Psychological Interference on the Student's Academic Writing Process

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Abstract: Most of EFL English teachers often expect to help the students to solve their student's essay writing problems. However, the approaches of dealing with the problems are not always appropriate since those teachers do not realize the importance of analyzing the student's psychological interference and it's solutions. Therefore, this study was aimed to find the student's psychological interference in writing an academic essay and its solutions. The participants in this study were six students who enrolled in writing 3 class in the third semester of english education program in a university in Karawang Indonesia. The data were collected by way of two techniques, i.e., classroom observations and interviews with the writers. The data were later codified and juxtaposed in order to reveal the student's psychological interference (anxiety, motivation and self-esteem). The findings show the basic level of language proficiency tended to have more psychological problems like anxiety, lack of motivation and lack of self-esteem. The upper-intermediate students tended to have higher self-esteem and motivation. Therefore, the teacher needs to solve the problems by reducing psychological negative interference through portfolio writing, collaborative writing, psychological engagement by way of consultation and giving rewards. The findings of the present study provide some recommendations for the next researchers who wish to investigate the same field and also for teachers and students to improve the teaching learning process especially writing an essay in EFL context.

Key words: Psychological interference, writing academic essay, anxiety, self-esteem, motivation

INTRODUCTION

Research background: In general, in terms of the processes and the practices, writing problems can be divided into three categories. The first is difficulties in developing ideas. The second is related to linguistic skills. The third category is related to cultural and psychological factors. These categories often influence each other (Weigle, 2009; Westwood, 2008). Hence, many linguistic and non-linguistic variables possibly influence and contribute to the student's writing. Some linguistic variables are the students 'proficiency in English such as grammar, vocabulary mastery, organization and mechanics. Whilst, among non-linguistic factors may include learning style, proficiency level, knowledge of relevant subject and the psychological factors such as aptitude, attitude, feeling, motivation and self-confidence.

Some studies state that weaker writers tend to have more psychological problems. Poor writers were often bound to the text at the expense of ideas whereas the good writers allowed their ideas to generate the text. The poor writers find task of writing very difficult and unrewarding (Westwood, 2008; Yuhardi, 2009; Wigati, 2014). Therefore, psychological problems often accompany the process of writing and can seriously interfere the quality and quantity of the text. More study also mentions that the poor writer or the lower achievers often had prolonged academic failures, students with learning disabilities sometimes manifest secondary characteristics such as low self-esteem, low motivation, anxiety or even hyperactivity (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). This might become big obstacles in writing teaching and learning process in EFL context since the second language writers often find that writing is more complex, less efficient and more complicated (Wigati, 2014).

Identification of problems: Based on the background above, there are so many factors that are often coloring the process of student's writing. In order to plan and implement support for students, it is necessary first to find their psychological problems. Therefore, the main focus of this current study is to identify the student's psychological problems and to discover the possible solutions to overcome the problems. Nevertheless, this study only focuses on the problems related to psychological aspects like anxiety, motivation and self-confidence. In addition, regarding the proficiency levels of the students, this research only focuses on the basic and the upper-intermediate level.

Literature review

The nature of writing: Writing is a mechanism in expressing ideas, thoughts or knowledge in a written form in a clear and systematic way by encompassing correct structures, good coherences between sentences and paragraphs; it also should be free from mechanical errors such as spelling and punctuation (Alwasillah, 2007; Harmer, 2001). In a slightly different tone, Hyland (2009, 2003) also states that writing is the process whereby a person selects, develops, arranges and expresses ideas in units of discourse. These natures of writing are the basic foundations of writing assessment.

The process of writing: There are four main stages in student's writing process which were done in this study: prewriting, planning, writing and revising the draft and writing the final copy. Each stage will be explained.

Prewriting: Prewriting is an activity in which students write freely about a topic to looking for ideas (Oshima and Hogue, 2007; Greenville, 2001). The purpose of prewriting is to produce as many ideas as possible and to write them down without worrying about appropriateness, grammar, spelling, logic or organization. In this research, the students were asked to clustering their ideas.

