Female EFL Pre-service Teacher’s Emotional Geography in Teaching Practicum during Limited Face to Face Learning

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Abstract
The school environment serves as a domain of learning characterized by a diverse range of emotional complexities. The dynamics of affect that emerge within the classroom setting may give rise to heterogeneous interpretations among educators, influenced by the interactions and dynamics of proximity or distance between teachers and students. This research explores the emotional geography dimension of female prospective English language teachers in the context of conducting teaching practices during the period of limited face-to-face instruction. The narrative approach method is adopted with the intention of capturing narrative accounts concerning the affective experiences of female student teachers who are in the process of developing their careers as educators. The subjects of this study are female student teachers pursuing education as prospective educators within a state university institution in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia. The method of semi-structured interviews is implemented as a tool for collecting relevant data. The data that has been successfully collected pertains to the affective experiences of the participants while conducting teaching practices during the period of limited face-to-face instruction. Subsequently, this data is analyzed with reference to the conceptual framework of “Emotional Geography” proposed by Hargreaves (2001). This study reveals the affective experiences of female prospective teachers in the execution of teaching practices within the context of limited face-to-face instructional settings. The experiences undergone by these prospective teachers entail a multitude of emotions encompassing both positive and negative dimensions. Some of the emotions experienced encompass tension, fear, anxiety, surprise, confusion, stress, overwhelm, helplessness, empathy, relaxation, tranquility, happiness, pleasure, and gratitude.

INTRODUCTION
The practice of teaching constitutes a crucial phase for student teachers to apply what they have learned in higher education institutions. As highlighted by Kaldi & Xafakos (2017), teaching practice or professional experience is significant for pre-service teachers as it facilitates authentic learning within teacher education programs, connecting theory to practice. The aim is to provide authentic experiences for prospective teachers to develop teaching and pedagogical skills within the educational
Teaching experience for student teachers holds benefits for them in understanding the actual educational context they will face.

Given the novelty of this experience for student teachers, they encounter a myriad of emotions in response to challenges and new encounters. They might grapple with various issues related to applying their cognitive abilities, personal, social, and professional values, as well as their own feelings (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010). Liu (2016) states that teaching invariably elicits a range of emotions due to interpersonal interactions with others and the need to navigate through their emotions. Teachers' emotions are seen as dynamic and ever-changing. Student teachers often experience a spectrum of emotions, both positive and negative (Bloomfield, 2010). Emotions such as anxiety, fear, unease, surprise, confusion, stress, overwhelm, enthusiasm, tranquility, happiness, excitement, and gratitude manifest in response to various events such as adapting to a new environment, interacting and relating to individuals in teaching practice, preparing for teaching practice, and balancing academic life with teaching practice (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

As elucidated by Hargreaves (2001), schools are environments rich with complex emotions. The emotions arising within the classroom may be interpreted differently by teachers due to the closeness or distance between students and educators. These emotions of comprehension and incomprehension in teaching are referred to as emotional geography by Hargreaves. Emotional geography, as defined by Hargreaves (2001a), is “the patterns of spatial experiences of proximity and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help to create, configure, and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world, and each other.” It is a concept used to identify the support and threat to fundamental emotional bonds and to gain an understanding of the school as a result of the proximity, distance, interactions, and relationships of individuals (Hargreaves, 2001a). Hargreaves also states that five essential dimensions influence the form of emotional geography: the physical/personal dimension, the socio-cultural dimension, the moral dimension, the professional dimension, and the political dimension. The physical dimension pertains to the proximity or distance resulting from shared time and space. The socio-cultural dimension involves the distances arising from differences in race, culture, gender, ethnicity, language, and disability. The moral dimension refers to proximity and/or disparities caused by differences in goals and aspirations in achievement. The professional geography refers to proximity and/or gaps in differing professional perspectives and actions. The political dimension involves differences in power and status that can hinder interpersonal communication.

