

# The Gender's Perception on Pre-Service Teacher's Anxiety in Teaching English

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## Abstract

Teaching practice gives students experience and opportunities to learn how to teach in real schools. However, some may feel anxiety because they lack of teaching experience. Male and female could have different feelings. This feeling can cause potential problems to their learning and teaching process. This research aimed to discover the gender's perception caused of Indonesian pre-service teachers' anxiety in teaching English. This research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data were collected from questionnaires and interview. The results show that several perceptions based on their gender contributing to pre-service teachers' anxiety, namely: confidence, English teaching skills, preparation, lesson delivery, students' profiles, evaluation skill and class management. While, in solving the problems, the participants applied personal, professional, social, and institutional coping strategies. Knowing the factors contributing the students' anxiety in speaking based on the gender and how to solve it gave the pre-service teacher opportunity to reduce them.

**Keywords:** *Gender in Education, Anxiety, English Pre-Service Teachers, ELT*

## Introduction

The practice of teaching English is one of the most important aspects of an English education study program because aspiring teachers need opportunities to learn from and in real schools.

This teaching practice activity turned out to have an anxiety effect on prospective English teachers. The negative impact of anxiety is always considered to have a strong influence on how English teacher candidates teach. This issue grew to be of paramount



importance that teaching is one of the top five stressful careers in the world.<sup>1</sup> That is, prospective English teachers usually have more anxiety caused by many reasons than experienced teachers<sup>2</sup>. Being nervous or restless can happen for a variety of reasons. However, lack of experience in teaching is believed to be one of the causes of prospective English teacher students experiencing anxiety about English.

Regarding anxiety in male and female pre-service teacher, female are more worried about their inability than male. Male are more active and explorative, while female are more sensitive, besides that men think more rationally than female who tend to be emotional. Other research shows that male are more relaxed than male<sup>3</sup>.

In the research that has been done by Gregersen (2003), it is revealed that teaching and learning activities are influenced by anxiety about language<sup>4</sup>. In other words, the success of teaching English teacher candidates could be affected by their pressure about the language because they are still part of the students learning of the language. Furthermore, a year later, Kim and Kim (2004)

conveyed the results of their research that several factors influenced the anxiety of prospective English teacher students<sup>5</sup>. Among others are; ability in English, lack of confidence, knowledge of language and education, lack of readiness, comparison with experienced and native-speaking teachers, fear of getting bad grades, and lack of experience. Naturally, this will greatly affect the teaching and learning process later, so solutions are primary regarding the anxiety faced by prospective English teachers.

The issue of anxiety faced by prospective English teachers is not considered a new thing in the world of language and education.

However, there are not many research done on this subject. Furthermore, previous research findings are still lacking in consistency that leads to the causes and strategies to overcome them, especially for prospective English teachers. Because research on the same issue has only focused on anxiety about English in general aspects, there have not been many studies that raised future English teachers in Indonesia as subjects or participants in previous studies

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<sup>1</sup> Coombe, C. "Burnout in ELT: Strategies for Avoidance and Prevention". *TESOL Arabia Perspectives*. Vol. 15, No. 3, (2008): 11-13.

<sup>2</sup> Alashev, S. I. and Bykov, S.V. "Teachers' State of Anxiety", *Russian Education and Society*, Vol. 45, No. 12, (2002): 71

<sup>3</sup> Trismiati. Perbedaan Tingkat Kecemasan Antara Pria dan Wanita Akseptor Kontrasepsi antap di

RSUP dr Sarjito Yogyakarta. Palembang : Universitas Bina Dharma, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Gregersen, T. S. "Nonverbal cues: Clues to the detection of foreign language anxiety". *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(3), (2005): 388-400.

<sup>5</sup> Kim, S. Y., & Kim, J. H. "When the learner becomes a teacher: Foreign language teaching anxiety as an occupational hazard". *English Teaching*, 59(1), (2004): 165-186.

that focused on their anxiety about English and the solution.

Anxiety is a negative way to convey one's feelings. When we are anxious, we feel nervous, worried, and afraid. As a result, we tremble, we sweat, and our hearts beat faster. This problem usually arises when speakers perceive their oral performance as wrong, stupid or incomprehensible. In general, anxiety can be defined as a complex concept that depends not only on one's feelings of self-efficacy but also on assessing the potential and perceived threats inherent in a given situation<sup>6</sup>. In other words, anxiety is associated with unpleasant feelings similar to fear.

