

ENGLISH PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' ANXIETY FACTORS IN THEIR TEACHING PRACTICUM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Keywords:

*Anxiety,
English pre-service
teachers,
teaching practicum*

The purpose of this study was to describe the factors of anxiety experienced by English pre-service teachers in their teaching practicum during this COVID-19 pandemic. This study was a descriptive case study. The participants of this study were twenty eight students from an English language department at a private university in East Java. These students carried out their practice teaching from January 2, up to February 28, 2022. Then, the researchers administered questionnaires in the form of open-ended questions through Google Form to collect the data. In analyzing the data, the researchers used the theory of a-five factor language teachers' anxiety by Devellis. Meanwhile, the technique of data analysis used was the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's theory. The results of this study showed that the five factors of teaching anxiety comprising of inexperience teaching, self-perception of language proficiency, feeling afraid of getting negative evaluation, the students' less interest in teaching activities, and getting difficulty in their teaching time management, existed. Hopefully, this present study results can be used as the consideration for EFL lecturers in providing some strategies for the future English pre-service teachers to overcome their teaching anxiety.

Kata Kunci:

*Kecemasan,
guru PPL bahasa
Inggris,
praktik mengajar*

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan faktor penyebab kecemasan yang dialami oleh guru prajabatan bahasa Inggris dalam praktik mengajar selama pandemi COVID-19 ini. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kasus deskriptif. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah 28 mahasiswa dari jurusan Bahasa Inggris di salah satu perguruan tinggi swasta di Jawa Timur. Para mahasiswa ini melaksanakan praktik mengajar dari tanggal 2 Januari sampai dengan 28 Februari 2022. Kemudian, peneliti memberikan angket berupa pertanyaan terbuka melalui

Google Form untuk mengumpulkan data. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan teori lima faktor kecemasan guru bahasa oleh Devellis. Sedangkan, teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah teori Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa lima faktor kecemasan mengajar yang terdiri dari pengalaman mengajar yang kurang, persepsi diri terhadap kemahiran berbahasa, perasaan takut mendapat penilaian negatif, minat siswa yang kurang dalam kegiatan mengajar, dan kesulitan dalam manajemen waktu mengajar mereka ini dialami oleh para mahasiswa yang sedang praktik mengajar ini. Semoga hasil penelitian ini dapat digunakan sebagai bahan pertimbangan bagi dosen bahasa Inggris dalam memberikan beberapa strategi bagi calon guru bahasa Inggris masa depan untuk mengatasi kecemasan mengajar mereka.

INTRODUCTION

One of the essential components in a teacher education program is teaching practicum. That is why all the students in this teacher education program are obligated to conduct their teaching practicum. The purpose of it is to provide the students with all kinds of teaching experiences before they they undergo the real life of being teachers. These kinds of students are, then, called as pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers will get three kinds of experiences in their teaching practicum, such as classroom practice immediacy, educational organization needs, and classroom teacher expectations (Geng, Smith, & Black, 2017). Furthermore, Caires, Almeida, & Vieira (2012) state that their teaching practicum will give them the chances to boost their skills including the skill to interact with the pupils. In addition, Agustiana (2014) explains that the pre-service teachers also get the opportunity to explore the real world of teaching. Then, Mena, Hennissen, & Loughran (2017) argue that the pre-service teachers will have the chance to act and take a decision in various classroom situations. They will also have better experiences because they will automatically face some challenges when they implement the theories that they have learned in their courses in the real teaching classrooms (Gan, 2013).

English language education department is one of the departments existing in a faculty of teacher training and education. It can be said that the students in the English language education department are prepared to be the English teachers. So that the students taking the English teacher education have to join teaching practicum. They have to practice their teaching performance before they graduate. These pre-service English teachers will work with their mentor teachers and should follow the school cultures where they practice teaching English.

Therefore, it is a common thing that the pre-service English teachers face some problems and challenges during their teaching practicum. Lack of teaching experiences, classroom management, and time management are the common problems that cause these English pre-service teachers' anxiety when they conduct their practicum of teaching English (Pasaribu & Harendita, 2018).

