

**INDONESIAN PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS'  
FEELINGS IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY  
IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BANGKOK,  
THAILAND**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of *Sarjana Pendidikan* (S.Pd) in English Education**



**By:**

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI  
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN  
2025**

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## MOTTO

*“There will be times when you fail, when everything feels heavy and you think you’ve reached the end. But that’s not your ending, it’s your turning point. Keep growing, keep fighting. Don’t give up, because new hopes and new beginnings are waiting for you. Believe in your dreams, work for them, and prove to yourself that you can rise stronger than ever before.”*

**\_Sukma Abdul Mahya**, a Language and Education Enthusiast.\_

*“Growing up in a small place doesn’t mean you can’t have a big dream”*

**\_Rica Asrosa**, PhD student at University College London.\_

*“You don’t need to be like anyone else, your uniqueness is your strength. The world needs a version of you, not anyone else.”*

**\_Ary Ginanjar Agustian**, Founder of UAG University, 165 Tower.\_



## ABSTRACT

Understanding teachers' emotional feeling is essential in English language teaching, especially in cross-cultural contexts. This study explores Indonesian pre-service EFL teachers' feelings in teaching English vocabulary at an elementary school in Bangkok, Thailand. Guided by Martin and White's Appraisal Theory (2005), the research focused on three emotional domains: affect, judgement, and appreciation. Using a qualitative narrative inquiry, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two pre-service EFL teachers and analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that participants experienced mixed emotions such as nervousness, anxiety, self-reflection, and appreciation. They expressed affective feelings like nervousness and excitement, judgement feelings regarding their teaching competence, and appreciation feelings toward Thai students' politeness and openness. These emotions reflected their process of adaptation, self-growth, and intercultural understanding. The study suggests that teacher education programs should include emotional readiness and intercultural sensitivity training to better prepare pre-service teachers for global teaching experiences.

**Keywords:** Pre-service EFL Teachers, Teachers Feeling, Teaching English Vocabulary.

## ABSTRAK

Memahami perasaan emosional guru merupakan hal yang penting dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris, terutama dalam konteks lintas budaya. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi perasaan guru EFL asal Indonesia dalam mengajar kosakata bahasa Inggris di sebuah sekolah dasar di Bangkok, Thailand. Dengan menggunakan teori Appraisal dari Martin dan White (2005), penelitian ini berfokus pada tiga domain emosional, yaitu affect, judgement, dan appreciation. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode narrative inquiry, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan dua guru prajabatan dan dianalisis secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para peserta mengalami berbagai emosi seperti gugup, cemas, refleksi diri, dan apresiasi. Mereka mengekspresikan perasaan affect seperti kegugupan dan antusiasme, perasaan judgement terkait kemampuan mengajar mereka, serta perasaan appreciation terhadap kesopanan dan keterbukaan siswa-siswa Thailand. Emosi-emosi tersebut mencerminkan proses adaptasi, pertumbuhan diri, dan pemahaman lintas budaya yang mereka alami. Studi ini menyarankan agar program pendidikan guru mencakup pelatihan kesiapan emosional dan sensitivitas antarbudaya untuk mempersiapkan guru prajabatan menghadapi pengalaman mengajar di tingkat global.

**Keywords:** Guru EFL, Perasaan Guru, Mengajar Kosakata.

## **PREFACE**

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Pekalongan, November 2025

The researcher



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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

Language teaching, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), has become a global priority as English is considered an essential skill for personal, educational and professional success (Stella, 2023). A study conducted by Sabirova et al, (2021) found that In many countries around the world, English is taught as a second or foreign language, and plays an important role in shaping cross-cultural communication. In the Asian context, English has gained great significance due to globalization, with countries such as Thailand seeking to increase English proficiency among its citizens (Boonsuk, 2021). Indonesian pre-service EFL teachers encounter distinct and pressing difficulties when delivering English vocabulary instruction in foreign classroom settings, particularly in Thailand (Abdillah & Fithriani, 2023). These challenges, including pronunciation barriers, limited access to learning resources in rural schools, and cultural mismatches in teaching styles. By understanding EFL teachers' feelings on overcoming these obstacles and applying successful vocabulary instruction methods is important for improving cross-cultural teaching outcomes.

Among the many components in language learning, vocabulary acquisition is a major element in mastering a second language. Based on a study conducted by Gina et al, (2023) stated that Effective vocabulary instruction is key in achieving fluency, as vocabulary is essential for understanding and producing language. Vocabulary knowledge not only helps in communication but also improves reading comprehension, writing skills and overall language competence. As a result, there is a growing interest in understanding how vocabulary is taught

and learned, especially in primary and elementary education, where fundamental language skills are first developed.

In an EFL settings, pre-service teachers play an important role in shaping their students' learning experiences (Bayraktar & İşcan, 2024). These teachers are usually still in the training phase and are preparing to enter the classroom as professional educators. Their perceptions, skills and preparedness have a profound impact on their future teaching practices. A research conducted by Qafa et al, (2024) has shown that pre-service teachers' feelings and attitudes towards teaching methods, such as vocabulary teaching, can affect their teaching effectiveness.