In the literature on teacher candidates' anxiety about foreign languages, Merç (2004) found that anxiety was among the most frequently reported by prospective English teachers practising teaching at the Faculty of Education, Anadolu University. In addition, Kim and Kim (2004) also conducted a study that focused on things that trigger anxiety for prospective teachers. The results reveal that

future teachers are anxious when teaching English<sup>7</sup>.

Yoon (2012) examined Korean students as prospective English teachers at Seoul University, Korea. The results of this study indicate that the anxiety factors of these students are the fear of using English in class, self-confidence, preparation when teaching and willingness or effort to overcome the anxiety<sup>8</sup>. Meanwhile, Takahashi (2014) states that prospective English teachers' level of English proficiency does not significantly affect anxiety when teaching English<sup>9</sup>. Because according to Takasi, there is a complex relationship between the level of language proficiency of future non-native English teachers to their anxiety when teaching English. So it is very important to research the causes of anxiety which, according to him, are complex in teaching English. Shresta (2009) observed the anxiety of prospective teachers in their first grade. It can be seen that they are anxious when expressing basic sentences, so the structure of

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<sup>6</sup> Tobias, S. Anxiety and Cognitive Processing of Instruction. In: Schwarzer, R., Ed., *Self-Related Cognition in Anxiety and Motivation*, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, (1986) : 35-54.

<sup>7</sup> Kim, S. Y., & Kim, J. H. "When the learner becomes a teacher: Foreign language teaching anxiety as an occupational hazard". *English Teaching*, 59 (1), (2004): 165-186.

<sup>8</sup> Yoon, T. "Teaching English though English: Exploring anxiety in nonnative pre-service ESL". *Teachers Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 2(6), (2012): 1099-1107

<sup>9</sup> Takahashi, H. "Nonnative English-speaking teachers" self-perceived language proficiency levels, anxieties, and learning strategies". *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*. 1, (2014): 24-44.

the language is different from what it should be.

Based on the previous studies above, this study aimed to observe the anxiety on pre-service teacher based on their gender. Then, it is important to conduct a study about the role of gender on preservice teachers.

## Method

This study used a mixed-method design that combined quantitative and qualitative data and analysis. The type used is a design that begins with the collection of quantitative data and continues with the collection of qualitative data aimed at elaborating the quantitative results obtained previously<sup>10</sup>. Quantitative data was collected using a questionnaire, and qualitative data were obtained through interviews.

This study took 44 respondents as questionnaire informants. They consist of 22 male and 22 female pre-service teachers. All of the participants had taken peer tutoring in their microteaching classes. Data was collected by distributing questionnaires and interviewing participants. The questionnaire used to collect quantitative data was adapted from the Pasaribu and Herendita (2018)

instrument and modified by the researcher to answer the research questions<sup>11</sup>.

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Test. The results showed that the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of the questionnaire showed a high internal consistency ( $r = 0.899$ ).

Thus, it is considered a reliable instrument. The questionnaire contains 35 questions consisting of seven indicators; self-confidence of prospective teachers, English language skills, preparation, delivery of lessons, peer conditions, evaluation, and class management. The questionnaire was created in Google Forms and answered online by respondents. The respondents were asked to agree or disagree with each statement ranging from strongly disagree (score 4), disagree (score 3), agree (score 2) and strongly agree (score 1). For the interview, a semi-structured open interview was conducted involving five participants to obtain more detailed information regarding the anxiety of prospective English teacher.

To analyze the data this research used descriptive analysis. The result of questionnaires are analyzed. Then the result are delivered in discussion.

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<sup>10</sup> John. W. Creswell, *Research Design (Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches)*. (4th. Edition) (United Kingdom: Sage Publishing, 2014), 264

<sup>11</sup> Pasaribu, T. A., & Herendita, M. E. "English language anxiety of pre-service teachers:

Causes and coping strategies". *LLT Journal : A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 21(2), (2018), 134-147. doi:

<https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.2018.210202>

## Discussion

### Causes of Anxiety for Pre-service English Teachers

Prospective teachers experience anxiety when they teach English in real classroom situations. The analysis that has been carried out reveals and discusses the frequency of the anxiety indicators experienced by prospective English teachers. The first cause is a crisis of confidence.

**Table 1. The Confidence of Male Pre-service English Teachers**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
1	I'm nervous when I speak in class	0	36	64	0
2	I feel embarrassed when I speak English in front of students	5	64	31	0
3	I feel very comfortable in speaking English.	9	36	50	5
4	When I will teach English, I feel very confident and relaxed.	9	41	50	0
5	I Never Feel Confident In Myself When I Speak In Class.	0	45	41	14

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

The majority of male candidates for pre-service English teaching positions are uneasy because they have high expectations for their performance. This supports the finding from Sameephet and Wanphet's (2013) study that "Anxiety can be related to expectations." One person said that he couldn't sleep because of his anxiety. He has high expectations because he wants to follow the lecturer's instructions.

