

EXPLORING INDONESIAN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' STRATEGIES DURING PRACTICUM IN THAI SCHOOLS

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Abstract: Teaching practicum is a component of teacher education programs that provides pre-service teachers (PST) with practical classroom experience. This study investigated the teaching strategies and challenges of Indonesian student teachers during practicum in Thai schools. The study involved 27 participants from 4 universities in Central Java who participated in a one-month internship program. Using qualitative methods, data were collected through open-ended questionnaires and interviews. All 27 participants agreed to complete open-ended questionnaires regarding the challenges experienced during the teaching practicum. From the results of the questionnaire, only 4 participants agreed to be interviewed further regarding teaching strategies. The results obtained from filling out the questionnaire about the challenges showed that 89% experienced language barriers, 8% were constrained in learning media, and 4% had difficulty finding halal food. On the other hand, the results obtained from interviews show that PST apply teaching strategies using digital media, printed media, and ice-breaking. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the use of strategies in teaching must be appropriate and can make students understand the material presented by PST due to the limited language and media.

Keywords: *pre-service teachers; teachers' strategies; challenges; teaching practicum.*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is an integral part of shaping professional teachers. The training begins at the university, where pre-service teachers (PST) practice their teaching skills at schools in the neighboring area of their campus. There are challenges when PST practices teaching, such as differences between theory and practices and adjusting to the new role. The language barrier becomes one of the biggest challenges in cross-national teaching practices. In Southeast Asia, English is taught as a compulsory first foreign language in countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. These countries are the Expanding Circle of language learners, as indicated by (Yuniar Diyanti & Madya, 2021). Being the first foreign language to be taught at schools where the learners are speakers of other

languages, challenges can be heightened for the PST, whose mother tongue is not English. PST must learn to manage the class, choose appropriate teaching strategies, and recognize learners' English skills are minimal and the PST do not speak their learners' mother tongue, the language barrier is hard to penetrate.

Under the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum or Freedom to Learn Curriculum, Indonesian universities where PST are trained are encouraged to achieve the Key Performance Indicators (KPI). One of these programs is that higher education aims for students to gain experience outside the campus, domestically and abroad. The students must study and practice off campus for a maximum of 40-semester credits, plus an extra 20 semester credits outside of the study program. This program is designed to

overcome problems in the education system and improve students' readiness to enter the workforce in the 21st century and society 5.0 (Khusniyah et al., 2023). The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum concepts is appropriate today since the 5.0 society is becoming more educated in technology innovations that might help solve social problems (Marisa, 2021). Each university must establish and apply the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum per the graduate profile and Learning Outcomes in each study program (Kholik et al., 2022). The results of his research (Aji & Putra, 2021), reveal that the faculty must take steps to determine the implementation of activities in the semester that are considered under the teaching and learning process in the campus environment so that the designed curriculum can impact the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. In their research, Beshir et al., (2023) revealed that there is a structure to be established by expert educators to lead teaching internship programs through strong and collaborative college relationships between partners and colleges.

In 2022/2023, Indonesian universities and the Al-Hidayah Waqaf Foundation for Education and Social Development in Hatyai, Thailand, collaborated to establish a one-month internship program. More than 40 students from several majors attended the internship program in Thailand. Apart from gaining experience outside the campus, this program also aimed at enabling Indonesian PST to develop their teaching skills so they can be ready to enter the workforce later. This program is one of the implementations of Universitas PGRI Semarang to fulfill the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy program for students to study and teaching internships outside the campus which is a campus partner. In the research of Tuasikal et al., (2021), found that teaching skills improve progressively, and the MBKM program gives students the hope to seek more experiences. The overseas internship program also enhances PST professional competencies such as the development of communicative, and pedagogical competencies, new experiences in education, career goals, and opportunities (Auni et al., 2022). This program is to promote PST competencies in ASEAN.

In Indonesia, teaching internships are a mandatory activity undertaken by students majoring in teaching and education. Pre-service students in the program complete the requirements to become professional teachers

(Ugalingan et al., 2021). Mentoring is necessary for several objectives worldwide, ranging from Initial Teacher Education (ITE) to senior leadership development. PST teaching experience is an important component of ITE programs. This program allows PST to gain authentic experiences in the education world and learn from experienced teachers. Commonly, PST joins teaching internships in schools. Duties and responsibilities like that of a professional teacher are challenging skills a PST must master. According to Kiok et al., (2021), PST teaching practicum experience can be categorized into intrapersonal and interpersonal development. This will show the changes when they are before the teaching internship and after the teaching internship. In addition, the practicum experience also depends on the institution or place of internship.

