

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

It has been three and a half years since I entered English Education major in one of universities in Indonesia, and I am currently in my 8th semester. In my 7th semester, I was required to undertake a teaching practicum for 3 months. It was held in September until November. Throughout the practicum, I encountered difficulties regarding to my identity.

I arrive in the institution with my values, beliefs, and expectations, which cause a serious tension between the professional demands and myself. The demands entitled from the institution push me to decide which parts of myself that I was willing to set aside in favor of the professional demands.

My struggle to shape my identity was related to my experiences, considering my experiences in teaching was limited. I only have a few chances during a course project and there was no time for the students to know me beforehand. Furthermore, as I experienced the teaching practicum, I had several challenges such as adaptation to school realities, classroom management, mastering the materials, administrations, and many other

things. According to Alsup (2006), every pre-service teacher is expected to be both student (willing to learn and reflect, and required to demonstrate competency and ability), and teacher (able to act and know and accepted as a professional). Therefore, the expectations leave the pre-service teacher struggled and overwhelmed on constructing their professional identity (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013).

Universities not only has an important role in preparing the pre-service teacher in a teaching practicum. As a matter of fact, universities and colleges decided on how to train pre-service teachers and what constituted the content of the courses (Meierdirk, 2016). Yet, the apparent neglect of pre-service teachers' learning in curriculum learning areas is an issue, as the focus has tended to be placed on theory and general method (Fletcher & Kosnik, 2016, as cited in Kosnik & Beck, 2009). The proceeds created a distinction between the 'ideals' and the 'real world' of school and classroom in their professional teacher identity construction (Yuan & Lee, 2015).

The teaching practicum, in particular, offers the pre-service teachers an opportunity to assess their teaching ability and theories that they are learned while working one-on-one with students (Wetzel et al, 2016, as cited in Haverback & Parault, 2008). Yuan & Lee (2016) claimed during the teaching practicum, the pre-service teacher likely to be expected to encounter emotional ups and downs which have a direct bearing on their process to envision themselves as a professional teacher.

The existing researches (e.g. Gayton, 2016; Nykvist & Mukherjee, 2016; Widodo, 2016; Taylor, 2017) have contributed an understanding of pre-service teachers identity construction, especially in the context of educational reforms. However, the process of pre-service teachers construct their identities during teaching practicum in Indonesia, remains underexplored. A study in this particular area, especially in Indonesia, is essential to capture a crucial part of a pre-service teacher identity construction.

B. Formulation of the Problem

To investigate the purpose of this study, I as the researcher intend to investigate; how do I as a pre-service teacher shape my professional identities during teaching practicum?

C. Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides several definitions related to the study, as follow:

1. Professional Identity : A self-concept based on negotiations between experience, ego, and the school realities in relation to a profession.
2. Teacher Identity : An image that presented to others as a teacher.

3. Teaching Practicum : A process of learning to teach and self-familiarize with the school realities.
4. Pre-Service Teacher : A student who currently learning to teach and self-familiarize with the school realities.

D. Aim of the Research

The research aims to investigate the process of a pre-service teacher in shaping professional identities during teaching practicum.

E. Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical Use

This study will expand the identity theory applied during teaching practicum.

2. Practical Use

This study will provide the lecturers a consideration regarding with the adequate preparation and support for the pre-service teachers before begin their professional practices.

3. Empirical Use

This study will provide empirical insights into the process of a pre-service teacher in shaping professional identities during teaching practicum.

