

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature from the areas of EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions, reflective teaching, and teaching practice in order to establish an analytical framework for the present study. Previous empirical studies are discussed in an effort to gain an understanding of the relevant research.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study included a review of relevant previous studies, which enabled deductive thinking to generate new concepts and theses. This subsequently enabled the researcher to formulate hypotheses and effectively analyze data.

##### **2.1.1 The Concept of Perception**

According to Atkinson (cited in Wena, 2015), perception is a process by which people organize and interpret the patterns of stimuli in the environment. Additionally, Szilagyi and Wallace (cited in Stefanny, 2015) defined perception as a process of attending to incoming stimuli, organizing, and interpreting them into messages that indicate an appropriate action or behavior. Furthermore, Huffman and Vernoy (2000, cited in Stefanny, 2015) stated that perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting data into a usable representation of the world.

Finally, Noe (2015) argued that organism intelligent activity controls and shapes the information provided by perception.

Maba (2017) outlines that teacher perception is a response to their experience in the education field, including teaching, guiding, assessing, and evaluating students, which is contingent upon their feelings and beliefs. This response is categorized into two aspects: positive and negative. Positive perception is a favorable response from teachers, which encourages a strong foundation of values related to the reflective teaching process. Conversely, negative perception is a result of constraints faced by teachers when implementing reflective teaching, which can cause further issues.

Research has indicated that reflective journal learning can be an effective tool to enhance the learning process (Francis, 1995). Studies have suggested that journal writing encourages reflective activity in learners and that reflective thinking skills can be taught and taught (Francis, 1995).

Pre-service teachers' perceptions are essential for gaining an accurate understanding of their students. This is because their perceptions can influence how students perform in the classroom. Perceptions can be defined as the process of individuals selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory data or stimuli in order to carry out appropriate actions or intelligent activities in their environment. This study examines pre-service teachers' perceptions of reflective teaching journals during field teaching practice, which involves discovering and describing the

organization and interpretation of reflective teaching practices. This allows the researcher to gain insight into the phenomena.

### **2.1.2 Profile of Pre-service Teacher**

The research of Gabryś-Barker (2012) provides an overview of the professional attitudes of pre-service teachers. This finding indicates the direction of teachers' actions and helps them to become more focused in their future profession.

Moreover, it is assumed that the knowledge obtained during the teaching process is a major factor influencing the quality of instruction in the classroom. The comparison of the expected and actual classroom experience makes pre-service teachers possess different attitudes and be less likely to develop various teaching approaches (Appel, 1995; Burden, 1980; Katz, 1979; Mok, 2005). Thus, the main focus is on the affective and cooperative elements of pre-service teachers' duties, such as providing active support for their students and striving to establish authority and rapport with them.

Pre-service teachers should orient themselves toward the problems that should not be discussed in the process of actualizing themselves. By doing so, they can maintain a professional attitude and focus on the class intervals they teach. Through this, they can gain a clearer understanding of what needs to be done to make their learning more interesting and active. To demonstrate a qualified teacher's attitude, they must demonstrate motivation in their teaching, as well as provide good direction to their students (Gabryś-Barker, 2008). Thinking about

existing gaps provides an interesting understanding of the criteria for good teachers (2004, p. 262). This can be based on the model of their outstanding teachers and the quality of classroom practice they experience as autonomous students.

In many studies, teachers have been reported to present themselves as idealists, leading to a clear vision and mission (Gabryś-Barker, 2008). It is thus important to consider the transfer of knowledge from the training process to pre-service teachers through the engagement of all who are actively involved in the review (Gabryś-Barker, 2012; Younger et al., 2004). The described explanation suggests that teachers should undertake an active reflective process in their teaching as a starting and meeting point for the achievement of student-oriented objectives, such as providing and developing awareness in active learning.

The attitude of pre-service teachers is widely accepted as a key factor in the preparation process, which can enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of the development process. Educators and pre-service teachers should be cognizant of the processes that can have a significant impact on existing programs and the potential to develop strategies to achieve their specific and general goals as teachers. Considerable attention should be given to fostering teachers who are self-assured by engaging a variety of trainees to foster an attitude that can be well assimilated in terms of their self-expression and appreciation of the scope of their responsibilities. In reflective teaching, the emphasis is placed on cultivating the ability to reflect at the pre-service level, which should be considered the primary objective when creating successful and well-directed teachers (Gabryś-Barker, 2012).



