

TEACHING ENGLISH IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN SOUTHERN THAILAND: CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY PRE-SERVICE INDONESIAN TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the obstacles faced by Indonesian pre-service English teachers during their teaching practicum and the underlying causes at junior high schools in Southern Thailand. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three Indonesian pre-service English teachers undertaking their practicum at junior high schools in Southern Thailand to gather qualitative case study data. Six interconnected categories of issues exist: linguistic barriers (students' restricted vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties stemming from Thai, Malay, and Patani Malay); communication barriers (language disparities and dependence on translation); psychological barriers (students' apprehension regarding errors); and classroom engagement challenges (disinterest and diminished focus due to multilingual cognitive processes). Five contributing factors included restricted English exposure beyond the classroom, first language influence resulting in phonological interference, a curriculum-proficiency mismatch leading to systemic barriers, monotonous teacher-centered methodologies with insufficient learning media, and structural constraints such as time and facilities. Southern Thailand possesses a multitude of languages, rendering it distinctive within Thai EFL. Students were required to attain proficiency in Thai, Malay, Patani Malay, and Arabic before acquiring English as a fifth language. The results indicated that challenges in multilingual education

are systemic, necessitating context-specific pedagogical approaches, enhanced training for novice educators, curriculum modifications to align with students' proficiency levels, and improved institutional support for junior high school teaching, including time and technological resources.

Keywords: *Pre-service teachers, English teaching challenges, Southern Thailand*

INTRODUCTION

English plays an important role in interpersonal communication. English serves as an intermediary language for individuals with different linguistic backgrounds and linguistic systems. In a global context, English is considered a lingua franca. English currently serves as a lingua franca, used by speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds to communicate internationally (Chen et al., 2020). The importance of English as a global language requires non-native speaking countries (Boonsuk & Ambele, 2021), especially Thailand. The study conducted by Nuranissa, (2024) based on interviews with one of the Indonesian pre-service teachers, students in southern Thailand have a feeble command of basic English vocabulary. Therefore, in the context of English as a lingua franca, teachers are not only required to teach English communicatively but also to be able to adapt their teaching strategies to local linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical conditions (Suminto & Ena, 2024). This condition affects teachers' teaching practices, including Indonesian pre-service teachers placed in Thai schools. Recent studies tend to reinforce the perspective that English now serves as both a lingua franca (ELF) and an international language (EIL). These insights have several implications, particularly in the fields of foreign language teaching (FLT) and teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), concerning cultural awareness and identifying the appropriate cultures to integrate into EFL learning (Ghaffour, 2022). Consequently, it is important to understand the challenges they face during their teaching practice in Southern Thailand.

The use of English in Thailand has grown extensively in various fields of communication. English is also useful as a means of mediation between Thailand and other countries to meet international economic needs (Tarrayo et al., 2021). The Thai Ministry of Education recognizes the urgency of English proficiency and has therefore made English a mandatory subject at all levels of education. The English curriculum is designed to foster students' passion for learning, develop a positive attitude towards English, and strengthen their communication skills (Oeamoum & Sriwichai, 2020). Based on the findings of the study by Nguyen and Suwannabubpha. (2021) Both teachers and students stated that students' limited vocabulary and grammar skills were the main factors that made the process of teaching and learning EFL writing difficult. Previous research by (Putra et al., 2024) some students also shared their concerns because they were often afraid of

making mistakes in sentence structures, misspelling words, or not being able to find the right vocabulary to write.

Pre-service teachers are involved in teaching practice programs as part of their professional preparation to gain authentic experience in a real teaching context (Suyatno et al., 2023). Such practicum programs have been implemented by various educational institutions, and through active involvement in the teaching process, reflective interaction with supervising teachers, and intensive guidance from mentors, pre-service teachers can develop a deep contextual understanding of the complexities of teaching, especially in an international setting (Kabilan et al., 2020). The teaching methods used by Thai teachers dominantly utilize memorization in the instructional process (Noom-Ura, 2013) which ultimately limits opportunities for students to engage in interactive and communicative learning experiences. Therefore, language learning is important for self-development, especially English, which is an international language. This condition poses a challenge for pre-service teachers, especially pre-service teachers from Indonesia, as they must adapt their teaching strategies to a learning environment that is not conducive to the application of more modern communicative approaches.

