English as a foreign language, (3) to develop students' understanding toward the relation between language and culture and shaping the knowledge of culture, so that students will have an insight of cross cultural understanding, which enables them to engage in diverse sociocultural contexts. Even the latest Curriculum 2013 still uses communicative language teaching as its underlying approach. CLT approach has been adopted and used in the English curricula in Indonesia since 1984 to the present time.

With the number of hours spent to learn English in secondary schools and the optional hours for learning English in elementary schools, it is expected that by the time the

students graduate from senior high schools, they will have a high ability in English. However, the outcome is far from expectations. It seems that some high school graduates, especially those who graduate from senior high schools outside the island of Java, have a low ability in English. They are unable to communicate intelligibly in English and those who are able are assumed to have taken private courses or come from a privileged family background. Sadtono (1997) as cited in Kam (2004) reported that children in one elementary school in Surabaya that were taught English from grade one were able to write fairly good compositions when they were in grade five and six. He believes that this was due to an integrated approach in the teaching of English that was implemented by the teacher. From this study, it can be seen that teachers' decision in employing a certain teaching approach in the teaching of English may bring success to the students' learning of English. However, teachers' teaching practice in class is certainly influenced by the teaching beliefs that they have. It has been

widely discussed that teachers' pedagogical beliefs play a central role in their teaching practices where these beliefs are manifested in the teaching methods, in choosing class activities, and in decision making process in the classrooms (Borg, 2001). Therefore, an investigation of teachers' beliefs is necessary to understand teachers' points of view about English and the ways they are implementing what they believe about the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in their teaching practices.

In the last two decades, many researchers in the field of language teaching have paid more attention to the study of teachers' beliefs. They have shown that teachers' beliefs are built up over time and play a critical role in the classroom practices (Richards, 1998; Richards and Lockhart, 1996; Smith, 1996). Evidently, the nature of language teaching practices, roles of teachers, and relationships with students are influenced by the beliefs that are held by teachers (Richards, 1998). Donaghue (2003) states that teachers' beliefs also influence

acceptance and uptake of new approaches, techniques, and activities. According to Borg (2003), teachers' beliefs constitute one of the dimensions of teacher cognition, an inclusive concept of the complexity of teachers' mental lives which has become a well-established area of analysis in second language teaching and learning. Teachers' beliefs result from the relationship between: 1) the values, goals, and assumptions that teachers have about the content and development of teaching, and 2) the understanding of the social, cultural, and institutional context where teaching takes place (Richards, 1998).

Research studies conducted on teachers' beliefs and practices have examined a number of issues such as different perceptions about communicative language teaching (Salomone, 1998); influence of the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and the classroom (Breen, 2002); and the nature of grammar teaching as teachers perceive it (Borg, 2003). One of the focuses of research studies on

teachers' beliefs and practices is to find out the relationship between teachers' beliefs and the practices based on their beliefs in the classroom, specifically to find out to what extent teachers' stated beliefs correspond to what they do in the classroom. Based on the results of their research, Gebel and Schrier (2002) stated that the teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices do not always correspond to each other. Some studies such as the one conducted by Tayjasanant and Barnard (2010) use such terms as incongruence, inconsistency and discrepancy to refer to such mismatch, and such mismatches between teachers' stated beliefs and what they really do in the classroom have sometimes been viewed as unwanted or negative phenomenon. In this study, the argument for a more positive perspective on such differences is given by conceptualizing the phenomena as "divergences among different forces or elements in the teacher's understanding of the ... subject matter ..." (Borg and Phipps, 2009).

Studies of English teacher education and teaching process in Indonesia so far have focused on teachers in Java. Very few studies were conducted to find out how English teaching is delivered in schools outside Java. One thing that we should keep in mind is the fact that teachers, regardless of their institutions or where they are assigned to teach, are the heart of education. Arden-Close (1999) regard teachers as the arbiter of methods and choice. When the teachers give emphasis on the teaching of English vocabulary in class, many students see vocabulary as the most important aspect of their English learning. This might demonstrate a good example of teachers' powerful influence in shaping their students' opinions about which aspect of the language that is important for them to learn in order to master the language. Another example is where a greater amount of students' learning time is spent on developing basic linguistic ability (on 'form' mainly). As a result, a close look at teachers' beliefs is essential to have a better understanding of EFL teaching and learning.

