An investigation of EFL students' anxiety toward online English learning in paragraph based writing subject

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the students' anxiety related to the online English learning in writing subject as well as the factors that contribute anxiety during online learning, and exploring the students' anxiety strategies in overcoming their anxiety for this study. One of private university in Cirebon was chosen as the site for this study. This study employed qualitative study with a case study design. Students' anxiety from fourth semester in academic year 2019/2020 was chosen as the participant of this study. The data were collected through interview and questionnaire. This study discovered that students' anxiety related to the English online learning is situation-specific anxiety, and the factors that contribute anxiety which can be group into four categories: being not familiar with the situation in, incompetence in learning, less English proficiency, no match with expectation. This study also identifies four category strategies employed by students' anxiety: positive thinking, keep calm and enjoy it, self-confidence, and preparation. The findings of this study provide experiences for students about anxiety that can arise during online learning in unsupportive situation.

Keywords: *Anxiety; Types of Anxiety; Online Learning, Writing Skill; Paragraph Based Writing.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of multimedia and information technology, as well as the use of the internet as new technical teaching has made changes in the traditional teaching process (Wang et al. 2007). Technology in education plays a role in providing convenience for teachers and students who have difficulty in understanding lessons in the classroom or outside the classroom. Technology in education plays a role in providing convenience for teachers and students who have difficulty in understanding lessons in the classroom or outside the classroom. Learning outside the classroom can be carried out independently by utilizing a variety of media, media that can be utilized include: learning videos, e-books, DVDs, internet, television and others. the process of utilizing this media is called e-learning. Online learning can be defined as an effort to connect students with learning resources that are physically separate or even far apart but can communicate with each other, interact, collaborate (Michael Molinda, 2005:182). Online Learning is learning process using or utilizing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as tools that can be available whenever and wherever needed,

therefore can overcome time and space constrains. Online learning gives hope new as an alternative solution to most of the problems of education in Indonesia (Sudirman, 2010: 66). The online learning environment is a subcategory of distance education and is a platform where educational courses are delivered via the internet, or use a web-based teaching system either in real-time or asynchronously. During the covid-19 pandemic students' university still study from home. In the online learning in writing course process, students also write and make a note on the material that has been explained. In process of teaching and learning English there are four skill that must be mastered, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. One of the skills that is still considered difficult to master is writing, this statement also supported by Richards and Renandya (2002: 303) writing is the most difficult skill for second or foreign language learners to master. According to Scovel (in Brown, 2007: 151) states that anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension or worry it means they are in anxiety. There are several definitions of anxiety which are found by the writers. According to Passer and Smith (2009: 546) define anxiety as a state of tension and apprehension as a natural response to perceived threat. There are types of anxiety. Two of the most well-known is state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety is anxiety that happen when faced with specific situation. Writing skill is one type of language skills students must master. According to Henry Guntur Tarigan (2008; 3), writing skill are one of productive and expressive language skills used to communicate indirectly and indirectly face to face with other people, and according to Zamel (2007: 207), writing skill is process which the people can explore and discover their thoughts and ideas in writing forms. From statement above it can be assumed that writing skill is a very important subject because we have to share idea from our brain in writing. According to Melly (2006. P. 1), there are five kinds of writing. First is expository writing. It is kind of writing in which the purpose of writing is to explain or inform. The second is descriptive writing. Descriptive writing is writing that serves to show, describe something. The third is persuasive writing. It is kind of writing for arguing or against an issue. The fourth is creative writing. Creative writing is a vague term, but includes fiction, poetry, drama, screenwriting, autobiography, and more. And the last is narrative writing. It is kind of writing that tells story and, in doing so, entertain or informs the reader. In order to write well, there are several aspects which should be considered by students. According to Nurgiantoro (2001: p. 307) those are: Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Grammar, Mechanic. The students writing performance covers some components such as grammar, vocabulary, According to Brown (2004: p. 157) those two components can be assessed by the following scoring rubrics, they are:

