

## Indonesian Preservice Teachers' Perception as Non-Thai Speakers in Teaching English to Junior High School in Thailand

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**Abstract:** This study meticulously investigates the extensive experiences of Indonesian preservice teachers who, as non-native Thai speakers, instruct Thai junior high school students in the English language. The educators' positive views are revealed through a thorough analysis of the questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The study emphasizes the substantial influence of teachers on student motivation, active participation, and comprehension of the English language, underscoring their pivotal role in shaping Thai language education. The study emphasizes the intricate obstacles that Indonesian teachers encounter when dealing with cultural disparities, linguistic disparities, and variations in student proficiency. These challenges assess the educators' ability to adapt and their resilience. Despite the intricacies of the environment, they employ efficacious pedagogical techniques that transcend linguistic and cultural obstacles. Their teaching style is effective due to their adaptability. These findings have broader implications that extend beyond the field of education, offering valuable insights for a range of individuals and groups involved. The adaptability and efficacy demonstrated by Indonesian teachers can serve as a source of inspiration for educators to integrate cross-cultural sensitivity into their teaching practices. Policymakers ought to take into account the presence of cross-cultural teaching environments and formulate educational policies that are both supportive and inclusive. These findings can assist teacher training programs in developing specific interventions that aid teachers in navigating diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. This research sheds light on the way towards a more refined and culturally attuned English language instruction in Thailand. Despite the challenges of cross-cultural teaching, non-native Indonesian preservice teachers who speak Thai have demonstrated encouraging outcomes. Acknowledging and commemorating this ability to bounce back from adversity can assist the educational community in fostering a diverse and interconnected network of language education that transcends national boundaries.

### KataKunci:

Pengajaran lintas budaya, pendidikan bahasa Inggris, siswa SMP. Guru bahasa non-pribumi, Tantangan dan persepsi guru

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini dengan cermat menyelidiki pengalaman ekstensif para calon guru di Indonesia yang, sebagai non-penutur asli bahasa Thailand, mengajar siswa sekolah menengah pertama Thailand dalam bahasa Inggris. Pandangan positif para pendidik terungkap melalui analisis menyeluruh terhadap kuesioner dan wawancara mendalam. Studi ini menekankan pengaruh besar guru terhadap motivasi siswa, partisipasi aktif, dan pemahaman bahasa Inggris, menggarisbawahi peran penting mereka dalam membentuk pendidikan bahasa Thailand. Studi ini menekankan kendala rumit yang dihadapi guru di Indonesia ketika menghadapi kesenjangan budaya, kesenjangan bahasa, dan variasi dalam kemahiran siswa. Tantangan-tantangan ini menilai kemampuan pendidik untuk beradaptasi dan ketahanan mereka. Terlepas dari kerumitan lingkungannya, mereka menggunakan teknik pedagogi yang mujarab yang melampaui hambatan bahasa dan budaya. Gaya mengajar mereka efektif karena kemampuan beradaptasi mereka. Temuan-temuan ini mempunyai implikasi lebih luas yang melampaui bidang pendidikan, dan menawarkan wawasan berharga bagi sejumlah individu dan kelompok yang terlibat. Kemampuan beradaptasi dan kemandirian yang ditunjukkan oleh guru-guru Indonesia dapat menjadi sumber inspirasi bagi para pendidik untuk mengintegrasikan kepekaan lintas budaya ke dalam praktik pengajaran mereka. Para pengambil kebijakan



harus mempertimbangkan keberadaan lingkungan pengajaran lintas budaya dan merumuskan kebijakan pendidikan yang mendukung dan inklusif. Temuan ini dapat membantu program pelatihan guru dalam mengembangkan intervensi spesifik yang membantu guru dalam menavigasi konteks bahasa dan budaya yang beragam. Penelitian ini menyoroti jalan menuju pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang lebih halus dan selaras dengan budaya di Thailand. Meskipun terdapat tantangan dalam pengajaran lintas budaya, calon guru yang bukan penduduk asli Indonesia yang bisa berbahasa Thailand telah menunjukkan hasil yang menggembirakan. Mengakui dan memperingati kemampuan untuk bangkit kembali dari keterpurukan dapat membantu komunitas pendidikan dalam membina jaringan pendidikan bahasa yang beragam dan saling berhubungan yang melampaui batas-batas nasional.

