

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is intended to investigate the teacher identity construction of EFL novice teachers through their emotional experiences. This chapter depicts the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research question, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the last decade, teacher identity has been intensely discussed in educational research to develop teachers to define themselves as teachers (Gonzales-Calvo & Arias-Carballal, 2017; Karlsson, 2013; Sahin & Copur, 2020; Yazan, 2018). Furthermore, teacher identity construction has received considerable attention in language teaching education (Salinas & Ayala, 2018; Trent, 2015), because teacher identity is imperative in the world of education, especially for teachers to understand themselves, such that the teachers are not the sources of knowledge. Still, they act instead as promoters for students to make the students more active and have a role in facilitating and improving the learning process in the class (Djoub, 2018). The teachers are the main element and are at the forefront of education because all of the learning and the process of learning is shaped by them (Dogutas, 2021). In a similar vein, Li (2020) stated that teacher identity is a crucial role in improving effective pedagogy and enhancing teacher learning. In addition, Fani (2022) also claimed that teacher identities are part of teacher development as educators.

In the global context, the researchers focus primarily concerns to the topics such as teacher identity, teacher identity construction, improved understanding of teacher identity, how teacher identity is built, the challenges to building teacher identity, the factor of teacher identity, the characteristics of teacher identity (see Aktekin & Celebi, 2020; Aykac, Yildirim, Altinkurt, & Marsh, 2017; Dogutas, 2021; Gedik & Ortactepe, 2017; Gonzales-Calvo & Arias-Carballal, 2017; Mockler, 2011; Trent, 2015; Uitto, Kaunisto, Syrjala, & Estola, 2015). In line with this, the topic of teacher identity construction has become a focus of much theoretical and empirical discussion in teacher education (Chien, 2016; Kasmiran, 2018; Lim, 2010; Nykvist & Mukherjee, 2016; Stenberg, Karlsson, Pitkaniemi, & Maaranen, 2014; Yuan & Lee, 2015; Yuliyana, 2019) because teacher identity is essential as an issue in the field of education for teachers' development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Dogutas, 2021; Kasmiran, 2018).

There are various internal and external factors that create teacher identity of teachers. The internal factors that construct teacher identities, such as self-image (Salinas & Ayala, 2018), awareness of inner feelings (Soodmand Afshar & Donyaie, 2019), emotions (Esmaeili, Modirkhamene, & Alavinia, 2019; Flores & Day, 2006), epistemological beliefs (Huang, Wang, & Teng, 2021), good personal characteristic such as love for teaching, having good communication skills to students, being patient, tolerant to students (Kavrayici, 2020), teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs (Djoub, 2018), and the maturation of biological and psychological development (Siswanto & Kuswando, 2020). Furthermore, the external factors that construct teacher identity are learning environment, practicum experiences (Salinas & Ayala, 2018), students' condition (Goktepe &

Kunt, 2020), peers' feedback in a teaching practicum (Kasmiran, 2018), life experiences (Menon & Azam, 2021), social-context (Chien, 2016), school's micropolitical context (Uitto, Kaunisto, Syrjala, & Estola, 2015), social aspect (Djoub, 2018), workplace (Li, 2020), and the point of view from society (Dogutas, 2021).

In the EFL novice teacher's context, teacher identity is how novice teachers view themselves and describe how the teachers are in the context of professional work (Chien, 2016; Siswanto & Kuswando, 2020). Substantially, novice teachers' view of the definition of the teacher before they become a teacher in real or pre-service teachers will differ from when they have become new teachers or novice teachers. Huang, Wang, and Teng (2021) stated that novice teachers often undergo an identity shift and even changes in teacher identity because their instructional beliefs change from someone who initially learns and then they should teach or called a pre-service teacher to be a novice teacher. It could happen because a teacher's identity is formed by life experiences. So, teacher identity can also change every time or be dynamic.

