

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Background of the Study

The fact that English is a foreign language in Indonesia demands the teachers as well as the students to have extra efforts to master English. There are strengths and weaknesses among English teachers in their process of teaching and learning English in Indonesia. One of the strengths is that they experienced to have English classroom practices in the Indonesian context so they know exactly the feeling to be Indonesian EFL learners. They know how to struggle to have English mastery and how to acquire language learning strategies that could shape their prior beliefs about language learning. However, it could also become their weakness as well if they adopt erroneous beliefs about learning EFL since classroom practices could not at all meet the students' need. Therefore, teachers' beliefs about language learning and language learning strategies in this case are considered to be important factors that could influence the success of language learning.

Belief is 'imbued with emotive commitment' (Borg 2001: 186) and serving further as a guide to thought and behavior. It is also part of cognition (Borg 2003:82). Beliefs are formed early in life as a result of a person's education and experience (Jonson 1994, Mohamed 2006), and strong beliefs about learning and teaching are well established by the time a student completes schooling. Teacher's fundamental commitment to their student's learning and that their teaching makes a difference is a basis for their efforts to teach well (Griffith, Gore & Ladwig 2006). In other words, teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching are well established time to time from their education and experience and shape fundamental commitment in their efforts to teach well in classroom practices.

Recent studies about teachers' beliefs related to language learning strategies and classroom practices have been made especially in EFL contexts.

Khonamri and Salimi (2010) reported from their study that Iranian teachers

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believed that reading strategies play an important role in reading comprehension and that it is necessary to teach reading strategies in reading classes. The results also revealed that there is inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and their self-reported classroom practices. Nguyen (2007:46) found in his study related to teachers' beliefs about teaching reading strategies and their classroom practices that classroom practices were based on a logical system of beliefs, yet, teachers' beliefs were complicated, therefore, further studies were suggested.

Teachers' beliefs about language learning influenced the activities they arranged in their classroom. Kuzborska (2011) reported her study in Lithuanian university context that teacher's beliefs were congruent with practices and was reflected in reading instruction, emphasizing vocabulary, reading aloud, translation, and whole class discussion of texts.

Related to TEFL in Indonesia Hamied (2005) stated, "As a higher education institution's core missions include teaching, research and public service, and as teaching is the essence of the three core missions, all higher education policies and programs in ensuring the nation's competitiveness, enhancing autonomy, and ascertaining institutional health should be maintained and developed to support teaching, bolster all its entailing teaching activity components, and reinforce all facilities it calls for". He further explained that teaching required the teacher to play various different roles exhibited in a single setting of teaching.

Lukmana (2006) reported that social dynamics between students and teachers could be revealed by critically looking at texts in form of audio recording. Verbal reactions from the interaction in the class were analyzed using a critical discourse analysis theory based on the principles of systemic-functional-grammar. In his study at that time, it was found that interpersonal relationship was still very much dominated by the teachers who had the managerial authority as well as knowledge in class. Nevertheless, Suherdi (2011) strengthened, "A radical shift from knowledge-based to skill-oriented teaching is now on stage in TEFLIN (Teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia). The teaching orientation which has been dominated by explanation of linguistic rules is now geared towards the mastery of all different types of texts that will help students

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fulfill their need of communication in English.” It is supported by Emilia (2012: 4) in the introduction to the concepts related to the application of the approach. She provided a guide to teachers by saying , “ Before you teach texts utilizing SFL GBA, it is better for you to understand some concepts related to SFL GBA that is also the basic principle of systemic functional linguistic. Some of the basic principles are text, the context, the characteristic of a good text and intertextuality.”

In fact, not all pre-service teachers are aware of their beliefs about language learning and language learning strategies. Therefore, they could not yet make use of various strategies to improve their English mastery. The relevance between student teachers’ beliefs about the nature of language learning and Metacognitive strategy in language learning in an Indonesian context was reported by Wijirahayu (2009). Metacognitive strategies in this case were actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process. Related to strategies in teaching writing, based on the issue that the Indonesian high school students’ writing ability was still low, a study was conducted by Sudaryat (2010). The implementation of Text-Based Modeling Strategy (TBMS) was offered. The finding shows that the procedure composed and applied in the TBMS, that has never been done before, contributes positively to the increasing of writing competence.

Lengkanawati (2004) found that cognitive strategies were used more frequently by Indonesian as a foreign language (IFL) students in Australia than by EFL learners in Indonesia. Based on the observation, the academic atmosphere in the EFL classroom in in Indonesia was not as active and stimulating as in the IFL classroom. She also reported that the intensity of the use of compensation strategies with IFL students in Australia was higher than that by EFL learners in Indonesia.

She further explained,“If we take a look at the indicators in the compensation strategies, these strategies are used to overcome students' limitation in knowledge in the target language. Again, this has something to do with the educational habit common within Australian families. This kind of behavior will make the students willing to take a risk in studying and to be more active. Risk

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taking principle in learning a language is very important.” It was related to Oxford (1990) statement that not only beginners and advanced learners who employed guessing, even native speakers used guessing when they have not heard anything well enough, when they do not know a new word, or when the meaning is hidden between lines. Less proficient language learners need these compensation strategies even more, because they run into knowledge roadblocks more often than do individuals who are skilled in the language.

Indeed, Wenden and Rubin (1987:104) supplied preliminary evidence that learner beliefs about language-learning could influence their language-learning strategies. In interviews with language learners, they found numerous instances where learners were not only able to enumerate their beliefs about language-learning, but even more importantly, they described learning strategies consistent with these beliefs.

