

Students' Writing Apprehension in Research Background Development

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Abstract — in higher educational context or universities in Indonesia, most EFL students still find difficulties to write the ideas in written form, especially in writing the background section of an academic article. There are a lot of problems occurred when they are writing an academic article. One of the problems is writing apprehension which comes up with various types. Therefore, the researcher conducted this study by interviewing 10 university students of State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya dealing investigating the types of writing apprehension. The analysis proves that there are 3 types of writing apprehension including low, medium and high apprehension. The three types show the participants responses are varied due to different perception, and also most of the students feel difficult to construct the theme in writing the academic article background. This study offers ways on how to overcome writing apprehension for university students by knowing and understanding the types and factors which cause it.

Keywords : *writing skills, writing apprehension*

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the English skills that requires time to think about the topic. It is in line with Chakraverty, A. & Gautum, K. (2000) who state that writing require enough time to think the specific and analyze the background knowledge because it is a reflective activity. When a writer wants to pour his or her idea or feeling, he or she can express it through writing. According to Gaith (2002:1) writing is a complex process to engage the writer thinking. Therefore, the case of students' apprehension in writing process frequently appears as a result of the complex process in engaging and

constructing writers thinking which lead to unease feeling that causes apprehension. Other difficulties of writing are when writers need to put their idea or think, since they have to do the brainstorming first before starting writing. Based on Zahara (p. 8, 2014) the writers should have the background knowledge of their topic, definition, the keywords, and some other elements.

Every researcher believes that writing research background is an important thing when he or she wants to present their research. The research background is not only about writing the fact related to the case, but also explains why the researcher chooses to do the research. The research background should be supported by several theories, data, empirical facts, laboratory observations, and literature studies. Doing research is a branch of academic writing based on the type of writing performance in which it belongs to extensive writing. Extensive writing implies successful management of all the process and strategies of writing for all proposed, up to the length of an essay and term paper, a major research project report or even a thesis. Therefore, in writing mini research, students should have mastered all the basis writing such as grammar, vocabulary, and so on.

Additionally, writing a research background is not easy. As mentioned above, writing a research background is included as macro skill. In research writing, students have to think, change and construct ideas, as well as see how well it relates to the next sentence or not. Writing research background also has the same process as other kinds of writing. Zamel (1982) describes the writing process as exploratory and generative in which the writers discover and generate ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning. The process of writing involves sub-processes of planning, collecting the data, drafting, revising, rewriting and editing. In

writing research there should be a consideration of the writing components. Raimes (1983) categorizes the components of writing like content, organization, grammar, syntax, mechanics, word choice, targeted audience, and writer's process.

Writing a research background has complex components. Students of English Education Department of UIN Sunan Ampel who write research background rely on themselves to accomplish the thesis writing in a certain time as the final examination. Before writing the research background, they must determine the topic of the research. Due to the fact that they need to accomplished writing background under pressure, it makes them feel stressed, confused and worried. The reason for choosing the research background development in this research is because the students are confused when they are writing the background part in the research. In writing, this condition is normally called writing apprehension.

Each person may have a different level of writing apprehension. Singh (2012) argues that there are 3 different levels of writing apprehension such as high apprehension, average apprehension, and low apprehension. The researcher uses those types to indicate the students' writing apprehension level and choose such classification to categorize the level.

The term of apprehension is coined by Daly and Miller (1975) refer to writing-specific anxiety. The phenomenon of writing apprehension is similar to anxiety, blocking, and fear. However, concerning writing, the common word used is apprehension or anxiety. There are different definitions of the word apprehension and anxiety. According to the literature, writing apprehension is a subject in specific condition that avoids situation and is perceived to require collaborative or individual writing which contrastly associated with a person's tendency for approach through some potential evaluation, as stated by Daly and Miller. Therefore, writing anxiety is outweighs the projected gained from the ability to write which leads to fear in the writing process.

The phenomenon of writing apprehension is also related to the development of writing skills, syntactic level, and the formal level. Students who have a high level of apprehension tend to have less vocabulary compared to the students who have low levels of apprehension. For instance, they use less variation of vocabulary in their writing. Generally, they use fewer words.

In this study, the researcher took the English Language Education Department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya as the location of research because of the students there use English for writing the research background. The research conducted involved the third-semester students who are doing research background writing in academic year of 2016/2017. From this investigation, the researcher gives a description of the students' level of writing apprehension. The lecturers and advisors can get information about writing apprehension so they can give suggestion or feedback to the students' writing and this research can help them to find a method to reduce

writing apprehension also for teaching students who have low unusual or average and high writing apprehension.

