

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background of the study, research question, purposes of the research, the scope of the study, significance of research, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

In a university level, as one of the skills taught in the curriculum, writing grows to be an expected skill that learners' need to master (National Education System, 2003, as cited in Febriani, 2011). Writing provides people with a means to communicate their feelings, achievements, dreams, and opinions. It bridges the gap and connect people from different background and across borders. Writing is one of paramount importance for EFL learners. It is a survival skill as learners are obligated to use it as a medium for learning other courses, to prepare home assignments, projects, and eventually to communicate with their instructors. In other words, writing is a complex process represented by textual features that entails language proficiency, transmission of ideas, communication and interaction with people, as well as appropriateness within diverse contexts (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes & Flower, 1987).

From those definitions above, it is very likely that writing is one of productive skills that many people believed to be the hardest skill, which not only needs competence in other macro skills, namely listening, reading, and speaking but also requires writing learners brainstorming their ideas, arranging structure of the text, and building paragraphs (Alico, 2016). Since writing demands many efforts to the writing learner, if anxiety occurs, it will possibly affect their motivation also their performance on it. Meanwhile, Zhang (2001) and Hilleson (1996) stated that when learners perform activities that require productive skills, they experience considerable amount of anxiety.

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Many people still find writing difficult, frustrating, and even anxiety-producing, not just in L2 but also in L1 (Bloom, 1980; Leki, 1999). For Horwitz (1990), motivation pertains to the learners' outlooks for a particular language, its culture and the individual pragmatic reasons for learning a foreign language (Engin, 2009).

Anxiety itself has been a concern for many years in language teaching and applied linguistics. In *Advanced American English* Longman (2005) anxiety is defined as a feeling of being worried about something that may happen or may have happened, so that most people will think about it all the time. In addition, it is a feeling of wanting to do something very much but being very worried that they will not succeed. It is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry (Scovels, 1978). Cheng (2002) found that higher anxious writers tend to avoid taking writing courses and instead take majors that have little to do writing.

In 1992, Ryan defined anxiety as an emotional sign often reported by dyslexics. In a Foreign Language (FL) class when learners are supposed to produce the foreign language while they lack proficiency, foreign language anxiety is produced (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Gardner et al. (1993) defined foreign language anxiety as the overall anxiety associated with the individual. Despite this definition, anxiety is viewed by some as something brought about by the class environment for achieving second language proficiency. Horwitz et al. (1986), sees language anxiety as distinguished complex of behaviors, feelings, beliefs and self-perceptions associated with class atmosphere raised from the distinct characteristic of FL learning.

To date, however, relatively few studies have explored the nature and effect of writing anxiety (WA) on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Language research has showed the debilitating effect of writing anxiety on learners' performance. Daly (1978) found that anxious writers tend to produce messages of a lower quality with shorter and simpler structures. Using both writing quality and quantity task, Hassan (2001) concluded that low anxious University learners produced better quality compositions than their high anxious counterparts.

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Some studies regarding writing anxiety have been conducted in Indonesia and even in other countries. A study that related to the factors causing learners' writing anxiety was conducted by Cheng (2004). From this study, it is revealed that learners writing anxiety might stem from a variety of sources related to (1) instructional practices, (2) personal beliefs about writing and learning to write, (3) self-perceptions, and (4) interpersonal threats.

A study conducted by Ariyanti (2017) found that learners writing anxiety could be measured by the level of anxiety itself. Consecutively, it is divided into three levels; High Anxiety, Moderate Anxiety and Low Anxiety. There are several factors causing writing anxiety in academic writing according to the levels; The learners' apprehension of having negative comment, their difficulties in finding relevant theories from experts as well as compare and combine those theories with correct English structure are derived from low self-confidence and doubt regarding with their English writing quality because of their poor English language proficiency. They are afraid of the lecturer's opinion toward the production of their English writing. These correlated facts confirm the theory from Rodriguez and Abreu (2003) who stated that self-confidence and motivation are like two sides of a coin which influenced by anxiety.

Another study about factors causing learners' writing anxiety held by Lin (2009). In this study, the factors expressed by the learners, were mentioned by previous research, including factors of grading (Cheng, 2004), other learners' perception (Cheng, 2004), time constraint (Cheng, 2004), and difficulties caused by uninterested subjects which means the subject chosen are not learners' expertise (Lee, 2001) etc. One significant updated factor was found in this study, subject of this study pointed out that being requested to write with uniformed writing formats could cause anxiety since their freedom and creativity of writing might be taken away.

Moreover, the number of studies investigating the factors causing writing anxiety in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) University Learners at one of Universities in Bandung is quite scarce. Based on the problem explained above, the present study will

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be conducted in eighth semester (fourth year) learners and will identify the factors causing EFL University Learners' writing anxiety in Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Majoring in English Education Department.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the background of this research, the purpose of the study was intended to answer this question.

What are possible factors causing EFL University Learners' writing anxiety at one of universities in Bandung?

1.3 Aims of the Study

As stated in the research question above, the study focused on investigating factors causing writing anxiety among EFL university learners at one of universities in Bandung.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Given the research question and the aim of the study, this study focused on investigating factors causing writing anxiety among EFL University learners. Furthermore, this study also covered learners' level of anxiety. This study was conducted in University Learners' level; more specifically in eighth semester (fourth year) learners in Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Bandung Majoring in English Education Department.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study was believed to have more contribution towards the gap filling concerning foreign language anxiety studies in Indonesia, more specifically in writing skill. Furthermore, this study is hopefully could give some benefits in theory, practice, and professional benefits. In term of theoretical benefits, the research findings can be used as the contribution toward the research about Writing Anxiety in overcoming

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learners' writing anxiety particularly to EFL University Learners who are in the process of learning writing for academic purposes, making and producing text.

As for the practical benefits, the research findings will be beneficially useful for teachers, learners, and the readers who are interested in overcoming Writing Anxiety by suggesting or providing some relevant strategies. Additionally, in term of professional benefits, the research findings can help teachers to improve the quality of teacher, create relevant strategies, increase critical thinking of the learners, and create an interesting language learning.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

The terms below frequently used in this study. Therefore, to avoid misconception and misunderstanding, below are the clarifications of the terms used in the study:

- *Writing in Foreign Language* is one of critical important productive skill for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This skill is quite complex and requires learners' effort to survive in making home assignments, tasks, projects and eventually communicating their ideas with teachers or others.
- *Foreign language anxiety* in this study refers to a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process. (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986)
- *Writing anxiety* as a term, refers to writers who are competent enough to intellectually adhere to a task, but, nonetheless, face difficulty with the process of writing production (Zheng, 2008).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This study will be presented in five chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of the study, the research question, aims of the study, the scope of the study, significance of research, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

- Chapter II Literature Review

This chapter covers the theoretical foundation of the study. It consists of four sections which talk about writing in foreign language, general concept of anxiety, types of anxiety, foreign language anxiety, and writing anxiety.

- Chapter III Research Methodology

This chapter covers the research methodology. It consists of research design, research site and participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis technique.

- Chapter IV Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings and discussion to answer the research question in chapter I. It is divided into four sections plus concluding remarks, with each section presenting the findings and the discussions for the research question and linking them to the theoretical foundation presented in chapter II.

- Chapter V Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part provides the conclusions of this study. The second part provides suggestions to other researchers that have interest in the same field.