

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language to learn. For some students, English is an exciting subject, but for most other students, English is difficult. That means teaching English is even more challenging to do. Teaching is a complex job because it requires skills, thinking, decisions, and actions (Lamatokan, 2018). One type of English teacher is an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher. English as a foreign language shows the use of English in non-English speaking areas (Faizal, 2011). The principal preparation for becoming an EFL teacher is taking educational courses.

One of the choices of universities to take education-based courses is IKIP PGRI Pontianak. IKIP PGRI Pontianak is one of the teaching universities in Indonesia which has the mission of developing competitive character education by utilizing information, communication, and technology as learning resources as well as improving the quality and relevance of cooperation with various parties and competitiveness in the Tridarma of Higher Education. In producing educators, every teacher student is provided with a series of courses on education which are not only limited to theory but also practical activities.

The learning experiences and activities from a series of theoretical and practical courses are expected to increase students' identity and interest in becoming teachers. Students' who study in teacher colleges will gain an identity as future EFL teacher candidates. Identity is a particular characteristic or condition of a person. In other words, identity is the overall picture of whom we believe we are and whom we tell ourselves and others about ourselves. Identity is an interrelated integration between teachers' knowledge of specific disciplines, self-awareness, and ongoing relationships with other peers and students (Day, 2018). Of course, undergraduate students majoring in English education at IKIP PGRI Pontianak are required to maintain their identity as prospective EFL teachers, especially with the societal stereotype against them

that after graduating from their studies, they will become teachers. Society stereotypes will be stronger because IKIP PGRI Pontianak has a background in a Teacher Training and Education Institution. However, even though they have been given the material to become an educator, graduates majoring in education do not have to become teachers. It all depends on their interest in work and their way of life. One way to make undergraduate students' majoring in English Education at IKIP PGRI Pontianak aware of their identity is to examine their perceptions. Beauchamp & Thomas (2009) state that examining new teacher identity can be considered an essential step to developing more effective teacher training programs. A teacher's identity development is related to understanding the notion of 'self'.

Students' perceptions of their identity as EFL teachers in the future need to be examined to consider them for students who want to become EFL teachers. Perception is a process preceded by sense, namely by receiving a stimulus from a receptor, and it is transmitted to the brain or nerve center, which is organized and interpreted as a psychological process (Sunaryo, 2013). Perception is the most crucial element in adjusting behavior to the environment. Based on this definition, it can be concluded that perception is the most crucial role in human life because the perception will find human behavior in dealing with their environment.

Many studies have been carried out on student identity as future EFL teachers. For example, Wijaya & Mbato (2020), titled "Undergraduate Students' Perceptions on their Identity as Future EFL Teachers". The findings show that most pre-service EFL teachers studying in Micro Teaching Classes are willing to maintain their identity as future educators as long as extensive support is provided. Triutami & Mbato (2021), titled "EFL Undergraduate Students' Professional Identity Construction: A Sociocultural Perspective". The findings revealed that the process of students' professional identity construction is dynamic, unstable, and shaped by the three intertwined factors: self-perception, educational environment, and teaching practicum. The students' self-perception changed through the process as the impact of their interactions

with the educational environment and teaching practicum. Akhmad (2017), with the title "Identitas dan Orientasi Nilai Kultural Mahasiswa Calon Guru", the research result shows that majority of teacher prospective students are on low cultural identity status. Babanoglu & Agcam (2019), titled "Turkish EFL Teacher Candidates' Early Teacher Identity". The research findings indicated that they held a high level of early teacher identity scores and somehow significantly differed in their perceptions about early teacher identity concerning gender and the attended university type. Babanoglu (2017), titled "A Study on Possible Selves of Turkish Pre-Service EFL Teachers". The results indicate that EFL teacher candidates have positive expectations and no specific fears for their first year of teaching, especially female teacher candidates with higher scores than males in terms of expected possible selves. Previous research has similarities and differences with this study. Their similarities broadly illustrate the identity of students as prospective teachers. Meanwhile, the difference is that in this study, the researcher examine undergraduate students' perceptions about their identity as future EFL teachers by using closed questionnaires and interviews. This study uses a descriptive analysis using the Likert scale and thematic analysis methods. Then, this research only focused on eighth semester students in the A Morning class majoring in English education at IKIP PGRI Pontianak for the 2021/2022 academic year. The research results obtained from the data are to be processed positive or negative.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in doing this research because it believes it can help various parties to know undergraduate students' perceptions of their identity as EFL teachers in the future. In addition, it can identify deeply with undergraduate students' preferences about their identity as EFL teachers.