Table 1. The Scoring Rubrics

Vocabulary	Score
Use of vocabulary related to the topic appropriately	5

Sometime use inappropriately term/or must rephrase ideas or lexical in adequacies.	4
Frequently uses the wrong words: conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	3
Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary make comprehension quite difficult.	2
Vocabulary limitation so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.	1
Grammar	
Make few (if any) noticeable errors of grammar of words order.	5
Occasionally makes grammatical and/or word order which do not, however, obscure meaning.	4
Make frequent errors of grammar and word order errors which occasionally obscure meaning.	3
Grammar and word order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase sentences and/or restrict himself to basic pattern.	2
Errors in grammar and word order as severe as to make written virtually unintelligible.	1

Many people have investigated the issue of student anxiety toward online learning English. The first study was conducted by Tuomainen. S, University of Eastern Finland, Finlandia 2017 entitled Students anxiety and learning difficulties in academic English course. The second previous study was conducted by Siagian.U.M[1], Adam[2] University of Riau Kepulauan 2017 entitled an analysis of student's anxiety is speaking. The third previous study was conducted by Listrianingsih 2018 in her thesis at State Islamic Institute of Surakarta Entitled "Students' Anxiety in Speaking English Class at the Eleventh Grade of Man 4 Bantul in Academic Year of 2017/2018". From previous study above, there is similarity and differences between these studies. The similarity between this study and other study is same about anxiety and speaking English. The differences are setting and entitle of the study. In this study entitled is "An Investigation of EFL Students' Anxiety toward Online English Learning In writing Subject". The setting was conducted in one of private university in Cirebon in academic year 2019/2020. The gap in this study was in theory online learning which has been done virtually but with the same goal as the learning process in general. But in reality, the online learning process did not run effectively, because it was found that some learning cases were limited to giving assignments, not delivering that material as a whole.

Covid-19 pandemic had an extraordinary impact on education. During pandemic covid19 the government to break the Covid-19 chain by implementing social distancing. By implementing of social distancing, students also prohibited going to school. Therefore, the government implemented an online learning system for all schools and universities including one of the private Universities in Cirebon. By applying online learning at one of the private universities in Cirebon during pandemic Covid-19, students also write and make summaries in each course session. The online learning system

implemented by the government to break the Covid-19 chain for several months has caused anxiety for students.

To overcome the above problems, writers used a case study method consisting of two instruments, namely interview and questionnaire. Case study is a qualitative study design that studies a single individual, group, or important example to formulate interpretations to the specific case or to provide useful organization (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009: 13).

This current study used interview as the main instrument. Interview is a process to obtain information for the purpose of study by face to face questioning between the interview and interviewer, with or without the use of an interview guide (Bungin, 2007: p. 111). After interview process finished, the writers continued to give a questionnaire to respondent. Questionnaire is variety of instrument to get respond from the object which is being studied.

During covid-19 pandemic students spent a lot of time studying online. Students often feel anxious in online learning problems, the anxiety faced by these students is includes in the 'trait anxiety' as the expert said. Trait anxiety is pattern of responding with anxiety even in nonthreatening situation (Ormrod: 2011). Therefore, the writers conclude that trait anxiety is kind of anxiety which is come from the body of person and it is nature in their body.

To overcome this problem, the writers used two instruments; instrument is a tool to get data from respondents. In this study, the writers used instrument by way of interview and the second instrument by giving questionnaire to respondent. In the interview process, the writers made ten questions that gave to the respondents. After interview finished, the writers continued on to give a questionnaire consisting of ten questions which distributed to respondent. After getting data with instruments above, then the data are analyzed. Checking the validity of the data or validity data was used for prevention or can be used to compare the data. In this case the writers used triangulation techniques. After the data analyzed, then the result reported to the finding of the study.

METHOD

This study employed the qualitative study with case study design. It was typically focused on the social phenomenon obtain from people view to acquire a detail understanding of the issue being studied (Lodico, et al., 2010). By other words, qualitative study is a study from people perception of the phenomenon being studied. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009: 13), case study is a qualitative study design that studies a single individual, group, or important example to formulate interpretations to the specific case or to provide useful organization. The object of this study is students' fourth semester in English Education program in academic year 2019/2020 at one private of university in Cirebon. The total students from fourth semester in academic year 2019/2020 were twenty-nine students. This study took nine students of fourth semester

in academic year 2019/2020 based on achievement and employ purposive sampling technique to collect the information from respondent.