Teachers' feelings, including emotions such as anxiety, enthusiasm, confidence and stress, are integral to teaching effectiveness. Studies shown that teacher emotions can directly affect teaching methods, classroom dynamics and student learning outcomes (Frenzel et al, 2021). For pre-service teachers, feelings experiences in teaching can be particularly significant as they move from theory to real-world practice. Emotions such as self-doubt, excitement or nervousness can shape the way they approach lesson planning, classroom management and interactions with students (Pöysä et al, 2025).

Indonesian Pre-service EFL teachers, in particular, face unique challenges when teaching English vocabulary in foreign contexts (Abdillah & Fithriani, 2023). Given the cultural and educational differences between Indonesia and Thailand, Indonesian teachers experience a mismatch or unfamiliarity when teaching English in Thailand. Understanding how these teachers perceive their role, especially in the context of teaching English to primary school students, is important to know how they feel about dealing with these challenges and implementing effective vocabulary teaching strategies. Their experiences can provide insights into training needs for pre-service teachers in Indonesia.

Recent studies, such as Haryadi (2020), Hidayatulloh and Sugirin (2022) and Setiadewi (2019), identified practical

challenges faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers in Thailand (e.g., language barriers, classroom management, and cultural adaptation), they primarily focused on problem identification without exploring affective dimensions. This study intends to fill the gap by focusing on EFL teachers' feelings using Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) to systematically analyze pre-service teachers' psychological responses in Bangkok's elementary schools.

Based on pre-observation, the researcher found that the elementary students in Thailand came from low-income families, which impacted their access to English learning resources. Their foundational vocabulary was limited, with most only familiar with basic words like parts of the body, numbers, and simple greetings. However, fourth-grade students demonstrated a slightly wider vocabulary range. Despite these constraints, their motivation to speak English was notably high. The Indonesian EFL teachers reported feeling happy and enthusiastic when they engaged students through interactive methods, such as pointing to colors or using facial expressions (e.g., acting angry). However, they faced challenges due to pronunciation differences, Thai students often pronounced words like 'more' as 'moa' and 'blue' as 'bua,' creating difficulties in mutual understanding. These obstacles highlighted the need for tailored teaching strategies that addressed both linguistic and cultural gaps.

Based on the explanation above, this research intends to explore the feelings of pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers who taught English vocabulary in an elementary school in Bangkok, Thailand. It seeks to understand how these teachers perceive their role, and how they feel about teaching vocabulary in a foreign cultural and educational setting. By exploring these feelings, the study aims to uncover the feelings that may influence their teaching effectiveness and preparedness, providing valuable insights into the professional development needs of pre-service teachers working in international settings.



## **1.2 Identification of The Problem**

Teaching in a real classroom often brings out various emotions among pre-service EFL teachers. Feelings such as anxiety, excitement, nervousness, or satisfaction may arise as they interact with students and adjust to their teaching responsibilities. These emotions play an important role in shaping their teaching confidence, motivation, and personal growth. However, limited attention has been given to how pre-service teachers actually feel during their teaching experiences, especially when teaching English in a different cultural and educational setting like Bangkok, Thailand.

## **1.3 Limitation of The Problem**

This research is limited to examining the feelings of pre-service EFL teachers during their teaching experience in an elementary school in Bangkok, Thailand. The study does not discuss teaching strategies, classroom management, or learning outcomes. It mainly highlights the emotional aspects, how pre-service teachers feel, react, and make sense of their experiences while teaching English in a real classroom setting.

## **1.4 Formulation of The Problem**

This research provides one research question. The researcher explored "How do pre-service EFL teachers feel while teaching English in an elementary school in Bangkok, Thailand?" By employing this formula, the researcher find out more about pre-service EFL Teachers' Feelings in teaching English in an elementary school in Bangkok, Thailand.

## **1.5 Operational Definitions**

1. Pre-service EFL Teachers : Pre-service EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher is someone who is undergoing training or education in preparation for teaching English to speakers of other languages. These teachers are typically in the process of acquiring skills,

methodologies, and knowledge essential for effective language instruction (Martin & White, 2005).

2. Teachers' Feeling : Teacher feelings refers to the emotions and attitudes that educators may express or experience in their role. These feelings can significantly impact their teaching practices, relationships with students, and overall classroom dynamics (Martin & White, 2005).
3. Teaching English Vocabulary : The intentional process of helping learners understand, remember, and use English words effectively through structured instructional methods. This includes selecting high-value words, presenting them in meaningful contexts (such as sentences, stories, or real-life situations), and using strategies like visual aids, repetition, and practice activities to reinforce learning (Boers, 2021).