Considering the complexity faced by teachers in the learning process, it is crucial to identify the challenges faced by Indonesian teacher candidates during their teaching practice in Southern Thailand in order to improve teacher preparation programs and encourage more effective teaching practices. This study aims to comprehensively investigate the challenges experienced by Indonesian teacher candidates who are teaching in junior high schools in Southern Thailand and contribute to the growth of knowledge about international teaching practices.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Challenges and Teaching EFL in Thailand Junior High School

English language teaching in Thailand at junior high schools faces various structural and curricular obstacles. In Thai classrooms, interactive teaching methods—such as the communicative approach and task-based learning—are rarely used (Oeamoum & Sriwichai, 2020), which makes it difficult for students to use English functionally in real-life situations. The results of research conducted by Noom-Ura. (2013) report that the teachers who were respondents identified that the level of this problem was caused by the teachers themselves, the curriculum, textbooks, assessment practices, and other supporting aspects of the teaching process. In addition, participants said the high level of the problem stemmed from students' lack of experience with English, so their language background was inadequate. Research by (Farrelly & Sinwongsuwat. (2021) found that the main challenges in teaching English stem from students' low ability

levels, low motivation to learn, and limited learning facilities. This results in suboptimal learning due to limitations in technology and media, especially when delivering material.

Experiences and Challenges of Pre-Service Teachers

Pre-service practice at Andaman coastal schools in Thailand, where support for the development of self-efficacy and professional skills is an important factor in enabling pre-service teachers to cope with classroom realities (Yuso, 2023). The experiences of pre-service teachers in teaching at Thai schools show that there are complex challenges, both in terms of pedagogy and cultural adaptation, especially for non-native Thai teachers. Research conducted by Farrelly & Sinwongsuwat. (2021) shows that teachers with limited experience tend to experience difficulties in delivering material, classroom management, and adapting teaching materials. Especially as pre-service teachers teaching in Thailand, they often face communication barriers with students because they have low comprehension of English instructions. This is supported by the results of an interview conducted by Ameliana et al. (2025) with a teacher at Assa-Adah School, who revealed that students find it quite difficult to understand instructions and new concepts when the material is delivered in English, thus hindering their academic progress. This is because students have limited reading skills in terms of speaking, listening, writing, and even vocabulary and structure in English learning. These observations show that student comprehension in English learning is a challenging aspect.

The Impact of Local Context (Social, Cultural, and School Environment) on EFL Teaching in Southern/Rural Thailand

The social, cultural, and school environment context in southern and rural Thailand greatly influences English language teaching practices. A study conducted by Farrelly and Sinwongsuwat. (2021) found that limited exposure to English outside the classroom, exam-centered learning orientation, and teacher-centered methods hinder authentic student interaction in English. Other research also highlights obstacles in rural schools, such as limited resources, limited teaching time, inadequate teacher training, and irrelevant textbooks. As a result, the communicative approach is difficult to implement, and learning tends to revert to grammar-translation, which results in low student motivation and ability (Nguyen & Suwannabubpha, 2021). Based on the results of a study conducted in Pattani and Songkhla, students choose to be translanguaging and passive in class due to local factors such as the dominance of the Malay language, Islamic cultural values, and social norms that limit public speaking. This is also supported by the experiences of Indonesian pre-service teachers in this region, who encountered obstacles such as students' limited vocabulary, shyness in speaking, lack of cross-cultural training for teachers, and IT limitations (Nuranissa, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using the case study method. The case study approach focused on an in-depth study of a particular issue or situation to explore in detail the experiences and challenges faced by Indonesian English teacher candidates in the context of cross-cultural teaching. The qualitative method was considered appropriate because it could capture the dynamics and complexity of the phenomenon, allowing researchers to understand the experiences and perspectives of participants more comprehensively (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Semi-structured interview guides were used as the main instrument for data collection. These interview guides were adapted from validated instruments developed by Nuranissa (2024), which were specifically designed to identify and explore the challenges of teaching English. This study used data triangulation by collecting data from three Indonesian pre-service English teachers who were doing their practicum at three different junior high schools in Southern Thailand, which focused on examining various aspects related to the learning process, including factors related to students, teaching practices, and the experiences of Indonesian teacher candidates when teaching English at junior high schools in Southern Thailand.

