Challenges Faced by Pre-Service Teachers During Teaching Practicum

Emma Martina Pakpahan[1]
[1]Universitas Prima, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Background. Teaching English to EFL learners is a challenging task. However, most English pre-service teachers fail to meet the challenge during their teaching practicum. Therefore, it is essential for the pre-service teacher to know the challenge they may face in teaching practicum. It can help the pre-service teacher prepare themselves for teaching in a classroom.

Purpose. This study aims to investigate the challenges faced by English pre-service teachers. It focused on the factor that could be a challenge that bothered the pre-service performance in their teaching practicum. The internal and external factors were also discussed.

Method. Three participants participated in this research from different universities. Three of them were doing teaching practicum in the same school. Diaries and mentor feedback were used to collect the data.

Results. The findings exposed that there were internal and external challenging factors in teaching. The external challenging factors were the student's motivation and the lack of facilities. The internal ones were classroom management and teacher proficiency.

Conclusion. This research contributed to the instructional practices for EFL pre-service teachers. By knowing the challenges, EFL teachers can overcome them before teaching.

KEYWORDS

Challenges, Practicum, Teacher

INTRODUCTION

Being a teacher is tiring as the workload is too much. The teacher needs to be patient to engage the students (L. R. Putri dkk., 2023). Teacher and student interaction will affect the teaching load (Johanna dkk., 2023). Teachers who have a positive relationship with the student decrease their emotional burden. Teachers also need to be creative and innovative to get the students' attention. Innovative teachers improve the student's skills in researching, exploring, and promoting their critical thinking (Susanti dkk., 2023). The teacher cannot control many aspects of the job like the student's character, background of knowledge, and experiences (Andra dkk., 2023). While the aspects of the job that teachers can control are lesson preparation, teaching skill, and classroom management. Moreover, teachers have an important role to accompany and help students grow physically and emotionally in this rapidly changing societal context (Saputra dkk., 2023). The teacher promotes deeper learning to improve the student learning outcomes (Sari dkk., 2023). In other words,

factors (Zarnuji, 2023). Islam has an important role in the development of education in Indonesia. There are three sectors of Islamic education in Indonesia, namely formal, informal and non-formal (Farid, 2023). After Indonesia's independence, the problem of religious education received attention from the government both in public schools and in private schools (B. Beribe, 2023). Therefore, it is very important for us to review how the development of Islam in Indonesia after independence (Yusuf, 2006).

EFL teachers must create a supportive environment and promote students' confidence and engagement. An unsupportive environment can affect students' feelings negatively such as anxiety, worry, and stress (Maulida dkk., 2023). Moreover, EFL teacher needs to motivate and encourage the students to learn English. Indonesian students are facing difficulty in learning English as a foreign language. Teaching a foreign language means teaching a different language, culture, and habit (Amri dkk., 2023). Some challenges to teaching EFL students are faced by EFL teachers in Indonesia. The government needs to improve the EFL teachers' qualifications in answer to the challenges (N. A. Putri dkk., 2023). One of the ways to improve teachers' competency is by preparing the teacher prior to teaching in the classroom.

A pre-service teacher is a teacher candidate who is enrolled in a teaching program, such as a bachelor of education or a teaching certification program (Asman dkk., 2023). During their first semester, they learn the theory of teaching and the teacher's role. They learn about basic teaching skills including designing a lesson plan, managing the classroom, and implementing teaching methods for about 3 years (B. Beribe, 2023). Then, at the last of their program, they will be invited to practice their skills as a teacher in the classroom (Yeltriana dkk., 2023). Teaching practicum is one of the teacher training programs that equip the pre-service teacher.

Teaching practicum is designed for the pre-service teacher to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned in a school context (Lumban Gaol, Hansrainer, dkk., 2023). Teaching practicum gives the opportunity for the pre-service teacher to develop their teaching skills (Minarti dkk., 2023). It allows the pre-service teacher to have teaching experience and to take up the teacher's role and responsibility for a certain duration. In teaching practicum, pre-service teachers complete their education and training to become qualified teachers. Teaching practicum can help the pre-service teacher to improve the required skills.