At the start, they were introduced to the class structure and classroom and how to run it. They will learn how schools operate, the administrative duties of a teacher, how to manage class, and other skills required by a teacher. Miranda & Wahyudin, (2023) argues that the supervising teacher must provide good coaching and monitoring to develop student teachers into certified instructors. Another argument prevalent in the literature from (Ellis et al., 2020), it reported that PST thought senior teachers or university lecturers who serve as mentors frequently need a clearer grasp of their roles. In addition, (Janu & Kuswandono, 2023) explained in their research that the "Project Kepemimpinan" program created by the Ministry of Education is one of the mandatory components of teacher development in Indonesia. This program can have a very noticeable impact on PST. Lautenbach & Heyder, (2019) also reported that PST reflects on their learning experiences, such as learning styles and motivation to apply their teaching skills.

The practicum is an important skill and a vital component of the teacher education program. Teaching practicum is an important stage for PST to enhance their learning and prepare them to become professional teachers (Saied & Rusu, 2022). Studies on PST have been conducted for a long time, as this is a significant topic to cover in education. Chasanah & Sumardi, (2022) conducted a study of the two Indonesian pre-service EFL teachers during the teaching practicum program in Thailand. The results showed that language socialization experiences impact PST personal and professional identities during international teaching practicum programs.

As PST embark on the journey of shaping their identity, losing communication skills can hurt the process because language is a major part of a person's identity features. Thus, overcoming the language barrier became paramount in this particular study. Another experience in Indonesian PST was conducted by (Hasymi & Nurkamto, 2023) who found that three Indonesian PST faced challenges in terms of cultural assimilation and language barriers during their international practicum in the Czech Republic, Thailand, and Malaysia. The active engagement in teaching and learning activities that these challenges present can significantly increase self-confidence and self-assurance. The studies above covered most significant the biggest challenges among the PST, which were language barriers and communication issues. From this perspective, this present study addresses how the PST overcomes the difficulties of language barriers, what kind of teaching strategies they use to tackle the issues, and the overall process of teaching English in Thailand. Practical teaching activities and techniques can benefit PST in the early phases of the teaching profession.

A teaching strategy is a plan, or method that teachers employ to assist students learn effectively (Richards & Pun, 2022). These teaching strategies also relate to teaching styles and classroom management (Ayatollahi & Ferdosi, 2021). PST have learned the teaching theories and even practiced in a micro-teaching class where they had to prepare lesson plans and select the appropriate teaching strategies. They worked in controlled situations and settings, working with their peers and lecturers to become a teacher. However, the teaching practice contexts were inside the campus, and the students were their peers. It was not a real situation where they dealt with actual students. The PST had no exposure to an actual school, students, or situations where they had to think and act quickly. Teaching strategies are techniques used by instructors and students in specific classes and for certain goals. It should be noted that a strategy that is effective for one material is not necessarily effective for another material (Hayati et al., 2021).

There are various types of strategies that PST could employ, such as antecedent strategies. Antecedent methods are tactics that may help instructors control students' disruptive behavior, which is one of the most challenging difficulties in classroom management, by modifying the learning environment to induce problematic

behavior (Obergruesser & Stoeger, 2020). Pariska, (2022) conducted a study and analysis of the employment of antecedent strategies for managing behavioral challenges in EFL classroom management. The study demonstrated that using the antecedent technique in a classroom involves three essential elements for the teacher to follow: completing a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), explicitly elucidating the desired behavior, and decisively determining preventative measures. Another teaching strategy research from Aprilia et al., (2023) found that early childhood teachers apply strategies to teaching English to early childhood students to manage interdisciplinary teaching activities. The research showed that the teachers use various techniques such as games, songs, interactive methods, effective teaching practices, and pedagogical approaches that can better manage children's teaching activities. Khalisa et al., (2022) found that four novice EFL Indonesian lecturers used several strategies, such as grouping students into groups with diverse abilities, adjusting the material to the student's proficiency level, and designing activities that encourage critical thinking. Deni & Fahriany, (2020) conducted a study of the teaching strategy of teaching vocabulary by two English Teachers at the Qur'an Learning Center, one of the elementary schools in South Jakarta. The results found that they used media such as videos, pictures, games, and songs to attract students' interest in learning new vocabulary in English.

