

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Teachers' identity construction plays an important role in teachers' professional development. Gallchóir, Flaherty, & Hinchion (2018) stated that in teachers' initial education, teacher beliefs, practice and development, there is teacher identity which has an important role, and teacher identity shapes instructional practice and professional knowledge. Gallchóir et al., (2018) also informed that "identities are constructed via symbolic interactions which make meanings for how an individual should enact a role" (p.2). Emerged from the tradition of sociocultural research, identity inherently recognizes and combines the influence of culture, society, and history on the teacher's self-feeling (Mcgriff, 2015).

Previous study conducted by Gallchóir et al. (2018) reported that their physical appearance and how they play their role (identity) as teachers are the main concerns of pre-service teachers. Thus, they offer a dichotomization of how a good teacher or a bad teacher can appear physically. Furthermore, there is a change in the role of the campus-based segment to a school being an educator.

The phenomenon of identity construction was experienced by one of the students from a state university in Tasikmalaya who has joined the teaching practicum. He was assigned to teach English in a vocational high school for two months. This program required him to change his identity as a student who previously studied educational science to become a teacher who applied the knowledge gained during his education to become a teacher.

There are many studies about pre-service teachers' identity construction in ESL and EFL contexts both in junior or senior high school in general. Mahendra (2020) noted that several studies have investigated teacher identity construction in certain contexts, meanwhile, the notion of identity among ESP teachers is an under-researched topic. Tao & Gao

(2018) through their research reported that the complexity of ESP teacher identity was unpacked. Yet, a limited number of the study focuses on pre-service ESP teachers' identity construction in Indonesian EFL context during teaching practicum program in vocational high school. In this case, the researcher seeks to investigate what identity is constructed by a pre-service ESP teacher after two months teaching a practicum program using Gee's (2000) theory of four ways to view identities such as nature-identity, institution-identity, discourse-identity, and affinity-identity.

1.2 Research Question

A research question is addressed in this present study. I investigate “what identity is constructed by a pre-service ESP teacher after two months teaching a practicum program in a vocational high school in Tasikmalaya?”

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misinterpretation of this research, here are the operational definitions of each keyword:

1.3.1 Pre-Service ESP Teacher's Identity:

Characteristic of pre-service teacher which includes nature-identity (we are what we are primarily because of our “nature”), institutional-identity (we are what we are primarily because of the positions we occupy in society), discourse-identity (we are what we are primarily because of our individual accomplishments as they are interactions recognized by others), and affinity-identity (we are what we are primarily because of the experiences we have had within certain sorts of “affinity groups”).

1.3.2 Teaching Practicum:

Two months of teaching program conducted by a student teacher from a university in Indonesia to teach English in one of vocational high schools in Tasikmalaya.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The study aims to explore the teacher's identity constructed by a pre-service ESP teacher after two months of teaching practicum program in a vocational high school in Tasikmalaya.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Uses:

This research contributes to adding references about identity construction theory in teacher's identity construction in Indonesian EFL context.

1.5.2 Empirical Uses:

This research will offer empirical insights into how a pre-service teacher's identity is constructed by interaction for how an individual should enact a role.

1.5.3 Practical Uses:

The study will provide insights into how the teacher realizes his genuine identity to enhance his quality of teaching.