

THE EXPLORATION OF PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS' CHALLENGES IN TEACHING PRACTICE

THESIS

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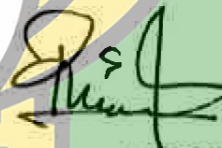
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Adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggungjawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

A R - R A N I R Y

Banda Aceh, 5 Agustus 2024

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the challenges and strategies of pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from the English Language Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, focusing on students who have completed their teaching practice. Employing qualitative methods, this research conducts semi-structured interviews with six participants to delve into the complexities faced by these future teachers. The study identifies critical challenges such as lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement, which significantly influence their teaching effectiveness. It also explores the various adaptive strategies these pre-service teachers utilize to overcome these obstacles, including modifying teaching methods and leveraging mentorship. The findings reveal a dynamic interaction between the challenges faced and the innovative solutions applied, highlighting the need for comprehensive training programs that adequately prepare future EFL teachers. This research contributes to the broader discourse on teacher education by emphasizing the importance of practical experience in effectively translating theoretical knowledge into classroom practice, thereby enhancing the preparedness and confidence of pre-service teachers at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In the context of teacher preparation, students enrolled in colleges, particularly those within faculties dedicated to teaching and training, are mandated to participate in teaching practicums. These practicums, prevalent in universities both in Indonesia and globally, are typically integrated into the curriculum during the final two years of the student's academic journey. This approach is corroborated by Alamri (2018), who notes that numerous institutions in Saudi Arabia, alongside those in other developed nations including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, have established comprehensive teacher education programs. Such programs are designed to furnish pre-service teachers with essential teaching experiences and knowledge prior to their transition into the professional teaching realm.

The teaching practicum, a crucial requirement for attaining a bachelor's degree in education, is designed to equip college students for a professional teaching career post-graduation. This practicum is essential in enabling pre-service teachers to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired from teacher training institutes in practical settings, as highlighted by Hudson and Hudson (2021). Furthermore, Koksai and Genc (2019) assert that teaching practicums are mandatory across all teacher training programs, facilitating the transition of learned theories and methods into effective

classroom practices. Singh and Han (2010) define pre-service teachers specifically as those enrolled in university-based teacher education programs, thereby emphasizing the importance of the teaching practicum in not just general teacher education but also within specialized departments like English Education. This program thus serves as a fundamental bridge between academic training and the practical realities of the teaching profession.

In teacher education programs, pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers must learn skills for both engaging in classroom interactions and facilitating student participation. However, many of these programs, including English-focused ones, often fall short in preparing teachers for actual classroom teaching. Pre-service EFL teachers frequently struggle with key aspects of their teaching practicum, such as lesson planning and classroom management. As Sudirman (2017, p. 115) points out, lesson plans are crucial as they guide teachers in implementing each lesson's competencies. These plans are integral to the teaching process, encompassing the strategies and methods pre-service EFL teachers will use in the classroom.

Addressing challenges faced by pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, this study investigates specific difficulties encountered during teaching practicums and strategies employed to overcome these obstacles. Understanding these challenges and coping strategies is critical for fostering effective learning environments in classrooms and preparing for professional roles

as educators. The significance of teaching practice in teacher preparation programs is well-recognized, indicating a need for program enhancements and more comprehensive evaluation of pre-service teachers during practicums. Wang and Clarke (2014) highlight the necessity of incorporating practical teaching experiences within teacher education programs, a concept widely supported in academic literature. This research focuses on elucidating the challenges and strategies associated with teaching practice for pre-service EFL teachers, contributing to the improvement of teacher preparation programs.

Moreover, there were several researchers who previously worked on the issues of teaching practice. In an article of Kabilan (2013) reports that critical reflections, in the context of teacher educational programs, including analyzing, reconsidering, and questioning challenges of the pre-service teachers in real classrooms setting are integral components of teachers' learning and professional development.

Focusing on the critical role of teaching practicums in teacher education, various studies highlight the challenges and development needs of pre-service teachers. Aquino (2014) notes that the practicum issue has garnered significant attention, emphasizing its importance to key stakeholders in teacher education, including student teachers, classroom teachers, university supervisors, and school administrators. Despite their differing roles and inputs, these stakeholders share a common goal: effective teaching practice.

Alamri (2018) adds that EFL pre-service teachers require further development

in teaching experiences and skills pertinent to classroom and school settings. The study suggests the need for regular interactions among stakeholders through meetings, workshops, and discussion sessions to identify problems and devise potential solutions.

Oeamoum & Sriwichai (2020) explore the specific problems and needs in English language teaching (ELT) of pre-service English teachers in Thailand, focusing on curriculum and content, instructional materials, and teaching methods. Their research, utilizing questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, reveals issues such as insufficient study hours, inadequate courses for specific English skills, outdated curriculum, and content that is not applicable to real-life contexts. The study underscores the need for a curriculum that emphasizes real-world contexts and communication skills, like speaking and listening.

Lastly, Kabilan et al. (2020) aim to understand the challenges pre-service EFL teachers face in ESL settings, particularly in understanding the realities of teaching in an international context. Through focused interviews and reflective journals, they identify challenges related to curriculum, lesson planning, language proficiency, and cultural differences. This study emphasizes the importance of integrating multicultural elements into future International Teacher Programs (ITP) and teacher education programs.

These studies collectively affirm that the teaching practicum is a vital component of professional education and development for pre-service teachers,

preparing them for their future teaching careers.

B. Research Question

The research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What are challenges pre-service EFL teachers face in teaching practice?
2. What strategies pre-service EFL teachers use to overcome these challenges in teaching practice?

C. Research Aim

The aims of this study are:

1. To investigate pre-service EFL teachers' challenges in teaching practice.
2. To identify the strategies that pre-service EFL teachers use to overcome challenges in teaching practice.

D. Significance of Study

1. *To pre-service EFL teachers*

This study tries to explore about what college's students face during teaching practice. The main focus of this study is to investigate pre-service EFL teachers' challenges in teaching practice and to identify the strategies that pre-service EFL teachers use to overcome these challenges in teaching practice. The writer hopes the result of this study gives new perspective and solution about

teaching practicum for college's students.

