

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the introduction to the study. It covers background of the study, research questions, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, scope of the study, and thesis organization.

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

Teaching is normally recognized as a profession (Wallace, 1991; Richards and Farrel, 2005). Wallace (1991, p. 2) explains the term profession as a positive term that means “a kind of occupation which can only be practiced after long and rigorous academic study, which should be rewarded because of difficulty of attaining it and the public good it brings”. As a professional, teachers are suggested to continually reshape their understanding about their knowledge of teaching and learning (Brookfield, 1995; Ellias and Merriam, 2005; Farrel, 2007, 2009). The knowledge of teaching and learning according to Meijer et.al (2001) includes the knowledge about subject, learners, curriculum, pedagogic, teaching performance, context, and self-recognition as a teacher.

Actually, the teachers in their education program are well informed of that knowledge related to teaching and learning. However, after entering the real world of teaching, teachers still need to refresh and update their knowledge and skills in teaching because they sometimes work in a complex, ambiguous, and dilemmatic classrooms (Cimer and Palic, 2012).

Several attempts can be done by teachers to improve and develop their competences to be a professional teacher. The efforts are either by joining training and education program or by engaging in teacher development (Wallace, 1991). The distinction between the teacher education/training and the teacher development is on the initiative assumed. Where other parties may be assumed to manage teacher training or education, the teacher development is something that can only be done by the teacher himself (Edge, 1988 in Wallace, 1991). Moreover, Richards (2005) explains that teacher training just focuses on the short-

termed goal of learning and emphasized on specific skills and responsibilities meanwhile the teacher development refers to the long-termed teacher learning to improve their teaching abilities and skills. In order to engage in teacher development, the teacher needs to have a systematic and objective collection of his own teaching behavior and all information about his teaching practice in order to have necessary changes in the future teaching (Rani, 2012).

In this case, most of the teachers lack information about what they have done in the classroom (Richards and Lockhart, 1996). These two experts complain that the teachers rarely examine their own teaching practices. Many teachers do not use their time to think about their actions in the classroom. They just wait until they are supervised by the principal or the the supervisor. Many researches evoke that the experienced teachers apply classroom routines and strategies almost automatically without involving a great deal of conscious thought (Parker, 1984 in Richards and Lockhart, 1996). In accordance to this, there have been many experts talking about the teacher development. Richard and Farrel (2005) explain that the teachers' competences could be developed by joining teacher workshop and training, keeping teaching journal and portfolios, having teacher support group, peer observation, and self monitoring. Furthermore, Zeichner and Liston (1996) suggest that teacher should think and question about their goals and values in teaching and examine his/her teaching assumption.

The teacher development in this way is actually based on the concept of reflective practice in teaching. Reflective teaching itself has various definitions. Some of the definitions are given by Vauhgan, (1990); Killion and Todnem, (1991); Zeichner and Liston (1996). They explain that reflective teaching is a teacher's attempt to solve the problems he/she faces related to his work as a teacher. Moreover, Graves (2002) clarifies that reflective teaching is one of the most powerful tools teachers can use to explore, understand, and redirect their practice". In addition, Farrel (2004 p. 27) identify reflective teaching as "a systematic and structured process in which the teacher looks at concrete aspects of teaching and learning with the overall goal of personal change and more effective practice". Several above

definitions reveal that reflective teaching is one way teachers can use to improve their teaching practice.

Actually, there have been many researches worldwide talking about reflective practice in teaching. The study conducted by Fatemipour (2009) investigated about the effectiveness of reflective teaching tools in English language teaching in Islamic Azad University. He found that there were four effective tools that the teachers could use effectively to obtain data about their teaching practice. The tools were teachers' diaries and journals, peer observation, audio and video recording. This study gives an understanding that the effectiveness of using reflective teaching tools occurred differently in certain teaching context.

In addition, Kurt and Attamturk (2011) investigated the reflective practice and its role in stimulating personal and professional growth of teachers in Turkey. The result of this study showed that gender, experience, and level of education did not play a role in teachers' reflection. It can be inferred from this study that the most important factors to help better reflective practice is the willingness of the teachers to improve their teaching practice no matter how long their teaching experience is, without any influences of their education levels and gender variety. The teachers who have strong commitment to improve themselves as professionals, developed through reflective teaching practice. There are several other previous studies related to reflective teaching practice that are elaborated in chapter two.