**Table 2. The Confidence of Female Pre-service English Teachers**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
1	I'm nervous when I speak in class	10	45	45	0
2	I feel embarrassed when I speak English in front of students	14	81	5	0
3	I feel very comfortable in speaking English.	5	26	64	5
4	When I will teach English, I feel very confident and relaxed.	9	36	55	0
5	I Never Feel Confident In Myself When I Speak In Class.	0	91	9	0

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

Based on the data above, female English pre-service teacher feel nervous not because they are shy, but because they have high expectations of their performance. This is in line with what Sameephet and Wanphet (2013) found in their research that "Anxiety can be

related to expectations"<sup>12</sup>. One respondent admitted that he was so anxious that he couldn't sleep. He has high expectations because he wants to be according to the wishes of the lecturer.

The second cause is the ability to speak English. Of course, it is undeniable that prospective English teachers must have good language skills to convey the existing material.

**Table 3. Skills of male pre-service language teachers towards English (linguistics)**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
6	I'm nervous when explaining the material in English	9	13	6	9
7	I worry when I have to explain difficult vocabulary	9	18	73	0
8	I'm afraid I don't know how to teach english grammar	9	14	59	18
9	When I realized I was make a mistake, I'm getting nervous	0	50	50	0
10	I Am Afraid That My English Is Not As Good As The English Teacher Should Be	9	27	69	5

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

From these data mastery of skills male English pre-service teacher affects their anxiety level. While they do not really worried when they have to explain the difficult

vocabulary. They also still could manage the class when they made mistakes.

**Table 4 Skills of female pre-service language teachers towards English (linguistics)**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
6	I'm nervous when explaining the material in English	9	50	36	5
7	I worry when I have to explain difficult vocabulary	5	17	65	13
8	I'm afraid I don't know how to teach english grammar	9	9	73	9
9	When I realized I was make a mistake, I'm getting nervous	0	65	45	0
10	I Am Afraid That My English Is Not As Good As The English Teacher Should Be	13	37	50	0

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

The English ability of female English teacher candidates can affect their level of anxiety. They were afraid when they cannot be influential figure for the student. Thus, they must improve their performances to convince the students.

**Table 5. Preparation of Male Pre-service English Teachers in Teaching**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
11	The more I prepare for the language class England, getting nervous.	5	73	22	0

first encounter with students in EFL classroom. Journal of Education and Practice. 4(2), (2013)78-87.

<sup>12</sup> Sammephet, B. & Wanphet, P, Pre-service teachers' anxiety and anxiety management during the

12	I am anxious when I try to maintain my teaching preparation to a fairly good standard.	0	22	65	13
13	I dread when I have to write a detailed lesson plan.	5	27	41	27
14	I am anxious when I have to develop appropriate resources/materials for lessons.	9	18	73	0
15	I Worry If My Teaching Is Not Interesting	0	9	59	32

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

The male pre-service teachers did not worry when their explanation did not run well. But, they were anxious when they could not develop the materials. The male pre-service teacher did not really focus to the performance, but they could be more anxious when they are lacking of teaching materials.

Table 6. Preparation of Female Pre-service English Teachers in Teaching

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
11	The more I prepare for the language class England, getting nervous.	13	78	9	0
12	I am anxious when I try to maintain my teaching preparation to a fairly good standard.	0	40	55	5
13	I dread when I have to write a detailed lesson	13	45	37	5

14	I am anxious when I have to develop appropriate resources/materials for lessons.	10	45	45	0
15	I Worry If My Teaching Is Not Interesting	0	23	63	14

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

The female pre-service teachers were anxious when they could not develop the materials. The female pre-service teacher thought that the preparation is very important. The more preparation, would give a better result.

Table 7. Submission of Teaching Materials by Male Pre-service English Teachers

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
16	I worry when I introduce a new topic to my students	5	45	50	0
17	I am afraid of not being able to convey abstract concepts to my students.	5	27	55	13
18	I'm worried that I won't be able to attract students' attention when I'm delivering lessons..	0	23	50	27
19	I'm worried that I won't be able to meet the lesson plan objectives while I'm teaching	0	23	64	13
20	I'm Afraid I Won't Be Able To Provide Appropriate Feedback To Students.	0	23	72	5

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

The information above demonstrates the respondent's desire to create engaging lessons and materials for pupils. The majority of respondents worry about being underprepared because they want to give students engaging content. Consequently, kids don't feel more anxious as they get ready for the session. In fact, they view planning as a method for reducing their worry.

