

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Understanding teachers' cognitions is indispensable to understand teachers' classroom practices. Since the insights in psychology have shown the crucial importance of thinking on behaviour, teachers is recognized to be thoughtful decision-maker determining instructional practices (Borg, 2015). In fact, although teacher cognition is not the sole factor influencing instructional practices, teacher cognition is acknowledged to play a vital role to govern teacher behaviour in the classroom (Yue'e & Yunzhang, 2011). Eventually, teacher cognition which Borg (2015) defines as teacher's thought, belief and knowledge is regarded to organize classroom practices.

Barnard & Burns claims what teachers believe and practice is key to their success in teaching and student success in learning (as cited in Rahimi & Zhang, 2015). It means understanding teacher's cognition is essential to fathom the success of teaching and learning practices. Therefore, Couper (2016) asserts researchers and teacher educators need to consider teacher cognition in order to direct pedagogical advices appropriately.

In fact, teachers' cognitions are an established area of inquiry in the field of English language teacher education and teacher education in general. The issues on English language teacher cognition research encompass what constitutes teachers' beliefs and knowledge about English language teaching, how these cognitions have developed, and how they are reflected in classroom practice (Borg in Baker, 2013). These issues have been studied through a number of research studies in contexts of English as a second and foreign language. Indeed, studies on English language teacher cognition research have potential to enhance professional development of English language teachers. As stated by Borg (2015), teacher cognition research plays a key role to reinforce teacher learning at both pre-service and in-service level.

Meanwhile, studies dealing with specific curricular domains in English language teaching comprise of grammar (e.g. Farrell & Lim, 2005), reading (e.g. Atai & Fatahi-Majd, 2013), writing (e.g. Ferris, 2014), listening (e.g. Graham, Santos, & Francis-Brophy, 2014), speaking or oral communication (e.g. Yue'e & Yunzhang, 2011) and pronunciation (e.g. Baker, 2013). Nonetheless, study of teacher cognition about speaking instruction is still a limited domain of inquiry (Borg, 2015). In regard to the paucity of research on teacher cognition into teaching speaking, this study reports a descriptive case study to add this body of knowledge by examining a pre-service EFL teacher's cognition. This study investigated the extent to which a pre-service EFL teacher perceives the teaching of

speaking in accordance with her teaching experience during teaching practice program without directly observing the actual practices in the classroom.

B. Formulation of the Problem

A research question in this study is “To what extent does the cognition that pre-service EFL teacher have about the teaching of speaking?”.

C. Operational Definitions

1. Pre-service EFL Teacher : EFL student teacher enrolled in an undergraduate teaching degree of English teacher education program completing field-based teaching experience in seventh semester.
2. Teacher Cognition in Teaching Speaking : Teacher’s knowledge, thinking, and beliefs about teaching speaking.
3. Teaching Speaking : To teach learners to be able to communicate their ideas in the target language that involves the process of producing, receiving and processing information through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols.

D. The Aim of the Study

The present study aims to investigate the extent to which the cognition of a pre-service EFL teacher about teaching speaking in an EFL classroom.

E. The Significances of the Study

1. Theory

This research will expand the cognitive behavioural theory in which teaching is viewed as thoughtful behaviour driven by teacher's cognition.

2. Empiric

This study will present the nature of teaching speaking in an EFL classroom perceived by pre-service EFL teacher.

3. Practice

The results of this study can be put to provide the basis of more effective teacher education and development programmes.