THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WRITING ANXIETY AND WRITING ACHIEVEMENT OF THE FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, MULAWARMAN UNIVERSITY

Yunita Sinaga
FKIP Universitas Kutai Kartanegara

Abstract: This research aimed to investigate the relationship between Second Language Writing Anxiety (SLWA) and students’ writing achievement. The correlation design was applied in this research. There were two instruments utilized here: students’ writing score, and Second Language Writing Anxiety (SLWA). The research was conducted on the fourth semester students of English Department, in Mulawarman University. Fifty-four students were asked to answer the questionnaire in SLWAI. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (-0.368) and t-test (-2.854) at p = 0.05 showed significantly negative correlation between writing anxiety and students’ writing achievement. This indicated an inverse relationship i.e. the students with lower anxiety level were more likely to achieve higher writing achievement, and those with higher anxiety level tended to obtain lower writing achievement. Furthermore, somatic anxiety was the highest anxiety found on SLWAI results. It was followed by cognitive anxiety and avoidance behavior. For future researchers, it is better to include the lecturers as the interviewee of the research in order to get the deeper insight and understanding not only from the students’ point of view but also from the lecturers’. Moreover, investigating students’ facilitative anxiety can be beneficial for future researchers as well.

Keywords: second language writing anxiety (SLWA), writing achievement, second language writing anxiety inventory (SLWAI).

INTRODUCTION

People who learn English as a foreign language often say that writing is more difficult than any other skills. It is also supported by the opinion of Watcharapunyawong and Usaha (2013) who said that writing has been found to be the most difficult for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

Taking all this into consideration while practicing writing, students will feel stressed and anxious and quit writing. This, in turn, leads to difficulties in producing effective and coherent written pieces. Anxiety is a personal trait which affects someone’s success in acquiring and learning language. Everyone may become anxious in certain situations and under certain circumstances, yet some may become more frequently anxious than others. Those do not seem to do as well as others for their feeling of anxiety inhibit their learning of language (Kharma and Bakir, 2003).
In this case, the researcher conducted the study on the fourth semester students of English Department in Mulawarman University. The researcher also chose the fourth semester students of English Department since they had passed the writing class, from Writing 1 to Writing 3. Therefore, they might have faced many anxieties in writing English compositions.

As stated before, the main purpose of this research was to seek for whether there was a correlation between students’ writing achievement and students’ writing anxiety. Based on the previous study, Cheng (2004) analyzed factors associated with second language writing anxiety, and he offered a measure, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), to assess the levels and types of second language writing anxiety. Therefore, the researcher used it to find the correlation.

Concerning the background of the study, the researcher formulated the ideas of her research into the following research questions: “Does second language writing anxiety (SLWA) relate to writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department, Mulawarman University in academic year 2016/2017?”

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Definition and Types of SLWA**

Writing anxiety, as a subject and situation specific anxiety, was defined as a general avoidance of writing behavior and of situations thought to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing (Hassan, 2001). Cheng (2004) offered a multidimensional L2 writing scale—the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) which conforms to a three-dimensional conceptualization of anxiety, such as Somatic Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, and Avoidance Behavior.

According to Grey (2011), the term somatic anxiety refers to physical changes in the body that occur when a person experiences anxiety. Cognitive anxiety refers to the cognitive aspect of anxiety experience, including negative expectations, preoccupation with performance and concern about others’ perception. Avoidance behavior refers to the behavioral aspect of the anxiety experience, avoidance of writing. Cheng also pointed out that the negative relationship between test anxiety and L2 writing performance is primarily due to the cognitive components rather than somatic components or avoidance behavior.

Furthermore, the three-dimensional conceptualization of anxiety will be explored in this research. The researcher will find out how the students’ SLWA is, according to somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety, and avoidance behavior.