### 2.1.3 English as Foreign Language

The development of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education has been of significant concern throughout the world, prompting calls for reform to pre-service EFL teachers' practices in order to raise the standard of teaching and learning (Aiken & Day, 1999; Cook, 1996; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Luo, 2003; Richards, 1998; Velez-Rendon; 2006). Vietnam has experienced rapid growth in EFL teaching, with English becoming an essential requirement for employment at many institutions across the country, reflecting a change in the world towards a 'global village' with increased intercultural contact between people from different cultural backgrounds. This increased demand for foreign language learning has posed a new challenge for EFL teachers and students in Vietnam, as lack of attention to language learning between cultures may be attributed to two main reasons: students not being given the opportunity to become familiar with interculturality in everyday life; and, with countries increasingly engaging in multilateral and diverse international relations, there is a need for foreign language learners to develop intercultural competence in order to succeed in communicating with people from other cultures and in a multicultural environment at work.

The neglect of intercultural language learning in Vietnam has been observed to stem from the design of the EFL curriculum and the practice of language learning in the classroom. Dinh (2021) asserts that two main reasons are responsible for this neglect: the focus on mastering vocabulary and grammar rules, and the emphasis on testing vocabulary, grammar, and translation. These factors have relegated culture to a subordinate status. Phan (2009) also notes that many Vietnamese

English teachers lack awareness of the socio-cultural dimension of foreign language education, which further contributes to the neglect of culture in EFL classrooms.

In China, many students are able to read and write English, yet lack the fluency to speak it. This can be attributed to a lack of a natural English environment and limited practice after class. Classroom teaching, therefore, plays a role in foreign language learning. Nevertheless, the formal teaching process in college EFL classes is generally not effective. Secondary school teachers tend to prioritize grammar structures, reading, and writing in order to prepare students for national entrance examinations, rather than providing students with opportunities to practice speaking English. After six years of formal English education, students have become used to following instructions and listening to the teacher, instead of speaking English or engaging in interaction with the teacher and other students. As such, it is rather difficult for university teachers to encourage the active participation of students in EFL classes.

Early introduction to English education, particularly prior to age 12, is advantageous due to the young learner's inherent linguistic development potential. Although English is not the mother tongue in Indonesia, its application is limited to certain contexts and is most prevalent in highly urbanized areas. Conversely, in rural areas, English is not commonly utilized for interpersonal communication. Consequently, the current trend of early English education provides an opportunity to foster understanding in the younger generations of the importance of the language

#### **2.1.4 EFL Pre-service Teacher**

EFL pre-service teachers have the responsibility to equip themselves with the necessary pedagogical skills before taking on the role of a teacher (Barzaq, 2007). This includes the ability to design and implement a curriculum, utilize appropriate technologies, and master the target language and its culture (Sheridan, 2011). Goldstein and Freedman (2003) and Mills and Satterthwait (2000) have highlighted that pre-service teachers typically enter teacher preparation programs with a priority placed on the emotional aspects of teaching; however, they often come to view the managerial dimensions of teaching as particularly important.

Reflection has been identified as a form of reflective thinking that can be employed to address challenging situations (Fullan, 1999). It has the potential to enable teachers to comprehend the presence of an issue, and to critically evaluate their teaching practices (Spalding & Wilson, 2002). In this way, reflection gives rise to teacher actions that are more prudent, which in turn can benefit both educator and student.

Understanding the alternative perspectives of one's teaching lies at the heart of professional development. Student perspectives can provide teachers with a valuable source of data for personal reflection (Schon, 1987). Seeking these perspectives can help teachers to question their assumptions and view their own practice through the eyes of others, both of which have been recognized as important for successful teacher change (Aldridge & Fraser, 2008; Bustingorry, 2008; Hoban & Hastings, 2006; Rhine, 1998). As defined by Mezirow (1998), reflection can be used to integrate theory with practice, facilitate insight, and

stimulate self-discovery, not only in classroom contexts, but also in professional life.

According to Barzaq (2007, 2017), there are certain criteria that EFL pre-service teachers must meet in order to be well-qualified, such as language skills, culture and literature, language and linguistics, psychology, and other related teacher criteria. Furthermore, in areas where English is a foreign language, it is a crucial factor that must be taken into account in a TEFL program. Thus, EFL pre-service teachers are expected to possess good language proficiency and be able to communicate effectively. Nonetheless, in reality, pre-service teachers often find challenges and weaknesses when faced with teaching.

According to Farrel (2012), pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers often face various challenges, such as lesson planning, lesson delivery, classroom management, and identity development. These challenges vary depending on the different conditions and circumstances that teachers encounter in real life. To address this issue, Farrel (2009) proposes two solutions in Farrel (2012). The first involves preparing teachers or teacher candidates at the Second Language Teacher SLT stage by including reflection activities and assignments in certain subjects. The second involves holding trainings for teachers in their first year to help them reduce the challenges they will face.

