

Students' Writing Anxiety, Reading Motivation and Writing Achievement during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

A high level of students' anxiety in writing is one of the factors behind unsatisfactory writing performances. It influenced the students to refrain from participating in any writing activities to reduce negative impressions from their classmates about their ability. It also led the students to avoid writing in the target language, and thus this can directly affect their writing performance. Moreover, the students with high levels of anxiety were less confident and did not enjoy writing-demanding situations. Thirty-three students were participating in this research. They were in the fifth semester of the English Education Department in one private university in Jakarta. The findings of this study showed that the higher the level of writing anxiety, the worse the writing ability, meanwhile the higher the level of reading motivation, the better the writing ability. These factors are essential, especially in teaching writing, to facilitate better students' learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, reading motivation, writing anxiety, writing performance

1. Introduction

Anxiety in writing encounters the students, even English teachers, since writing is considered a complex task due to its complex nature, lack of vocabulary in the writers' repertoire, and defects in their grammatical knowledge. When a student has difficulty writing, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and motivation may also decrease, which further hinders their learning process and their performance in writing. Such problems dealt with a lack of hands-on practice and a lack of reading motivation. Reading, on the other hand, is essential that is inseparable from human activities. Moreover, for the students, it is an integral part of the successful learning process. Is it influencing the students' writing achievement? However, many factors distract the students' attention in reading intensively. Motivation is one of the factors.

Moreover, the students' thought, feeling, and beliefs about online reading and writing activities influence their learning motivation. (Wigfield et al. 2016) reviewed: "In a review of research on brief, social-psychological motivation interventions that focus on students' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about school (44), such interventions improved students' motivation and achievement in different areas—and they should be assessed in reading as well. Finally, in research on the success of different intervention

programs, effects are sometimes moderated by different children's characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, and achievement level (45); such effects should be examined in intervention studies of reading motivation." (Hoskins & Van Hooff 2005) stated: "Since individual differences will determine the extent to which students use this facility, future research should focus on developing online learning environments that incorporate activities with both a beneficial influence on learning and appeal to a wide student population."

(Russell 2020) argued that required language educators and their students to transition rapidly to the online environment without sufficient time or preparation for it, which is an additional cause of stress for both students and instructors alike. Therefore, the adaptation from both teachers and students leads to better preparation for online learning, and it influences anxiety. The article also concludes with suggestions for future research on online language anxiety. Therefore, in this study, one of the researchers' intentions is to explore how the students' reading motivation influences their writing achievement in the current online learning in a pandemic situation. Online learning environments and facilities influence the students' motivation and ability.

2. Research Method

A correlational study was the design in this research. It is to assess the relationships between variables within a group of participants and examine the relationship between reading motivation, writing anxiety, and writing skills. The researcher utilized two questionnaires to obtain the data. Thirty-three students majoring in English Education in one of the private universities in Jakarta participated in this study. They were in the fifth semester and had completed Paragraph Writing and Essay Writing subjects in the previous semester.

3. Result and Discussion

Reading motivation drives to read more, is an area of interest in education and the processes to put more effort into reading activities. There are four elements of reading motivation in a foreign language: intrinsic value, extrinsic utility, and the importance of reading and reading efficacy. Three scattered graphs illustrated the data analysis in this study. The first graph below showed the illustration.

The graph shows in Fig. 1 that the variable x is independent and the variable y is dependent. The variable x is the motivation to read, whereas variable y is the problems experienced when writing causes anxiety. The tendency of the line shows that the higher the reading motivation score, the lower the writing anxiety.

The intrinsic value of reading covers achievement goal orientation and achievement values. Extrinsic utility of reading covers three aspects separated from one another in that reading competition covered an individual's attempt to outperform others in reading, reading recognition related to tangible forms of recognition such as a teacher or peer approval, and reading for grades associated mainly with the teacher's evaluation of learners' reading performance. Reading efficacy is a belief or expectancy about reader competence for success in reading. It is an individual's evaluation of their capacity to organize and execute courses of action.

