



Degrading Indonesian Vocational Middle School Students' Writing Anxiety Using Classroom Action Research of EFL through Low-Cost IT-Based Integration Learning

EDTWIN SULISPRIYANTO

English Department and Education Faculty, University of Slamet Riyadi,
Sumpah Pemuda No.18 Kadipiro, Surakarta 57111, Indonesia
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9257-994X>

SRI HANDAYANI

English Department and Education Faculty, University of Slamet Riyadi,
Sumpah Pemuda No.18 Kadipiro, Surakarta 57111, Indonesia

ULUPI SITORESMI

English Department and Education Faculty, University of Slamet Riyadi,
Sumpah Pemuda No.18 Kadipiro, Surakarta 57111, Indonesia
<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4795-2685>

Abstract:

Writing is a complex process, which (may) burdens students psychologically or resists their skill development. That is the reason how the class become tormenting place. Since the anxiety level in writing ability give the perception of enthusiasm, the product and process became difficult to handle. The purpose of this study was to identify in what students worried and does CAR using IT-based integration degrade writing anxiety level among Indonesian Vocational Middle school students. A Classroom Action Research which was conducted from 18 students of a vocational school in Solo, Indonesia, whose their level of anxiety was high. The results showed that students generally appear to be anxious in the class; anxiety quietly dominated in communication, the test, negative evaluation. The results of cycles showed that the means, Minimum Completion Standard, and t-test significance degrade their anxiety level when ICT-based integration supporting what they have in writing. The motivation which is analogous of anxiety, which researcher used in pre-cycles and pot-cycles shows that students eager in writing skill of EFL.

Keywords: *Anxiety level, Classroom Action Research, Low-cost ICT-based integration, Writing ability, Writing anxiety*

1. Introduction

Anxiety in writing has great influence in changing motivation, writing succession indicators, and potential students' competence. This is the main scope why vocation middle school students have the most difficulty in implementing English as foreign language. This is an urging strategy by the Indonesian government for their quality in foreign language mastery for their next carrier in having their jobs. The first perspective on anxiety in English writing is a complex process of writing itself, and most of the research literature recognizes the difficulty it poses for students. There are two main facts that state that writing is so difficult. The first fact is writing is not a spoken language, as it requires audiences or the readers to understand and to interpret what has been written. Parker (1993) states that writing is torment to students. From this fact, it is believed that writing requires great deals of skills and conventions such as writing readiness and grammatical rules for students to become proficient and effective writers. The second fact is writing is not just putting pen to paper or writing

ideas to paper, but it is how ideas are presented and expressed affectively and effectively. English writing in Indonesia urges not only the students but also people who need to learn writing for occupational or academic purpose. Then the impact of this in a classroom culminates in anxiety phenomenon. Hence, there must be an adequate technique using IT to improve their writing elements completion, to motivate their mind and two-way learning in sharing difficulties with their teacher or students, and to enhance their using of IT in writing class

2. Literature Review

Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger 1983). Anxiety in language phenomenon which according to Horwitz (2001), anxiety has been one of the most investigated variables in educational and physiological research area and she goes on stating that many learning types can be impeded by anxiety. Cheng, Horwitz, &Schallert, (1999) considered foreign language classroom anxiety as a more generic type of anxiety and detected a strong speaking component in it, whereas they pinpointed that L2 writing anxiety is a 'language-skill-specific' anxiety type. Writing anxiety may be experienced in higher anxiety degree when students are asked to write. This anxiety is evident in their behaviours, attitudes, and written work. In terms of written work, those with writing anxiety tend to have more difficulty in creating ideas for writing as the degree of pints or measuring the aim or writer' meaning, produce shorter words, and experience difficulty with grammatical usage and mechanics. Undoubtedly, writing anxiety can be a deterrent to learning. As the EFL teachers automatically evaluate students' achievements with giving negative evaluation. This means that students were far from writing difficulties stake. To show these students started their writing task using Indonesian (L1) as the basic concept. Then they continue in English. Their difficulties in determining ideas, diction and pints in English crushed. In the end of writing class, teachers only give the evaluation. Hence, students were in impasse.