The population in this study consisted of English education students in Indonesia. There were 11 Indonesian students who were undergoing a pre-service program who were placed in various schools in Southern Thailand. However, not all participants were assigned to teach at the junior high school level. This study selected 3 participants as the research sample using a purposive sampling method, who met specific criteria required for this research, meaning that the selected participants met the research characteristics and were relevant to the research topic. The three participants who were sampled for this study met the following criteria: Indonesian pre-service teachers teaching at junior high schools in southern Thailand, responsible for teaching English classes, and capable of articulating their experiences and challenges in detail during interviews. These criteria ensured that the selected participants had direct and relevant experience with the phenomenon being studied and could provide relevant data to answer the research questions.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the main instrument for data collection. This method was chosen because it allowed for the exploration of information while maintaining the focus of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The duration of each interview was 45-60 minutes, and the interviews were recorded using an audio recorder on a smartphone with the participants' consent to facilitate the transcription and data analysis process. During the interview process, Indonesian was used to ensure that participants could understand the questions

well. To collect data, the researcher followed the procedure outlined by Nuranissa (2024). The researcher compiled several questions to be asked of the three pre-service English teachers. The researcher then interviewed the teachers by asking the questions that had been prepared in advance. Each participant's answers were recorded and documented in a file. The researcher qualified and grouped the responses of the pre-service teachers based on the criteria.

In qualitative research, semi-structured interview data analysis was conducted through several systematic steps to explore the meaning of participants' experiences or views. First, the analysis process usually began with transcribing interview recordings, then reading the data repeatedly to understand the context and gain an initial understanding. Next, the researcher conducted a coding process, which involved labeling important parts of the relevant data. These codes were then organized into categories or themes that described the main issues found in the data. The researcher then interpreted the data to understand the relationships between themes, explain the meaning of the data, and relate it to relevant research questions and theories. In this study, the interpretation focused particularly on identifying the challenges faced by pre-service Indonesian teachers in adapting to the English teaching context in Southern Thailand. The final stage was concluding and conducting verification.

FINDING

This chapter presents findings from a study conducted through semi-structured interviews with 3 Indonesian pre-service English teacher candidates who were conducting teaching practice at junior high schools in southern Thailand. Thematic analysis was used to explore several challenges faced by participants during their teaching practice at school, including linguistic challenges, communication barriers, psychological challenges, instructional and curriculum challenges, time constraints, and teaching media and facilities. These challenges will be described in detail based on direct quotes from the participants.

Table 1. List of participants

Participants	Semester	University	Teaching Location
PST1	7	UMKT	Junior High School A at Yala
PST2	5	UM Kendari	Junior High School B at Songkhla
PST3	7	UM Kendari	Junior High School C at Yala

This study involved three Indonesian pre-service English teachers who conducted teaching practice in southern Thailand. PST1 was a seventh-semester student from Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan who taught at Junior High School A in Yala. PST2 is a fifth-semester student from Kendari University

who teaches at Junior High School B in Songkhla, teaching junior high and elementary school students. PST3 is a seventh-semester student from Kendari University who teaches at a Junior High School in Yala. All schools mentioned here have been disguised to protect the confidentiality of those involved in this study.

What Challenges are Faced by Indonesian Pre-Service English Teacher?

Linguistic Challenges

Limited Vocabulary and Pronunciation Difficulties

Based on the findings of the 3 pre-service teachers, they reported that linguistic challenges in the form of students limited English vocabulary, including basic grammar and commonly used words, caused the learning process to proceed slowly.

“They still don’t know even the basic use of a and an” (PST1).

“Almost everyone didn’t know basic objects like pillow, box, ball and wood” (PST2).

PST3 also emphasized that students' vocabulary was generally very limited.

“There are a lot of words that are still limited” (PST3).

In addition, difficulties and errors in pronunciation are also influenced by the students' first language, especially if there are sounds such as v, th, and final consonants in English.

“This happens because of cultural differences when saying something, I mean, pronunciation. For example, in Indonesia or abroad, we say it “apple” but there they call it “apen” (PST1).

“I feel like it’s difficult for them because the vocabulary in English is influenced by their first language. As we know, there’s a mini market in Thailand called 7-Eleven. But most students, and even almost everyone around the school, don’t say that it’s seven eleven, but “sewen elewen”. They read the letter V and articulate it as almost going to the letter W” (PST2).

“There are a lot of most of students who find it very difficult for them to pronounce sounds that are not in Thai or Malay. Like the sound of TH or V, or the end of double consonants” (PST3).

All three participants agreed that students' difficulty in pronouncing English words was influenced by their culture and first language. Pre-service teacher 3 said that many students had difficulty pronouncing sounds that did not exist in Thai or Malay.