2. To lecturers

The result of this study is expected to help lecturers to guide their college's students in following teaching practice. Because teaching practice is a part of subjects in university, the lecturers have to make sure that their students follow the rule of practicum properly before they practice teaching directly in the school. It will be easy for lecturers to guide their students during teaching practice.

3. To other researchers

The writer believes this study does not cover all the questions and curiosity of thereader. Moreover, the writer hopes that other researchers will re-conduct the same study that can fill the gap in the future.

4. To the institution

The results of this study will be beneficial for the institution as a strengthener. Through this study, it is expected that the institution will more support and ease students to administer matters related to teaching practice. The institution has to make sure to improve a major component of the professional education and the development of pre-service teachers before their college's students go on to the actual teaching profession.

E. Research Terminology

In order to avoid misunderstanding, the writer has defined the following operational definitions of this research as follow:

1. Pre-service EFL teacher

A teacher is often defined as an expert capable of imparting knowledge, which assists learners in building, identifying, and acquiring skills necessary to navigate life's challenges. According to Susiyanti (2019), a teacher also imparts knowledge, skills, and values that are essential for learners' development. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), pre-service teachers are college students who engage in teaching practicums. These practicums serve as a preparatory phase before they embark on their professional teaching careers, equipping them with the necessary experience and skills to become effective educators. This preparation is crucial in shaping them into professionals who can contribute significantly to the learning and development of their future students.

2. Teaching Practice

Teaching practice is a temporary period of teaching in a school undertaken under supervision by a person who is training to become a teacher. It is included in the workload of teacher preparation programs, which include ESL/EFL teacher education programs, to gear up pre-service teachers with courses related to their respective profession.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Pre-service EFL Teacher

Research in the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) increasingly directs its focus toward the education and development of pre-service teachers. One pivotal study illustrated how practicum experiences significantly impact the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service EFL teachers (Collins, 2008). This insight into self-efficacy becomes instrumental for shaping the trajectory of professional growth among these teachers. It emphasizes the inestimable value of hands-on experience in real classroom settings and foregrounds the need to integrate such experiences into teacher education programs.

Another research angle applies complexity theory to deconstruct the practicum experiences of pre-service EFL teachers (Daristotle, 2015). This study uncovered a variety of contributing elements, including the curriculum and the culture of the school environment. The insights gained underscore the need for teacher education programs to be versatile and responsive to diverse teaching conditions. Such curricula should prepare future educators for the multi-faceted challenges they will encounter in their professional lives, ensuring that they are equipped to navigate the complexities of different educational settings.

Numerous challenges lie in the path of pre-service EFL teachers, specifically during their practicum stages (Smith & Johnson, 2018). These challenges range from

classroom management to the development and implementation of effective assessment strategies. Consequently, the study calls for bolstered support mechanisms throughout the practicum stage. These would ideally provide pre-service teachers with the requisite tools and resources needed to effectively navigate the challenges posed by real-world teaching environments.

A longitudinal perspective contributes additional layers to our understanding of pre-service EFL teachers (Williams, 2019). This study posited that teachers' beliefs about teaching EFL to preschoolers are not static. Instead, these beliefs are fluid, influenced by their evolving educational background and sustained hands-on experience in the classroom. This dynamic nature of teachers' beliefs highlights the importance of a robust foundational education in both early childhood pedagogy and EFL methodologies.

Continuing in this line of inquiry, the role of workshops and professional learning communities in shaping the commitment levels of pre-service teachers cannot be understated (Rode, 2012). This research accentuates the importance of engaging these emerging professionals in various avenues of development. The study posits that active involvement in these communities not only augments their skill set but also deepens their commitment to the teaching profession.

The traditional understanding of a teacher is one endowed with the ability to impart vital life skills and knowledge to learners (Susiyanti, 2019). In the context of EFL, pre-service teachers are college students engaged in a practicum as a part of

their pre-professional preparation. This practicum serves as an essential learning experience aimed at enhancing the quality of their future teaching endeavors. The role extends beyond mere knowledge dissemination to encompass a more holistic view that includes skill development and the inculcation of values.

The professional aspirations of teachers can change over time, contingent on their years of teaching experience (Louws et al., 2017). Moreover, the accumulation of pedagogical content knowledge is not only individualistic but also contextual (Driel & Berry, 2012). In relation to this, multiple factors contribute to the professional learning of pre-service teachers. These factors are not isolated but are shaped by a complex interplay of past and present experiences garnered in various educational contexts (Leeferink et al., 2015).

Against the backdrop of these complexities, personal experiences play an instrumental role in the pedagogical content knowledge that pre-service teachers acquire. It is plausible that the learning experiences these individuals have had prior to and during their pre-service teacher education contribute significantly to their professional learning. Pre-service teachers are active agents in shaping their professional knowledge throughout their initial education (Tang et al., 2012). Their education, both on campus and in schools, has the potential to positively influence their future teaching capacities (Tang et al., 2016).

Furthermore, pre-service teachers often start seeking professional development opportunities from the onset of their educational program (Toom et al., 2017). This

early search for growth amplifies the importance of the roles played by teacher educators and other key stakeholders in pre-service teacher education. The guidance and expertise offered by these individuals can serve as invaluable resources for pre-service teachers navigating the intricate pathways of educational development.

Teaching practice, complete with supervised instruction, is a cornerstone of most EFL teacher education programs (Gebhard, 2009). The significance of English as an international language underscores the need for effective teaching in this field. Consequently, there is an impetus to create pre-service teacher programs capable of producing highly competent English teachers. These programs, often housed within faculties of education, aim to groom future teachers as agents of positive change in education (Vibulphol, 2015).

In conclusion, the challenges and opportunities facing pre-service EFL teachers are multi-dimensional. They encompass individual, contextual, and institutional elements that all interact to shape the quality of their professional development. With the right combination of training, experience, and mentorship, pre-service teachers can successfully transition from educational theory to effective classroom practice, fully prepared to fulfill their roles as educators for the next generation.

