

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Teaching has always been a challenging task for teachers from time to time, not only for novice teachers but also for in-service teachers who have taught for decades. The challenges they experienced in their careers transformed differently over time (Liao, Yuan, & Zhang, 2017, p. 369). Those challenges arose partly come from students, the school, and the teachers themselves (Songbatumis, 2017, p. 54). In the learning, students could feel bored, had a speaking problem, low concentration, and lack of discipline. This would get worse if the school provided inadequate facilities and resources because it would also affect the teaching that carried out by the teachers and make them unfamiliar to IT, lack of professional development, shortage of training, had language proficiency issues, and limited mastery of teaching methods.

Ningsih (pseudonym), a secondary school in-service English teacher who has dedicated herself for more than 20 years, also encountered many challenges throughout her teaching career. Those challenges she faced were triggered by changes in education related to English curriculum policy and staffing regulation policy. She admitted that she had experienced curriculum policy changes three times so far, from the 1984 curriculum called CBSA (*Cara Belajar Siswa Aktif*) to the 1999 curriculum or KBK (*Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi*), then the 2006 curriculum called KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*), and the 2013 curriculum (*K13* or *Kurtilas*) which still used today. Meanwhile, the staffing

regulation policy changes which she experienced were related to the workload and teaching load. The changes that occur posed challenges that support her to develop professionally.

Exploring Ningsih's experience related to the challenges she faced during her career and how she overcame these challenges were appealing to be carried out. The current study highlighted a similar study conducted by Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli (2018), yet this study was only focused on one participant by applying narrative inquiry. Telling stories about the experience of Ningsih, in this case, related to the challenges she encountered and how she coped with those challenges, provided the information and valuable lessons that can later be applied to the teaching both by other English teachers and pre-service English teachers who still have very limited experience.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Problem**

To investigate the purpose of this study, the following questions were formulated to be pursued:

- 1.2.1 What are the challenges faced by an in-service English teacher during her teaching career?
- 1.2.2 How does she cope with those challenges?

## **1.3 Operational Definition**

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides several operational definitions, as follows:

- 1.3.1 Teacher's experience : the process of getting knowledge or skills from doing, seeing, or feeling the teaching for a long time and will then establish the teacher's profession.
- 1.3.2 Teacher's challenges : the situation in the form of difficulties or encouragement triggered by policies specified in education which could help the teacher to develop professionally.
- 1.3.3 Teacher's professional development : a continuous learning process for the teacher triggered by challenges in teaching, implementing curricula and developing materials, and assessing students that arise during her career which then entailed her for doing training, practicing and feedback, as well as providing adequate time and following-up support to solve those challenges.

#### **1.4 Aims of the Research**

This study aimed to explore the challenges faced by an in-service English teacher at one of the secondary schools in Indonesia for more than 20 years of her teaching career, as well as to discover how she overcame those challenges.

## **1.5 Significances of the Research**

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Use**

Theoretically, this research presents a new perspective regarding the challenges encountered by a secondary school English teacher during more than 20 years of her teaching career and the solutions she took to overcome those challenges examined by the Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) theory.

### **1.5.2 Empirical Use**

The research related to the challenges faced by the teacher along with the solutions carried out which examined by the TPD theory and using narrative inquiry as a research design is sparsely investigated, evidenced by the stiffness of finding the related literature.

### **1.5.3 Practical Use**

By researching the challenges experienced by an in-service English teacher during more than 20 years of her teaching career along with the solutions she performed could provide insight and lessons for other teachers to further be applied in their teaching practices, as well as provide an overview for prospective teachers related to the world they will be involved in later.