

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

In this era of globalization, the ability to communicate in English has become very important, especially at the upper secondary education level. In high school, learning English as a foreign language (EFL) often emphasizes the development of four main skills: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. One of the important language skills that high school students must acquire is writing skills (Abd. Rahim & Mohd Hayas, 2014). Writing is considered a demanding skill, especially for learners of a second or foreign language, it is a demanding skill because the learners have to think in their language and then translate their thoughts or ideas into English. Moreover, the students have to pay attention to the grammar in their writing (Halimah, 2019).

Writing in a foreign language in this regard writing in English, is an important language skill to acquire the importance of communication in the globalization era. Because of the importance of writing skills, EFL students must learn and be able to produce written texts well. They must understand the writing process and structure of a particular text to create a suitable written text (Fatoni, 2019). Meanwhile, some EFL students do not understand the appropriate writing process, making EFL students difficult in writing English.

Writing English for EFL learners is a difficult skill because EFL learners are confused by organizing ideas, translating languages from Indonesian to English, following grammar rules, and finding and writing the right vocabulary. Researchers found that there are several factors in the ability of students. The first factor is that students do not know about writing skills, are not even familiar with writing skills in English, lack of vocabulary and students think it is difficult to memorize the pronunciation of each word and how to write correctly. The next factor is students underestimating in learning English which is often considered difficult, lack of motivation of students to learn English, especially writing, which they think is boring. The last is that students feel hesitant in writing and not

confident in what they are doing because they are sometimes afraid and worried of their writing does not match the teacher's expectations (Sinta & Astutik, 2019).

The difficulty in writing English is also felt by EFL students at Tay Do University, Vietnam. Xiu Yan J (2012), said that the students had seven difficulties in learning English writing such as difficulties with vocabulary, problems with grammar, problems with prior knowledge, troubles with organizing ideas, problems with the allotted time, difficulties with teachers, and difficulties with the mother tongue. Among these difficulties, "allotted time" caused the most difficulty for the students. Generally, the results of this thesis stated that all of the participants had difficulties in learning English writing, especially problems with allotted time.

Writing skills have a central role in the development of overall language skills. An important purpose of writing is to communicate in written form. Writing tasks are important for students, however, writing tasks are not easy, especially for students with minimal language skills, where they have no previous experience compiling various genres of texts. During the writing process, students encounter barriers such as language barriers that can cause anxiety (Adhi Nugroho & Teda Ena, 2021a).

According to the American Psychiatric Association (2000), anxiety is a natural reaction and a necessary warning response in humans. Meanwhile, Cheng (2009) anxiety response consists of the emotional component, feeling tense, the cognitive component, worry, physiological response, increased heart rate, and blood pressure; and the behavioral response, avoiding certain situations. Anxiety is very likely to interfere with such cognitive processes when the task places heavy demands on working memory or long-term memory.

Foreign language anxiety can be associated with three different anxieties related to academic and social states of judgment. This anxiety can be measured by several criteria, including; Communication fear, negative judgment anxiety, and exam anxiety. Communication anxiety refers to a form of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety to interact with others. Students can feel shy, awkward, and scared when they have to engage in real conversations, even when students are old enough to think. Fear of negative feedback is anxiety about the judgment of others, some students will avoid the circumstances in which they will be evaluated and the fear that others will judge their writing so that it becomes a problem in writing (Adhi Nugroho & Teda Ena, 2021b).

Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014) claim writing problems are five main types including inadequate ideas about the topic they want to write about, the right vocabulary to convey its meaning, what they should write at the beginning of their essay, correct English sentences and how to make their paragraphs coherent (Fatoni, 2019). In addition, (Cheng, 2004) suggests three components of writing anxiety, namely physiological (somatic), cognitive, and behavioral components. The importance of identifying types of student anxiety and looking at possible research on students' writing anxiety levels in the course of writing in high school has not been explored much in previous research. The purpose of this study was to explore writing anxiety levels among EFL students in high school, identify factors that contribute to writing anxiety, and formulate recommendations to address those challenges.

Several previous studies have been conducted related to writing anxiety in various settings have been carried out in his research. First, Syarifudin (2020) which studied about writing anxiety among students. Students of the Department of English Language Education of Mataram State Islamic University reported experiencing significant levels of writing anxiety at the end of the study, with the most dominant form of anxiety being somatic anxiety. The most important sources of concern are lack of understanding of the subject and low writing skills; The least important factor is insufficient teacher feedback.

