

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates on the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

This research explores pre-service teachers' strategies to build an interactive learning environment in the classroom during teaching practicum. Nowadays, education has undergone significant changes driven by technological advancements, evolving teaching methods, and a growing understanding of diverse learning styles. Technology plays a role in the success of learning activities, making their use as a learning medium essential in the modern era (Syaniah & Fithriani, 2023). Technological advancements have impacted the learning environment, where students are now more focused on their smartphones than actively interacting in the classroom. Abdullah & Basthomi (2020: 21) state when the pre-service English teacher explained the material, several students used their phones to check Instagram and play online games, making mobile phones the main distraction in the classroom. Considering the importance of active student engagement, interactive learning is regarded as one of the methods that can be implemented to promote such involvement. Interactive learning environments foster student participation, collaboration, and hands-on experiences, creating a more dynamic and meaningful learning experience (Munawir et al., 2024). Therefore, pre-service teachers need to explore effective strategies that can build an engaging and interactive classroom environment.

Interactive learning comes from the interaction. Interaction is the cooperative sharing of ideas, feelings, or thoughts between two or more people and has a mutually reinforcing effect (Brown & Lee, 2015). In addition, classroom interactions play a crucial role in language learning. Interaction in the classroom significantly contributes to the development of English learners as a foreign language (Yousra, 2022). As stated

by Luk & Lin (2007), interactions not only facilitate knowledge construction but also contribute to the development of student's confidence and sense of identity as successful language users.

As interaction plays a crucial role in ELT, pre-service teachers should gain practical experience in real classrooms to build an interactive learning environment during teaching practicum (Yousra, 2022). A pre-service teacher is an individual undergoing formal training and education to become a professional teacher. Zacharis (2020) defines pre-service teachers as students undergoing professional teacher training at higher education institutions. Pre-service teacher's training often includes both classroom instruction and practical experience through teaching practicum, where they apply their knowledge in real classroom settings under experienced educators such as in-service teachers. During their practicum, pre-service teachers can implement their theoretical knowledge in a real-world setting, bridging the gap between theory and practice (Meijer et al., 2002). Pre-service teachers have learned various theories in several subjects related to teaching. Pre-service teachers have learned teaching pedagogy, teaching methodology, teaching strategy, arranging lesson plans, and others. Thus, a teaching practicum allows pre-service teachers to practice theory in real settings.

Moreover, pre-service teachers may face a variety of challenges during their teaching practicum, particularly in managing classrooms and applying effective teaching strategies. Pre-service teachers often struggle with handling student misbehavior, such as disrespectful language, inattentiveness, and sleeping during class (Irawati & Listyani, 2020). Pre-service teachers also report difficulties caused by external factors like noisy surroundings, overcrowded classrooms, uncomfortable seating arrangements, and a lack of learning resources, all of which can affect student behavior and engagement (Macias & Sanchez, 2015).

Based on limited observation at School A, one of the additional challenges faced by pre-service teachers is the excessive use of smartphones by students during lessons. The development of technology, particularly the widespread use of smartphones among

students in junior high school, has brought new challenges to the learning process. Students are more focused on smartphones rather than interacting with classmates and teachers directly in the classroom, reducing the quality of classroom discussions (Abdullah & Basthomi, 2020). It can be an essential issue as interaction plays a role in English language learning. Interaction is still an important strategy commonly employed in the classroom to enhance learning in ELT (Shawaqfeh, 2024). Furthermore, pre-service teachers should make several efforts to develop strategies for building a more interactive learning environment. Although pre-service teachers know various techniques to create interactive learning, they still need to explore whether they implement these theoretical strategies in practice or adopt alternative techniques.

