

Chapter One

Introduction

The study's introduction is presented in this chapter. This chapter discusses some key points. First, the study's background informs why the researcher is interested in exploring the anxiety EFL teachers have when distance learning is applied during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, this chapter covers the research questions used to guide the study. The study's objective identifies the research's specific goals or aims. The importance of the study is also shown as the advantages of this study to certain people. Finally, the chapter organization illustrates how each chapter is explained.

Background of the Research

Research on the issue of anxiety has gained much attention from researchers from a variety of fields. Every human being cannot be separated from this feeling as it is a part that has been in them since birth. Anxiety provides its typical colour and story in a person's life. This feeling can be a motivator if needed, but it can also be annoying whether someone cannot control it. In language teaching and learning, anxiety is a significant aspect for English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers as long as distance learning is enforced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The level of students' understanding of the material is the most important aspect considered by them. As the class manager, they have to ensure that teaching and learning activities may go well according to the lesson plan (Cubukcu, 2013). Their awareness of this feeling is a must to determine how they perform in facilitating students in EFL learning who are separated by distance and place.

Anxiety tends to make a person fear something. As defined by Zeidner (2008), it is a form of nervous-system arousal that is highly useful when a challenge appears.

However, he added that this feeling would get in the way while someone has a mission to complete. Anxiety cannot be denied by its presence when a person feels nervous about what is happening or might happen in the future. It seems to influence how a person acts against his worried side. When EFL teachers experience anxiety, it seems to inhibit their classroom performance (Azmi, 2012). This uneasy feeling has an undeniable influence as it prevents them from effectively teaching the materials.

Anxiety combined with the amount of pressure EFL teachers have under during teaching and learning activities in the COVID-19 pandemic, cannot be denied. The pandemic is the archetypal adaptive and transformative obstacle, with no predetermined roadmap to guide proper responses. The teachers' identity as educators is challenged by the abrupt change in conducting the class. They realize that being a good educator with limited time and resources poses numerous challenges and is hard to achieve. Basar (2021) expressed that the implementation of distance learning by the government requires that they cannot meet face-to-face with students like classes in general. Since this pandemic progresses, schools plan responses quickly and with specific scenarios in mind. They are replacing their teaching techniques and adjusting their curriculum to support distance learning as social distancing becomes more stringent. On the other hand, this learning model is still rarely applied in Indonesia, especially for junior high schools, so they need to adapt to this sudden change.

A series of recent studies have indicated that distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic allows anxiety to arise in EFL teachers. Novita's study in 2021 found that due to the implementation of distance learning when the pandemic happens, EFL teachers experienced the most major difficulty in evaluating students' work. They worry whether the work students have done obviously reflects their ability during

learning from home. Study conducted by Suputra, Nitiasih and Paramarta (2020) noticed that learning activities are limited to the type of teaching materials used. EFL teachers have to make sure that the teaching materials are easily accessible to students. Furthermore, Erni et al. (2020) revealed that the learning time became irregular while distance learning in the pandemic period. EFL teachers take longer than the usual class to ensure that all students may participate in the learning process. They are indirectly under greater teaching demands during this pandemic to facilitate students in effective learning.

While there have been several studies (Ghosh et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Arribathi et al., 2021; Mohammed & Mudhsh, 2021) on anxiety in EFL teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have primarily focused on students' perspectives. Those studies investigated how EFL students' anxiety levels were and how they coped with this feeling. There are still few studies that make EFL teachers become the subject. Most of them explore how teachers deal with students' anxiety, not their anxiety. They must have had some things that could cause anxiety during teaching and learning activities in the pandemic. In Indonesia, there are not many researchers in the same field who have examined the issue. Meanwhile, the researcher for this study investigated this issue to get participants' noticeable experiences directly involved in distance learning during the pandemic in Indonesia. The anxiety EFL teachers have regarding distance learning in this pandemic should be explored so that they can be prepared whether the same or a similar scenario recurs in the future.

According to the researcher's observation, teaching and learning activities before the COVID-19 pandemic provide many opportunities for EFL teachers to communicate, identify students' characters, and expose students to the target language. They can

intensively monitor how students learn the material and do the given exercise. Moreover, the facilities used for teaching do not require many conditions. Whereas, distance learning in the pandemic has reduced the frequency of direct interaction between EFL teachers and students. The learning progress of students is limited to be observed by the teachers. Distance learning makes them do more activities through learning software and application. This condition probably causes them to feel anxious due to unexpected changes in the teaching and learning process. Hence, the purpose of this study is to analyze EFL teachers' anxiety when distance learning is implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic in junior high school and their strategies to overcome this feeling.