**Effects of SLWA on Writing Performance**

Two effects of L2 writing anxiety consistently found in previous works concerning second language anxiety were “distress associated with writing and a profound distaste for the process” (Cheng, 2004). For instance, research showed that higher anxious writers tend to avoid taking writing courses and prefer academic majors and careers that are perceived as having relatively little to do with writing.

With respect to the relationships between ESL writing anxiety and writing performance, recent studies suggested significant negative correlations between them with several varied measures. Hassan (2001) used both Writing Quality Task and Writing Quantity Task to find out that low anxious students write better quality
composition than their high anxious counterparts. At the same time, low anxious students write more than high apprehensive students. Previous work also suggested that the detrimental effect of writing anxiety is most likely to be manifested when the anxious writer composes under time pressure (Cheng, 2004). Further, Cheng (2004) specified the effects of writing anxiety on writing processes and behaviors, such as physiological effects as reflected in unpleasant feelings of tension or nervousness, cognitive interference in writing process, and avoidance of writing.

He also used the participants’ performance on a timed English essay writing task as an index of their English writing performance to measure the correlations between the specific writing anxiety and writing performance. The findings showed a significant negative correlation between anxiety and performance.

In other words, SLWA gave negative impacts on someone’s writing performance as well. The higher writing anxiety he has, the worse writing performance he will do.

**METHODOLOGY**

The design of this research is correlation design. The purpose of the design is to examine the relationship of one variable to the other one. The first variable under this study is second language writing anxiety (SLWA) as independent variable. The second variable is writing achievement as a dependent variable. The population of this research was the fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017. The number of the population of the fourth semester students, in regular class, was 54 students from two different classes. In order to measure second language writing anxiety and its correlation towards students’ writing achievement, the researcher used questionnaire as the instrument. According to some researches, SLWAI has high reliability and validity (Atay & Kurt, 2006) and can be used to assess the writing anxiety within EFL (Cheng, 2004) and ESL contexts (Atay & Kurt, 2006).

Students’ second language writing anxiety (SLWA) was investigated by administering the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) proposed by Cheng (2002). Additionally, a higher score obtained there upon indicates a higher level of ESL writing anxiety. A total score above 65 points indicates a higher level of anxiety, a total score below 50 points indicates a low level of writing anxiety and a total score in-between indicates a moderate level of writing anxiety.

In collecting the data, first, the researcher contacted the lecturers of each class that she wanted to conduct a research on their class. After getting permission, the researcher came to each class and explain the purpose for her attendance there. The researcher, then, gave the questionnaire form to the students. Next, the students were asked to write down their names and phone number on the top of the paper. The researcher also emphasized that the results of the questionnaire would not influence their writing scores. Then, the researcher informed them the way how to answer the questionnaire. The researcher asked them to thick one of the options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD). The researcher gave 30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. As stated before, each of the questionnaire items was answered on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly agree (5 points), agree (4 points), neutral (3 points), disagree (2 points), strongly disagree (1 point).” When statements of SLWAI are negatively worded,
responses are reversed. An anxiety score was derived by summing students’ answers of the 22 items.

The researcher used an essay test to collect the data on writing achievement. The format of the test was the students’ worksheet under the topic of Safety at Work which was designed in writing composition with 90 minutes provided time. Furthermore, concerning the scoring of the test, the researcher used the criteria on writing given by Jacob (1991).

To see whether second language writing anxiety (SLWA) relates to writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula was used. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula is drawn by Sudrajat (2015) as follows:

\[
r_{xy} = \frac{N(\Sigma XY) - (\Sigma X)(\Sigma Y)}{\sqrt{[N(\Sigma X^2) - (\Sigma X)^2][N(\Sigma Y^2) - (\Sigma Y)^2]}}
\]

Where:
- \(r_{xy}\) = coefficient of correlation between variable X and variable Y.
- N = the number of testees
- X = the scores of writing anxiety
- Y = the scores of writing achievement
- \(X^2\) = squared of X
- \(Y^2\) = squared of Y
- XY = multiplication of X and Y
- \(\Sigma\) = the summation of