In Indonesia, after nearly two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, new policies regarding the education system have emerged. Instruction that was conducted virtually during the pandemic is now being implemented in schools. However, instruction needs to take place with limited student numbers or half the class size, and instructional time is reduced compared to normal circumstances. This regulation presents both opportunities and challenges. Like in online learning, pre-service teachers may miss the components of the school environment, culture, and expectations (Sealey-Ruiz, 2013; Hill, 2021). This new regulation offers prospective teachers the opportunity to observe real-life situations in the school environment. However, in this limited face-to-face instruction, prospective teachers need to adjust to this new learning situation and face the challenge of reduced instructional time.

Numerous studies have focused on the experiences of pre-service teachers during teaching practice. Research by White & McSharry (2021) found that pre-service teachers experienced isolation and detachment during teaching practice in the pandemic era. The teaching experience of pre-service teachers during COVID-19 was revealed by Ayumi et al. (2021), who indicated that pre-service teachers
faced challenges in online learning and suggested the readiness of pre-service teachers regarding instructional content. Studies on the emotional experiences of pre-service teachers during teaching practice have been conducted by Rahmawati et al. (2021), unveiling the emotions felt by pre-service teachers during online teaching practice. Research on the emotional geography of pre-service teachers was also carried out by Astutik & Hapsari (2022), revealing the emotional experiences of pre-service teachers in teaching that manifest as both positive and negative emotions.

Prior related research in Indonesia has uncovered the experiences of pre-service teachers or emotional experiences during teaching practice amid the COVID-19 pandemic. However, research on the emotional experiences of pre-service teachers during limited face-to-face teaching practice remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the emotional experiences of female pre-service teachers during limited face-to-face instruction and how they cope with these emotions. This research employs a narrative design and the emotional geography framework by Hargreaves (2001a).

**METHODS**

**Design and Sample**

The purpose of this study is to investigate and gain a deeper understanding of the emotional experiences of female pre-service teachers during limited face-to-face teaching practice. This study employs a narrative approach to collect narrative stories about the emotional experiences of female pre-service teachers. The participants of this study are female pre-service teachers enrolled in a state university in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia. The subject (pseudonym) is an eighth-semester student majoring in English education who was assigned to carry out teaching practice as a requirement before obtaining a teaching license. She conducted teaching practice during limited face-to-face instruction.

**Instrument and Procedure**

The participants of this study are eighth-semester students in the English education program who have completed micro-teaching and teaching practice. The recruited participants have undergone teaching practice during limited face-to-face instruction. The researcher obtained permission to conduct an interview with the subject (21). Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data. The primary data collection took place through WhatsApp conversations. The researchers inquired participants about their emotional experiences while conducting teaching practice during limited face-to-face instruction.

**Data Analysis**

The data analysis utilized in this study is the theoretical framework of “Emotional Geography” formulated by Hargreaves (2001a). This theoretical framework comprises five emotional dimensions: physical/personal geography, socio-cultural geography, moral geography, professional geography, and political geography. After data collection, the researchers proceeded to analyze the data. They employed the data analysis components proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994), which encompass data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data transcription was gathered from interviews with the participants. Prior to data analysis, the researchers transcribed the interview data. In the data reduction phase, the researchers selected and transformed the interview data with the aim of eliminating irrelevant data. Subsequently, the researchers gathered and organized a condensed array of information to facilitate conclusion drawing. Data display assisted the researchers in discerning the
findings of the study. Conclusion drawing or verification, the final step of data analysis, involved determining the significance of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data for this research was collected through semi-structured interviews with a participant, specifically a female prospective teacher student enrolled at one of the state universities in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia. The interview data was subjected to analysis based on the theoretical framework of emotional geography proposed by Hargreaves (2001), who posits that five pivotal dimensions influence the configuration of emotional geography, encompassing physical/personal, socio-cultural, moral, professional, and political dimensions.

