Article

Writing Process Approach and Its Effect on Students' Writing Anxiety and Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the effect of the process approach on student writing anxiety and performance. Teachers should find ways to cope with anxiety as it is known as the negative predictor of students' writing performance. Fifteen students participated in this study. They were assigned to write an argumentative essay under the topic 'should national exam be banned?". The treatment was given following the writing stages, from outlining to publishing. SLWAI questionnaire was distributed before and after the treatment to measure the effectiveness of the process approach on students' anxiety. The findings indicated that students writing anxiety decreases from 71.27 to 63.20, which means that the anxiety level goes down from high to moderate anxiety. The second findings informed us that there is a significant difference in students writing performance after the treatment with the level of significant .000. It can be said that the writing process approach has a significant effect on students writing anxiety and performance. The pedagogical implication is also discussed.

I. INTRODUCTION

English students are required to have a good command of English both in written and spoken form. Communicating ideas in written form are more challenging than in spoken form because writing itself must be self-explanatory in which readers can understand the writers' intended meaning. To produce an understandable piece of writing, students should have acquired language knowledge such as spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and syntax (Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017). Furthermore, they should apply writing techniques, such as text genre, mechanics, organization, and coherence and unity. Thus, writing becomes more complex, and most students consider writing is the most difficult skill to master (Zoghipour and Nikou, 2016). In addition, writing with its complex nature makes writing a complex task in itself. It is also due to students' lack of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge (Sabti, Rashid, Nimehchisalem, & Darmi, 2019)

Regarding the factors that cause writing difficulties, Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova (2014) reported that Omani students experience difficulties in writing due to lexical and content aspects. Other research studies reported that Pakistani undergraduate students have to struggle with grammar, syntax, vocabulary, generating ideas, and structural organization. In addition, a study conducted by Alfaki (2015) revealed many factors associated with writing problems that Sudanese students face, such as mechanical problems, linguistic problems, cognitive problems, and psychomotor problems. Furthermore, they also feel anxious about writing and tend to rely on L1 (Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016). More recently, Umamah, Hidayanti, & Kurniasih (2019) found that grammar, mechanics, organization and content, and style re the main causes of writing difficulties experienced by Indonesia EFL Students.

What makes writing more complex may also come from the students themselves when students feel insecure about writing concerning language

knowledge and writing properties. Students' affective feeling cannot be neglected because it may become the source of writing problems (Latif, 2012). In other words, students' negative emotions need to be given serious attention due to their detrimental effect on students writing since writing is both cognitive and affective activity (Erkan & Saban, 2011). Students' feeling of uneasiness and discomfort of writing activity is labeled as writing anxiety (Jennifer & Poniah, 2017), which was first called 'writing apprehension' by Daly and Miller (1975), referring to a condition where students tend to avoid writing situation and fear of negative evaluation. Writing anxiety has gained interest in being investigated, focusing on its type, level, and level of anxiety. Most of the studies found that writing anxiety correlates negatively with students' performance. The higher the students writing anxiety level, the lower the students writing performance will be. Therefore, it is a need to investigate teachers' strategies in helping students reduce their anxiety. One of which is by implementing process approach writing.

The process approach has been well-known for its benefits for writing. It allows students to go through writing stages before submitting their final draft to the teacher. Furthermore, the teacher can also give comprehensive feedback to the students' work, starting from the brainstorming idea, outlining, drafting, revising, and publishing. In process writing, students' involved in the stages of writing form brainstorming for ideas, organizing ideas, writing the first draft, revising, and publishing (Graham & Perin, 2007; and Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). Students have been trained to plan their writing so that their final product will be the version of them. It is also possible for students to implement the same skills they have learned in the process approach into a new context(Guy, 2009). Zamel (1982) emphasizes the importance of teacher intervention throughout the writing process, and students should consider themselves as readers. However, the teaching method, which focuses on the final product, ignores how ideas were explored through writing and fails to teach students that writing is a process of discovering meaning in which writers do not know what they will write. Therefore she writes in the title of her article *"Writing: the process of discovering meaning"*.