## INTRODUCTION

Language is crucial in shaping human social interactions and serves as a fundamental instrument in communication. Our existence is rooted in and shaped by language. The evolution and maturation of language is remarkable. English is globally dominant, spoken as a first language by nearly 400 million people. English is becoming a worldwide language, and teaching it as a foreign or second language is becoming increasingly necessary in many nations (Fareh, 2010).

This is primarily attributed to various historical factors, particularly the pattern of colonialism by English speakers. The expansion of English can be linked to the British colonial empire, where the authority and impact of these rulers established the dominance of the English language (Dash, 2022). English's dominance is evident in various areas of life, including education, international trade, science, diplomacy, and the internet (Rose, 2020). The extensive use of this language has sparked worries about cultural dominance and its effects on other languages and cultures globally.

Global Englishes research, which examines the use of English as an International Language and global lingua francas, is evolving and refining its focus on pedagogy in response to the increasing interest in the international influence of English on business and education. The core concept of lingua franca lacks strong empirical evidence but remains influential in challenging the perception of English as exclusively belonging to native speakers.

The growing prominence of English as a global language highlights the rising demand for English language instruction in numerous countries. Students must attain fluency in English due to its significance in global sectors like politics, science, culture, and communication. This establishes English as a crucial language in contemporary times.

English significantly impacts foreign language education in Thailand. English is a mandatory subject in Thai schools, as stipulated by educational policy. It is included in the curriculum at all three tiers of education: elementary, middle, and high school. Hence, students at every educational level must study English as a component of their curriculum. The significant emphasis on English language education in different institutions underscores its extensive influence on Thailand's education system.

In Thailand, English is taught as a foreign language, similar to Indonesia, rather than as a second language. Most Thai individuals communicate in either Thai or Melayu language in their daily interactions. Most students are not proficient in English, making teaching English as a foreign language challenging (Mohammad Behroozia, 2014). Students mainly concentrate on grammar rules, vocabulary memorization, and translation to succeed in exams, especially in technical/vocational education, where English language teaching is lacking, which could impede marginalized and underprivileged students.

Thailand is classified as being in the circle of expansion in terms of the spread of English historically. Thailand has not been under British colonial rule in the past, and English is now an official foreign language (EFL) taught in the country, especially for communication with foreigners (Sarmah, Gogoi, & Wiltshire, 2009). English is commonly utilized for leisure, social, and travel-related activities in Thailand. English is widely acknowledged as a global lingua franca

(Trakulkasemsuk, 2018). Several recent studies have used the term "Thai English" (Sarmah et al., 2009; Kim, 2018).

The current situation of English language education in Thailand is undergoing significant change (Comprendio, 2019). In the past, the nation did not prioritize English teaching due to not being formally part of the British Empire. However, in recent decades, English has become a key priority in the educational system ((Baker and Jarunthawatchai 2017).

Thai authorities plan to enhance English proficiency by implementing a thorough curriculum and teacher training programs. However, foreign English teachers, such as those from Indonesia, encounter difficulties such as language barriers and culture shock. Recent research has investigated the encounters of Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Thailand as documented by Putri (2020), Fauziyah et al. (2021), and Perwitasari & Sundari (2022).

Teaching English as a foreign language is important not only locally but also globally, as demonstrated in Thailand. The demand for English language proficiency is increasing in this country, especially in primary education. This study aims to reveal the traits and trends of vocabulary teaching offered by prospective Indonesian EFL teachers to Thai elementary school students studying English as a second language. Understanding the background and perspective of prospective teachers and the complexities of teaching in an international context is expected to lead to the creation of more effective strategies to improve students' English language skills. This study aims to investigate the experiences and challenges faced by Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the Thai educational environment to improve understanding. The study investigates the experiences of Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers teaching English at primary schools in Thailand, specifically focusing on their teaching techniques and challenges.