B. Teaching Practice

Teaching practices are a compilation of methods and strategies employed by educators to foster learning in students. Effective teaching practices are vital,

particularly in early childhood settings where the foundation for lifelong learning is laid. Such practices can be quantified by various tools, including the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®), which aids in assessing adult-child interactions in these educational settings (Teaching practices, n.d.). Notably, effective teaching practices encompass several critical elements that contribute to the overall learning experience. These elements are now more critical than ever, given the challenges brought forth by changes in educational paradigms and societal expectations.

Teacher clarity is an essential facet of effective teaching. As educators introduce a new unit or project, it is imperative to clarify the objectives, learning goals, and provide explicit guidelines for achievement. This elucidative approach helps students grasp the importance and relevance of their learning material, thereby aiding in enhanced retention and engagement (Alber, 2015). Moreover, this transparency fosters an environment where the teaching and learning processes are synchronized, eliminating any scope for ambiguity.

Student-centered learning serves as another cornerstone in modern educational practices. This pedagogical approach pivots around the specific needs and interests of individual learners, permitting them an active role in their own education (Gupta, 2023). Not only does this enhance engagement, but it also allows for a more personalized learning experience. This approach complements teacher clarity by ensuring that the information is not just disseminated effectively but is also absorbed

and applied by the learners themselves.

Differentiated instruction and collaborative learning further bolster the efficacy of teaching practices. The former involves customizing teaching methods to cater to diverse learning styles, abilities, and interests, whereas the latter encourages peer-to-peer interactions for problem-solving and idea exchange (Gupta, 2023). When students are given the opportunity to collaborate, they develop skills that are crucial for real-world applications. Additionally, feedback loops are imperative in this context, as they offer timely, specific assessments that contribute to a student's academic growth and development (Alber, 2015).

Lastly, a focus on continual improvement and professional development ensures the teaching practices remain in line with the latest educational research and trends. Reflective practice enables educators to identify potential areas for growth and tailor their methods accordingly (Gupta, 2023). Also, the integration of evidence-based practices that have proven efficacy fortifies the educational experience, helping in the attainment of better learning outcomes (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). This commitment to self-improvement and reliance on empirical data act as the scaffolding that upholds the structure of effective teaching practices.

Teaching practice performs a crucial role in initial English language teacher preparation programs in which offers pre-service English-as-a-foreign- language (EFL) teachers a great chance to put the pedagogical content knowledge they have acquired through the coursework into practice by teaching real students. Teaching

practice (TP) could be conceived to be a platform where pre-service EFL teachers gain a first-hand experience of testing the effectiveness of disparate methods for English language teaching, about which theoretical information is provided by the university component of pre-service teacher education.

The practice component of teacher education programs are composed of mainly five aspects: a) student teachers as the active participants of the practicum, b) university supervisors as the experts to help student teachers before and after they practice teaching, c) cooperating teachers as the experts helping student teachers in their practicum schools, d) students as the receivers of knowledge that student teachers present during their practice teaching, and e) educational context and system that student teachers are required to complete their student teaching requirements in. (Merç, 2015)

The teaching practice is located at the highest level of the university-school cooperation of the teacher education programs (Tang, 2002). Therefore, another essential concept in teaching practicum component is the placement of student teachers for their teaching experiences. Schick & Nelson (2001) argue that teacher educators, or whoever responsible for this job must be careful about placing student teachers into schools where cooperating and mentor teachers are the successful ideals of the target language and language teaching methodology at each level. This view is also supported in the way that schools are the places where teacher-learner interaction takes place, and schools and schooling are the indispensable parts of

language teacher education due to the fact that student teachers gain the necessary school values from the places they complete their student teaching practice (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

C. Pre-service EFL Teachers' Challenges in Teaching Practice

The journey of pre-service EFL teachers is fraught with several challenges, primarily adapting to new environments. This adaptation is not just about acclimating to a different school or teaching setup but also involves understanding cultural nuances and effectively managing a classroom (Tůma, Obrovská, & Svojanovský, 2023). In many instances, teachers have to maneuver between different cultural settings, balancing their teaching styles to meet diverse student needs. Training programs must, therefore, include modules on cultural sensitivity and classroom management techniques. These training modules can provide pre-service teachers with the necessary skills to adapt quickly and manage classrooms efficiently.

Another significant hurdle is the selection of appropriate educational materials and the subsequent planning of lessons. The literature reveals that pre-service teachers often struggle to identify materials that align with their educational objectives and the learning outcomes desired for their students (Koşar, 2021). Additionally, they have a hard time developing cohesive lesson plans. Training programs can address these issues by equipping pre-service teachers with the skills

to critically evaluate educational resources and effectively plan lessons. This includes workshops or sessions on curriculum mapping, resource evaluation, and lesson planning.

Language proficiency also poses a challenge. Pre-service EFL teachers must have a strong command over the language they intend to teach; however, this is often not the case (Nababan, 2021). The struggle with language proficiency impacts their confidence and may hinder their ability to deliver effective lessons. To remedy this, training programs should include comprehensive language courses focusing on both written and verbal skills. Furthermore, specific strategies to improve language proficiency can be integrated into these courses, thus empowering teachers to conduct lessons more effectively.

Despite the value of teaching practice programs in providing hands-on experience, they are not without flaws. Issues such as inadequate time allocation and a lack of seriousness among student teachers often hinder the effectiveness of these programs (Mahboubeh Taghizadeh & Mina Basirat, 2022). Addressing these challenges requires a two-pronged approach: First, the training programs need to emphasize the importance of practical experience, and second, they must offer strategies for maximizing the utility of limited time. This way, pre-service teachers can extract the most value from these practice sessions, thereby enhancing their professional development.

A transformative outcome of teaching practice is a change in perspective among

pre-service teachers. Three elements crucial to this transformative learning are critical reflection, dialogue, and action (Sari, De Backer, Joson, & Lombaerts, 2023). These elements empower pre-service teachers to reinterpret ESL theories to suit EFL contexts effectively. Training programs should thus incorporate these elements, offering avenues for critical reflection, fostering dialogue, and encouraging actionable steps. With proper training, reflection, and support, these challenges can be overcome, enriching the learning and understanding of issues pertinent to pre-service EFL teachers.

