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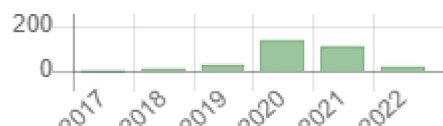
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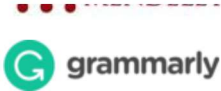▸ By Issue
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ENGLISH PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' IDENTITY DURING TEACHING PRACTICE: NARRATIVE RESEARCH

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Abstract
This research attempts to discover the identities of pre-service teachers in a private university in Yogyakarta, in relation to their positioning of their students. In addition, this research also aims to study to what extent positioning can construct identities of the pre-service teachers. The participants of this research were two pre-service teachers of a private university in Yogyakarta. The data were obtained through interview. The findings of this research first showed that the pre-service teachers perceived various identities in relation to positioning of their students. However, it was found that there were different identities between the two participants even though they faced similar problems. Last, positioning might have a force for the pre-service teachers in constructing their identities.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, identities, positioning theory, teaching practice

Introduction
As teacher candidates, pre-service teachers are required to shape their professional identities as pre-service teachers. These identities are shaped during their studying period, especially through courses related to teaching and pedagogy (Ivanova & Skara-Mincāne, 2016). Along with their studying period in university, teaching practice is also significant in developing pre-service teachers' professional identity.

As teaching practice gives the pre-service teachers real experiences of working in real schools, the pre-service teachers get some benefits for their professional development, Chan (2013) states that "through such practice student teachers are exposed to valuable opportunities to acquire professional knowledge, improve their teaching skills, and gain teaching competence" (p. 1). It shows that by doing teaching practice, the pre-service teachers are given opportunities to get professional knowledge, teaching skills, and teaching competence.

Other than the benefits that the pre-service teachers get from teaching practice, the pre-service teachers also perceive their teachers' identity through the interactions they do in schools toward their students and also their mentors. This is in line with Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) who state that "a teacher's identity is shaped and reshaped in interaction with others in a professional context" (p.

178). Then, Olsen (2008) adds that identity can be seen as a result of interactions in teachers' development. Thus, it means that teaching practice provides a chance for the pre-service teachers to (re)negotiate their teacher's identity.

Since teaching practice enables pre-service teachers to develop their teacher identity through the interactions that they made in school, positioning as a result of those interactions should be a part of attention for the lecturers and the pre-service teachers themselves (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Davies and Harré (1999) claim that "positioning … is a discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines" (p. 37). Kayi-Aydar (2015) highlights the importance of positioning in teacher identity construction. Reeves (2009) also points out that people can assign or reject the identities that are labelled to them by using positioning. This shows that there is an urgency to seek pre-service teachers' identities through positioning because positioning can reveal their identities. Moreover, their identities can determine what kind of interactions that the pre-service teachers have during their teaching practice.

Considering the significance of teaching practice course in building pre-service teachers' identity, this study attempts to analyze pre-service teachers' positioning and identities. Utilizing positioning theory to identify pre-service teachers' identity is considered as a new development in researching professional identity. It is because some research related to pre-service teachers and their identity has been conducted (e.g. Charles, 2017; Hong, 2010; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016; Walshaw, 2009), but none of them use positioning theory yet to analyze the identity of the pre-service teachers. Meanwhile, positioning theory has been said to be a useful way to see how people position themselves and others. Apparently, positioning theory is also widely utilized to reveal one's identity (Carbaugh, 1999; Berman, 1999; Sabat & Harré, 1999). Therefore, this research is going to shed a light in the use of positioning to discover English pre-service teachers identity.

Based on the research background stated above, the researchers formulate two research questions to guide this research: (1) what are the English pre-service teachers' identities during their teaching practice according to how they position themselves in relation to their students? (2) To what extent do the positioning shape the pre-service teachers' identities?

Method

As mentioned in the introduction, this research focused on identifying English pre-service teachers' identity during their teaching practice through positioning theory. In order to achieve this aim, the researchers needed to gather in-depth data of the English pre-service teachers' experiences during their teaching practice. Thus, this research is a qualitative research. As stated by Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (2010), "qualitative inquiry seeks to understand and interpret human and social behavior as it is lived by participants in a particular social setting" (p. 420).

This research was a narrative research in which the focus was the story told by the participants. According to Ary et al. (2010), narrative research "has its roots in different humanities disciplines and focuses on stories (spoken or written)

told by individuals about their lives" (p. 468). This research will explore the experiences gained by English pre-service teachers during their teaching practice in order to find out their identity and positioning. The stories were gained through their written reports and interviews, as Ary et al. (2010) state that "a narrative can be any text or discourse" (p. 468).