Dimension 1 - Physical Geography

The participant received a warm and favorable reception from both students and teachers on the initial day of her teaching practice. The mentor teacher provided substantial assistance and pedagogical advice concerning classroom instruction. The students exhibited friendliness, politeness, and amicability towards her. This encouraging treatment propelled her towards excellence in teaching practice while concurrently alleviating her anxiety. Acknowledging her unease due to the extended interval since her previous formal teaching engagement, she articulated that this marked her first teaching endeavor at this particular school. Furthermore, she articulated occasional fluctuations in her self-assurance levels. Elaborating on her sentiments, she stated:

"Undoubtedly, I experience apprehension. This marks the very first occasion wherein I am granted the opportunity to engage in instruction at this institution. It also stands as my inaugural teaching episode since approximately two years prior to the pandemic. Occasionally, I am imbued with self-assurance; conversely, there are instances when such self-assurance wanes. I experience confidence when thoroughly preparing my instructional content and mastering the subject matter. Conversely, my self-assurance recedes when my preparation falls short. However, this is surmountable, given my previous acquisition of knowledge pertaining to high school curricula."

Probing into the continuation of her interactions with her mentor teacher, it was discerned that ongoing feedback and instructional guidance were offered by the mentor teacher within the classroom context. In this context, the participant candidly depicted her emotions, encompassing her feelings of trepidation and self-assuredness. The prolonged hiatus since her preceding teaching engagement accentuated her anxiety; however, the provision of support and acceptance from both instructors and students contributed to its mitigation. This underscores the paramount role of an enabling environment in managing anxiety and cultivating self-confidence (Gafur, 2020; Sulfemi, 2020).

Dimension 2 - Socio-Cultural Geography

The participant endeavored to assign tasks pertinent to her pedagogical material to her pupils. She acknowledged that in the framework of blended in-person and online instruction, students might experience a sense of burden as they are assigned tasks not only by her but also by other educators. She explicated:

"As the incumbent responsibility bearer for task allocation, I am duty-bound to execute this function. However, when the task assumes an online format, numerous students encounter connectivity-related predicaments, consequently exhibiting a tendency to abstain from task completion. Consequently, during in-person sessions, collaborative task discussion is favored, as opposed to soliciting independent responses."
The participant evinced an acute awareness of the students’ context, particularly concerning task distribution. Heightened sensitivity on the teacher’s part towards classroom dynamics and an understanding of individual student attributes augments the harmonization of the devised written curriculum with its practical implementation within the classroom milieu (Zendrato, 2016). The participant astutely recognized the potential ramifications of an escalated task workload within an educational milieu encompassing both in-person and virtual modalities. The selection to foster collaborative task deliberations mirrors incisive contemplation and underscores an earnest concern for student well-being.

**Dimension 3 - Moral Geography**

In the milieu of pedagogical interactions, the participant encountered several pupils demonstrating a prowess for English language acquisition. Evidencing an acute sensitivity to the dynamics of instructional activities, she noted the presence of pupils exhibiting subpar English proficiency and a concomitant lack of motivation towards the language. The following outlines her actions in instances where students confronted learning challenges:

“I observed students attaining subpar scores in assessments. On occasion, within the classroom domain, I would direct inquiries towards such students to engender their engagement and participation in the learning process. During intervals of respite, I would engage them in casual dialogues concerning the factors underpinning their suboptimal scores and the impediments encountered in their pursuit of English language proficiency.”

In this particular scenario, the participant evinced empathetic responsiveness towards students grappling with learning obstacles. As elucidated by White & McSharry (2021), numerous pre-service teachers have demonstrated socio-emotional preparedness in their empathic retorts to the exigencies of student needs. The participant manifested a deep-seated empathy towards students encountering learning challenges. Beyond the mere solicitation of responses during instructional sessions, she engaged in personalized conversations, thereby affording her insight into their challenges. This proactive gesture reflects a mindful response to the heterogeneity of student aptitudes and an earnest commitment to fostering their achievement (Dewi, 2020).

