

EFL STUDENT- TEACHERS' SPEAKING ANXIETY IN TEACHING PRACTICUM AT INDONESIAN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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Abstract: This study investigates speaking anxiety during teaching practice in a unique cultural context of an Islamic educational institution experienced by EFL student teachers. The study aims to understand the sources of speaking anxiety and the strategies used to overcome it. The study used a qualitative narrative inquiry design, involving in-depth interviews with four EFL student teachers in an Islamic junior high school in Indonesia. Thematic analysis revealed six sources of speaking anxiety: classroom interaction, teaching materials, initial practicum experiences, classroom management, speaking ability, and the Islamic educational institution. Four strategies for managing anxiety were identified: thorough preparation for practice, seeking social support, self-management, and using effective teaching strategies. This research fills a critical gap by focusing on Islamic educational institution-specific challenges and coping mechanisms, providing invaluable insights for EFL student-teachers, educators and policymakers to enhance EFL teaching practices in similar cultural contexts.

Keywords: Speaking anxiety, EFL student-teacher, teaching practicum, Islamic school

INTRODUCTION

In teacher education, the practicum is a crucial transition into the profession, involving student teachers taking on educator responsibilities and gaining a deeper understanding of students' needs (Li et al., 2023). This phase prepares them for the dynamic educational environment by engaging in real classroom tasks such as setting objectives, managing dynamics, and building relationships (Charisma & Nurmalasari, 2020). However, this phase can often be demanding and increase anxiety among student teachers (Marais & Meier, 2004). Research indicates that among EFL learners, speaking English induces the highest levels of anxiety (Ashari et al., 2023; Chen, 2022; Sukmana et al., 2023; Zhang & Lai, 2023).

Several studies have explored the sources and coping strategies for teaching anxiety. Ashari et al. (2023) identified factors such as embarrassment, fear of mistakes, lack of confidence, nervousness, and infrequent speaking as contributors to speaking anxiety. Coping strategies included seeking motivation from friends, starting classes in English, using game-based learning, and preparing materials beforehand. Similarly, Li et al. (2023) reported higher foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) among pre-service EFL teachers due to inexperience and low self-perception of language proficiency. Dzulfikri and Azami (2024) investigated anxiety among international pre-service teachers in a remote Malaysian Islamic boarding school and identified coping strategies such as language games and incentivized quizzes. These studies highlight various aspects of teaching anxiety and coping mechanisms, but differ in their focus and contexts with this research.

In the context of Islamic educational institutions, these establishments play a pivotal role in shaping Islamic education in Indonesia, acting as hubs for knowledge dissemination, research, training, community development, and cultural preservation (Hidayat et al., 2018; Muttaqin, 2020). Pertiwi et al. (2018) explored

value-based and ethical leadership in Islamic boarding schools, highlighting how the Kyai's example fosters a familial bond with students, distinguishing these institutions from traditional schools. However, these institutions also have certain cultural regulations and norms and sometimes maintain a conservative environment that can cause stress and anxiety for student-teachers during their teaching practicum (Marzulina et al., 2021; Pertiwi et al., 2018).

This research specifically examines speaking anxiety among student-teachers during their teaching practicum in an Islamic education institution. Previous studies, such as Ashari et al. (2023) and Getie (2020), suggest that studying students within the Islamic community can provide valuable insights into how their specific circumstances and surroundings influence anxiety levels. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the unique cultural context of Islamic junior high schools and its impact on student-teachers' speaking anxiety during the practicum. The research addresses two main questions:

1. What are the sources of speaking anxiety experienced by EFL student-teachers during teaching practicum in Islamic educational institutions?
2. How do EFL student-teachers overcome speaking anxiety during teaching practicum in Islamic educational institutions?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Anxiety among EFL Student-teacher in Teaching practicum

The teaching practicum is a crucial phase for EFL student-teachers, bridging theory with practice. It helps student-teachers face real classroom challenges and apply their pedagogical skills. Zein and Stroupe (2015) highlight its role in providing practical experience, connecting theory with practice, facilitating mentorship, encouraging self-reflection, and easing the transition to full-time teaching. The practicum is vital for professional development, shaping teachers' identities and skills. It prepares preservice teachers to handle modern educational challenges, fosters critical thinking, and encourages self-reflection (Collinson et al., 2009& Tuli & File, 2010). Feedback and guidance from experienced educators during this phase are key to their success and persistence in the field (Grudnoff, 2011).

