

# Pre-Service Teachers' Anxiety and Anxiety Management during the First Encounter with Students in EFL Classroom

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## Abstract

The first classroom encounter is a challenging experience for pre-service teachers who meet and teach new students. It is undeniable that first encounters can create and increase pre-service teachers' anxiety. The key purposes of the study were to investigate possible causes of pre-service teachers' anxiety and to study how the teachers managed their anxiety effectively. Four pre-service teachers participated in the study. Focus group interviews were conducted to interrogate participants three times during this study: a few days before first teaching, a few days after first teaching, and in the middle of the semester. Each interview took 30-45 minutes and was tape-recorded. The causes of anxiety were grouped into four categories according to the research framework determined: teacher's own personality, teaching context, supervision context, and others. Another important finding is that there were successful anxiety management techniques, i.e., 'self-control', 'let-it-be', and 'face-it and handle-it'. The pedagogical implications of this study will be beneficial to the field of language teacher development because teacher trainers can familiarize pre-service teachers with particular anxiety-related problems.

**Keywords:** pre-service teachers' anxiety, causes of teachers' anxiety, anxiety management, first encounter

## 1. Introduction

Teachers' anxiety is one of many concerns not only of experienced teachers but also something pre-service teachers have to deal with. The negative impact of the anxiety always has a strong influence on the teaching performance of the pre-service teachers particularly in the first encounter with students in EFL classroom. Anxiety in this particular meaning is an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future (Cambridge, 2012). This issue has grown in importance according to the previous study of Kyriacou (1987 cited in Coombe, 2008, p. 11) which found that "teaching is one of the top five most stressful careers in the world". That is, new teachers usually had anxiety and were confronted with the causes of anxiety more than an experienced teacher (Alasheev & Bykov, 2002). So far, however, there are a large number of studies on learners' anxiety in learning language, but there are not so many researchers who have conducted research on teachers' anxieties and their anxiety management. Thus, it is important and worthwhile to study these particular fields for in-depth understanding.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Teachers' Anxiety

Randall and Thornton (2001) point out that anxiety can be a positive force for teachers if it is at the right scale. They also admit that a good number of teachers feel nervous before encountering a new class, so they tend to plan and organize effective lessons for their new class, and pay close attention to what is going on in the class. In contrast, the group of novice teachers usually experience tension, a cause of anxiety, typically caused by teaching load and career anxiety (Alasheev & Bykov, 2002) while in a classroom. Anxiety is caused by fear, the fear that a teacher may do any unintentional damage to students (Moskowitz, 1978). In contrast, anxiety can relate to expectations, i.e., a person can have anxiety when his expectation is not met. This is evident in the study of Kongchan and Singhasiri (2008), which finds that the teachers expected to teach the students who had high English proficiency. But in reality, the teachers had to teach low English proficient students. The consequence of this unexpectedness caused those teachers to worry about using English to instruct such students. Moreover, the teachers felt worried because the students did not understand what the teachers said in English. But the level of the anxiety the teachers found was moderate.

Shrestha (2009) observes the negative side of language teachers' anxiety in their first class, and finds that they cannot express utterances naturally even it is basic conversation. That is, utterances of anxious teachers and that of other teachers differ in the structures and the flow. He also finds that anxiety leads the teachers to forget what he wants to say to the students and the students not to be able to understand what the teacher wants them to do next. In other words, teachers' anxiety results in unsmooth communication and communication breakdown.

According to teachers' anxiety stated in this literature review, there are varieties of causes of teachers' anxiety

that can be grouped in the categories. So, below are categories of the possible causes of teachers' anxiety categorized by previous scholars.

**Table 1** Category of Causes of Anxiety

Scholars	Topics of the Study	Categories of Causes of Anxiety
Berry (2004)	Tensions of teacher educators in learning about their own practice and tasks in school contexts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Telling and growth (<i>giving a chance to self-reflect and accepting student teachers' concerns to develop ability</i>)</li> <li>2. Confidence and uncertainty</li> <li>3. Working with and against</li> <li>4. Discomfort and challenge</li> <li>5. Acknowledging and building upon experience</li> <li>6. Planning and being responsive</li> </ol>
Wilson (1986)	Anxiety of pre-service teachers in teaching practicum contexts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Insecurities</li> <li>2. Concerning regarding the field instructor</li> <li>3. Client concerns</li> <li>4. Anxiety regarding the agency or the system</li> </ol>
Randall and Thornton (2001)	Factors affecting anxiety of teachers in teaching supervision contexts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluation (<i>getting feedback and a grade from an advisor</i>)</li> <li>2. Novelty (<i>facing with a new situation</i>)</li> <li>3. Ambiguity (<i>having an ambiguous situation</i>)</li> <li>4. Conspicuousness (<i>being a more noticeable teacher</i>)</li> <li>5. Prior history (<i>confronting with the same anxious situation</i>)</li> </ol>