Planning (out lining): An outlining is a formal plan for a paragraph. Outlining is helpful for both readers and writers. Outlining is a strategy to plan for writing. It shows how the main ideas are allied to the thesis statement, how supporting ideas are linked to main ideas and how the details are connected to supporting ideas (Oshima and Hogue, 2007).

Writing and revising the draft: This stage is called writing process. It should be considered that no piece of writing is ever perfect in the first time (Oshima and Hogue, 2007). Each time a writer writes a new draft he should refine the text to improve the quality of the text. The outlining process and the drafting process are the most significant process to dig up the participant's psychological problems in writing the essay.

Writing the final copy: In this stage, it is expected that the result of writing has been written neatly and legibly in ink or typed. After rereading the final copy there is always a possibility that writers make a decision to construct a few or even major changes (Oshima and Hogue, 2007).

Psychological aspects

Anxiety feelings: Feelings of tension, worry, apprehension and nervousness often rise as emotional response in the condition of learning a foreign language which can give negative impact on a person's second language acquisition (Oztruck and Cecen, 2007). Students who suffer this problem usually have mental block against the foreign language which can be their obstacle in achieving their goal. For example, a student who worries too much about his/her lack of abilities in writing often tends to avoid any writing task given rather than struggle to improve his/her skills in writing.

In terms of the writing learning process, this anxiety feeling can be caused by three factors: lack of ability, apprehension of time limit and fear of negative evaluation (Oztruck and Cecen, 2007; Yuhardi, 2009).

The first is the lack of ability which refers to the ability in writing. The lack of abilities can be in the forms of having weaknesses in grammar, lack of idea and limited vocabulary. Some writers tend to have anxiety problem as the reflection of their awareness on their lack of ability. For example, they may become less risk taker by avoiding writing or writing instruction (Westwood, 2008). The second is the anxiety caused by time allocation. The time allocation often provokes the nervousness in the process of producing written text. The third is apprehension of negative evaluation. Fear of being evaluated by the teacher and the other students may also arouse the feeling of anxiety. The anxiety feeling may arouse as students are judged on the basis of the amplification of the ideas they express, the arguments they develop and the range of vocabulary they use. Moreover, in writing assessments, they are also often evaluated on the basis of accuracy for example the spelling, the syntax and the mechanic which become the big challenge for the second language students (Oztruck and Cecen, 2007).

Self-esteem: Self-esteem is a belief system that someone possesses as a way of living with his environment (Palladino, 2004). In the respect of learning, self-esteem is constructed from self-efficacy which is presumed to be related to academic role performance (Owens *et al.*, 2001). High self-esteem will result in successes on academic performance. Contrariwise, students with low self-esteem have a worse performance in the class and are also estimated to have the prospects of low performance in the future. Plummer (2001) stated that children who have good self-esteem is more likely to achieve the full potential and will establish a success.

Owens *et al.* (2001) mentioned some indicators of a low self-esteem person. First, low self-esteemed person is sensitive to criticism and feels disturbed with other's negative comments. Second, he is disturbed when he/she does poorly on tasks they undertaken and thirdly, he/she is aware of his/her inadequacy. The fourth is that his/her feeling will be easily hurt, being sensitive to criticism and more concerned about other people really think.

Motivation problem: Motivation is the emergence of construct that sparks one's initiatives to do something to achieve the goal with the intensity of his or her physical power (Gunarhadi, 2014). The stronger the desire, the stronger the intensity of behaviors appears. According to Maehr, motif that is underlying someone's learning behavior may both be intrinsic and extrinsic. Makmun (1996) suggested indicators of individuals that have high motivation. The first is about duration. Individuals who have high motivation usually have a willingness to do the activity longer than individuals with low motivation. Second, individuals with high motivation always expect to have a more frequent activity (in one period) than individuals who are less motivation. Third, individuals who have high motivation will have a high persistence of the objectives of the activity. Fourth, the high motivated individuals will have fortitude, persistence and ability to respond to the difficulties and to achieve the goal. Individuals who have high motivation also will be willing to dedicate their selves and make sacrifices (may include energy, thought or money) to achieve the goal. Fifth, Individuals who have high motivation tend to have a desire to achieve high targets of the execution of activities. Sixth, Individuals who are motivated have the willingness to have positive output from the target activity. The last, Individuals who have high motivation will have a positive attitude towards the target activity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design: Qualitative methodology was used in this study to identify the students 'psychological problems in writing an academic essay and its possible solutions since the qualitative method is the best method to explore a concept or phenomenon deeply (Creswell, 2003; Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993; Merriam, 1998). Qualitative inquiry of research is more often used to explain about case studies. This statement is also asserted by Yin (1989) exposing qualitative approach to discuss the exploratory and descriptive case studies. Therefore, this research can be regarded as a case study since it is done in a small scale on one particular case in which the processes of student's writing were explored. A qualitative case study was used in this research because it was necessary to explore the phenomena to present a detailed view of student's psychological traits in the writing class.