Speaking anxiety among preservice EFL instructors involves feelings of tension, apprehension, and fear related to future teaching challenges. This anxiety often arises from uncertainties about students, goals, and teaching scenarios (Xiao & Ma, 2009). Higher anxiety levels are linked to lower self-assessed competence and reduced effectiveness in managing classroom situations (Bach & Hagenauer, 2022). Addressing these anxieties by exploring their causes and implementing effective strategies is crucial to maintaining teachers' enthusiasm and strengthening their resolve in the demanding field of language education.

Factors Contributing to Speaking Anxiety in Teaching Practicum

Anxiety among foreign language students and teachers can arise from various factors. Charisma and Nurmallasari (2020) identified six causes during teaching practicums: unfamiliar classroom scenarios, monitoring by mentors or supervisors, perceived teaching inadequacy, unmet expectations, low English proficiency, and poor classroom management. Alrashidi (2022) found five primary sources of anxiety for Saudi preservice English teachers: fear of mistakes, poor grades, unfamiliar material, lack of preparation, and large class sizes. Li et al. (2023) identified key anxiety sources as lack of teaching experience, low self-perception of language skills, and fear of poor evaluations.

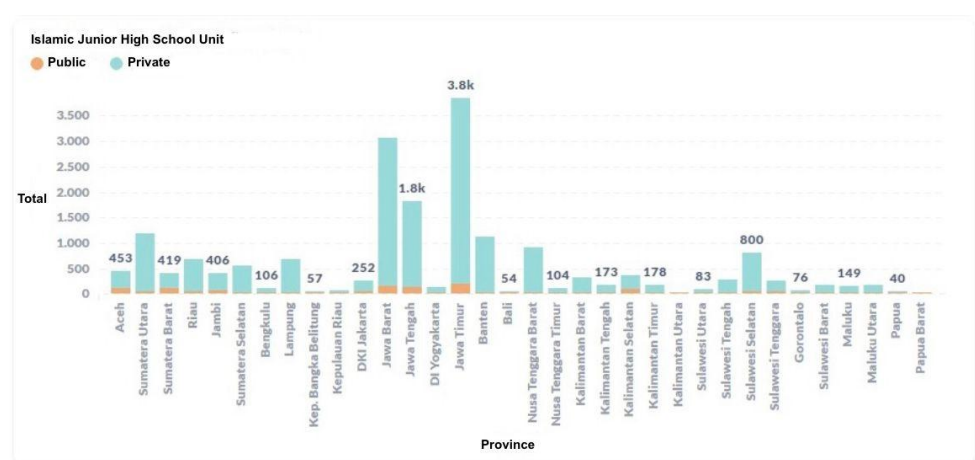
Coping Strategies for Speaking Anxiety in Teaching Practicum

To address teaching anxiety, Pasaribu and Harendita (2018) identified four main strategies: personal, professional, social, and institutional coping methods. Charisma and Nurmalasari (2020) outlined six strategies: adapting to class conditions and understanding students, thorough preparation (lesson plans, vocabulary, educational videos, peer discussions), building positive relationships with mentors and students, boosting self-confidence, fostering positive thinking, and maintaining calmness during the practicum.

Islamic Educational Institution

Islamic educational institution has special distinction, and it mostly influenced by the cultural values. Yunus (2019) describes Islamic educational institution with three key elements: the Kyai, who leads the Islamic educational institution; the Santri, who live and study there; and the mosque, which serves both worship and study purposes. The relationship between the Kyai and Santri is uniquely close and extends beyond academics to include spiritual guidance and personal development, unlike typical school interactions (Pertiwi et al., 2018). Islamic educational institutions have certain cultural regulations and norms and sometimes still have a conservative environment that often causes stress and anxiety for student-teachers when doing teaching practicum (Marzulina et al., 2021; Pertiwi et al., 2018).