Communication Barriers

Language Differences

The language gap between teachers and students is a significant issue that prevents communication during learning. Participants revealed that students are more familiar with "Thai" and "Jawi" (local language) than English, which limits

their ability to understand instructions given in English. One pre-service teacher stated that students tend to prioritize the use of regional languages over English, as expressed by one pre-service teacher:

“First is the difficulty in communicating... because they didn't really get much English language in the first place. Because they are more focused on Thai and Jawi.” (PST1)

In addition, there are differences in the variety of Malay language that affect communication difficulties. Although Malay is sometimes used as an alternative language to facilitate understanding and delivery of material, participants pointed out that the Malay used by students in southern Thailand is different from the Malay commonly used in Malaysia. This issue was highlighted by PST2 and PST3, who stated:

“The majority of the students use Thai, while I use Malay to communicate with them. The challenge is that the Malay I learned is different from the Malay they often use at home. There are even students who can't speak Malay at all, so it's very difficult for them to communicate” (PST2).

“The students there in South Thailand use Patani Malay language, which indeed, the Patani Malay language is a bit different from the other Malay languages” (PST3).

This statement indicates that teachers have made an effort to use Malay as a medium of communication; however, misunderstandings can still occur due to differences in the Malay language when delivering material.

Dependence on Translation

The other communication barrier identified from the interview data was a considerable dependence on translation during classroom learning. Pre-service English teachers often relied on translation to help students understand the material being explained, which also hampered the teaching process and limited direct interaction in the use of English.

One participant explained that students' limited vocabulary requires translation as a tool to help Indonesian pre-service English teachers explain the material. This also affects the learning process.

“Because of the lack of words, I have to open the translation, I have to explain what each word means, and that makes the learning process very slow” (PST1).

Similarly, another participant highlighted that language limitations force them to simplify their language and rely on non-verbal communication and translation.

“Well, this is a challenge for me, because I can't use complex words and I have to use body language or translate it into Thai” (PST3).

These findings show that although translation helps students understand the lesson, it actually reduces opportunities for English communication between Indonesian pre-service english teachers and students. This type of interaction makes interactions between students and teachers less interactive, especially in the use of English during the learning process.

Psychological Challenges

Fear of Making Mistakes

Based on the results of the interview analysis, students' anxiety and fear of making mistakes when practicing English reading are significant challenges that affect communication in the classroom. Participants revealed that although some students are willing to participate actively in learning, other students tend to remain silent because they are afraid and lack confidence. One participant noted that students' emotional responses often prevent them from participating actively in classroom activities.

“But sometimes, other students are too shy, too afraid of making mistakes.” (PST1)

Further analysis by PST2 shows that students' fears are closely related to pronunciation and reading accuracy. Students worry that their English skills may be wrong and cause them to feel embarrassed:

“They are afraid that the way of reading is still wrong, and a lot of students feel embarrassed because the pronunciation is different from how the word is written.” (PST2)

PST3 also emphasized that students' anxiety becomes a real challenge when they have to speak English in front of their friends.

“The students often feel embarrassed and afraid when they want to try to speak English in front of their friends.” (PST3)

These findings suggest that the emotional factors experienced by students, specifically fear and embarrassment associated with making mistakes, play a significant role in English language learning. The three participants described this as a challenging situation they faced as Indonesia pre-service teachers teaching English in southern Thailand, where students showed significant hesitation and social anxiety when asked to communicate in English.

Classroom Engagement

Students Boredom

Based on the analysis of interview data, student boredom emerged as one of the factors affecting classroom engagement. Participants described that students tend to lose interest when learning activities are not interesting or are repetitive. PST 1 mentioned that students often feel uninterested during English lessons.

“They feel that English is boring and feel the activity is too long.” (PST1).

Similarly, PST2 identified that teaching patterns or methods can contribute to student boredom, especially when there is a lack of variety in learning methods:

“They may feel that the teaching pattern or method is monotonous” (PST2).

In line with the opinion of PST2, PST3 emphasized that boredom is also often seen when teaching practices are dominated by lecture methods and teacher-centered approaches:

“A lot of students who are bored, the reason is because there are too many lectures in the teacher-centered method” (PST3).

Overall, these responses indicate that student boredom tends to arise in classroom activities that are perceived as prolonged, repetitive, or dominated by teacher explanations. This condition was repeatedly observed and experienced by Indonesian teacher candidates during their teaching practice.

Lack of Concentration

Based on the results of the interview data analysis, the researchers identified that this was related to the students' low levels of attention and concentration during the learning process. PST1 revealed a number of behaviors observed by students in the classroom.

“Some students are busy playing by themselves. Sleeping and chatting in class with their friends.” (PST1)

In addition, according to PST1, specific factors that cause students to lose concentration during English lessons are:

“They have studied too many languages. First, they have to learn Thai, then they have to learn Malay, and then they learn Arabic.”