Although the purpose and the function of the practicum component in teacher education are clear and meaningful, several problems appear in the implementation stage of this process. For example, teaching practices are stress-creating experiences due to the factors such as lack of role clarification, the evaluation procedure, not knowing the expectations of the cooperating teacher and the supervisor, and lack of time to talk with the cooperating teacher (Murray-Harvey et. al, 2000). Moreover, several researchers have tried to identify the problems in student teaching during teaching practice and have specified a wide range of problematic areas such as classroom management, individual learner differences, dealing with unmotivated learners, managing time, inappropriate lesson planning, etc. (Hertzog, 2002).

In Thailand, Klaichim (2009) reveals that the main problems of English teaching and learning for pre-service English teachers included the language skills, learning behaviors, English curriculum and course content, teaching materials, teaching

methods, teacher's performance, and institutes support. While Noom-ura (2013) findsthat pre-service teachers mentioned the problems related to curriculum and textbooks,assessment and other factors supporting teaching success. Moreover, they mentioned that the lack of perseverance in practicing or seeking more opportunities to use English contributed to their lack of confidence in using the language for communication.

Another recent study is conducted by Valdez et.al (2000) to identify the problematic classroom situations pre-service teachers are likely to experience. The study also aims to see the manner of the student teachers towards their practice according to personal and formal theories, and to see to what extent the student teachers seem to have changed throughout their practicum. Their data consist of the well-remembered events of 57 elementary student teachers. The student teachers' stories put forward the following most influential problem categories: classroom management (30%), instruction and learning (48%), individual differences (12%), and other rare items (12%)

In the study of Genç (2016) states that pre-service teachers had problems mainly with classroom management, appropriate feedback, time management and teaching strategies. In-service teachers have serious challenges in establishing theoretical background for their comments and needed more guidance in mentoring. In addition, the pre-service teachers expresses that they had problems with the mentor teachers in terms of lack of communication and cooperation, conflicting perceptions of roles

and appropriate feedback on issues in teaching practice in their reflective journals and interviews. The data also illustrates that the participating pre-service teachers were quite weak in decision-making skills as they could not handle unexpected moments effectively, that their teaching practices needed to be motivated and developed. The finding of this study suggests that pre-service teachers need more practice opportunities in their way to becoming a language teacher whereas in-service teachers definitely need to improve and update their theoretical knowledge base on current developments in the class.

D. Solution to Challenges in Teaching Practice

In the evolving landscape of education, teaching practices continually face a myriad of challenges, necessitating innovative solutions for effective learning. Recent literature emphasizes various strategies that significantly contribute to enhancing teaching practice, particularly for pre-service teachers.

A key solution to teaching challenges lies in integrating technology within the classroom. Johnson and Smith (2012) highlight the role of digital platforms and interactive tools in enhancing student engagement and accommodating diverse learning styles. Their research suggests that pre-service teachers trained in these technologies are better equipped to handle varied classroom environments, thereby addressing common challenges in student engagement and preparing them for a technologically advanced educational context.

Building on the technological framework, Green et al. (2013) underline the importance of collaborative learning environments. They propose that implementing collaborative projects and peer-learning strategies can significantly improve classroom dynamics and student participation. This approach aids pre-service teachers in developing essential skills like communication and teamwork, while also managing diverse classroom settings more effectively.

Thompson and Davis (2015) bring attention to the importance of personalized learning strategies. They advocate for educational approaches that are tailored to individual student needs and learning paces, arguing that training pre-service teachers in differentiated instruction allows for more effective adaptation to the diverse needs of students, addressing challenges in classroom management and engagement.

The role of reflective practice in teaching is explored by Anderson and Kim (2016). They suggest that regular self-reflection helps pre-service teachers identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Such introspection is vital for ongoing professional development and overcoming practical challenges in teaching.

Lee and Chang (2018) focus on classroom management through positive reinforcement strategies. They contend that techniques like rewards and recognition foster a conducive learning environment. This method assists pre-service teachers in maintaining discipline while promoting a positive and inclusive classroom culture.

Mentorship's role in enhancing teaching practice is examined by Patel and Jones

(2019). They propose that mentorship programs, involving guidance from experienced teachers, offer practical insights and strategies for real-world classroom issues, effectively bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application for pre-service teachers.

Murphy and Fernandez (2020) emphasize the importance of incorporating mental and emotional well-being into teacher training. They argue that strategies for managing stress and emotional challenges are as crucial as developing teaching skills, ensuring that teachers maintain their well-being, which is essential for a sustainable and effective teaching career.

Collectively, these studies provide a comprehensive framework for addressing the challenges in teaching practice. From embracing technology to prioritizing mental health, these varied approaches form a holistic roadmap for preparing pre-service teachers to navigate and thrive in modern educational settings.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The research design of this study adheres to Creswell's (2012) framework, which outlines that any research methodology involves three critical components: data collection, data analysis, and report writing. In line with this conceptualization, the current study employed a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing interviews as the primary instrument for gathering data. This method was chosen because it aligns closely with the objectives of the research, which are to investigate the challenges faced by pre-service EFL teachers during their teaching practice and to identify the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges.

Within the realm of qualitative research, several processes are key to obtaining meaningful data and insights, as explained by Creswell (2012). First, the data is collected and prepared for subsequent analysis. The researcher then engages in multiple readings of the data to familiarize themselves with the content, followed by a coding process. Coding involves the identification and labeling of themes and descriptions that will be discussed in the research report. In this study, a descriptive analysis was conducted to elaborate on the research findings.

Descriptive research is an investigative approach that aims to understand phenomena based on observed facts. The rationale behind using this particular method is rooted in the study's use of interviews to explore the challenges and

strategies encountered by pre-service EFL teachers during their teaching practice. The interview responses are predicated on the participants' own experiences, offering a rich source of primary data that can be explored in depth through qualitative analysis.

The decision to use interviews as the only method for data collection was intentional. The study aims to explore the participants' personal accounts of their teaching practicum. Given that the research questions are closely tied to these individual experiences, a qualitative approach is most fitting. This method provides the depth and nuance needed to understand the specific challenges and strategies of pre-service EFL teachers, something that would be hard to achieve with quantitative methods.