This table shows some major previous studies of the causes of teachers' anxiety in different contexts categorized in different patterns. These studies are all related to teaching. For example, in 2004, Berry focused on the anxiety occurred when the teachers practiced their profession in the school contexts. In another important study, Wilson (1986) investigated the categories of the causes of teachers' anxiety in teaching practicum contexts. There is, moreover, the study of causes of teachers' anxiety in the teaching supervision contexts conducted by Randall and Thornton (2001). These studies set various categories to group different causes of teachers' anxiety depending on different perspectives of teaching and learning. For this reason, this present study made use of these categories as a primary framework for developing a new research framework afterwards.

### 2.2 Pre-Service Teachers' Anxiety in the First Class

McKeachie (1986) divides the pre-service teachers' anxieties according to three stages including 'before teaching hour', 'while-teaching hour', and 'after teaching hour'. During 'before-teaching hour', the pre-service teachers are worried about planning lessons or preparing materials because a success of the first lesson can support teaching and learning for the overall achievement of the course. Thus, many teachers employ individual techniques to the first lesson as we can see from the activities that they selected. Moreover, the teachers feel worried when they have inadequate time to create the lesson plan (Howarth, 2002). Thus, the first class is a definitely challenging experience for pre-service teachers to be in a class and meet with and teach students for their first time, all while they are expected to follow the lesson and to promote rapport with the class. That is, what they are expected to do can be affected by their own anxiety, an anxiety that is built up even before the class starts. Similarly, the situations in the first class are unique for the teachers and the students: they are sharing the same feeling of prospect with different perspectives (Sanderson, 1995).

During 'while-teaching hour', the pre-service teachers are worried about unexpected situations, for example, the teachers' anxiety over interaction with students, over time management, and over classroom management, etc. Moreover, while in the class, the teachers are concerned with meeting unfamiliar people and that affects teachers' emotion (McKeachie, 1986). In 'after-teaching hour', the anxieties still remain because the teachers are worried about feedback from their students and supervisors.

In conclusion, this study focused on pre-service teachers' anxieties in their first-time teaching and how they managed their anxiety. The purposes of this study were to investigate causes of pre-service teachers' anxiety and to study how the pre-service teachers managed their anxiety effectively. Furthermore, the outcomes of this study may yield a number of significant implications for professional development of EFL teachers.

### **3. Research Questions**

In order to study pre-service teachers' anxiety and anxiety management, this study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the causes of pre-service teachers' anxiety in their first encounter with their students?
2. How do these teachers manage their own anxiety?

### **4. Research Methodology**

#### *4.1 Participants*

Four pre-service teachers from the Department of Language Studies, School of Liberal Arts, KMUTT, Bangkok, Thailand participated in the study. Two of them were international M.A. students and the others were Thai M.A. students. They were enrolled in "Teaching Techniques in Practice" course as part of the curriculum in M.A. in Applied Linguistics (ELT). For the sampling selection, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique in order to select the individual participants. The standard criteria to select the participants in this study included: 1) the participants had different personalities and characteristics; 2) the participants used English as a foreign language; 3) the participants learned teaching and learning English background in different contexts; and 4) the participants had no previous teaching experience in a secondary school setting.

#### *4.2 Research Instrument*

The research instrument in this study was focus group interviews. The focus group interviews were conducted in order to respond to research questions obviously. The researcher adapted specific open-ended questions from the study of Young (1992 cited in Ohata, 2005). The four participants were asked in English during the interview three times during the following periods:

Prior to their first teaching, how they felt about their first class; how they would prepare for their first class; what they think would happen; and what kind of anxiety it was; what the possible cause of the anxiety was; and how they would handle the anxiety before the class starts.