On the other hand, PST also had challenges or obstacles that they faced during their teaching internships at Thai schools. This challenge is the second discussion in this study. Generally, these challenges are often found in both domestic and overseas PST. The overseas PST, especially those in this study, admitted to many language barriers. According to Kadir et al., (2021), one of the challenges of teaching practicum is the lack of communication, the interaction between PST and students can have an impact on social and personal development. Thus, communication is one of the main keys for learning to run smoothly. In addition, Shah et al., (2021) found that PST has constraints regarding the lack of teaching aids or learning media. Obstacles like this are the second hurdle PST must overcome when teaching internships abroad. But despite all these challenges, teaching internships make them more confident, and experienced, and have a more professional educational spirit.

Based on previous studies, many have

discussed some of the experiences and challenges of teaching, especially abroad. Starting from language barriers, and media, to the environment that exists abroad. However, it is not only the challenges that are discussed in this research. Teaching strategies are one of the topics that are discussed in this research. We can see that teaching strategies are very important for PST. From previous studies, it can be seen that the topic of teaching strategies only focuses on a single class. However, what if the teaching strategy focuses on students who come from abroad and we as PST have a lack of communication? Given the gaps in the previous research, it is imperative to examine the teaching strategies PST use when teaching abroad with the challenges they face. Therefore, this study aims to identify the teaching strategies challenges, and solutions of Indonesian PST during their teaching internships in Thai schools.

METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative research method to gather the perceptions of the PST. The choice of reflective studies was because it provided rich data on the participants' experiences. A qualitative study was deemed most suitable because it acknowledged the subjective nature of the problem and the diverse experiences of the participants (Tamayo et al., 2020). This approach enabled a sample of participants who were willing to fill out questionnaires and be interviewed to dig deeper into their direct involvement with the international internship program in Thailand.

This study involved 27 participants from four universities in Central Java who participated in a month-long internship program in Thai schools. They filled out the questionnaire and were invited for interviews. They aged from 19 to >23 years old during the internship and were in their second to eighth semester of their study. They were in different age groups occupying different stages of learning in their university. Details of the participants are presented in Figure 1.

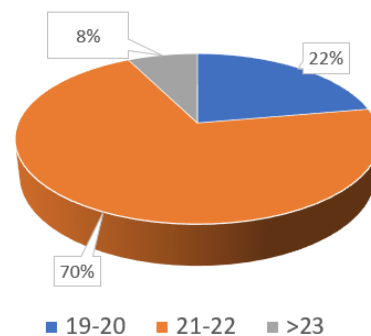


Figure 1. *Participants age range*

One of the requirements for participating in this internship program was that the participants must be at least in the second year of their studies to have completed the required course and subjects as PST. They also had to pass the selection test prior to their departure to Thailand. From the questionnaire, the majors of the PST are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Pre-service teachers' majors*

No	PST' Major	Percentage
1	English education	74.07
2	Primary school education	14.81
3	Mathematics education	11.11

There were more PST from English education majors because they had better English language mastery compared to those from other majors. Naturally, they became more competitive in terms of language which enabled them to pass the selection test.

Five Thai schools were assigned to be the schools for practices. The PST distribution to those schools was unequal because of the school sizes; one was bigger than the others, thus requiring more PST. Table 2 presents the distribution of PST to the schools where they were doing their internship.

Table 2. *Practice school name*

No	School pseudonyms	Number of PST
1	Wat Klong	5
2	Kalla	3
3	Phattna	11
4	Satit	6
5	Yalla	2
Total PST		27

The purpose of the questionnaire is to collect data that can answer the obstacles the PST encountered during practicum in Thai schools, how the PST overcame the obstacle, and inform consent to be interviewed further. The data that has been obtained shows that of the 27 participants who filled out the questionnaire, there

were 89% of PST were contained in language, 8% were constrained in learning media, and 4% had challenges in the environment, and difficulty finding halal food.

