

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study is concerned with exploring experience of two English teachers when they were involved in the two projects of writing English textbook. Then, discussion on the researcher's reasons for exploring the two English teacher's experience in writing textbook which becomes the focus of study will be presented in this chapter, Section 1.2, i.e. the background of the study.

Next, regarding the focus of study, research questions will be proposed in Section 1.3 and followed by a sequence of sections: the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, and the thesis organization. Each section will be discussed subsequently.

### **1.2 Background of the study**

The important role of textbook for the users in school, i.e. teachers and students is undeniable. Although there are the arguments for and against the use of textbook in learning process, "the most obvious and most common form of materials support for language instructions comes through textbook" (Brown, 2001:136). Indeed, as said by Richards (1998:135), "The extent of English language teaching activities worldwide could hardly be sustained without the kind of teacher-proof textbook currently available".

In ELT, a textbook, as defined by Harris and Hodges (1995), as "a book used for instructional purposes, especially in schools and colleges", has functions as: (1) a resource for presentation material (spoken/written), (2) a source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction, (3) a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary,

pronunciation, and so on, (4) a syllabus, (5) a resource for self-directed learning or self-access work, and (6) a support for less experienced teachers (Cunningsworth, 1995:7).

Regarding the evidence of the dominance of commercial textbook these days, Richards (1998:136) argues that there are two factors as main reasons for this condition, i.e. practical factors as well as ideological ones. The practical factors, Richards further argues, constitute the most obvious reasons for the widespread use of commercial textbook. Shortly speaking, textbook practically enable teachers to present materials in classroom without burdening or time-consuming in preparing them.

According to Richards (1998:136) the ideological factors relate to beliefs that teachers and others often hold about commercial materials, which serve to reinforce the status of textbook in teaching. The improvement in the quality of teaching, he further states, is believed to depart from the use of instructional materials that are based on findings of current theory and research. Teachers themselves, it is argued, are likely to be unaware of current research and theory. Publishers, academics and textbook writers are, and hence can incorporate these findings in materials. Therefore, the role of teachers is seen primarily as consumers of materials produced and validated by others (Long and Crookes, 1991 cited in Richards, 1998).

However, according to Masuhara (1998:247) such the condition could carry “the threat of deskilling teachers” by reducing the teachers’ role. Actually, teachers, Masuhara argues, may become potential materials writers due to their experience in teaching fields. It is teachers that become, as Masuhara says, “the central figures in materials development” – for they are the ones who select materials, who actually teach the materials and who sometimes have to rewrite materials.

Concerning the teachers’ opinions about textbook, according to Grant (1982: 7) there are three kinds of teachers’ mind. The first is teachers who say they do not use a

textbook in learning; the second is those who admit they could not teach without a textbook; and the last is those who state that they use it a lot of the time, but not all the time. The first teachers, Grant states, are exceptional; perhaps they have plenty of time to prepare their own materials or they are geniuses. The second ones are those who rely wholly on the textbook, and use it as a cook uses a recipe. The third ones are those who are not enslaved by their textbooks as they think they are; they can be flexible in using the textbooks in their classes.

Based on the view above, the second and third types of teachers aforementioned can likely be empowered by knowing ways to use a textbook (Grant, 1987: 7). For that intention, attempts to evaluate, adapt, select, and develop writing materials have been promoted by some experts such as Grant, 1982; Cunningsworth, 1995; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Crandall, 1995; Breen and Candlin, 1987; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Sheldon, 1988, Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005.

Regarding the process of writing, Richards (1998:135) says that the processes of writing a textbook are the same as the process of planning the content of a lesson. Therefore, it is reasonable, as said by Masuhara (1998: 247) that teachers may become potential materials writers. Perhaps through such a notion, teachers in the USA are encouraged to improve their capabilities to create a textbook or at least to write in-house materials, i.e. a textbook for their own classes. It is obvious that the world of textbook writing abroad widely runs, particularly in the USA as reported by Watt (2007 cited in [www.iartem.org](http://www.iartem.org)).

However, in an Indonesian context, according to Alwasilah (2005, 160), the improvement of textbook writing is still far from expectations. One cause of this condition, Alwasilah argues, is that the study of writing textbook in Indonesia is still rare.

In the teacher educational institutions (LPTK), students are offered subject in curriculum and textbook evaluation, but there is seldom courses of how to write textbook.

Moreover at UPI, the study of writing textbook is still rare. Up until now, studies which focus on the textbook are dominated by the evaluation and adaptation of materials. For example, Majid's (2002), Tahrur's (2002), Sabir's (2008) theses focus on the evaluation of EFL Textbook. Meanwhile Yuniarti's (2002), Syahmadi's (2004) theses observe the adaptation of textbook. While the most studies of writing processes are dominated by students' writing, such as Sugaryamah's (2004), Herdiah's (2005), and Ansori's (2007) theses. Their studies focus on the writing process done by students particularly in writing academic tasks, e.g. essays, papers. The study of teachers' writing only exists in Alwasilah's (2002) thesis which focuses on the creative process of writing done by three teachers who write in fiction genre. In summary, the results of studies that focus on the textbook writing particularly done by teachers are still hard to find.

Therefore, this condition triggers the researcher to investigate the process of writing textbook and experience done by two English teachers. The results of the study are expected to encourage teachers to learn more in writing textbook, which can eventually empower them.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

As has been explained in the background of the study, this thesis focuses on exploring experience of two English teachers in writing textbook. Therefore, this present study attempts to address the following questions:

1. What processes are involved in writing textbook?
2. What benefits and challenges do the teachers gain in writing textbook?

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

Generally, this study aims to describe the process of writing textbook. Specifically, its objectives are:

1. to explore the process of writing textbook done by two English teachers;
2. to identify benefits and challenges the two English teachers found in writing textbook.

#### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The study reported here, in the light of the problems reviewed, is expected to have the following significance.

##### **1. Significance to the theory**

This study is hoped to enrich the theory of writing, particularly textbook writing. Since this study focuses on the process of writing textbook conducted by English teachers, it is expected to enrich the previous theories of writing, especially writing of English textbook.

##### **2. Significance to the profession**

This study is expected to help teachers in developing their professionalism; particularly those want to do it through writing textbook. In addition, the study is hoped to make the teacher aware about the demand to improve their competence and professionalism.

##### **3. Significance to the practice**

The results of this study are expected to provide information for teachers on textbook writing explored through the two English teacher participants involved in this study.



## **1.6 The Scope of the Study**

In order to narrow the scope of the study, this study focuses on: (1) process of writing textbook carried by two English teachers in order to know the extent of writing stages take place, (2) benefits and challenges found by English teachers in writing textbook.

## **1.7 Organization of the Thesis**

In correspondence with the outline, this thesis is organized into five chapters and formulated as follows:

1. Chapter 1 sets forth the introduction.
2. Chapter 2 clarifies review of related literature and theoretical foundation.
3. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of the research.
4. Chapter 4 reports findings and discussion; and
5. Chapter 5 draws the conclusions and suggestions.

## **1.8 Concluding remark**

This chapter has elaborated the principles that drive this study including the background of present study, the formulation of research questions, the objectives and significance of the study, the scope of the study, and outlines or organization of the thesis. The next chapter will discuss reviews of the relevant literature and the theoretical foundation that underlay this study.

