CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 Background of the Study

The conduct of this study was motivated by the fact that since the implementation of 1984 curriculum, the communicative approach or Communicative Language Teaching (henceforth CLT) has been adopted as an official approach in English Language Teaching in Indonesia. However, the result of the implementation of this approach does not contribute to the success of teaching learning process. This is indicated by the students' mark in final examination which is considered low and their communicative proficiency is also poor.

The teachers become the victim of the failure since they directly face the students in the classroom. Applebaum (2007: 266) identified some difficulties in teaching English in Indonesian context include teachers' beliefs, the teachers are not having enough knowledge nor experience about the approach in the classroom implementation, CLT itself not having clear guidelines which made the teachers still grammar-oriented and unlikely using English therefore the students are not exposed to use the language communicatively, teacher-centered, and so on.

Furthermore, many other researchers have claimed that no matter what kind of language approach or method is being implemented, teachers remain the ones who take control on most of the values involved in the classroom by making a series of decisions (Pajares, 1992 cited in Yero, 2002; Richards and Lockhart, 1995: 30).

These instructional decisions stem directly from the teachers' beliefs which are brought by teachers into their teching context, guide and affect their pedagogical decisions and practices as well as their development throughout their professional lives (Pajares, 1992 cited in Yero, 2002; Kagan, 1992 cited in Zacharias, 2003; see also Anderson and Holt Reynolds, 1995; Fang, 1996; Murphy, 1999; Ballone and Czerniak, 2001; Wilson et al, 2002; Minchew, 2004; Richards et al, 2006 cited in Intansari, 2007). Individual teachers shape the curriculum according to their own beliefs, teach their own personal values through the implicit curriculum, and operate their classrooms in accordance with their own particular definitions of teaching and learning (Yero, 2002).

Priyono (in Cahyono and Widiati, 2004: 31) confirms that although there is a general consensus in Indonesia that teaching and learning English should be done in a communicative way using the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, English teachers differ in their beliefs about what teaching methods should be used. The teachers believe that communicative approach is appropriate to be applied in teaching context but the implementation is far from expectation. Lengkanawati (2007a) adds that in implementing the curriculum, teachers are lack of understanding of the CLT concept. Further, Lengkanawati (2007b) suggests

teachers to consider teaching beliefs which should be the guidance in teaching foreign language, in this case English.

The importance of teachers' beliefs in guiding teachers in the practice has motivated the researcher to conduct this study. Based on this reason, this study is aimed to explore the English teachers' beliefs about communicative language teaching and how they put the beliefs into practice especially at MTsN in Jambi City.

1.2 Research Questions

The following are the research questions of the study:

1. What are English teacher's beliefs about communicative language teaching?
2. How do the teachers implement their beliefs about communicative language teaching into classroom practice?

1. 3 Purposes of the Study

The study focused on the teachers' beliefs about CLT and its implementation into classroom practice. Thus the purposes of this study are listed as follows:

1. To find out the English teachers' beliefs about CLT, and

2. To describe how the teachers put their beliefs about CLT into practices.

1.4 Significance of the Study

As mentioned above, the aim of this study is to explore the beliefs of English teachers toward communicative language teaching and to investigate whether their beliefs are represented in their methodologies in serving students in the classroom. Therefore, the finding of this study is expected to be a good resource especially for Religion Department to design projects for teachers and education development, especially in English teaching and learning.

The study findings can also benefit English teachers especially in Islamic schools to do self development which can be valuable to strengthen their beliefs in communicative language teaching and reflect it in the practice in order to give better teaching for the students.

1.5 Definitions of Terms

There are some operational terms in this study needed to be defined in order to avoid misunderstanding. The terms are:

1. **English teachers** are teachers who teach English as a foreign language in Indonesia. In this research, the English teachers teach English at MTsN in Jambi city.

2. **Teachers' beliefs** refer to teachers' pedagogic beliefs. These beliefs are related to the convictions about language and the teaching and learning of it. These beliefs are manifested in teachers' teaching approaches, selection of materials, activities, judgments and behaviors in the classroom (Borg, 2001: 186).

4

3. **Communicative Language Teaching** is an approach to teaching English which contains a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom (Richards, 2006: 2).

1.6 The Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is introduction which highlights the basic description of this study. The second chapter deals with theoretical framework building up the theories and references for this study.

The third chapter describes the methodology that was used to conduct this research. The fourth chapter elaborates research finding and discussion. The fifth or the last chapter summarizes the findings, presents the conclusion of the thesis and offers some suggestions for further research.