

# THE EFFECT OF GUIDED WRITING TECHNIQUE AND ANXIETY UPON WRITING COMPETENCY

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## Abstract

This research aimed at investigating the effect of guided writing and anxiety upon writing competency. It was an experimental research with 2x2 factorial design. The result showed that (a) there was significant difference in writing competency between the students taught by guided writing technique and those taught by conventional technique, b) there was an interactional effect between the implementation of guided writing and the students' anxiety, (c) there was significant different in the writing competency between the students' with high anxiety, taught by implementing guided writing technique and those who are taught by conventional technique, (d) there was significant different in the writing competency between the students' with low anxiety, taught by implementing guided writing technique and those who are taught by conventional technique, (e) the implementation of guided writing technique was responded in a more positive way by the students with high anxiety rather than by the ones with low anxiety.

**Keywords:** guided writing, anxiety, and writing competency.

## INTRODUCTION

English instruction in Indonesia has developed which is followed by renewal of curriculum. Since 2006, English is taught based on School Based Curriculum (SBC) or "Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP). In SBC, it is stated that language has a central role in intellectual, social, and emotional development of the students and has a significant importance to support students' success in learning all subjects. In the field of language teaching, it is stated that teaching English focuses on the mastery of four language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The other language components such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary are also taught to support the development of language skills. When compared with other fundamental skills

such as listening, speaking, and reading, writing is considered as the most difficult skill for language learners because it requires writers to have great deal of lexical and syntactic knowledge as well as principles of organization in second language to produce a good writing (Tangpermpoon, 2008:1).

Writing is also considered as a complex skill because in writing we need to develop and present our thoughts or ideas in a structured way to make the reader understand our writing. Since writing is a difficult and complex skill, students who engage in it tend to face many problems during the process of writing. This condition leads the students to a state of anxiety.

Anxiety is a basic human emotion consisting of fear and uncertainty that

typically appears when an individual perceives an event as being a threat to the ego or self-esteem. McLeod in Clark (2006:4) states that studies show the affective aspects of learning such as anxiety has a strong impact on the students' ability to learn course content. Research, specifically on writing anxiety, has linked it to several factors, including both writing ability and students' learning. Writing anxiety is defined as the 'fear of writing process that outweighs the projected gain from the ability to write' (Thompson in Ozturk, 2007:3). The students who suffer from writing anxiety are not skillful writers. They may avoid writing and writing instruction, neglecting chances to improve their writing skills, may be less risk-taker in their writing and less straightforward and clear when they write (Smith in Ozturk, 2007). From the previous explanations, it can be said that anxiety affects students's competency in writing.

Another factor that may affect the students' competency in writing is the strategy used by the teacher in teaching writing. Traditionally, teachers rarely give brainstorming to stimulate the students' ideas before being expressed in written form and often let them work alone without giving them any guidance to develop or express their idea properly. To ease the students in discovering their ideas, the teacher should provide adequate warming-up activity about the topic being discussed. Moreover, during the process of writing the teacher should guide and assist the students to write a good paragraph as well as revise their work since several aspects need to be considered in writing such as: grammar, mechanic, vocabulary, content and organization of paragraph. The teacher however, gives no chance to the students to realize their mistakes in writing. The students only wait for their score and teacher's correction without knowing how to correct their mistakes by themselves. Occasionally, those reflect the use of conventional writing technique that is usually applied by the teacher.

Problems in writing were also faced by the students at SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja. Based on the observation

conducted during the teaching and learning process in an English class, it was found that the majority of the students faced difficulties in writing. It took them a long time to think about what and how to write and organize their ideas. It was not easy for them to arrange an idea and put it into written form logically. When they finished their writing, they felt that the writing process has finished and submitted their work without doing any correction. They did not know how and what to revise to improve their writing. It became the cause of unsatisfying writing result. In addition, the students' problem in writing might due to the writing technique used by the teacher. In the teaching writing process, the teacher did not support the students with enough guidance in writing class. She also did not provide enough warming-up activity and vocabulary related to the topic. Besides, they were also not provided with enough guiding tools about the five elements of writing so that they did not understand what they should revise and how to revise their work in terms of content and development, organization, vocabulary, structure, and also mechanic to improve their writing. As a result, the intended competency in writing was not successfully achieved by the students.

In relation to that problem, the researcher considered using guided writing technique in teaching writing. Guided writing technique is one strategy that can be applied in teaching writing and can be used to improve students' writing competency. Guided writing technique is an instructional situation, where the teacher guides the writers through the whole writing process. Oczkus states that guided writing is an essential tool in a balanced writing curriculum, providing an additional supported step towards independent writing. Through guided writing, students are supported during the different stages of the writing process. It also helps students to improve their writing and to work with increasing independence. Another researcher Lee (1994) showed that guided writing strategy assisted with pictures is an effective way to improve the students' writing proficiency. More specifically, such instruction using pictures

in a guided writing environment can assist beginning foreign language students to develop and improve their writing skills as well as lower their anxiety in terms of expressing themselves in the target language.

Regarding to the previous statement, this research aims at finding out whether the application of guided writing is effective and gives significant difference toward the writing competency with the consideration of students' anxiety.

