

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is intended to investigate EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of the daily reflective journal during field teaching practice experienced by EFL pre-service teachers in a field teaching practice program. This chapter describes the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research questions, the research objectives, the significance of the research, and the definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the past decade, many researchers have taken an interest in observation, dealing with writing daily reflective journals. Abednia, Hovassapian, Teimournezhad, and Ghanbari (2013) conducted research that used focus group discussions with six service teachers on the benefits and challenges of journaling tasks. A thematic analysis of the discussion showed that participants believed writing the journal contributed to them in the context of participants' self-awareness, grasp of issues related to ELT, reasoning skills, and interaction with pre-service teachers.

According to Akbari (2007), reflective teaching will make teachers question clinches that they have learned during their formative years and will also enable them to develop more informed practice. Teachers will integrate the knowledge

they have gained during pre-service training with their practical experiences and make informed choices based on the situations they find themselves in.

Teachers in higher education must be reflective in their pedagogical practices and take ownership of providing chances for their students to do the same to help them develop into reflective practitioners. According to Villegas-Reimers (2003), the term professional development refers to the development of a person in their professional role. With specific reference to teachers, it is concerned with the growth, which is a result of increased experience and examining their teaching systematically. Planning teaching experiences and creating assignments that encourage reflection on the lessons and teaching method is one technique to encourage students to engage in reflective practice. This would give students the chance to consider and reflect on how their teaching, methodology, styles, and strategies have affected others. Students would be inspired to continue this practice if reflective reflection was introduced to them, but if it was done in various of methods, that would be easier to use when they were practicing as teachers.

Journaling as a reflective teaching strategy has now gained popularity in terms of second education or foreign language teachers, considering its benefits to the advancement of education and teaching (Dumlao & Pinatacan, 2019). Teachers who adopt reflective practices gain a higher comprehension of their instructions, value their qualified development, elevate informed decision-making skills, and develop positive. It supports the claim that you will be able to teach with confidence (Alsuhaibani, 2020). Thorpe (2004) claims that pre-

service teacher reflection encourages teachers, and readers to participate in the reflection process.

Student journals are used extensively in university contexts as a means of facilitating reflection, deepening personal understanding and stimulating critical thinking (Ballantyne & Packer, 1995). The need for reflective teacher education has been argued because it facilitates the linking of theory and practice, subjects the expertise of teachers to critical evaluation, and enables them to take a more active role in their professional accountability (Calderhead, 1988). Developing skills and habits of reflection may be seen both as a means of improving teaching practice and as an end itself, a valid outcome of reflective teacher education (LaBoskey, 1993).

According to Hubbs and Brand (2005), the rationale for using reflective journaling in higher education is grounded in general learning theory, adult learning theory, and experiential learning theory, and in its importance for a students' professional development. It may also be an essential tool in developing the students' reflective skills. However, despite the widespread prominence given to reflection in teacher education, Spalding and Wilson (2002) report that studies on reflective thinking in pre-service teachers often yield disappointing results.

Examples cited include pre-service teachers having "difficulty achieving higher levels of reflection," with "distinguishing between telling and reflecting," or with "moving beyond immediate concerns of classroom management and control." A further concern of practicing teachers is the time reflection takes (Gil-Garcia & Cintron 2002). Additionally, Galvez-Martin (2003) found that, while

pre-service students practice reflection, in-service teachers do not. The result is that reflection stagnates or vanishes over time after their first entry years as teachers. It is thus imperative to be cognisant of these and other possible impediments to the use of a reflective journal as a tool for professional development.

Nonetheless, although reflective journaling generally goes beyond classroom practice and content, and can involve personal values and belief systems, it is my contention that classroom practice should not be discarded as trivial. Researchers such as Mezirow (1990), and Atherton (2011) have contributed much to highlight the importance of being able to reflect both on and in practice. According to Spalding and Wilson (2002), this reflection type focuses on pedagogical activity in context. Carried out in context, such pedagogical activity becomes extremely important in evaluating one's teaching performance.