In addition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia stated that the number of Islamic junior high schools in 34 provinces under the Ministry of Religious Affairs' administration is 18,998 as of 2020/2021, consisting of 1,615 public junior high schools and 17,383 private junior high schools. In addition, East Java, the province where this research was conducted, has the most significant number of junior secondary schools, namely 3,800 under the Ministry of Religious Affairs' administration. Moreover, here is an overview of the data:



Statistics of Islamic Junior High School Units
(Source: Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs)

Given this substantial number, it becomes evident that exploring speaking anxiety among EFL student-teachers in Islamic educational institutions is crucial. The unique educational context shaped by Islamic traditions and practices in these institutions necessitates a deeper understanding of the challenges and coping mechanisms related to speaking anxiety. This research is vital for developing effective strategies and policies to support EFL student-teachers in managing anxiety, thereby enhancing the quality of education in Indonesia's Islamic junior high schools.

METHODS

Research Design

Narrative inquiry is used to explore speaking anxiety during a teaching practicum in Islamic settings, as it effectively captures the complex dynamics of foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This approach emphasizes personal narratives, providing a deep understanding of EFL student-teachers' emotions and experiences. It allows for detailed examination of subjective realities, contributing factors, and coping strategies. Inspired by Pita-Castro & Castiblanco-Rincón (2021), narrative inquiry enriches the research by highlighting the unique challenges and strategies within an Islamic context.

Setting and Participant

This research was conducted at Islamic junior high school in East Java, Indonesia, focusing on EFL student-teachers' practicum experiences. The research took place after the practicum due to time constraints. Four female participants, aged 21-23 and in their 7th semester at a private Islamic college in Malang, were selected through purposive sampling with criteria such as students who have undergone two months of teaching practicum at the school level in the Islamic boarding school environment. And there were no male participants practised teaching in that Islamic junior high schools. The researcher had prior collegial relationships with the participants, one of whom was a close friend. Participants had different levels of teaching experience, and pseudonyms were used for confidentiality.

Participants Profile

No	Participant	Age	Gender	Teaching experience
1	Asila	22	Female	Yes
2	Bunga	22	Female	No
3	Citra	21	Female	No
4	Difa	23	Female	No

Data Collection

Before the interviews, participants provided consent via a Google Form detailing the study's purpose and benefits (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). In-depth interviews were conducted to explore their experiences (Sudarwati et al., 2022; Yulianti & Mukminin, 2021). A face-to-face interview with Difa occurred, while the others were online: Asila on Zoom, Bunga on Google Meet, and Citra via WhatsApp voice note. Participants could use Indonesian to avoid language issues, with follow-ups via WhatsApp. The interviews aimed to identify speaking anxiety causes and coping strategies, using questions from prior research (Clandinin, 2006; Ubaidillah & Widiati, 2021). The interview questions explore the speaking anxiety of EFL student teachers during their teaching practicum, focusing on its importance, causes, and the impact of the Islamic boarding school setting. They also examine strategies to overcome anxiety, support from the social environment, and the role of mentorship, guidance, and institutions in managing anxiety.

Data Analysis

The theme analysis method by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed, involving (1) data identification, (2) transcription, (3) multiple transcript readings, (4) coding significant data points, (5) grouping codes, and (6) synthesizing overarching themes. Initially, recorded data was reviewed to understand the

interview context, followed by meticulous transcription and three thorough readings. Data points were clustered into codes, organized into categories, and ultimately synthesized into themes aligned with the research questions.