During the second interview, the researcher asked how they liked their first class they just taught; whether what they predicted would happen really happened; if they experienced anxiety during their first teaching; if so, what the possible cause of the anxiety was; how they handled it; and what they learned in terms of anxiety that would be beneficial for their future teaching.

During the third interview, the researcher asked the same questions he asked during the second interview, but with reference to their second teaching.

#### *4.3 Data Collection*

Focus group interviews were conducted three times during this study: a few days before their first teaching (5<sup>th</sup> June, 2012), a few days after their first teaching (8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012), and in the middle of the semester (11<sup>th</sup> July, 2012). Each interview took 30-45 minutes and was tape-recorded. English was the target language while conducting the interview. To make sure that the session progressed smoothly, the researcher took a role as a moderator when conducting the interviews and to keep the talk on track.

#### *4.4 Data Analysis*

The categories of causes of teachers' anxiety were taken from various studies including: 1) tensions of teacher educators in learning about their own practice and task in school contexts done by Berry (2004 cited in Loughran, 2007); 2) pre-service teachers' anxiety in teaching practicum contexts (Wilson, 1986); and 3) factors affecting anxiety of teachers in teaching supervision contexts (Randall & Thornton, 2001). After that, the researcher developed the framework based on three studies above in this study. Consequently, there were four main categories of causes of the teachers' anxiety as follows:

1. Teacher's own personality
2. Teaching context
3. Supervision context
4. Others

In this study, the data were analyzed by grouping the causes of pre-service teachers' anxiety. It meant that all of the data were grouped carefully under those four main categories.

### **5. Data Presentation and Interpretation**

To answer two research questions, the data present the causes of pre-service teachers' anxiety, anxiety management, and management results through interpretations with extracts.

## 1. Teacher's Own Personality Category

**Unfamiliarity with New Students and Classroom Situations:** This issue was one of the causes of the teachers' anxiety. According to the first class experience, the pre-service teachers were unfamiliar with secondary school students because they had microteaching experience with university students. In addition, the pre-service teacher mentioned that *"I worried about making mistakes in the first class"* (Subject D: the 1<sup>st</sup> interview). All of the participants also worried that they could not meet the aims of teaching because they were moderately new to the teaching events and classroom circumstances. One pre-service teacher reported her first class situation as follows:

**Extract 1:** *"... I could not distinguish what was the exact moment would occur next... so many times it would not happen as I predicted. Besides, I did not master of adapting myself to the spontaneous situations reasonably. Hence, I gained too much anxiety..."* (Subject C: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

The pre-service teacher had anxiety because she was faced with the unexpected situations in the first class. To relieve anxiety, she managed her anxiety by accepting the situations and letting the situations go with the flow. The result of these solutions indicated that she could reduce her anxiety. She clarified that *"I was satisfied with the anxiety management techniques that I used because I could relieve the anxiety in the first class"* (Subject C: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview).

**Students' Attitudes towards Learning English with New Teachers:** The pre-service teachers were concerned a great deal about the students' attitudes towards the new teachers. They believed that, when the students had a good attitude towards the new teachers, students would love to create their own learning concepts. In contrast, if the students were dissatisfied with the new teachers, maybe the students would not want to take their classes. Thus, it would directly affect students' learning in the very first class. One participant indicated that:

**Extract 2:** *"... I totally worried about the negative attitudes of the secondary school students towards my personality, character, and identity... Thus, I was afraid that if they were dissatisfied with myself in the first encounter—maybe they would not desire to learn with me for the entire course as well."* (Subject D: the 1<sup>st</sup> interview on the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

She had anxiety about the negative attitudes of the students towards the new teacher on the first day of teaching. To overcome the anxiety, she planned to focus more on teaching and to promote a good rapport with the new students. After trying these solutions, the participant said that *"The students paid attention to the class and they interacted with me very well"* (Subject D: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). Consequently, she could cope with her anxiety as well as being satisfied with her class.

