

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates six research points: the background of the research, research questions, research purposes, research significances, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

### **A. Background of the Research**

Teaching practicum becomes one of the requirements for student teachers to professionally teach and it is a challenge to face as a preparation to teach in an actual classroom setting. The actual classroom teaching requires them to demonstrate their pedagogical skills without any aspects simplified (Marno & Idris, 2008 as cited in Agustiana & Nurhayati, 2019). The teaching practicum challenge becomes even more complicated for those who teach English as a foreign language. Even though the language teachers are expected to perform the target language eloquently well, a feeling of incompetence in the target language may lead them to face teaching anxiety (Horwitz, 1996 as cited in Aydin & Ustuk, 2020). In the foreign language focus, anxiety becomes an issue that is mainly discussed due to its significances in foreign language teaching or learning processes (Tüfekçi-Can, 2018).

Nonetheless, as the classroom organizer, the teacher is bound to encounter this situation during the teaching-learning activities. Foreign language student teachers with no or a few teaching experiences are even more likely to experience this psychological discomfort (Pasaribu & Harendita, 2018). Even though anxiety may also arise to novice or experienced language teachers, practitioners, and instructors in charge of the foreign language classroom (Tüfekçi-Can, 2018). Thus, the anxiety is specified into a foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) once a student teacher enters the classroom and takes a responsibility to teach and organize the language class. Therefore, foreign language learners are not the only ones experiencing anxiety.

Anxiety in a foreign language is considered the "barrier" for individuals to successfully acquire the language (Tuncel et al., 2020). In an attempt to improve the language acquisition process and to decrease anxiety in the language classroom, more efforts should be carried out and more methods should be employed (Horwitz

& Cope, 1986 as cited in Tüfekçi-Can, 2018). Researchers mainly focused on examining foreign language learning anxiety rather than carrying out contextualized research regarding foreign language teaching anxiety (Aydin & Ustuk, 2020). Meanwhile, studies concerning FLTA are expected to have similar concerns in the English language teaching field. Furthermore, the non-native foreign language teachers come to grips with both foreign language anxiety (FLA) and teaching anxiety which both have extensively put them under pressure but indeed significantly important for their career development (Liu & Wu, 2021). FLTA can cause several negative effects on language teaching, for instance; teachers tend to avoid certain teaching styles and activities (Merç, 2010) and use the target language (Tum, 2015).

Foreign language teaching anxiety research in Indonesian educational field seems to be overlooked (Permatasari et al., 2019). For Indonesian EFL student teachers, feeling uncertain of several advanced vocabularies and being afraid of making a false step at teaching grammar are the anxieties they faced related to English language skills (Pasaribu & Harendita, 2018). Moreover, anxiety which is caused by external factors such as evaluation from the supervisor and class control is the highest factor of FLTA among the EFL student teachers (Agustiana & Nurhayati, 2019). Furthermore, there is a specific anxiety types that possibly occur to the student teachers regarding fear of negative evaluation which is caused by inability to give an accepted social impression (Aydin, 2008).

In Indonesia, English education teaching practicum is generally held in public or private schools. Subsequently, in response to Coronavirus disease 19, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia has decided to instruct every school to implement online learning since March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (Mendikbud, 2020a). The policy of carrying out online learning impacts a teaching practicum for the tertiary level students who undertake an education major. An online teaching practicum concept is held in the faculty of education and teacher training in a state Islamic university in Indonesia. This program is an effort to create professional teacher candidates. Notwithstanding that Covid-19 significant impact on educational field, this online teaching practicum has an intention to support the students in finishing their study for the expected duration (FTK, 2020). This new

concept of teaching practicum program in 2020, however, has an obstacle in term of the performance of both the Faculty members and the student teachers (Sidiq & Darmawan, 2020).

This teaching practicum program requires the student teachers to manage the teaching practicum administration independently from the beginning since the practical school is located in the close proximity to their residences. The student teachers can contact the supervisor only through online messaging. In addition, lesson planning and teaching implementation should be arranged differently (Mendikbud, 2020b). These changes have caused the student teachers to implement the theories to the unexpected real classroom situation.