Research site: The research was conducted at one university in Karawang. There are two main reasons why this university was chosen. The first reason to choose the university was because it is the biggest university which has relatively big numbers of students in english language education program in Karawang that hopefully will keep the reliability of the results of the study. Second, the researcher has been teaching at this university for six years hence this research was also aimed to find student's writing and problems as a need analysis to improve student's writing.

Participants: This qualitative study investigated the student's psychological problems when they were writing the academic essay and to find the possible solutions. Since, this was a case study design, so the samples were purposively selected.

Participating in this study were six students who enrolled in essay writing class in the third semester. Those sixth students were purposively selected though three considerations.

Since, this research was aimed to investigate the students psychological problems across different proficiency levels, therefore, the first concern of choosing the participants was based on the result of the student's language proficiency levels test. However, there is a limitation of this study that because of the complexities of both writing as process and as product and to ensure the clarity of the student's psychological problem across language proficiency levels, a decision was made to contrast only high achieving student'sproblems and low achieving student's problems in the essay writing. Therefore, this study just focuses on the psychological problems of the basic level students and the upper intermediate level students in writing an academic essay.

Second, the purposive participants were also chosen based on their academic performance in the previous semester. The selected basic level participants are the students who got C for almost all English skill subjects while the selected upper-intermediate level participants are the students who always got an A for all of the English skill subjects. The considerations were based on the documents taken from the institution in which the students who were at the basic level of language proficiency tended to have low marks while the upper-intermediate students tended to get the highest marks in their class.

As a result, the composition of the purposive participants as the samples of the study was three students who were at the basic level and three students who were at the upper-intermediate level.

Data collection: This study employed two techniques in collecting data namely observation and interview.

Classroom observation: While elicitation methods provide reports of what people say they think and do, observation methods offer actual evidence of it by systematic documentation of participants engaged in writing (Hyland, 2009). Therefore, classroom observations were done to take notes on the student's behaviors and activities during writing stages: pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing. The observation necessarily demonstrated some important behaviors of the participants on how they face the writing assignments and can also be evidence for the relevant behaviors that match with the indicators mentioned about the psychological traits. The position of the researcher was as participant observer that the observation role is secondary to the participant role. The positive thing for this role was that the unusual aspects can be noticed during observation (Creswell, 2003). The main instrument in this method was field notes. The researcher made notes about the events and situation in the classroom while she was engaging in teaching activities. To validate the data, the researcher invited her colleague to observe the class. This was intended to have the observation data to be checked (Emilia, 2005).

The data collected through this method were teaching and learning activities, student's responses and behaviors in carrying out the writing assignments.

Interview: The interview was used in this research. It was to find the student's psychological traits. The interview was addressed to the selected students. The study used both semi structured interview and stimulated recall interview. The aim to use semi interview is because as an interviewer the researcher will have a clear picture of the topic. Whereas the stimulated recall interview was used because it is suitable for examining processes and it has been used to study learning processes like writing processes. The data were collected in the writing classes by means of a video-tape in a 100 min lesson during which the students were asked to show how they do the writing tasks. Then, stimulated recall interview with the same students was used as the qualitative research method in the investigation of student's psychological problems in writing the essays. The video was replayed to the students to stimulate their recall of their actions during the writing processes in the class. The recall was important to remind the participants about what they felt and thought during the essay writing processes.

