

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter starts with the general issues related to the present study. These include the background of the study, purposes of the research, research questions, significance of the research, definition of the key terms, thesis statement, research design and organization of the thesis.

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

Curriculum is the foundation of teaching and learning process. It is one of the important factors involved in teaching and learning process and it is the teacher who is the principle agent of curriculum development (Nunan, 1988). The term curriculum refers to a very broad field which is defined as follows:

“Curriculum is all activities in which children engage under the auspices of the school. This include not only what people learn, but how they learn it, how teachers help them learn, using what supporting materials, styles, and methods of assessment, and in what kind of facilities” (Rodgers, 1989 in Richard, 2001:39)

Besides that, there are many conceptions and definitions of the curriculum: as content, as learning experiences, as behavioral objectives, as a plan for instruction, and as a nontechnical approach (Lunenburg: 2011). Moreover, curriculum is one of the key dimensions that contribute to the quality of the institution (Richard, 2001). From the description above, it is obvious that teachers take the most important role because they are the curriculum implementers who always use or even develop the curriculum.

Developing curriculum is a comprehensive and multidimensional process, in which curriculum is planned, designed and then implemented in the classrooms (Oliva, 2009; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). In curriculum development, teachers' role is of utmost importance. Teachers' involvement and knowledge of the orientation of the curriculum give them a chance to exploit the current sources at their best for optimum results. In line with that, Marsh (2009) states that the active participation of teachers in curriculum planning is limited and teachers are

regarded as curriculum implementers whose role is to adapt official curriculum to their classroom.

In 2013, the government decided to try out the new designed curriculum, the 2013 curriculum. 6.410 schools consisting 2.598 elementary schools, 1.521 junior high schools, 1.270 senior high schools, and 1.021 vocational high schools have participated in this try out (<http://kemdikbud.go.id/kemdikbud/berita/1309>). This curriculum was officially launched on July 15 starting with first, fourth, seventh and 10th graders. As suggested by the ministry of education that the reason to justify such implementation of this new curriculum is to restore character education and improve students' creative thinking. Students are required to be more active, creative and innovative. Besides that, the character building is integrated in all subjects.

However, the government's decision to introduce the 2013 curriculum has been met with mixed reactions. Those who supported were upbeat that the new curriculum better suit the future challenges and ease the burdens on students and teachers, while those who objected worried about the lack of focus on the curriculum due to the merging of some subjects. The result of interview with some junior high school teachers in Kuningan revealed that most of teachers were not ready to implement the 2013 Curriculum, in terms of books, assessment systems, teachers' training, teachers' mentoring and Principals training. Although they have been trained, many teachers are still confused. They are afraid they would not have enough time to learn and make preparations since they still have yet to be informed about details in the new curriculum.

As a result, in 2014 the Minister of Culture and Primary and Secondary Education, Anies Baswedan has ordered the pilot project schools to return to the 2006 curriculum and/or to continue to implement the 2013 curriculum. His decision was actually confusing since there are two curricula implemented in one school at the same time. Regarding this decision, different reactions and opinions are emerged from the society, schools and teachers. A big question is also raised whether this decision is based on the fact that most schools and teachers are more prepared to implement the 2006 curriculum. As we know that teachers are the key

people who are interpreting the planned curriculum and giving life to it in the language classroom by means of their instructional and evaluation strategies. A successful curriculum and examination system involves all the stakeholders to create its ownership. The 2013 curriculum is generally planned without consulting the end users i.e. teachers, who therefore, cannot deliver effectively. Therefore, teachers' lack understanding of the 2013 curriculum becomes a serious problem in implementing the 2013 curriculum successfully. Teachers' lack understanding also influences the way they teach, the way they assess their students and conduct the teaching and learning process. As a result, it's found that teachers are still difficult to create a student-centered classroom and students are not motivated to participate actively in the classroom.