There are three main anxieties that students have in mind at this research. Horwitz et al. stated that there are three components of foreign language anxiety: communication anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Students feel apprehensive about writing, especially when written assignments contribute substantially to the course final grade (see .Horwitz : 1996). The most effect in Indonesia is test anxiety and negative evaluation by the EFL teachers in their school. Hence , the interaction in EFL writing activity through the applied methods must enhance in sharing difficulties not what is the maximum result of students' achievement toward target of the language. Since the evidence of sharing difficulties result through the variable were examined, the degree of anxiety are sought as the main indicators that this applied research has the significance.

Harmer (2004: 86) states that writing is a process that what we write is often heavily influenced by constrains of genre, and then its elements have to be present in learning activities. Tommasello (2014:104) states that writing is activity through process and product works into a pint or idea in relative scope of readable form. Hence, from the definitions above, it can be concluded that writing is the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable forms in relative scope through process-product orientation. Brown brings up that it is important to "balance process and product", "account for cultural or literary backgrounds" and "provide as much authentic writing as possible" (2001:347). Cushing Wiegler states that writers spend a lot of time planning and editing their work for both organization and content, as well as taking the audience into consideration (2002:22- 23). This is the center of teacher's evaluation that should be realized. Due to the significance progress, the EFL writing orifices the students results toward writing perfection. Unfortunately, the evaluation doesn't demand students to bear difficulties. It contains anxiety increasing based on evaluation, readers' consideration in readable forms. The time, which is needed, determines students' sharing difficulties. From these , there is a way which leads to the effective writing which sums up from student's anxiety handling progress. Applebee and Langer

(2006) on the association of strategies based on formal writing achievement shows that the association between “making changes to fix mistakes” and achievement was by far the strongest (p.24). This is developed by North Coast Institute (2007) on formal writing characteristics: (1) focus on the issue, not the writer, (2) choose words with precise meanings, (3) avoid using slang, jargons, clichés, and abbreviations, and (4) make claims tentative rather than definite (p.1).

Writing requires the use of creative and critical thinking, information skills to investigate, draw conclusions about, and create content and quality without getting rid on student’s weakness in correction according to the appropriate elements of writing through ICT. Otherwise, before using ICT, students may not have access to the full learning experience that Chris Anson describes¹:

“We, teachers need to experience what our students experience . . . to feel the pressure of a deadline or that often *productive discomfort* of imagining our peers experiencing our words. . . . We need to remember the moments of difficulty, of being twisted up in a tangle of assertions . . . we need to remember as well the moments of satisfaction or triumph when we’re surprised by our own words and their elegance or intelligence. (Anson 30–31)”

Anson here recommends that teachers need to come into what our students experience—not only to write what have our students written (*see also* Barr Ebest, 2005: 6)². A crucial step towards understanding one’s writing students— toward being rooted in the field—comes in sharing an equivalent experience of difficulty through writing elements, rather than only sharing equivalent topics or genres of writing.

Hyland (2003:12) emphasizes that the teacher’s role is to guide students through the writing process, avoiding an emphasis on form to help them develop strategies for generating, drafting and refining ideas. Since writing has always been regarded as a difficult skill, instructors of English writing skills accept that students writing abilities may not reach a satisfactory level due to some errors. The errors found in students writing show that they face severe difficulties due to their lack of writing strategies as well as lack of language proficiency. These aspects lead the students’ anxiety due to afraid in writing indicators, language proficiency, and negative evaluation by the teachers.

There are two main reasons as IT-based learning improves writing engagement which gains anxiety. Firstly, students need to develop the skills which will enable them offered by IT. Secondly, Jill Blackmore et al states that (2003:2) most of the significant positive ‘computer effects’ in IT-based technique are students being in technology rich classrooms or come from action research based projects with researchers reflecting on practice. Certainly, IT can be a stimulus to reform classroom practices.