Given the importance attached to the development of reflective skills and propensities, it is not surprising that a range of teaching tools for this purpose has emerged in the literature. Reflective journal writing is one such technique that has been advocated by educators in many fields as a means of stimulating reflective learning: counseling (Eldridge, 1983), psychology (Hettich, 1990), nursing (Landein et al. 1992), leadership (Walker, 1985), sociology (Wagenaar, 1984), and teaching (Yinger & Clark, 1981). A student journal may be defined as a learning exercise in which students express in writing their understanding of, reflections on, response to or analysis of an event, experience or concept (Ballantyne & Packer, 1995). Despite the popularity and prevalence of this

technique, the theoretical and empirical bases supporting its use are underdeveloped.

To get students to reflect on their professional practice while participating in field experience placements, journal writing has become a popular tool employed in pre-service teacher education programs. It is not only a novel approach but also a reasonable one for researchers to comprehend how pre-service teachers record their professional knowledge through journal writing using the Popperian (1979) theoretical framework, as shown in this study, especially when pre-service teachers connect theoretical notions of responsibility for their professional growth in knowledge.

Other research conducted by Dumlao and Pinatacan (2019) investigated the pre-service teachers' perceptions and practices of reflection in teaching. This study found that pre-service teacher reflection useful and helpful, especially early in their teaching experience. Then, it just became a repetitive routine. An analysis of student-teacher practices showed that student-teacher reflections were general, brief, and primarily descriptive.

In the Indonesian context, writing reflective journals has been an issue in the EFL classroom context. Zulfikar and Mujiburrahman (2018) conducted a study to examine how English teachers perceive the impact of reflective journals on their attitudes toward teaching. The results from the interviews indicated that most of the participants believed that reflective journals would help them become reflective teachers. It was also found that teachers viewed reflective journals as an

effective tool to increase awareness in the classroom and improve performance during class.

However, the study of EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of the daily reflective journal is still less, whether in international, even in the Indonesian context, in terms of knowing the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers about the daily reflective journal that students write during the field teaching practice program. Therefore, to fill all the gaps, this present study attempts to examine the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers in university in terms of the daily reflective journal that students produce during the field teaching practice program. Information about EFL pre-service teachers can be disclosed through scientific research. The findings of this study are expected to provide an understanding of daily reflection journal that are emphasized as personal development in classroom teaching during field teaching practices. This provides instructors and colleges with detailed information on student-teacher perceptions of daily reflective journaling activities during field teaching practice programs.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study focused on the EFL pre-service teacher's perceptions of a daily reflective journal. This study emphasized the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers at one of the higher Islamic education institutions in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, about the daily reflective journal during the field teaching practice program. This study only focused on identifying teachers' perceptions of the daily reflective journal during field teaching practice.

1.3 Research Question

Regarding the focus of the study that has been mentioned above, the researcher formulated the research question, “What are EFL pre-service teachers’ perceptions of daily reflective journal use for teacher development?”

1.4 Objective of the Study

Dealing with the statements of the problem above, this study aims to investigate EFL pre-service teacher's perceptions of a daily reflective journal use for teacher development.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The finding of this study can be utilized as a reference for those who intend to conduct research in analyzing EFL pre-service teachers’ perceptions of the daily reflective journal during field teaching practice. Moreover, this study is very useful for the other EFL pre-service teachers that will be teaching in the class, and this study will also be helpful for the lecturers or mentor teachers, or supervisors to understand EFL pre-service teachers’ perceptions of the reflective journal given to them. Lastly, it will be a reference for universities so that they can apply it as the most crucial reference in developing the teaching performance of pre-service teachers.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

This part is aimed to define some essential terms in this study as in the following:

EFL pre-service teacher is an EFL college student who has been taking part in a field teaching practice program; students who studied in the education department and trained to be a teacher. This study refers to nine students from the English Education department at one of the higher Islamic education institutions at Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Daily reflective journal function is to write down what people have experienced, positive or negative feelings, or what people have learned from an experience. This study refers to a daily reflective journal written by EFL pre-service teachers while engaged in a field teaching practice program.

A Field teaching practice program is a program conducted by universities or institutions to allow their students as pre-service teachers to have a real teaching experience in the school. In this study, the program is implemented by one of the Senior High Schools in Southeast Sulawesi.

Teachers' perception is a position where someone gives an interpretation of or about an event. In the context of this research, the intended perception is the pre-service teacher's interpretation of the daily reflective journal writing activity during the 45-day teaching practice program.