Triangulation/Trustworthiness

The researcher acknowledges the study's limitations in generalizability due to the small sample size and time constraints. To address this, the researcher consulted an expert in thematic analysis to review and refine the themes derived from the interview data. Additionally, member checking was conducted by sharing the transcripts and themes with participants to gather feedback and refine the findings. This iterative process aimed to enhance the study's transferability and relevance to broader contexts beyond the specific participant group.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings reveal the causes of anxiety among EFL student-teachers in Islamic boarding schools and strategies to address them. Six main anxiety themes were identified: (1) Classroom Interaction, (2) Materials, (3) Initial Teaching Practicum Experience, (4) Classroom Management, (5) Speaking Ability, and (6) Islamic-Based Institution. Strategies to mitigate anxiety included: (1) Maximizing Teaching Practicum Preparation, (2) Social Support, (3) Self-Management, and (4) Teaching Strategy. The following sections will detail these findings and insights from participant interviews.

Sources of Speaking Anxiety Experienced by EFL Student-Teachers During Teaching Practicum

This topic explores six themes of teaching anxiety among EFL student-teachers in Islamic boarding schools: 1) Classroom interaction, where mentor observations and student interactions increase anxiety; 2) Materials, focusing on the adequacy of instructional content; 3) Initial teaching practicum, reflecting early-stage uncertainties; 4) Classroom management, addressing challenges with active male students; 5) Speaking ability, highlighting pronunciation and grammar concerns; and 6) Islamic institution pressures, including strict regulations and mentor expectations. Each theme is discussed in detail.

a. Classroom Interaction

A classroom interaction factor contributed to speaking anxiety experienced by EFL student-teachers during their teaching practicum in two ways, namely, mentor teacher and students.

1. Mentor Teacher Interaction

During weekly classroom teaching practice, participants were accompanied by a mentor teacher. Asila worried about mistreating students and receiving negative judgment. Difa felt tense but more focused with the supervising teacher.

Asila:

"Fearing poor evaluation from my mentor, I spoke faster due to nerves and sweating."

Asila felt anxious in the unfamiliar teaching environment, worried about negative evaluations from her mentor. Her nervousness, shown by speaking quickly and sweating, compounded her unease as she faced the challenges of teaching.

Difa:

"I feel tense with a supervising teacher, needing to be mindful of my words and behaviour while teaching."

Difa notes a distinct change in the classroom atmosphere when a supervising teacher is present. This triggers a sense of unease, prompting them to be more cautious about their speech and behavior while teaching.

2. Student Interaction

Bunga, and Citra share common teaching anxieties. Bunga fears her students might not understand or engage with her lessons. Citra feels shaky teaching in front of large groups.

Bunga:

"I worried about engaging students and ensuring their understanding."

Bunga expresses concern about engaging her students and ensuring their comprehension during her teaching sessions. She worries about the effectiveness of her teaching methods in capturing their interest and fears that they may struggle to grasp the concepts she presents.

Citra:

"Honestly, I am a bit shaky every time I have to teach in front of many students."

Citra feels nervous and shaky when teaching large groups of students, admitting to a sense of apprehension each time. This sentiment is common, as many people experience stage fright or performance anxiety, especially in educational settings where they are expected to impart knowledge and command attention.

b. Materials

In teaching practice, crafting and presenting instructional material are crucial tasks. Asia worries about lesson plan suitability, and Bunga about mastering content and ensuring understanding.

Asila:

"I was also unsure whether my lesson plans, teaching modules, and worksheets I had prepared would be suitable for them or not."

Asila's anxiety stems from uncertainty about the suitability of her lesson plans, teaching modules, and worksheets, as she wants to provide effective and engaging materials tailored to her students' needs and learning styles.

Bunga:

"I am concerned about delivering material effectively and ensuring student comprehension, especially when students hesitate to seek clarification."

Bunga is anxious about teaching due to past experiences where students struggled with tasks and hesitated to ask for help, leaving her unsure about her effectiveness.

c. Initial teaching practice experience

In their reflections, Citra, and Difa all express feelings of anxiety and nervousness due to their lack of teaching experience. Citra similarly felt tense and nervous as it was her inaugural teaching experience. Difa's apprehension stemmed from facing the challenge of teaching and interacting with students for the first time.

Citra:

"Since this was my first teaching experience, it really made me tense and nervous."