Despite existing studies focusing on Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' viewpoints on teaching abroad, there is a continued necessity for additional investigation on this subject (Perwitasari & Sundari, 2022). Moreover, there is a lack of research on the specific experiences and challenges faced by Indonesian teachers in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context in Thailand, despite their increasing numbers. The importance of this study is to offer additional perspectives to the current body of literature. This research aims to enhance the understanding of the distinct experiences and obstacles encountered by Indonesian EFL teachers in the Thai educational setting.

This study aims to research the experiences and obstacles encountered by Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the Thai educational setting to enhance comprehension. The study examines the encounters of Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers instructing English at primary schools in Thailand, with a specific focus on their teaching methods and difficulties.

In relation to this matter, the subsequent research inquiries were formulated: (1) What are the perspectives of Indonesian preservice teachers who are not fluent in Thai when it comes to instructing English to junior high students in Thailand? (2) From the perspective, is the significant impact and how interaction with students? (3) What

obstacles do Indonesian preservice teachers encounter as non-Thai speakers within the Thai educational framework, and how do they manage these difficulties?

The primary goals of this study are threefold. The study aims to investigate the perspectives of Indonesian preservice teachers who are not fluent in Thai when teaching English to junior high school students in Thailand. This entails a comprehensive investigation into the subjective experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of these educators, with a specific emphasis on comprehending the cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical factors that influence their viewpoints. Furthermore, the research seeks to examine the influence of these perceptions on the choice of instructional methods, classroom control methods, and the dynamics of teacher-student interactions within the English language classroom. Understanding how teachers' perspectives manifest in concrete actions and strategies in the educational environment is essential. Finally, the study aims to analyze and classify the difficulties encountered by Indonesian preservice teachers in the Thai educational environment and investigate the strategies they use to overcome linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical barriers.

Therefore, this research has substantial ramifications for various parties involved. Firstly, this study adds to the current knowledge in the field of English language education by providing insights into the experiences and difficulties encountered by non-Thai speakers who teach in Thailand. Furthermore, it offers valuable perspectives for educators and policymakers, guiding the creation of focused training programs and policies that promote effective teaching methods in various linguistic and cultural contexts. This study provides Indonesian preservice teachers with a reflective platform for professional development. It helps them become aware of potential challenges and offers strategies for adapting to cross-cultural teaching environments.

Considering the varied linguistic and cultural environment of English language education in Thailand, we argue that the perspectives of Indonesian preservice teachers who are not native Thai speakers have a substantial impact on their teaching approaches, classroom control methods, and student interactions. These perceptions are expected to pose distinct challenges. Nevertheless, by employing efficient coping strategies, preservice teachers can surmount these hurdles and make significant contributions to English language education in the Thai context.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study utilizes a qualitative research methodology. This methodology includes various data sources such as verbal explanations, behavioral cues like gestures, personal experience records, and conversational interactions. A wide range of practices in conceptualizing and theorizing qualitative data exists due to the varied backgrounds, expectations, and theoretical knowledge of researchers (Broom, 2021). This methodology utilizes multiple data sources such as verbal explanations, behavioral cues, personal experience records, and conversational interactions. This study uses a descriptive research design to explore the primary challenges faced by prospective teachers in Indonesia when teaching English in junior high schools in Thailand.

This procedure is executed by progressing through multiple phases:

#### 1. Participant selection

The research included seven prospective Indonesian English teachers who were enrolled at a private university in Indonesia. These instructors participate in an international internship program known as International Real Work Lectures (KKNI). They were assigned to four distinct educational institutions in Satun Province, located in the southern region of Thailand, for a duration of one month. There were seven women, all between the ages of 21 and 22.

