Unpacking the Indonesian EFL Pre-Service Teachers in Teaching Vocabulary For Thai EFL Elementary School Student

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Abstract: *The purpose of this research is to investigate in depth the approaches, methods, and strategies prospective Indonesian English teachers employ when instructing Thai elementary school students learning English as a foreign language in vocabulary. Prospective English teachers in Indonesia were administered questionnaires, which were subsequently subjected to quantitative analysis in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of their pedagogical approaches. The findings of the study underscore the prevalence of the combination approach in vocabulary instruction, whereas the favorable reactions of students towards the implementation of technology, role-based activities, and games suggest that the interactive approach has been effective. However, parental involvement in supporting the learning process and comprehension of the local cultural context could be strengthened in order to increase the applicability of instruction. In general, these results provide a significant contribution to the advancement of English language instruction approaches that are more responsive and efficient, particularly as they pertain to the acquisition of English as a second language in elementary schools in Thailand. The findings of this study underscore the importance of further developing responsive and diverse pedagogical approaches, in addition to fostering greater collaboration among educators, learners, and guardians, in order to optimize the efficacy of English vocabulary acquisition in multicultural environments such as the one described.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental means of communication among humans and plays a crucial role in the process of learning the English language. Consequently, students who have achieved proficiency in a particular language will inherently possess the ability to comprehend the thoughts and discourse of others (Asmara et al, 2024). In other words, alongside proficiency in grammar, spelling, and pronunciation, students should also be well-versed in vocabulary. Therefore, vocabulary instruction must be incorporated into the English-teaching process. Previous research highlights the significance of learning in language acquisition by demonstrating that incorporating short stories can enhance students' eagerness for vocabulary enhancement (Fajri, 2018).

Students' English proficiency should encompass four fundamental skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—that have an impact on their continuing education and career decisions (Boonmoh, 2023). Because English encompasses a vast array of situations, cultures, forms, pronunciations, vocabulary, and sentence structures, students must exercise patience and foresee potential obstacles. Language learners will be bewildered, unable to express their emotions and thoughts through speaking, writing, listening, and reading in the absence of a sufficient vocabulary. The process of imparting vocabulary to children extends beyond mere memorization and comprehension; it also encompasses instructing them on the contextual meaning and application of those words. Vocabulary comprehension in English is a fundamental and essential learning requirement.

The study assessed Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers' proficiency in vocabulary instruction in Thailand. Previous research suggested teaching strategies to improve L2 learners' reading skills, including monitoring, predicting, inferring, questioning, summarizing, visualizing, and organizing techniques. Wutthisingchai and Stopps (2018) surveyed 1,827 Thai students to explore factors influencing reading ability, finding internal factors like learning preferences, motivation, and attitude, along with external factors such as teaching techniques, texts, and environment, with the nature of the text being deemed most crucial. However, Thai students often struggle with complex English grammar and tenses, focusing on memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules for exam success, especially in technical education, hindering marginalized students.

As non-native country, just as Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, not English as second language in Thailand. Most Thai people use Basa Thai or Melayu as their daily speaking. This caused a problem that most of the student is not familiar with English, and it is the challenge for the teacher to provide the best strategy or media for English learning, especially in primary levels. Consequently, students predominantly focus on grammar rules, vocabulary memorization, and translation for exam success, particularly in technical/vocational education, where English language instruction is insufficient, potentially hindering marginalized and underprivileged students.

Historically, Thailand classification of the spread of English, is situated in the circle of expansion. This indicates that the country has not experienced British colonial rule in the past and English is currently an official foreign language (EFL) taught in Thailand, particularly for communication with strangers (Sarmah, Gogoi, & Wiltshire, 2009). Additionally, English is frequently used for recreational, social, and travel-related purposes in Thailand. As a result, English serves as a universally recognized lingua franca on a global scale (Trakulkasemsuk, 2018). Furthermore, a number of recent studies have employed the term "Thai English" (Watkhaolarm; Sarmah et al., 2009; Kim, 2018).

Thai authorities aim to boost English proficiency through a comprehensive curriculum and teacher development initiatives. Nonetheless, foreign English instructors, including Indonesians, face challenges like language barriers and culture shock. Recent studies have examined the experiences of Indonesian EFL instructors in Thailand (Putri, 2020; Fauziyah et al., 2021; Perwitasari & Sundari, 2022).