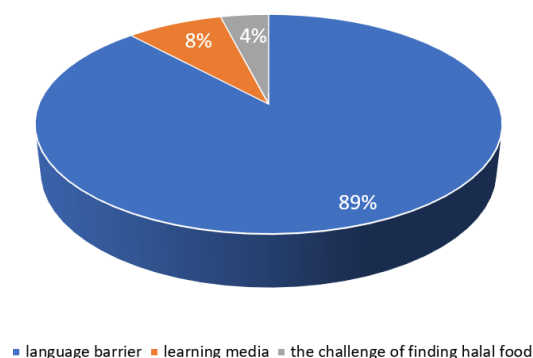


Figure 2. *The obstacles by PST during practicum in Thai*

Purposive sampling was implemented to select the questionnaire and interview criteria, such as being willing to be interviewed, having teaching

experiences in Thai schools, and encountering problems during the internship program. All 27 participants met the criteria. According to Hossan et al., (2023), purposive sampling is when a person is chosen intentionally based on considerations for reasons of knowing their story, knowing certain traits they possess, and is used for qualitative research. However, only four of them welcomed the interview invitation. In addition to the questionnaire, the interview also had purposive sampling applied to determine the participants who could be interviewed, such as foreign language acquisition and competence scores at least rated B1 in CEFR. From the questionnaire data, there were only 4 participants who met these requirements. The participants who agreed to be interviewed had previously taught in elementary and junior high schools in Central Java.

Table 3. *Interview participants' details*

No	University	Major	Pseudonyms	Gender	Name of School
1	University A	English Education	PST1	Female	Wat Klong
2	University B	English Education	PST2	Male	Phattna
3	University C	Primary School Teacher Education	PST3	Female	Satit
4	University D	Mathematics Education	PST4	Male	Phattna

PST data were collected in the form of narratives and interview transcripts. Their reflective practice was taken into account as an essential strategy for becoming a professional teacher. The steps of data analysis began by closely looking into data that were collected from November 2023 to January 2024. Data were transcribed from interview sessions. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and were conducted online using Google Meet and Zoom for approximately 45b minutes for each participant. This method aims to ensure clarity and avoid misunderstanding the participants' answers. The questions in the questionnaire were used to map the participants' demography and background. The authors provide new and more diverse insight, such as some of the obstacles and how to overcome the obstacles experienced by PST during teaching internships and what teaching strategies PST uses. The interview aimed to follow up with the respondents regarding teaching strategies after filling out the questionnaire about the challenges experienced during teaching practice at Thai schools. After that, the transcript was checked thoroughly and carefully to find patterns, themes, and interesting information from the participants. The themes

were later coded according to the themes found in the script.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research's experience and reflective study are from PST 1,2,3, and 4 during the internship in Thai schools. They described their teaching teachers' strategies and challenges during the internship period. Several crucial findings were unveiled from the narratives. Which are grouped into themes. The first topic from the interview session was related to the choices of teaching strategies. Different PST employed different strategies depending on where they practiced, their students' class level, language skills, and overall communication competence. What matters in this aspect of teaching is how to make the students understand the lessons delivered by the PST.

The teaching strategies by PST

In teaching practice, PST uses different strategies when teaching, many variations of experiences make a reflection for PST. Choosing the type of teaching strategy requires first understanding the student's learning styles, but this is often difficult to do in a class with a large number of students

(Deocampo, 2020). Excellent and successful PST in other countries are teachers who can control the students when teaching and learning activities. Thus, employing appropriate teaching strategies maximized the students' learning experiences. In the world of education, a PST must understand how to properly implement teaching strategies. What is taught to students is not only theory but

also practice making things, role-playing, singing, and more (Astutik et al., 2021). PST must master teaching methods, especially for children who cannot speak English and PST who lack communication in English.

Table 2 below presents the dominant themes of teaching strategies employed by the PST.

Table 1. Choices of teaching strategies

No	Pseudonyms	Teaching Strategies
1	PST1	Make some groups and digital tools.
2	PST2	Use PowerPoint Slides and write on the blackboard. Do the ice-breaking before starting the learning.
3	PST3	Do the ice-breaking such as singing and dancing. Use books and makeshift material such as origami paper.
4	PST4	Use books, and Thai money (baht).

