

Exploring UIN Ar-Raniry EFL Pre-Service Teachers Experiences During Teaching Profession Practice in Southern Thailand: Challenges and Strategies

THESIS

Submitted by

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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 tanggung jawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

Banda Aceh, 12 April 2025

Saya yang membuat pernyataan


Jihan Namira



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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the challenges and strategies of UIN Ar-Raniry English Education pre-service teachers during their teaching profession practice in Southern Thailand. Using a qualitative method with a phenomenological research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five pre-service teachers from the 2021 batch. The findings reveal that participants faced several challenges, including language barriers, differences in educational systems, classroom management difficulties, and cultural adaptation. To address these challenges, the participants employed a variety of strategies such as learning basic Thai, using non-verbal communication like sign language, implementing game-based and student-centered teaching methods, and collaborating with local teachers. These strategies helped them adjust to the new teaching environment and deliver effective lessons. The study highlights the importance of preparation, adaptability, and intercultural awareness for pre-service teachers engaging in international teaching experiences. The findings may serve as valuable input for teacher education programs in better preparing students for cross-cultural teaching contexts and global classroom challenges.

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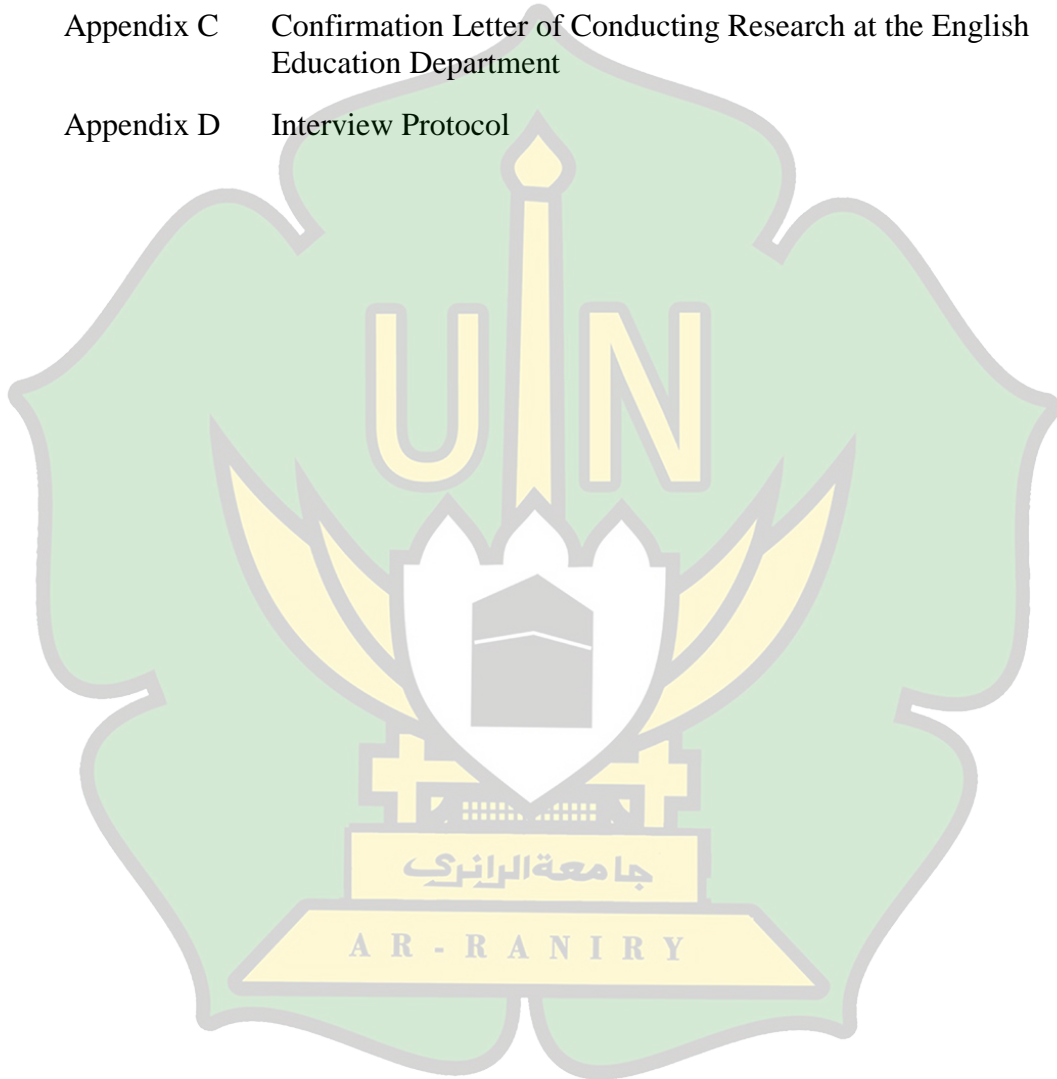
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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

The preparation of pre-service teachers is a crucial component in the development of qualified English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators, especially for those who aim to teach in international or multicultural contexts. For UIN Ar-Raniry English Education students, participating in teaching practicums abroad, such as in Southern Thailand, offers valuable opportunities to develop their teaching skills while adapting to different cultural and linguistic environments. Morley, Alyssa, et al. (2019) emphasize Cross-cultural immersion experiences are an effective way to help pre-service teachers improve a broader and more global perspective. However, these international placements also expose pre-service teachers to significant challenges that require careful exploration and understanding.

