

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study is intended to investigate the EFL pre-service teachers' reflection and reflective teaching practice during their field teaching practice in the schools in Kendari, South East Sulawesi. This chapter depicts the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research questions, and the purpose of the study. Moreover, it includes the significance of the study, the definition of the key terms used in this study, and the structure of the dissertation.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

As the heart of the teaching practice, professional development and education, reflection is needed way before the teachers face their real students in the classroom context as they enter teaching profession. Reflective teaching, therefore, has been the standard in most of teacher education programs in western academic culture. Despite the significant role of reflective teaching practice in teacher education context, to date there is a lack of studies focusing on the reflective teaching practice in EFL settings such as those in Indonesia. Most of research studies pertaining to reflective teaching practice in Indonesian classroom contexts are within the discussion of Lesson Study (see, for example, Cahyono, 2014; Saito, Harun, Kuboki, & Tachibana, 2006; Suratno & Iskandar, 2010) while there is still scarcity of empirical studies investigating reflective teaching practice of EFL pre-service teachers (see Astika, 2014; Kuswandono, 2014; Nurlaelawati, 2015; Palupi, 2011; Ragawanti, 2015) or EFL teachers in Indonesian classroom contexts (e.g., Caterine, 2013; Martina, 2013; Silvia, 2014; Widodo, 2004).

The paucity of such research in Indonesian EFL classroom contexts is more liable to Indonesian L2 teacher education curriculum which does not clearly instruct the implementation of reflective teaching concepts within the teaching and teacher education contexts. Although the The Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia in its Higher Education Long Term Strategy 2003-2010 has encouraged the teacher educators to adopt more student-centred approach, in

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which reflective practice is instructive under this constructivism view, Karnita, Woodcock, and Super (2013) argue that many of the Indonesian teachers, regardless their awareness of its significance, describe reflective practice as process of introspecting and self-evaluating happening naturally in their everyday life. To support this phenomenon, Silvia (2014) confirmed that the teachers in her case study had never realized they had been practicing reflective practice—what they called self-evaluation—in their classrooms until they were introduced to the term.

The importance and significance of reflective practice have been investigated and re-investigated the past three decades (Farrel, 2016), resulting in a plethora of research on reflective practices in various fields such as medicine (e.g. Wear, Zarconi, Garden, & Jones, 2012), nursing (e.g. Lawrence, 2011), the law (e.g. Cockburn & Ryan, 2015), music (e.g. Heyworth, 2011), social work (e.g. Wilson, 2011), teacher education (e.g. Colomer, Vila, Salvado, & Casellas, 2013; Nelson, Miller, & Yun, 2016; Standal & Moe, 2013), and teaching (e.g. Andersen & Matkins, 2011; Hsieh, Jang, Hwang, & Chen, 2011; Lu, 2014; Simoncini, Lasen, & Rocco, 2014; Spilkova, 2011; Tan, Wettasinghe, Tan, & Hasan, 2010; Yuksel, 2011). In language teaching context, reflective practice has also gained popularity focusing on pre-service, inservice, novice, less experienced as well as experienced teachers (see Edge, 2011; Horn & Little, 2010; Lyons, 2010; Tsui, 2011) of English language teaching (e.g. Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2010; Astika, 2014; Fatemi, et al., 2011; Ragawanti, 2015; Roux, Mora, & Tamez, 2012; Vethamani, 2011; Yesilbursa, 2011) or other languages (see Knezevic & Scholl, 1996).

While reflection and reflective practice have been discussed extensively by John Dewey in his work *How We Think* (1933), which further developed by Donald Schön (1983, 1987), only in 1990s did reflective practice begin to gain more attention in language teaching (see Farrell, 2012; Richards & Ho, 1998; Tsui, 2011). Accordingly, respective studies have gained explosive attention (Edge, 2011; Horn & Little, 2010; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Lyons, 2010; Tsui, 2011). The results of the study mainly focused on reflective teaching practice as

meditational tools for teacher professional learning (Burton, 2009; Nakamura, 2014; Zeichner & Liu, 2010).