To see the strength of the relationship between second language writing anxiety (SLWA) and writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017, the researcher used the criteria proposed by Sudrajat (2016) as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Correlation Interpretation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.80 – 1.00</td>
<td>Very high correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.60 – 0.79</td>
<td>High correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.40 – 0.59</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.20 – 0.39</td>
<td>Low correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.00 – 0.19</td>
<td>Very low correlation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning the coefficient of relationship between variables, Dornyei (2007), describes that there are three rules of interpreting the relationship based on a correlation coefficient: a high coefficient (+1) means a strong relationship between the two variables, a coefficient of 0 suggests no relationship between the two variables and a negative correlation coefficient (-1) suggests inverse relationship between the two variables.

Furthermore, to determine the significant correlation between second language writing anxiety (SLWA) and writing achievement of the fourth semester students of
English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017, the t-test formula was used as it was drawn by Sudrajat (2015) as follows:

\[ t = \frac{r \sqrt{n - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - r^2}} \]

Where:
- \( t \) = t-computed
- \( r \) = coefficient of product moment correlation
- \( r^2 \) = square of \( r \) coefficient
- \( n \) = the number of sample

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The descriptive statistics was employed as a preliminary analysis using SPSS version 21.0. This is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of SLWAI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLWAI</th>
<th>N Valid</th>
<th>54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>69.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>69(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>11,601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>3735</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the variables concerning students’ responses of SLWAI namely mean, median, mode, standard deviation, the minimum and maximum scores and also sum scores of SLWAI. Using the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 for each item, the total scale scores ranged from 47 to 87. The minimum score of 47 indicates the low anxiety level while the maximum score of 87 indicates the high anxiety level. The descriptive statistics table also shows the mean score (M) of 69.17, the standard deviation of 11.601 and sum of the scores of 3735.

Concerning the descriptive statistics of writing achievement by using SPSS version 21.0 resulted the following data:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Writing Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Achievement</th>
<th>N Valid</th>
<th>54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>75.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>77.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>4067</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the variables concerning students’ writing achievement namely mean, median, mode, standard deviation, the minimum and maximum scores and also sum scores of SLWAI. Using scoring forman given by Jacob (91), the students’ writing scores ranged from 54 to 91. The minimum score of 54 indicates the low achievement level while the maximum score of 91 indicates the high achievement level. The descriptive statistics table also shows the mean score (M) of 75.31, the standard deviation of 10.81 and sum of the scores of 4067.

To see the relationship between second language writing anxiety (SLWA) and writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017, the calculation of Product Moment formula was done using SPSS version 21.0 resulted the following data:

Table 3 Coefficient Correlation of SLWA and Writing Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SLWA</th>
<th>Writing Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLWA</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
<td>-.368**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Achievement</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation -.368**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the result of Product Moment formula above, it was known that correlation coefficient was -0.368. It meant that variable second language writing anxiety (SLWA) had satisfactory correlation to variable of writing achievement based on the interpretation criteria of Sudrajat (2016).

Furthermore, to prove whether second language writing anxiety (SLWA) significantly relates to writing achievement or not, the researcher needed to process the correlation coefficient of both variables using t-test formula and to test the hypothesis as follows:

$$ t = \frac{r \sqrt{n - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - r^2}} $$

$$ = \frac{-0.368 \sqrt{54 - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - (-0.368)^2}} $$

$$ = \frac{-0.368 \sqrt{52}}{\sqrt{1 - 0.13542}} $$

Jurnal Intelegensia, Volume 3, Nomor 1, April 2018
DISCUSSION

The result of Product Moment Correlation between second language writing anxiety (SLWA) and writing achievement was obtained to get the result of t-test formula that was used to test the hypothesis testing of the study. This procedure was aimed to indicate the significance of correlation of both variables.