Digital tools

The use of different teaching strategies produced varied data. For the internship program, PST-1 taught elementary and junior high school students, suggesting that she specialized in teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). The explanation is accompanied by the claim that students from elementary to high school are already using digital tools such as iPads for teaching and learning media.

“...I usually form some groups first after which the students listen to the material I explain. I used digital tools for primary and high school students.” (PST-1)

This experience from PST-1 has a similar idea as introduced by (Loizou, 2022), through perceptions and experiences between teachers and students. It shows that the use of digital tools is the most effective to use during teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The digital tools can support; 1) flips, 2) activities in class, 3) communication, 4) entrance tickets, 5) collaboration, and 6) assessment. Although Loizu's study had more emphasis on the use of digital tools, the importance of learning experiences was the same.

Making groups

In contrast with Loizu's work above, PST-1 applied a slightly different learning method to match the availability of school infrastructure and learners' skills. PST-1 formed several groups, the purpose of this group formation was to make learning more efficient. Once the students had been assigned to their respective groups, they would listen to PST-1's explanation of the material and then work on the assignments given

to them. The use of teaching strategies such as making groups was supported by Komang Arie Suwastini, (2021) whose findings stated that by using this grouping, teachers can meet the best interests of students by facilitating differentiated teaching, which aims to engage students equally and regardless of their differences. This teaching strategy was considered to be effective as it fostered independence and acceptance. Differentiated learning was an appropriate strategy for Thai students. Due to their background differences, inherently they had different learning styles and understanding of material. Furthermore, encouraging differentiated learning helped the PST to manage the class better, as the load of responsibility was shared with the group leader. Breaking down the class into smaller groups allowed students to learn more exclusively based on the similarity of the group member's learning styles. PST could focus more on managing the class and reduce the stress of the language barrier because the students could solve the problems by using their mother tongue to communicate, thus resulting in a better understanding of the materials.

Group works allowed the students to share their ideas and thoughts with their peers. This alleviated the pressure of working on the lessons on their own. By encouraging group work, students can explore more than their basic skills. They could learn how to work with their friends, share responsibilities, make decisions, and present their work in front of the class.

Power Point

Teaching media is an indispensable part of teaching strategies. Bringing some teaching media made the job less burdensome because

PST had objects, manuals, or files to show the students that help them explain the materials. Despite the advance of technology, writing the instructions and materials on a whiteboard was proven to be a helpful strategy, as indicated in the narrative below.

“I teach using the manual provided by the school. Sometimes I also use PowerPoint Slides to teach because I teach junior high school students, but I mostly write on the blackboard.” (PST-2)

PST-2 used the learning media that the school had provided, which was a book. PST -2 continued the learning provided by the supervising teacher. Unlike PST-1, PST-2 taught junior high school students by using PowerPoint Slides as his teaching media. These strategies align with previous research results that emphasize the advantages of PowerPoint Slides in teaching strategies. For example, Wirawan & Gading, (2022) PowerPoint Slides is a multisensory-oriented learning media that aims to improve student motivation and learning outcomes. It has undergone a series of development stages. Experts in the field have validated it. In addition, Vanisree et al., (2024) they also argued that using PowerPoint Slides can help language learning in terms of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. PowerPoint slides are not the main media he uses, but whiteboards are the main learning media.

Whiteboards

In this era of advanced technology, whiteboards are still often used in schools. For example, PST-2 usually uses whiteboards for his learning media. This approach is in line with the recommendation of Shi et al., (2019) that the use of interactive whiteboards can positively affect students' cognitive learning outcomes compared to traditional teaching and learning activities. The mediated teaching actions of interactive whiteboards are visualizing and highlighting teaching content for children; manipulating objects, coloring, and animating are aspects of the multimodality of interactive whiteboards (Bourbour, 2023). Using the whiteboards for learning media is one of the easiest interactive ways between teachers and students. The effect that occurs when a teacher writes on the whiteboard will make all students pay more attention and become quieter because they only focus on one goal, writing.

Ice breaking

According to Table 2, PST-2 also added that he did ice-breaking.

“...I do ice-breaking first, such as asking each other how they are doing or having a full chat using English so that they are motivated.” (PST-2)

Ice breaking is an important activity to help students and teachers get acquainted and form a learning community that encourages students to communicate more comfortably (Saragih et al., 2023). Sometimes learners came to class not having the courage to learn and became less interested in the lesson. Ice breaking helped them to interact more casually and get into the activities without having to jump into the heavy topics head-on. Teachers engage their students by asking small, fun questions to start and move to a more serious topic as time goes on.