B. Research Participant

1. Population

In research methodology, the term 'population' refers to the entire group of individuals or instances that meet a set of specified criteria. Creswell (2012) defines population as a group sharing similar attributes which are of interest to the research study. In the context of this study, the population is specifically defined as students from the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. These are students who enrolled in the teaching practicum course during the latter half of the 2022-2023 academic year and who initially joined the program in 2018. The total

number of students meeting these criteria, and hence constituting the population for this study, amounts to forty.

2. Sample

Sampling in research involves selecting a subset of individuals from the population to represent the larger group. Morse (2010) emphasizes that purposeful sampling strategies are crucial in research design, particularly when the participants are closely related to the research topic. In this study, a random sampling method was employed to select the sample from the population. Six students from the population were chosen through this method. These students, also serving as pre-service EFL teachers, comprise the sample for this research. The rationale behind selecting six students as the sample is to gather a diverse range of experiences and perspectives, aiming to collect varied insights from participants who have experienced teaching practicums in different educational settings. This approach is intended to provide a broad understanding of the experiences of pre-service EFL teachers during their practicum.

C. Data Collecting Procedure

In the data collection procedure of this study, interviews served as the primary instrument for gathering information. The researcher functioned as the interviewer, coordinating the conversation and directing its focus towards the challenges and strategies encountered by pre-service EFL teachers during their teaching practice. The goal was not only to identify the challenges but also to elucidate the strategies

employed to overcome them, aiming for a holistic understanding of the teaching practicum experience.

The study adheres to Brinkmann's (2013) assertion about the potency of interviews as a learning tool, capitalizing on their conversational nature. Brinkmann also recommends limiting the number of participants in qualitative interview studies to a maximum of 15 to maintain the integrity and depth of the collected data. In alignment with this guidance, this study selected a smaller sample size, opting for six participants to ensure the quality of the information gathered.

Open-ended interviews were chosen as the format to facilitate long, detailed responses from the participants. This study assumed that employing such an interview method would enhance the depth of the collected data. The open-ended questions were designed to allow participants the freedom to elaborate on their experiences, thereby yielding nuanced insights into the challenges and strategies associated with pre-service EFL teaching practice.

Overall, the choices made in the data collection procedure—from the interview format to the number of participants—were meticulously planned to yield comprehensive and insightful findings. By employing a conversational yet structured interview method, focusing on a manageable number of participants, and encouraging detailed responses through open-ended questions, this study aimed to generate data that is both rich and relevant to the challenges and strategies of pre-service EFL teaching practice.

D. Data Analysis

In this study, the process for analyzing and interpreting qualitative data follows a structured approach outlined by Creswell (2012). Initially, the collected data is organized and prepared for the analysis stage. The researcher then thoroughly reviews the data multiple times, subsequently coding it to identify descriptive elements and thematic patterns that will be featured in the final research report. The specific analytical technique employed in this research is descriptive analysis, which aids in the comprehensive interpretation of the data acquired from interviews with six participants.

The researcher dedicates substantial effort to reading the collected data numerous times. This repetitive reading process ensures a deep familiarity with the data, which is instrumental in the subsequent coding phase. In this study, coding involves assigning short words or phrases that encapsulate the essential meaning of each sentence, phrase, or paragraph. This process of coding simplifies the categorization of data, thereby making it more manageable for in- depth analysis.

Descriptive analysis is the chosen method for interpreting the coded data in this study. The researcher aims to interpret the results in a manner that provides rich, contextual insights into the challenges and strategies of pre-service EFL teaching practice. Descriptive analysis allows for the elaboration of nuanced perspectives, offering a comprehensive view of the experiences and attitudes of the participants.

In summary, the data analysis procedure in this study is rigorous and systematic,

closely following the guidelines set forth by Creswell (2012). From the initial organization of collected data to the detailed coding process, and finally to the descriptive analysis, each step is designed to ensure the integrity and depth of the study's findings. Through this meticulous approach, the researcher aims to produce a well-rounded and insightful research report that is both credible and substantively enriching.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings obtained from interviews with six students who have completed their Praktik Pengalaman Lapangan (PPL) or internship teaching. These participants were selected through random sampling. The research has two primary objectives: first, to investigate the challenges encountered by pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers during their internship teaching experiences; and second, to identify the strategies these pre-service teachers use to surmount these challenges. The collected data offers in-depth insights into the specific difficulties faced in internship teaching, as well as the adaptive strategies employed by pre-service EFL teachers to navigate these challenges. This chapter further delves into how these challenges and coping strategies influence the participants' teaching efficacy, communication abilities, and overall professional growth.

A. Research Findings

This study aims to investigate the challenges and strategies encountered by pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers during their teaching practice. Data for this research were collected through individual, semi-structured interviews with six participants from the 2019 batch who have completed their Praktik

Pengalaman Lapangan (PPL) or internship teaching. Interviews were conducted via WhatsApp, utilizing either voice calls or voice notes, and lasted between 30 to 45 minutes. This duration was designed to allow participants ample time to provide in-depth responses to ten targeted questions that directly address the research questions.

After the interviews, all responses were translated from Indonesian into English to facilitate analysis. A meticulous examination of the data was then conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of both the challenges faced and the strategies employed by pre-service EFL teachers in their teaching practice. The findings derived from this analysis are detailed and elaborated upon in the subsequent sections of this study.

4.1 Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Challenges in Teaching Practice

Following structured interviews with the participants, the researcher collected data to understand the various challenges faced by pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers during their teaching practice. From these interviews, several key challenges emerged that provide insights into the complexities and nuances of teaching practice for these aspiring educators. The challenges identified include issues related to time management, classroom control, external factors like school policies, student engagement, self-confidence, mastery of material, adaptability, and student attitudes. These challenges, as directly mentioned by the participants, shed light on the multifaceted nature of teaching practice and its

inherent difficulties. The specific challenges derived from the interviews are elaborated upon in the subsequent sections.

a. Time Management: Struggling with Lesson Pacing

In this sub-section, the researcher aims to delve into the challenges related to time management during teaching practice. The focus is to investigate whether pre-service EFL teachers find it difficult to manage time effectively, particularly in delivering the planned material within the allocated class time.