This study was conducted in students fourth semester in academic year 2019/2020 at one private of university in Cirebon. This University which is located at Jl. Fatahilah, Watubelah, Subdistrict Sumber, Cirebon, and the writers did this study in this university. At the beginning of the study, the writers asked permission to Head of English Department one private of university in Cirebon and lecture fourth semester in writing subject to conducted this study, and the writers came to students and explained about the purpose of this study. Students interviewed and write questionnaire because the data collected through interview and questionnaire. The writers used two instruments to collect data and the instruments prepared so that this study successful. They were questionnaire, and interview.

The type of questionnaire was 'yes and no' question and consist of ten questions. Thus, students only checked in the 'yes or no' column in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from Cui (2011: P. 875-880) focused on the causes student's English learning anxiety.
The following are the types of ten questions that given to respondent:

Table 2. Questionnaire

No	Questionnaire	Yes	No
1	Is online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject effective.		
2	I do not worry making mistake in online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.		
3	It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.		
4	I keep thinking that the other students are better in online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.		
5	I get anxious when I do not understand every word teacher explain during online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.		
6	I do not feel anxious and tense while online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.		
7	I do not feel anxious when I am late to login in online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.		
8	I really enjoy online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.		
9	The teacher explains the material with clearly in online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.		
10	I feel anxious when the situation un-support while online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.		

The interview guide was adapted from Lampadan (2014: p. 35-36) focused on the causes of student's anxiety towards online English learning in teaching writing.
The following are some interview questions that gave to respondents, such as:
1. Are you worried about online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?
2. What situation makes you feel worried during online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?

3. What other factors contribute to your anxiety during online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?
4. What other challenges did you face while online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?
5. What difficulties do you face when online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?
6. What is the effect of anxiety in online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?
7. Based on your experience, how do you solve your anxiety in online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?
8. What strategies did you use to overcome your anxiety during online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?
9. Is your strategy successful in overcome your anxiety during online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?
10. What are your suggestions for students who experience anxiety in online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject?

Procedures

A questionnaire given to students, then students told to fill the questionnaire, with two options namely 'Yes and No'. A content based on the experience and experienced by students during writing subject online learning. Then the questionnaire data is made a percentage based on the number respondents who chose options from the questionnaire. The answered from respondents were made a transcript. In making the transcript, the writers separated the questions and responses from the participants, and some parts of the transcript from the interview included in the finding of the study. For this study, the writers checked validation of the data through triangulation strategy. The writers used methodological triangulation to get validity of data. Data Sources refers to researcher uses two data sources in the research. Data sources is making different technique to get validity of data. Therefore, data sources triangulation is by combining the data used by researcher in obtained the data, each method covered other's weakness so that the data obtained can be trusted.

The first was data reduction, it means the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, identifying, and transforming the data appear in written-up transcription. The data are summarized, sorted, and organized in such way that the writers started to draw conclusion. The data took from the result of interview in which the data explored in findings.

The second was data display, it means the process to simply the data in the form of sentence, narrative or table. Data display refers to show data that have been reduced in the form of pattern. It benefits to help the writers in understanding of the data. In displaying data, the writers describe data that have been reduced into sentence form. It means that the data is drawn and explained in the form of words, sentences, paragraph, and table. The writers display the data, and then describe it. After describing data, the

writers made analysis about the data. The writers present the data from the factor cause anxiety in online learning and the strategies that the students use to overcome the student's anxiety in online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject.