Indeed, it is important to know the anxiety problems that the English pre-service teachers encounter during their teaching practicum in order to provide the information for the future English pre-service teachers. Related to this, there are several previous studies investigating the anxiety faced by the English pre-service teachers in their practicum of teaching. One of them was the study by Sammephet & Wanphet (2013) finding that the EFL pre-service teachers' anxiety in their English teaching practicum was caused by the pre-service teacher's own personality, teaching context, and supervision context. Then, a study conducted by Agustiana (2014) reported that the English pre-service teachers got anxiety because of lack of teaching experience and less in mastering English materials. After that, Pasaribu & Harendita (2018) in their study found that the contributing factors that caused the English pre-service teachers' anxiety were confidence, English skills, preparation, lesson delivery, students' profiles, evaluation and classroom management. These students solved those problems by using personal, professional, social, and institutional strategies in their teaching practicum. Meanwhile, Oktaviani & Jaelani (2020) showed the results of their study that the pre-service teachers faced anxiety due to the fear of classroom management and being evaluated by their practice teacher. Being confidence and keeping struggling became the strategies of these pre-service teachers to overcome their

anxiety. Whereas, Sari & Anwar (2021) found five factors of anxiety as mentioned by Devellis (2016) happened during the practicum of teaching. The five anxiety factors consisting of teaching inexperience, self-perception of language proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, lack of student's interest, and difficulty with time management were also experienced by the English pre-service teachers in this pandemic of COVID-19.

Many previous studies having been explained had investigated the English pre-service teachers' anxiety in their teaching practicum when the learning situation was normal and the classes were conducted offline. However, there were scarce studies exploring the anxiety faced by the English pre-service teachers in their teaching practicum during COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the researchers were interested in conducting this present study with the purpose to describe the factors causing the English pre-service teachers' anxiety in their teaching practicum during COVID-19 pandemic.

English Pre-service Teachers

Pre-service teachers are the candidates of teachers from a teacher education program. They are conducting teaching practicum. According to Agustiana (2014), pre-service teachers are the university students who are assigned in student teaching experience. Besides, Ivanova & Skara-Mincĭne (2016) argue that pre-service teachers are the college students who are in the project of forming their professional identities through practicing their teaching and pedagogical courses in the real classroom. Thus, English pre-service teachers are English education students who are engaged in their English teaching practice in the schools. These English pre-service teachers usually conduct their English teaching practice at schools for two months minimally (Sari & Anwar, 2021). Additionally, Rahmawati, Miftakh, & Al-Baekani (2021) state that these pre-service teachers enhance their teaching skills and competencies and implement their pedagogical knowledge that they have studied in campus into their practical teaching. English pre-service teachers get the assignment from the university to practice their

teaching and pedagogical courses related to English skills and components in the real classes.

Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety

Anxiety is every feeling of worry that occurred due to the uncertain result of a particular effort (Daud et al., 2019). Meanwhile, Agustiana (2014) states that foreign language teaching anxiety is related to the foreign language teachers' feelings, self-perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors about their language teaching processes in the classrooms. In addition, Mercer (2018) explains that foreign language teaching anxiety is language teachers' negative emotion due to their low mastery in the target language that they teach. According to Oktaviani & Jaelani (2020), feeling anxious is the common thing that the English pre-service teachers faced before they conducted their teaching practice. The five factors of anxiety by Devellis (2016) were investigated in this present study. Thus, it can be argued that commonly the English pre-service teachers feel anxious when they practice their English knowledge in their teaching English in the classrooms.

METHOD

This was a qualitative research with the design of a descriptive case study. According to Harrison et al. (2017), a case study is a research design which is effective for investigating and understanding the complex issues in the real-life settings. The participants of this study were twenty eight students of an English language education department in a private university in East Java. These students conducted their English teaching practicum in January 2, 2022 up to February 28, 2022. Then, the researcher shared questionnaires containing open-ended questions with those students via Google Form to collect the data. The questions in the questionnaires were about why the English pre-service teachers felt nervous when they were teaching. Then, the researchers analyzed the data using the theory of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014) after the data were collected. The researchers grouped the answers of the questionnaires based on the five anxiety factors in foreign language teaching. The five factors of anxiety by Devellis (2016) were

used to analyze the data from the questionnaire answers. The answers did not tell their anxiety factors when doing teaching practicum were separated. The researchers only took the answers which expressed the factors causing their anxiety in their teaching english during COVID-19 pandemic. After the data were categorized based on those five anxiety factors, the researcher drew the conclusion