The new policy also instructs the lecturers to supervise the student teachers remotely from home. Moreover, the new online learning policy requires the lesson's syllabus to be adjusted for simplification and alleviation of basic competences (PG DIKDAS, 2020) which it requires more adaptation. Besides, the online supervising agenda caused some issues within the journey. Inability to contact the lecturer offline makes the supervising process run ineffectively.

The research in foreign language anxiety has been mainly focused on the learning experiences. Foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) has not been explored thoroughly when this affective issue has a significant role in providing a better teaching-learning ambience and better teaching performance if there are more studies conducted related to this topic. Several studies concerning the foreign language teaching anxiety in the past five years were carried out. Merç (2015) conducted the study to determine the relationship between the level of language teaching anxiety experienced by EFL student teachers and their language teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Next, Aydin (2016) conducted a study to investigate the sources of FLTA. Furthermore, another study was conducted in Turkey by Öztürk (2016) to investigate the FLTA among Turkish student teachers. İpek (2016) conducted a study to investigate the factors behind FLTA among non-native EFL teachers. Last, another research was conducted in Indonesia by Pasaribu and Harendita (2018) to identify the causal factor of FLTA and the student teachers' strategies to cope with it.

While the previous studies were mainly focused on FLTA that surfaced to the English student teachers in the face-to-face classroom, the current study is significantly different from the previous ones. It investigates the foreign language teaching anxiety among the EFL student teachers in an online teaching practicum during the Covid-19 pandemic held by one of the educational faculty in a state Islamic university in Indonesia. Until recently, research on this issue has never been done.

## **B. Research Questions**

According to the description above, this research is aimed at answering the following question:

1. What are the factors of teaching anxiety experienced by the EFL student teachers during the online teaching practicum amidst the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. How do they cope with their teaching anxiety during the online teaching practicum amidst the Covid-19 pandemic?

## **C. Research Purposes**

Generally, the purpose of this research is to investigate the foreign language teaching anxiety that is experienced by EFL student teachers during the online teaching practicum amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and to generate awareness, knowledge, and understanding of that matter which expectedly may solve the problems.

Nevertheless, from the research question above, this study is intended to obtain the following purposes:

1. To investigate the factors of teaching anxiety experienced by the EFL student- teachers during the online teaching practicum amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. To explore EFL student teachers' strategy in coping with their teaching anxiety during the online teaching practicum amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **D. Research Significances**

This research is presumed to give theoretical and practical significances. Theoretically, this research is expected to provide new information needed by everyone regarding EFL student teachers' foreign language teaching anxiety during the online teaching practicum amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Practically, this study is expected to give significances to:

1. Student teachers

This research will contribute to the student teachers' prior knowledge to initiating the online teaching practicum program for preparing themselves in terms of teaching English in novel circumstances to reduce the teaching anxiety.

2. English Education Department

This research is expected to help the department guide the student teachers' taking part in the online teaching practicum program.

3. The Committee of the Online Teaching Practicum Program

This research is also supposed to be a proper reference for the committee of the online teaching practicum in order to provide a better preparation needed by the student teachers, especially for those who take English education majority before they take part in the online teaching practicum.

#### **E. Research Scope**

This study is limited to investigating the foreign language teaching anxiety that is suffered by the EFL student teachers who participated in an online teaching practicum program held by a faculty of education and teacher training in a state Islamic university in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **F. Conceptual Framework**

Anxiety is distinguished based on the "experiencer", some of them feel anxious in various situations. Some people only feel anxiety which is concerned in certain circumstances, and language anxiety is one type of specific anxiety reaction. Many studies also revealed that this affective factor significantly impacts foreign language learning or teaching (Tüfekçi-Can, 2018). Moreover, the research about teacher psychology has a significant impact on teaching quality (Mercer, 2018).

Language anxiety is determined as specific anxiety in the language acquisition process related to second language achievement (Gardner, 1985 as cited in Tüfekçi-Can, 2018). Meanwhile, foreign language anxiety refers to circumstances when foreign language learners are required to practice the foreign language with a lesser proficiency level (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993 as cited in Baltaci, 2017). Furthermore, language teaching is essentially emotional work that can cause a feeling of anger, annoyance, disappointment, and anxiety (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020, as cited in Aydin & Ustuk, 2020). As role models for their students, the student teachers will try to perform the language taught accurately since they have a responsibility to give a proper example in practicing the language.