Teaching reflection or reflective practice in the teaching context is needed because it is essential to teacher professional development as it becomes the core activity of being a teacher and the formative influence in his/her professional development (McGregor & Cartwright, 2011; Zeichner & Liu, 2010; Zwodiak-Myers, 2011). In L2 teacher education, reflective teaching practice has also been an essential element in teacher education programs with writing reflective journal as almost the standard requirement due to its practical use in recording the teachers' teaching experiences (Lyons, 2010; Mack, 2012; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Roux, et al., 2012; Tsui, 2011; Yesilbursa, 2011). A number of studies have reported on how L2 teachers come to a better understanding of their work through reflective practice (see, for example, Bailey & Springer, 2013; Barkhuizen, 2014; Farrell, 2013; Jadidi & Keshavaraz, 2013; Ragawanti, 2015).

As regards English pre-service teachers' context, many of the studies conducted required the student teachers to keep reflective journal (e.g. Astika, 2014; Kuswandono, 2014; Mack, 2012; Nurlaelawati, 2015; Palupi, 2013; Richards & Ho, 1998; Ragawanti, 2015), and video-taped their teaching (e.g. Hatton & Smith, 1995), or went through stimulated recall in order to confirm the reflection-in-action (e.g. Breen, et al., 2001; Gatbonton, 2008; Johnson, 1992). Pre-service teachers, as the core element of teaching education programs, are achieving higher levels of reflection by being involved in reflective practice (Roux, et al., 2012). Their best practice in reflectivity, however, is being lost by the end of their teaching programs. In most schools in Indonesia, it is still difficult to ensure whether reflection is being promoted among teachers and whether teachers are interested in reflecting their teaching (Caterine, 2013; Luciana, 2004) due to the scarcity of related empirical studies. Caterine (2013), in her study, for example, recommended that the position of reflective practice be developed in language teaching settings as she noticed that despite the teachers' awareness of the reflective practice and its importance, such implementation in the classroom is still far from cry. This becomes a great concern regarding that classroom teachers

who do not show any importance of reflectivity to the pre-service teachers assigned to them, they are wrongfully modeling that reflection is not important or necessary in the profession (Simoncini, et al., 2014). This is making pre-service teachers reflect less, and stop to reflect as beginning teachers.

Reflecting on multiple aspects of teaching is believed to be able to foster new teachers' knowledge integration and development to a more complex view of teaching (Davis, 2006). However, teachers' attitude and their lack of capacity are responsible for how pre-service or new teachers understand reflective practice (Farrell, 2006), thus impacting on how they write their reflections in their journals. Therefore, through careful structuring and monitoring of journal writing, the reflective practice may help the teachers write in a way that more readily promotes critical reflection and therefore provides useful benefits in teacher education and professional development (Richards & Ho, 1998), and makes participants' cognitive processes more explicit than in their actively constructing knowledge about teaching and learning (Hoover, 1994).

Albeit a myriad of studies that indicate the importance of reflective teaching practice in pre-service teacher level as well as the positive impacts of keeping reflective teaching journals, there is a scarcity of studies that specifically investigate the elements of reflection realized in the process of reflection, further examine the relationship among the elements of reflection and the level or quality of reflection in the presence of attitudes required for being reflective practitioners (see Loughran, 1996), and the nature of teachers' concerns within their reflection. Despite this paucity, reflective practice in the context of English language teaching is commonly recognized as a key component in promoting teacher quality.

Based on the phenomenon and the empirical findings above, this study attempted to use the theoretical and methodological assumptions derived from Dewey's (1933) and Loughran's (1996) elements of reflection, Hatton and Smith's (1995) and Pisova's (2005, as cited in Syslova, 2015) level or stages of reflection and connected to Halliday and Mathiessen's (2014) logico-semantic relation, and Freeman and Johnson's (1998) knowledge-base of language teacher education as

well as Moradkhani, Akbari, Samar, and Kiany's (2013) language teachers' pedagogical knowledge in unlocking the practice of reflective teaching of the pre-service teachers, especially as the frameworks emphasize the teacher as part of the constructs of society and the dialectical relation between teachers' knowledge and their world of practice.

In order to investigate the EFL pre-service teachers' elements of reflection, to examine their existing level or quality of the reflection—which is regarded by many scholars as essential to both teacher education program's consideration and the pre-service teachers' further professional development once they enter the world of real teaching as novice teachers, and to unveil the issues being concerned in their reflections, this present study utilized journal writings, observations, stimulated recalls and interviews due to their significance in identifying the existence of reflection and reflective practice during the participants' field teaching experience.