Hartono and Maharani (2019) have researched writing anxiety among Indonesian students. In this study, researchers were interested in knowing students' writing anxiety levels as well as their main anxiety levels. Based on these findings, students had significant levels of anxiety when writing in English, with cognitive anxiety being the type of writing anxiety most often suffered by students. followed by somatic anxiety and avoidant behavior. Grammar problems are the most commonly expressed cause of anxiety, followed by problems, vocabulary, and lack of writing practice. Apart from that, there is also research by Hussein, and Qashoa (2014) which has explored and investigated potential factors associated with writing anxiety and strategies to reduce it among English language learners at Emirati universities. The findings suggest that high levels of writing anxiety may primarily be associated with writing tests and cognitive and linguistic factors.

Meanwhile, Rasool (2023) conducted a study on 72 preparatory class students in the English teacher training department at Education University. The findings showed no

difference in anxiety levels between the sexes, whereas cognitive anxiety types differed in results. Most participants experienced high and intermediate levels of anxiety.

Based on a preliminary study by the researcher that has been conducted at one of the high schools in Bojonegoro in October 2023. English is one of the subjects that must be taught to students. English writing has been taught to students since the first year or 10th grade. The researcher gave several questions in the paper to find out how difficult the level of difficulty in English. Researchers found that the majority of tenth graders still have problems in English, especially in their writing performance. It can be seen when in class, they are still nervous, confused, and have difficulty writing in English. This case occurred not only because the student was not competent enough, but also because the teacher only gave assignments at a glance and did not give too much handling to students who could not complete the task of writing them. Anxiety hampers their ability to write English most of them choose to avoid writing in English. In English lessons, tenth-grade students are given the task of writing various genres or specific topics (descriptive texts, narrative texts, recount texts, procedure texts, etc.). Meanwhile, some students often have difficulty writing so they feel anxious when getting writing assignments. Writing difficulties and ongoing anxiety affect their academic results and language skills development and can be a serious obstacle for them.

Some of the previous studies above addressed student problems in writing English theses at one university or higher institution. The focus is similar to this study, but this study chose different subjects from EFL students at various universities and higher institutions in Indonesia and abroad. Researchers will explain related to English writing difficulties in EFL high school students, because there may be many high school students in Indonesia who have difficulty in writing. However, a few journal articles discuss the writing anxiety felt by students in senior high school along with the causes of anxiety and strategies for coping with student writing anxiety. Therefore, the researchers are interested in examining students' writing anxiety at the high school level by involving students directly in writing anxiety. Thus, the instrument with interviews and give SLWAI questionnaires adapted from Cheng (2004) and CWAI adapted from M. Rezaei (2014) to tenth-grade students are needed in this research.

Writing anxiety is a common phenomenon observed among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially in senior high school settings where writing tasks play a crucial role in academic success. Understanding the factors contributing to writing anxiety and its impact on EFL students' writing performance is essential for educators to develop effective strategies for alleviating this anxiety and promoting better writing outcomes. This research proposal aims to **Investigate the Writing Anxiety among EFL Students of Senior High Schools**, focusing on identifying its causes, manifestations, and potential interventions.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background above, the researcher has two questions about the problem. The problem can be identified as follows:

1. How many does the student's degree of anxiety in writing English texts at senior high school?
2. How are the factors affecting students' anxiety in writing English texts at senior high school?
3. What are the strategies to reduce writing anxiety and improve writing proficiency among EFL students?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study can be stated as follows:

1. To explore the levels of writing anxiety experienced by EFL students in senior high school.
2. To identify the factors contributing to writing anxiety among EFL students.
3. To propose strategies for mitigating writing anxiety and enhancing writing proficiency among EFL students.

1.4 Significance of the Study

1.4.1 Theoretically Significance

The findings of this study are expected to provide information to those who are involved in the world of teaching and learning English as a second language foreign language.

1.4.2 Practically Significance

From this research, it is expected to be able to provide the benefits for:

a. Teacher

The results of this study are expected by teachers to provide motivation or encouragement and how to overcome factors related to the cause of writing anxiety among students. With it, the teacher will be able to achieve the learning objectives perfectly.

b. Student

It is expected to provide motivation or encouragement and how to overcome factors related to the causes of writing anxiety experienced by students. With it, students will be able to control their anxiety in writing English and can produce quality writing.

c. Researcher

The researcher hopes that this research can be useful for other researchers and provide motivation and a lesson that can be learned by everyone.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Research

The researcher limits the scope of this research to avoid misunderstandings about this research. The scope of this research is about the writing students' anxiety in writing descriptive text in grade 10th of senior high school.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

It is important to emphasize the phrases in this essay's title to prevent misunderstandings and confusion. The following terms need to be highlighted:

1. Investigating

Investigating is searching out and examining the particulars to learn the facts about something hidden, unique, or complex, especially to find a motive, cause, or culprit.

2. Writing Anxiety

Writing anxiety is a feeling of incomprehension of grammar, confusion in word selection, and excessive concern regarding judgment when writing a foreign language.

3. EFL

English Foreign Language (EFL) is the term used to describe the study of English by non-speakers in countries where English is not the dominant language.

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