But the most productive use of IT is more likely to occur in transformed classrooms alongside the students learning style and adequate significance of skills production³. At next, the IT-based approach towards effective writing is emphasized through these following engagements (GE-REDOC):

¹Anson, Chris. “Teaching Writing Creatively: A Summer Institute for Teachers.” *Teaching Writing Teachers of High School English and First-Year Composition*. (Ed). Robert Tremmel and William Broz. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002. 27–39

² Barr Ebest, Sally. *Changing the Way We Teach: Writing and Resistance in the Training of Teaching Assistants*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2005, page 60.

³Jill Blackmore, Lesley Hardcastle, EsméBamblett, Janet Owens, Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology(ICT) to Enhance Learning for Disadvantaged School Students, Deakin Centre for Education and Change; Institute of Disability Studies, Deakin University and Institute of KoorieEducation, Deakin University, 2003, page 2.

a. Generate

A topic or a title is determined. It is guided by the teacher or the students or the writers. The Encarta as the implementation helps them to find or combine the ideas into subtopics through the encyclopedia, videos, pictures, or articles. It infers the concept that will conduct readers' perspective. A lesson plan is the main aspects to form from guided generated ideas. The other one is collaborated by others materials (authentic or artificial)

b. Empowering sync

The concept or outline collaborated by the individuals or group to produce the characterful writing. This works are the way to provoke or to have the readers is attracted through the genre or rhetorical development. The outline is developed in composing without correction. ICT-based integration such as Universalis, Encarta, or Rosetta Stone will useful on this steps.

c. Editing-Revising Sync

After the outline or concept is developed enough, the writers could revising or editing by using dictionary (L1-L2) and Spelling – grammar corrector to reform the elements of writing, such as capital letters, punctuation, diction, mechanics, coherency, passive-active option according to rubrics. The writing indicators will be focused in this step. It means the ideas composition, sequence and logical order, genre, purpose, mechanics, coherency are acquired. This is the teacher role to help the writers' or the students' English writing ability is improved and not the negative evaluation. The ICT-based integration are useful here to prevent negative evaluation, to succeed writing indicators and to empower readability level.

d. Opportunity and Continuity

The products of writing in this step are regarded as the track of writing improvement. It is a way of writing style to get their positive or implicit function. The products may not over at here. That is way the new style of learning or teaching writing leads the students to endure another purpose in bigger ideas or purpose (such as readability, other disciplines or literatures).

3. Methodology

3.1 Subject

There were 18 female students in this research. They were middle school students of class X that indicated higher anxiety degree of negative teacher evaluation, higher error writing indicators degree, and the lowest Minimum Completion Standard that was 30,20 of 66,68. They were selected from the pre-test on 72 students of class X in academic year 2015 by using means formula :

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma X}{N} \quad \bar{Y} = \frac{\Sigma Y}{N} \quad \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where

\bar{X} = mean of pre-test scores

\bar{Y} = mean of post-test scores

N = the number of sample

3.2 Instrumentation

The researcher used three cycles of CAR to lower the degree anxieties degree, writing rubrics towards its proficiency, and keeping teacher negative evaluation on observation during the cycles. The results reveal their strength and weaknesses and give opportunities for instructors to advise and provide assistance regarding their writing practice in a more practical and flexible way. To determine the value of significance, the researcher using the t-test value and Taylor Units to decrease margin error until 1 % formulas :

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2 - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{N}}{N(N-1)}}} \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

- t = the t-value for non-independent (correlated) means
- D = the differences between the paired scores
- \bar{D} = the mean of the differences
- $\sum D^2$ = the sum of the squared differences
- N = the number of pair

$$\epsilon_a = \frac{p^{*n+1} - p^{*n}}{p^{*n+1}} \dots\dots\dots(3)$$

- ϵ_a = error on completion margin error 1 %
- p^* = best measurement

3.3 Writing rubric towards its proficiency

Here below was the scoring rubric towards. The standard of scoring writing rubrics is based on the products of procedure achievement. The researcher occurs on analytic scoring rating composition tasks is suggested by Brown and Bailey in HD Brown (2003: 244-245) just on this table 1 below.