Previous studies have been conducted regarding pre-service teachers. Research focused on pre-service teachers' strategies for creating active learning environments, improving students' speaking skills, managing classrooms, etc. Initially, Wibowo et al. (2020) explore pre-service teachers' perceptions of strategies and preparations necessary for creating an active learning environment in English language classrooms. Subsequently, Strelow et al. (2020) investigate the influence on pre-service teachers' intention to use classroom management strategies for students with ADHD. Furthermore, Miranda et al. (2023) examine pre-service teachers' strategies for improving students' speaking skills. However, this current research is different from the previous research. This research is more specific and focuses on the ways pre-service teachers take strategies to build interactive learning environments during teaching, whether they use the same strategies to build an interactive learning environment or not. In addition, this research also discusses the challenges they encounter when building an interactive learning environment in the classroom during teaching practicum.

B. Research Questions

Two research questions were formulated based on the background of the study. The two research questions are as follows:

1. What strategies are used by pre-service teachers to build an interactive learning environment in the classroom during teaching practicum?
2. What challenges do pre-service teachers encounter while building an interactive learning environment in the classroom during their teaching practicum?

C. Research Purposes

Two research purposes were formulated based on the research questions above. The two research purposes are as follows:

1. To find out the strategies pre-service teachers use to build an interactive learning environment in the classroom during teaching practicum.
2. To find out the challenges pre-service teachers encounter while building an interactive learning environment in the classroom during their teaching practicum.

D. Research Significances

The findings of this research are expected to be used theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this research contributes to the existing literature by offering new insights into the strategies employed by pre-service teachers to build interactive learning environments during their teaching practicum.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, this research provides practical guidance and reflection to pre-service teachers in building an interactive learning environment in the classroom. In addition, pre-service teachers can adopt the strategies to build interactive learning environments. In summary, the research's findings can help pre-service teachers effectively design strategies to build interactive learning environments in the classroom.

E. Research Scope

This research provides a detailed exploration of how pre-service teachers build interactive learning environments in the classroom, including the strategies they use to build interactive learning environments and the challenges they encounter while building interactive learning environments during teaching practicum. This exploration focuses on pre-service teachers in their initial teaching practicum experience.

F. Conceptual Framework

This research explores the strategies used by pre-service teachers to build an interactive learning environment and the challenges they encountered while building an interactive learning environment in the classroom during teaching practicum. According to Brown & Lee (2015), there are several principles of interaction in the language classroom. The first is automaticity. It means interactions that occur between humans that can convey meaning and messages. The second is intrinsic motivation. Motivation comes from within, not from coercion from other people and outside parties. The third is strategic investment. Interaction necessitates strategic language competence to make judgments about how to say, write, or interpret language, as well as to restore communication pathways that become obstructed. The next involves taking risks. Interaction can lead to misunderstanding; it consists of the danger of failing to transmit and comprehend the meaning conveyed. The next is the language-culture connection. The next is interlanguage. The role of the teacher in giving some feedback is crucial because many production and comprehension errors will occur in this part. The last is communicative competence. For effective communication, all parts of communicative competence, including grammatical, pragmatic, strategic, and others, must operate together.

Interactive learning plays a crucial role in ELT. Moore (1989) states there are three types of interaction in the classroom. The first is student-teacher interactions. The second is student-student interactions. The last is student-content interactions. Interaction is a crucial learning environment where learners can actively engage with

the language, make discoveries, and develop communication skills (Adams, 2018). Peer interaction allows students to experiment with language without fear of judgment, collaborate to solve problems, and engage in critical discussions that are not readily facilitated in traditional teacher-led settings (Philp. 2014). Moreover, developing communicative competence requires students to experience language in authentic social contexts, going beyond the limitations of classroom instruction (Bayley & Schechter, 2003). Based on those statements, it means as new teachers, pre-service teachers need to consider how to build interactive learning environments in the classroom. A pre-service English teacher is a student enrolled in an English education program at a university, pursuing studies to become a professional teacher (Siregar, 2021). Pre-service teachers are in teacher education programs. Pre-service teachers learn pedagogical theories, subject-specific content, and teaching methodologies.