Some other researches proved that there is a relation between beliefs and language learning strategies. A significant correlation between student teachers' beliefs about the nature of language learning and social strategies in language learning has been reported from a research conducted by Wijirahayu (2009) in one class of graduate program of English Education in one of private university in Jakarta. Learning a language involves other people, and appropriate social strategies are very important in this process. Three sets of social strategies, each set comprising two specific strategies are included here: Asking Questions, Cooperating with Other, and Empathizing with Others (Oxford, 1990:145). Similar finding was reported by Suwaranak (2012) that a significant correlation between students' beliefs about English language learning and their use of learning strategies indicate that the beliefs to some extent related to strategy use.

Ganjabi (2011) studied the effective foreign language teaching: a matter of Iranian students' and teachers' beliefs and the recommendation from the findings is that teachers should include discussion about the nature of language learning as a regular part of their instruction to confront students' erroneous beliefs with new information. A similar case about LLS used by Iranian Postgraduate Students, Kafipour, Noordin and Pazeshkian (2011) reported the teachers should encourage the learners to actively employ all the strategies in

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their learning process. Wijirahayu (2013) studied pre-service teachers' beliefs in utilizing film and role-play in EFL classroom practices and found that the selected film related to the chosen theme by the pre-service teachers combined with collaborative learning and performed in scenes role-play increased their beliefs about language learning and LLS.

Ariogul (2007:177) in his study about teachers' practical knowledge concluded, "Teachers' active, ongoing, and negotiation-based knowledge has been partly developed and shaped by their prior language learning experiences. When the teachers experienced a discrepancy within the context of teaching or when they struggled to understand their learners, their identities as former language learners helped them in the process of their decision making and instruction." The study revealed that teachers' beliefs were complicated as it was concluded by Nguyen (2007), therefore, further study about teachers' beliefs about LLSS and their classroom practices was essential to be conducted.

Teachers' beliefs about language learning and language learning strategies play important role in the success of EFL learning and teaching. Prior knowledge and experiences about applying language learning strategies influence the teachers' beliefs about language learning strategies and how they apply the strategies in their classroom practices. In other words, teachers' beliefs about language learning strategies in EFL context have influence on how they employ the strategies in language learning and in turn the beliefs influence how they guide their students to use language learning strategies in their teaching practices.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the assumption that teachers have already had certain beliefs about language-learning strategies and employed various strategies in their language-learning, this study will specifically find the answers to the following questions.

1. What beliefs about EFL learning strategies did the teachers in this study have in their language learning?

2. Which beliefs about EFL learning strategies of the teachers in this study were reflected in their classroom practices and how were the strategies applied in their classroom practices?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

As beliefs about language-learning and language-learning strategies are considered to be the important factors that influence the success of language-learning, this study was aimed at investigating the reflection of teachers' beliefs about language learning strategies in their classroom practices. In detail the objectives were explained below.

1. To indicate the teachers' prior beliefs about EFL learning strategies.
2. To indicate the application of the teachers' beliefs about EFL learning strategies in their classroom practices.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study of teachers' beliefs about EFL learning strategies and classroom practices is beneficial in a developing methodology to reveal the teachers' beliefs themselves since it is believed to be complicated. As EFL learning strategies and classroom practices are also variable, possible modification of EFL learning strategies application in classroom practices could be offered especially in the Indonesian context.

The teachers' beliefs about EFL learning strategies was important due to the role in language-learning success or failure. Having known the teachers' prior beliefs about EFL learning strategies and how they were employed in their classroom practices would give a better understanding for the teachers on how English language teaching could be improved by applying various LLSS as one of alternatives to support students to be able to have more effective and more autonomous in English language learning. Therefore, teachers' awareness of their beliefs about EFL learning strategies and the decision they made to integrate language learning strategies as part of essential experiences in their classroom practices were suggested by this study. Based on this understanding, teachers could help the students to eliminate the beliefs that may hinder the students' efforts by introducing language learning strategies as alternatives to have a more effective learning process.

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1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

- (1) *Belief about language-learning* in this case is feeling that something in language-learning is real, true and valuable. Learner beliefs about language-learning will profoundly influence their approach to language-learning (Cotterall, 1995: 202).
- (2) *Teachers' beliefs* are a set of ideas rooted in the psychological and mental content of teacher and play a central role in guiding his/her teaching behavior.
- (3) *Learning strategies* are the steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. Strategy use involves some degree of conscious awareness on the part of the learner. When a behavior is used unconsciously, it is not strategy because conscious awareness is not present (Oxford,1992: 9).
- (4) *Language learning strategies* are conscious steps taken by students to enhance their own language learning.
- (5) *Teachers' beliefs about EFL strategies are* a set of ideas rooted in the psychological and mental content of teacher and play a central role in guiding his/her teaching behavior related to EFL conscious steps taken by learners to enhance their own language learning.
- (6) *Language learning strategy training* is training that involves learning and practicing one or more strategies with actual language tasks. This kind of training gives the learner information on the value of the strategy, when it can be used, how to use it, and how to evaluate the success of the strategy
- (7) *Classroom practices* Sugirin (2012:1) implies that classroom practices are creative and innovative actions the student-teachers employ in their practice teaching practicum. In other words classroom practices are observable action done by teachers and learners consciously, in participating a format classroom interaction. In this study, classroom practices are the mechanism of teaching and learning created by the teacher that is observable in the class.
- (8) *Strategies in classroom practices* are observable action done by teachers and learners consciously, in participating a format classroom interaction.