The significance of teaching English as a foreign language extends beyond local relevance and plays a crucial role in the global context, as exemplified in Thailand. In this nation, the demand for English language skills is growing, particularly in elementary education. This research aims to uncover the characteristics and patterns of vocabulary instruction provided by future Indonesian EFL teachers to elementary school students in Thailand learning English as a foreign language. By comprehending the background and viewpoint of potential teachers and the intricacies of teaching in a global setting, it is anticipated that more effective strategies can be developed to enhance students' English proficiency.

The researcher developed multiple problem formulations to narrow down the discussion topics. 1. What teaching method do Indonesian English teachers use to teach vocabulary to Thai elementary school students learning English, and how successful is this method? 2. How does the vocabulary teaching approach used by Indonesian English teacher candidates affect the learning progress of Thai elementary school students, and what factors determine this influence? What methods do potential Indonesian English teachers employ to address obstacles in teaching vocabulary to Thai elementary school

students, and how successful are these methods in enhancing students' vocabulary comprehension?

This study aims to examine the teaching methods used by Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers when teaching vocabulary to Thai EFL elementary school students and to evaluate how effective these methods are in improving students' vocabulary learning. Vocabulary is the backbone of learning the English language (Bhatti et al., 2022). The study seeks to pinpoint the obstacles encountered by Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers when teaching vocabulary to Thai students, investigate the methods used to tackle these obstacles, and assess how cultural comprehension affects the significance and involvement of vocabulary instruction. The study aims to improve English language teaching practices and foster cross-cultural understanding in EFL contexts.

This study has significant implications for stakeholders in English language education. This research could provide Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers with valuable information on teaching methods and strategies specifically designed for Thai EFL elementary school students, which may enhance their teaching skills and confidence in teaching vocabulary. Thai EFL elementary school students could improve their language proficiency and academic performance through improved vocabulary instruction. Educational institutions and curriculum developers could use the results of this study to improve teacher training programs and curriculum design, promoting culturally responsive and effective English language teaching practices. The broader implications involve advancing cross-cultural understanding and collaboration in English language education, promoting global language learning initiatives, and enhancing intercultural competence among educators and learners.

This study holds significant importance for the researcher as it presents an opportunity to contribute to the field of English language education through empirical investigation and scholarly inquiry. By delving into the teaching practices of Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers and their impact on Thai EFL elementary school students' vocabulary acquisition, the researcher aims to expand the existing knowledge base and address gaps in understanding within this specific context. Furthermore, the study offers the researcher a platform to develop valuable research skills, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation, while also fostering a deeper understanding of cross-cultural dynamics in language education. Ultimately, the insights gained from this research endeavor not only enrich the researcher's academic and professional growth but also hold the potential to influence future research directions and inform educational practices aimed at promoting effective language instruction and intercultural competence.

RESEARCH METODOLOGY

The current study adopts a qualitative research methodology and employs a descriptive case study design. Aspers and Corte (2019) suggest that qualitative investigation is literative, aiming to enhance comprehension of a subject by uncovering new and meaningful nuances, thereby establishing connections between qualitative and quantitative approaches. Given the diverse backgrounds, expectations, and theoretical knowledge of researchers, there exists a wide spectrum of practices in conceptualizing and theorizing qualitative data (Broom, 2021). This methodology involves various data sources, including verbal explanations, behavioral cues like gestures, personal experience records, and conversational interactions. Data collection was facilitated through the use of a questionnaire. The study utilizes a descriptive research design to explore the primary

challenges faced by prospective educators from Indonesia while teaching English in Thai elementary schools. This process involves several 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) for one month. 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.	Meysha Fadilla	Female	21
3.	Putri Marlida	Female	22
4.	Annisa Syahbilla	Female	22
5.	Qisty Karamina Darus	Female	21
6.	Jihan Amelia	Female	22
7.	Widya Amalia	Female	22

Source: adapted from the primary data

2. Data Collection

Data acquisition involved the distribution of surveys through questionnaires and the conduct of interviews at Muhammadiyah University of North Sumatra. Throughout the interview process, mobile devices were employed to capture audio recordings meticulously, ensuring comprehensive documentation of responses without the risk of omitting pertinent details or succumbing to potential memory lapses on the part of the interviewees.