The provided quote reflects Citra's initial apprehension and anxiety as they embarked on their first teaching endeavour. The word "tense" suggests a heightened state of stress or unease, while "nervous" indicates a feeling of anxiousness or worry. This combination of emotions is common among individuals facing new challenges, particularly in unfamiliar roles such as teaching.

Difa:

"On the first day I taught in that class, I felt nervous because it was my first experience. I worried about how I would teach and face those students."

The unfamiliarity of the situation compounded her apprehension as she pondered over the intricacies of effectively conveying her lessons and interacting with her students. The weight of this responsibility loomed large as she grappled with uncertainties about her teaching approach and how she would engage with her students.

d. Classroom Management

The data to be presented includes the experiences of Asila and Bunga, who shared their concerns and challenges in managing the classroom. Asila shared difficulty in dealing with boys' classes. Then, Bunga's anxiety stemmed from managing active students. Here are their stories:

Asila:

"I feared teaching an all-male class, worried my efforts would be overlooked or ignored. My concerns materialized; many did not listen, and some slept during explanations."

Asila's experience underscores the challenges women may face in environments where gender dynamics may overshadow their capabilities and voices.

Bunga:

"I was confused about managing/conditioning active students, so it made me anxious too."

Bunga expressed her confusion and anxiety regarding the management and conditioning of active students in her classroom. This sentiment reflects the challenges educators face in maintaining a conducive learning environment while catering to their students' diverse needs and behaviors.

e. Speaking Ability

Speaking ability plays an important role in a teacher's confidence and convenience when teaching. Asila expresses her anxiety about speaking, particularly fearing errors in pronunciation and grammar.

Asila:

"I fear speaking, anxious about mispronunciations and grammar errors. In my first teaching session, nervousness led me to speak faster and sweat more."

Asila's concerns about speaking stem from anxiety over mispronunciations and grammar errors. Her initial teaching experience, marked by nervousness and increased perspiration, underscores the psychological pressure of communicating in a second language, especially in professional settings.

f. Islamic Education institution

The environment of the Islamic-based institution, which is the teaching practice location, has a significant impact on the participants' speaking anxiety. These include factors such as class division regulations, challenges in managing student behaviour, the pressure of teaching under the guidance of a respected (ning) mentor teacher, and concerns about language use. Here are the stories:

Difa:

"I felt anxious teaching boys due to class gender segregation. My mentor's religious authority made me more mindful of my teaching methods and behaviour."

Teaching in gender-segregated settings causes anxiety. Mentoring by a religious figure emphasizes awareness of teaching methods and behaviours influenced by religious norms. This highlights the pressures and considerations teachers face in religiously segregated settings, where cultural and religious authorities influence pedagogical approaches and teacher conduct.

Asila:

"Teaching in boarding and regular classes differs due to rules. Boarding some students' behaviour, like sleeping or chatting, tests my patience."

Asila underscores the challenge of maintaining discipline in these circumstances, as the boarding students often prove resistant to regulation despite the expectation of patience from teachers. This account sheds light on the complexities of managing classroom dynamics within the framework of institutional regulations. It underscores the importance of fostering an environment conducive to learning and mutual respect.

Despite encountering numerous sources of anxiety when teaching in Islamic-based schools, EFL student-teachers have devised effective strategies to address these challenges. In the following section, the author will explore and discuss these strategies in detail, offering insights into how educators can successfully navigate and overcome their anxieties in such environments.

Strategies to Overcome EFL Student-Teachers' Teaching Anxiety

This topic discusses four themes of strategies used by EFL student teachers to overcome teaching anxiety during their practice in an Islamic boarding school environment. The themes include maximizing teaching practicum preparation, social support (from peers, mentor teachers, students, and the school environment), self-management, and employing appropriate teaching strategies. In the upcoming sections, we will thoroughly examine each theme to offer a comprehensive overview of the various methods employed by student teachers.

a. Maximalize Teaching Practicum Preparation.

