

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In general, teacher identity can be defined as the way teachers see themselves and the image they present to others in the social and cultural context in which they exist. Pennington (2015) emphasizes that identity can first be viewed in terms of a unique set of characteristics associated with a particular individual compared to the perceptions and characteristics of others. Teacher identity is the framework within which teachers build their understanding of the teaching profession (Sachs, 2005). Therefore, through their identities, teachers present themselves with certain characteristics in certain situations. As the development process progresses, the concept of identity is determined by the attribute of professionalism. Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) highlighted four elements of teacher professional identity, stating that professional identity is an “ongoing process” of meaning-giving experiences that connect “person and context,” consists of "sub-identities,” and requires the exercise of "agency." In a narrower context, these four elements underlie the conceptualisation of language teacher identity by Barkhuizen (2017), who sees that identity includes the teacher's "cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical" aspects, which are explained in the process of "being and doing, feeling, and imagine, and telling" how they struggle personally and

professionally in social interactions. This concept explains the relationship between identity and teacher professional development.

Teacher identity refers to the development of one's knowledge and understanding of oneself as a teacher. Early-career teachers' resilience is enhanced when they effectively engage in self-analysis and self-understanding processes that enable them to maintain a consistent sense of personal identity while simultaneously allowing for the development of a positive teacher identity. The topic of teacher identity has been intensely discussed in educational research for years (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Izadinia, 2013).

Teacher identity is believed to be formed as part of the teaching and learning process (Britzman, 2001). This process usually begins when students choose the teaching profession, even though they already have a clear understanding of the meaning of teaching based on their experiences as students. However, choosing to become a teacher is an important step in adopting a new identity as an educator, which develops over time in the teacher education program. This programme provides them with pedagogical knowledge, material knowledge, and classroom experience, all of which are considered important in carrying out their role as teachers. Gradually, students then begin to internalise this new identity. Classroom experiences are often scheduled in the senior year as part of a practicum. During this practicum, student-teachers begin to understand the true meaning of teaching and negotiate the roles and interactions that are a fundamental part of their professional identity.

The topic of teacher identity has been a central focus in recent research on language teaching and learning. Thoroughly understanding how teachers see themselves is believed to have a significant impact on the teaching process. Typically, this topic is approached from the perspective of what is seen and unseen in a teacher's work and life. Visible aspects include activities performed by teachers, such as classroom interactions, assessment, material design, or task implementation, which are often considered technical or functional dimensions of teaching in teacher education literature. On the other hand, the invisible aspect involves personal phenomena such as thoughts, beliefs, hopes, or emotions. Therefore, exploring teacher identity is considered beneficial for both students and fellow teachers in the context of teaching and learning.

The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum that includes a variety of intracurricular activities (intracurricular activities are defined as teaching and learning activities that take place during specified instructional hours). Intracurricular activities that are commonly carried out in schools include classroom learning activities, or teaching and learning opportunities, where the content is optimised so that students have ample time to investigate topics and build competency. Teachers have the freedom to select numerous teaching instruments in order to tailor learning to students' learning requirements and interests. Projects to improve Pancasila student profiles are produced based on government-specified themes. The project is not related to the topic material because it is not aimed at attaining specific learning achievement objectives. Teachers also need to act as leaders who lead well and

become good examples for students so that they can be role models, apply them in everyday life, and behave in accordance with religious teachings. They tend to show good behaviour and avoid undesirable behaviour in the educational context as teachers. It is also implied in the Al-Qur'an surah An-Nahl verses 120:

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

The verse in Surah An-Nahl, which mentions Ibrahim AS, teaches us about leadership and good role models. Ibrahim AS is a figure who obeys Allah and does not associate anything with Him. For a teacher, this reminds of the importance of being a good example for our students. A teacher must show obedience to Allah's teachings and avoid all forms of association with Him. By being a role model like Ibrahim AS, a teacher can provide strong inspiration and guidance to his students in terms of morals and spirituality. Therefore, in carrying out our role as teachers, must follow the leadership and example of Ibrahim AS to guide our students towards goodness and devotion to Allah.

A teacher is not only tasked with imparting knowledge, but also guiding, educating, and empowering his students to become individuals who are beneficial to themselves and to others. The explanation about the identity of the teacher is related to the Hadith from the Prophet:

خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ (رواه البخاري)

Rasulullah SAW said: "The best among you is the one who is most beneficial to others." (HR. Bukhari)

The hadith, which states, "The best person among you is the one who is most beneficial to others," is an important call for a teacher in the Islamic context. This underlines the essential role of a teacher as a bearer of benefits in society. In Islam, education is not only about mastering subject matter but also about forming character and morality in accordance with religious teachings. Therefore, a teacher must pay attention not only to academic aspects but also to moral, spiritual, and social aspects of the learning process. By understanding and implementing Islamic values in their actions and teaching, a teacher can fulfil their role as an agent of positive change in society.