Addressing this specific challenge, P1 stated:

"I often find that the target material that should be taught is not achieved because I don't have enough time to convey it to the students."

Considering the statement made by P1, the researcher finds evidence supporting the notion that inadequate time management skills can hinder the effective delivery of lessons. This challenge underscores the importance of time management in teaching practice, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions or training to improve this skill in subsequent sections.

b. Classroom Control: Navigating Student Behavior and Classroom Atmosphere

In this sub-section, the researcher aims to explore the challenges related to classroom control faced by pre-service EFL teachers. The focus is on understanding how these teachers manage student behavior, particularly in specialized settings like

gender-segregated classrooms or when dealing with noisy or disruptive students.

Addressing this specific challenge, P1 stated:

"I find it very difficult to manage students, especially in schools that separate male and female students, like in religious schools. As a beginner teacher, I find it extremely challenging to teach in a class that only has male students, especially when their ages are not much different from mine. They seem to lack respect for me as their teacher."

Similarly, P4 mentioned:

"It's hard to maintain a quiet classroom atmosphere. The students are louder than I am, and they don't seem to take young teachers seriously."

Considering the statements made by P1 and P4, the researcher finds evidence that classroom control is a multifaceted challenge for pre-service EFL teachers. These challenges range from managing student behavior in gender-segregated settings to maintaining a conducive classroom atmosphere. These insights emphasize the need for specialized training and strategies to improve classroom management skills, which will be further discussed in subsequent sections.

c. ***External Factors: Influence of School Policies and Senior Teachers***

In this sub-section, the researcher aims to explore the challenges related to keeping students engaged during lessons. The focus is on how pre-service EFL teachers handle situations where students are bored or inattentive.

Addressing this specific challenge, P2 stated:

"The challenge is when the students get bored; they tend to ask to play games instead."

P3 also added:

"The main challenge I face is having to enliven the atmosphere so that the students do not get bored."

Considering the statements made by P2 and P3, the researcher finds evidence that maintaining student engagement is a significant challenge for pre-service EFL teachers. This underscores the importance of developing effective engagement strategies to capture and sustain student interest, which will be further elaborated upon in subsequent sections.

d. Student Engagement: The Struggle to Maintain Focus and Interest

The purpose of the ensuing section is to analyze the challenges associated with maintaining student engagement during lessons. The aim is to probe how pre-service EFL teachers navigate situations where students display boredom or inattentiveness. As revealed through the interviewees' comments, P2 stated:

"The challenge is when the students get bored; they tend to ask to play games instead."

P3 further elaborated:

"The main challenge I face is having to enliven the atmosphere so that the students do not get bored."

Based on the insights from P2 and P3, maintaining student engagement emerges as a significant challenge for pre-service EFL teachers. This emphasizes the need for crafting effective strategies to both capture and sustain student interest, topics that will be further discussed in subsequent sections.

e. Self-Confidence: The Fear of Making Mistakes

The goal of this portion is to scrutinize the challenges related to self-confidence among pre-service EFL teachers. The focus is on understanding how the fear of making mistakes in teaching affects their performance.

Drawing from the participants' observations, P4 stated:

"At first, I was not confident. I was afraid of making mistakes in teaching the material, and even more afraid if the students corrected me if I was wrong."

Based on the comments provided by the participant, a lack of self-confidence can significantly impact the effectiveness of pre-service EFL teachers. This challenge highlights the need for confidence-building measures and mentorship, which will be further discussed in subsequent sections.

f. Mastery of Material: The Challenge of Content Knowledge

The objective of this sub-section is to delve into the challenges related to mastering the teaching material. The aim is to assess how well pre-service EFL

teachers understand and convey the subject matter.

Considering the feedback from the participants, P4 and P2 stated:

"The first challenge is mastering the material. I'm afraid I won't be able to master it and will get confused in the explanation."

"The challenge is when they get bored; they tend to ask to play games instead."

As evidenced by the participants' remarks, mastering the teaching material is a significant hurdle for pre-service EFL teachers. This underscores the need for comprehensive content training, which will be elaborated upon in subsequent sections.

g. Adaptability: Navigating Diverse Classroom Environments

This segment seeks to explore the challenges related to adaptability in various classroom settings. The focus is on how pre-service EFL teachers adapt to different student characters and school environments.

Given the insights from the interviewees, P5 stated:

"I find it difficult to adapt to various student characters and the school environment, both inside and outside the classroom."

Considering the statements made, adaptability is a crucial skill that many pre-service EFL teachers find challenging. This highlights the need for training in

adaptive teaching strategies, which will be further discussed in subsequent sections.

h. Student Attitude: The External Factor Affecting Teaching Practice

The intent of this sub-section is to evaluate how student attitudes serve as external factors that complicate the teaching practice of pre-service EFL teachers. The focus is on student behaviors like inattentiveness or lack of interest.

Reflecting on the statements made by the participants, P3 and P5 stated:

"The main challenge I face is having to enliven the atmosphere so that the students do not get bored."

"Yes, student attitudes greatly affect the teaching and learning process. The lack of interest from students in the material being taught and the different characters of the students make it difficult for me to carry out teaching practice."

In consideration of the participants' input, student attitudes can significantly impact the effectiveness and complexity of teaching practice for pre-service EFL teachers. This underscores the need for strategies to manage these external factors, which will be elaborated upon in subsequent sections.

4.2 The Strategies That Pre-Service EFL Teachers Use to Overcome These Challenges in Teaching Practice

Based on structured interviews, the researcher collected data on the strategies used by pre-service EFL teachers to tackle teaching challenges. The interviews

revealed a variety of methods, from using homework as a disciplinary tool to incorporating games for student engagement. Support from senior teachers was also noted as a key resource. These strategies, as mentioned by the participants, highlight the diverse approaches needed to address teaching challenges. Further details on these strategies will be discussed in the following sections.

a. *Punitive Measures and Assignments: The Double-Edged Sword*

The focus of this part is to investigate the use of punitive measures such as assignments and homework as a strategy. The aim is to probe how these measures affect student behavior and engagement.