Recognizing the influence of anxiety factors on their teaching practices, all participants recognized the need for improvement and attempted to improve their teaching practices through better preparation, including benefitting from past experiences, practicing before teaching, observing colleagues teaching, and making notes of materials. The following are their opinions:

Asia:

"Drawing from my previous experience teaching elementary school students, I employed techniques to manage lively and unruly classrooms."

As exemplified by the narratives of Asila, this implies that she has developed strategies or methods to effectively handle situations where students are energetic or difficult to control. Her approach reflects adaptability and resourcefulness in managing classroom dynamics to facilitate effective teaching and learning and reduce her anxiety.

Bunga:

"I practice before teaching, rehearsing material in front of a mirror. I also practice with friends, seeking their feedback on my presentation."

Then, Bunga's statement reveals her approach to preparing for teaching sessions. She mentions engaging in practice sessions before teaching, where she rehearses delivering the material in front of a mirror. Additionally, she practices with friends and seeks their feedback on her presentation. This indicates that Bunga adopts a proactive approach to refine her teaching skills by practicing and soliciting input from others.

b. Social Support

While the above data strategies focus on initiatives taken by individual participants, it is equally imperative to recognize the external support systems, collectively termed social support. Social support encompasses peers, mentor teachers, students, and the school environment.

1. Peers

During their teaching practicum, Citra and Difa emphasized the important role of peer support in reducing teaching anxiety. Such as support and encouragement from peers, accompanying each other during teaching sessions, discussing and collaborating in making media and lesson plans, and constructive peer feedback to foster productive teamwork.

Citra:

"During teaching practice, I regularly discussed with friends, receiving helpful feedback on my methods."

Citra regularly engaged in discussions with friends during teaching practice, receiving valuable feedback on her methods. This suggests a collaborative learning environment that can help alleviate teaching anxiety by providing constructive criticism and support.

Difa:

"My friends consistently supported me by sharing teaching methods, discussing issues, and offering suggestions."

This indicates a strong support network that can help alleviate teaching anxiety by providing resources, advice, and encouragement throughout the teaching journey.

2. Mentor Teacher

In addition, Asila and Bunga agreed that the presence of the mentor teacher proved instrumental in reducing their anxiety through motivational support, discussion, guidance, reassurance, and assistance, which contributed significantly to the participants' development as future educators.

Asila:

"The mentor teacher offered initial guidance on understanding student characteristics and provided motivational support during the teaching practicum."

Asila's mentor provided initial guidance on understanding student characteristics and offered motivational support throughout the teaching practicum, potentially reducing anxiety by providing a supportive framework and encouragement.

Bunga:

"Our mentor teacher entrusted us with Grade 9 teaching responsibilities and encouraged open communication, which provided a sense of reassurance."

Bunga's mentor's trust and encouragement, coupled with open communication, likely decreased anxiety by fostering a sense of reassurance and confidence in handling Grade 9 teaching responsibilities.#

3. School Environment

On the other hand, Bunga and Difa were able to reduce their anxiety through support from the school environment during their teaching practicum. A supportive and inclusive school environment can positively impact teaching practicum experiences, promoting a sense of calm and belonging among student teachers. Here are the stories:

Bunga:

"At school, we were involved in making a teaching module, which helped me feel calm."

Bunga's participation in creating a teaching module at school made her feel calm. This indicates that hands-on activities related to teaching can help reduce anxiety and increase confidence during the practicum.

Difa:

"School warmly welcomed us, inviting us to meetings, meals, and celebrations like Independence Day. We are provided with a comfortable basecamp with meals and a special restroom."

Difa reflects a welcoming and supportive atmosphere at the school, with invitations to various activities and amenities provided. This inclusive environment likely contributed to a positive teaching practicum experience, fostering a sense of belonging and comfort for student teachers like Difa.

c. Self-Management

In addition to enhancing their teaching preparation, Asila and Bunga utilized self-management techniques to address teaching anxiety. These included methods such as taking deep breaths and visualizing the absence of the mentor teacher and employing positive affirmations.

Asila:

"To ease first-day teaching anxiety, I take deep breaths and imagine the supervising teacher is not there."

