

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This study intends to explore the EFL pre-service teachers' challenges in designing tasks during field teaching practice. This chapter presents some aspects related to the study, such as the background of the study, the scope of the study, research questions, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and the definition of the key terms.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

EFL pre-service teachers must be professional regarding abilities, characteristics, and teaching skills. They also need to learn how to balance learning activities in the classroom. Therefore, they need teaching practice to realize their abilities in the field of education (Mardiah, 2020). According to Faridah, Arismunandar, and Bernard (2017), teaching practice is one of the essential components in teacher education programs. Through teaching practice programs, EFL pre-service teachers can practice their teaching skills, demonstrating their ability to apply their college knowledge to actual teaching situations (Riesky, 2013). It also provides opportunities for them to test the knowledge they have acquired during the theoretical study and apply that knowledge to action (Hamaidi, Al-Shara, Arouri & Awwad, 2014). However, many pre-service teachers believe that the teaching practice is one of the most challenging, difficult, and frustrating aspects of a teacher education program

(Faridah et al., 2017). One of the challenges they face during teaching practice is designing tasks for students.

Task design is a process that refers to the principles and procedures of designing or preparing tasks for use in the classroom (Johnson, 2003). Designing tasks is a part of the language teaching and learning process, and some people may argue that designing tasks is simple work, but some EFL pre-service teachers may find it challenging during field teaching practice. Because each student is different in their way, the teachers will need to take into account a variety of factors to accommodate the student's differences. Castillo (2008) asserts that classroom tasks and materials should be designed to stimulate language use for communication. Thus, teachers should give tasks and text that activate prior knowledge and provide students with enough background information to understand the tasks' concepts. Many students nowadays appear to have limited enjoyment in their learning because many classroom teacher tasks need to be more suitable for them (Darmi, Harun, Samah, Behak, Saad & Ali, 2017). Therefore, teachers must be aware of the tasks they select or design for their lessons. They must stay current with students' needs and pedagogy development as teachers.

Researchers have conducted several studies on challenges in designing tasks for English foreign language (EFL) and English second language (ESL) classrooms. A study by Farias and D'Ely (2020) found that in designing tasks, teachers face the challenges of selecting targets and pedagogical tasks and adapting tasks for beginners, where teachers have to design tasks relevant to the

routine and context of students. These challenges demonstrate the importance of needs analysis and a clear instructional framework in using the task.

A study by Darmi et al. (2017) revealed that challenges encountered by teachers in designing tasks are how to design tasks that suit all students taking into account their understanding. Although students have the same level of proficiency, the level of task difficulty may be different for all students because of the contextual relevance of tasks for students and their cognitive levels in their ability to do tasks.

Darmi, Behak, and Mohamed (2016) also found that task context and cognitive demands influence students. Their study found that tasks with high contextual support and low cognitive demands increase the development of second/foreign language students. It shows that designing tasks requiring higher-order thinking can be challenging for teachers, particularly when it involves tertiary students and demands students to communicate more in their second/foreign language.

Although many researchers have researched challenges in designing tasks, researchers have yet to extensively study research discussing challenges in designing tasks in the context of EFL pre-service teachers conducting teaching practice. Therefore, this study focuses on the challenges of EFL pre-service teachers in designing tasks during field teaching practice. The researcher expects the results of this study to provide an overview of the challenges of EFL pre-service teachers while conducting teaching practice, especially in designing tasks, and the efforts they make to overcome these challenges. The researcher also

expects this research to help future researchers who wish to conduct similar research.

## **1.2 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on EFL pre-service teachers' challenges in designing tasks during field teaching practice. In this study, the researcher just mapped the challenges in designing tasks based on EFL pre-service teachers' experience during conducting teaching practice. This study involves six fifth-semester students of the English Education Department at an Islamic higher institution in Southeast Sulawesi who have conducted a teaching practice program.

## **1.3 Research Question**

Based on the background of the study described above, the research question for this study is: "What challenges did EFL pre-service teachers encounter while designing tasks during their field teaching practice?"

## **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

Based on the research question the researcher formulated, this study aims to explore the EFL pre-service teachers' challenges in designing tasks during field teaching practice.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study has some significance for the readers. First, this study aims to provide information about the EFL pre-service teachers' challenges in designing tasks during field teaching practice. Then, this study can help students discover the challenges that EFL pre-service teachers face during teaching practice, especially in designing tasks, so that they can prepare and improve their teaching skills before the activity. Furthermore, this study can guide teachers to prepare their students to become qualified teachers in their fields because teachers know the challenges they face later through this research. Besides, this study can be a reference to be helpful for further researchers who want to research EFL pre-service teachers' challenges in designing tasks during teaching practice.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

For the study, the researcher defines the key terms used in this study: EFL pre-service teachers, challenges, designing tasks, and teaching practice.

*EFL pre-service teachers* are EFL (English as a Foreign Language) student-teachers who get an opportunity to follow a teaching practice program and teach in order to get experience prior to becoming real teachers.

*Challenges* are the problems that EFL teachers face during the teaching and learning process. In this study, the researcher analyzes the EFL pre-service teachers' challenges in designing tasks during their teaching practice program. These challenges include choosing materials, using media, selecting the type of tasks, and adapting tasks to students' abilities.

*Designing tasks* in this study refers to a process where the teachers design something and give it to students to do in the classroom. Designing tasks is a stage that contains activities that may involve students participating in the learning process during teaching practice.

*The teaching practice* here is a program of faculty of education and teaching training where every student is required to take it as one of the requirements for completing studies. Teaching practice is a program that allows student teachers to conduct teaching trials in real school situations.