**Uncertainty to Make Decisions:** The analysis showed that, before teaching, the pre-service teachers were not convinced that they could implement appropriate activities and the best teaching strategy to the class. During while-teaching, they could not make immediate decisions to solve problems by themselves. Furthermore, one participant reflected that *"I did not know how to balance the interactions between teacher talk and student talk appropriately"* (Subject B: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). Interestingly, the pre-service teachers felt anxious when they were uncertain about decisions making on choosing classroom activities. Similarly, the participant mentioned this issue to highlight it as the following:

**Extract 3:** *"I had the anxiety when I faced with the situation in decision-making of selecting the activity to serve the students' preferences, supervisors' expertise, and my capability to distribute it."* (Subject B: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2012)

The anxiety increased when she was uncertain during the process of making decisions. Being new in the field of teaching, she had to rely on someone else while practicing instruction. To decrease this anxiety, she consulted with her supervisors on how to select the activities based on various aspects and how to handle it individually. The results of this solution indicated that she could gain benefits from useful suggestions. As we could see, the participant mentioned that *"I realized the rationale of selection and implementation of classroom activities with confidence"* (Subject B: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview).

**Teacher Language:** According to the analysis of the interview, the pre-service teachers were truly concerned about their 'language competence' and 'language use in the class' because they lacked self-confidence in using English in the EFL class. On account of divergence between the features of the language utilized in and outside classroom, the means to speak in the class was definitely different from the means to converse in their daily life. The pre-service teachers had limitations in forming grammatically correct sentences in the classroom. So, they were afraid they would make grammatical mistakes and use wrong expressions. Moreover, one of the participants said that *"I worried that I would pronounce the words incorrectly"* (Subject C: the 1<sup>st</sup> interview). More importantly, this issue was a serious concern when they used English in the class as the role model of the students because the students basically acquired the language from the outputs of the teachers. One of the participants clearly pointed out that:

**Extract 4:** *"I had less self-confidence to speak English in the class... I felt anxious when I had to control my speaking pace and modify language in order to use the language as a language teacher in the first class."* (Subject A: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

The pre-service teacher had anxiety when she had less confidence in controlling her speaking pace and modifying the language in the class. Thus, simplifying the language, and using communication strategies were the techniques used to cope with the anxiety in the second week. After using these solutions, the participant reflected that *"... I was pleased that those techniques worked very well..."* (Subject A: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview). The result indicated that she handled her anxiety effectively in the second class.

Furthermore, 'language use in the class' caused anxiety of the pre-service teachers; all of them shared the same feeling of worry about giving an explanation in English. It indicated that there were serious issues including "using words in wrong contexts" and "explaining abstract words". Surprisingly, the explanation seemed to be the problem for two pre-service teachers who were non-Thai natives. One of them elaborated that:

**Extract 5:** *"I was worried that the students did not understand what I explained particular concepts to them in English... Moreover, I was so excited and nervous when the students asked me to explain those concepts in Thai because I could not speak Thai at all."* (Subject A: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

The ability to explain played a very essential role in teaching and learning contexts. She had anxiety while explaining the concepts to low proficient students. To overcome this anxiety, she called her co-teacher to explain the concepts and check the students' comprehension in Thai. After explaining in Thai, the participant echoed that *"My students understood the concept clearly... I was satisfied with this technique."* (Subject A: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). The pre-service teacher completely overcame the difficult situation without feeling anxious.

## 2. Teaching Context Category

**Implementation of the Lesson Plan in the First Class:** The pre-service teachers had anxiety when they implemented the lesson plan in the first class. For example, they felt worried about using a poor lesson plan that led them to face difficulty while teaching. Moreover, they suffered some hardship when the lesson plan intended to promote interaction did not go well. One participant expressed that *"I felt anxious that I would not follow my lesson since there were many factors influenced it"* (Subject A: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). Thus, they also worried about adjusting the plan immediately as well as worrying about going off track while teaching because of detailed lesson plans. The extract below supports the claim.

**Extract 6:** *"I had anxiety because the lesson plan did not go along with expectations of mine while teaching... the lesson plan did not match the ability of the students, hence the students did not enjoy the activities provided."* (Subject C: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

The implementation of the lesson plan into the first class led the pre-service teacher to have anxiety. So, she managed her anxiety by accepting the situations and letting it go. Moreover, after teaching, she and her partner planned to solve the problem by adjusting levels of activities to meet students' ability in the second class. She also mentioned that *"I could decrease my anxiety by using the right techniques to solve problems. Most students found the activity very enjoyable"* (Subject C: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview). The results indicated that she was satisfied that the students had enjoyed the lessons more.

