

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research problems, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background

A lot of recent studies have emphasised the importance of incorporating systematic reflective practice in teacher learning. The incorporation of reflection stage in learning process in general is crucial to meet the 21st century educational demand (Kaye, 2014; OECD, 2019). This is also true in the context of teacher learning. In-service and pre-service teachers benefit from the implementation of reflective practice in their continuous professional development (CPD) and education (Ashraf et al., 2016; Bautista & Oretga-Ruiz, 2017; Fatemipour & Hosseingholikhani, 2014; Slade et al., 2019).

Furthermore, these benefits extend not only to teachers' skill and practice but also students' academic achievement both in face-to-face and online teaching settings (Gillie Bolton, n.d.; Kheirzadeh & Sistani, 2018). Reflective practice within teacher education context includes opportunities for teachers to digest the newly obtained knowledge, discuss them with colleagues, and identify areas in need of improvement (Hammond, Hylar, & Gardner, 2017). In short, reflective practice is an important component for any teacher development program to positively improve teaching practices and students' learning.

However, reflective practice is often missing in a teacher continuous development program. In the rare opportunities that it does, the reflective practice is not implemented systematically enough to be impactful. In a systematic reflective practice, a formed habit of critical reflection (Brookfield, 2017) and collaborative aspect (Benade, 2015) are required but they are often

missing in practice. In Indonesian context, there have been research studies on reflective practice employed by Indonesian teachers in a professional program such as teaching workshops (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019; Yanuarti & Treagust, 2016) but they are not continuous nor well-designed. Hence, it does not become a habit that affects teachers' instructional practice nor students' learning. In fact, most development programs provided by the Indonesian government such as PLPG (*Pendidikan dan Pelatihan Profesi Guru*) focus on getting teachers certified (short-term) instead of on teachers' continuous progress (long-term) and do not incorporate any reflective practice explicitly. Meanwhile, this one-off type of professional development has proven to yield minimal to no results in improving teachers' instructional practice as they lack, among all, an important component of systematic reflective practice (Bautista & Oretga-Ruiz, 2017). Thus, there is a need to explore further the incorporation of reflective practice in the context of Indonesian teachers CPD.

With teachers being the agents of change in education, attention is currently focused on providing effective CPD programs for in-service teachers to upgrade their teaching skills which will benefit their students. The demand of better CPD in Indonesia is shown by the result of the recent PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) survey published in 2018 in which Indonesian students scored lower than average for reading, mathematics, and science compared to other OECD's countries (OECD, 2018). In fact, this result was the lowest in the last eighteen years. This requires serious commitments from the Indonesian government, educational institutions, and the general public in improving the literacy proficiency of Indonesian students.

To meet this demand, this study aimed at exploring the reflective practice in a teacher CPD called the *online literacy coaching (LC) program*. The objective of the online LC program was to provide teacher training focussing on literacy knowledge and literacy teaching for in-service middle school English teachers from 16 different provinces in Indonesia with the rationale that

teachers' literacy improvement is prerequisite to students' literacy improvement (Mayuni et al., 2020). As government initiated CPD, the program incorporated systematic reflective practice. The findings in this study were the results of an exploration of the implementation of the reflective practice and the extent it supported the program's objectives. Finally, this research investigated the levels of reflection generated by the participants through the reflective practice in the online LC program. Due to its distinctions (its online mode of delivery, its urgency to improve literacy level, and its participants who are projected to be future coaches), the study is expected to generate contextualized benefits of reflective practice which is generally known to have limited and temporal direct response in practice (Benade, 2015).

Overall, the objectives of this study are to explore the existing reflective practice implemented by the program and the extent the reflective practice support the achievement of the program outcomes as well as to investigate the levels of reflection shown by the teachers. The remainder of paper consists of the literature review, methodology, findings and discussions, conclusion and recommendation, and references.

1.2 Research Problems

To explore the reflective practice implemented in the program, the study uses the following research questions as guidance.

- 1) How is the reflective practice implemented by the LC program for the teachers?
- 2) To what extent does the reflective practice support the achievement of the LC program outcomes?
- 3) What are the levels of reflection shown by the teachers in the LC program?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to:

- 1) explore the reflective practice activities implemented by the LC program.
- 2) explore the extent of the reflective practice supporting the achievement of the LC program outcomes
- 3) investigate the levels of reflection shown by the teachers in the LC program

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of reflective practice in this study was limited to the reflection activities held within the online teacher literacy coaching program's coverage which involved the use of digital reflective journal at the end of every coaching session and online collaborative reflective session. The two reflective activities mentioned were completed by the coaches and teachers during the program. However, the scope of this study only covered the teachers as they were the target of the program since the coaches had already been considered as models of successful and well-developed teachers. The improvement of teaching skill was the main objective of both the coaching program as well as the reflective practice.

1.5 Significance of the Study

By answering the proposed research questions this study will contribute to English language teaching in Indonesian context in general, but it also serves as:

- a. A reference to the implementation of reflective practice as a part of teacher CPD.

As this paper explores the implementation and depth of reflective practice incorporated in the LC program, the practice can inherently be replicated for any teacher development program bearing in mind their strengths and weaknesses.

- b. A source of empirical evidence on the levels of reflection implemented by the teachers during the LC program.
- c. An evidence of how Indonesia teachers' respond to reflective practice as a component of a CPD.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

There are a few key terms and acronyms used throughout this paper. To avoid misunderstanding and reinforce clarity of concept, the key terms are defined below:

- a. CPD refers to teachers' continuous professional development. This refers to programs aim at improving teachers' professional ability.
- b. Online Literacy Coaching (LC) Program was a continuous professional development program for junior high school English teachers who are members of *MGMP Bahasa Inggris*. The online LC program was initiated by a team of researchers from *Universitas Negeri Jakarta*. The focus of the program was on the development of the teachers' literacy and literacy teaching skills.
- c. In-service Junior High School English Teachers refers to the participants of the online literacy coaching program who were teachers of Junior High Schools from 16 provinces in Indonesia.
- d. Reflective Practice (RP) refers to activities in the CPD in which teachers are facilitated in reflecting on their thoughts process and actions and make sound changes based on them (Finlay, 2008; Richards & Lockhart, 2007; Schon & DeSanctis, 1986). There were two reflective tools used in the online LC program: reflective journaling and collaborative sessions (Loughran, 1996; Mathew et al., 2017) .

- e. The Reflective Journal used in this program was a digital form consisting of open-ended prompt questions. The forms were made available at the end of every coaching session. The teachers as the participants of the program were expected to have them filled out before the upcoming meeting.
- f. The Collaborative Sessions consisted of two sessions -one for each cycle of the program- where teachers were divided into small groups with their corresponding coaches to engage in discussions pertaining their experience during the program and their microteaching experience. The sessions were conducted synchronously through an online platform.

