

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This study is intended to explore the experience of EFL pre-service teachers in teaching English to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter describes the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research questions, the research objectives, the significance of the study, and the definitions of key terms.

### 1.1 Background of Study

When COVID-19 cases increased fantastically in almost all regions of the world, including Indonesia, the government immediately implemented large-scale physical distancing, which penetrated all aspects of human life, including the education process (Meade&Rahiem, 2020). In response to this critical situation, several universities in Indonesia have directed educational activities, including service-learning programs to be delivered online and offline by considering the domicile situation of students (Nurfaidah et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly forced education, with more challenges and transformations to adapt to these conditions (Crawford et al., 2020). This situation has an impact on the teaching experience program, making it difficult for EFL pre-service teachers to find the location for teaching practice, even though teaching practice itself is very important and must be done for every teacher candidate to train and improve teaching skills (Saragih et al., 2021). They are considering the skills demanded in the 21st century; namely, education must be considered (Amponsah et al., 2021).

Experiences of teaching English to the community have attracted extensive scholarly attention, especially in this critical situation of the current COVID-19

pandemic. Because this is considered one of the places to train pre-service teachers' teaching skills other than at school, as an important step for becoming a professional teacher in the future (Masry & Saad, 2018). In teacher education, especially foreign language learning, teaching experience or student service learning has become a practice that has permeated various continents and nations so far as a means to improve the teaching abilities of pre-service teachers (Nguyen & Bao, 2021). Hallman (2011) reveals, in Lawrence, Kansas, students have teaching practice in two options, namely in schools and the community through service-learning programs. Then, they can train pre-service teachers in teaching skills and understand their interests and students' strengths and abilities well outside of school. Different studies also reported that community-based field teaching practice experience programs had a positive effect by consistently demonstrating improvement in teacher candidates' social skills, academic achievement, and involvement in the community (Conway, Amel, & Gerwien, 2009).

Regarding experiences of teaching English to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last few years, researchers have shown that EFL pre-service teachers experience teaching practice in the community similar to teaching practice in schools. It positively influences future teaching as a strategy to improve teaching skills (Azizah et al., 2018). In addition, teaching practice experience is very valuable as a means to train pre-service teachers' teaching skills, and they can practice effectively (Arslan & Ilin, 2018). However, during this pandemic, EFL pre-service teachers, of course, have difficulty implementing the practice. For this reason, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many universities,

including in Indonesia, immediately took a stance by coordinating with the teaching faculties, then could continue to carry out field teaching practices online or create learning communities by complying with health protocols (Mubarok, 2020). Then, pre-service teachers can still conduct their field teaching practice experience offline and engage directly with communities in green zone areas (considered safe from viruses) while still complying with health protocols because the main purpose of implementing practical teaching experiences is to provide hands-on teaching experiences and activities for pre-service teachers so they can cultivate whatever skills are needed to become professional teachers (Ersin et al., 2020).

However, in the Indonesian research context, there are still very few studies that discuss this issue but only focus on the experience of teaching English in schools, and online learning (Mubarok, 2020) focuses on the experience of teaching English to the homeless and disabled community (Nguyen & Bao, 2021). Therefore, this latest study tries to fill this gap by focusing on EFL pre-service teachers teaching English experience to communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this study are, expected to contribute to providing an understanding of the importance of teaching practice experiences for EFL Pre-service teachers in any situation, despite facing difficulties in critical situations such as the current pandemic.

## **1.2 The Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the experience of EFL pre-service teachers teaching English to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study examines the experiences of teaching English to the community of three EFL pre-service

teachers from the English education department of IAIN Kendari during 45 days of teaching English to the community. The data in this study were taken from the stories of three EFL pre-service teachers who had the experience of teaching English in a community in their field teaching practices during the pandemic because they did not get the location or school to teach in their area, thus, creating an English learning community while still obey to health protocols.

### **1.3 The Research Question**

This study is attended to answer the research question: *“What are the EFL pre-service teachers’ experiences in teaching English to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic?”*

### **1.4 The Objective of the Study**

Based on the research questions, the main objective of this research is to explore the experiences of EFL pre-service teachers in teaching English to the community during the pandemic. This can provide an understanding that practice experiences are very important for EFL Pre-service teachers as a forum to develop their teaching skills. Field teaching experience can be done anywhere, whether in schools or online learning, but it can be in the community.

### **1.5 The Significances of the Study**

This research is intended to broaden the horizons of the authors and readers, especially regarding the experience of EFL pre-service teachers in teaching practice in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic as critical situation. Many studies have found the need for phenomenological studies to explore the teaching experience of pre-service teachers. This program can provide knowledge, experience, and real teaching activities for pre-service teachers and improve

teaching skills to become professional teachers (Ersin et al., 2020). Mubarok (2020) states that education needs to make the latest innovations by holding teaching practices experiences not only in schools or online learning but EFL pre-service teachers can create an English learning community in situations during the current pandemic. The findings of this study can be used as a reference for those who want to explore the experience of teaching English to the community in their future research. First, this research will help pre-service teachers know that hands-on teaching practice experiences can be carried out in schools and online learning and in creating a learning community. Second, this research will explain to the pre-service teacher their teaching practice experience that will influence their future teaching. The latter can be a reference for teaching faculties to continue to hold teaching practice experiences programs because training and improving pre-service teachers' teaching skills are very important.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

*EFL Pre-service teachers:* This study refers to three pre-service teachers from the English education department of IAIN Kendari, who have implemented a field teaching practice program by creating an English learning community because they did not get the location to teach at the critical situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Experiences of teaching English to the community:* This is the teaching experience of three EFL pre-service teachers. Where community teaching is different from previous teaching practice experience programs, where the previous program was carried out in schools, but this year, the campus made an innovation by stating that pre-service teachers should make online learning or

form learning groups or communities if they do not get schools where they practice during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*COVID-19 pandemic:* The COVID-19 pandemic increased significantly in almost all regions, including Indonesia; the government immediately implemented large-scale physical distancing, which penetrated all aspects of human life, including education. During the pandemic, the government diverted all activities involving many people to be carried out remotely. This situation is complicated for pre-service EFL teachers to get schools for practical field teaching experience because almost all schools are closed to prevent transmission of the coronavirus indefinitely.