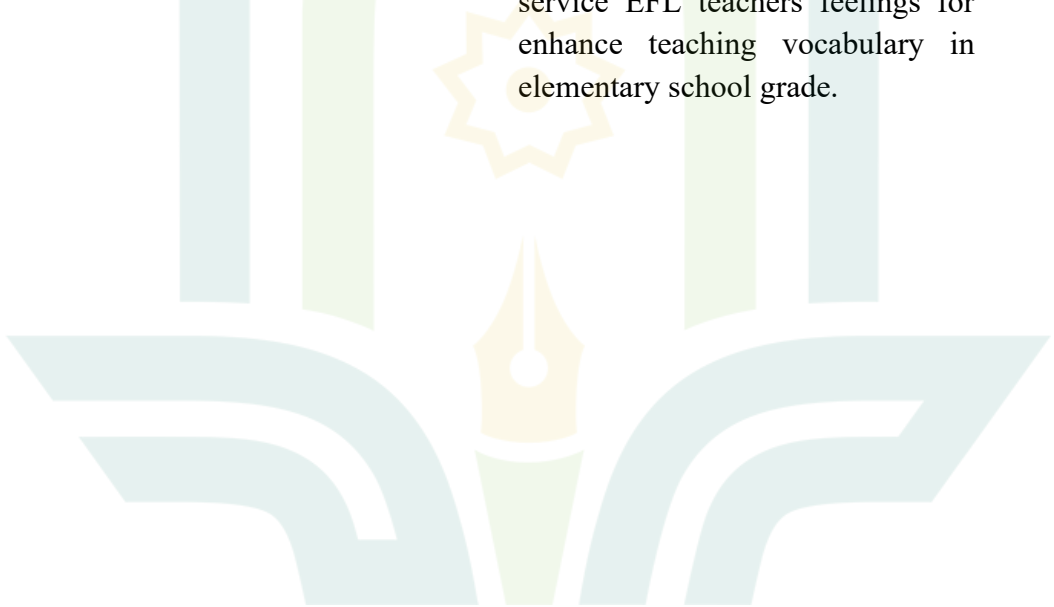
### **1.6 The Aim of the Study**

Based on the problem researcher explained, the aim of this study is to describe the pre-service EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers feelings while teaching English at an elementary school in Bangkok, Thailand.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The researcher assumes that this research gives significance in three aspects as follows:

1. **Theoretical Use :** This research contributes to the teaching theory by exploring how pre-service EFL teachers feels while teaching English vocabulary in an elementary school in Thailand.
2. **Empirical Use** This research provides empirical evidence on pre-service EFL teachers' feelings in teaching English vocabulary in an elementary school in Bangkok, Thailand.
3. **Practical Use** This research offers practical insight for teacher education programs on better preparing pre-service EFL teachers feelings for enhance teaching vocabulary in elementary school grade.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Summary of The Findings**

This research concludes that teaching English vocabulary in a cross-cultural setting, such as Thailand, brings not only academic learning but also deep emotional and personal growth for pre-service EFL teachers. Through their experiences, the teachers developed feelings of happiness, appreciation, and self-awareness that shaped their professional identity. They learned that effective teaching goes beyond language transfer, it involves understanding, empathy, and the ability to connect with students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The findings also highlight that emotional engagement plays a vital role in the teaching process. Feelings of affection, gratitude, and appreciation helped the teachers build trust and positive relationships with their students. Even when they faced challenges such as language barriers or different classroom behaviors, these

experiences encouraged self-reflection and growth. They became more adaptive, confident, and appreciative of diversity, realizing that teaching is a two-way process of learning and sharing.

Overall, this study shows that teaching abroad provides valuable lessons for both professional and emotional development. It helps teachers strengthen their intercultural understanding, improve their teaching practices, and develop a more open-minded and reflective attitude. The experience of teaching English in Thailand proves that education is not only about language learning, it is also about building connections, fostering respect, and growing as a person and educator.

## **5.2 Recommendation**

In this section, the researcher would like to make some recommendations for university students, English lecturers, and future researchers. First, the findings of this study show that pre-service English teachers experienced a range of emotional responses, such as happiness, anxiety, appreciation, and self-evaluation, while teaching



English vocabulary in Thailand. These feelings were categorized under Martin and White's (2005) theory of Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation, which helped identify how emotional engagement shaped their teaching experiences. The study found that emotional factors, such as feelings of insecurity, confidence, gratitude, and cultural appreciation, significantly influenced their motivation, classroom interaction, and teaching performance. Moreover, the experience of teaching abroad encouraged self-reflection, adaptability, and professional growth, showing that emotional awareness is an important part of teacher development.

So, for future researchers suggested to conduct deeper studies exploring the connection between emotional experience and teaching performance using a longitudinal or mixed-method design. Further research could also focus on how emotional intelligence and cultural empathy develop over time among pre-service teachers during international teaching placements. Investigating these

aspects will provide richer insights into the emotional dimensions of language teaching and contribute to more effective teacher training programs in global education contexts.

