

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The importance of reflective practice has been discussed by researchers and practitioners. Reflective practice is important for building teachers' professional development as it requires teachers to see their own and other practices as a platform for learning (Widodo & Ferdiansyah, 2018). Richards (2010) added that teachers need to acquire the ability to be able to reflect consciously and systematically on their teaching experiences as a key to long-term professional development. Moreover, the importance of reflective practice not only affects the teachers' improvement in their teaching process but also helps the students in their learning process. Farrell (2015) stated that teachers who engaged in reflective practice can construct and reconstruct their own beliefs and practices to provide an optimum learning environment for their students.

Reflective practice is not only meant for in-service teachers but also for pre-service teachers who conduct teaching practicum. In initial teacher education (ITE), a teaching practicum is a tool for introducing pre-service teachers to the actual teaching profession (Widodo & Ferdiansyah, 2018). Teaching practicum can also lead pre-service teachers to build their professional development as professionalism can be acquired through both academic study and practical experiences (Richards, 2010). In other words, as a means of

building teachers' professional development, pre-service teachers who conduct teaching practicum need to do the reflective practice.

A myriad study has documented reflective practice conducted by in-service teachers and pre-service teachers during teaching practicum program (Jones & Ryan, 2014; Farrell & Mom, 2015; Naci Kayaoğlu, Erbay, & Sağlamel, 2016; Vaughn, Parsons, Keyes, Puzio, & Allen, 2017; Widodo & Ferdiansyah, 2018; Farrell & Kennedy, 2019). In the ESL context, Farrell and Mom (2015) through their research suggested that promoting reflective practice especially on teachers' beliefs and classroom practices can shape their beliefs about successful teaching. In the EFL context, Widodo & Ferdiansyah (2018) reported that reflective practice in teaching practicum context can be a substance for both personal growth and professional development include the sense of agency, self-confidence and autonomy, and understanding praxis in context. However, a limited number of the study reported pre-service teachers' experience in reflective practice during the international teaching practicum (international context).

One of the students from a public university in Indonesia has experienced joining an international teaching practicum which was organized by private schools' partnership association in Southern Thailand. She went to Thailand and was assigned to teach English in a secondary school for five months. This program required her to plan and conduct the teaching and learning activity, and to reflect on her teaching practice so that she would be

able to know her progress in teaching and to decide her plan for the next teaching to improve her teaching performance.

Based on the previous studies and the phenomenon experienced by the student, this study explores the aspects that a pre-service teacher reflected on her teaching practice during the international teaching practicum through several reflection activities promoted by Burhan-Horasanlı & Ortaçtepe (2016) and Widodo & Ferdiansyah (2018) namely reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection-for-action. Moreover, this study also explores the contributions of doing reflective practice on her teaching practice during the international teaching practicum. In the end, this study contributes to facilitate pre-service teachers' development regarding their reflective practice activity.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

This study focuses on answering the questions:

- 1.2.1 What aspects does a pre-service teacher reflect on her teaching practice during the international teaching practicum?
- 1.2.2 What are the contributions of doing reflective practice on her teaching practice during the international teaching practicum?

1.3 Operational Definitions

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

- 1.3.1 **International Teaching Practicum:** the program of teaching practicum where pre-service teachers from a university in Indonesia were assigned to teach English in Thailand for five months.

1.3.2 **Pre-service Teacher:** a student of an initial teacher education who conducts international teaching practicum in Thailand.

1.3.3 **Reflective Practice:** pre-service teacher reflects her teaching practice in the form of reflective journal writing. The reflection includes description of what has happened in the classroom, what is going on in the classroom, and how she reacted to the issues arose (reflection-on-action and in-action), as well as the plan that she will carry out in the next teaching as the response for those issues (reflection-for-action).

1.4 Aims of the Study

The study aims to explore the aspects that a pre-service teacher reflects on her teaching practice and the contributions of doing reflective practice on her teaching practice during the international teaching practicum.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 **Empirical:** this study will show an empirical understanding of what a pre-service teacher reflects on her teaching practice and the contributions of doing reflective practice on her teaching practice during the international teaching practicum.

1.5.2 **Theoretical:** this study will enrich the literature of reflective practice in initial teacher education, especially in the international teaching practicum context.

1.5.3 **Practical:** this study can be used as a reference for pre-service teachers to conduct reflective practice in their teaching practice as a means of building teachers' professional development.