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Teaching inexperience

Most of the students reported that they were nervous at the first meeting of their teaching. They also told that they suddenly got blank when they were in front of the students in the classroom at their first meeting. Even, before they entered the classroom, they had already felt worried. Then, they also felt afraid if they made mistakes when they were teaching in the classroom. All those students' answers show that they had anxiety in their teaching practicum because they had lack of experience in teaching. The following are the examples of the students' answers related to their anxiety.

S1: "I felt anxious, even I had not entered the classroom."

S3: "I was very nervous when I was in front of the students in the class. It was exactly in my first day of teaching."

S7: "I felt my knees shaking when I introduced myself to the students in my first meeting."

S8: "My anxiety came when I was teaching and suddenly I was not sure about what I told to the students in the class. I was afraid if my explanation was wrong."

S17: "I was nervous at my first teaching but gradually I could make myself relaxed."

2. Self-perception of language proficiency

The students told that they felt shy when they had realized that they made mistakes in their speaking. Moreover, when the students spoke with better pronunciation, they felt very embarrassed. Next, they also often felt confused when they had to explain the grammar of the text that they were teaching. They were not sure that their grammar was good enough. They also told that sometimes they were really stressed when the students asked questions that they had not predicted before. Besides that, they felt confused when their teaching material was not familiar for them. All in all, those responses describe that the students felt anxious due to their self-perception of their language proficiency. The description of these feelings can be seen in the examples of the students' responses below.

S5: "I was shy when realizing the mistake in my speaking but If I told the truth to the students, I would be more shy."

S2: "I directly smiled at the student whose pronunciation was better than me. It was just to cover my feeling embarased."

S12: "The thing that I felt very worried about was when I had to explain grammar in the class. The material at that time was related of a certain grammar and unfortunately, I was not sure about my knowledge of that grammar."

S15: "I ever felt shocked when there was a student asking about the unpredicted material to me. I just tried to answer it without knowing whether it was right or not. The point is I just answered because I was a teacher in the class at that time."

S18: "I was tense when I had to teach the material that I did not master."

3. Fear of negative evaluation

The students explained that they were panicked when their mentors observed their teaching. They added that they could not bring their class into a fun learning situation when their mentors were observing them. They would teach as what the lesson plans told. They had done that because they wanted to have good score from their mentors' evaluation. They also felt nervous when there was the student giving a negative comment to their teaching. To sum up, all the descriptions above have reported that the students' anxiety came because of

feeling fear of negative evaluation. The following are the examples of the students' description about their anxiety because of fear of negative evaluation.

S22: "I got panicked when my mentor suddenly came into my class and took a seat in the back row."

S3: "I felt my teaching to be boring when I taught as what I wrote in my lesson plans. However, I should have done it because my mentor observed my teaching. I wanted to get the better score for my teaching"

S10: "I had ever felt tense in my teaching when knowing my mentor entered the class and saw my teaching. I knew she was evaluating my teaching practice."

S4: "I felt so worried about my teaching. A student told her negative evaluation about my explanation in the class. I became panicked and anxious when thinking about my teaching in the following meeting.

4. Lack of student's interest

The students told that they got confused when there the students who did not want to do their instruction in their teaching. Additionally, they became tense when knowing some students did not participate the learning activities in their class. They also felt worried when some students showed their reluctance in doing their teaching and learning activities. Even, they felt stressed when they often found one student sleep in the middle of their teaching. Briefly, it can be said that the students got anxious when they knew that the students had lack of interest in their teaching. Here are the examples of the students' descriptions about it.

S9: "I was really confused when some students did not do my instruction."

S11: "I felt tense when knowing some students did not want to join the learning activities. They just sat in their seats without giving any responses."

S16: "I got tense when I knew some students were reluctant to do the learning activities in the class."