However, the transition from students to teachers makes it difficult for the pre-service teacher to create their own target to be a professional teacher (Mustajab dkk., 2023). It was found that not all pre-service teacher is able to practice theoretical knowledge in the learning process in the classroom. Most pre-service teachers expressed worry that inhibited their motivation, actions, and future (Nurzen dkk., 2022). The challenges that the pre-service teacher faced increased the attrition rate of teachers becoming a teacher as their profession (Hong & Greene, 2011). As EFL pre-service teachers face some challenges in teaching practicum, this study aims to identify the challenge faced by the pre-service teacher (Ulum dkk., 2023). The result can be used to prepare qualified teachers to solve the problem and challenges they may face.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore the challenges faced by pre-service during teaching practicum in one of the public schools in Medan, Indonesia. Diaries and mentor feedback was used to collect the data. Diaries are an effective method that provides participants' recall of conditions and situations over a period of time (Roshayanti dkk., 2023). Mentor feedback was used as supportive data to see the challenge that pre-service teachers faced from the mentor's point of view.

Three pre-service teachers who were from 3 different universities were purposively selected. Two of them were from public universities and another one was from a private university (Pamungkas & Halimah, 2023). Three of them were female and their ages ranged from 20-23 years old. All had no teaching experience and no family member teaching (Fuadi & Mirsal, 2023). They had studied English for at least six years (Suryaningsih, 2021). Moreover, they had no experience in studying abroad and communicating with people from other cultural backgrounds.

The research took place within 4 weeks (1 month) during they took teaching practicum. The teaching practicum was in one of the public junior high schools. In this study, diaries and mentors' feedback were employed to gain a more in-depth understanding of the pre-service teachers' perspective on the challenges of teaching English (Mutalib & Dylan, 2021). The data procedure was designed in three steps (Afifah dkk., 2023). First, the participants were distributed consent forms and the individual demographic form. Detailed demographic information is provided in Table 1. To protect participants' identities, a pseudonym was assigned to each participant as P1 for Participant 1, P2 for Participant 2, and P3 for Participant 3.

Table 1

Name	Teaching career intentions	Teaching experience	semester
P1	Committed	No	5
P2	Undecided	No	7
P3	Not interested	No	5

During the teaching practicum, the participants were asked to write diaries every day. At the last of their teaching practicum, the mentor's feedback was used to provide more in-depth data.

Diaries

The participants were asked to write their daily activities at school in online diaries in their Learning Management System (LMS). In their diaries, they needed to describe what they did in the classroom, how the class was going, and how the students behaved during the learning process. The diaries were written in Bahasa Indonesia, the participant's native language (Amirudin dkk., 2022). By using their native language, it was hoped the participant were able to express their feeling well. The participants were also able to upload their pictures to their online diaries (Lumban Gaol, Morales, dkk., 2023). The diaries were analyzed to get data about the challenge the pre-service teacher faced during practicum from the pre-service teachers' perspective.

Mentor's feedback

During teaching practicum, pre-service teachers had a mentor that guide them. Three participants have the same mentor in the same school (Muhammadong dkk., 2023). The mentor was a teacher in the school they taught (Pathurohman dkk., 2023). The mentor had a task to build communication with the pre-service (Nida dkk., 2023). The mentor would help pre-service solve their problems and also share her teaching experience. At the end of the participants' practicum, the mentor gave feedback as an evaluation of the participants' teaching performance.

Data analysis

This study used a qualitative methodology to content-analyze the data to find the challenge pre-service faced during the teaching practicum (Zarnuji, 2023). The analysis involved reading the data multiple times to classify the challenges the participants face, recording how many times the challenges may face, calculating and ranking frequencies of the challenges, and connecting with data **Pre-service teachers' frequent challenges (pre-service teachers' perspective)**

Based on data from the diaries, the challenges the preservice teacher faced were external (factors outside of the participants' control/ can be from the students or environment) and internal (factors the participants can control/from the participants themselves).

External factor

From the diaries, pre-service teachers faced challenges during teaching practicum. Most of the pre-service teachers found that the external factors were the big challenges they faced. All of them said that the student's motivation affected the learning process (Farid, 2023). The lack of motivation made the students feel less interested in learning English. Most of the students found English difficult to understand.

"When I explain and teach, most of the students do not pay attention to what I teach, even some of them are sleeping during the learning process" (participant 1).

"I feel stressed as the students like to forget about what I have taught before, even though I keep teaching it so many times. When I question them, most of them cannot answer it and even ignore me. I feel hard to improve their English skills" (participant 2).

All of them said that the student was lazy to do the task they gave and not active to participate in the classroom (Teguh dkk., 2023). The students sometimes kept talking to one another which made the class noisy. The lack of motivation affected how the student behaved during the learning process.

Two of the participants agreed that another external factor that challenges the participants was the lack of facilities. The school was a public school in a rural area. The school had only 8 classrooms. They did not have enough computers and handbooks as a medium to find any references to learn English. The students never had listening classes as the school did not provide a tape or a language laboratory. Dictation was the only way they used for teaching listening. The participants found that they got difficulties using the media to teach English to the students.