PST-2 varied his class by asking each other how they were and chatting in English. PST-2 also emphasized that the purpose of using full English when doing ice-breaking was to motivate students. ŞAT et al., (2022) stated that game-based learning methods or ice-breaking are used to eliminate students' boredom and to increase their learning motivation. Ice-breaking in the middle of the day can be a powerful tactic to combat boredom for students, the selection of singing and dancing activities in this strategy is an excellent way to stimulate their motoric system.

“...At the beginning of the lesson, I do ice-breaking to stimulate their motoric brain, such as singing and dancing. They were very enthusiastic because I invited them to sing and dance. The songs I play are usually traditional Indonesian songs.” (PST-3)

During the interview, PST-3 said using ice breaking was superb as it aimed at stimulating the students' motor skills and comprehension. In addition, she also introduced Indonesian culture by showing traditional Indonesian songs. This statement is accurate evidence of the belief that using ice-breaking such as singing and dancing, can stimulate students' motoric brains. PST-3 strongly believed that incorporating songs and dances into their educational style could create an enjoyable learning environment and did not bore students quickly. The use of dance was also credited for building positive relationships between teachers and students. In Spain, songs are

included in the curriculum policy as curriculum content and as pedagogical tools, especially in foreign language learning (Casal de la Fuente & Gillanders, 2022). This physical activity also encouraged kinesthetic learners who enjoy moving around and learning better by doing physical actions, which, once again, was evidence of how the PST supported and encouraged differentiated learning for their students.

Printed media

Being a PST requires creativity and resourcefulness to ensure that the learning process runs smoothly without interruption in any form. In the school where they did internships, sometimes there were insufficient learning materials that demanded the PST to create their teaching media. If one was available such as books, they could use it for the classroom activities, however, sometimes the course materials required something else to make the class more interesting. This was the part where PST had to be creative, as indicated in the statement below.

“The learning media I use are usually books from school. Sometimes I also make teaching materials from makeshift materials such as origami paper.” (PST-3)

PST-3 used books provided by the school but sometimes she created her teaching media from makeshift materials such as origami paper. These teaching media were used for teaching in class and were considered to make it easier for the teacher to explain the material to students. Origami is an ancient art from Japan in the form of paper and was used throughout history to teach math, science, art, and motor skills. This is supported by Assis & Donovan, (2020), to support students in gaining understanding and fluency in practice, the use of origami practice allows students' memory to be better. Not only that making origami require patience and concentration, but this activity encourages fine motor skills like folding small-sized paper into various objects. Origami also has a positive impact on psychology and helps reduce stress and anxiety in students (Salehudin Marji et al., 2023). origami is proven to foster creativity, and critical thinking, and make students calmer. An example of how to use origami in a certain subject was to follow steps and procedures, which are usually available in genre-based writing or reading for procedure texts. This way, learners could enjoy making the origami paper as well as developing

their English language skills.

PST-4 said that he used Thai money to teach, this media also makes it easier for him to teach about currency and makes the students he teaches easily understand what PST-4 has explained. Thai money is more varied ranging from the lowest value of 1 baht to the highest value of 1000 baht. PST-4 explained from 1 baht to 1000 baht the students were asked to show the money they had. There were 20 baht, 50 baht, and 100 baht bills. According to Yuwono, (2020), the use of money as a learning medium at an early age is one way to introduce children to the purpose of how money is exchanged for goods and services. The use of money as a medium is a traditional learning that is still often done by math teachers in Indonesia.

“...I used books there and sometimes use different teaching materials, for example, money. When explaining about currency, I use Thai money (baht) as teaching material.” (PPT-4)

PST-4 said that he uses books as learning media. To ensure that all students understand the material PST-4 explains, PST-4 uses Thai money for teaching materials. In detail, he observes and ensures that all students can receive the material he explains. By using Thai money, it can improve students' understanding of the currency material.