Foreign language teachers may "suffer" the foreign language anxiety in three stages: the initial learning stage, the student teachers' teaching stage, and the actual novice teaching stage (Tum, 2015). Hence, it can be stated that language teachers experience anxiety while teaching because they are also basically language learners (Aydin & Ustuk, 2020). Nevertheless, their anxiety is specified into a foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) once they enter the classroom and take a responsibility to teach and organize the class. That term refers to an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness, which is unique for student teachers, language teachers, instructors, and practitioners (Ellis, 1994 as cited in Tüfekçi-Can, 2018).

Teaching practicum is when teacher training students are prepared to successfully demonstrate the pedagogical theory in particular practices (Buckworth, 2016). However, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, universities in Indonesia put effort to support student teachers to have a chance to do the teaching practice in a real classroom setting even though the education programs are shifted to distance online design. This current situation, somehow, possibly increases the level of foreign language teaching anxiety among student teachers.

Awareness of information and communication technologies (ICT) is required for all teachers, and they need to keep updating their knowledge about it (Hafifah, 2020). During this pandemic, teachers are expected to be creative and skillful in using technology. They should go beyond being the only expert on the teaching content since they also must acknowledge how technology is used in language

teaching and foreign language learning pedagogy (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). This recent educational model has had an impact on the teaching-practicum program (FTK, 2020). The student teachers who are novel in the actual teaching-learning practice, somehow, are supposed to handle those issues.

Meanwhile, the conventional teaching practicum itself has already significantly impacted their anxiety level (Pasaribu & Harendita, 2018). Furthermore, the studies also reveal specific anxiety related to technology-used occur to the teachers, which is called techno-anxiety (Muñoz et al., 2016). Somehow, online courses serve student teachers challenges, especially those who have low self-confidence, since they should improve their learning and work quality independently (Dymen & Downing, 2018). Furthermore, during the online teaching practicum, the student teachers argued that they did not have a chance to contact the learners directly. The unavailability of proper technology devices and problematic internet connections generate anxiety and affect their motivational teaching level (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020).

Moreover, the lack of communication with the supervisor during the teaching practicum possibly impacts future student teachers' work (Clarke et al., 2014). However, the new teaching practicum concept due to the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the student teachers' anxiety level. It is implemented for the first time without the proper readiness regarding some issues includes controlling and supervising from the faculty to the student teachers (Sidiq & Darmawan, 2020).

Measuring FLTA will help recognize the particular negative emotion for a foreign language teacher since understanding teacher psychological condition potentially impacts teaching quality (Mercer, 2018). Also, most FLTA issues come from the foreign language student teachers who undertake the teaching practicum (Merç, 2010). The research on FLTA will help to generate awareness. Hence, precautions can be taken for both EFL teachers or and trainers (Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020).

## **G. Previous Studies**

Several researches were conducted related to foreign language teaching anxiety in the past years in several countries. Merç conducted a study in 2015 and it was

published in *The International Journal of Research in Teacher Education*. The study aims to determine the relationship between the level of language teaching anxiety experienced by student-EFL teachers and their language teaching self-efficacy beliefs. This study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data is gained from the reliable questionnaires, and the qualitative data gained from the semi-structured interviews. Two types of questionnaires were employed for this study. Foreign Language Student teacher Anxiety Scale (FLSTAS) determines the anxiety level regarding the relationship with the mentors, language proficiency, feelings about academic incompetence, fear of being criticized by peers, fear of others' thoughts, and pupils. Another instrument called Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SEQ) was employed to determine the student teachers self-efficacy beliefs regarding classroom management, learner management, classroom instruction, and professional growth. One hundred seventeen student teachers in Anadolu University had a teaching practicum in the 2011-2012 academic years participating in this study. However, there were 22 randomly selected student teachers who had semi-structured interviews session to obtain the qualitative data. The result showed that student teachers recognized their high level of self-efficacy when their teaching anxieties were also lower in general.