Asila shared a self-management strategy she employs to address anxiety during teaching, particularly on the first day of classes. She described calming herself by taking deep breaths and visualizing the absence of the supervising teacher. By imagining this scenario, Asila adjusts her mindset to remain calm and relaxed, allowing her to approach the situation with greater composure and confidence.

Bunga:

"I cope by maintaining a positive mindset, using affirmations, deep breathing when anxious, and reminding myself that I can overcome challenges."

When Bunga begins to feel anxious, she focuses on her breathing and reassures herself that she can handle and overcome the situation. By emphasizing positivity and self-encouragement, Bunga equips herself with the mindset needed to navigate teaching situations with composure and resilience.

d. Teaching Strategy

Citra and Difa offer insights into effective teaching strategies that aim to reduce teaching anxiety and foster student engagement. These include creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere by encouraging storytelling among students, and using technology-based learning.

Citra:

"I often encouraged my students to share stories during breaks, whether about personal experiences, complaints, or anything they wished to discuss."

Citra believes that facilitating these storytelling sessions helps build closer relationships between students and herself, ultimately reducing her anxiety. By fostering a sense of camaraderie and trust among students, Citra creates a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Difa:

"To ease class anxiety, I integrate technology-based learning, such as quizzes, fostering engagement and discipline among students."

Difa addresses class anxiety by incorporating technology-based learning, such as quizzes, to boost enthusiasm and discipline. This approach also helps Difa remain calmer and more focused on her teaching material.

In the upcoming discussion section, these findings will be contextualized with relevant literature in educational and psychological research, including studies that support our initial findings regarding factors

contributing to teaching practicum anxiety. Additionally, we will explore the literature on effective strategies to address this anxiety, providing a comprehensive overview of both the challenges and potential solutions in teacher preparation.

DISCUSSIONS

This study addresses two main questions. The first examines factors contributing to speaking anxiety among EFL student-teachers in Islamic-based schools, identifying six themes: classroom interaction, materials, initial teaching practicum experience, classroom management, speaking ability, and the Islamic-based institution. These findings align with previous research by Charisma and Nurmalasari (2020) and Djawarmara & Listyani (2021), which highlighted issues such as classroom uncertainty, mentor observation, incompetence, expectations, and speaking proficiency. Wijaya (2022) further identified additional factors like poor teaching practices and low self-esteem. Common anxiety factors include uncertainty, incompetence, and challenges in classroom management.

The second question explores how EFL student-teachers address their anxiety, revealing four main strategies: preparation, social support, self-management, and effective teaching strategies. Studies by Charisma and Nurmalasari (2020), Djawarmara and Listyani (2021), and Ashari et al. (2023) emphasized approaches such as adjusting to new environments, thorough planning, fostering positive relationships, and using encouragement, game-based learning, and advanced preparation. The following sections will delve into each theme and relate them to existing research.

Sources of Speaking Anxiety Experienced by EFL Student Teachers During Teaching Practicum

EFL student teachers experience speaking anxiety from six main sources. The first is classroom interaction, divided into interactions with mentor teachers and students. Anxiety increases when mentor teachers observe, evaluate, and have high expectations, leading to nervousness and fear of negative evaluations (Charisma & Nurmalasari, 2020; Alrashidi, 2022). Interactions with students also heighten anxiety due to concerns about understanding student backgrounds and managing large groups, causing fear of student disengagement and misunderstanding (Charisma & Nurmalasari, 2020; Ashari et al., 2023).

The second theme is the material, where anxiety stems from worries about lesson plan suitability, student comprehension, and delivering material in English. Student teachers fear making mistakes, being perceived as ineffective, and students not understanding the material (Charisma & Nurmalasari, 2020; Djawamara & Listyani, 2021; Alrashidi, 2022).

The third theme is the initial teaching practicum experience. Anxiety is heightened by the combination of teaching for the first time and lack of prior experience. This inexperience leads to frequent mistakes and loss of classroom control, undermining confidence (Sanjaya, Nurkamto, & Sumardi, 2024; Novitasari & Murtafiah, 2022; Pasaribu & Harendita, 2018).