In Indonesian context, the study about reflective English teaching is still very limited. The most recent study in Indonesia University of Education related to reflective practice in English teaching was an action research conducted by Martina (2013). She studied about the use of reflective teaching to improve novice teachers' performance. The result of the study showed that reflective teaching improved the following teaching domains; teacher preparation, classroom management, and teacher-student interaction. This study confirms the advantages of being reflective teachers believed by the theorist. Osterman (1990) declares that reflective teaching allows individual teacher to become more skillfull and effective. Furthermore, Farrel, (1998); Mckay (2002) state that reflective practice

will make the teachers free from routine behaviours. They argue that reflective teachers are very innovative in creating effective lessons. Moreover, not only the individual teachers get the benefits of reflective teaching practice, all the school members in general will have better atmospheres of teaching and learning that leads to students' satisfactions in learning (Calderhead, 1992).

Regarding all the advantages of being reflective in teaching practice. Teachers are fully suggested to conduct reflective practice in their teaching. In Indonesian EFL context, There is still very limited study in attempting to know the Indonesian teachers understanding and practice of reflective teaching. In order to fill the gap of the research related to reflective teaching in Indonesian context, this study attempted to find out the English teachers' understanding and practice of reflective teaching and the impediments that prevent teachers from being reflective in their teaching.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

In line with the background above, in the context of English teaching in Indonesia, this study attempts to address the following research questions:

1. What is the teachers' understanding and practice of reflective practice in teaching?
2. What are the teachers' levels of reflectivity?
3. What are the impediments that prevent teachers' reflection?

## **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

Departing from the problems that mentioned above, the present study aims to:

1. find out the EFL teachers' understanding and practice of the notion of reflective practice in English language teaching.
2. figure out the levels of reflectivity the teachers reflect in their teaching practices.
3. acknowledge the impediments that prevent teachers reflecting in their teaching practices.

#### **1.4 The Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will portray the experienced EFL teachers' understanding and practice regarding reflective practice in teaching and the activities they do in order to reflect their everyday teaching practices. In particular, the study will be of significance to:

- 1) Theoretically, the results of the study can enrich the literature on English teachers' understanding and practice of reflective teaching.
- 2) Practically, the teachers can use the results of the study in order that they can improve their teaching through reflection activity.
- 3) Government and policy makers, the result of the study can give the empirical data that can be used to include the practice of reflective practice in teaching to be a requirement in getting the teacher certification.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on investigating the EFL teachers' understanding of the reflective teaching. In addition, this study also explores their practice regarding the reflective teaching. The teachers who are involved in the study are the four selected English teachers who teach in high schools in Bandung.

#### **1.6 The Clarification of Terms**

To avoid potential misinterpretation, definitions of essential terms employed in this study are provided as follows:

1. English teachers refer to those teachers who are teaching in Bandung. In this context, the researcher made a limitation for at least five-year experiences in teaching English in high schools.
2. Reflective teaching is an approach to teaching and to teacher education, which is based on the assumption that teachers can improve their understanding of teaching and the quality of their own teaching by reflecting critically on their teaching experiences (Qing, 2009).

3. Reflective teaching practice refers to the activities in which they collect data to examine their attitudes, belief, and assumptions about their teaching practice and use the obtained information to improve the teaching quality (Richard and Lockhart, 1994).
4. Understanding of RT in this study related to how the teachers define reflective teaching, their recognition of characteristics of reflective teachers, and their awareness of the importance of being reflective.
5. Practice of RT signifies the teachers' practice of using reflective teaching tools suggested by Richard and Lockhart (1996).
6. Levels of reflectivity are the criteria for the recognition of evidence of reflectivity in the teacher teaching journals. It is classified based on Moon (2004)'s levels of reflectivity.
7. Impediment is something that interferes with movement or progress (Merriam Webster online dictionary). In this study, impediments are the hinderance or obstructions in doing reflective teaching practice.

### **1.7 Thesis Organization**

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is introduction which highlights the basic concerns of the study. Chapter two deals with theoretical framework which portrays the theory of reflective English teaching and teaching practice. Chapter three discusses research methodology including research questions, research design, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter four elaborates research findings and discussion. The last chapter, chapter five presents the conclusions of the study and offers some recommendations.

### **1.8 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has elaborated the background of the present study about English teachers' understanding and practice of reflective teaching. Research questions, the objectives, the significance, and scope of the study are also explained in this chapter. Moreover, the operational terms are displayed in order to avoid misleading and misunderstanding of this research. The next chapter discusses the literature review of related theory to reflective teaching.