Building an interactive learning environment is not an easy task, especially in this junior high school where students are more focused on operating their smartphones than interacting directly with their classmates. This certainly presents a challenge for pre-service teachers. However, according to Brown & Lee (2015), two strategies can be used to build an interactive learning environment in the classroom. The first strategy is questioning techniques. By posing thoughtful questions related to the topic, teachers can encourage active student participation and foster an interactive learning environment. The second strategy is group work. It incorporates a variety of group activities, including games, role-plays, simulations, and discussions, to foster an interactive learning environment. These activities encourage interactive learning by engaging students in tasks, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and exchanging opinions. These several strategies to build an interactive learning environment introduced by Brown & Lee (2015) have become the ground theory for the research. Therefore, this research explores pre-service teachers' strategies to build interactive learning environments in the classroom during teaching practicum, whether they implement these theoretical techniques in practice or conduct alternative techniques.

Moreover, this research also discusses the challenges they encounter when building an interactive learning environment during teaching practicum.

The conceptual framework outlines the strategies employed by pre-service teachers to build an interactive learning environment during their teaching practicum, along with the challenges they encounter in the process. The following figure presents a structured overview of the relationship between these key aspects.

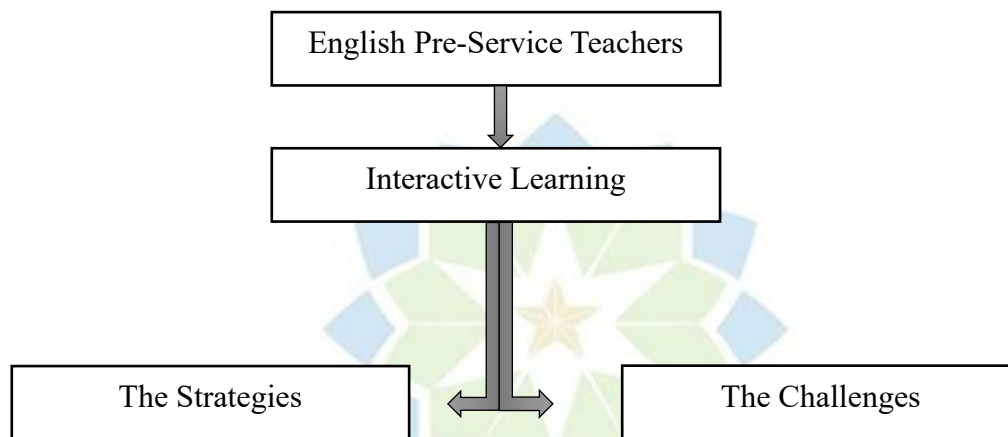


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

G. Previous Studies

Research on pre-service teachers has been conducted in several earlier studies. The first research by Wibowo et al. (2020) explores pre-service teachers' perceptions of strategies and preparations for creating an active learning environment in ELT. The research employed a qualitative case study design, utilizing semi-structured interviews as the primary research instrument to gather in-depth information regarding their experiences and perceptions. The research involved five pre-service teachers from a private university in Yogyakarta with practical teaching experience. Through qualitative interviews with five experienced pre-service teachers, the findings revealed four main strategies for creating an active learning environment in English language teaching: (1) combining students' interests with instructional media to enhance engagement, (2) providing motivational videos to improve students' enthusiasm for learning, (3) applying the Total Physical Response (TPR) method to enhance

vocabulary acquisition, and (4) utilizing web-based learning tools to facilitate interactive learning experiences. Additionally, three essential preparations for pre-service teachers include adjusting the teaching environment based on student observations, selecting appropriate learning resources, and employing diverse interactive media to capture students' interest.

The second research by Strelow et al. (2020) investigates the factors influencing pre-service teachers' intentions to use effective and ineffective classroom management strategies (CMS) for students with ADHD. The research utilizes a cross-sectional, non-experimental design to test the suggested variables. The study included an online survey that assessed various psychological constructs, such as attitudes toward CMS, knowledge about these strategies, perceived behavioral control, and individual stress levels, involving a sample of 1,086 pre-service teachers in Germany. The results revealed that attitudes towards CMS significantly impact intentions, with knowledge about these strategies playing a crucial role in shaping those attitudes. Specifically, a positive attitude towards students with ADHD enhances the intention to use effective CMS, while higher stress levels correlate with a greater intention to resort to ineffective CMS. The research highlights that behavioral attitudes, knowledge, and individual stress account for a substantial portion of the variance in intentions to use CMS. The study underscores the need for educational programs to enhance teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward effective CMS to improve their application in classrooms, particularly for students with ADHD.