**Teacher Student Interactions:** It was undeniable for the pre-service teachers that 'teacher student interaction' was one of the key indicators of a successful class. One participant mentioned that *"I worried that most of the students kept silent while I was drawing the interactions"* (Subject A: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). In addition, the pre-service teachers noticed that some students ignored interacting with the teachers; some students felt uncomfortable to interact with the teachers, hence students desired to interact with their peers instead. Moreover, the participant also supported that:

**Extract 7:** *"It was hard to select interesting topics to attract the students' interactions... Thus, I was concerned about that because I attempted too much to have interactions in the first class."* (Subject B: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

The anxiety occurred when she was concerned with teacher-student interaction in the first class. However, she had solved the problem by finding topics for teenagers and using a group discussion in the second class. After solving the problem, the participant reported that *"The students seemed to be interested in the topics more and they shared ideas among their group through L1 and L2... I could promote classroom interactions"* (Subject B: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview). Thus, the pre-service teacher gained benefits from the successful solutions.

We now turn to the case of non-Thai pre-service teachers. They reflected other causes of anxiety in teaching contexts. One of them commented that *"I worried that the definition of words in L1 and the use of incomplete sentences in L2 that the students responded, were not clear to understand"* (Subject B: the 1<sup>st</sup> interview). Thus,

the pre-service teachers worried that students would go off track while doing a classroom activity since the pre-service teachers could not immediately check the students' responses in Thai. Below was an echo from one participant that emphasizes more on this issue.

**Extract 8:** "... *The class was so quiet; I was really worried that the students did not understand clearly what I assigned them to do the activity because there was no response from the students.*" (Subject D: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

The teachers' anxiety occurred during the instruction time because the students did not take an active role in their response. The pre-service teacher solved the problem by giving the instructions step by step with examples. After solving the problem, the participant reported that "*The students realized clear instructions... I really felt comfortable with my class*" (Subject D: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). Thus, she could reduce her anxiety by using effective techniques.

**Teaching Performance:** The pre-service teachers agreed that the first class had numerous anxieties because they were uncertain about how to open the first class naturally, what to teach, and how to teach new students productively. Moreover, one participant stated that "*I was concerned about the ways to help the students to reach the goals through activities*" (Subject B: the 1<sup>st</sup> interview). Besides, they did not master drawing the students' attention to the lesson smoothly when the students lost concentration. One of the participants supported that:

**Extract 9:** "*My first teaching was very apprehensive because I did not know much about effective techniques to teach reading skills and to sum up the lesson...*" (Subject C: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

She had anxiety since she was not an expert in using effective techniques for teaching. Positive thinking was the solution to cope with the anxiety; that is, she was talking to herself that she could not guarantee any outcome of using techniques in the first class. But at least she already learnt to make a better class. She expressed that "*After the class, I felt more relaxed because I learnt from my direct experience through the first class. ... I knew how to avoid this trouble in the next lesson*" (Subject C: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). The result indicated that she could decrease her anxiety by using the positive thinking technique.

Furthermore, there were remarkable causes of anxiety in the teaching context. The result illustrates that the pre-service teachers were concerned about selecting the best teaching strategies for the class (e.g. teaching learning strategies, teaching abstract vocabulary items, and teaching thinking skills, etc.). Because of their lack of experience, they were not fully capable of implementing the teaching and learning strategies to the students. The extract below could illustrate a clearer picture.

**Extract 10:** "*I worried about applying the CLT approach to the class effectively. So, what was the best way to apply to my class.... During the second week, I asked questions to promote the students' high level of thinking but they could not respond well.*" (Subject A: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2012)

The teachers were concerned about how to apply teaching approaches and techniques in the class. To reduce the anxiety, one of the informants solved the problem by using various solutions such as using realia, video, and pictures during the lead-in activity. Moreover, while waiting for the reply, she gave hints and translated the questions into L1 for the students. After using these solutions, the participant commented that "*I felt comfortable with my second class... Finally, the students had a better understanding of the questions and they could answer to me in L2 afterwards*" (Subject A: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview). Thus, she could solve the problem and reduce the anxiety at that time.