Table 1. Scoring rubrics of writing product

No	Elements of Writing	Rating Scale	Description
1	Organization : Introduction, Body, Conclusion	20 up – 18	Excellent – Good
		17 – 15	Good – Adequate
		14 – 12	Adequate – Fair
		11 – 6	Unacceptable
		5 – 1	Not collegial work
2	Logical Development of Ideas / content	20 up – 18	Excellent – Good
		17 – 15	Good – Adequate
		14 – 12	Adequate – Fair
		11 – 6	Unacceptable
		5 – 1	Not collegial work
3	Grammar	20 up – 18	Excellent – Good
		17 – 15	Good – Adequate
		14 – 12	Adequate – Fair
		11 – 6	Unacceptable
		5 – 1	Not collegial work
4	Punctuation, Spelling, Mechanics	20 up – 18	Excellent – Good
		17 – 15	Good – Adequate
		14 – 12	Adequate – Fair
		11 – 6	Unacceptable
		5 – 1	Not collegial work
5	Style and Quality of Expresion	20 up – 18	Excellent – Good
		17 – 15	Good – Adequate
		14 – 12	Adequate – Fair
		11 – 6	Unacceptable
		5 – 1	Not collegial work

3.4 Anxiety degree

A writing anxiety scale, which was developed earlier in a pilot run, was adapted 13 items from Tsai's (2008) English writing anxiety questionnaire. This answered the students in English writing worried about and in what contains the students were lack in English writing activity. Then, motivation-based questionnaires, an analogous f anxiety indicator emphasized to detect students eagerness in their anxiety level.

3.5 Data collection procedure

The subjects were all taking an English writing class at the time of participating in this investigation in the 2nd semester of 2015. The questionnaire consisting of subjects' self-evaluated writing competence and writing anxiety measures were distributed to the subjects who agreed to participate in the study and they completed the questionnaire within 30 minutes immediately after finishing their compositions. The questionnaire was then collected by the researcher for further data analysis (Means towards KKM, scoring grade of writing ability, and t-test value significance)

3.6 Data Analysis

The result contained on two statistical values. First, it was the differences of CAR cycles towards KKM means and significance t-test value. Second, the value was the result on the questioner calculation. Based on the purpose of the study, three research questions were explored in the following:

- a. What are the students worried about in English writing towards their anxiety?
- b. Is the anxiety degree degraded using IT based learning (GE-REDOC)?

4. Results

4.1 What the students were worried about in English writing towards their anxiety

The anxiety degrees of students worrying in EFL contained a questionnaire of ELAS (English Learning Anxiety Survey), for the purpose of understanding participants' inner thoughts in terms of English language learning anxieties among three categories, was partially edited from ELAS (foreign language classroom anxiety scale). It was adapted from Mei-Ling (2009) The result showed that the students worried about their making mistakes in these tables of classification

Table 2. Anxiety categories and its reliability towards the item (see also. Mei-Ling : 2009)

No.	Categories	Total item	QUESTIONS	Means
1	Communication	13	1-13	3 →overall language anxiety 1
2	Test	9	14-22	2,8 →overall language anxiety 1
3	Fear of evaluation	10	23-31	3,5 and 3, 5 →overall language anxiety 1

Table 3. Potential categories and its reliability towards the item to use ICT(see also. Mei-Ling: 2009)

No.	Categories	Total item	QUESTIONS	Means
1	Computers application	2	32-33	1,7 →overall language anxiety at 1 – 2
2	Purpose	4	34-37	3,7 →overall language anxiety 1

From those means, it could be concluded that the students were in anxiety levels on communication aspects, test, and fear of evaluation. The means showed that al the categories were up to 0,86 Or 1 as the significance mean indicator. Next, CAR was associated to improve student's writing anxiety. It was indicated on their ability in writing mastery. This below shown that the cycles were three, which gained to lower their anxiety using ICT-based integration. This integration had low-cost or freeware, familiar with the students, contained encyclopaedias, dictionary, and easy to be learned by the students

or teacher. In this CAR, researcher used Microsoft Encarta Integration as the tool for degrading students' anxiety which GE-REDOC as the engagement. The cycles were emphasized in two weeks of March2014 to April 2015⁴.