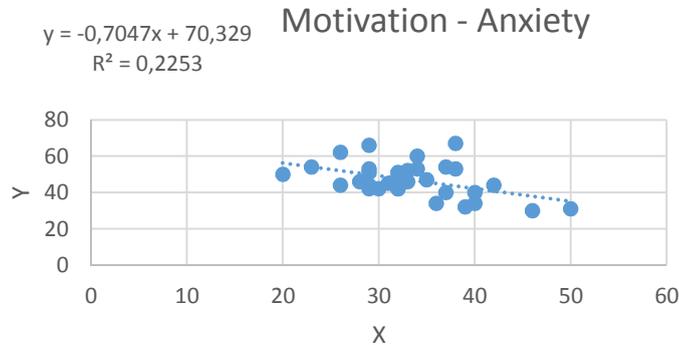


Fig. 1 A scattered graph of correlation between Reading Motivation and Writing Anxiety

Writing anxiety is a feeling of not being ready to write or not being good enough to write. Anxiety in writing is a variety of feelings of anxiety and pessimism about writing. Writing anxiety does not describe psychological attributes. Foreign language anxiety is one factor that influences the learners' confidence in communicating in English (Wijirahayu & Ayundhari 2018). The development of student's creativity and autonomous learning through strategies in instructional design could reduce anxiety (Wijirahayu & Ayundhari 2018; Wijirahayu et al. 2019)

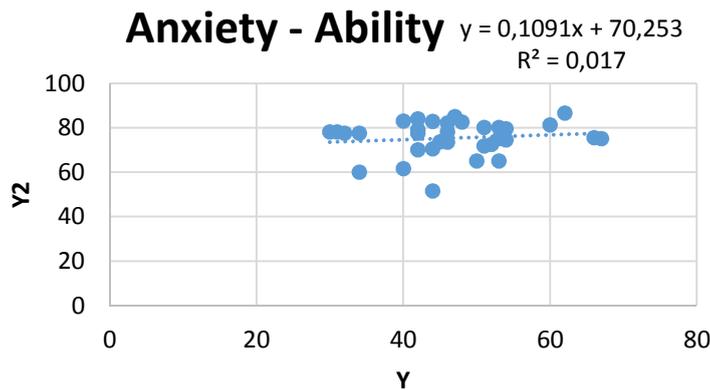


Fig 2. A scattered graph of Correlation between Writing Anxiety and Writing Achievement

This graph shows in Fig.2 that variable x is writing anxiety, and variable y is writing achievement. The line in the graph shows that the higher the writing achievement, the lower the writing anxiety is. Research on writing anxiety has generated some conflicting evidence about the impact anxiety has on writing ability. Some experts believe that writing anxiety plays a vital role in writing ability because it triggers student concentration and accuracy (Russell 2020). Collected evidence has revealed that anxiety

leads to lower writing performance (Sabti et al. 2019). It is in line with the result of this study.

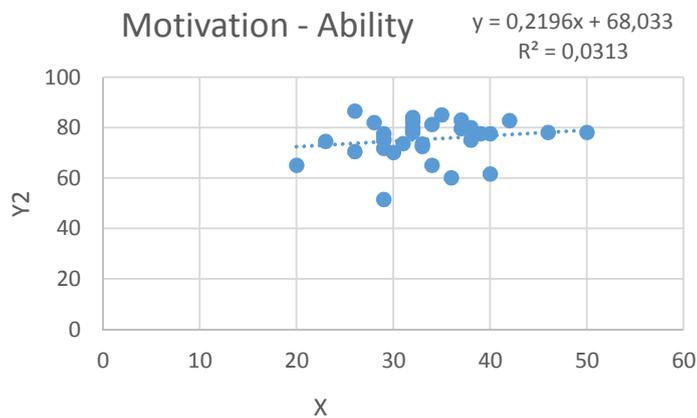


Fig. 3. A scattered graph of Correlation between Reading Motivation and Writing Achievement