Participants and Data Gathering Technique

The participants of this research were two English pre-service teachers from English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) of a private university in Yogyakarta, named Ammy and Elia (all names are pseudonyms). The participants were the eighth semester students who had done their teaching practice and had finished their reports. The participants were all females. The participants did their teaching practice in two different school. Ammy taught in a private single-sex school. Elia taught in a public vocational school. Both of them were located in Yogyakarta. The participants were purposively selected so that the data met the objectives of this research.

In order to gather the data, the researchers used the participants' reports of teaching practice to obtain general data of the participants regarding their teaching practice experiences and how they positioned themselves. However, the data that were found in the reports were not rich. The reports were also consciously written by the participants as a requirement of their evaluation. Thus, the researchers conducted interviews with the participants regarding their experiences during their teaching practice. The interview was to gain deeper understanding of their experiences during their teaching practice, their positioning, and identities. The interview was audio recorded as well. The data obtained from the interviews were the primary data of this research.

Data Analysis Technique

After the data are gathered, the data were analyzed. The data from the participants' teaching practice reports were reviewed. While reading the reports, the researchers highlighted some interesting experience regarding to teachers' identity and positioning. However, the researchers did not find rich data about in their teaching practice reports. Thus, the researchers used the data from the teaching practice reports as the guidelines for the interviews.

After conducting the interviews, the interview data were transcribed verbatim. The participants' interviews transcripts were coded. According to Ary et al. (2010), coding refers to "read and reread all the data and sort them by looking for units of meaning—words, phrases, sentences, subjects' ways of thinking, behavior patterns, and events that seem to appear regularly and that seem important" (p. 483). By coding the transcripts, the researchers were able to find the pre-service teachers' identities.

Findings and Discussion

From the data analysis, it was found that the two participants faced an extreme situation during their teaching practice regarding classroom management especially handling students' attitude. Through their stories of facing a challenge of their students' attitude, it can be seen how they positioned their students. Moreover, it reflected their identities in relation to their students. Therefore, there

are two parts in this section, the first part reveals the pre-service teachers' identities in relation to their positioning of the students. The second one describes the influence of positioning to their identities.

Identities Perceived through Positioning to the Students

From the stories that the two participants told, the researchers found that actually Ammy and Elia faced similar problem, in which they found difficulties in handling students' behavior. However, they showed two different identities while facing the situation. Ammy shaped herself as a firm teacher to face students' bad behavior. This situation also shaped Ammy to be a creative teacher by preparing a bunch of activities to minimize students' noise. Meanwhile, Elia showed a 180º different identity in facing the situation, which is a powerless teacher. She positioned her students to be more powerful than her that she could not handle the students anymore. She also felt frustrated in teaching her students so she decided to give up teaching that class.

Ammy, who did her teaching practice in a single-sex private school in Yogyakarta which is popular to have brilliant students, had some difficulties in facing students' attitudes which were really annoying for her. Indeed, her students were excellent already in English because most of them have prior experiences of using English in their daily life. Even some of them spent their lifetime abroad, such as in Dubai or Africa, so they do not have any difficulties with English. However, their excellence made them seem like they did not need teachers, and it influenced their attitudes in class. Ammy's students were really noisy, and liked to make a chaos in the class. It made her feel like she was not respected in the class. Moreover, there were some students who slept in the class, and the other played mobile games.

Looking upon the students' attitudes, Ammy made some solutions to handle students' behavior. There were some ways that she did in class. First, she made a set of activities that allowed students to do nothing in class. She always prepared a lesson plan before teaching, which guided her in teaching. Furthermore, she always had a backup plan to be done just in case her lesson plan was not successful. She gave her students activities over activities to minimize students' bad behavior. For example is what she stated in the interview,

> "I designed my lesson plan to have student-centered activities. I did that so they had activities to do, and so they don't fall asleep. If I taught them, they would not listen to me. I always taught for only 10-15 minutes. After that, I gave them some activities, (like) group works, (then) I go around them."

She also paid so much attention on the time allocation for each activity. She tried her best to implement each activity right on time so all of her prepared activities could be successfully done and there was no time for the students to do nothing. All of these activities, made her a well-prepared teacher and a creative teachers because she always prepared a bunch of materials and activities to be given to the students.

Aside from preparing a bunch of activities for the students, Ammy also set herself to be a firm teacher. She put a line between herself and her students, so the

students still respected her as a teacher. Moreover, her body was smaller than the students. Thus, if she became very friendly with her students, she was afraid that her students would bully her and not respect her. She was also afraid that her students would not pay attention to the materials that she had prepared. Even though she put herself as a firm teacher, when there was a student who slept, or were busy by themselves, she came closer to the student and asked them to pay attention. When the student fell asleep, she also came to the student's seat and asked them to wash their face. So, Ammy set herself to be a firm teacher, and in the same time, an attentive teacher.