S19: "I had ever felt very stressed. At that time I found one students sleeping when I explained the material in front of the class. I directly thought, it might be my teaching was boring."

5. Difficulty with time management

The students reported that they felt tense because they had not been prepared for their class. They added that they also felt nervous when they realized that they explained the materials so fast so that they finished teaching before the time was over. But, they also got panicked when they had not finished their teaching yet when the bell rang as the sign that the time for teaching was over. In summary, it can be said that the students got difficulty with their teaching time management. This situation can be seen in the following description.

S25: "I was very panicked when I was not prepared for teaching but I just entered the class. I did not want to be absent from my teaching. "

S23: "I felt tense when coming to the class without any preparation."

S20: "My concentration was lost when I heard the bell ring but I had not finished all the materials targeted for that day."

S13: "I felt very worried when I finished my material but the time for teaching was not over yet. I was confused to decide what to do with the students while waiting for the time to go home."

Discussion

The result of this study shows that one of the factors causing the English pre-service teachers' anxiety was the lack of teaching experience. It was because the new situation would make most of the people feel uncomfortable. This was what the English pre-service teachers experienced when they came to their teaching meeting in the first time. Then, this new situation made them worried. Besides, they also got pressured from their new society, especially in the school where they became the English pre-service teachers. The society demanded them to behave and act as the professional English teachers. Therefore, the English pre-service teachers got anxious in their teaching practice due to their inexperience in teaching. This present study result is similar to the the result of the study by Sari & Anwar (2021) finding that English pre-service teachers was anxious because of their teaching inexperience.

The second factor of the anxiety causes found in this present study was the English pre-service teachers' self-perception of their language proficiency. They

felt that their English proficiency was not good enough so that they were not confident when teaching the English skills to the students. They were afraid of making wrong explanations. They were worried about making mistakes in their pronunciation when they spoke English. Moreover, they felt embarrassed when their students had better pronunciation or understanding of English skills. These conditions caused them to feel anxious. This study result is the same as the study result by Oktaviani & Jaelani (2020) explaining that the highest concern of English pre-service teachers was about teaching the English skills because it caused their anxiety more in the class.

The third anxiety cause which was found in this study was the English pre-service teachers' fear of getting negative evaluation. All of them wanted to have good evaluation. They did not want to get the negative comments for their teaching practice. However, this feeling made them often seem nervous when the observer or the mentor joined their class. This study result is still in line with the result study by Sammephet & Wanphet (2013) finding that the pre-service teachers' anxiety was caused by the existence of their supervision in their classes.

The next cause of the English pre-service teachers' anxiety was lack of the students' interest in their teaching. When knowing their students did not have motivation to take a part in their teaching activities, the pre-service teachers directly got panicked. They were afraid if they could not teach so that the students were not interested in their teaching activities. Actually, this situation happened because the English pre-service teachers conducted their peer teaching online but their teaching practice was offline. So this different situation made the pre-service teacher less able to create the interesting teaching activities. Then, it resulted in the students' less motivation in following the instructions in their teaching activity. The result of this study is also similar to the result of the study by Sari & Anwar (2021).

The last cause of the pre-service teachers' anxiety found was that they got the difficulty with their teaching time management. It is a common thing that the pre-service teachers experienced. It was because they still could not predict the time of teaching for a certain material well. The results of it was that sometimes

the pre-service teachers would feel more time for their material and sometimes they felt that their teaching time was too much for a particular material. They really need the long process to be the professional teachers. They are still learning to be the teachers. According to Sari & Anwar (2021), the English pre-service teachers need the longer time to be professional as their society expect them.

CONCLUSION

The anxiety experienced by the English pre-service teachers in this COVID-19 pandemic was caused by the five factors, namely inexperience teaching, self-perception of language proficiency, feeling afraid of getting negative evaluation, the students' less interest in teaching activities, and getting difficulty in their teaching time management. This result still shared the similar factors causing the anxiety of the English pre-service teachers in the normal situation. Hopefully, the English lecturers considered these five factors of English pre-service teachers' anxiety so that the future pre-service teachers can be supplied with some strategies to avoid the teaching anxiety.

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