Data analysis: Data interpretation and on-going data analysis were done from the classroom observations, student's written text and interviews. The following are the steps of data analysis.

The data obtained from classroom observation was analyzed trough several steps. Firstly, the field notes and the recorded data from classroom observations were transcribed into written form. Then, the transcripts were read many times to look for events related to the research question. Secondly, the data was categorized by using codes based on the theme. Third, the data was analyzed and interpreted based on the theories in literature review.

The second technique is document's analysis. In analyzing the student's essays, the researcher focused on the writing aspects such as: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics.

The third technique to get the data was through interviews that were administered after each of the writing process was finish. The interviews were used to clarify the data from observation and documentation (Cresswell, 2003). The data were transcribed and categorized through codification and interpreted to answer the research. Then, all of the data were triangulated with the existing theories.

RESULTS

Data from observation: The classroom observations were administered 6 times. At first, the lecturer started the activities by giving information to the students that they would discuss an exposition text. These activities were aimed to build student's knowledge about the genre. After that, the lecturer explored the features of the schematic structure of the text. These activities were aimed to build up the student's understanding of the purpose, structure and the language features of the exposition text.

The writing process: There are three main stages in the student's writing process: prewriting; planning; writing and revising drafts and writing the final copy.

Prewriting stage: Prewriting is an activity in which students write freely about a topic to looking for ideas (Oshima and Hogue, 2007; Greenville, 2001). The purpose of prewriting was to produce as many ideas as possible and to write them down without worrying about appropriateness, grammar, spelling, logic or organization. In this stage, all of the students tried to get ideas. The lecturer just guided them to choose a topic they have

known well. The students chose a topic and collect ideas to explain the topic. All of the respondents did the clustering in their brainstorming activity to generate their ideas. They wrote a topic and drew a balloon around it as the core balloon. Then they wrote their ideas in the balloons around the core. In this stage, all of the respondents consulted their brainstorming to the lecturer.

R#1, the basic level student, preferred to use Indonesian language to gather the ideas in view of the fact that the idea might be truncated because of her lack of English vocabulary. Whilst, the other respondents from the basic level decided to used English although they should consult the dictionary over and over. On the other hand, the students from the upper intermediate levels did not have any problem with the vocabulary. Their problems were mainly on how to cluster their ideas.

Planning (out lining): An outlining is a formal plan for a paragraph. Outlining is helpful for both readers and writers. Outlining is a strategy to plan for writing. It shows how supporting ideas are linked to main ideas and how the details are connected to supporting ideas (Oshima and Hogue, 2007). In this stage, almost all of the respondents had a hard work to express their ideas in the outline. At the same time, the lecturer opened the opportunity for every student to have consultations with her. In the consultation time, the lecturer always reminded the students about the schematic structure, linguistic features that usually used in writing a descriptive text.

What the lecturer did shows that the lecturer was as a facilitator and the students were as apprentices (Feez and Joyce, 1998). However, she had a limitation in practicing the role since she could not access all of the students in the class because of the limited space and time.

From the observation, it was also found that when all the students were given the time to compose the outline, R#1 did not make it. She chose to compose the draft first in Indonesian language in order to avoid truncated ideas therefore she did not do any consultation with the lecturer. The other two basic level respondents also did not do any consultation. They were busy to look up the dictionary. They consulted the dictionary about 6 until 7 times in one sentence making. This may lead to two impacts. First, the time that should be used to write was more taken up to consult the dictionary. Second, the ideas might be truncated due to the limited vocabulary. Moreover, in this stage, problems in applying the correct grammar also became the big obstacle for the students in conveying their ideas.

On the other hand, all of the respondents from the upper-intermediate level did the consultation. Though the

students tended to have longer time to compose the introductory paragraph in the Identification part, they could build supporting sentences and details smoothly. This observation data supports the previous claims stating that poor writers were often bound to the text at the expense of ideas whereas the good writers allowed their ideas to generate the text (Kroll, 1991).

