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STUDENTS' LANGUAGE ANXIETY, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING

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ABSTRACT

This study delved on the students' English language anxiety, reading comprehension, and writing. The first set of respondents composed of forty (40) Bachelor of Arts in English Language (AB-EL) students at the Visayas State University (VSU) answered a survey questionnaire on language anxiety adopted from Horwitz et al (1986) and a reading comprehension test adopted from Villamin et al (2003). The second set of respondents composed of forty-nine (49) AB-EL students answered a self-report questionnaire on writing and revision adopted from Abdul-Rahman (2011). The study followed a descriptive survey design and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. To determine relationship between the students' English language anxiety and their reading comprehension, Spearman's Rho correlation analysis was used. Results showed that the respondents had different levels of English language anxiety. This entails that respondents do not have enough confidence with their English language foundation to deal with their English lessons inside the classroom. Moreover, the respondents had different reading comprehension levels based on their background knowledge in comprehending reading texts. Results further showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between students' English language anxiety and their reading comprehension. The study suggests that it is advisable for the students to be more aware with their language anxieties and build more self-confidence and to train themselves to become wide readers to improve their reading comprehension. On the other hand, results on the respondents' writing and revision process showed that majority of the students answered "often" on the usage of English writing process for the structural improvement in their writings while all of them answered "always" in all the items indicated in the revision process. All of them always think that the usage of writing revision process is the ultimate means to improve the quality of their writing after having written some drafts under the writing process. It is highly recommended for the students to practice more when it comes to writing for them to develop their writing ability.

KEYWORDS: language anxiety, reading comprehension, writing, revision

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety has been a matter of considerable interest in language education setting for educators since it is a major obstacle to English language learning that the learners need to overcome (Wu, 2010; Zheng, 2008). It is one of the most important factors which influence language learning process; it is also a central factor which is observed as contributing toward learning process and learning achievement (Hurd, 2007). Among the four language areas, reading is not so much associated with language anxiety compared to that in listening, speaking, and writing. Reading is a skill that must be learned, yet the process of learning to read can become pleasurable and easy for some students or displeasing and complicated to others (Wallace, 2007). Reading comprehension is a skill that is critical in the educational aspect of all

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individuals (Best et al, 2005). Without adequate reading comprehension skills, students can struggle in many subjects areas. Moreover, reading comprehension is a complex interaction among automatic and strategic cognitive processes that enables the reader to create a mental representation of the text (Van Den Broek Espin, 2012). Comprehension depends not only on characteristics of the reader, such as prior knowledge and working memory, but also on language processes, such as basic reading skills, decoding vocabulary, sensitivity to text structure, inference, and motivation. Meanwhile, in a writing process, it is important to know some principles of learning because learning to write is part of learning a second language. Although writing is a difficult skill, it is essential for second language learners' academic success (Williams, 2005). Even if writers know when to use certain words and structures of the target language, they still need to improve their vocabulary and grammar in order to be more fluent in the language. Writing revision is usually the stage of the writing process when the writer takes into account the reader (Ellis et al, 2008). Revision is a necessary and important step to a successful composition of different degrees which depends on the author's writing competence and the efficacy of the instructions received. It is to correct in order to improve the writing process. Revision helps the author to avoid errors in writing. Therefore, there is a need to study on the students' English language anxiety, reading comprehension, and writing for students and mentors to make necessary adjustments when dealing with English lessons.

OBJECTIVES

This research was raised to help determine the students' English language anxiety, reading comprehension, and writing. Specifically, it aimed to:

1. Determine the students' English language anxiety;
2. Determine the students' reading comprehension;
3. Determine the relationship between the students' English language anxiety and their reading comprehension; and
4. Determine the students' writing and revision process.

METHODOLOGY

This study followed a descriptive survey method. The first set of data was gathered from forty (40) AB-EL students who answered a survey questionnaire on English language anxiety adopted from Horwitz et al (1986) and a reading comprehension test adopted from Villamin et al (2003). The second set of data was gathered from forty-nine (49) AB-EL students who answered a self-report questionnaire on writing and revision process adopted from Abdul-Rahman (2011). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. To determine relationship between students' English language anxiety and their reading comprehension, Spearman's Rho correlation analysis was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results showed that majority of the anxiety indicators scored "agree" followed by "neutral", and only three indicators scored "disagree. This implies that the respondents have many language anxieties, and that they do not have enough confidence with their English language foundation to deal with the English lessons inside the classroom. Results further showed that the respondents differed in their anxiety level depending upon the language anxiety item indicator found in the survey questionnaire. This result is supported by Na and Wei's study (2007) that anxiety is a complicated phenomenon, a kind of emotion so that the issue of anxiety in language learning has concerned language educators and researchers for many

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years. Results also showed that the respondents also differed in their reading comprehension scores: 13% "outstanding", 55% "very good", 27% "good", and 5% "fair". Findings further revealed that there is a significant relationship between the students' English language anxiety and their reading comprehension. The lower the anxiety level, the higher score they obtained in the reading comprehension, and the higher the anxiety level, the lower score they obtained in reading comprehension. This result supports Huang's study (2012) which indicated that when language anxiety is felt, one's reading will not work well. Meanwhile, on the writing and revision process, majority of the students answered "often" on the usage of English writing process for the structural improvement in their writings. Wolfe et al (2009) explained that the basic structure of writing is effective in helping college students write better argumentative essays that both of these goals (improving writing through revision instruction and teaching basic argument structure) might be effectively combined. Furthermore, all of the respondents answered "always" on the usage of English revision process to improve the quality of students' writings when they check or revise correctly and appropriately. In the study of Myhill and Jones' (2007), results showed that students do, in fact, have some understanding of global revision in improving writing accuracy.

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CONCLUSION

The study suggests that it is advisable for the students to be more aware with their language anxieties and build more self-confidence and to train themselves to become wide readers to improve their reading comprehension. Moreover, teachers need to develop necessary teaching strategies to enhance their students' writing and reading ability, and to boost their self-confidence. It is highly recommended also for the students to practice and participate more in oral and written exercises for them to become confident learners of the target language.

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