3. Data analysis

Researchers utilize a structured sequence of methodologies to meticulously analyze the collected data. Initially, the researcher categorizes the interview data according to predetermined criteria, such as the emotions linked with teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand, the confidence levels exhibited by junior high school English teachers, the strategies employed to address learning difficulties, and insights gained from teacher training programs. Following this categorization process, a timetable is established for conducting interviews with participants. During these interviews, the researcher clearly elucidates the research objectives and specifics to the participants, ensuring transparency and understanding. Additionally, a voice recorder integrated into a smartphone is utilized to accurately capture and document the interviews, minimizing the risk of data loss and facilitating comprehensive analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of data from students' speaking skills assessments revealed several noteworthy findings indicating a high level of proficiency in spoken English, achieved through a meticulous consideration of ten factors: vocabulary instruction effectiveness, the impact of instructional approaches on academic advancement, strategies for overcoming obstacles in language learning, evaluation of students' reactions to teaching methods, integration of technology and media, efficacy of role-based activities and

games, student satisfaction levels, teacher confidence, parental involvement, and comprehension of local culture. This thorough examination provided insights into the robust proficiency levels displayed by students, contributing to a deeper understanding of language learning dynamics and instructional strategies. The results can be seen in the below.

Table 2. Questionnaire results

No.	Questionnaire	Results
1.	What teaching methods do Indonesian English teachers use to teach vocabulary to Thai primary school students learning English?	Respondent 1: combination Respondent 2: combination Respondent 3: combination Respondent 4: traditional Respondent 5: combination Respondent 6: combination Respondent 7: traditional Respondent 8: traditional
2.	How does the vocabulary teaching strategy used by Indonesian English teachers affect the learning progress of Thai primary school students?	Respondent 1: neutral Respondent 2: influences Respondent 3: influences Respondent 4: neutral Respondent 5: influences Respondent 6: influences Respondent 7: very influential Respondent 8: neutral
3.	What tactics do aspiring Indonesian English instructors employ to surmount challenges in teaching vocabulary to	Respondent 1: limited Respondent 2: limited Respondent 3: limited Respondent 4: limited

	Thai primary school students?	Respondent 5: varied
		Respondent 6: varied
		Respondent 7: varied
		Respondent 8: combination
4.	What is the response of Thai primary school children to the vocabulary teaching methods employed by prospective Indonesian English teachers?	Respondent 1: very positive
		Respondent 2: positive
		Respondent 3: very positive
		Respondent 4: positive
		Respondent 5: very positive
		Respondent 6: very positive
		Respondent 7: positive
		respondent 8: positive
5.	How does the incorporation of media and technology in vocabulary instruction by Indonesian English teachers impact the level of interest among Thai elementary school students?	Respondent 1: increasing interest
		Respondent 2: increasing interest
		Respondent 3: increasing interest
		Respondent 4: neutral
		Respondent 5: greatly increased interest
		Respondent 6: increasing interest
		Respondent 7: increasing interest
		Respondent 8: increasing interest

6.	How effective is the application of role-based games and activities by prospective Indonesian English teachers in strengthening Thai elementary school students' vocabulary understanding?	Respondent 1: very effective Respondent 2: effective Respondent 3: neutral Respondent 4: neutral Respondent 5: effective Respondent 6: very effective Respondent 7: effective respondent 8: effective
7.	What is the satisfaction level of Thai primary school children about vocabulary instruction provided by prospective Indonesian English teachers?	Respondent 1: satisfied Respondent 2: satisfied Respondent 3: satisfied Respondent 4: satisfied Respondent 5: very satisfied Respondent 6: satisfied Respondent 7: satisfied Respondent 8: neutral
8.	How confident are prospective Indonesian English teachers in managing the classroom and maintaining discipline among Thai elementary school students?	Respondent 1: neutral Respondent 2: confident Respondent 3: neutral Respondent 4: neutral Respondent 5: very confident Respondent 6: very confident Respondent 7: very confident respondent 8: confident