## **1.2 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on the reflective teaching practice of four Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers relative to their teaching journals study taken during their teaching, observation utilizing videotapes and field notes, stimulated recalls following the observation as well as in-depth interviews after their teaching practice in natural setting during their field-teaching experience. The respondents involved in this study were based on their previous exposure to reflective teaching experience during Microteaching class and their willingness to take part in the research. The conceptual framework underlying this study was based on some theories on reflective teaching practices proposed by Dewey (1933) and Loughran (1996) regarding elements of reflection, Hatton and Smith (1995) and Pisova (2005, as cited in Syslova, 2015) regarding level of reflection which connected to Halliday and Mathiessen's (2014) logico-semantic relation, and Freeman and Johnson's (1998) and Moradkhani, et al.'s (2013) knowledge base of second/foreign language teacher education regarding the issues the pre-service teachers addressed in their reflections.

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### **1.3 Research Questions**

In an attempt to contribute to the body of knowledge in reflective teaching practices, this case study focused on revealing such questions as:

- 1.3.1 What are the issues relative to teachers' knowledge which prompt the EFL pre-service teachers to reflect during the field teaching practice?
- 1.3.2 What are the elements of reflection being realized by the EFL pre-service teachers in their reflections during the field teaching practice?
- 1.3.3 What are the levels of reflection of the EFL pre-service teachers as revealed in their reflections during the field teaching practice?
- 1.3.4 How are the EFL pre-service teachers' issues in reflection, elements of reflection, and levels of reflection interconnected in light of instructional contexts?

### **1.4 Purposes of the Study**

Based on the research background, this present study is aiming

- 1.4.1 to investigate the elements of reflection being realized by the EFL pre-service teachers during the field teaching practice;
- 1.4.2 to discover the levels of reflection of the EFL pre-service teachers as revealed in their reflections during the field teaching practice;
- 1.4.3 to find out the issues relative to teachers' knowledge which prompt the EFL pre-service teachers to reflect during the field teaching practice; and,
- 1.4.4 to reveal how the EFL pre-service teachers' issues in reflection, elements of reflection, and levels of reflection are interconnected in light of instructional contexts.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The past decade has witnessed a proliferation in the number of reflective practices. The number of teachers, teacher educators, and teacher students seeking to integrate these practices into their teaching learning process has also proliferated. However, the understanding of the significance of such practices in

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the Indonesian context remains insufficient. This study, therefore, attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge already established in this field, both theoretically and practically. At the theoretical level, this study is expected to shed new light on the current debate concerning the rise of reflective teaching practice relative to individual reflection during field-teaching experience. At the practical level, this study is expected to either confirm or disconfirm the value of reflective practice in education, thus affecting the future direction of educational policy nation-wide.

The results of this study are expected to give contributions to both the theory and practice of reflective teaching studies with respect to EFL pre-service teachers' teaching practices in Indonesian classroom settings. First, this research may fill the gap of the scant studies in reflective teaching journal-based research on the process of reflection conducted by the Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers. The use of reflective teaching journals, videotaping, simulated recalls, and interviews in triangulating the gathered data in this case study is expected to enrich the discussion of research methodology in reflective teaching practice in Indonesian instructional setting. Second, the conceptual framework used in this study is hoped to contribute to the current discussion of the elements of reflection realized by the pre-service teachers in their reflections, their level of reflection as well as their concerns as reflected in their reflective teaching practice. Third, the results of this study are hoped to contribute to the discussion of instructing the implementation of reflective teaching practices in Indonesian teacher education curriculum whether integrated with other course of studies or as a unit of study. Furthermore, the information gained from the results of the study is expected to lead to the enhancement of the Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers' considerations for being reflective practitioners within their current practices. The considerations may lead them to a better path towards professional development in their career.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

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For the purpose of this study, the terms to be defined are listed as the following.

*Reflection:* This study defines reflection as the process in which problems pertaining to classroom teaching contexts came into the participants' mind, and the time when their assumption, beliefs, and ideas were challenged by situation as regard solution to be sought.

*Reflective Teaching:* In this study, reflective teaching means the state when the pre-service teachers involved in this study faced a problem and they began to question their teaching beliefs, assumption, and ideas, as well as teaching method, approach, and technique being employed in their language classroom for the success of the teaching and learning process.