The challenges and solutions by PST

The experiences PST had during the internship program improved greatly from teaching experiences, learning new cultures, Thai food experiences, and so on. Challenges were certainly memorable experiences for PST when teaching at school. Putri, (2020) also agreed that most of Indonesian EFL teachers were enthusiastic about teaching English in Thailand in order to get teaching experience overseas and enhance their English proficiency. They also had to think about what strategies and teaching media they could use, what learning media, and what kind of teaching-learning style they would provide for the students. These must have clear learning objectives because understanding the material taught to students is the key to success when teaching. Not only challenges, they also had to think of the best solution for the students.

“ I had a language barrier when teaching in Thailand because it was a regular school where the language was Thai.” (PST-1)

This difficulty was the main difficulty for the

PST in Thailand. They knew that English was the first foreign language to learn at school. Teaching at a regular school where the language used for daily communication was Thai was challenging because the PST did not speak Thai, and the students did not speak English. This sparked the challenge where language barriers became the obstacle to successful classroom teaching. In their research Kopchak et al., (2022), found that the effectiveness of using English as an introductory language in the educational process. For example, in this case, the Thai mentor teacher explained to PST what to do when teaching and what to teach. The PST sometimes did not fully grasp what the mentor intended to say and it caused errors in the classroom practice. What the mentor wanted was not understood correctly, leading to things such as missing class schedules because of the changing hours, teaching different topics because PST had low comprehension of what the Thai mentor had explained and sometimes, the students end up not getting the best lesson possible because of the language barrier. The communication problems with the Thai mentor were not limited to their explanation about how to teach, but they expanded to how to manage the class. The mentor asked PST to adapt and adjust their communication style after meeting the students. So, even when they used different languages, understanding was built between PST and students through the means of pictures and teaching media.

Generally, PST took the knowledge they had acquired before arriving in Thailand to manage the class, such as greeting. PST were taught to use language of instructions, and simple commands to regulate the class and to ensure that the class ran smoothly. Sometimes, PST had to be repeated several times to make the students understand what they meant. Using pictures and teaching media helped the PST to overcome the challenges because they could point at the picture and use simple vocabulary understood by the students.

Another issue that arose from the language barrier came from the students. PST delivered the lesson using limited English, making it hard for the students to understand the material presented by PST. This statement was conveyed by PST-3 in the results of her interviews.

“There are still many students who find it difficult to understand the material I convey; this is a challenge that I often get almost every day.” (PST-3)

Understanding the material was indeed the main thing that PST should pay attention to, considering that PST could only use English and Malay to communicate with students. From the interview data, it showed that 70% of students could understand the material and the remaining 30% did not understand the material, or only partially understood the material presented. Even though they did not understand the material taught PST-3, they were still excited to follow the lessons.

Students' enthusiasm was a critical element of the learning success despite the limitations of language and communication. It was an advantage for the Indonesian PST that their mother tongue is Indonesian, and the students in the school speak Malay. Those two languages are of a group, come from the same roots, and share many similar vocabularies. This way, the communication barrier was not very challenging as the PST could switch between English and Malay, and students also used both languages to ask and answer questions.

Cultural values in Thailand greatly influence the learning style of the students, such as strong obedience and respect for the teachers. This behavior manifested in how students followed every instruction without a shadow of a doubt. PST encountered students who were reluctant to express their opinions as they preferred a passive learning style to the Western one. But this did not make PST give up on teaching, PST-3 revealed that;

“Sometimes, I use body gestures to make it easier to communicate with the students. Often, I also ask the teacher to help me translate” (PST-3)

PST-3 also used a third person to help communicate with students there. In addition, she also used body gestures to facilitate communication. Even though she had difficulties communicating in English, she could overcome her obstacles by using her body to speak. These gestures can reinforce the message or provide information to the listener, which is more important when providing additional information rather than redundant information for the spoken message (Sparrow et al., 2020). The use of gestures was also supported by Freitas & Andrade Neto, (2023) where their findings state that using gestures between students and teachers can be an important interactional resource for

instruction as well as assessment of students learning, and effectively, students use gesture capture to demonstrate understanding of temporal concepts. Another challenge was also explained by PST-2 in his interview;

“I had a hard time finding food that suited the Indonesian tongue. The food there is sour and salty while in Indonesia it is more sweet and salty.” (PST-2)

In his interview, PST-2 said that he had difficulty finding food that suited the Indonesian palate. He was not used to food that tended to have a salty and sour taste. This problem was often encountered by many foreigners and they had to adjust their tongues to the food there. Although this issue was not related to academic endeavors, food fell into the well-being of the participants as it could lead to health issues. Consequently, when a PST had a digestion problem, it led to their concentration in teaching and disrupting the teaching process.