Meanwhile, PST3 explains that students' lack of concentration is also related to physical fatigue and their perception of the relevance of the learning material.

“A lot of my students in my class can't concentrate when I deliver the material, maybe the students are tired and they feel the material is not relevant to their daily lives.” (PST3)

Interpretation of these findings reveals that student engagement is manifested through directly observed behavioural and attentional responses (playing alone, sleeping, and chatting), but is also related to more complex contextual factors, such as students' physical condition, multilingual learning load, and their perceptions of the relevance of learning. These findings highlight the challenges faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers in the context of teaching English in Thailand, where they need to understand not only student behaviour but also the factors underlying low student engagement during learning, and need to design effective and responsive learning strategies tailored to student needs.

Instructional and Curriculum Challenges

Curriculum Mismatch

Based on the analysis of interview data, the mismatch between curriculum requirements and students' English language skills emerged as one of the learning challenges faced by pre-service Indonesian teachers. After going through the process of coding, statements related to “material too high,” “low comprehension,” and “curriculum mismatch” were categorized as gaps between the curriculum content and students' English proficiency.

PST1 expressed the level of difficulty of the material in relation to students' comprehension capacity:

"The material is too high while their understanding of English is still very lacking. So, when they are faced with material that matches the curriculum, they cannot understand it." (PST1)

Similarly, PST2 emphasized that curriculum requirements are not in line with students' vocabulary mastery, especially considering their age and learning level.

"That's a challenge in itself, especially for their age, their level, their learning has to follow curriculum. And that's not in line with the vocabulary they master." (PST2)

This interpretation shows that Indonesian pre-service teachers face challenges in balancing their obligation to follow the established curriculum with the reality of their students' limited linguistic abilities. This misalignment creates a significant challenge, where students have difficulty understanding the material due to the gap between the curriculum's expectations and their existing language foundation.

Time Constraints

Limited Teaching Time

The third theme emerged based on data analysis, which showed that there were time constraints in learning that were perceived as insufficient to achieve effective learning objectives. PST1 explained the challenges in delivering material with limited teaching time, especially considering that English is a completely new language for students:

"In one week, we have to explain the same material twice. They are forced to understand one topic in one week, with only one meeting. It's very difficult because English is something totally new for them." (PST1)

PST2 emphasized that a 45-minute learning period is considered ineffective for completing a chapter or even a page of material:

"We only have 45 minutes. I think it's not effective to finish a chapter or even a page. One meeting is almost not enough." (PST2)

Furthermore, PST3 described the implications of time constraints on the delivery of learning material:

"I feel it's not enough because one lesson is 45 minutes long. So, we have to rush the material, and it ends up taking a lot of time." (PST3)

These findings show consistency in the perceptions of all three participants that the available learning time is insufficient to deliver the material in its entirety. This time constraint forces Indonesian pre-service English teachers to rush through the material, thereby sacrificing the quality of students' understanding of English. These findings highlight the challenges faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers in the context of teaching English in Thailand, where they must manage the trade-off between curriculum coverage and depth of learning within a limited time frame, especially when teaching students who have minimal exposure to English.

DISCUSSION

Challenges Faced by Indonesian Pre-Service Teachers in Teaching English at Junior High School in Southern Thailand

The findings show that Indonesian pre-service teachers face six interrelated categories of challenges: linguistic barriers, communication difficulties, psychological barriers, classroom engagement issues, curriculum incompatibility, and time constraints. These findings reflect broader research showing that low proficiency and vocabulary in EFL classrooms. Communication barriers are also reported due to the multilingual background of students. In a context such as Thailand, where multiple languages are used, linguistic interference and dependence on translation significantly hinder classroom interaction, a finding similar to those in other EFL environments, where limited exposure to English outside the classroom and dependence on the first language impede communication during learning. These findings are consistent with the results reported by Nuranissa, (2024), who found that Indonesian pre-service English teachers face significant challenges due to students' limited English proficiency and vocabulary.