Researchers such as Barcelos (2000), Tseng (1999), and Hsieh (2002) have indicated and proven that teachers' beliefs are generally consistent with their teaching behaviors and that teachers' beliefs influence foreign language teachers' decision-making in a classroom context. Therefore, this study attempted to reveal the beliefs of English teachers in senior high schools outside Java island (specifically in the capital region of West Sumba) regarding the epistemological issues about English (i.e., whether it is seen as a subject concerning the acquisition of grammatical structures or regarded as the means of communication) with reference to different views about English language teaching in order to find out what kinds of teaching techniques were employed by the English teachers to achieve varying teaching goals based on their teaching beliefs. This study also aimed at profiling the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices to find out whether they were convergent or divergent, and finding out the factors leading to the divergence.

## **Statement of the Problem**

This study was conducted to investigate the English teaching beliefs of English teachers in Waikabubak, West Sumba and the influence these beliefs had on teachers' classroom practices. The researcher wanted to find out whether the teachers' beliefs were congruent with or divergent from their actual classroom practices and to figure out the reasons for the incongruence between teachers' stated beliefs and their classroom practices. The researcher focused on the three questions below in conducting the study:

1. What are the teachers' beliefs about EFL teaching in senior high schools?
2. To what extent do their classroom practices reflect their beliefs?
3. What are the reasons for any incongruence between their expressed beliefs and practices?

## **Purpose of the Study**

In teaching and learning processes, teachers try to achieve their teaching objectives through interaction with their students by means of teaching selected materials. Teaching is more than rationally standardized lectures since teachers' personal interpretations of teaching materials are involved (Hung, 1999). Thus, the emphasis should be put on teachers' interpretations of curriculum, methods of instruction, ways of evaluation, and choices of classroom activities.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To figure out the teachers' beliefs about EFL teaching in senior high schools.
2. To find out to what extent the teachers' classroom practices reflect their beliefs.
3. To discover reasons behind the incongruence of teachers' stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices.

## **Theoretical Framework**

According to Anthony (1963), components of language teaching theories can be analyzed at different levels. He divides the components of language teaching theories into: *approaches*, *methods*, and *techniques*. An approach refers to theories of language and language learning. Methods are the application of these theories, resulting in ways of teaching language, as well as syllabus designing. Techniques are classroom activities or procedures according to particular methods. Based on his analysis, these three concepts differ in level: theoretical, organizational, and practical respectively.

In the long history of ELT in Indonesia, there are three approaches that are commonly claimed to have been introduced in Indonesian ELT: *GTM*, *ALM*, and *CLT*. The *GTM* is believed to be the most dominant ELT approach in most Indonesian EFL classrooms, especially in the formal education sector (Pasassung, 2003). In the *GTM* classroom, students learn a foreign language by memorizing its vocabulary and grammar

rules for the further development of their reading and writing skills. It uses deductive methodology, including translating texts, answering comprehension questions, finding synonyms and antonyms, comparing spelling or sounds with the native language, deductive grammar exercises, cloze-tests, grammar and vocabulary memorization, sentence formation, and writing essays. The medium of instruction is mainly students' native language. Accuracy is the main criterion for evaluation. Teachers always correct errors straight away. The underlying danger with overuse of the GTM is that students may possess knowledge of the language but do not necessarily learn to use the language.

The ALM was developed with the influences of structural linguistics and behaviorism, which suggests that learning is the result of habit formation through conditioning. As a consequence in a typical ALM classroom, students concentrate on drill repetition and are rewarded for correct production. Language teaching focuses on the development of

automatic communicative abilities, and builds on structures and speech-related skills, such as listening and speaking. The teaching of the other skills is based on that of oral skills. The teaching process is inductive where practice precedes rule explanations through activities such as: dialogue memorization and drills, repetition drills, chain drills, substitution drills, sentence transformation, questions and answers, minimal pairs of pronunciation learning, dialogue completion and grammar games (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Errors are predicted, undesirable, and corrected instantly.

CLT does not give emphasis on linguistic forms as much as language functions. Thus, its focus is on appropriate language use. Language is viewed as a means of interaction and communication. Therefore, learners are asked to participate in meaningful activities that promote unconscious learning of various elements such as grammar, communication, discourse, and strategies. In CLT classroom, meaning-focused activities such as, reorganizing scrambled sentences, information gap

games, problem-solving activities, and role-plays are used. Authentic reading materials and realia are often used, as they illustrate the target culture to learners (Winskowski, 1999). Tests are used to evaluate the successful completion of a task instead of accuracy. Errors are perceived as a part of development. Thus, teachers tolerate students' errors rather than correcting them.