This graph shows in Fig.3 that variable x is the reading motivation of the respondents, and variable y is writing achievement. The line in the graph shows the writing achievement depends on reading motivation. The higher the reading motivation score, the better the writing achievement is. Since I conducted this study to determine the effect of students' reading motivation on writing anxiety and the Indonesian students' writing achievement in writing essays, the result is in line with the study conducted by (Nasihah & Cahyono 2017). They also found it in the findings in (Tsao et al. 2017; Ilahiyah et al. 2019) also stated: "Results showed that intrinsic motivation and different writing anxiety predicted English as a foreign language learners' evaluative judgments of teacher and peer feedback. The findings have implications for English-writing instruction." The reading motivation is still influencing the writing achievement during remote learning in the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Essay writing is an academic writing that is very distinctive for students at the university level. In essay writing, a writer states an argument about a chosen topic academically. Hence, writing essays is quite a demanding and complex task. In schools and universities in Indonesia, writing is the most neglected skill (Alwasilah 2005) The exclusion of writing in the concept of literacy triggered the condition. I perceive literacy more than reading rather than reading and writing (Alwasilah 2006). In addition, teaching writing emphasizes the theory and grammar of writing rather than the expression of ideas. Difficulties in writing in this study were also happening because of the time constraint that increased the students' anxiety. The figure below illustrated it.

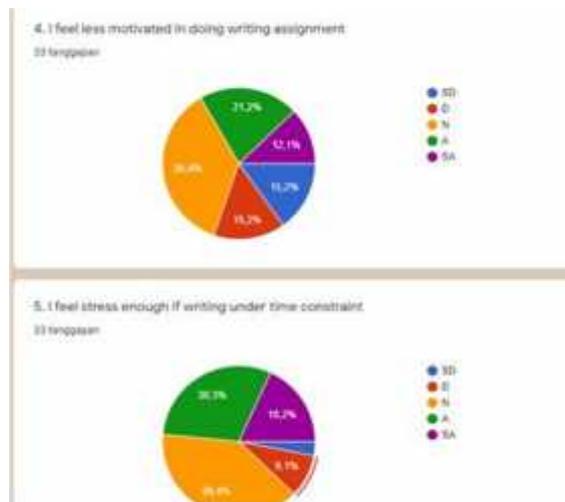


Fig 4. Influences the students' anxiety in this study is time constraint

The factor that influences the students' anxiety in this study is time constraint. It is over 48% of the students in this study admitted that time constraints made them stress enough—the percentage in Fig.4 above shown the illustration. The other factors that influence the students' writing anxiety in this study are the success criteria and the high expectation from the lecturer and parents. It is over 36% of the participants admit that.

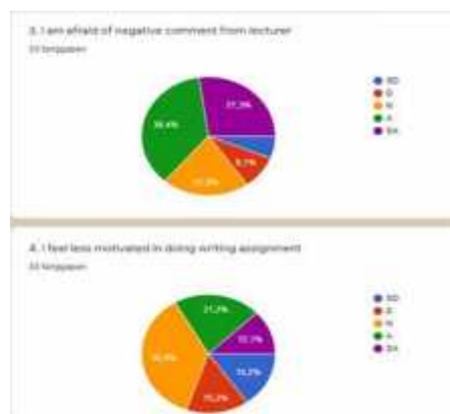


Fig. 5. The external factor that influences the anxiety in this study is the negative comment from the lecturer

The external factor that influences the anxiety in this study is the negative comment from the lecturer. It is over 63%. The internal factor is the students' less motivation in doing writing assignments. We show it in Fig.5 above. The anxiety generates students' low self-confidence. It is over 39% of the students admitted to having low self-confidence in writing in this study. Some participants in this study also face problems in finding theories of the essay topic. It is over 37% of the participants' state it. Yet, More than 33% of them doubt the quality of their English writing. We show the percentage in

Fig.6 below.