Pre-service teachers often focus on the aspects of teaching that they can visibly maintain due to the lack of an immediate outcome and the emotional investment required (Liston & Garrison, 2004). Although the managerial tasks of teaching, such as entering grades or creating worksheets, are necessary for effective



instruction, relying solely on a technical view of teaching ignores the pre-service teachers' prior affective understandings and disregards the importance of emotion in teaching (Mills & Satterthwait, 2000).

In the Indonesian context, pre-service teachers' professional identities are developed in the milieu of teacher education programs. This process of becoming a teacher provides insight for teacher educators to help support pre-service teachers' professional growth (Izadinia 2013; Olsen 2008). Understanding this process can thus shed light on the development of pre-service teachers' professional identities.

In this study, the term "EFL pre-service teachers" refers to those individuals who have acquired professional experience through PPL (school internship). PPL is a subject which all teaching students, particularly those in the English Education Department, are required to attend. Compared with other college activities on campus, the implementation of this subject is both theoretical and practical. These subjects are applied directly to school, providing teaching experience to students, similar to other activities. As a result, English Department students, as EFL pre-service teachers, must participate in practical field experience activities in the subject on campus in order to meet the requirements of their profession. These activities are taught directly in schools, much akin to general teachers.

#### **2.1.5 Reflective as Professional Development**

In the past two decades, researchers have increasingly documented the benefits of reflective teaching as a form of professional development. Teacher education programs have begun to prioritize the use of reflective instruction to

equip student teachers with the ability to be more mindful of the consequences of their decisions. However, studies on this topic have largely focused on teachers' perceptions, beliefs, issues and challenges, with relatively few specifically examining pre-service teachers teaching in foreign classrooms. For example, Haugan et al. (2013) explored the reflective practices of Norwegian student teachers, while Shu-ping (2012) conducted a case study with university teachers and third year students, finding that journal writing can be a useful tool to help EFL teachers develop their professional identity.

Additionally, Chien (2013) investigated the journals of two elementary school English teachers and revealed the advantages of using reflective journals in the classroom, such as to monitor performance, provide guidance for future classes, and increase self-efficacy in teaching. Motalebzadeh et al. (2018) and Nguyen (2017) also examined journal writing as a form of critical thinking, discovering that reflective journals could help pre-service teachers express their thoughts. Soodmand-Afshara and Farahanib (2017) and Leavy et al. (2006) analysed journal writing to understand the development of pre-service teachers' beliefs and identity. Despite the clear benefits of reflective teaching for pre-service teachers, there are still a limited number of studies on this subject involving those teaching in foreign classrooms, creating a gap between theoretical and empirical research.

#### **2.1.6 Reflective in Teaching Practice**

Reflective practice has been identified as an integral part of teacher preparation in educational contexts, both in terms of theory and instructional

strategies in the classroom (Beauchamp, 2015). Farrell (2013) defined reflective practice as the process of teachers critically examining their beliefs, assumptions, and values regarding teaching and learning. This implies that, in an educational context, reflective practice can provide pre-service teachers with new insight and help to improve the quality of their teaching. Loughran (1996) asserted that the purpose of reflection is to gain a better understanding of a confusing situation and to find ways to address the challenge.

Additionally, Richards and Farrell (2005) argued that reflection is a process that requires critical analysis of experiences that can lead to a greater awareness of teaching practice. Arslan's (2019) research on EFL pre-service teacher reflection in teaching practice further suggests that supporting pre-service teachers to evaluate their teaching practice can aid in the identification of both strengths and weaknesses. Finally, Mattheoudakis (2007) reported that teaching practice programs provide a realistic view of classroom activities and enable pre-service teachers to become aware of their own beliefs, articulate prior experiences, and reflect.

#### **2.1.7 Effect of Reflective Teaching Journal for Student Learning**

The use of reflective journal writing to enhance the learning process has been the subject of several studies. Francis (1995) suggested that journal writing is a supportive tool that encourages reflective activity in learners and that reflective thinking skills can be taught and learned. O'Connell and Dymont (2006)

investigated the benefits of journal writing as a tool to encourage students to reflect on their own learning and improve their writing skills. Kerka (1996) indicated that students' responses could be used to "articulate connections between new information and what they already know" (p.2). Chirema (2007) examined the use of reflective journals in promoting reflection and learning in post-registration nursing students, finding that student writing "can be used as evidence for the presence or absence of reflective thinking" (p.2).