Writing and revising the draft: In this stage, the students wrote their essay, following their outline as closely as possible. However, the lecturer always reminded the students that they could add relevant ideas. In doing the drafting process, there are some notes that should be highlighted.

In the drafting phase, R#1, the basic level student, translated her Indonesian draft into English. However, her final draft was much shorter than her Indonesian draft. It seems that many of her ideas were truncated due to her lack of vocabulary and her lack of ability in operating the English grammar. The same result also happened to the other two texts produced by the basic level students. They could only produced 9 until 10 sentences for their essay. Moreover, the vocabularies and the grammar used were not comprehensible. This result of the study confirms the previous claims stated that poor writers typically exhibit difficulties in coping with grammar (Westwood, 2008). Especially for those who learn English as a foreign language, the amount of language which they have for writing is often very limited so that it is frequently impossible to make any meaningful form of writing practice (Westwood, 2008). Knowing that they had problems with their essays, however, no one of these students made any consultation with the lecturer. Moreover, they also did not try to revise their draft. R#1 needed more than one meeting to translate her Indonesian draft. While, R#2 and R#3 preferred to chat with their friends after finishing their draft.

On the other hand, the upper-intermediate students experienced different things in their writing process. They always consulted their draft. Because they had a quite long essay, R#4 and R#6 focused their revision mainly on the organization of the essay and the diction of the vocabularies used. While, R#5 made some revisions of the content.

All of these observation data are in line with the previous research which claimed that poor writers typically exhibit major difficulties in coping with grammar, spelling and punctuation while, the more proficient writers usually cope with the problems in generating ideas and sequencing the content. Moreover, weak writers tend to produce a much smaller amount of work than more proficient writers (Saddler, 2006).

Interview results: The interviews were also intended to explicate student's psychological experiences which were difficult to be explicated by observation data only.

The respondents who are at the basic proficiency level confirmed that they were aware of their limitations in writing an essay. Though they had all of the ideas needed and they also had tried to control the linguistic features of their texts, however, they still had big obstacles in expressing their ideas in the target language, English. It is also evidenced by their essays that showed the lack of ability in writing. Consequently, they felt anxious when they were asked to write the essay":

> R#1 (I feel anxious when there is a writing assignment especially writing an essay. Actually, I have a lot of ideas but I could not write it since I have limited vocabulary. Yes, it is true that I could consult dictionary but it took times, even when I got the vocabularies, I still had problem with the grammar. Those things are the causes of my anxiety)

> R#2 (I feel nervous since writing an essay is difficult)

> R#3 (I felt stressful when I wrote the outline for the reason that I had to write it in English)

The data interview above provides some explanations of the reasons why the respondents did not provide enough details. According to the respondents answers, it is revealed that they had the difficulty in expressing their ideas in English. The problems were mainly on their lack of vocabulary and their lack of capability in operating the English grammar. In the process of writing, the basic levels respondents were bounded by the struggle to convey their ideas in English. Consequently, these basic level students did not give their focus the other aspects of writing. As a result, the texts produced showed many problems such as organization and mechanics. Based on the findings, it is revealed that the organizations of the basic level student's texts were not adequately controlled. Moreover, many mechanical errors like punctuation errors, capitalization errors and spelling errors were frequently found. The findings is supported by:

> R#1; It is almost impossible to think about how to connect one sentence to other; even it is very hard for me to deliver a sentence in English)

On the other hand, the respondents who are at the upper-intermediate of English proficiency level did not have any anxiety feelings caused by the lack of ability. They tended to believe that they have enough capability to finish the task. This claim is evidenced by the following statements:

> R#4 I think, my writing skill is good)

> R#5 (As far as I know, my writing is good enough)

> R#6 (Insya Allah, I could give my best in doing the essay writing)

With respect to this result, Westwood (2008) said that competent writers commonly have mastered mechanical aspects of writing and have a sound of understanding of the structure needed in writing. That is why the upper-intermediate level respondents did not have any anxiety feeling related to the lack of ability since they have the abilities needed in the essay writing.