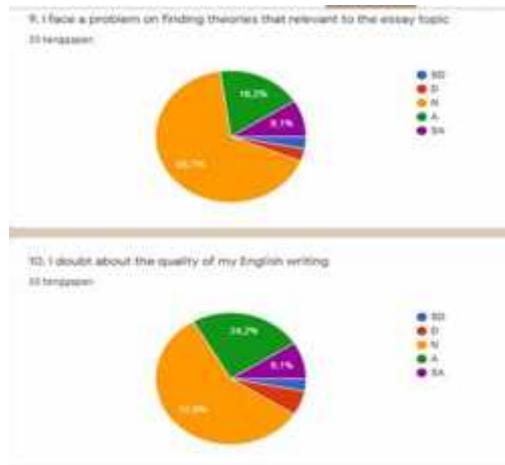


Fig. 6 the quality of their English writing

Therefore, they are afraid of the lecture’s opinion about the quality of their writing, and over 51% of the participant stated that opinion. Part of the reason they have those difficulties is that they could not have a face-to-face consultation, especially in this pandemic situation. It is over 30% of the students in this study expressed that response. We show it in Fig. 7 below.



Fig. 7 Difficulties is that they could not have a face-to-face consultation, especially in this pandemic situation

Although over 33% of the students in this study were afraid of facing writing exams, yet only 12% avoid writing assignments. It is over 30% of the participants disagreed with avoiding the writing assignment. This is a sign of the writing spirit. The participants in this study realize that writing practices are essential in the learning process. We show it in Fig.8 below.

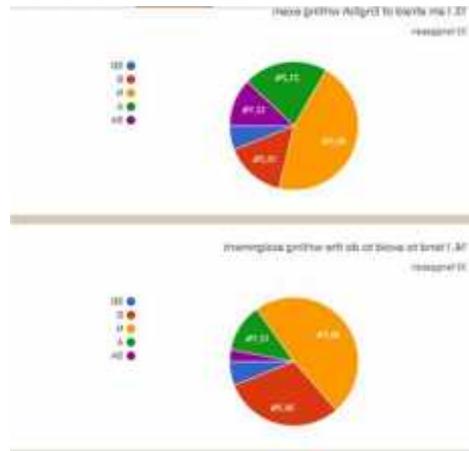


Fig. 8. This study realize that writing practices are essential in the learning process

The participants in this study believed online sources in writing to support their writing activities. We show it in the figure below. They also believed to can produce impressive pieces of written work, although there were few of them were convincing to have. It is essential since pre-service teachers' prior knowledge influence their teaching act in the future (Wijirahayu 2017). We show it in the diagram in Fig.9 below.

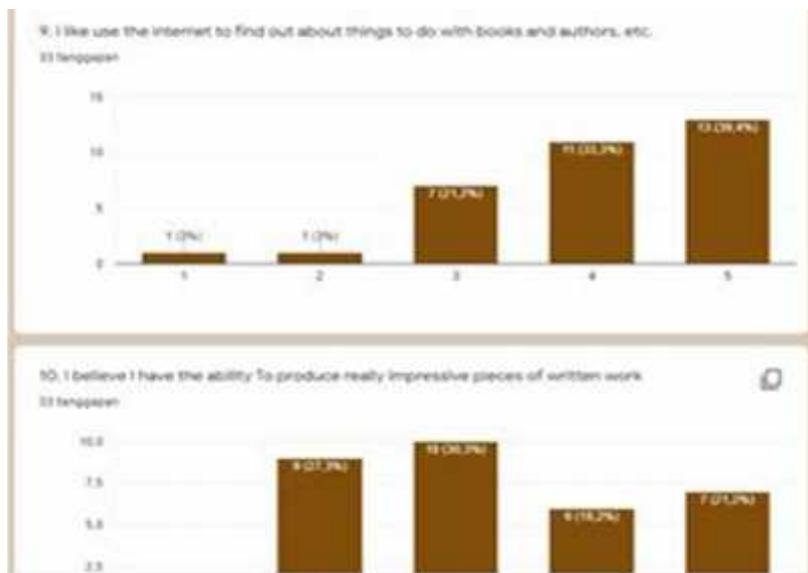


Fig. 9. The participants in this study believed online sources in writing to support their writing activities