The issue of changing curriculum to the 2013 curriculum has been popular among educators in Indonesia. However, only few have studied on the 2013 English curriculum (Prisilya (2014), Shofiya (2014), Matra (2014), Kusumaningrum (2014), Muniroh (2014), Ningsih (2014), Syarifah (2014), Stepani & Apriyani (2014), Handayani (2014), Rohadi, (2014).

Hence, this study intends to portray English teachers' understanding of the 2013 curriculum in the teaching of English in junior high schools in Kuningan as well as benefits and challenges faced by the teachers after two year of the implementation of this curriculum.

## **1.2 Purposes of the research**

This study is sought to do the following: 1) to find out teachers' understanding of the 2013 English curriculum, 2) to find out benefits felt by the teachers in implementing the 2013 English curriculum, and 3) to find out challenges faced by the teachers in implementing the 2013 English curriculum.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

In line with the above mentioned purposes, this study endeavors to address the following questions:

1. What is teachers' understanding of the 2013 English curriculum?
2. What benefits felt by the teachers in implementing the 2013 English curriculum?
3. What challenges faced by the teachers in implementing the 2013 English curriculum?

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

The result of the study provides teachers and administrators as well as government with empirical evidence on teachers' understanding of the 2013 curriculum. Further, the result of this study is expected to give a valuable contribution to the public and stakeholders in evaluating the 2013 curriculum so that weaknesses can be corrected and the perceived difficulties of teachers and students can be solved immediately. This might be also useful for policy makers to make a better decision.

### **1.5 Definition of the key terms**

There are two words in this study; "understanding" and "The 2013 Curriculum". Understanding is to know the meaning, nature, explanation, of something (Hornby, 1987:939). In this study, this term refers to mental construct; it is facts of acquiring meaning. Understanding is proven by "transfer" which means applying what knowledge and skills are useful in specific situation. Wiggins and Mctighe as cited in Aguilar and Rosenberg (2005) state that there are six facets of understanding which are prevalent in the process of understanding. They are explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge.

Since the 2013 curriculum is a very broad field, this study limits the coverage of the 2013 curriculum only on elements of the 2013 curriculum. Understanding here refers to teachers' ability in explaining ideas or concepts

which includes interpreting, summarizing, paraphrasing, classifying and explaining elements of the 2013 curriculum. They are general concept of curriculum, definition of the 2013 curriculum, purpose of the 2013 curriculum, rationale of the 2013 curriculum, changes elements of the 2013 curriculum, structure of the 2013 curriculum, assessment, teaching process, benefits and challenges of the 2013 curriculum.

Regarding the 2013 curriculum, The Ministry of Education and Culture states that 2013 Curriculum is a means of integrating values systems, knowledge and skills, has orientation on developing the learners' competencies, the changing of teaching-learning methodology towards teaching-learning process which gives priorities on the learning experiences through observing, inquiring, associating, and communicating so as to enhance the values of competitiveness and build prime characters. To achieve all of these, the teaching methodology involves not only exploration, elaboration, confirmation, but also observation, inquiry, analysis, reasoning, description, inference, evaluation and creation (Kemendikbud, 2012:25 in Srijono, 2013:59).

## **1.6 Thesis statement**

This study intends to portray teachers' understanding of the 2013 curriculum in the teaching of English in five junior high schools in Kuningan as well as benefits and challenges faced by the teachers after two-year of the implementation of this curriculum.

## **1.7 Research Design**

This study employed qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data were collected first through survey using Thurstone scales questionnaires. These scales can be used to get the description of attitudes, opinions and perceptions of subjects (Neuman, 2000; Oppenheim, 1982; Kitao and Kitao, 2002; Sugiono, 2008). To get in depth information, a qualitative method was also applied to support the quantitative data. Then the interview was conducted in collecting the

data. The small numbers of participants who were interviewed were chosen based on a purposive sampling.

### **1.8 Organization of the thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one presents general description of the introduction to the topic of the research. Chapter two discusses the theories that support the study. Chapter three elaborates the methodology of the research. Chapter four presents the data, data analysis result, and the discussion of findings. This thesis is concluded in chapter five in which the conclusion and recommendation are presented.