**Table 1.** The Situation of the prospective Indonesian English teachers at Sri Aman Suksa School

No.	Name	Gender	Age
1.	Qori Amelia	Female	22
2.	Meysya Fadilla	Female	21
3.	Rani Meilani	Female	22
4.	Annisa Syahbilla	Female	22
5.	Venia Azura Isty	Female	21
6.	Jihan Amelia	Female	22
7.	Widya Amalia	Female	22

Source: adapted from the primary data

#### 2. Data Collection

Information was acquired via dissemination of surveys by quissionare and interviews carried out at Muhammadiyah University of North Sumatra. During the interview, employ mobile devices to capture audio recordings in order to avoid any missed words and mitigate potential memory lapse concerning the interviewee's answers.

#### 3. Data analysis

Scientists employ a sequence of methodologies to analyze the data. The researcher initially categorized the interview data based on specific criteria, including emotions associated with teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand, confidence levels as a junior high school English teacher, training for addressing learning difficulties, and experience gained from teacher training programs. Subsequently, establish a timetable for conducting interviews with participants, elucidate the objectives and specifics of the research to them, and employ a voice recorder on your smartphone to record the interviews.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Following data collection, an analysis was conducted to examine the perspectives of non-native Thai-speaking Indonesian teachers on their ability to effectively teach English in Thai junior high schools. The analysis was conducted by manipulating the quantity of questionnaires comprising 10 items. A detailed account of the analysis can be observed in the subsequent description:

**Table 2.** Questionnaire results

No.	Questionnaire	Results
1.	What are the perspectives of non-native Thai-speaking Indonesian teachers in teaching English to junior high school students in Thailand?	Respondent 1: Very positive Respondent 2: Positive Respondent 3: Neutral Respondent 4: Very positive Respondent 5: Very positive Respondent 6: Very positive Respondent 7: Very positive
2.	How do the perceptions of non-native Thai speaking Indonesian prospective teachers impact their teaching strategies, classroom management, and interactions with students?	Respondent 1: Very influential Respondent 2: influences Respondent 3: Neutral Respondent 4: Very influential Respondent 5: Very influential Respondent 6: Very influential Respondent 7: Very influential
3.	What challenges do prospective Indonesian teachers face as non-Thai speakers in the Thai educational context, and how do they overcome these challenges?	Respondent 1: Easy Respondent 2: Difficult Respondent 3: Difficult Respondent 4: Neutral Respondent 5: Difficult Respondent 6: Difficult

		Respondent 7: Difficult
4.	How much do non-native Thai-speaking Indonesian teachers believe they can inspire students to learn English?	Respondent 1: Greatly increases motivation Respondent 2: Greatly increases motivation Respondent 3: Increase motivation Respondent 4: Increase motivation Respondent 5: Greatly increases motivation Respondent 6: Greatly increases motivation Respondent 7: Greatly increases motivation
5.	What is the level of confidence of prospective Indonesian teachers as non-native speakers of foreign languages in evaluating student learning progress?	Respondent 1: Confident Respondent 2: Neutral Respondent 3: Neutral Respondent 4: Very confident Respondent 5: Very confident Respondent 6: Very confident Respondent 7: Very confident
6.	To what extent do non-native Thai-speaking Indonesian teachers' teaching	Respondent 1: Very effective Respondent 2: Neutral

	strategies enhance students' comprehension of English content?	Respondent 3: Neutral Respondent 4: Effective Respondent 5: Effective Respondent 6: Effective Respondent 7: Effective
7.	What do junior high school students in Thailand think about the English communication abilities of non-native Indonesian teachers?	Respondent 1: Very good Respondent 2: OK Respondent 3: Not good Respondent 4: Neutral Respondent 5: Very good Respondent 6: Very good Respondent 7: Very good
8.	To what extent can prospective Indonesian teachers acclimate to the learning routines of junior high school students in Thailand?	Respondent 1: Very good Respondent 2: OK Respondent 3: OK Respondent 4: Very good Respondent 5: Very good Respondent 6: Very good Respondent 7: Very good
9.	What is the extent of engagement of junior high school students in English learning facilitated by non-native Thai	Respondent 1: Very active Respondent 2: Very active Respondent 3: Active