**Dimension 4 - Professional Geography**

The participant posited that she encountered limited impediments in the formulation of lesson plans, attributing this to her prior exposure to lectures with a pronounced focus on lesson plan creation. She detailed her practice of seeking internet-based resources and conferring with peers in preparation for lesson planning and instructional content development. Nevertheless, challenges arose in the successful execution of her formulated lesson plans within the classroom setting, indicative of the characteristic inexperience frequently associated with pre-service educators (Astutik & Hapsari, 2022). On inquiring into her motivating impetus, particularly in the context of confronting pedagogical barriers, the participant articulated:

"My motivation rests in a commitment to the pursuit of learning; this notion is firmly entrenched in my consciousness, signifying the imperative nature of this opportunity for personal education. I am compelled to glean multifarious insights from this experiential sojourn. Consequently, I am driven to unveil the unknown, necessitating engagement with kin, mentors, and communal discourse to realize this aspiration.*

The participant, imbued with a heightened sense of preparedness owing to prior training, expressed her propensity to surmount challenges in lesson planning. Despite grappling with the application of these plans, her resolute disposition and proactive outreach to diverse informational
sources underscored her unwavering commitment to a continuous trajectory of learning and professional development as a prospective educator (Nur & Fatonah, 2022).

**Dimension 5 - Political Geography**

Pertaining to the structural ethos of the educational institution, the participant asserted that she did not encounter substantive hurdles adversely affecting instructional activities. Nonetheless, she admitted to feelings of discomfort and a semblance of despondency attributed to the exigencies of compacted in-person teaching periods, compelling her to expound upon instructional content with celerity. The amalgamation of restricted in-person interactions and virtual instructional provisions engendered a confluence of emotions including elation, exhaustion, and apprehension. She vocalized her sentiments as follows:

“I am imbued with profound enthusiasm as the scholastic pursuits within the classroom ambit recommence. However, the concurrent amalgamation of virtual and in-person instruction has wrought a sense of fatigue. Navigating the realms of both in-person and virtual instructional spheres entails strenuous effort. This has duly resulted in pronounced fatigue.”

Consequently, the participant discerned that the juxtaposition of in-person and virtual pedagogy exerted an influence upon her well-being, culminating in sentiments of exhaustion and unease. This circumstance corroborates the profound impact that regulatory shifts and alterations in the educational milieu can wield over.

Anderson & Smith (2001) argue that emotional geographies give consideration to how emotions affect our world and lives. They suggest that emotions constitute ways of ‘knowing, being and doing’ and highlight the need for more work that recognises the link between emotions and the spaces and places in which they are experienced. Davidson & Milligan (2004) note emotional geographies are concerned with the emotions connecting people to places, landscapes and objects in particular situations. Derived from the analysis of gathered data, this research signifies that the encounters of aspiring teacher trainees encompass a spectrum of both affirmative and unfavorable emotions. These findings align with antecedent scholarly investigations into emotional geography conducted by Rahmawati et al. (2021) and Astutik & Hapsari (2022). The range of emotions they experience encompasses sensations of trepidation, apprehension, unease, astonishment, perplexity, strain, inundation, vulnerability, compassion, repose, serenity, felicity, gratification, and thankfulness. A pioneering revelation stemming from this study is that within the milieu of constrained in-person instruction, aspiring teacher candidates grapple with sentiments of weariness and despondency arising from the imperative of accommodating new regulations prompted by the circumstances of the new normal.

**CONCLUSION**

This study portrays the emotional experiences of female prospective teachers during limited face-to-face teaching practices. The experiences of these pre-service teacher candidates encompass both positive and negative emotions. The emotions they undergo comprise feelings of apprehension, fear, anxiety, surprise, confusion, stress, overwhelm, helplessness, empathy, relaxation, tranquility, happiness, pleasure, and gratitude. A novel finding emerging from this research is that in the context of constrained face-to-face learning, pre-service teacher candidates encounter feelings of fatigue and despondency as they navigate the necessity to adapt to new regulations stemming from the “new normal” situation.
REFERENCES