These challenges are not isolated incidents but form a complex system in which each difficulty influences and reinforces the others. Linguistic challenges, particularly students' limited vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties influenced by their first languages (Thai, Malay, and Pattani Malay), are in line with previous studies documenting persistent vocabulary deficits among Thai EFL learners (Nguyen & Suwannabubpha, 2021)

The observed patterns of phonological interference—such as the substitution of /v/-/w/ in “seven eleven” to “sewen elewen” and difficulties with the /th/ sound—are examples of L1 transfer phenomena that are well documented in the second language acquisition literature. However, what distinguishes this study is the multilingual complexity in Southern Thailand, where students must master Thai, Malay, Patani Malay, and Arabic before encountering English as a fifth language. This multilingual burden creates what one prospective teacher described

as an excessive cognitive load, which goes beyond the bilingual or trilingual contexts typically studied in Thai EFL research. Previous research also shows that students need to manage multiple languages in EFL classrooms, presenting pedagogical complexities, and teachers need to negotiate the use of English and students' native languages during instruction (Anggoro et al., 2025).

Other teaching challenges, such as the mismatch between the curriculum and student abilities, are also evident. Teachers report having to simplify the material due to students' limited basic skills, meaning that the teaching design is not in line with students' language abilities, which is a major obstacle in the EFL education system where the curriculum expectations exceed student readiness. These findings are in line with the findings of Indonesian pre-service teachers taught by Nuranissa. (2024) in Thailand, who experienced challenges related to students' inadequate language readiness, which hindered the effective implementation of the curriculum. This problem was exacerbated by the classroom environment, which required adjusting the pace of lessons, adding to the complex challenges for Indonesian pre-service teachers in adapting to the classroom learning system. This hinders the optimal delivery of material due to the limited duration of learning.

Factors Contributing to Teaching Challenges

In addition to identifying the teaching challenges experienced by Indonesian pre-service English teachers, this study also explores several factors that contribute to these difficulties, including students' fear of making mistakes, low student participation in class, dependence on translation, and limited teaching time.

First, students' lack of exposure to English outside of formal learning contributes to their level of English proficiency. Thus, limited real-world practice also reduces students' retention and communicative readiness. This is in line with reports of systemic barriers in the English language learning environment in Thailand. Noom-Ura (2013) emphasized that limited exposure to English outside the classroom is a major problem in the context of EFL in Thailand, as students rarely have the opportunity to practice in real communication situations.

Second, the influence of students' first language has also been described as a common obstacle in EFL classrooms, where the use of the mother tongue (L1) often reduces the effectiveness of English teaching and reinforces passive learning habits. Tarrayo et al. (2021) pointed out that the pattern of first language interference, specifically phonological transfer from Thai to English, causes ongoing pronunciation difficulties and affects students' confidence when communicating. This highlights similar socio-cultural and linguistic dynamics in multilingual classrooms.

Third, institutional and educational context factors also contribute significantly to English language learning. Participants reported that inadequate school facilities limited interaction in the classroom. Yuso (2023) reveals that prospective teachers in coastal schools in Thailand face major obstacles related to inadequate school facilities, lack of technological support, limited classroom interaction, and declining teaching quality. Similar observations also explain that other EFL studies, in which technology or electronic media support learning, greatly affect the quality of teaching and student engagement in learning (Ameliana et al., 2025).

Fourth, difficulties related to teaching methods and the learning environment have also been noted; studies show that teacher-centered approaches and limited use of interactive methods hinder student engagement and communicative practices. Nguyen and Suwannabubpha (2021) revealed that traditional pedagogical approaches in Thai secondary schools are teacher-centered, limiting opportunities for interactive learning and authentic language use, which tends to make students passive during the learning process.

These five studies also found that limited teaching time was a challenging factor that made it difficult for Indonesian pre-service teachers to achieve learning objectives effectively. Nuranissa (2024) findings also support the author's findings that the teaching challenges faced by prospective teachers were caused by contextual factors such as student readiness, curriculum design, and classroom realities in an EFL environment. Yuso (2023) also identified that time constraints contribute to the challenges faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers when teaching. This causes them to feel pressured to cover the curriculum, thereby sacrificing student understanding and suboptimal English language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals the difficulties faced by systemically embedded challenges by pre-service English teachers from Indonesia and the factors influencing English teaching in junior high schools in Southern Thailand. The results indicate that pre-service English teachers encounter several challenges, including deficiencies in students' language competencies regarding vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation; communication impediments in multilingual classrooms; diminished student confidence and motivation; and obstacles in fostering active student engagement. These challenges are intensified by educational issues, including the disparity between the curriculum and students' actual language skills, insufficient teaching time, and inadequate learning resources. This study identifies several contributing factors, including students' restricted exposure to English beyond the classroom, the predominant effect of their first language, and institutional

constraints. These findings highlight the intricacy of instructing English in a multilingual EFL environment and the pressing necessity for contextualized and culturally attuned instructional strategies.

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