The third research by Miranda et al. (2023) explores pre-service teachers' strategies for improving students' speaking skills, particularly in Indonesia, where English is a foreign language. This research utilizes a qualitative design, primarily through a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The research instruments included perception questionnaires and data from the internet, focusing on various aspects of speaking strategies and challenges faced by students. Through a questionnaire involving 26 students from the English Education Department, the research highlights the significance of speaking as a vital communication skill. The

study also identifies challenges such as lack of confidence and motivation. Key factors for success include vocabulary, fluency, and grammar, with activities like listening to English songs making learning enjoyable. The findings stress the necessity for diverse teaching methods to engage students, encourage regular practice, and foster a positive learning environment, ultimately aiming to enhance students speaking abilities and confidence in communication.

The other research by Limbong & Wadham (2024) investigates the digital competence of pre-service English teachers, particularly in Indonesia, focusing on their ability to create interactive instructional materials using a model called PACIFIC, which incorporates various digital tools such as PowerPoint and Canva. The research employed a qualitative descriptive design, utilizing semi-structured focus group interviews to gather insights from the participants regarding their experiences and challenges in using digital tools for instructional material creation. The study involved 30 pre-service English teachers in Indonesia who participated in focus group interviews to assess their digital competence in creating interactive instructional materials. The findings indicated that while the pre-service teachers felt competent in designing digital materials, they encountered challenges related to resource availability, such as internet connectivity and access to software. Despite these obstacles, the participants demonstrated resilience and adaptability, transitioning from consumers to creators of digital educational materials. The study highlighted the need for improved resource allocation, ongoing support, and training in digital literacy to enhance the technology in their teaching practices.

The last research by Darkwa et al. (2024) investigates the development of interactive pedagogies among pre-service accounting teachers (PSATs) in Ghana, focusing on four teaching dimensions: active, collaborative, authentic, and intentional. The researchers employed a sequential multiple case study design to explore how the PSATs developed interactive teaching skills to enhance student participation in Senior High Schools. The data collected from student questionnaires, interviews, and observations revealed that PSATs successfully engaged students,

leading to improved participation and collaboration. The data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings show that the interactive lessons designed by the PSATs significantly promoted classroom collaboration and participation among students. The study highlighted four key teaching dimensions: active, collaborative, authentic, and intentional. While students rated the lessons highly for active and collaborative dimensions, the authentic dimension received lower scores, indicating challenges in relating accounting concepts to real-life situations. In conclusion, the study concluded that training teachers to develop interactive lessons can enhance student engagement, foster independence, and increase enjoyment in learning accounting concepts.

The previous studies have extensively explored various pre-service teachers' strategies within the classroom, such as strategies for creating active learning environments, enhancing students' speaking skills, and managing classroom behaviors. Previous studies have explored how pre-service teachers create and develop interactive materials and pedagogy. However, this current study explores deeper understanding, specifically how pre-service teachers build interactive learning environments during their teaching practicum, including the strategies they use and the challenges they encounter in building interactive learning environments. Although previous studies have explored various teaching strategies, one of the main areas focused on pre-service teachers' strategies and perceptions in creating an active learning environment. However, research remains limited in understanding how pre-service teachers effectively apply these strategies within the dynamic and complex classroom setting. Moreover, the reliance on a single data collection technique in prior studies constitutes a limitation. This study seeks to address this gap by offering a more comprehensive exploration through multiple data collection techniques to investigate the application of pre-service teachers' strategies and the challenges they encounter in building an interactive learning environment during their teaching practicum.