Second, a study published in *The Qualitative Report* journal in 2016 to investigate the sources of FLTA. This research was conducted by Aydin and it used a qualitative research approach and employed four research instruments: questionnaire, interviews, reflections, and essay papers. The sample group of 60 student teachers of English education in Balikesir University participated in this study. The data then has been triangulated, and only the statements concerning the anxiety they experienced were noted. The words such as worried, anxious, and stressed were considered as indicator pieces of research of anxiety. The results concluded that student teachers experience FLTA before, during, and after their teaching activities regarding personality, perception of low-level language proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, teaching demotivation and motivation, teaching inexperience, and technical concerns. Some practical recommendations were found from this study. First, topics related to FLTA should be included in the curricula of pre-and in-service training programs. Then, telling the student teachers



that making a mistake during the teaching practicum is a natural part of the teaching process. Student teachers are suggested to focus on the content of knowledge they should teach to prevent the anxiety caused by low language proficiency. Last, student teachers should be trained regarding their personality and how to behave during the teaching practicum.

Another study was conducted in Turkey by Öztürk in 2016 to investigate the FLTA among non-native English teachers. It was published in Sakarya University Journal of Education. This research used a mix-method approach to collect the data, including quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures when both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were employed as the research instruments. The participants consist of 103 EFL teachers with various degrees and teaching experiences. For this research, they were chosen randomly from six universities in Turkey. The questionnaires for this research were adapted from Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety Scale (FLTAS), which was developed by İpek (2006). There were two questions posed for the semi-structured interviews to get in-depth data related to nervousness experience during the teaching practicum and the situations that caused anxiety. The results of the study revealed that they have a moderate level of teaching anxiety. They were not too nervous, and they felt confident with their English proficiency. From the interviews, the cause of FLTA was revealed, and it was regarding knowledge of target language items and students' manners and understanding of the target language. Therefore, this study gives some implications for the teaching practicum program: the FLTA issue and coping strategies of FLTA should be included in the training before the teaching practicum. The exercise of advanced vocabulary for non-native EFL teachers is needed.

İpek conducted a study in 2016 to investigate the factors behind FLTA among non-native EFL teachers and the research was published in Journal of Qualitative Research in Education. There were 32 non-native EFL teachers with various teaching experience, ranging from no experience at all to 16 years of experience participating in this study. They teach in a school of foreign language at Anadolu University. This study employed three research instruments to gather the data; those are behavioral tests to determine the visible signs of nervousness or fear in the subject, physiological tests to measure blood pressure and temperature, and

self-reports such as diaries and interviews to investigate the EFL teachers' internal feelings toward the subject. The results showed that the primary sources of FLTA were making mistakes, fear of failure, and using the native language. This study implies that the training institution is suggested to include the FLTA in their courses. Therefore, the EFL teachers will be familiar with the anxiety issues they may face in the actual classroom setting.

Meanwhile, another study was conducted by Pasaribu and Harendita in Indonesia in 2018 and was published in LLT Journal to identify the causal factor of FLTA. This study implies strategies to cope with it. This research employed a mix-method approach, with questionnaires as the quantitative research instrument and focus group discussion as the qualitative research instrument. The kind of anxiety faced during the teaching process is collected through the questionnaire and the detailed experience the student teachers gain from the narrations in the focused group discussion. 50 EFL student teachers at Sanata Dharma University participated in this study. The result showed that the anxiety causal factors related student teachers confidence in their English and pedagogical skills; therefore, they use several coping strategies such as personal coping strategies (establishing a lively classroom by humor, positive talks, and rewards), professionals coping strategies (having an appropriate preparation before teaching), social coping strategy (share the problems to social supports), and institutional coping strategy (asking for support from institutional authority). This study gives teachers education programs to help the student teachers by providing emotional and meaningful guidance and supervision.

Nonetheless, this research focuses on perceiving foreign language teaching anxiety problems experienced by EFL student teachers during an online teaching practicum at an English Education Department in one State Islamic University in Indonesia which proposed to become a reference for the EFL student teachers in preparing themselves participating in the online teaching practicum and accountable source for the online teaching practicum committee as well as the English education department in assembling a better preparation before handling the program in order to prevent or reduce the EFL student teachers' teaching anxiety

level. Moreover, based on the observation the research concerning FLTA in an online teaching practicum in this university has never been studied.