Greiman and Covington (2007) conducted a study to gain insight into the process of developing reflective practitioners through journal writing experiences of student teachers. The results revealed that the student teachers were generally comfortable with writing as a form of communication and largely perceived the journal writing process to be successful. The most common benefit of journal writing identified by the participants was the development of reflective thinking.

Sen (2010) conducted a study to examine the reflective writing of students and the associated outcomes. The results revealed a correlation between academic learning, self-development, critical review, awareness of one's mental functions, decision making and empowerment. Sen (2010) found that the most beneficial outcome was evident when learners displayed "deeply analytical reflective writing" (p. 91).

Dyment and O'Connell (2010) investigated the conflicting findings between studies that showed student journals containing reflective entries and those with less optimistic results. Their research identified several factors that could hinder or enable high-quality reflection in student journals, such as clarity of expectations, training, responses, assessments, relationships with the lecturer, and developing the



practice. This was based on their reading of the literature, their multi-phase research project on journal writing and their reflections on their own teaching practice.

Lew and Schmidt (2007) conducted a study at a post-secondary institution to investigate the extent to which students believe that journal writing improves their learning. They concluded that using online reflection journals offers numerous opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and for facilitators to monitor students' progress through their reflections. Williams (2008) investigated reflective journal writing in an 8th-grade classroom and found that it created class participation, stronger academic achievement, and a better opportunity for students to connect with the subject matter.

Spaulding and Wilson (2002) examined the journals of 34 students and posited that reflective journal writing could serve four purposes for the student. Maloney and Campbell-Evans (2002) suggest that the interaction between journal writers and their audience 'provides opportunities for student teachers to make practical theory explicit' (p.39). Hine (2000) believes that mentoring develops 'more self-reflective, meta-cognitively aware and self-directed learners' (p.1). Sen (2010) examined students' reflective writing in terms of identifiable outcomes and explored students' thoughts on reflection and reflective writing as a process. Dymont and O'Connell (2010) sought to explore the conflicting results between researches that show that student journals contain primarily deeply reflective entries and research that presents a less optimistic perspective. Based on the reviewed literature, it is evident that reflective journal writing is vital for maximizing interaction among students, increasing motivation, and developing critical thinking

skills. Moreover, some researchers reported better achievement for students in the subject matter.

#### **2.1.8 Students' Reflective Journal Writing**

Reflective journaling has been shown to be an effective method of improving writing skills, developing self-awareness and reflection, and providing opportunities for professional development (Allan & Driscoll, 2014; Mansor, 2011). Through the putative use of reflective journals in the classroom, students can transfer their thinking into writing, expand their understanding of various concepts, and be encouraged to engage in self-monitoring (Mansor, 2011).

Francis (1995) conducted a study with pre-service teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education program, finding that writing journals helped them to question their own roles as teachers and learners. Jung (2012) examined in-service teachers in physical education, noting that reflection served as a possibility to assess themselves, detect areas in need of improvement in the teaching practice, and alter their existing teaching beliefs. Genc (2010) studied the use of reflective diaries in the context of EFL, determining that they allow teachers to become aware of and understand their own beliefs and knowledge about language learning/teaching (p. 407).

Furthermore, reflective journals can provide teachers with a useful assessment tool that gives additional insight into how students value their own learning and progress (Henter & Simona, 2014). In order to maximize the

effectiveness of reflective journaling, it is important to model the journaling process, especially with younger students, by thinking aloud and debating what and what not to write (Henter & Simona, 2014). Journal prompts and questions should not be superficial but should encourage students to explore their thoughts in depth. For example, consider the difference between the following questions: “How did you feel when you finished the assignment?” versus “What did you learn about yourself when you finished the assignment?” (Henter & Simona, 2014). Ultimately, the aim of reflective journaling is to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning and development (Allan & Driscoll, 2014).

#### **2.1.9 Field Teaching Practice**

Teaching practice is an essential component of a Bachelor's degree in Education, affording students the opportunity to put their writing, instruction, and classroom management skills into practice (Caner, 2010). It is a key factor in the pre-service teacher's development, enabling them to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired in the lecture hall to a real teaching context (Kasanda 1995; Kiggundu & Nayimuli. 2009; Ngwaru 2013; Ntsaluba & Chireshe 2013). The experience is often a mixture of excitement, apprehension, and challenge (Quick & Sieborger 2005). Teaching practice is overseen by tutors and supervisors from the university.