Existing research highlights that Indonesian pre-service EFL teachers often face unique obstacles when teaching abroad. Saputri and Saragih (2024) found that language barriers are among the most significant challenges for Indonesian teachers in Thailand. Students in Southern Thailand typically communicate in their local dialects or Thai, which can limit teachers' ability to deliver effective instruction or build rapport with their students. Additionally, cultural differences in educational practices, such as classroom management styles and teacher-student interactions, further complicate the teaching

experience. These challenges are particularly pronounced for teachers who are accustomed to Indonesian cultural and educational norms, as adapting to Thai culture requires both flexibility and a deep understanding of the local context.

Despite these challenges, there is evidence that Indonesian pre-service teachers develop creative strategies to address these difficulties. Alapuranen (2023) observed that visual aids and body language are often used to overcome language barriers, while forming collaborative relationships with local teachers helps them navigate cultural expectations. However, while these studies provide valuable insights into the experiences of Indonesian teachers in Thailand, most focus on general teaching challenges without exploring the specific experiences of students from UIN Ar-Raniry. This creates a gap in the literature, as little is known about how UIN Ar-Raniry pre-service teachers uniquely experience and address these challenges during their teaching practicums in Southern Thailand.

This gap is significant for several reasons. First, UIN Ar-Raniry has a unique focus on preparing English teachers within an Islamic educational framework, which may influence their teaching approaches and their interactions in predominantly Buddhist Southern Thailand. Understanding how these students navigate cultural and religious differences could provide valuable insights into intercultural teaching competence. Second, exploring the strategies used by UIN Ar-Raniry pre-service teachers to overcome challenges can contribute to the development of more effective support systems within the university's teacher education program. Lastly, this research has broader implications for improving the preparation of EFL teachers who plan to work

in culturally diverse settings, making it relevant not only for UIN Ar-Raniry but also for other institutions with similar programs.

The importance of studying this topic is further supported by previous research. Arslan and Ilin (2018) emphasize the role of teaching practicums in shaping pre-service teachers' professional development, while Deardorff (2023) highlights the importance of cultural adaptability in international teaching. Additionally, Putri (2020) argue that better preparation for international teaching can lead to more effective teaching practices and greater resilience in foreign settings. By focusing specifically on UIN Ar-Raniry pre-service teachers, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature and provide practical recommendations for improving international teaching programs. While prior research has examined the challenges and strategies of Indonesian pre-service teachers in Thailand, limited attention has been given to the specific experiences of UIN Ar-Raniry students. This study is thus essential to uncover how these students face and overcome the unique challenges of teaching in Southern Thailand, contributing to the broader understanding of international teaching practicums and the preparation of future EFL teachers.

B. Research Questions

In this research, there are several research questions, including:

1. What challenges do UIN Ar-Raniry pre-service English teachers face during their teaching profession practice in Southern Thailand?
2. What strategies do UIN Ar-Raniry pre-service English teachers employ

to address the challenges encountered during their teaching profession practice in Southern Thailand?

C. Aims of Study

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To identify and analyze the challenges experienced by UIN Ar-Raniry pre-service English teachers during their teaching profession practice in Southern Thailand.
2. To investigate the specific strategies utilized by UIN Ar-Raniry pre-service English teachers to address the challenges they encounter during their teaching profession practice in Southern Thailand.

D. Significant of Study

The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into the common challenges pre-service English teachers face in international teaching profession practice and the strategies utilized by them.

1. For lecturers

This study will provide valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by UIN Ar-Raniry pre-service English teachers during their teaching practicum in Southern Thailand. These findings can help lecturers improve teaching practicum preparation programs by addressing cultural and linguistic barriers, as well as integrating practical skills and adaptive teaching techniques into the curriculum to better equip students for international teaching experiences.

2. For students

This research will help pre-service English teachers understand the challenges they might face when teaching in international and culturally different environments like Southern Thailand. Additionally, it will provide practical strategies that have been successfully used by previous students, serving as a guide for future pre-service teachers to navigate and overcome similar challenges effectively.

E. Terminology

To prevent misunderstandings, a few terms used in this study need to be explained. The terms are as follows:

a. Pre-service Teacher

Pre-service teachers are individuals who are undergoing formal teacher training before becoming professional educators. According to Ellis and Alonzo (2020), pre-service teachers develop essential teaching skills through practical experiences, particularly when they engage in international teaching programs. These experiences help them bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world classroom application.

In this study, pre-service teachers refer to students from the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, specifically those from the 2021 batch, who have completed their coursework and are now participating in their teaching practice in Southern Thailand. This program provides them with firsthand experience in teaching English to Thai students,

allowing them to adapt to different educational systems, overcome language barriers, and refine their instructional strategies.

b. Teaching Profession Practice

Teaching profession practice, often referred to as teaching practicum, is an essential phase in teacher education programs where pre-service teachers apply pedagogical theories in real classroom settings. According to Finkelstein, Sharma, and Furlonger (2021), teaching practice is crucial for developing teaching confidence, classroom management skills, and effective instructional techniques. It allows future educators to gain practical insights into student learning behaviors and teaching methodologies.

In this study, teaching profession practice refers to the hands-on teaching experience undertaken by UIN Ar-Raniry English Education students in Southern Thailand. Through this program, pre-service teachers are placed in schools where they engage with Thai students, adapt to local teaching practices, and navigate cultural and linguistic differences while delivering English lessons.

c. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is the teaching and learning of English in a country where it is not the primary language. Zarrabi (2018) explains that EFL instruction typically occurs in educational settings where students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, requiring teachers to use specific strategies to enhance language acquisition. EFL

teaching presents unique challenges, including differences in linguistic backgrounds, limited language exposure, and varying levels of student motivation.

In this study, EFL refers to the experience of Indonesian pre-service teachers teaching English to Thai students in Southern Thailand. Given that both the teachers and students are non-native English speakers, this context requires special teaching strategies to address language barriers, engage students effectively, and facilitate meaningful communication in English.