The majority of responders expressed concern about their ability to engage kids in class. They genuinely think it's crucial to grab students' attention since it allows them to accomplish the desired learning goals.

**Table 8. Submission of Teaching Materials by Female Pre-service English Teachers**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
16	I worry when I introduce a new topic to my students	5	68	27	0
17	I am afraid of not being able to convey abstract concepts to my students.	4	32	64	0
18	I'm worried that I won't be able to attract students' attention when I'm delivering lessons..	0	27	56	17
19	I'm worried that I won't be able to meet the lesson plan objectives while I'm teaching	0	35	60	5
20	I'm Afraid I Won't Be Able To Provide Appropriate Feedback To Students.	0	35	60	5

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

<sup>13</sup> Merç, A. "Reflections of pre-service EFL teachers throughout their teaching practicum. What has been good? What has gone wrong? What has

The data shows that the respondents want to make the lesson/material interesting for the students. Most respondents are also worried about having insufficient preparation because they want to provide interesting material to students. However, although some respondents had difficulty in preparing the teaching materials, statement 13 revealed that they did not become more nervous when preparing the lesson. In fact, they consider preparation as a strategy that helps them overcome anxiety.

Most of the respondents were worried that they would not be able to attract the attention of students in class. They really consider it important to get students' attention because it is a way to achieve the expected learning objectives. This is in line with Merc (2011) who found that many respondents noted that when they could attract students' attention, they could achieve the level of success they wanted<sup>13</sup>. As shown from the data, the respondents were also anxious because they could not fulfill the objectives of the lesson plans.

The fifth cause of anxiety is the student profile or the context of the students to be taught. One of the important factors in determining the success of the learning

changed?". Unpublished master's thesis. Anadolu University, Eski ehir, (2004).



process is the condition of the students themselves.

**Table 9. Student Profile or Context of Students to be Taught by Male Pre-service Teacher**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
21	I worry about possible problems in class with misbehavior or misbehavior from students.	5	17	64	14
22	I worry that my students will not respect me in class.	5	50	31	14
23	I'm worried that my students will ask difficult questions	5	32	46	17
24	I am anxious about how to give equal attention the same for every student.	5	17	61	17
25	I'm Worried That Students Can't Follow The Material I Explain	5	17	41	27

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

Among the respondents was found to be significantly influenced by the state of the other students in the class. Respondents instruct peers whose English proficiency is typically at the same level in microteaching classes. However, in actual teaching settings, respondents must cope with pupils with a range of English proficiency and behavioural issues. Additionally, the sixth reason for aspiring English teachers is worry about evaluation or assessment.

**Table 10. Student Profile or Context of Students to be Taught by Female Pre-service Teacher**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
21	I worry about possible problems in class with misbehavior or misbehavior from students.	5	27	55	13
22	I worry that my students will not respect me in class.	5	37	45	13
23	I'm worried that my students will ask difficult questions	5	45	45	5
24	I am anxious about how to give equal attention the same for every student.	5	40	50	5
25	I'm Worried That Students Can't Follow The Material I Explain	5	27	55	13

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

The condition of students in the class proved to be a very significant cause of respondents' anxiety. In microteaching classes, respondents teach their peers whose English is generally at the same level. But in actual classroom situations, respondents have to deal with students with different levels of English and diverse behaviors. In addition, anxiety to be evaluated or assessed is the sixth cause for prospective English teachers.

**Table 11. Evaluation of Male Pre-service Teacher**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
26	I'm worried that I won't pass the teaching	0	17	60	23

	practicum				
27	I am nervous when my supervisor/lecturer observes and evaluates me while teaching.	9	27	41	23
28	I worry about the expectations of my lecturer/supervisor	9	18	45	28
29	I feel anxious when observed by my friend	22	50	28	0
30	I'm Nervous When My Lecturer Gives An Evaluation In Front Of My Friends	0	41	46	13

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

The data shows that respondents are anxious to be observed and evaluated by their supervisor/lecturer while teaching. Most respondents feel anxious about the expectations of their supervisor/lecturer. On the other hand, less than half of respondents feel anxious when observed by their peers. There are respondents who feel anxious when given feedback by supervisors / lecturers in the form of verbal evaluations of their teaching practices. The seventh cause of anxiety is classroom management. Most of the respondents felt anxious because they could not gain discretion in class control.