## METHOD

The research made use of a *Posttest Only Control-Group Design* using a 2x2 factorial arrangement. For the data collection instrument, writing competency test (post-test), anxiety questionnaire were administered. The questionnaire was based on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) for students of English as a second or foreign language designed by Horwitz and his colleagues. It consists of 33 items. Meanwhile, for the treatment instruments, teaching scenario and teaching handout were used. The data collection instruments were firstly tried out and estimated that the instruments were reliable and valid. The gained data were analyzed by Two-Way Anova and Tukey test which were assisted by SPSS 16.0.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data descriptions of the central tendency (median, mean, and mode) and the spread of dispersion (standard deviation, variance, range, minimum, and maximum) of the eight groups of data (experimental group, control group, experimental group having high anxiety, experimental group having low anxiety, control group having high anxiety, control group having low anxiety, group of students having high anxiety, and group of students having low anxiety) were presented in table 1.

Tabel 1. The Summary of the calculation of central tendency and dispersion

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Mean	65.8	55.4 3	68. 53	63. 06	54.1 3	56.7 3	61. 3	59. 9
Std. Deviation	5.21	5.81	4.8 1	4.1 3	3.71	7.25	8. 45	6. 63
Range	16.0 0	25.0 0	13. 00	13. 00	11.0 0	25.0 0	26. 0	27. 0
Minimum	60.0 0	46.0 0	63. 00	60. 00	50.0 0	46.0 0	50. 0	46. 0
Maximum	76.0 0	71.0 0	76. 00	73. 00	61.0 0	71.0 0	76. 0	73. 0

From the result of analysis, it was known that the mean score of the students taught by guided writing technique (65.8) was higher than the mean score of the students taught by conventional writing technique (55.43). It means the guided writing technique affects better than conventional writing technique on students' writing competency.

In investigating the interactional effect between the implementation of guided writing technique in relation to anxiety toward the students' writing competency, the finding shows that there is a significant interactional effect between guided writing technique and anxiety upon the students' writing competency. It was proven by the result of the probability value of 0.004, which was lower than 0.05. So, it can be concluded that besides teaching methods applied, writing competency of the eight grade students of SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja was influenced by anxiety which is considered as one of the internal factors of the students in learning. After proving that there was an interactional effect between teaching method and anxiety level on students' writing competency, Tukey test then was done to know the effect of interaction. The result of the calculation was that  $Q_{counted}$  (= 10.83) is higher than  $Q_{critical}$  value (= 2.83). It means that there is a significant difference in writing competency between the students taught by guided writing technique and those taught by conventional writing technique. To know which group is better, it is necessary to

Statistik	Group					
	exp	cont	exp	exp	cont	Con
ha						

consider the mean score of both groups. The mean score of the students having high anxiety and taught by guided writing technique (= 68.53) was higher than mean score of the students having high anxiety and taught by conventional technique (= 54.13). This means that guided writing technique affects better than conventional technique on students' writing competency of the students having high anxiety. From low anxiety group, it was found that the mean score of the students having low anxiety and taught by guided writing technique (= 63.07) was higher than the mean score of the students having low anxiety and taught by conventional writing technique (= 56.73). So, it can be concluded that guided writing technique affects better than conventional technique on students' writing competency of the students having low anxiety.

Moreover, a better result in writing competency which was gained by the students taught by guided writing technique was related to the effectiveness of guided writing in this study that can be seen in some writing processes. In the beginning, when the teacher showed pictures to the students to introduce the topic, the students gave more attention and became more interested in learning. The benefits could also be seen in revising activity. This process provided the students a great opportunity to check and correct their writing including the content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanic by using revision guide. From this activity they could also check the grammar used in their writing and correct it using the accurate use of grammar, add more ideas or make some modification to their writing to be relevant with the determined topic.

In comparison, the students in control group taught by conventional writing technique just need to write as well as they can and only depends on their actual knowledge without having any guidance or having any clue of making mistakes or errors. Since they did not have guidance of finding out their mistakes in writing, they possibly thought that what they had made was correct (having no mistakes or errors). This situation made

the implementation of conventional writing technique not be able to give positive effect on students writing competency, since it focused on the product, not on the process. Besides, it did not give any chance to students to assess their writing in order to know their strengths, weaknesses, and also which parts of their writing needed to be corrected or revised. It made them not be able to improve their writing and as the result, the implementation of guided writing technique affects the students' writing competency better than conventional writing technique.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the research findings and discussions, it can be concluded that: (1) there was a significant difference in the writing competency between the students taught by applying guided writing technique and those taught by conventional technique; (2) there was an interactional effect between the application of guided writing technique and the students' anxiety; (3) there was a significant difference in the writing competency between the students with high anxiety and taught by guided writing technique and those taught by conventional technique; (4) there was a significant difference in the writing competency between the students with low anxiety and taught by guided writing technique and those taught by conventional technique; (5) the implementation of guided writing technique was responded in a more positive way by the students with high anxiety rather than by the ones with low anxiety.

Based on the research findings, it is strongly recommended that English teachers implement guided writing technique in teaching writing, especially for the students with high anxiety because this technique is good to improve their confidence and reduce anxiety because the steps in this technique provide them a guidance to produce a good paragraph. Teachers also have to be aware of the students' anxiety, because students' anxiety affects students' performance in writing. Being aware of the students' anxiety, the teacher can create a

comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. It can make the students be more relaxed to take part in the classroom activities.

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