On the other side, the lacks of capability in writing the essays had provoked the other problems to the basic level respondents. They felt disturbed when they did the essay poorly. They also were aware of their inadequacy and really concerned about their friends really think of their poor writing ability. The incapability in writing the essay had loosened their confidence and turned be low self-esteemed. It is evidenced by the following excerpts, an interview with. R#1 (a basic level respondent):

> Interviewer; What do you feel when you wrote the essay?
> Respondent "(It was difficult, I didn't have high confidence when I wrote the essay)
> Interviewer;" What was the most difficult for you in writing?"

> Respondent (No, never I was ashamed for my bad work on writing the essay and my friends would recognize it")

This finding is in line with the statement from Plummer (2001) which stated that to be personally valued, someone has to have personal worth built up from his capacities and because of the capability, the person feels confidence. On the other hand, the person who has less capability often feels less confidence (Plummer, 2001). In addition, this result of the study also confirmed the previous research conducted by Yuhardi (2009) which claimed that students can suffer self-esteem problems in the process of writing. Nonetheless, this recent study has extra finding which acknowledged a new insight that the

upper-intermediate level respondents did not have any problems with their self-esteem since they believed that they were able to do the task. It is evidenced by R#4's comment" (I felt confidence to write, I love writing). This respondent felt that her capability is worthwhile upon her work. Having lack of capability and low self esteem had provoked the other psychological problem, namely lack of motivation. It is indicated that they had lower spirit to achieve the desire to get a good mark. It is evidenced by R#2's statement (I think, I don't need to revise my essay since the result will be the same. There will be no improvement on it). It can be concluded that she gave up easily since she felt incapable to make any correction and improvement on the essay.

On the other side, the respondents who are at upper intermediate level of proficiency had higher motivation. There was a tendency that the students found the value of learning and the benefits from the learning activities. It is evidenced by R#6's (I am happy to compose an essay, I can do more practices). She also devoted all her ability to successfully prevail over the problems faced. It is supported by the observation data that the upper intermediate respondents always made use the consultation time to ask the solutions of their difficulties to her lecturer. The three respondents also tended to have a desire to achieve high targets of the execution of activities. It is evidenced by R#5 (my target in this subject is an A and hopefully, I can write much better later). The similar answers also pronounced by the other two upper intermediate respondents.

DISCUSSION

The data about the student's psychological traits in writing the essay gained shows that the students who are at the basic level of language proficiency had more psychological problems than the students who are at the upper-intermediate of language proficiency.

Anxiety feelings: In terms of the writing learning process, anxiety feeling often comes. This feeling can be caused by three factors: lack of ability, apprehension of time limit and fear of negative evaluation (Oztruck and Cecen, 2007; Yuhardi, 2009).

The respondents who are at the basic proficiency level were anxious when they were asked to write the essay. The anxiety was caused by their lack of ability. It is evidenced by their essays that showed the lack of ability in writing. It is also supported by the data through interview, quoted as follows.

R#1 (a basic level respondent who wrote text #1) (I feel anxious when there is a writing assignment especially writing an essay. Actually, I have a lot of ideas

but I could not write it since I have limited vocabulary. Yes, it is true that I could consult dictionary but it took times, even when I got the vocabularies I still had problem with the grammar. Those things are the causes of my anxiety).

The similar answers were also given by two other respondents. Therefore, it can be concluded that all respondents who are at the basic level of language proficiency had anxiety problem which was caused by their lack of ability.

From the above confession, it can be concluded that the feeling of anxiety were caused by the difficulty in expressing the idea in English because of their lack of vocabulary and their lack of capability in operating the English grammar. This response is relevant to the argument stating that the lack of ability like not having the adequate vocabulary and the incapability of coping with grammar can create anxiety problems which often accompany the process of writing for those who are not proficient and can seriously interfere with the quality and quantity of the text the students produces (Westwood, 2008).

On the other hand, the respondents who are at the upper-intermediate of English proficiency level did not have any anxiety feelings caused by the lack of ability. They tended to believe that they have enough capability to finish the task. With respect to this result, Westwood (2008) said that competent writers commonly have mastered mechanical aspects of writing and tended to have more understanding of the structure needed in writing. That is why the upper-intermediate level respondents did not have any anxiety feeling related to the lack of ability. This kind of problems could be solved by two ways: applying collaborative writing technique since this technique could create the cooperation between higher achievers and lower achievers (Wigati, 2014). By having cooperation, the lower achievers can get many information from the higher achievers and also they could learn grammar and improve the vocabulary by collaborating with their own group. Whilst, the higher achievers also could share their knowledge as well as could train their members in the writing group.