The hypothesis of the study was read: “Second language writing anxiety (SLWA) significantly relates to writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017.” To test the hypothesis, firstly the working hypothesis was formulated into null hypothesis (Ho). The formulated hypothesis into Ho was needed because the researcher should be in neutral opinion. This meant that before testing hypothesis, the researcher had to put his neutral position and did not show any prediction on the result of the testing. Therefore, the hypothesis was stated in the negative form. The null hypothesis (Ho) of this study was read as: “Second language writing anxiety (SLWA) does not significantly relate to writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017.”

By doing t-test calculation, the researcher found that t-value = -2.854. Then, this result was compared to the t-table at degree of freedom (df) = N - 2 = 54 - 2 = 52 and p = 0.05 or α = 5%. Based on the criteria, the researcher found the t-table was 2.000. The result of t-value was compared to the t-table. This procedure indicated that t-value (-2.854) was higher than t-table (2.000). This meant that Ho was raccepted and Ha was rejected. The result of the study implied that the Ho that was read: “Second language writing anxiety (SLWA) does not significantly relate to writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017.” was considered true. Consequently, the result of the data analysis under study should be stated as: “Second language writing anxiety (SLWA) does not significantly relate to writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017.”

The fact was supported by other findings, particularly on the value of Product Moment Correlation formula. It was found that the value of rho was -0.368 which fell on the position of low relationship (value between 0.20 and 0.39). This meant that between variable of second language writing anxiety (SLWA) had low relationship to the variable of writing achievement. Furthermore, Dornyei (2007) states that the two variables had an inverse relationship. In other words, SLWA gave negative
impacts on someone’s writing performance as well. The higher writing anxiety he has, the worse writing performance he will do.

As could be seen from table 3, second language writing anxiety (SLWA) has a negative correlation with the students’ writing achievement ($r = -0.368$) and the value of $t$-computed is $-2.854$ which is higher than $t$-table at $p = 0.05$. These facts indicated that two variables had an inverse relationship, that is the students with lower anxiety level are more likely to achieve higher writing achievement, and those with higher anxiety level tend to obtain lower writing achievement. Furthermore, relating to the value of $t$-computed ($-2.854$) indicated that the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and $H_a$ is accepted which means second language writing anxiety (SLWA) significantly relates to writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University in the academic year 2016/2017.

CONCLUSION
The results of the research clearly indicated the existence of anxiety in most students who are learning writing. This concludes the findings of the research according to the main purpose of this research. The aim of this research was to know the relationship between second language writing anxiety (SLWA) and writing achievement of the fourth semester students of English Department, Mulawarman University in academic year 2013/2014. The Pearson Product Moment correlation showed that second language writing anxiety (SLWA) was negatively correlated with students’ writing achievement ($r = -0.368$) and the value of $t$-computed is $-2.854$. This result implied that two variables had an inverse relationship that is the students with lower anxiety level are more likely to achieve higher writing achievement, and those with higher anxiety level tend to obtain lower writing achievement. It is consistent with the previous researchers who also found negative correlation between writing anxiety and writing achievement (Zhang, 2011).

SUGGESTIONS
The present research has shown that the presence of anxiety influenced students’ performance in writing English compositions. In accordance with the research finding, most students revealed that the role of lecturers in teaching has a great influence over the students and is considered as one of the potential sources of anxiety in writing English compositions. There are several points highlighted by the researcher concerning lecturers’ role in teaching writing in terms of providing teaching material and promoting classroom activities.

The lecturers who play significant role in the class need to provide supportive atmosphere to better encourage learners to think positively and help them in approaching and finding solution for their problems related to writing anxiety. Moreover, lecturers should be able to posit themselves as learning partners rather than authoritative instructors. Therefore, the students do not feel anxious in writing their English compositions.

Since this was the quantitative research, it is suggested to the future researcher to conduct the research on qualitative design to gain more information related to students’ writing anxiety.
REFERENCES