The last process was drawing conclusion and verification. In qualitative study, the characteristic of conclusion is temporary. It can change if the writers did not discover strong evidence to support the next collecting data. However, if the conclusion in the previous data can be evidence by validity and consistency when the writers were going back to the field, so the conclusion was credible. In this study, the writers made conclusion from the data display. In short, the steps in analyzing data were: (1) the writers collected the data through interview and questionnaire. Then, the writers selected, identified, and focused on the data by referring to formulation of the study. After selecting the data, (2) the writers analyzed the data with the theory from expert, the last (3) displayed data and analyze, conclusion was drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were gathers through questionnaire and interview. It showed the emergence students' anxiety during online English learning, and the factors that contribute students' anxiety as well as their strategies in overcoming anxiety during online learning can be categories as follow:

Students' Anxiety Related to Online English Learning

According to the result of questionnaire and interview with student anxiety, it can be identified that anxiety encounter by students' during online learning was situation-specific anxiety. Online learning activities used applications and English make students more anxious in learning. A similar statement by Wu (2010:175) defines that situation-specific anxiety is apprehension in a particular context or situation, such as giving speech, taking a test, or no signal. Therefore, online learning activities at home used several applications, English, and un-support situation; no signal was category as a situation-specific anxiety. There are several factors contributing to student's anxiety during online English learning in paragraph-based writing subject such as:

Being not familiar with the situation

The students respond that they were anxious because they did not get used to those kind of situation. They said it was very different from the usual classroom learning situation. In the classroom, they studied with their friends as students and lecturers as teacher. While at home, they found different level of learning online learning situations. These situations make them anxious and shock.

Learning Incompetence

The result of interview and questionnaire written by students showed that students felt anxious when they began to learn online and they were afraid of being wrong, miscommunication, and feel un-comfortable. In addition, they required inevitably to understand the lesson deliver by the lecturers.

Less English proficiency

The students responded that online learning has made them felt anxious. Moreover, the lecture asked them to be more enthusiastic in online English learning to receive the material. The students realized that their English skill was still low, especially in writing and grammar. Therefore, when they studied English online in a writing course, they felt confused about what to write, hard to find vocabulary that was suitable for make sentences, and sometime students felt inappropriate about their own writing. The similar statement by Takahashi (2014) indicates that anxiety increase due to student insufficient English abilities.

Not as expected

One source of anxiety during English online learning in writing course did not match with what was expected. Before students began the online learning class, they prepared everything well and they hoped to be matched with what they expected. But everything did not work according to what they want. In fact, learning in the class was different than English online learning. In English online learning, students sometimes find difficulties and challenges that can make them experience anxiety. A similar statement from Sammphet and Wanphet (2013) argued that anxiety can relate to expectation. People can have anxiety when his or her expectation does not match.

Students' strategies to overcome anxiety during online English learning in paragraph based-writing subject

Positive thinking

Students realize that they can be in un-expected situation and they needed to stay positive. Therefore, positive thinking always awakens in our minds to produce positive result. This statement also the similar as the way students used to overcome their problems while learning English online in teaching writing.

Positive thinking has many positive impacts in life, health, and learning. It was because with the way of thinking form our habits, behavior, how to talk and how the person thinks. For example, if the learner has positive thinking, their character will appear calm, optimistic, and confident.

Keep calm and Enjoy in online English learning in Paragraph-based writing subject

The student said that they remain calm in overcoming challenges and difficulties, and enjoy the condition as ways that can be apply to overcome anxiety while online English learning. Teacher used several techniques to deal with anxiety such as positive thinking, self-talking and calming down.

Self Confidence

The finding from interview and questionnaires and responded from participants indicated that confidence can reduce anxiety in learning English online. Believing in them was one way to overcome anxiety while learning online English. The existence of self-confidence in a person will be seen in the way they behave. This self-confidence manifests itself in calm body expressions and gesture. Student who have self-confidence generally like themselves and always positive thinking. Students who are confident are

more focus on the beliefs and the ability to carry themselves that can create a sense of comfort in the behavior need to get the expect result.

Preparation

The result of interview and questionnaires can conclude that make preparation is a main thing to overcome anxiety while learning English online. Participants recognize that preparation to deal with undesirable things such as running out of quotas, noise, and un-support situation, there must be preparation and it becomes something that must be done.