The second is apprehension of negative evaluation. Fear of being evaluated by the teacher also aroused the feeling of anxiety to the respondents who are at the basic level. The anxiety feeling of the respondents was mainly caused by their lack of confidence. Accordingly, they often refused to have the consultation sessions with the lecturer because they did want to get any negative evaluation from the teacher and their friends.

On the other hand, the respondents who represented the upper-intermediate level of language proficiency tended to have no problem with negative evaluation. It is

evidenced by the interview data, R#6 (an upper intermediate level respondent who wrote text#6:" saya malah suka dikoreksi Ms, biar tau kesalahanya dimana" (I love to be corrected, thus I could know where my mistake is).

The result is consistent with the claim stated that students often had anxiety feeling caused by fear of negative evaluation (Oztruck and Cecen, 2007; Yuhardi, 2009). Conversely, this study revealed that the students from the upper-intermediate level of language proficiency tended to have no problem with criticism since they would like to know their mistakes so that they can produce a better writing product.

The problems of the basic levels students could be solved by engaging the role of the teacher in the form of personal consultation. In this personal consultation, the teacher and the students have more comfortable conversation rather than by giving the correction in front of the class or giving feedback on the student's paper. In the consultation, teacher might find student's difficulties as well as give the solution to their problems.

Self-esteem problems: With regard to lack of self esteem, there are four major characteristics of low self esteemed students. They are more likely to be sensitive to criticism. They are disturbed when they do poorly on some tasks they have undertaken. They become aware of some fault or inadequacy in them. They have feelings easily hurt and more concerned about other people really think of them (Owens *et al.*, 2001).

The respondents who are at the basic of language proficiency level had low self esteem. It is evidenced by the statements from R#1 (a basic level respondent) comment about writing the essay (It was difficult, I didn't have high confidence when I wrote the essay) " What was the most difficult for you in writing? "(All, especially the grammar). "Did you like to consult your difficulties". (No, never I was ashamed for my bad work on writing the essay and my friends would recognize it").

She felt disturbed when she did the essay poorly. She also was aware of her inadequacy and concerned about her friends really think of her poor writing ability. The incapability in writing the essay had loosened her confidence and turned be low self-esteemed. This is in line with the statement from Plummer (2001) which stated that to be personally valued, someone has to have personal worth built up from his capacities and because of the capability, the person feels confidence. On the other hand, the person who has less capability often feels less confidence (Plummer, 2001). In addition, this result of the study also confirmed the previous research conducted by Yuhardi (2009) which claimed that students can suffer self-esteem problems in the process of writing.

Nonetheless, this recent study has extra finding which acknowledged that the upper-intermediate level respondents did not have any problems with their self esteem since they believed that they were able to do the task. It is evidenced by R#5 (an upper-intermediate respondent)'s comment" (I felt confidence to write, I love writing). This respondent felt that her capability is worthwhile upon her work. She also showed the feeling of comfortable in doing the writing task. She made herself high self-esteemed.

In conclusion, the students who are at the basic level of language proficiency had psychological anxiety problems which are caused by their lack of ability and apprehension over the negative evaluation. Lack of motivation and self-confidence also accompanied the process of their writing. The findings support the previous claims that the less competence writers often face motivation, anxiety problems and self-esteem problems as they find the writing tasks are very difficult and unrewarding since they have lack of abilities to write (Westwood, 2008). This negative feeling can be avoided by teaching writing through process. It means that the teacher could reduce the anxiety feeling and the low self-esteem through step by step writing or by using portfolio (Oztruck and Cecen, 2007). By writing step by step, the students could have more time to think, to look up the dictionary, to ask their classmate about the difficulties, they also could consult the teacher to find the solution. Therefore, the negative feelings could be reduced because they have enough time and perfect solutions to improve their skills.