The fourth source is classroom management, especially in handling boys' classes, which are often more challenging. Anxiety increases due to feelings of insecurity and lack of preparedness when students are uninterested or uncooperative (Kazazoglu, 2020; Sanjaya et al., 2024; Charisma & Nurmalasari, 2020).

The fifth theme revolves around speaking ability, with anxiety focusing on pronunciation and grammatical accuracy. Concerns about mispronouncing words and maintaining fluent speech contribute to anxiety (Aydin, 2016; Novitasari & Murtafiah, 2022; Pasaribu & Lestari, 2023).

The final theme pertains to Islamic-based institutions, where specific regulations and cultural norms contribute to anxiety. These include class divisions by gender, teaching under a revered mentor teacher, and adherence to strict behavioral and language norms. This conservative environment often leads to stress and anxiety for prospective teachers (Marzulina et al., 2021; Pertiwi et al., 2018).

Strategies to Overcome EFL Student Teachers' Teaching Anxiety

During the teaching practicum, EFL student-teachers employ four strategies to cope with anxiety. The first strategy is maximizing teaching practicum preparation by drawing on past experiences, engaging in practice sessions, observing colleagues, and taking notes on instructional materials. Charisma and Nurmallasari (2020) emphasize the significance of preparation, such as pre-planning lessons, expanding vocabulary, watching educational videos, and discussing with peers and mentors. Djawamara and Listyani (2021) stress mastering materials before teaching, while Pasaribu and Harendita (2018) underline the necessity of sufficient preparation and planning to manage anxiety. Confidence correlates with the depth of preparation (Mardhatillah et al., 2024).

The second strategy is seeking social support from friends, mentor teachers, students, and the school environment. Wijaya (2022) highlights the critical role of mentor teachers in boosting confidence and persistence. Pasaribu and Harendita (2018) found that sharing experiences with peers alleviates anxiety. Djawamara and Listyani (2021) emphasize the importance of positive relationships with school teachers and students through communication. Saidi and Arefian (2023) conclude that nurturing interpersonal connections and a supportive educational environment bolsters confidence and alleviates anxiety.

The third strategy is self-management, involving techniques such as deep breathing, positive affirmations, and remaining authentic. Falk et al. (2015) assert that positive affirmations engage the ventromedial prefrontal cortex and amygdala, helping individuals relax in anxious situations. Relaxation techniques like deep breathing and positive thinking aid in managing anxiety (Djawamara & Listyani, 2021).

The final strategy is employing effective teaching strategies, such as creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere, encouraging storytelling, and utilizing technology-based learning. Building strong relationships with students and conversing outside of class lowers anxiety levels (Pasaribu & Heredita, 2018). Moreover, Dzulfikri and Azami (2024) found that using technology, particularly learning videos, facilitates active student engagement and reduces anxiety.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study offers a detailed view of speaking anxiety among EFL student-teachers in Islamic boarding schools and the strategies they use to manage it. It highlights the complex factors such as classroom interactions, teaching materials, early teaching experiences, classroom management, speaking abilities, and the specific challenges of Islamic-based institutions. This research addresses a gap by focusing on Islamic boarding schools, unlike previous studies which often look at general educational settings. It underscores the unique pressures from school policies, mentor influence, and cultural expectations.

The student-teachers' strategies include thorough practicum preparation, seeking peer and mentor support, self-management, and using effective teaching methods. These approaches help reduce anxiety and improve teaching effectiveness. By using narrative inquiry, the study explores the emotional and psychological aspects of teaching anxiety, offering valuable insights for teacher education programs. The findings suggest that EFL student-teachers benefit from thorough preparation and mental readiness. Mentor teachers and supervisors should provide regular feedback, and universities should offer psychological support programs. Future research

should include male participants and increase the number of participants and compare anxiety levels between Islamic educational institution and non- Islamic educational institution to enrich the understanding of teaching practicum challenges.

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