	speakers who are prospective Indonesian teachers?	Respondent 4: Very active Respondent 5: Very active Respondent 6: Very active Respondent 7: Very active
10.	What is the impact of Indonesian prospective teachers' use of technology in teaching on junior high school students' interest in learning English in Thailand?	Respondent 1: Very positive influence Respondent 2: Neutral Respondent 3: Very positive influence Respondent 4: Positive influence Respondent 5: Very positive influence Respondent 6: Very positive influence Respondent 7: Very positive influence

Source: adapted from the primary data

1. Indonesian prospective teachers' perceptions of teaching English in Thailand: Five out of seven respondents hold a predominantly favorable perception regarding the competence of non-native Thai-speaking Indonesian teachers in instructing English at Thai junior high schools. This demonstrates a positive acknowledgement of their capabilities.

2. The impact of teacher perceptions on teaching strategies, classroom management, and interaction with students: The majority of respondents (6 out of 7) indicated that the perceptions of Indonesian prospective teachers have a substantial impact on teaching strategies, classroom management, and interactions with students. This demonstrates that favorable perceptions of teacher competencies can exert a beneficial influence on multiple facets of the learning process.

3. Challenges Encountered by Aspiring Teachers in Indonesia and Strategies for Overcoming Them: - Most of the participants (5 out of 7) regarded the challenges of teaching as arduous. Additional information is required to ascertain the specific nature of

the challenges they encounter and the strategies they employ to surmount them. Further investigation is required to comprehend the strategies employed by Indonesian prospective teachers in overcoming the encountered challenges.

4. Motivation for Student Learning As a result of the perceptions held by Indonesian prospective teachers: Out of the total respondents, a significant majority (6 out of 7) expressed that having positive perceptions of Indonesian prospective teachers can have a substantial impact on enhancing students' motivation to learn English. This demonstrates that instructional factors play a crucial role in fostering student motivation.

5. Confidence of Indonesian Prospective Teachers in Providing Assessments: - The majority of respondents (4 out of 7) expressed a high level of confidence in their ability to provide assessments of student learning progress. This suggests that they possess the necessary skills and knowledge to accurately assess student learning outcomes.

6. Efficacy of Teaching Strategies in Enhancing Student Comprehension: - The majority of participants (4 out of 7) believed that the teaching strategies employed by aspiring Indonesian educators were successful in enhancing students' grasp of English content. This demonstrates efficacy in the pedagogical methodology employed.

7. Evaluation of Indonesian Prospective Teachers' English Communication Skills from the Perspective of Students: Five out of seven respondents indicated that prospective Indonesian teachers were perceived to have excellent English communication skills by students. These findings indicate that students perceive their teachers as proficient communicators in the English language.

8. Assessment of Indonesian Prospective Teachers' Aptitude in Adjusting to Student Learning Patterns: Out of the respondents, the majority (6 out of 7) expressed that Indonesian prospective teachers possess a high level of adaptability to the study habits of junior high school students in Thailand. This demonstrates the teacher's adaptability in accommodating the diverse learning styles of local students.

9. Students' Engaged Involvement in English Acquisition: Out of the respondents, the vast majority (6 out of 7) indicated that student engagement in English learning, under the guidance of Indonesian prospective teachers, was highly active. This demonstrates the teacher's capacity to inspire students to actively engage in the process of acquiring knowledge.

10. Impact of Technology Utilization on Students' Enthusiasm for Learning: - A majority of respondents (5 out of 7) affirmed that the utilization of technology by potential Indonesian educators has a beneficial impact on students' enthusiasm for learning the English language. This demonstrates that the incorporation of technology can have a beneficial impact on enhancing the caliber of education.