### 3. Supervision Context Category

**Being Observed:** The pre-service teachers reflected that their anxiety increased when their supervisors went to observe their teaching, especially the first class. One participant explained that "*I was not ready to be observed since it was too early to do so*" (Subject C: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). Moreover, the pre-service teachers also were afraid that the supervisors would notice their serious mistakes while teaching. Also, the composure of pre-service teachers was absolutely affected by the supervisors' reactions. One of the pre-service teachers explained that:

**Extract 11:** "*I had anxiety when I saw the reactions of the supervisors while observing my first class... I did something wrong with the class. Suddenly, I saw my supervisors' facial expression and she wrote down several comments on her observation check sheet*". (Subject C: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

Her anxiety was caused by the reactions of the supervisors while observing her class. To reduce the anxiety, she used the solutions to decrease her anxiety immediately by pretending to not pay attention to the supervisors (e.g. focusing on teaching and the students) and performing well in front of the class. After using the technique, she mentioned that "*I was satisfied with the solution since I could reduce my anxiety...*" (Subject C: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). Thus, it was apparent that she could use this strategy to overcome the anxiety effectively.

**Evaluation from Supervisors:** The pre-service teachers' uneasiness due to the presence of their supervisors would directly reflect the negative points of the pre-service teachers. One participant said that "... *sometimes the negative feedback lowered my self-esteem...*" (Subject D: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview). Because the pre-service teachers were anxious about grading, they were uncertain whether they followed all suggestions from the supervisors. One participant clarified that:

**Extract 12:** "*I felt anxious when I could not follow suggestions from the supervisors and they would see the same problem of mine again in the second class. Furthermore, I was really concerned regarding the feedback and evaluations from the supervisors since it directly affected my future grade as well*" (Subject D: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2012)

Due to some concerns about the future grading, she showed the supervisors that she learnt from the feedback; if she could not integrate the feedback she would not have a good grade. To manage the anxiety, she tried to show teaching improvement to the supervisors in the second class. She reported the result that "*I felt comfortable with my performance because I could cover feedback suggested by the supervisors.*" (Subject D: the 3<sup>rd</sup> interview). So, she gained confidence when she could apply feedback from supervisors.

#### 4. Others Category

**Lesson Planning:** In this issue, the pre-service teachers had anxiety when they faced hardship while designing activities to promote classroom interaction. There were several aspects to take into account such as needs, interests, and learning styles of all students. Thus, the pre-service teachers could not select appropriate activities for the students since they were uncertain about how those activities would support and promote the interactions in the first class. Similarly, the pre-service teachers had anxiety when they did not know how to plan the lesson effectively, how to set objectives appropriately, and how to create activities to achieve the goals successfully. One participant explained that:

**Extract 13:** "*I was concerned a great deal of determining the appropriate activity to class because I anticipated that the students were mixed abilities, it was extremely complicated to decide one activity which suitable for all abilities...*" (Subject B: the 1<sup>st</sup> interview on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

The difficulty arose when the participant chose the activities to serve all abilities of the students. Thus, she managed her anxiety by seeking guidance from supervisors before the first teaching. She reflected her successful solution that "*To deal with this difficulty, I needed suggestions from the supervisors... After the first supervision, I no longer worried about it since I had guidelines and awareness of creating activities to fit the class*" (Subject B: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). Thus, she could overcome her anxiety.

**Managing Tasks and Time:** The pre-service teachers felt nervous about managing tasks and time in the first class. This is some evidence in the extract of one participant, "*It worried me to manage tasks and time by myself*" (Subject A: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). So, they were concerned about serving the students with different needs and interests by organizing clear tasks (e.g. solo work, pair work, group work, and plenary work). Besides, the pre-service teachers also worried about the use of classroom time; that is, they could not manage time in the first lesson since there were many factors to be taken into account. The extract below is clear evidence of this:

**Extract 14:** "*I had anxiety when my co-teacher taught over time in the first part because it affected the second part of my teaching. Consequently, I could not use the activity from the lesson plan in real class situations because it was running out of time...*" (Subject A: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2012)

Time management was the cause of the pre-service teachers' anxiety. To manage the anxiety, one of the participants tried to understand the situation and tried to calm herself down. After the class, she also discussed with her co-teacher the time management issue. The participant commented that "... *I felt relaxed when I understood the situation and tried to control my feeling... After the discussion, I also had the time management technique.*" (Subject A: the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview). The results of the solution indicated that she reduced anxiety since she obtained time management techniques.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Categories of Pre-Service Teachers' Anxiety