Several studies related to context related to teacher identity in Indonesia show positive results on the identity formed by teachers in the educational sphere. Research conducted by Fani (2011) revealed that a teacher's identity is the result of practical experience in teaching and teaching knowledge. This identity continues to develop as the career progresses, influenced by the various teaching situations teachers face. In addition, teacher identity is also influenced by the information and skills taught in the classroom, as well as student characteristics in various teaching contexts. Apart from that, another study conducted by Lankveld et al. (2011) also concluded that factors such as interaction with students, staff development, and appreciation for teaching can influence the formation of a teacher's identity in a university environment. The five psychological processes involved are career path

prediction, sense of competence, connection, appreciation, and commitment. On the other hand, Gholampour & Ayati (2020), who conducted their research, reported that a teacher's professional identity develops through four stages: individual negativity, zigzag, social negativity, and affirmation. Factors that influence the development of teacher identity are divided into four dimensions: individual and family, educational life, work life, and socio-political dimensions.

The researcher concluded that the gap between previous research and the current research lies in the English language teachers, based on English foreign language learning and the schools studied were schools that implemented an independent curriculum and schools that were Islamic boarding schools. Meanwhile, in previous research the focus was on teachers who did not come from English and not from junior high school level but from tertiary institutions. The teachers studied by the researcher were also driving teachers, where these teachers had been certified as independent curriculum teachers which was sufficient to become teachers. Apart from that, the school is also based on an Islamic boarding school, where previous researcher only conducted research at state universities. Apart from that, the school that the researcher wants to study is a school that has received the title of third model driving school. The third model driving school is a school that has a good reputation for implementing an independent curriculum and does not require further guidance or is already independent. The school also does not have a red note on the education quality report in the field of literacy and numeracy.

The research was conducted at SMP Islam Terpadu Insan Madani since they had already done learning with an autonomous curriculum there. Data was collected in depth via interview. Therefore, researcher conducted research entitled "Exploring Teacher Identity on Independent Curriculum Implementation in English Subjects." The researcher conducted research from the beginning of learning to the end, and all teacher preparations were addressed because the researcher wanted to know the instructor's attitudes and beliefs in order to design an autonomous curriculum.

B. Definition of Key Terms

Several terms related to the research are clarified to avoid misconceptions.

1. Teacher Identity

Teacher identities are multi-faceted and dynamic; under continual construction and reconstruction, development takes place during interactions with others (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). In this research, the researcher focused on how teacher use language when communicating with students, understanding English well, and the teacher's knowledge of students (the teacher examines the characteristics of students in the class as in the independent curriculum, where the teacher must know the abilities of students before giving differentiation assignments).

2. Independent Curriculum

Independent Curriculum is a curriculum with various intra-curricular learning activities where the content will be more optimal so that students have

enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competence (Indrawati et al., 2020). In this research, the researcher explored the teaching behaviour when the teacher implement independent curriculum in class the teacher consistently uses the concept of an independent curriculum, such as the teacher ensures that students learn according to their level of understanding and always uses differentiated learning.

3. English Language Teaching

English Language Teaching helps students understand natural language usage' and describes the goal of classroom fluency activities (Brumfit, 1984). English Language Teaching (ELT) is a process in which teachers teach and students learn English as a second or foreign language, as explained by Nurdiana (2015). The ELT teacher's duties include designing and delivering lesson material that is appropriate to the student's level of English proficiency. They utilise a variety of teaching methods and strategies with the aim of improving students' English language understanding and skills. This research examines how teacher identity is formed and what factors influence driving teachers in independent curriculum schools.

C. Research Questions

Based on the problem described in the research background, the researcher decided to explore 2 research questions, as follows:

1. How does the teacher construct teacher identity in English teaching of Independent Curriculum implementation?
2. What are the factors that influence teacher identity construction of Independent Curriculum in English subject?

D. Objectives of Study

According to the research questions, the research aims to find out:

1. To find out how the teacher construct the identity of Independent Curriculum Implementation in English subject.
2. To find out the factors that influence teacher identity construction of Independent Curriculum Implementation in English subject.

E. Significance of Study

The significance of this study will be useful for:

1. For English teachers, this research can help teachers better understand how their identities play a role in implementing an independent curriculum in English subjects, so that they can develop teaching strategies that are more effective and appropriate to students' needs.
2. For other researcher, this research provides a foundation for future researchers to deepen their understanding of teacher identity in the context of independent

curriculum, as well as providing directions for further research in this area, such as the exploration of other dimensions of teacher identity or its influence on student learning outcomes.