After knowing this phenomenon, the researcher attempts to know about the level of writing apprehension that is experienced by the students who are writing research background in English Language Education Department. The researcher's aim is not only to know the level but also to describe the causes of writing apprehension writing based on the students' perspective.

II. METHOD

The researcher used the interview to collect the research data. The interview was conducted by giving four questions to the participants. Such way helped the researcher to collect the data based on the participant's opinion. Through the interview, the researcher also knew the reaction of the participants because it was done directly or face to face. This research was conducted in English Language Education Department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The participants of this research were 10 college students from the department. From the interview, the researcher knew the students' apprehension of writing research background. The participants consist of five male students and five female students that have the same level. The study was investigated the existence of apprehension in writing the research background. From the focus of this study, each participant also had already written about the research background previously.

The participants were interviewed only once. Each participant got four questions and all of them had the same questions. The researcher asked one by one of the question to the participants. From that, the participants could answer the questions with the specific reason about apprehension in writing research background. The participants shared their own apprehension when they did the writing. They had different apprehension when they wrote the research background. This research collected the data from the interview, therefore this research is regarded as qualitative research.

There were four questions in the interviews. The first question is about the participants feeling when they are writing of their research. The second question is about if there any existence of anxiety when they wrote. The participants needed to share their reasons why they felt worried when writing the research. The third question deals with the activity that the participants did when they felt worried. The fourth talk is about the solution that the participants can give to themselves if they feel good.

III. RESULT

Writing Apprehension

The interview result shows that 60% of the students felt nervous when they wrote the research background. The majority of the participants also felt uneasy when they wrote the research background. It means that there is a problem

dealing with their confidence in writing research background. Regarding this phenomenon, the researcher found that there is a different level of students' writing apprehension. There were three participants stating that choosing a good theme was more difficult than writing a research background. Nabila said that looking for ideas and how to construct her writing are the difficult parts. (see figure 1.1)

The Solution of Writing Apprehension

The participants in this research are aware of their apprehension and try to cope with this problem by themselves. As a solution for decreasing their apprehension, 9 of 10 participants said that they searched a lot of references and asked the lecturer for help to overcome their writing apprehension. Based on the participants' perception, such way is more helpful for them to increase their grades. There is only one participant who stated about having some relaxation. He said that relaxation in the cafe will help him to decrease the apprehension. As we know, every participant has their own perspective, and it will give a positive impact to them to decrease the writing apprehension.

Table 1 Writing Apprehension

No	Name of respondents	Apprehension		Level	Solutions
		Research background	Other		
1	Nabila	-	Theme	Average	Find a reference
2	Muhammad Sanja Hasbullah	√	-	Low	Find a reference and ask a friends
3	Nurhamidah	-	Theme	Low	Find a reference from the internet or book
4	Ganjarfaldi	√	-	Average	Relax in cafe
5	Sulviana	-	Theme	Average	Find a reference from the internet or book
6	Aditya Herwanda Riswan	√	-	High	Find a reference from the internet or book
7	Tri Rohmat				Find a reference

	Sholehudin	√	-	Average	
8	Putra Bagus	√	-	Low	Find a reference
9	Wahyuni Dwi Fitria	√	-	Average	Find a reference
10	Izzatul Munnah	√	-	Average	Find a reference and ask the teacher

IV. DISCUSSION

The study offers ways how to overcome writing apprehension on university students by knowing and understanding the types and factors that causes writing apprehension. The writing apprehension of each participant is different. Most of the participants, they felt that writing research background still becomes the common apprehension while 3 of participants said their writing apprehension was not about the research background. From different writing apprehension, the researcher indicates their different writing apprehension levels. In this research, there are three levels of writing apprehension, including low, medium, and high. There were 6 participants indicated in the average level, 3 participants indicated in the low level, and only one participant indicated in the high level of writing apprehension. Not only that, but also the participant explained about how they solve their problem dealing with the writing apprehension. Most of the participants said that the ways they do usually are searching a lot of references on the internet (article, journal, or e-book) and book, and also ask the experts like a lecturer. Those ways decrease their writing apprehension. In addition, there is one who said that having relaxation in the cafe will develop their writing and decrease the writing apprehension.

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