Table 12. Evaluation of female Pre-service Teacher

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
26	I'm worried that I won't pass the teaching practicum	0	23	60	17
27	I am nervous when my supervisor/lecturer observes and evaluates me while teaching.	10	23	50	17

28	I worry about the expectations of my lecturer/supervisor	5	13	45	37
29	I feel anxious when observed by my friend	10	50	23	17
30	I'm Nervous When My Lecturer Gives An Evaluation In Front Of My Friends	0	40	44	16

Notes: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree

The data shows that respondents are anxious to be observed and evaluated by their supervisor/lecturer while teaching. Most respondents feel anxious about the expectations of their supervisor/lecturer. On the other hand, less than half of respondents feel anxious when observed by their peers. There are respondents who feel anxious when given feedback by supervisors / lecturers in the form of verbal evaluations of their teaching practices. The seventh cause of anxiety is classroom management. Most of the respondents felt anxious because they could not gain discretion in class control.

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
31	Saya khawatir jika saya tidak punya kekuasaan dalam mengontrol kelas.	0	23	60	17
32	Saya cemas ketika mengajar Bahasa Inggris karena kelas yang ramai dan banyak siswa	9	24	50	17
33	Saya khawatir tidak bisa mengelola waktu dengan baik ketika menyampaikan materi	5	13	45	37

34	Saya merasa tidak nyaman ketika kelas ramai	9	50	24	17
35	Saya Cemas Ketika Harus Menegakkan DisiplinKepada Siswa	0	36	46	18

From these data, male pre-service teachers are anxious when class conditions are not conducive. A teacher should be able to control the classroom situation. If the class is in a non-conducive situation, a teacher must be able to control the class.

No	Statements	1	2	3	4
		%	%	%	%
31	Saya khawatir jika saya tidak punya kekuasaan dalam mengontrol kelas.	0	5	13	17
32	Saya cemas ketika mengajar Bahasa Inggris karena kelas yang ramai dan banyak siswa	9	24	50	17
33	Saya khawatir tidak bisa mengelola waktu dengan baik ketika menyampaikan materi	5	13	46	36
34	Saya merasa tidak nyaman ketika kelas ramai	9	50	24	17
35	Saya Cemas Ketika Harus Menegakkan DisiplinKepada Siswa	0	36	45	17

From these data, female pre-service teachers also experienced the same thing. They are worried when the class conditions are not conducive. A teacher should be able to control the classroom situation. If the class is in a non-conducive situation, a teacher must be able to control the class.

### Strategies for Pre-service English Teachers in Overcoming Anxiety

Male and female English teacher candidates use several strategies to overcome these anxiety problems, including personal, professional, social and institutional coping strategies.

Murray-Harvey (1999) states that there are five categories of personal coping strategies, namely: cognitive strategies, physical strategies, behavioral strategies, emotional strategies and rational strategies. The interview results revealed that some respondents used several personal coping strategies, especially cognitive ones, to relieve their anxiety. In addition to personal coping strategies, Murray-Harvey (1993) also mentions three categories of professional coping strategies related to prospective teachers' knowledge, skills and qualities. Several strategies emerged in the interviews related to improving skills and building positive student relationships.

In addition, sharing problems with their social environment (social coping strategies), such as friends and family, can be a way to reduce their anxiety levels. Although they know they must be active in managing their anxiety, they also seek help from institutions (institutional coping strategies). Some respondents feel

helped by their supervisor. They feel that speaking to the supervisor is very helpful.

## Conclusion

Based on the data and explanations described above, it can be concluded that several factors cause anxiety for prospective English teachers, including; their confidence, English language skills, preparation, lesson delivery, student profile, evaluation, and class management. In addition, inexperienced teachers tend to feel insecure about their performance. They deal with these problems by applying personal, professional, social, and institutional coping strategies. The four strategies were used to help pre-service English teachers manage and overcome their anxiety.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the understanding of pre-service English teachers to identify the factors that cause anxiety that arises in them and how to overcome them. To minimize things that could hinder the teaching and learning process in the classroom. For lecturers or teaching practitioners, it is hoped that they will be able to examine the results of this study to help prospective English teachers overcome this anxiety and use this research as a reference to carry out further research that focuses on the anxiety of pre-service English teachers.

Concerning gender, male and female pre-service English teachers have different

characteristics. Male pre-service English teachers tended to be afraid if they did not have sufficient materials. In comparison, the female pre-service English teachers were worried when they could not manage the classroom situation.

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