*Reflective Teaching Practice:* Reflective teaching practice in this study means the practice maintained by the participants with respect to the elements of reflection identified in their reflections, the level or quality of their reflections, the issues or concerns emerged in their reflections as manifested in their reflective teaching journals, their recorded teaching practices in the classroom, which then were further elaborated more deeply in their interview sessions with the researcher.

*Reflective Teaching Journal:* Reflective teaching journal in this study means personal teaching journals, as one of the most widely used tools in mapping the teachers and/or pre-service teachers' teaching beliefs, assumption, and ideas, kept by each participant containing their reflections on their teaching and learning experiences during their field teaching practice. At the onset of this study, the participants were provided with reflective journal writing guidelines in order to make their reflection more focused.

*Elements of Reflection:* This study identifies Dewey's (1933) elements of reflection i.e. suggestion, problems, hypothesis, reasoning and testing, which mark the existence of reflection in the human's mind and also differentiate 'habit' from 'action'. Those five elements became one of the bases in developing the rubrics in investigating the participants' reflective teaching practice.



*Levels of Reflection:* This study utilized Hatton and Smith's (1995) level of reflection in assessing the quality of pre-service teachers' reflection in their written journal. The levels are: 1) non-reflective, 2) descriptive reflection, 3) dialogic reflection, and 4) critical reflection. Similar to the elements of reflection, the four levels of reflection became one of the analytical frameworks in investigating the participants' reflective teaching practice.

*Knowledge Base of Second Language Teacher Education:* This study defines the knowledge base of language teaching as the matter involved in language teaching, the matter the language teachers need to know and be able to do in order to be able to deliver effective language teaching and teach the students effectively. Using Freeman and Johnson's (1998) knowledge-base of language teacher education and Moradkhani, et al.'s (2013) conceptualized pedagogical knowledge base of language teaching, this study focused on the issues concerned in the PSTs' reflective practices on these components, but not prescriptive to: 1) the teacher-learner; 2) the social context; 3) the pedagogical process; 4) language management; 5) learning management; 6) classroom management; and 7) knowledge management.

*ELT Pre-service Teachers:* In this study, the pre-service teachers were four undergraduate English language teaching education students at Faculty of Education of a private university in South East Sulawesi, participating willingly and voluntarily in this project, prepared to enter the real teaching context by completing the required education courses and participating in student teaching in a real classroom setting in a public or private school. The term pre-service teacher, student teacher, and teacher learner are used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

*Field Teaching Practice:* Field teaching practice in this study is defined as the required 45-day teaching practice mandated by the Faculty of Education at the given university, conducted by the participants after their completion of the required courses in education and ELT, in real teaching setting with real students. The pre-service teachers in this program were supervised by their academic

mentors from the department and the mentor teachers from the schools where they were assigned.

*Sound Curriculum:* Sound curriculum in this study is expounded as the curriculum which accommodates the practice of reflection on learning and teaching experiences within the formal education in tertiary level. The curriculum incorporates reflective practices (reflective learning and reflective teaching) into courses taught in the colleges or universities, be they pedagogical or subject matter. The incorporation of reflective practices in form of reflective activities could occupy the courses' syllabuses.

### **1.7 Structure of the Dissertation**

The organization of the dissertation is as follows: Chapter One introduces the dissertation's concerns, scope, problem identification and purposes of the study, significance of the study, as well as defined terms used in this study. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature related to the concerns of the study thus aiding in the construction of the main data collection instrument as well as for discussing the findings. Chapter Three discusses the research methodology, methods, participants' selection, instruments used for data collection as well as ways to analyze the data. It also describes the setting where the study was conducted. Chapter Four presents the findings based on within-case analysis and cross-case analysis, and discusses, reviews and evaluates the results of the case analysis. A conceptual framework depicting the interconnection between issues in reflection, the elements of reflection, and the levels of reflection is also presented and is considered as the state of the art relevant to the research areas. Chapter Five summarizes the results of Chapter Four, thus providing a practically adequate understanding of the implementation of reflective teaching in EFL teachers education program. The implications of the results for teacher education and training program are highlighted, along with the limitations of the study and avenue for further research.