Facing similar, or even more extreme, situation in the class, Elia, who did her teaching practicum in a public vocational school in Yogyakarta, showed different identities in facing her challenge. When Ammy's school was well-known to have brilliant students in her school, Elia's school was well-known of having students who were really naughty. She already heard that rumor even before she began her teaching practicum. The situation was actually worse when she began her practicum.

Elia faced an extreme situation which made her lost her agency in teaching. She taught a tenth grade class, which consisted of the naughtiest students in the school. While she was doing her observation, she saw that the real teacher asked the students to be quiet. The teacher came to the back rows of the class. As soon as the teacher went back to the front, Elia heard some swearing words came from the students' mouth. After experiencing that, she was afraid, and started to feel worried of how she would teach in that class.

When she taught in that class, she found a lot of difficulties in handling students' behavior. According to her, the students' behavior was extremely bad, which made her give up on teaching her students. The students were really noisy, and they showed no respect to her at all. On one side of the class, the students were lying on the floor, taking off their clothes. One another side of the class, some of them were sleeping, or playing mobile games. Only few of them listened to her. Facing that situation, she could not do anything. What was more important for her was there were still some students who were willing to do the assignments.

Other than that, she also got some disrespectful behavior from the students. Once, she gave a remedial exam for the students. When she came to the class, she heard that one of the naughtiest students complained why she had to come to the class. Then, the exam began. After finishing the exam, the naughtiest student started to lie on the floor, playing his mobile phone. Some time passed, he asked whether Elia had left the class. Finding that Elia had not left the class yet, a swearing word came out of his mouth. Elia was shocked and down hearing that word. Then, another student tried to kick her. Fortunately, the kick did not hit her face, but the kick was extremely close to her face.

While telling this story, the words "I cannot do anything", or "I tried to be patient" were frequently said. Moreover, she also often said that "the most important thing was there were students who listened to me. That much was enough." Below is the example of what she said in the interview,

> "Teaching that class is extremely hard. While teaching them, I cannot do anything. What is more important is they do the assignments. I don't care they want to play games, or whatever. What's more important is there are still some of them who want to do the assignment"

It showed that she felt powerless in front of her students. She positioned her students as more powerful than her that she could not handle her. She perceived her identity as a powerless teacher in that class.

This identity brought some impacts for her. The impacts ranged from changing her mind-set, up to giving up teaching in that class. At first, realizing that she had no power to handle her students, she changed her mind-set from giving activities which stimulated students to be active, to the mind-set that she only needed to teach the students who wanted to listen to her. However, the situation did not bring any better improvement for her, which resulted in her giving up teaching the class. She also felt extremely tired after teaching the students. Eventually, she told her mentor teacher to change her class, and she finally taught another class.

However, Elia showed a different identity when taught different classes. When she did her teaching practice, she taught two classes. In the other classes, she was friendly to the students. She often came closer to the students who did not do their assignments, and helping them how to finish the assignment. The same identity was found when she taught the students of the class that was a replacement of the class that she gave up on. In teaching that class, she could approach her students, helping them in understanding the materials that the students had not understood.

From the analysis, the researchers also found a factor that made the two participants showed a polarized identity even though they face similar situation was the school culture. In Ammy's case, even though the students' behavior was annoying, the students were already excellent in English. Moreover, the school was known of having brilliant students. Meanwhile, in Elia's case, the students indeed seem like they did not have any motivation to go to school. In addition, the students also knew that their school was not a good school, so they underestimated the importance of school. This is what made Ammy and Elia perceived different identities.

The Influence of Positioning in Shaping Identities

From what the researchers found, both Ammy and Elia actually want to be a friendly teacher, but they could not shape that identity during their teaching practice. It means that positioning can force the participants to shape new identities that are different with the identities they initially want to have.

In Ammy's case, she perceived her identity as a firm teacher in the class, due to her positioning of her students as noisy students. To handle that situation, she needed to build her identity as a firm teacher when she actually wanted to be a friendly teacher. She stated in the interview that,

> "I intentionally make myself as a teacher, not their friend. Why? Because I see my friend who is friendly to the students, and the students do not respect

her at all because we are all women. And I don't want that to happen. I don't want them to underrate the lesson, or anything else. So, I become quite mean to them."

Similarly, in Elia's case, she also wanted to be a friendly teacher for her students. In addition to that, she also wanted to have more power than her students, because overall she is the teacher. Thus, she needed to be more powerful than her students, but in the same time being a friendly teacher for her students. As what she said,

"If I become a teacher, I want to be their friend. If we are close, I can give my knowledge to them easily, in a way that friends do, not too formal. It will be good between us. Yet, I want to be a level upper than them, so they will be respectful to me."