In this discussion section, to discuss the significant issues, the researcher pointed out only the highlight of the causes of pre-service teachers' anxiety in each category as follows:

The first category is '**teacher's own personality**' which mainly includes confidence and uncertainty. To clarify, the anxiety of the pre-service teachers increased when they met new students and classroom situations because they had no teaching experience in secondary school settings. Therefore, all these determinants decreased teachers' confidence in taking a role in front of the class. These findings further support the idea of McKeachie

(1968); while in the class, teachers' meeting unfamiliar people affected teachers' emotions and anxiety. In addition, the pre-service teachers were concerned a great deal about their own students' attitudes towards learning English. If the students were dissatisfied with the new teachers in the first class, the students would have negative attitudes towards the entire teaching hour; hence it explicitly affected the students' learning inputs. Similarly, this cause of anxiety influenced the pre-service teachers to become a less self-confident teacher in the first class as well. The reason is because the pre-service teachers' confidence in teaching was seriously undermined by an attitude problem of their students. This category is associated with perceptions of the teachers, i.e., the teachers and the students had different perspectives in the first lesson (Sanderson, 1995). Furthermore, the pre-service teachers had anxiety caused by uncertainty to make decisions during before- and while-teaching. This is because the pre-service teachers worried about their own language competence and language use in the class. This finding is supported by a previous study (Shrestha, 2009) in which the teachers could not speak naturally in basic conversation in the class due to their anxiety; thus it was the negative side of language teachers' anxiety in their first class.

The second category is '**teaching context**'. The current study found that the pre-service teachers had anxiety when confronted with the complexity in implementing the lesson plan for the first class. A possible explanation for this might be that when the pre-service teachers could not follow lesson plan procedures, they totally went off track. Besides, the anxiety of pre-service teachers increased when they had to change the plan immediately to survive in the first class. This finding is in agreement with Merç's (2011) findings which showed that teaching procedures were a significant category of EFL pre-service teachers' anxiety, since there were various factors that the teachers would take into account before teaching. For example, the reason for the teachers to change their original lesson plan was to adapt such a plan to fit into unexpected situations in the classroom. Moreover, the pre-service teachers felt anxious about teacher-student interactions, especially in the first class. These results are consistent with other studies and suggest that the pre-service teachers were concerned a great deal about teacher-student interactions in the class (Kim & Kim, 2004). Due to the importance of teacher-student interactions, the interactions played a very important role in classroom teaching and such interactions were a reliable indicator of the victorious class as well. Another important finding was that the pre-service teachers worried about their first teaching. There were several possible clarifications for this result. The pre-service teachers were uncertain how to open and wrap up the lesson, how to teach new students, how to draw students' attention, and how to assist the students to reach the goals. The finding is consistent with the study of Merç (2004); who found the pre-service teachers felt worried when they had to use new teaching strategies and open the first stage in the first day of teaching practicum.

The third category is '**supervision context**'. The results of this study indicated that the pre-service teachers were concerned about being observed in their first class by supervisors. Because of the fear of making mistakes, they worried that they would make serious mistakes while the supervisors were observing, and then the supervisors would notice their mistakes. Another interesting finding was that the pre-service teachers were concerned a great deal about the evaluation from supervisors because it would directly affect the final grade. This finding further supports the idea of Horwitz and Young (1991), who suggested the fear of negative academic evaluation. Also, Watson and Friend (1969) stated when the person feared being negatively evaluated by others, that person would have anxiety.

The fourth category is '**others**'. There were other factors that caused anxiety for the pre-service teachers in the first encounter such as lesson planning and managing tasks and time. To elaborate more, the pre-service teachers felt anxious when they had to select and design activities to serve all aspects of the students. For example, when the teachers designed a challenging activity for high proficient students but the activity was ineffective for the low proficient ones. The present findings seem to be consistent with other research which found that the teachers sometimes designed activities beyond the ability of students (Huimin, 2008).

Moreover, the pre-service teachers were concerned about managing the tasks for the students in the class. This finding is in agreement with Merç's (2011) findings which show the pre-service teachers had anxiety when they had to manage the tasks for pair work and group work since they had limitation in classroom management skills. They also worried about time management in the first class since they had to finish the activity on time. This finding confirms that time management is associated with the cause of the pre-service teachers' anxiety when they cannot implement the lesson plan on time (Howarth, 2002).

