CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general overview of the research, which investigates the beliefs and practices of two teachers' reflective teaching in the English classrooms. The chapter is divided into the following sections: the background of the study, the research questions, the aims of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the definitions of key terms, and the organization of the thesis. In this part of the thesis, I elaborate the rationale for conducting the present study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Highly competent teachers are desirable to help enhance the quality of education in Indonesia. However, the majority of EFL teachers in West Java are still lacking the required skills, competence and proficiency (Lengkanawati, 2005), especially in writing. Yet, acquiring fluency in English is listed as the expected students' learning outcome, and this poses a great challenge for teachers of English, who are expected to help students attain the competencies. The fact that many teachers have not yet fulfilled the required competencies has previously been pointed out by Jalal et al., (2009). Their study indicated that teachers in general were lacking the skills, creativity, and willingness to engage students in learning activities. Likewise, the teachers' pedagogical competence was also not developed as expected because they seemed to lack the motivation to develop their teaching practices (see also Syahruddin et al., 2013). These findings show that EFL teachers in Indonesia still need to be 'upgraded'.

Specific qualifications are required for being teachers. In an act in the U.S., *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), qualified teachers are required to have a bachelor degree, full certification and license as required by the state, and they are expected to have teaching competency of the subject as listed by the state for each subject of the core academic subjects (Ornstein, Levine, Gutek, & Vocke, 2011). The

expected teaching competency covers the subject knowledge, classroom management, and assessment including participation in high-quality professional development. The participation in assessment includes evaluation of what the teachers learn and reflect from it in order to enhance the teachers' teaching practices. Likewise, in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education also states that teachers are required to have a minimum educational qualification of diploma IV (D4) or bachelor degree (S1), depending on the subject being taught, or else they are required to pass the feasibility and equality tests for those having expertise without a diploma (Permendiknas No. 16 Tahun 2007). The Ministry of Education also provides categories of standard competence that teachers are required to obtain (Permendiknas No. 16 Tahun 2007). One of the categories covers pedagogical competence in which teachers are required to be reflective in their teaching. Being reflective is required so that teachers can enhance the quality of learning as stated in the Permendiknas, "*Melakukan tindakan reflektif untuk peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran*" (*kompetensi pedagogik no. 10,* p. 13). Also, it is explicitly stated that teachers are required to develop their professionalism continuously by doing reflective teaching: "*Mengembangkan keprofesionalan secara berkelanjutan dengan melakukan tindakan reflektif*" (*kompetensi profesional no. 23,* p. 17). Therefore, being continuously engaged in reflective teaching can be considered as a way to develop teachers' competencies.

Reflective teaching involves teachers' capability to recall the experiences, understand what has happened in the experiences, and plan reflection after that. Thus, it is a holistic approach emphasizing on creativity, skills, and context sensitivity (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Being reflective enables teachers to evaluate their teaching practices and help provide better informed decisions in their practices (Burton, 2009). Ferraro (2000) highlights that reflective practice can be a helpful process to teachers' teaching practices. Reflective practice facilitates teacher professional development by providing the insights into the choices teachers may decide towards their experiences in the teaching practice. The choices encompass that of teaching style, teaching preferences, and considering the value of the choices in order to grasp the effectiveness of the teaching practice.

As how reflective teaching is carried out in the teaching practice depends on the teachers' choices whether to do it or not; there seems to be a need to first grasp the teachers' ways of thinking about their teaching practices. How teachers think of their teaching and what consideration they have in mind to carry out the teaching practices will likely affect the teachers' actual teaching practices, either they choose to reflect on the practices or just leave it as is. Richards and Lockhart (1996) point out that teachers' consideration in their teaching practices are the "reflection of what they know and believe" (p. 29). Therefore, an array of exploration of the teachers' ways of thinking may shed a light of how these thinkings work and shape the teachers' beliefs. Besides, exploring teachers' teaching beliefs also offer insights into the meaning of being teachers (Borg, 2006).

Some studies on reflective teaching have been conducted. They tend to focus on the influence of a strategy of reflective teaching towards the teaching practices (Alsaleh, Alabdulhadi, & Alrwaished, 2017; Arvanitis, 2018; Astika, 2014; Farrell, 2016; Insuasty & Castillo, 2010; Nguyen & Ngo, 2018; Soisangwarn & Wongwanich, 2014; Susoy, 2015; Zulfikar & Mujiburrahman, 2017). Study conducted by Insuasty and Castillo (2010), for example, focused on investigating the influence of keeping a journal of information and discussing of blogs in groups to explore teachers' reflective teaching activities. The study enriched the teachers' perceptions on the implication of reflective teaching, and developed the teachers' references on evaluating teaching, and diagnosing and solving problems. Another study, which investigated pre-service English teachers' voices in reflecting on motivation towards teaching practicum at one university in Indonesia, pointed to the improvement of reflective practices for developing teacher professional identity to help stimulate intrinsic motivation and shape teacher identity and professionalism of becoming a teacher (Kuswandono, 2014).