Challenges unrelated to health issues happened in the classroom where PST taught the students. Sometimes, PST wanted to show an object, demonstrate an action, or perform a certain action in the classroom. However, the lack of learning facilities, teaching media, and creativity, as expressed by PST-4:

“... I am very constrained in teaching media. When I arrived in Thailand, I didn't bring any teaching media with me because of luggage capacity, and I didn't know how to teach in Thailand.” (PST-4)

As explained in Table 2 on teaching strategies, PST-4 used books and Thai money for his learning media. In the interview, he explained that he experienced problems with learning media. He used makeshift materials by borrowing Thai money from the students to explain the topic of money. PST did what it took to make the learning process of their students successful. Many ways to overcome the language barrier, creativity to design appropriate teaching media, and overcoming personal problems showed that the PST was resilient and strong. The challenges they faced made them think of ways to overcome them. Conducted the study, Poonputta & Intasena, (2022) revealed that teachers face fewer challenges in teaching mathematics than primary school teachers.

In summary, the findings revealed a variety of strategies used by the PST, including utilizing

digital tools, forming groups, using whiteboards, and PowerPoint presentations, incorporating ice-breaking activities, creating makeshift materials, and even leveraging real-world objects like currency. These strategies aim to enhance students' understanding and cater to diverse learning styles. For instance, forming groups fostered collaboration and communication among students, while using digital tools like PowerPoint presentations made the lesson more engaging.

The use of these strategies by PST resulted in several positive impacts on students. Ice-breaking activities helped create a more relaxed and enjoyable learning environment while incorporating songs and dances catered to kinesthetic learners. Additionally, using real-world objects like money for demonstrations proved to be an effective way to explain concepts related to currency. Overall, these varied strategies addressed the challenge of limited resources and language barriers, ultimately promoting student engagement and understanding. The authors highlight the importance of PST developing a repertoire of teaching strategies that can be adapted to different learning environments and student needs. The ability to leverage readily available resources and technology, as demonstrated by the PST in this study, is a valuable skill for future teachers. Furthermore, the experience of overcoming language barriers through gestures, visuals, and incorporating students' native languages can equip PST with valuable classroom management and communication skills.

The PST employed several strategies to overcome language barriers. These strategies included using simple English vocabulary and commands, employing visuals and realia, leveraging gestures and body language, and seeking assistance from mentors or students who spoke both languages. Additionally, the shared roots of Indonesian and Malay languages provided a communication bridge for the Indonesian PST.

The teaching strategies employed by the PST can be particularly beneficial for students in language learning environments with limited communication due to language barriers. The use of visuals, realia, gestures, and a variety of activities can enhance student comprehension and engagement despite language limitations. By incorporating these strategies, teachers can create a more inclusive learning environment that caters to diverse learning styles and promotes successful

language acquisition.

The six aspects of media and teaching strategies above were the main tools used by PST during their teaching internship in Thai schools. Although mastering the ability to communicate using English must be the main point when we do teaching internships abroad, mastering teaching strategies, pedagogy, and the skillful use of media are also points that must be mastered. That way, students will better understand what we are saying. Bayram Özdemir et al., (2024) in his research also said that in-service and PST are the number one people who contribute to promoting civic norms and values, so training or seminars before becoming a teacher are very important to follow to advance the educational environment. Therefore, some PST who are preparing for internships and preparing to become a teacher, need to improve their understanding by using more effective teaching strategies, being good at using learning media, and improving English communication skills for internships abroad.

CONCLUSION

The study's conclusions show that each PST had its teaching strategies and challenges during the practicum at Thai schools. This is based on the data processing results in the previous chapter which shows that media selection greatly affects students' understanding of the material presented. Digital tools and print media were the media chosen by PST were language barriers. Out of 100%, 89% of PST had a language barrier. Future research can examine the teaching strategies carried out by teachers abroad in terms of media, approaches to students, how to motivate students, and others. In addition, the author provides recommendations for future researchers to take teaching training, practice English before interning abroad, and understand better the latest concepts of teaching strategies

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Exploring Indonesian pre-service teachers' strategies during practicum in Thai schools