Another participant thought the student's characteristics also became an external challenging factor. Most of the students were rude and not polite. They like to fight, ignore the teacher, and seldom attend class.

"They show disrespect when I teach in front of the class, I thought that is because I am a pre-service teacher and young, they may think that I do not have any control in their class." (participant 2).

Internal factor

The internal factors that the participants experienced as a challenge were classroom management and teacher proficiency. Due to having no teaching experience, the participants encounter many problems in managing the classroom. They felt unable to get the students' attention. When they teach the student for the first time, all pre-service teachers were not able to control the class. The class was so noisy and some students were standing, walking around the classroom, and talking to one another. The chaotic class bothered the neighboring classroom. Other teachers often came and reminded me to control the class.

"I do not know how to control the class well, the class keeps noisy when I am explaining. It keeps happening that makes me skip some of the lessons. Sometimes I lost control and screamed to make them calm. I worried that another teacher comes to my class as if he blames me for the noisy class " (participant 1).

"I lack teaching method, I thought the student felt bored when I am teaching even the topic is interesting, most of them are not paying attention to what I teach, I should use interesting method to deliver the topic" (participant 3).

Three participants admitted that their English proficiency became one of the internal factors that become a challenge in teaching EFL students. The incompetent teacher contributed to the student's English skills. Nel & Muller (2010) found that most incompetent teachers delivered various forms of English language errors to learners. The limited English proficiency of the teachers hinders the development of the student's acquisition of English.

Pre-service teachers' frequent challenges (mentor's perspective)

The mentor did observation in pre-service teachers' classes once a week. The mentor was one of the teachers in the junior high school the pre-service taught. The mentor is a female teacher who had taught in that school for 6 years. The mentor gave feedback through oral and written language after she had done observation. However, in the last of the teaching practicum, pre-service needed to submit their report. The mentor gave feedback on their final report and diaries. The final feedback that the mentor gave was analyzed as supportive data.

Based on the feedback given by the mentor, it was noted that most of the pre-service teachers kept asking about how to get the students' attention. The mentor highlighted poor classroom management. She kept asking the pre-service teachers to find some interesting teaching methods. She also suggested grouping the student but it also failed as the pre-service had poor time and classroom management. For the future, the mentor asked the pre-service teacher to make some rules while teaching to give the students limits during the learning process.

Nevertheless, the mentor also agreed that it was not easy to teach the students in that school. Most of the students lived in poverty and in orphanages. They did part-time jobs after school. This made them tired and lack motivation in learning. They kept sleeping in the classroom and ignored the teacher. Therefore, the mentor said that grouping and games were good methods to apply. In one of her feedback, the mentor also mentioned the poor facilities at school. However, she invited the pre-service teacher to be creative to create their own teaching media. The mentor also focused on teacher and student interaction. The mentor found that participants did not have a positive relationship. It was suggested that the pre-service teacher could build communication and interaction to make the student feel comfortable in learning English. Many researchers found teacher and student interaction could decrease anxiety, improve the students' performance and control the students' behavior.

The result from pre-service teachers' diaries and the mentors' feedback showed that the pre-service teachers had difficulty managing the classroom. Managing the classroom could be caused by the Over-Crowded Class. The class which had more than 30 students was a challenge to manage the class activity (Marzulina, L., et.al, 2021). Another factor may be the lack of students' motivation and proficiency in learning English. The challenge from the internal factor that the pre-service faced might be from the external factor (students).

CONCLUSION

By analyzing the data, it was found some challenging factors in teaching English faced by the pre-service teacher. The factors included the students' lack of learning motivation, the school facilities, the classroom management, and the teachers' English proficiency. Those factors contributed to the learning process negatively. The findings showed two challenging factors faced by the pre-service teachers namely internal and external factors. The factors were student motivation and lack of facilities as the external factor and classroom management and teacher's proficiency as the internal factors. This finding shows that the pre-services did not have any preparation for challenges. This result gives significant implications for instructional practices in the EFL context. By finding the challenges the pre-service teachers faced, EFL teachers can deal

efficiently with the challenges to minimize the impacts. Moreover, government and stakeholders can also work together to provide facilities that can be used for the learning process. This study only focused on the challenging factors faced by the students in. Future researchers may investigate the challenges the pre-service teacher faced which are not included in this study.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Validation; Writing - review and editing; Data curation; Investigation; Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft; Visualization.

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