Writing anxiety has a significant contribution to the students' success that its causes need to be considered important to be given serious attention. Some of the causes of writing anxiety are lack of linguistic difficulties, lack of writing practice, lack of topical knowledge, and fear of negative evaluation and comments from peers and teachers. According to Cheng (2002), writing anxiety is categorized into three types. They are cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior. Cognitive anxiety refers to mental changes when students are assigned to produce a composition. They feel worried about negative evaluations from teachers and peers. Somatic anxiety deals with bodily symptoms such as trembling, sweating, panic, etc. Students who avoid writing situations due to their negative feeling of writing activity suffer avoidance behavior. Regarding the types of anxiety, most of the findings of the previous study revealed that the most common type is cognitive anxiety compared to the other two types (Cheng, 2002; Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017; Kurniasih, 2014; Kusumaningputri, Ningsih &Wisasongko, 2018, & Zhang, 2011).

To be able to produce a good piece of writing, in fact, students have some difficulties in writing due to some causes. Regarding the source of anxiety, Zhang (2011) developed a questionnaire to investigate the causes of anxiety. Some scholars agree that linguistic difficulties (spelling, grammar, and vocabulary), test anxiety (especially fear of unfamiliar content), lack of topical knowledge, low self-confidence in writing, and fear of teachers' negative comments, and lack of writing practice (Cheng, 2002; Zhang, 2011; Jennifer& Ponniah, 2017) are the major causes of anxiety. Furthermore, Jawas (2019) found that students become more anxious when they are given an in-class assignment. In addition, Kelly & Gaytan (2019) added that instructors' immediate behaviors and instructional clarity are two factors causing anxiety.

Some studies investigated the effect of writing anxiety on students; performance. They found similar findings that learners with higher levels of anxiety were likely to perform poorly compared to lower anxiety (Erkan & Saban, 2011, Gibriel, 2017 & 2019; Kurniasih, 2014; Latif, 2015; & Zhang,

2011). As based on those findings, most studies revealed that anxiety is the main negative predictor of students' writing performance.

Brown (2001) states that the Process Writing Approach reflects writers' thinking process that they have gone through before producing their final writing product. Applebee (1986) emphasized that Planning-revising and the like helps writers plan their writing rather than focus on how the final product looks (patterns of organization, spelling, and grammar). Moreover, process approach writing contributes to students' positive attitude toward writing (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). It enhances students' motivation in which students have their ability, get close attention from the teacher, and have a less stressful atmosphere. Those conditions can facilitate students to have a positive feeling towards academic task (Wigfild, 1994)

The process approach offers some benefits for the students in terms of organization of ideas (Barnet, 1992), managing and controlling their writing (Brown, 2001), collaboration with peers (Nunan, 1991; & Wigfild, 1994). Furthermore, Graham and Sandmel (2011) argued that Writing Process Approach trains students to be critical such as in the planning and revising stage, to enhance students' writing ability. Guo, Zhang, Deane, & Bennet (2019) investigated the students' writing process and classified the process into sequences of writing. It is found that students have gone through some stages start from classifying students' writing processes into sequences of writing states

Empirical studies have been conducted on the implementation of the writing process approach in various levels of education. Syafii (2019) reported that integrating the process approach and pictures improved writing ability and increased motivation to learn English of the eighth graders. In addition, Miftah (2015) implemented the Writing Process Approach to Indonesia EFL university students using Classroom Action Research Design for two cycles. After quite a long process, 86.67% of the students have improved their writing ability. Furthermore, Dokchandra (2018) measured the effectiveness of Writing Process Approach on students writing performance in a large class. The results showed that Writing Process Approach had a significant effect on the writing performance of Thai undergraduate students. Moreover, they perceived Writing Process Approach positively.

Writing Process Approach serves positive effects on lowering students writing anxiety as proven by a study conducted by Bayat (2014) that revealed that the process approach provides significant effects on students writing anxiety and writing success. Writing Process Approach is not only significant for students, but it is also beneficial for teachers to develop their teaching quality. Street and Stang (2008) found that the majority of teachers (79%) who have joined process-based writing courses become more confident to do their duties as teachers in giving the materials, checking students 'works, giving feedback and evaluation. Being more confident reflects a stable emotional state in which teachers don't feel anxious when they do writing-related activities.

As discussed above, it is, therefore, very crucial to optimize the positive side of the process approach to reduce the negative effects of writing anxiety and see its effect on writing performance. Therefore, this current study aims at answering two research questions: 1). Is there any significant difference in students' anxiety levels after being taught by using the process approach? 2). Is there any significant difference between students writing performance after being taught by using the process approach?

II. METHODS

Students who were registered in Writing III course have participated in this study. As many as 25 students filled out a SLWAI questionnaire in the Pretest, only 15 students completed the whole process (the pretest, treatment, and the post-test). Therefore, only 15 students were accounted as the participants in this study, which is good for writing class, so the teacher can give every student full attention. Regarding the design, One-group pretest-posttest design was employed. In this study, there is no control group.