### **2.1.10 Reflective journals in a Second Language Teaching Methodology course**

This study was conducted in a compulsory course of “Second Language Teaching Methodology” offered in the third year of the BA program of Translation Studies at a university in Tehran, Iran. The class was comprised of 30 students, of which half had teaching experience in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) ranging from six months to six years, while the remainder had no teaching experience. This heterogeneity was due to the fact that the course was one of a few ELT-related courses offered in the BA program of Translation Studies, as opposed to a teacher education program, in which students typically have similar teaching backgrounds and become practicing teachers after graduation.

John Dewey (1933) proposed that reflective thinking requires three attributes: open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness. He argued that open-mindedness entails an interest in listening to alternative perspectives, while responsibility involves attention to the consequences of a course of action. Wholeheartedness, as Dewey (1933) stated, refers to the ability to conquer fears of critical self-evaluation. Subsequently, Donald Schon (1987, p. 31) expanded on Dewey's work by introducing “reflection-in-action”, which he defined as “a reflective conversation with the materials of a situation”. These ideas have since been widely accepted and studied in the field of reflective teaching.

Reflective approaches to teaching encourage teachers to become reflective practitioners who consider their teaching from multiple perspectives. As opposed to relying on predefined materials to impart knowledge and skills, teacher educators



strive to build on student teachers' prior experiences and personal beliefs to enable them to reconstruct their understanding of professional roles, students' needs, and curricular objectives (Farrell, 2007; Koutselini, 2008).

Reflective journal writing is widely employed in teacher education programs as a means of fostering critical thinking in student teachers (Farrell, 2004; Lee, 2007). This practice enables student teachers to evaluate various facets of teaching in relation to contextual and personal factors and to gain self-awareness through exploration (Farrell, 2004; Lee, 2007). Other reflective methods such as classroom observation, concept mapping, and action research are also used in teacher education programs, yet reflective journal writing is one of the most popular approaches globally (Farrell, 2004; Lee, 2007).

## **2.2 Previous Study**

Several researchers have investigated the use of reflective teaching journals in the nation. Abednia (2013) conducted a study to assess the efficacy of reflective teaching journal writing in the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) for pre-service teachers. Reflection through journaling can bring multiple benefits for pre-service teachers, such as fostering self-awareness, allowing for self-evaluation, and modifying existing beliefs about teaching. Furthermore, the study found that reflective journal writing had a positive effect on pre-service teachers' understanding of and thinking about teaching, providing a deeper understanding of the complexities of teaching.

Studies conducted by Degago (2007) and Martin (2005) have suggested several positive impacts of reflective journal writing on the comprehension and contemplation of teaching by pre-service and in-service teachers. These included an in-depth understanding of teaching complexities (Degago, 2007), clarification of individual thought processes (Martin, 2005), formation of links between theoretical and practical matters (Woodfield & Lazarus, 1998), and the autonomous restructuring of teaching and learning processes in specific contexts (Genc, 2010). Results from this research suggested that the reflection generated through journal writing enabled participants to create meaningful connections between the course content and their own teaching experiences. Thus, they could form their own perspectives on topics discussed in class, rather than simply absorbing the ideas of others passively.

Pinatacan (2019) conducted a study examining the experiences of 13 Bachelor of Science in Education majoring in English Language teaching pre-service teachers during their field teaching practice in a foreign classroom. The results revealed that the participants viewed reflective journal writing as a way to promote teachers' personal development, pre-service teacher self-efficacy, and pre-service teachers' professional formation. Consequently, the study implicates that teacher education courses should include reflective journal writing as an explicit tool for teacher candidates' language learning and professional growth.

Goker (2016) conducted a study on the use of reflective journals in the development of pre-service teachers' leadership and teaching skills, focusing on the contribution of reflective practice to teaching practice among student teachers from

the Faculty of Education at Artvin Coruh University in Turkey. The findings indicated that guided reflective practice through reflective journals not only provided teachers with direction but also followed their capacity in teaching. Consequently, the incorporation of reflective journal writing into teacher education programs could result in significant benefits and could be validated in other learning and teaching contexts.

Sudirman and Kristanto (2021) have noted the utility of reflective journal writing for students, allowing for critical reflections, self-discovery, and an increased focus on writing components such as order, unity, coherence, and content. Interview results demonstrated that the students had primarily considered macro- and micro-level linguistic issues associated with reflective journal writing. Additionally, writing a reflective journal requires the ability to reformulate thoughts, provide details, and solve problems, as well as the development of critical thinking, metacognitive skills, and self-reflections. Thus, reflective journal writing can have a positive effect on student writing ability.