Table 4 . The CAR paces (see EdtwinSulispriyanto : 2015)

No	Cycles	Means	KKM	t-test value
1	Pre - test	4,706	30,2	-
2	Cycle one	8,647	55,5	4,176
3	Cycle two	10,65	68,4	4,478
4	Cycle three	15,12	97,1	5,029

4.2 Is the anxiety degree degraded using ICT based learning (GE-REDOC)?

Emphasizing GE_REDOC in Classroom Action Research contains five aspect of writing indicators, which based on Brown &Bailey 's scoring rubrics. From three cycles, the researcher found this students' eagerness in correcting their mistaken through their activity. Using this ICT-based integrations affected their sharing difficulties, enriched their writing knowledge, fixed their mistakes part by part (coherency, punctuation, mechanics, capital letter, tenses), gained their motivation to ask how to compile the features of Encarta to make their own ideas. This table below showed of students products toward organization, language development, PSM (Punctuation, Spelling, Mechanics), Grammar, SQE (Style Question and Expression). The progress is identified as significant.

Table 5. Brown and Bailey's Grade table of GE-REDOC

No.	Cycles	Organization	Language Development	Punctuation Spelling, Mechanics	Grammar	Style and Question Expression
1	Pre – test	1,2	1,3	1,6	1,1	1,4
2	Cycle one	2,0	2,6	2,7	1,9	2,7
3	Cycle two	2,3	3,0	3,5	2,5	3,3
4	Cycle three	4,4	4,4	3,5	4,3	4,1

The anxiety level on this research is based on the calculation of means of motivation between pre-cycle and post-cycle. The questionnaire (appendix A and B) were applied among the subjects to know whether there is any degradation significant of anxiety in writing of EFL. This questionnaire was adapted from Lavelle's research (2006) :

Table 6. Students motivation level against their anxiety (Lavelle : 2006)

No.	Categories	Pre – Cycle Anxiety	Post – Cycle Anxiety
1	Elaborative	2,2	18,8
2	Low-self Efficacy	1,8	9,6
3	Reflective-Reflection	1,0	8,3
4	Spontaneous – Impulsive	1,2	8,4
5	Procedural	0,8	7,3

⁴Sulispriyanto, Edtwin. 2015. *Improving Students' Writing Ability by Using Integration Of Microsoft Encarta-based Learning*. Solo: UniversitasSlametRiyadi.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate on what students were worried about in writing EFL and to degrade students' anxiety in CAR through ICT-based integration. From the results above, several key findings engaged in this research. They were as follow:

- a. Students were found in three categories of anxiety. The first category was communication anxiety. Students were in lack of confidence in communicating themselves during the writing EFL. The questions were number 1-8 of general anxiety. The anxiety grade was 3 (more than 0 or 1). It meant that students were in psychological anxiety through their perception of their English mastery before communicating themselves. Second category was test aspect. It was class performance, where the students got the pressure during the activity in groups or individuals. They worried even they were unprepared for writing before their teachers. The questions of this were number 9-19. The other stress from the teacher. The questions were 20-23. The students got nervous before the class and got silent when their teacher was ready to correct their mistakes. The third category was fear of evaluation. This contained language difficulties on writing indicators, of being panic in using IT for attempting their ability. The questions were 24 – 33. The means of those three categories were indicated anxiety level.
- b. During Classroom Action Research, the researcher took three cycles to degrade their anxiety level. Anxiety level is highly reverse-analogously to motivation. The researcher found that the means and Minimum Completion Standard were in progress. The significance of t-test value of those three cycles were above that in findings degree of freedom $N-1 = 17$ a t-test value of 2,110 was needed to significance at the .05 level and 2.898 at the .01. Then, the means result of motivation significance generated to indicate their eagerness toward writing EFL. There were five categories, as follow: Elaborative (see. Appendix of E.Lavell's developed questionnaire on questions no. 1-22) it is a personal search, analogy, visualization and a holistic conception of the writing process. Elaborative writers think about their writing when not directly engaged in it. They invest themselves in writing and derive personal meaning from their work. Their motivation is affective and they like to write to please an audience. They excel at narrative writing and at accommodating audience. Then the three levels were low (0-10), moderate (11-18), high (19+). The elaboration between pre-cycle and post-cycle was significantly achieved (from 2,2 to 18,8). Low Self-Efficacy (see. Appendix of E.Lavell's developed questionnaire on questions no.23-44) Low it contains a writing approach based on fear and doubt of skills or abilities. Writing is seen as a painful undertaking and not as related to self-expression. This is why the students became silent during the class. It has few strategies and writers scoring high on this scale do not see themselves as in control of producing a credible outcome. There are three levels: Low (0-3), Moderate (4 – 9), High (10+). The low-cost IT-based integration were significantly useful to degrade student's anxiety level on organization, language development, PSM (Punctuation, Spelling, Mechanics), Grammar, Style of Questions and Expression (SQE) from 1,8 to 9,6. The Low Self-Efficacy between pre-cycle and post-cycle was significantly achieved. Reflective-Revision. It describes a writing orientation based on a sophisticated understanding of the revision process as a remaking and clarification of thinking. This is the way of thinking to producing readable form as cognitive activity in relative way. Writing is considered an emergent process driven by intentions and aimed at supporting a thesis. It is a highly sophisticated approach. The GE-REDOC was found as students approach to engage their product was included the revision integration. There are three levels: Low (0-6), Moderate (7-10), High (11+). The Low Self-Efficacy between pre-cycle and post-cycle was significantly achieved from 1 to 8,3. Spontaneous-Impulsive. It describes a writing strategy based on an off-the-cuff or unplanned strategy. Writing is viewed as a one-step procedure, devoid of personal meaning. Conceptions or writing and revision are superficial or linear although these writers see themselves as highly competent. Writing contains opportunity and continuous aspect. This is why GE-REDOC engaged students to collaborate the integration features during the cycles. Students were eager than angry to find their new style of writing completion. The features

engaged them from writing grade II to grade IV in CAR cycles. They are three levels of Spontaneous-Impulsive category: (Low 0-5), Moderate (6-10), High (11+). The Spontaneous-Impulsive between pre-cycle and post-cycle was significantly achieved from 1, 2 to 8,4. Procedural. In writing, it describes a method oriented style based on strict adherence to the rules with a minimal amount of involvement. The style is technical and the goal is just to answer the question rather than to self-express. This strategy does not go beyond the bounds of the assignment. The focus is on mechanics rather than meaning. Writing assignments are just a demand to be met. In GE-REDOC engagement in cycles, students used Style-writer – Spelling/Grammar (F7) – Microsoft Office Proofing options to apply PSM corrections. There are three levels of procedural category: Low (0-3), Moderate (4-8), High (9+). The procedural category between pre-cycle and post-cycle was significantly achieved from 0,8 to 7,3.

From those explanation, it can be concluded that since students worked in sharing difficulties, were being helped in appreciating what they have in their lowest level of writing ability especially when teacher praise what they have, experienced in using adequate tools of IT-based integration through their activity, opened themselves to progress possibility of working in pairs or individual, their motivation became developed against their level of anxiety. Then the most students worried about their writing indicator achievement and negative evaluation from their teacher was reduced significantly.

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