We developed autonomous learning in reading and writing in online learning, and we show it in the graph in Fig. 10 below. Most of the participants responded they like to read and write on their own. (Wijirahayu 2011) reported that onetime strategy training increased the learners autonomy in language learning.

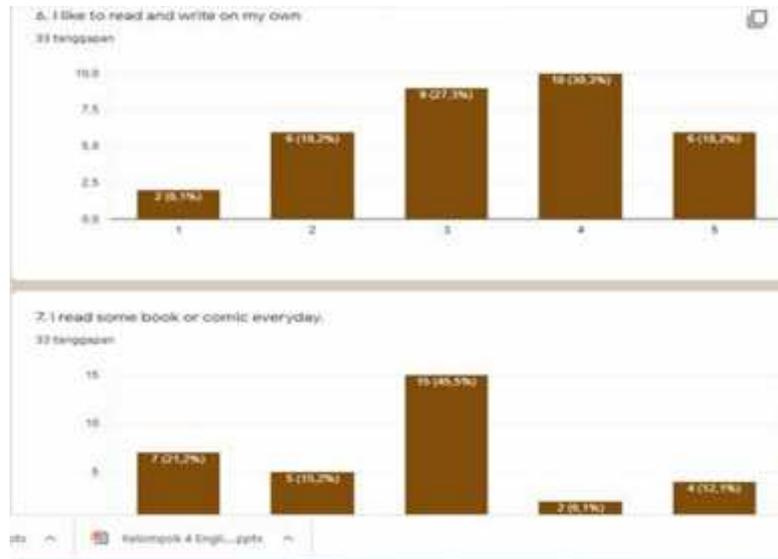


Fig. 10. Autonomous learning in reading and writing in online learning

The reading habit is not really promising yet. Therefore, the teacher and lecturer should develop it more by promoting creativity and using digital media in the instructional design (Wijirahayu et al. 2019). The intrinsic motivation could also be supported by cooperative integrated reading activity as it is stated in (Wijirahayu & Armiami 2020)

4. Conclusion

That this study revealed the stronger the reading motivation, the lower the writing anxiety demands the lecturer to develop more challenging and interesting activities to increase the reading motivation. The goal of this effort is to lower the students' writing anxiety. Since the result also reported that the writing achievement depends on reading motivation, it is essential to maintain and increase the reading motivation to improve the writing achievement. The third graph as the finding in this study shows that the higher the writing achievement, the lower the writing anxiety is and vice versa. Therefore, we should explore some factors that influence writing anxiety. We should also develop intensive efforts to lower anxiety, especially during the pandemic.

One factor found in this study that influences the anxiety of the student is time constraints that make the student have high tension. The other factors are successful criteria and expectations from lecturers and parents. We should avoid negative comments from the lecturer since over 63% of participants reported it; besides, the anxiety also generates their low self-confidence. Some participants in this study also face problems in finding theories of the essay topic and doubt about the quality of their English writing. The lecturers' opinions made them afraid of the quality of their writing. It is over 51% of the participant stated that opinion. A problem in having face-to-face

consultation, especially in this pandemic situation, is the reason.

Although some students in this study were afraid of facing writing exams, yet they take part in the writing assignments. They should maintain this writing spirit since it is essential in a successful learning process.

The participants in this study believed online resources in writing to support their writing activities. The students' belief to can produce impressive pieces of written work is essential to be developed further. They also showed autonomous learning as the impact of remote learning activity, although we should enhance further the reading habit.

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