However, seeing her experiences during her teaching practice, it is unfortunate that she could not shape the identity that she wanted to have. On the other hand, she perceived a powerless teacher identity because of the condition that forced her to position her students as more powerful than her.

From Ammy and Elia's case, the researchers found that there was a force within them that shaped their identity based on their positioning of their students. It means that actually there were some identities that they did not want to perceive, but because of the situation, they had to build certain identities.

The aim of this research is to find out pre-service teachers' identities in relation to the positioning of their student. In addition, this research also seeks to what extent positional identities force the pre-service teachers to build new identities. To answer the research questions, a data analysis has been conducted and the researchers found two main findings of the analysis. First, the two participants showed polarized identities, even though they positioned their students similarly. Second, there was a force within positioning that made the participants construct new identities during their teaching practice. All of the findings of this research were the result of the interviews with the participants. It was the limitation of this research that there was only a small amount of information that the researchers could obtain from the participants' reflections in teaching practice reports.

In this research, the two pre-service teachers showed various identities based on their positioning of their students, ranged from positive identities such as a creative teacher, an attentive teacher, a well-prepared teacher, up to quite negative identities, such as a firm teacher and a powerless teacher. What is interesting in the findings is the two participants showed polarized identities, even though they faced similar situation, which was facing difficulties in handling students' bad behavior. This may be influenced by how they position their students. Ammy positioned her students as noisy students, yet excellent in English. Meanwhile, Elia positioned her students as more powerful than her.

Looking upon a theory, Kayi-Aydar (2015) argues that teachers put positions their students will affect their self-positioning, which will also have results in their

teaching activity. In the participants' case, Ammy and Elia indeed face similar situation. However, they positioned their students differently. Elia directly positioned her students as more powerful than her, so she positioned herself as a powerless teacher. This brought her to frustration and finally giving up on the class. Yoon (2008) also explains that "whatever the positions teachers take, that positioning guides them in their interactive approaches with students in classroom settings" (p. 499). Here, it is understandable why Elia gave up on her class. However, Elia showed a friendly teacher identity in another class that she taught. It is caused by different positioning that she put upon her students, which is "sembodo" or naughty but clever. It is very normal to happen because positioning is flexible and contextual, rather than fixed (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

Positioning also might have a force to the pre-service teachers to construct new identities other than the identities that they wanted to perceive. In this research, both Ammy and Elia initially wanted to be a friendly teacher. However, the situation that they faced in school, did not allow them to put positions that enabled them to have a friendly teacher identity. In contrast, Ammy constructed an identity to herself as a firm teacher. Similarly, Elia perceived a powerless teacher as her identity. This finding is similar with Reeves (2009) states, "as people negotiate identities, they take up, assert, and resist identity positions that define them" (p. 35). Moreover, Kayi-Aydar (2014) also explains that "The same individual can manifest any of his or her identities or be assigned new identities inthe form of positions in different contexts" (p. 3). It means that a person can havea new identity depending on the positions he takes.

The results of this research may be guidance for the organizers of teaching practice to conduct a follow up on the results of teaching practice for the pre- service teachers. Pre-service teachers' identities are essential for their professional development. The identity that the pre-service teachers perceived also has influences on the agency that the pre-service teachers have later when they come to the professional world. It is in line with Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016) who state that "the relationship between agency and professional identity suggests that within the teacher education context, preservice teachers' professional identity cannot be developed without the possibility for agentic action" (p. 319). Teaching practice should be a chance for the pre-service teachers to develop their identities. Thus, the lecturers should keep an eye of them so the interactions between the pre-service teachers and all elements in schools can happen, as identity also emerged as a result of interactions.

One of the findings of this research also indicates that there may be some influences from the school culture to the positioning and identities of the pre-service teachers. Therefore, this research may be replicable to be conducted in other regions, or even other countries. Moreover, this study may lead to other research which focuses on the relation between positioning, culture, and identity. This topic is not limited only to pre-service teachers, but any other elements in educations, for instance is in-service teachers.

Conclusion

This qualitative research aimed to identify the identity of pre-service teachers of a private university in Yogyakarta viewed through positioning theory. Another aim of this research is to see the effect of positioning in constructing identities for the pre-service teachers. The results of this research showed that the participants of this research showed various identities in relation to their positioning of their students. However, even though the participants faced similar situation in handling students' bad behavior, the two participants perceived two polarized identities. Last, positioning theory takes a big role in constructing identities for the pre-service teachers.

This limitation of this research, which was the data of this research were mainly obtained through interview, can be utilized as the improvement for further research. Further studies are needed to support the finding that positioning has effects on pre-service teachers' identity construction. Future researchers who are interested in similar topic may conduct similar research on other teacher education program in other regions or countries. Further research may also employ more participants and more aspects, such as school culture, as the point of analysis.

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