### *6.2 Anxiety Management and Results*

In this part, the researcher explicitly discussed effective anxiety management techniques and the results were as follows:

The analysis of the interview on anxiety management indicated that the pre-service teachers used the '**self-control strategy**' (e.g. positive thinking, self talking, and trying to calm down, etc.) to cope with the anxiety. After using the strategy, they could decrease their anxiety. This finding corroborates the ideas of Bress (2006),



who suggested that to control the anxiety, the teachers had to understand how anxious situations impact real life, then they needed to control their personality, behavior, attitude, and thought in order to generate pleasure and well-being in EFL classrooms. Another important finding was that the pre-service teachers employed the **'let-it-be strategy'** while facing with the anxiety, i.e., acknowledging and releasing the situations to go with the flow. One unanticipated finding was that this strategy helped them to reduce the anxiety. This finding is supported by a previous study (Bawcom, 2005) in which the best thing to do was to accept the situation and forget about it, for the time being. Also, Bress (2006) found that the 'let-it-be strategy' was the way to increase relaxation by accepting the situations of having anxiety and letting them go in particular moments.

Furthermore, the results of this study showed that the pre-service teachers managed their anxiety by using the **'face-it and handle-it strategy'**. They were able to use this strategy through two patterns which included immediate and delayed solutions. A possible explanation for this might be that the pre-service teachers needed to face up to anxiety and handled the difficult situations in the class immediately by using individual techniques. The reason to use the delayed solutions was that they did not acquaint themselves with the techniques to cope with the anxiety at that time since they needed time to digest the problems. Thus, they searched for methods to cope with the causes of anxiety by consulting with co-teachers and supervisors. At last, the pre-service teachers could solve the problems and gain great benefits from the successful solutions. This study confirms that these solutions to cope with the anxiety are associated with the strategies suggested by Coombe (2008) in which the basic things that the teachers could do to reduce the anxiety were consulting with colleagues, asking others for help, providing adequate resources, and getting involved professionally. Also, these findings corroborate the ideas of Hatloy (2012), who suggested that the 'face-it and handle-it' strategy was a primary step in breaking the cycle of anxiety and insecurity. It meant that an anxious person should face up to anxiety and understand her feeling first, then search for the techniques to cope with uneasy situations. Finally, she may feel more confident and more relaxed.

### 7. Pedagogical Implications

The pedagogical implications are beneficial to the field of teacher development for both pre-service teachers and teacher trainers as follows:

- In terms of the pre-service teachers, before going to the field practicum, studying the possible causes of anxiety that will influence their emotions would be necessary. It would be the best practice for them to prepare effective anxiety management to cope with such anxiety beforehand. Positive impact of anxiety also helps the pre-service teachers become active in predicting problems and planning solutions to deal with the future situations. Also, it could help their teaching become successful afterwards. After facing with the anxiety, the pre-service teachers would be sufficiently self-aware to recognize the causes of their anxiety. At last, they could completely gain direct experiences in order to develop their long-term profession.
- In terms of teacher trainers' support, understanding the causes of anxiety would help the teacher trainers comprehend obvious issues regarding the possible causes of anxiety that disturb the pre-service teachers' confidence in the first encounter. Due to the individual anxiety, it would be an explicit signal to warn the teacher trainers to know when to give moral support, encouragement, and support to the pre-service teachers. Besides, the teacher trainers should train the pre-service teachers not only how to deal with the problems but also how to cope with the anxiety effectively.

### 8. Conclusions

This study has investigated the causes of pre-service teachers' anxiety and successful anxiety management. The results of this study indicated that the anxiety basically occurred every time during the first encounter (before-during-after teaching) with students in EFL classroom. The important causes of pre-service teachers' anxiety are grouped under four main categories, including 'teacher's own personality', 'teaching context', 'supervision context', and 'others'. Furthermore, the pre-service teachers used three main effective anxiety management techniques to solve problems or to relieve the anxiety, i.e., 'the self-control strategy', 'the let-it-be strategy', and 'the face-it and handle-it strategy'. Thus, it is obvious that the distribution of this study will be considerably beneficial to the field of ongoing teacher development. Consequently, the outcomes of this study are especially significant to the pre-service teachers, the teacher trainers, the supervisors, and even the educators who are in the field of TEFL/TESL/TESOL.

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