### **Significance of the Study**

Very little attention has been paid to English teachers' beliefs on the teaching of English as a foreign language to senior high school students in islands outside Java. Moreover, no study to date has focused on the links between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in the region of West Sumba. Therefore, there is a need to explore the degree of discrepancy between teachers' beliefs about teaching English as a foreign language in secondary schools outside Java island and their practical teaching activities. This study can act as a catalyst in

enabling other teachers in other islands outside Java to reflect on and examine their own beliefs in the teaching of English as a foreign language to senior high school students and their teaching practices.

This study is expected to give a significant contribution to the field in terms of three interrelated areas. They are English teaching, English teaching contexts, and curriculum development. First of all, the results might be beneficial for EFL teachers to give them an opportunity to reflect upon their own teaching practice in terms of how to motivate students and arouse students' interests as well as what kind of teaching strategies to employ so as to enhance students' language ability; as teachers may develop a better blueprint of teaching through the analysis and reflection of beliefs.

In terms of English teaching contexts, an investigation into teachers' teaching practices on the basis of their beliefs is essential so that suggestions on effective English teaching and learning contexts can be provided to English teachers and the

authorities concerned, and both sides can cooperate well to improve the teaching contexts and ensure the effectiveness and quality of teaching.

In terms of curriculum development, the findings of this study are expected to be able to shed light on the issue of identifying precise curriculum objectives, whether they should be function-oriented through the use of CLT method or notion-oriented as what a majority of English teachers prefer and are used to, or both.

### **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study has certain limitations in terms of human, time, and the focus of investigation. In relation to human limitations, this study was restricted to only investigate 4 (four) senior high school teachers teaching in 2 (two) senior high schools in Waikabubak; one is a public senior high school and the other one is a private senior high school. The limitation pertaining to time is that this study was conducted only in

twelve weeks in the second term of the 2013-2014 academic year. Due to the constraints of time, not all teachers in West Sumba region could be included as participants in this study. Further research can be explored by including a greater number of participants to gain an overall understanding of English teaching in senior high schools in West Sumba region.

As for the focus of investigation, this study focused only on teachers' thinking and action. Therefore, it will not illustrate students' perception of and reactions to classroom activities. Littlewood (1981) claims "In language teaching, our methods have often failed to produce effective learning, however sound they may have appeared in theory." According to Good (1987), the way how students interpret teachers' behaviors, their own ability, and learning activities may be quite independent of teachers' actual intentions and perception. Therefore, in further research it may be preferable to take students' perspectives into consideration.

Due to the limitations of the study, the results of this study may not be a reflection of teachers' beliefs in the whole region as it only investigated the beliefs of four English language teachers in Waikabubak.

### **Definitions of the Key Terms**

The following is a list of key terms and their definitions used in this study:

#### **1. Teachers' beliefs**

According to Borg (2001), teachers' belief is an evaluative scheme or plan which is accepted as true and consciously or unconsciously held by an individual. Pajares (1992) adds that even though belief is closely related to personal conceptions and internal mental processes, it is actually observable through an individual's attitudes, values, expectation, theories, and assumption that he/she makes because belief can influence someone's behaviors and decisions.

In this study, the term 'beliefs' refer to teachers' personal perception or what the teachers think and know about the teaching of English as a foreign language to senior high school students which underlies their teaching practices and may be reflected in their thought and behavior and also in their classroom practices.

## **2. EFL**

This term stands for English as a Foreign Language. Gunderson (2009) makes a comparison of EFL to ESL where according to him, "ESL is based on the premise that English is the language of the community and the school and that the students have access to English models. EFL is usually learned in environments where the language of the community and the school is not English. EFL teachers have the difficult task of finding access to and providing English models for their students".

### **3. Teachers' teaching practices**

This term can be defined as a set of teaching strategies and approaches that are employed by teachers in the teaching and learning process that happens in the classroom.

### **4. Approach**

This term refers to a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning which serves as the source of practices and principles in the language teaching and learning.

### **5. Method**

This term refers to a generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives focusing on the goals of the language teaching and learning, learner roles, teacher roles, and the role of instructional materials.