The result of questionnaire students' anxiety in online English learning in paragraph-based writing

To find the result of the questionnaire, the researcher divided the respondents who answer "yes" or "no". The respondents who answered "yes" are calculate by means, the total respondent who answered "yes" multiplied by 100% then divided by the total of all respondents. Respondents who answered no are count then the respondents who answered "no" the number multiplied by 100% then divided the total number of respondents. The result of questionnaire is put in Fraenkel and Wallen (2012) percentage as follows:

$$P = \frac{f \times 100\%}{N}$$

Where:

P   = Percentage

f   = Frequency

N   = Respondent

After counting the value of question, the result can be categorized into the criteria as follows:

Table 3. The Percentage of Categories

Percentage of Answer	Criteria
0% - 20%	Very Weak
21% - 40%	Weak
41% - 60%	Adequate
61% - 80%	Strong
81% - 100%	Very Strong

Table 4. The Results of questionnaire

No	Questionnaire	Yes	No
1	Is online learning in writing subject effective.	33%	67%
2	I do not worry making mistake in writing subject online learning.	11%	89%
3	It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in writing subject online learning.	100%	0%
4	I keep thinking that the other students are better in writing subject online learning.	89%	11%
5	I get anxious when I do not understand every word teacher explain during in	78%	22%

	writing subject online learning.		
6	I do not feel anxious and tense while in writing subject online learning.	33%	67%
7	I do not feel anxious when I am late login into learning in writing subject online learning.	0%	100%
8	I really enjoy in writing subject online learning.	44%	56%
9	The teacher explains the material clearly in writing subject online learning.	56%	44%
10	I feel anxious when the situation un-support while writing subject online learning	100%	0%

The Discussion of Questionnaire

Based on the question no.1 it is find that 33% students said that writing subject online learning was effective. While 67% students said that writing subject online learning was not effective. The criterion of this question was strong. It means that writing subject online learning is not effective.

Based on the question no.2 it is find 11% students said that did not worry making mistake in writing subject online learning. While 89% students said that worry making mistake in writing subject online learning. The criterion of this question was very strong. It means that students worry make mistake in writing subject online learning.

Based on the question no.3 it is find 100% students said that frighten when they did not understand what teacher was saying in writing subject online learning. The criterion of this question was very strong. It means students frighten when do not understand what teacher is saying in writing subject online learning.

Based question no.4 it is find 89% students said that the others students are better in writing subject in online learning. While 11% students said that the others students were not better in writing subject online learning The criteria of this question was very strong. It means the other students are better in writing subject online learning.

Based question no.5 it is find 78% students said that students get anxious when they did not understand every word teacher explain during writing subject online learning. While 22% students said that students not anxious when they did not understand every word teacher explain during writing subject online learning. The criterion of this question was strong. It means the students get anxious when do not understand every word teacher explain writing subject online learning.

Based question no.6 it is find 33% students said that they were not anxious and tense while writing subject online learning. While 67% students said that they were anxious and tense while writing subject online learning. The criterion of this question was strong. It means students anxious and tense while writing subject in online learning.

Based question no.7 it is find 100% student said that they felt anxious when late log in to writing subject online learning. The criterion of this question was very strong. It means students anxious when late log in to writing subject online learning.

Based question no.8 it is find 44% students said that they enjoyed writing subject online learning. While 56% students said they did not enjoy writing subject online learning. The criteria this question was adequate. It means students do not enjoy writing subject online learning.

Based question no.9 it is find 56% students said that the teacher explained material clearly while writing subject online learning. While 44% students said that the teacher explained the material unclearly in writing subject online learning. The criterion of this question was adequate. It means the teacher explain the material do not clearly while writing subject online learning.

Based question no.10 it was found 100% said that students were heart flutters when the situation un-support while writing subject online learning. The criterion of this question was very strong. It means students were hearts flutters when the situation un-support while writing subject online learning

CONCLUSION

First, the result showed that the anxiety faced by the students related to online English learning included in situation-specific anxiety, it was because most students experience anxiety when they were in an unsupported or uncomfortable situation. The result showed that they were four categories experience by students related to online learning, such as; being not familiar with the situation, incompetence in learning, less English proficiency, and not as expected.

Second, the anxiety experience by students in online learning can be overcome by four strategies, such as; positive thinking, keep calm and enjoy it, self-confidence, and preparation in this case, students can use more than one the strategies to solve an anxiety they face. To overcome the anxiety, students used positive thinking which including in privacy strategy, and preparation in professional strategy. This conclusion expect by the students to get an effective strategy to solve anxiety during online English learning.

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