9.	What is the level of involvement of parents of Thai elementary school students in supporting English vocabulary learning led by prospective Indonesian English teachers?	Respondent 1: neutral Respondent 2: neutral Respondent 3: neutral Respondent 4: low Respondent 5: high Respondent 6: high Respondent 7: neutral respondent 8: neutral
10.	How does a potential Indonesian English teacher's knowledge of local Thai culture and traditions impact the relevance and attractiveness of vocabulary learning for Thai elementary school students?	Respondent 1: neutral Respondent 2: increase Respondent 3: neutral Respondent 4: neutral Respondent 5: improve Respondent 6: greatly increased Respondent 7: increase Respondent 8: neutral

1. Vocabulary Instruction Strategy: The field of vocabulary teaching methodology requires the use of effective techniques and systems in order to provide the best possible learning outcomes for young English learners (Deni, 2020). English is taught at the elementary school level as a local content topic or as an extracurricular or supplementary subject. Therefore, it is necessary to use a more inventive approach that actively engages pupils in a pleasurable and significant process of acquiring language (Sutrisna, 2021). Given that primary school students are youthful individuals who still possess a fondness for play, it is anticipated that teachers will employ their imagination and creativity in formulating teaching approaches to enhance the appeal of English classes (Kirkgoz, 2018).

In this instance, a combination technique was chosen by six out of eight respondents. The data suggest that Indonesian English teachers typically employ a blend of practice and technique while instructing Thai elementary school students in vocabulary. While each method may elicit varying responses from kids. Therefore, the instructional tactics employed by teachers play a crucial role in effectively teaching vocabulary to young learners. In order to engage their interest and comprehension, it is important to deliver the topics using captivating ways and ensure that they grasp the jargon.

2. The Impact of Approach on Academic Advancement: The majority of respondents (five out of eight) are convinced that the method of vocabulary instruction has a substantial impact on student learning progress. However, two out of eight respondents expressed neutrality, suggesting that perceptions of its impact varied.

3. Strategies for Surmounting Obstacles: Three-eighths of respondents believed that the approaches employed to address obstacles in vocabulary instruction were insufficient. Nevertheless, a portion of the participants opted for a blend of tactics (1 out of 8) and a diverse range of approaches (3 out of 8), which suggests the wide array of methodologies employed. Furthermore, Putri's (2021) study demonstrates that English instructors employ several tactics to mitigate obstacles in online English instruction through the utilization of the E-Learning Platform. The employed strategies encompass the utilization of asynchronous methods, incorporation of alternative media to facilitate online learning, meticulous development of lesson plans, online learning materials, and activities, elucidation of content through video conferencing, explicit instructions for student assignments, and comprehensive assessment of student performance. Efficiently execute tasks and deliver both oral and written evaluations of student work to foster a sense of enthusiasm among students for enhancing their academic accomplishments.

4. Assessment of Student Responses to the Instructional Method: The teaching techniques employed by potential Indonesian English instructors were well-received by seven out of eight students, who reacted positively or extremely positively. In his research, Karpin (2020) elucidates that students' answers typically encompass multiple variable aspects, namely: (a) explanation, (b) facilitation, (c) value, (d) positivity, (e) interference, and (f) participation. These data suggest that this strategy is efficacious in enhancing students' comprehension of language.

5. Implementation of Technology and Media: Students' interest in learning can be stimulated through the use of media and technology, according to the majority of respondents (7 out of 8). This demonstrates the significance of incorporating technology into vocabulary instruction.

6. The Efficacy of Role-Based Activities and Games: A significant proportion of the participants (5 out of 8) held the belief that role-based games and activities significantly or effectively enhanced students' comprehension of vocabulary. This highlights the significance of employing an interactive methodology when instructing vocabulary.

7. Student happiness is influenced by various factors (Hanif et al., 2021). The majority of students (75%) expressed contentment with the vocabulary instruction offered by potential Indonesian English instructors. Nevertheless, a minority of participants (12.5%) exhibited a neutral stance, suggesting that students' perspectives on instruction can differ.