Despite many researchers' highlights on teacher identity construction, there is still a scarcity of empirical studies investigating teacher identity construction of EFL novice teachers in the Indonesian context, explicitly investigating their emotional experience, which plays a vital role in constructing their (teacher) identity as EFL novice teachers. Therefore, to explore the teacher identity construction of EFL novice teachers, this study focuses on exploring the EFL novice teachers' emotional experiences before and after being novice teachers. Zembylas (2003) said the connections of emotions with self-knowledge

are needed to understand teacher identity. Furthermore, novice teachers are categorized as 'new' in the teaching field, and most of them are struggling with their emotional problems while being new teachers (Lomi & Mbato, 2020). Furthermore, emotions are crucial in their teacher identity construction since they shape teachers' state of mind and attitudes in the classroom, thereby influencing the teaching quality and students' learning (Djoub, 2018). The focus of this study concerns the novice teachers' emotional experiences because it is argued that teacher identity construction and emotions are inextricably linked (Nichols, Schutz, Rodgers, & Bilica, 2016; Teng, 2017; Yuan & Lee, 2015; Yuan & Lee, 2016; Zembylas, 2003). Yuliana (2019) also emphasized that novice teachers face many challenges, complicated and difficult situations, and get much pressure.

However, the investigation of the role of emotions in constructing teacher identity, especially among EFL novice teachers, are still under researched. The studies that have been done by several researchers only mention a little about the role of emotions. In other words, it does not focus on the role of emotions as a factor in constructing teacher identity, especially for EFL novice teachers, while they were being pre-service teachers, and after they become novice teachers. For this reason, this study explores in-depth the EFL novice teachers' emotional experiences as the crucial factor that constructs their teacher identity. In order to examine more deeply the role of emotions in building teacher identity, this study compared the emotional experiences of novice teachers before and after they become novice teachers. This research exists to address the research gaps from previous studies.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study focused on the emotional experiences of EFL novice teachers' identity construction before and after they become novice teachers. This study involved three EFL novice teachers who are teaching at school in the first year after they graduated from one of the universities in Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi. This study is limited to the EFL novice teachers' emotional experiences as one of the factors to construct teacher identity while they were teaching at the school, before they became real teachers, and after they became real teachers at the school, especially dealing with their classroom interaction between teachers and students. This study looked at the positive emotions and negative emotions that the participants had, and how their emotional experiences were before becoming novice teachers and after becoming novice teachers in constructing their teacher identities. This study also compares the emotional experiences before and after they become novice teachers.

1.3 Research Question

Concerning the focus of the study, this study focused on seeking the answer to how EFL novice teachers constructed their teacher identity through their emotional experiences before and after they become novice teachers.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

Based on the research question, this present study aims to investigate the teacher identity construction of EFL novice teachers through their emotional experiences before and after they become novice teachers.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to raise the EFL novice teachers' awareness of teacher identity construction and how emotion is intertwined with identity construction. Not only for EFL novice teachers; this study is expected to contribute to teacher educators' awareness in helping pre-service teachers and novice teachers realize the importance of emotional aspects in teaching and their identity construction as future teachers. The results of this research are hoped to be able to provide insights to pre-service teachers and novice teachers in dealing with emotions to construct their teacher identity. The finding of this study could also be utilized as a reference for those who intend to research the teacher identity construction of EFL novice teachers.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To clarify the key terms in this study, the definition of the following terms are as listed:

Identity: Identity answers to the recurrent question, “Who am I at this moment?” (Beijard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004).

Teacher identity: Teacher identity is someone's understanding of who they are as a teacher (Lim, 2010). Teacher identity is also the self-image that teachers show to others.

Teacher identity construction: Teacher identity construction is the way to build or develop “Who am I?” as a teacher which refers to the development of one’s awareness and understanding of oneself as a teacher, and it is a continuous process that happens through experiences.

Novice teachers: Novice teachers are categorized as 'new' in the teaching field. They have recently graduated from the education faculty in their respective universities and are starting their journey as real teachers (Lomi & Mbato, 2020).

Academic emotions: In this study, the emotions of novice teachers, specifically within the context of classroom instruction and achievement, are referred to as academic emotions.

Personal-emotional: Personal-emotional refers to the involvement of transitioning from being a college student to becoming a teacher, during which the novice teacher has to redesign their teacher identity.