Two instruments were employed to obtain data about students writing anxiety and writing score. Participants were instructed to fill out a questionnaire, namely Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) developed by Cheng (2002), in the pretest and posttest. It consists of 22 items that fall into three categories: Cognitive

Anxiety, Somatic Anxiety, and Avoidance Behavior. The items distributions are as follows, Cognitive Anxiety ((1,3,7,9,14,17,20,21), Somatic Anxiety (2,6,8,11,13,15,19), and Avoidance Behavior (4,5,10,12,16,18,22). The SLWAI is a five-point Likert response scale was used for each item ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Out of the 22 items, five items (1, 4, 17, 18, 22) are negatively worded and require reverse scoring before being summed up to yield a total score.

The result of SLWAI questionnaire was analyzed to find out the mean before and after the treatment. To measure the effectiveness of process approach on writing performance, one group pretest-posttest designed was used. The data were analyzed using an independent paired sample t-test.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The effect of Writing Process Approach on students writing anxiety

To answer the first question, the result of data analysis of the first research question is presented in the Table 1:

The data in Table 1. indicates that the mean of the level of anxiety decreases from 71.27 to 63.29. Before the treatment, the students have a high level of anxiety (71.27), then after the treatment, the students' level of anxiety decreases to a moderate level (63.29).

Table 2. showes the difference in students' level of anxiety was significant at .002. Students have lower anxiety after getting the treatment using a process approach.

The effect of Writing Process Approach on students writing performance

The findings of the second research questions about the effect of the process on writing anxiety shows that there is a significant difference between students writing performance before and after the treatment as represented in the Table 3:

The data analysis results above informed us that there is a significant difference in students' writing performance after implementing the writing process approach. When students are given enough time to prepare their final draft, their score is significantly better than in the pretest.

Table 1: Mean of level of anxiety

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRETEST	71,27	15	4,590	1,185
	POSTTEST	63,20	15	9,405	2,428

Table2. The significant difference in the level of anxiety

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PRETEST – POSTTEST	8,067	8,328	2,150	3,455	12,678	3,7	14	,002

Table 3: Mean score of pretest and posttest

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRETEST	69,00	15	7,512	1,940
	POSTTEST	78,40	15	4,611	1,190

Table 4: Significance different of Students' performance

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	PR PS	-9,400	4,4	1,1	-11,8	-6,916		-8,1	14	,000

*PR= pretest, PS=posttest

Process approach has a significant effect on the students' anxiety. The findings show that students' level of anxiety decreases after the implementation of the process approach. The findings of this study are in line with Bayat (2014). He conducted a study of 74 first-year-students, and he found that the process approach significantly affected students' success and anxiety. This finding adds more valid data that Process writing is beneficial for improving writing quality and reducing students' anxiety.

In relation to the causes of anxiety, when students are given enough time to plan their writing and acknowledge the teacher's intervention during the writing process, their writing quality is better than the pretest. It indicates that time allocation matters in the process of writing since the writing process allows students to give and receive feedback from peers (Nunan, 1991; & Wigfild, 1994).

As the participants are pre-service teachers, making them familiar with the process approach can prepare them for a future career as English teachers. One of the pedagogical implications of process-based writing is based on the findings of a study conducted by Li and Zhang (2015), which indicated that the teachers who participate in process-based writing had understood the principle of process-based writing, have learned the stages of process-based writing starting from planning, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing, and have high confidence to be writing teachers as well as writers. It is also in line with Street and Stang's (2008) findings that the majority of teachers(79%) who have joined process-based writing course become more confident to do their duties as teachers in giving the materials, checking students' works, giving feedback and evaluation. Furthermore, a study conducted by Khuder and Hardwood (2015) proved that the process approach significantly affects the test situation's writing quality. In relation to the specific part of the writing process, the prewriting stage correlates significantly to the writing quality, while the revision stage has no effect (De Miliano, 2012) or negative effects (Worden, 2009).

IV. CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it is clear that the writing process approach helps students improve the quality of the writing and reduce students' anxiety. This research needs to be improved further in terms of the number of participants and the research design. Furthermore, the students' anxiety level may decrease to a low level if the research is conducted longer. It is suggested that teachers adopt/adapt the writing process approach principles to facilitate learning and prepare them to be English teachers and writers.

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