However, little attention has been given to teachers' beliefs about reflective teaching in Indonesia. Studies on what beliefs teachers adopt in doing reflective teaching and how their beliefs are reflected in the English classrooms in the context of Indonesia are still limited. Moreover, after reviewing a number of studies on relationship between teachers' beliefs and teaching practices,

Basturkmen (2012) suggests further studies to compare the beliefs and teaching practices of experienced and novice teachers in a similar or the same school to highlight comparative studies rather than the descriptive ones. In response to the suggestion, Farrell and Bennis (2013) conduct a case study investigating and comparing the beliefs and teaching practices of one experienced teacher and one novice teacher who work in the same school. Nevertheless, the study takes place in Canada; in Indonesia, past studies appear to be limited to teachers' beliefs in doing reflective teaching, but they did not highlight the comparative nature. Therefore, this study aims to identify and compare the beliefs about reflective teaching held by one novice teacher and one experienced teacher who teach in the same school, and also explore the ways their beliefs about reflective teaching are reflected in their teaching practices. This study is conducted to help raise teachers' awareness of the importance of beliefs about reflective teaching in improving teaching practices. In doing so, it is hoped that one of the requirements of being highly qualified teachers can be achieved.

1.2 Research Questions

In line with the background of the study discussed above, this study seeks to address the research questions as follows.

1. What beliefs about reflective teaching are held by one novice teacher and one experienced teacher who teach in the same school?
2. How are these beliefs reflected in their teaching practices?

1.3 Aims of the Study

Based on the research questions formulated above, the study is conducted to achieve the aims as follows.

1. To identify and compare beliefs about reflective teaching held by one novice teacher and one experienced teacher teaching in the same school.
2. To explore the ways these beliefs are reflected in their teaching practices.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to provide contribution to enrich the literature on teachers' beliefs about reflective teaching in Indonesia. The study is also expected to provide better understanding of the ways teachers think and make decisions in relation to their teaching practices. Furthermore, this research is expected to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of having beliefs about reflective teaching so that they can continuously enhance their professional development and improve their teaching practices, ultimately fulfilling the requirements of being highly qualified teachers.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on exploring and comparing the beliefs about reflective teaching of two English teachers—one novice and one experienced teachers—working the same private senior high school. The study is also concerned with exploring the ways in which these teachers' beliefs inform and are reflected in their teaching practices, highlighting the relationship between them.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

In this study, a number of key terms related to the topic of the study are defined. It is intended to clarify the meaning of the key terms to provide common understanding of the topic being discussed. The terms and their definitions are presented as follows.

1. Teachers' Beliefs

Belief systems of teachers are the goals, values, and beliefs related to content and process of teaching held and understood by teachers as the basis for making decision and taking action over time (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). In this study, the beliefs are specified into the beliefs teachers hold in relation to reflective teaching.

2. Teaching Practices

Practice, according to Buehl and Beck (2015), is defined as "any action that is part of the teaching process (e.g., planning, decision making,

instructional strategies or approaches, assessment, reflection, work with families, and relationship building)" (p. 67). The practices in this study refer to reflective teaching, as demonstrated by the teachers in the English classrooms.

3. Reflective Teaching

Reflective teaching is a holistic approach emphasizing on creativity, skills, and context sensitivity (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The holistic approach itself appears to refer to the teacher's capability in reviewing an experience to further understand what has happened in the experience and then plan reflection based on the evaluation. In this study, terms such as 'reflection' and 'reflective practice' are also used. Reflection is defined as a process that alters explored experiences into new apprehensions and cognitions of learning (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985), and reflective practice refers to the development of knowledge and understanding of everyday thought, consideration, practice, and challenges of teachers which resulted from reflection in various contexts (Rushton & Suter, 2012). The term reflective teaching, reflection, and reflective practice are related to each other to the extent that all of the terms are related to recalling experiences of events which then altered into new apprehensions and cognitions of learning. The term reflective practice is also used in this study to refer to the practice of reflective teaching.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of the following chapters. Chapter One introduces the background of the study, the research questions, the aims of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the definition of the key terms, and the organization of the thesis.

Chapter Two discusses the theoretical foundation of the study. It covers three key concepts of the study including that of teacher beliefs, English teaching,

and reflective teaching. Related studies of the topic of the study are also discussed in light of the concepts of the study.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology employed in this study consisting of the research design, site and participants of the study, data collection techniques, data collection procedure, and data analysis of the study.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of the data, the findings, and the discussion of the study in relation to answer the research questions of the study.

Chapter Five highlights the conclusions of the study, the implication of the study, and the recommendations of the study.