8. Teacher Confidence: Teacher confidence is the measure of a teacher's aptitude to accomplish objectives, encompassing their expertise, understanding, and belief in their capability to attain those objectives (Law-Davis, 2023). In their study, Law-Davis and Topliss (2023) examined teacher opinions within the elementary school setting, without distinguishing between early childhood teachers and elementary school instructors. According to the author's research, the findings indicate that the majority of potential instructors (five out of eight) possess a high level of confidence in their capacity to uphold student discipline and effectively manage the classroom. This demonstrates the significance of self-assurance in the efficacy of the instructional procedure.

9. Parental Involvement: The prevailing viewpoint among the majority of participants (three out of eight) was that parental involvement in English vocabulary learning was minimal or indifferent. This demonstrates that schools and parents must work more closely together to assist with the learning process.

10. Comprehending Local Culture: The sustained development of cultural values, practices, and identity in a language and culture is heavily influenced by human interaction (Maine et al., 2019). Language can unveil concealed social and cultural truths about individuals when they foster specific lifestyles and cultures within their families and communities through early language acquisition (Parajuli, 2021). The majority of respondents (5 out of 8) indicated that students may find vocabulary learning more engaging and applicable if they possessed a deeper comprehension of the local Thai culture and traditions. Nevertheless, a portion of the participants (3 out of 8) conveyed a neutral stance, suggesting that opinions regarding this component differ.

Based on the preceding analysis, it can be inferred that the integration of instructional methods when instructing Thai elementary school students in English vocabulary is generally efficacious and elicits favorable reactions from the pupils. Nonetheless, there remain domains that require further consideration, including augmenting parental engagement and fortifying comprehension of the local culture in order to enhance the applicability of education. Furthermore, it is critical that aspiring educators maintain a sense of self-assurance and cultivate a wider range of approaches to surmounting challenges encountered throughout the teaching profession.

The analysis of the questionnaire results suggests that among prospective Indonesian English teachers who participated in the study, a combination approach to teaching English vocabulary to Thai elementary school students was the most frequently selected method. These findings indicate an understanding of the significance of integrating diverse approaches and strategies to optimize pedagogical efficacy, taking into account the unique learning requirements and personal histories of each student. Nevertheless, opinions diverged regarding the degree to which this methodology affected the academic development of the students. While the majority of participants believed that the vocabulary instruction method had a substantial influence, others regarded it as neutral. This variation could potentially be attributed to divergent perspectives or experiences regarding the instructional approaches implemented.

Additionally, strategies for overcoming barriers in vocabulary instruction are a crucial factor that must be taken into account. While a majority of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the employed strategies, a subset favored alternative approaches or a combination of the two. This demonstrates that endeavors are being made to surmount challenges that might manifest during the instructional process; however, additional progress remains required in this respect. To promote more effective and inclusive learning, it is critical to continue developing strategies that are responsive to the needs of students and encompass a wide range of perspectives.

The positive feedback received from students regarding the implemented teaching methods, particularly the utilization of technology and media, role-based games, and activities, emphasizes the significance of an engaging and interactive strategy when instructing vocabulary. This is consistent with the tenets of a learner-centered approach, which emphasizes student engagement in the learning process. Nevertheless, parental engagement in facilitating vocabulary acquisition and comprehension of the local culture could be enhanced to greater effectuate interest and pertinence in the learning process for pupils.

Given the circumstances, it is critical that aspiring English instructors in Indonesia further develop their self-assurance with regard to classroom management and preserving student discipline. Teachers can be more effective at providing high-quality instruction and fostering a conducive learning environment when they possess a high degree of self-assurance. The examination of this survey thus yields significant findings that can inform the design of curricula and the implementation of English language instruction methods for pupils hailing from various cultural backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how crucial it is to comprehend the methods used by aspiring Indonesian English teachers when instructing vocabulary to Thai elementary school pupils who are learning English as a second language. This research offers valuable insights into teaching English as a foreign language in multicultural contexts by analyzing the different approaches, methods, and techniques used by prospective teachers. Research indicates that a combination approach is preferred, and students respond positively to technology, games, and role-based activities, suggesting the effectiveness of interactive methods in vocabulary acquisition. There is potential to enhance parental involvement in supporting learning and to gain a better grasp of the local cultural context to improve the teaching's relevance. This research significantly contributes to the advancement of more efficient and adaptable English language teaching methods, particularly in the setting of teaching English as a foreign language in Thai elementary schools.

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