Identification of Problem

The EFL teaching and learning process shows very different activities before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The class usually carried out at school suddenly turns into a home-class known as learning from home. The pandemic forces EFL teachers and students not to meet face-to-face due to the government's ban on crowding. EFL class activities have to be executed using distance learning. On the other hand, In Indonesia, the learning model is seldom used, especially for junior high schools. EFL teachers are sorely tested in the real world when it comes to ensuring the consistency of their teaching and learning practices and interaction with students. It allows them to have anxiety while applying this learning model during this pandemic. Of course, they must rapidly adjust to a situation outside their control to assist students in learning from home.

The observation conducted by the researcher indicated several conditions that allowed EFL teachers to feel anxious while doing distance learning during the

pandemic. This learning model causes few opportunities for the teachers to interact with students actively. On the other hand, they try to do the target language's exposure and recognize students about their characters and learning style. They also cannot directly keep track of students' learning activities. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate what triggers EFL teachers' anxiety when distance learning is implemented in junior high schools during the pandemic, as well as their strategies for dealing with it.

Delimitation of the Problem

In this research, the researcher focuses on the factors affecting anxiety in EFL teachers towards distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in junior high school and their strategies to overcome this feeling. To make this discussion more detailed, the researcher limits the problem. First, the researcher only analyzes the causes of junior high school EFL teachers' anxiety to distance learning in the pandemic. The learning model is rarely applied in junior high schools before this pandemic. Second, the researcher outlines the strategies used by the teachers to overcome their anxiety. Third, six EFL teachers from four junior high schools in Yogyakarta were recruited as the participants of this research.

Research Questions

This research tries to address the following questions based on the above description and issues:

1. As experienced by junior high school EFL teachers, what are the factors affecting their anxiety towards distance learning in the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. How do junior high school EFL teachers overcome their anxiety while teaching via distance learning in the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Objectives of the Research

There are two purposes to this research based on the research questions. There are the following:

1. To analyze the factors affecting EFL teachers' anxiety towards distance learning in times of COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To explore EFL teachers' strategies to overcome their anxiety while teaching using distance learning in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Significance of the Research

This research aims to give positive advantages for some parties such as teachers, students, and other researchers.

For teachers. From this research, teachers can get knowledge about EFL teachers' anxiety against distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in junior high school. The existence of this research may be a consideration for teachers whether they are confused in facing their anxiety towards distance learning. The teachers are also expected to realize the factors causing the feeling due to changes in the teaching and learning process without warning. This research can hopefully be beneficial to the teachers in recognizing their anxiety and deciding strategies to cope with it when similar situations happen in the future.

For students. Regarding the findings of this research, students can find out that their EFL teachers have several factors that cause anxiety when distance learning is done in the pandemic. The students are supposed to be aware of the issue, so they may help prevent their teachers from having this feeling.

For other researchers. Conducting this research, other researchers may know EFL teachers' anxiety during the application of distance learning in junior high schools

in the pandemic and strategies to overcome it. In addition, the other researchers can use the findings of this research as the theoretical overview of further research on the same topic and might become recommendations for further study.

Organization of the Research

This research is divided into five chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction of the research. This chapter contains some crucial information. First, the background of the study describes the reason why the researcher is interested in discussing EFL teachers' anxiety toward distance learning in COVID-19 pandemic in junior high school. Moreover, this chapter presents the research questions as the guide for the study. The objective of the study describes the specific purposes of the research. The significance of this research shows the advantages of the research to particular people. Finally, the research outline is presented, along with an overview of each chapter.

Chapter two is the literature review. This chapter discusses theories related to EFL teacher's anxiety towards distance learning. Several contents are discussed in this chapter, including the definition of EFL teachers' anxiety and distance learning. Additionally, this chapter mentions factors affecting anxiety and strategies to overcome this feeling.

Chapter three presents the methodology used in this research. This chapter discusses the methods, the instruments, the participants, settings, and data gathering techniques. Finally, the data analysis explains the steps of the data gathering.

Chapter four contains the finding and discussion. The results of the data analysis are presented in this chapter. There are two findings in this research. The first is related to the factor affecting the anxiety in EFL teachers when distance learning in

the pandemic time. Then, the second is related to EFL teachers' strategies to face the feeling.

Chapter five contains the conclusion and recommendation. The conclusion outlines the results of the study. The researcher concludes the results from chapter four. The recommendation offers some suggestions for teachers, students, and other researchers, in the hope of improving future studies.