The questionnaire findings indicate that, on the whole, non-native Thai-speaking Indonesian prospective teachers are viewed favorably by students and demonstrate effectiveness in teaching English in Thai junior high schools. Nonetheless, it remains imperative to elucidate the obstacles encountered by teachers and the specific tactics they employ to surmount these obstacles. Furthermore, their proficiency in adjusting to

students' learning preferences and stimulating students' active engagement is a crucial determinant of academic achievement.

Subsequently, following the distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher proceeded to conduct interviews with the participants in order to inquire about their perceptions during their tenure as educators. The interview consisted of three questions that addressed perceptions, significant impacts, ways of interacting with students, and challenges. Regarding the aggregation of interview findings.

1. Indonesian preservice teachers' perspectives on teaching junior high school in Thailand:

The Indonesian preservice teachers' responses shed light on the complex perceptions they have regarding their teaching experiences in Thai junior high schools. Respondent 1 and 3 initially presumed that the students possessed a high level of proficiency in English. However, they later found that the students' proficiency levels varied, with some students lacking even basic knowledge of the alphabet. Respondent 2 highlighted the challenge of teaching English to non-fluent learners, attributing it to language limitations among students. Respondent 4 and 6, on the other hand, viewed teaching in Thailand as a stimulating experience that involves distinctive cultural and linguistic difficulties. They saw it as a chance for personal and professional development. Respondent 5 and 7 recognized a difference in teaching between Thailand and Indonesia, which requires adjusting instructional methods to ensure effectiveness.

2. Significant impact and interaction with students:

Based on the given perspectives, it is evident that these perceptions have a significant impact on both the aspiring teachers and their interactions with students. Respondent 1 and 2 recognized the necessity to modify their teaching methods after realizing that a duplicated Indonesian teaching approach was not effective. Respondent 3 and 4 emphasized the beneficial influence of these perceptions on the preparation of future educators, promoting the development of strategic planning for effective teaching. Furthermore, the adoption of technology, such as smartphones and translation applications, has emerged as a significant method of communication. Respondent 5 and 6 highlighted the favorable influence on teacher training and the dependence on proficient English-speaking students for communication during instructional sessions. Respondent 7 highlighted the significant impact of perceptions on teaching strategies, promoting the importance of ongoing language development through interactive and enjoyable approaches, such as educational games.

3. Obstacles Encountered by Indonesian Preservice Teachers in Thailand:

The challenges encountered by Indonesian preservice teachers instructing in Thailand are diverse and complex. Respondent 1 identified cultural disparities and variations in learning styles as notable obstacles, specifically in assessing students' understanding during instructional sessions. Respondent 2 and 4 emphasized the notable difficulty caused by the difference in alphabets, which requires repeated instruction. Respondent 3 and 6 emphasized the challenge posed by differing levels of language proficiency among students, which hampers effective communication. Respondent 5 and 7 have identified

challenges related to pronunciation and linguistic differences among students. These challenges highlight the intricate complexities of teaching English in a foreign setting.

To summarize, the thorough examination highlights the complex relationship between perceptions, effects on communication, and difficulties encountered by Indonesian preservice teachers while instructing English to junior high students in Thailand. This examination offers valuable insights into the intricacies of cross-cultural teaching experiences and the strategies utilized by educators to effectively navigate these challenges.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study delves into the nuanced landscape of English language education in Thailand, particularly the experiences of non-native Thai-speaking Indonesian preservice teachers. The findings from both the questionnaire and interviews unveil a predominantly positive perception of these educators, as they navigate the challenges of teaching English to junior high school students in Thailand. The perceived impact of these teachers on students' motivation, active engagement, and comprehension of English content is substantial. The study sheds light on the multifaceted nature of obstacles faced by Indonesian teachers, including cultural disparities, linguistic differences, and varying levels of student proficiency. These challenges, however, do not hinder the effectiveness of teaching strategies employed by the educators, showcasing adaptability and resilience. Ultimately, this research contributes valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and teacher training programs, emphasizing the importance of understanding and addressing the complexities of cross-cultural teaching environments for enhanced English language instruction in Thailand.

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