Lack of motivation: There are some essential indicators of individuals who have high motivation, i.e., having persistence and ability to respond to the difficulties and to achieve the goal and having a desire to achieve high targets of the execution of activities (Makmun, 1996).

The respondents who are at the basic level of language proficiency still had psychological problem namely lack of motivation since they had lower spirit to achieve a good mark. It is evidenced by R#2 (a basic level respondent who wrote text #2)'s statement: "Kayaknya essaynya ngga usah saya revisi lagi deh ms, toh hasilnya akan sama saja, ngga akan meningkat "(I think, I don't need to revise my essay since the result will be the same. There will be no improvement on it). She gave up easily since she felt incapable to make any correction and improvement on her essay. Concerning about the data from the observation, the three respondents also didn't do any revision on their essay. When the other students revised their essay, R#2 preferred to chat with others. She didn't devote all of her ability to successfully prevail over the problems she faced and had a low persistence to the

objectives of the activity. The three respondents tended to have a low desire to achieve high targets of the execution of activities. Therefore, the results of the essay were not satisfying. Their writings were blocked by less motivation. It is evidenced by the statement from R#1: "saya nggak muluk-muluk ms, saya ngga pengen dapat A, dapat B juga sudah Alhamdulillah "(I don't expect too much. I don't need to get an A, even if I get B, I already feel satisfy). Therefore, it can be concluded that the three respondents had lack of motivation. This finding also supported by some claims that in the process of writing, lower level writers tend to have motivation problems which can interfere the quality and the quantity of the text (Westwood, 2008). For that reason, the challenge for teacher is to restore student's motivation for writing. Weaker writers, in fact, still need a very large amount of support and guidance to improve their writing so that they can also improve their motivation as writers. Westwood (2008) suggests using various incentives and rewards to increase the motivation. It is also necessary to ensure that students attempt to write about topics that genuinely interest them and to which they can relate at a personal level.

On the contrary, the respondents who are at upper-intermediate level of proficiency had higher motivation. There was a tendency that the students found the value of learning and the benefits from the learning activities. It is evidenced by R#6 (I am happy to compose an essay, I can do more practices. Moreover I can get many feedbacks). She also devoted all her ability to successfully prevail over the problems faced. It is supported by the observation data, that all of the respondents who are at the upper-intermediate of language proficiency always made use of the consultation time to ask the solutions of their difficulties to the teacher. The three respondents also tend to have a desire to achieve high targets of the execution of activities. It is evidenced by R#6's (my target in this subject is an A and hopefully, I can write much better later). The three respondents had the tendency that they had intrinsic motivation. The students learned because they wanted to know the content and believed that learning was a very useful for them and they devoted all her ability to successfully prevail over the problems faced. It is in line with the idea stated that a person who has intrinsic motivation tend to dedicate all his/her capacity to overcome problems (Gunarhadi, 2014). The result of this study confirms the previous claim stated that most proficient writers are self-motivated and will engage willingly in writing for its intrinsic rewards. They continue to build their skills in writing through practices and feedbacks from others (Westwood, 2008). To overcome

the low motivations of the lower achievers, the teacher can give some rewards to them in the end of the meeting. This can increase the motivation to give the best. The teacher an increase the extrinsic motivation since the intrinsic motivation of the lower levels students is low. The students are expected to improve their skills of writing because they wanted to get the rewards. They can devote all of their ability to successfully prevail over the problems faced.

CONCLUSION

The lack of ability being experienced by lower achievers caused the psychological problems like anxiety, lack of motivation and lack of self-esteem. Conversely, the respondents who are at the upper-intermediate level of language proficiency showed their ability in the aspects of writing therefore, they tended to have high self-esteem and motivation. To solve these psychological negative interference in the writing process, the teacher can apply portfolio writing, collaborative writing, psychological engagement by way of consultation and giving rewards.

LIMITATIONS

The limitation of this study is that there is a potential loss of reliability in terms of the number of the participants since the study was a qualitative study held in a very small scope. Therefore, it is recommended for the next researchers to do the same research by using quantitative approach.

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