

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This introduction aims to offer a brief explanation about the topic that is related and discussed in this research. It presents the research background, problems, objectives, significance, scope and limitation, and the definition of key terms. Each section is presented as follows:

1.1 Research Background

Writing is an English skill that has a high level of complexity that causes anxiety among students, especially in an online writing class. Writing is a complicated skill because it requires many factors, such as a good ability to develop ideas and information and diversified grammatical structures. As stated by Mohamad and Moses (2019), writing has become a difficult skill because of the challenges faced by the students in learning writing such as poor grammar, lack of vocabulary, and lack of exposure to books and reading materials. It means that, at the sentence level, the writer has to consider many factors such as content, sentence structure, punctuation, vocabulary, and spelling. These complicated writing activities can make students feel anxious while studying, especially in an online writing class. The anxiety that occurs in an online writing class is caused by several factors such as less English proficiency, fear of negative comments, and *being not familiar with the situation*. At the English Language Education Department of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, this problem seems very common and burdens students in their learning process.

This study was objected to know the types of anxiety that students faced and how to overcome their anxiety. This research examined the anxiety felt by students

by finding out the criteria to determine the type. It was important to know the types of anxiety experienced by the students to determine the best solution for reducing their anxiety. This research also wanted to find the best suites strategy to overcome individual anxiety. Each student experienced anxiety caused by different factors, so they had different strategies to reduce it. Knowing the types and strategies used by students was essential because it could foster effective learning in solving the anxiety problem.

Ahmad and Ajmal (2019) examined the causes of anxiety in distance learning, such as hard to understand assignments and feared negative feedback from the teacher. Lack of understanding of the assignments happened due to the task instructions were not written or explained clearly. For the second factor, learning activities that were carried out online did not make students feel less anxious. It was because their writing result became the main aspect of being assessed in online learning, considering that it was not easy to assess from other aspects. In other words, it means the teacher more often evaluated the results of their writing.

Based on Ponniah and Jennifer's (2017) research, there were three types of writing anxiety experienced by the student: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior. Cognitive anxiety was the dominant type of anxiety experienced by students. Cognitive anxiety became the dominant type because students were not confident with their writing results, which caused fear of negative comments and teacher evaluations. It was followed by somatic anxiety. Somatic anxiety occurred because students felt tense and nervous that caused by less English proficiency, such as a lack of understanding of grammar. The type of anxiety that

was least experienced was avoidance behavior. Avoidance behavior happened because students avoided learning writing.

Wern and Rahmat (2021) revealed that four categories of the strategy were identified. The first was process writing approach. This strategy used to help students how to structure their essay by outlining the ideas before writing. The second strategy was affective strategy. This strategy was used to create a conducive and less-inducing writing class by practice relaxation exercises and provide supportive guidance to help instill self-confidence in writing among student writers. The third was positive error correction. This strategy was used to change students' perceptions so that they are not afraid when they make mistakes in their essays. The last strategy was vocabulary knowledge enhancement. This strategy was used to help students in developing vocabulary by reading more references and discover their style of writing.

The above previous studies concluded types of anxiety from online learning, and most of the findings came from face-to-face classes. However, there were only few studies focused on investigating students' anxiety in an **online** essay writing class that has been published in SCOPUS, ELSEVIER, or Science Direct journals. In previous studies, several researchers discussed the types of anxiety and strategies students use to reduce their anxiety experienced in the onsite class. However, this research focused on discussing students' anxiety in an online essay writing class by identifying the specific types and strategies used by the students to overcome their anxiety at The English Language Education Department, the University of Muhammadiyah Malang

1.2 Research Problems

The problems of this study are formulated as follows:

1. What are the types of student's anxiety experienced by students in an online essay writing class at University of Muhammadiyah Malang?
2. What are the student's strategies to overcome their anxiety in an online essay writing class at University of Muhammadiyah Malang?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the types of students anxiety in an online essay writing class at English Language Education Department at University of Muhammadiyah Malang.
2. To investigate the strategies in reducing student's anxiety in an online writing class at English Language Education Department the University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

1.4 Research Significance

This study is considered significant to know that student's anxiety still appear in teaching-learning activities and needs to be investigated. The results of this study can be used by the students to overcome their anxiety in an online essay writing class and to help the teacher to create a low-stress learning situation in the teaching-learning process. In general, the results of this study can provide additional knowledge for readers by knowing student anxiety from the types, factors and strategy that students used to reduce their anxiety.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

In this current study, the focus is on the students' anxiety in an online essay writing class. However, the primary respondents in this study were 15 students. The number of the participants was taken as much as 10% (15 students) of the total students who took online essay writing classes, which were around 150 students in the academic year 2020/2021 at English Language Education Department University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Anxiety: Anxiety is a feeling of fear and nervousness. Most people feel overwrought when they do something new or do the thing that they do not master. In this context, the feeling fear and nervousness are experienced by the students who join online essay writing class. According to Miri and Joia (2018), anxiety is an emotion classified by worrying thoughts, feelings of tension, and physical changes such as increased blood pressure or worry about something that is happening or may happen in the future.
3. Online essay writing class: This course is the third writing course in the English Language Education Department. This course is presented in online platform and projected to help students improve their skill in writing essays. This online course equips students with skills in paraphrasing, summarizing, and referencing. Yulia (2020) argued that online learning is the activity that takes place virtually, and the internet is the main aspect of the continuity of teaching and learning activities.