Drawing from the participants' observations, P1 stated:

"I use punishments like giving them assignments or homework. If they are punished to leave the classroom, they are happier because they are free from the learning activities."

Based on the comments provided by P1, punitive measures can be a double-edged sword. While they may encourage compliance, they can also be perceived as a form of punishment, a topic that will be further discussed in subsequent sections.

b. *Game-Based Learning: Balancing Fun and Responsibility*

The purpose of the ensuing section is to analyze the use of games as a strategy to keep students engaged. The aim is to explore how games can be integrated into the teaching process without compromising learning objectives.

As revealed through the interviewees' comments, P2 and P3 stated:

"If they are bored, I follow their wishes to play games, provided they do what they should be doing in class."

"There is a warm-up and also creating games to make the teaching and learning process more enjoyable."

Based on the insights from P2 and P3, game-based learning emerges as a viable strategy for maintaining student engagement. This emphasizes the need for a balanced approach that combines fun and responsibility, topics that will be further discussed in subsequent sections.

c. *Mentor Support and Teaching Materials: The Role of External Resources*

The intent of this sub-section is to evaluate the role of mentor support and teaching materials in overcoming teaching challenges. The aim is to examine how these external resources can facilitate the teaching process.

Reflecting on the statements made by P1 and P3:

"There is support, like senior teachers who have warned students that we are also a teacher who should be respected. Usually, senior teachers also provide teaching materials, making the teaching process easier."

"There is support from the local teaching mentor."

In consideration of the participants' input, mentor support and teaching materials are valuable external resources that can aid in overcoming challenges. This underscores the importance of leveraging these resources, which will be elaborated

upon insubsequent sections.

d. Self-Initiated Strategies: The Power of Innovation

The goal of this portion is to scrutinize the use of self-initiated strategies like puzzles and icebreakers. The focus is on understanding how these strategies can make the learning environment more engaging and effective.

Given the insights from the interviewees, P4 and P5 stated:

"I make puzzles in English that they have to find vocabulary, the suffix of the letter & storytelling (telling experiences that are happy & bad for them)."

"I have tried to do ice-breaking to melt the atmosphere so that students do not feel bored."

Based on the insights from P4 and P5, self-initiated strategies can be highly effective in creating an engaging learning environment. This highlights the power of innovation in teaching, a topic that will be further discussed in subsequent sections.

e. Effectiveness of Strategies: A Mixed Bag of Results

The objective of this sub-section is to assess the effectiveness of the various strategies employed by pre-service EFL teachers. The focus is on understanding the pros and cons of each strategy as perceived by the teachers themselves.

P1 mentioned:

"There are positives and negatives. The positive is that the students will listen more to their teacher. The negative is that students will consider that exercises or homework are a punishment."

P2 stated:

"It is effective because they will be calmer in class by following the

class." P4 elaborated:

"It is very effective; they master vocabulary more, and the level of self-confidence increases."

Based on these insights, the effectiveness of the strategies used by pre-service EFL teachers varies. This underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of strategy effectiveness, which will be elaborated upon in subsequent sections.

f. Advice for Future Pre-Service EFL Teachers: Words of Wisdom

The aim of this final sub-section is to compile advice from the participants for future pre-service EFL teachers. The focus is on the takeaways that can guide future teaching practices.

Considering the statements made, P3 advised:

"Try to make the teaching and learning process not too monotonous so that students do not get bored."

P5 concluded that:

"Prepare mentally and must be good at building communication between teachers and students and establish good relations with mentoring teachers."

Considering the advice provided, future pre-service EFL teachers can benefit from these insights. This emphasizes the importance of both technical skills and soft skills in teaching, topics that will be further discussed in subsequent sections.

B. Discussions

This section delves into a comprehensive discussion of the study's findings, addressing two pivotal research questions: the challenges encountered by pre-service EFL teachers during their teaching practice and the strategies they adopt to navigate these challenges. The study was conducted within the context of the English Language Education Program at UIN Ar-Raniry, providing a unique lens to explore these issues. The first research question aims to investigate the challenges that pre-service

EFL teachers face during their teaching practice. The study uncovers a range of issues, from time management and classroom control to external factors like school policies. These challenges are not merely logistical but deeply impact the pedagogical effectiveness and psychological well-being of these future educators. The ensuing discussion will delve into each of these challenges, providing a nuanced understanding of the obstacles that pre-service EFL teachers encounter and the implications these have for their professional development.

The study reveals that pre-service EFL teachers grapple with a multifaceted set of challenges, chief among them being time management and classroom control. One

participant specifically underscored the issue of time management, a challenge that is substantiated by Mosbah (2021), who emphasizes the importance of effective time management for delivering high-quality education. This issue is intricately connected to the challenge of classroom control, another area where participants reported difficulties, particularly in specialized settings like religious schools. These challenges are further complicated by external factors such as school policies and directives from senior teachers, aligning with findings from Nababan and Amalia (2020), who also highlight the role of external elements in affecting classroom management and material selection. Thus, the challenges faced by pre-service EFL teachers are not isolated incidents but are influenced by a complex interplay of internal competencies and external pressures, necessitating a multi-pronged approach for effective teaching practice.

The challenges confronting pre-service EFL teachers are multi-faceted, encompassing issues from time management to classroom control and student engagement. The study's participants emphasized that a lack of student engagement often leads to disruptions, making the task of classroom management even more daunting. This observation is in line with Macías and Sánchez's 2015 study, which also underscores the importance of effective classroom management for successful instruction. Adding another layer of complexity is the issue of teachers' self-confidence. The fear of making instructional errors, as noted by one participant, can further destabilize classroom dynamics. This sentiment resonates with the findings of Eginli and Solhi (2021), who argue that classroom management is often the most

formidable challenge for pre-service EFL teachers. Mudra's 2018 research further corroborates this, listing ineffective classroom management and poor lesson planning among the key challenges. Thus, the hurdles faced by pre-service EFL teachers are not isolated but interconnected, influenced by both internal factors like self-confidence and external variables such as school policies and class size. This calls for a holistic approach to teacher education and professional development.