B. Research Question

What are undergraduate students' perceptions about their identity as future EFL teachers at IKIP PGRI Pontianak in the academic year 2021/2022?

C. Research Purpose

To find out the perception of undergraduate students' about their identity as future EFL teachers at IKIP PGRI Pontianak in the academic year 2021/2022.

D. Significance of Study

The significance of this study can be viewed from both theoretical and practical aspects, as described below:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to significantly contribute to the development of students as prospective EFL teachers in the future.

2. Practical Significance

a. For undergraduate students

This result of this study can be a reference for planning and developing self-quality as EFL teachers in the future.

b. For IKIP PGRI Pontianak

Especially for the Department of English Education as an educational institution that educate prospective EFL teachers, this research can be used as a reference for planning and developing programs that are by the needs of their students to support their quality as EFL teachers in the future.

c. For researcher

The results of this study can be used as a reference for researcher who are interested in conducting similar case studies and are expected to increase knowledge and information about students becoming EFL teachers in the future.

E. Scope of the Research

1. Research Variable

A variable is a characteristic or attribute of an individual or an organization that (a) researcher can measure or observe and (b) varies among individuals or organizations studied (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher only investigated the perceptions of undergraduate students on their identity as future EFL teachers as a single variable. A single variable may be independent, dependent, or intervening (Creswell, 2014).

2. Terminology

a. Undergraduate Students' Perception

Students are the most significant and essential resource in teaching and learning. Students can learn from teachers, while teachers cannot teach without students (Danim, 2010). All learning processes always start with perception.

Student perception is the process of students' preferential treatment of the information they get from an object. The object of this research is their identity as prospective EFL teachers. Students can interpret the observed objects through observations with their five senses. It is essential to know students' perceptions of how they perceive their identity as future EFL teachers. This perception affects the development of students to become EFL teachers in the future.

b. Undergraduate Students' Identities

Identity is a particular characteristic or condition of a person. Identity is an interrelated integration between the teacher's knowledge of a particular discipline area, self-awareness, and ongoing relationships with other peers along with students (Day, 2018). In line with this definition, professional EFL teachers must develop a more substantial commitment to practice maximum self-development to create more meaningful learning activities for students.

Identity can also be defined as a special characteristic or condition of a person. What is meant by identity in this study is the special

characteristics and circumstances of an undergraduate student currently studying in the English language education department where they are expected and educated as an EFL teacher in the future after they finish their studies.

c. EFL Teacher

EFL teacher is the term for teachers who teach English to non-native students in non-English speaking countries such as Asian countries. EFL is an acronym for English as a Foreign Language and applies to teaching English in countries where the majority do not speak English as a means of communication.

d. Eighth Semester Students of English Education Study Program

The eighth semester is the end of the semester if the student can complete the lecture on time. Final year students are undergraduate candidates who are expected to have their goals in carrying out the next developmental task in life, namely being able to work in a field of work that follows their interests and abilities (Lestari, 2013). Students who will become undergraduates are expected to have definite directions and goals for their future careers following their interests and fields of work.

The researcher took research samples on eighth-semester students of the English Education study program (class of 2018) because these students had carried out lectures from the beginning of the semester where they had taken all the courses, activities, and programs provided. Also, they have had hands-on experience with students in the field of learning in schools or institutions to train and develop teacher or educational competencies, which means they are expected to have a view of their identity.

e. IKIP PGRI Pontianak

IKIP PGRI Pontianak is one of the teaching universities in Indonesia with the mission of developing competitive character education by utilizing information, communication, and technology as learning resources and improving the quality and relevance of

cooperation with various parties and competitiveness in the Tridarma of Higher Education. The campus has four faculties with 11 majors based on teacher education. IKIP PGRI Pontianak was established to improve Indonesian teachers' quality of education and professionalism.