In this study, participants underscored the intertwined challenges of mastering teaching material and adaptability in diverse classroom settings. Mastery of content was pinpointed as essential for both enhancing teacher self-confidence and fostering student engagement. This observation is in line with Cahyono (2021), who argued that content mastery is pivotal for effective teaching. Additionally, the ability to adapt to different student personalities and educational environments was emphasized, acting as a unifying factor that links all other challenges faced by pre-service EFL teachers. This corroborates the work of Singh and Kasim (2019), who found that a lack of content mastery could set off a chain reaction of other challenges, including poor lesson planning and ineffective classroom management. Hence, the challenges identified are not standalone issues but are interconnected, necessitating a comprehensive approach to the training of pre-service EFL teachers.

Within the scope of the current research, student attitudes were identified as a crucial external element that complicates the teaching experience for pre-service EFL teachers. These attitudes not only affect classroom management but also have

a ripple effect on student engagement and the teacher's self-confidence. This aligns with the work of Wessels et al. (2017), who also emphasized the significant impact of student attitudes on the learning environment. Moreover, the issue of respect for the teacher, or the lack thereof, can exacerbate classroom management challenges, a notion supported by Dixon and Smith (2019). Consequently, the complex challenge presented by student attitudes highlights the necessity for pre-service EFL teachers to be armed with effective strategies to navigate these external influences.

To conclude the findings related to the first research question of the current investigation, it is evident that pre-service EFL teachers confront a complex array of challenges. These range from internal factors like time management and self-confidence to external elements such as school policies and student attitudes. Moreover, these challenges are not standalone issues but are intricately linked, each affecting and being affected by the others. This creates a complicated landscape that pre-service EFL teachers must skillfully navigate. The interconnected nature of these challenges underscores the need for future studies to delve deeper into these complexities for a more nuanced understanding.

The second research question focuses on the strategies that pre-service EFL teachers employ to overcome the identified challenges. The study reveals a variety of coping mechanisms, including disciplinary actions, engagement techniques, and mentorship support. These strategies are not only reactive solutions to existing problems but also proactive approaches that could redefine the teaching and learning

environment. The following discussion will explore these strategies in detail, evaluating their effectiveness and offering insights into how they could be optimized for better outcomes in teaching practice.

In the context of this investigation, participants revealed a range of strategies to counteract the challenges they face, often tailoring their approaches to specific issues. For example, one participant employed punitive measures like homework assignments to manage classroom behavior, a tactic that has garnered mixed reviews in existing educational literature. Another participant took a more student-centered approach, leveraging game time as an incentive for academic participation, a strategy supported by research that advocates for the integration of play to enhance educational outcomes (Elshirbini & Elashri, 2013). These varied strategies not only reflect the multifaceted nature of the challenges but also underscore the need for pre-service EFL teachers to be versatile and adaptive in their teaching methods.

Within the scope of this research, the influence of external support, especially from senior teachers, emerged as a key factor in helping pre-service EFL teachers overcome challenges. This form of support went beyond giving material resources and also increased the novice teachers' respect and standing in the classroom. Such findings align with existing literature that underscores the important role of mentorship and support networks in the professional development of teachers (Chu & Liu, 2022; Akmal et al., 2020). However, it is worth noting that some strategies were described as effective only for a short time, highlighting the need for

more sustainable, long-term solutions. This observation is in line with scholarly calls for ongoing professional development to ensure lasting effectiveness in both pre-service and in-service teaching.

Moreover, the strategies employed often required a high level of adaptability on the part of the teacher. Whether it was modifying classroom activities to make them more engaging or altering disciplinary tactics to suit the specific challenges of a given classroom, adaptability emerged as a key skill. This is consistent with literature that identifies adaptability as a critical competency for effective teaching. The strategies also often involved a level of risk and innovation, such as creating English-language puzzles or using "ice breakers" to enhance classroom engagement. These innovative strategies, while effective, also highlight the need for pre-service teachers to be trained in a wide range of pedagogical techniques.

In summary, the strategies employed by pre-service EFL teachers are multifaceted and often directly tailored to address the specific challenges they face. These strategies range from punitive measures and reward systems to the utilization of external support and the application of innovative, adaptive techniques. Like the challenges themselves, these strategies are influenced by a variety of factors, both internal and external, and their effectiveness can vary. Therefore, future research should aim to explore these strategies in greater depth, examining their long-term efficacy and the contextual factors that influence their success.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter synthesizes the main findings from the preceding analysis and suggests recommendations for future practice and research in the field of pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. The conclusions and recommendations are derived from the data collected through semi-structured interviews with pre-service EFL teachers who completed their teaching internships.

A. Conclusions

The study primarily focused on identifying the challenges and strategies encountered by pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers during their teaching practice. The key challenges highlighted were time management, classroom control, student engagement, self-confidence, mastery of material, adaptability, and managing student attitudes. These challenges underscore the multifaceted and demanding nature of teaching practice. The strategies employed to overcome these challenges varied significantly, encompassing punitive measures, game-based learning, mentor support, and innovative self-initiated methods. The effectiveness of these strategies was diverse, pointing to the necessity of a nuanced understanding of context-specific teaching practices.

B. Recommendations

In light of these findings, it is recommended that pre-service teacher training programs be augmented to address the specific challenges identified. This could include comprehensive modules on time management, classroom control, and student engagement strategies. The establishment of mentorship programs would be beneficial, offering pre-service teachers the opportunity to learn from experienced educators and share effective teaching strategies. Training should also incorporate exposure to diverse teaching environments, including gender-segregated classrooms, to prepare teachers for a variety of scenarios. Alongside technical teaching skills, an emphasis on developing soft skills such as adaptability, communication, and confidence-building is vital.

Further research is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of the various teaching strategies employed by pre-service teachers. This will help refine and recommend the most effective methods for different teaching contexts. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into the long-term impacts of these strategies on pre-service teachers' professional growth. Additionally, expanding research to include pre-service teachers from various institutions would offer a broader perspective and enhance the generalizability of the findings. Ultimately, these efforts aim to improve the quality of EFL teaching practices, benefiting both educators and students in this field.

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