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Factors of English Writing Anxiety: Perspectives from High School English Teacher and Students

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Abstrak

Menulis dalam bahasa Inggris sering menjadi hal yang sulit bagi siswa yang mempelajarinya sebagai bahasa asing karena dapat menimbulkan kecemasan, menurunkan rasa percaya diri, dan membuat mereka kesulitan menghasilkan tulisan yang baik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor penyebab kecemasan menulis pada siswa kelas X SMAN 6 Tanjungpinang, baik dari perspektif guru maupun siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Subjek penelitian adalah 27 siswa kelas X.2 yang dipilih secara purposive karena menunjukkan tingkat kecemasan menulis yang tinggi, sedangkan objek penelitian adalah fenomena kecemasan menulis itu sendiri. Data dikumpulkan melalui angket siswa dan wawancara dengan guru bahasa Inggris, kemudian dianalisis berdasarkan enam indikator: kurangnya pengetahuan, rendahnya kepercayaan diri, ketakutan terhadap penilaian negatif, tekanan waktu, kesulitan bahasa, serta teknik dan latihan menulis yang tidak memadai. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa faktor dominan penyebab kecemasan menulis adalah ketakutan terhadap penilaian negatif (74%), tekanan waktu (74%), dan kesulitan bahasa (70,4%). Faktor lain seperti kurangnya pengetahuan, rendahnya rasa percaya diri, dan minimnya latihan juga turut berkontribusi terhadap munculnya kecemasan menulis. Baik siswa maupun guru mengonfirmasi bahwa faktor-faktor ini saling berhubungan dan berpengaruh kuat terhadap kinerja menulis. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kecemasan menulis dipengaruhi oleh kondisi psikologis, linguistik, dan lingkungan kelas. Oleh karena itu, guru perlu menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang suportif, memberikan umpan balik yang konstruktif, serta menerapkan strategi menulis bertahap agar siswa dapat mengurangi kecemasan dan meningkatkan keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Kecemasan; Menulis*

Abstract

Writing in English is often difficult for students who learn it as a foreign language because it can cause anxiety, reduce confidence, and make it hard to produce good writing. This research aimed to find out the factors that cause writing anxiety among tenth-grade students of SMAN 6 Tanjungpinang, seen from both the teacher's and students' perspectives. The research used a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. The subjects were 27 students from class X.2, chosen purposively because they showed high levels of writing anxiety, while the object of the research was the phenomenon of writing anxiety itself. Data were collected through a questionnaire given to students and an interview with the English teacher. The data were then analyzed based on six indicators: lack of knowledge, low self-confidence, fear of negative evaluation, time pressure, language difficulties, and insufficient writing techniques and practice. The results showed that the main factors of writing anxiety were fear of negative evaluation (74%), time pressure (74%), and language difficulties (70.4%). Other factors, such as lack of knowledge, low confidence, and little practice, also contributed to the problem. Both students and the teacher confirmed that these factors were connected and strongly influenced writing performance. The research concludes that writing anxiety is influenced by psychological, language, and classroom conditions. Therefore, teachers need to create a supportive learning environment, give constructive feedback, and use step-by-step writing strategies to help students reduce anxiety and improve their English writing skills.

Keywords: Anxiety; Writing

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the primary language skills that is crucial in the academic world (Eka Mayasari & Joko Iswanto, 2025). English is an important subject in Indonesian schools, but many students find writing the most difficult skill. Writing is complex because it requires students to organize ideas, use correct grammar, apply suitable vocabulary, and follow writing rules at the same time.

According to (Bryne, 1988), two main challenges make writing difficult. The first is the physiological difficulty, which pertains to the the problem writers face due to the lack of knowledge of immediate interaction and feedback from their readers. This issue primarily concerned with the creation of written content or compositions. The second challenge is linguistic difficulty, which involves strict constraints on

grammar, vocabulary, language usage, and sentence structure in writing. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, these challenges often cause *writing anxiety*, which makes students less confident and less motivated to write (Horwitz, 1986).

Anxiety is an issue that can affect a writer's performance. Anxiety is a normal psychological state characterized by feelings of worry and behaviors such as nervousness, dread, and lack of confidence (Abrar & Humaira, 2020). If not handled, this anxiety can reduce students' motivation and slow down the development of their writing skills.

Based on preliminary research at SMAN 6 Tanjungpinang, many tenth-grade students face this problem. They feel pressured to produce good writing, have limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and are afraid of making mistakes. Teachers also observe that

students often avoid writing tasks, hesitate when asked to write, and make repeated errors because of low confidence and limited language ability. Based on this situation, the research asks: *What are the main factors that cause students' writing anxiety in English, according to both students and teachers at SMAN 6 Tanjungpinang?*

The purpose of this research is to find out the most influential causes of writing anxiety, such as lack of knowledge, low self-confidence, fear of negative evaluation, time pressure, language difficulties, and limited practice. The findings are expected to help teachers and students understand the problem better and apply suitable strategies to reduce anxiety and improve writing ability.

This research is important because there are still few investigations on writing anxiety in Indonesian high schools. By combining the perspectives of students and teachers, this research provides new insights into the psychological challenges of EFL writing and supports the development of teaching approaches that build confidence and motivation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is a skill used to communicate thoughts, opinions, and feelings to others through written language. According to (Ghaith, 2002) writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas and make the visible and concrete. The process of writing also takes time, starting from planning and drafting to revising and editing, which requires a lot of practice (Harmer,

2004). Writing is an important but complex skill because students must organize ideas, use correct grammar, choose the right vocabulary, and follow writing rules.

At the same time, anxiety often becomes a problem in learning English. Writing anxiety is a linguistic barrier that prevents writers from completing their projects (Bayat, 2014). Writing anxiety means students feel worried or afraid when asked to write. According to (Şahan. & Tangılntız, 2022) writing anxiety can happen because they lack knowledge, have low confidence, fear negative comments, face time pressure, Language Difficulties or Insufficient Writing Technique and Writing-Practice

Table 1. Causes of Writing Anxiety

No	Causes of Anxiety	Description
1	Lack of Knowledge	A feeling of inadequacy or uncertainty due to insufficient understanding of the topic or material.
2	Low Self-Confidence	A lack of belief in one's abilities or skills, which creates self-doubt.
3	Fear of Negative Evaluation	Anxiety about being judged or evaluated negatively by others, leading to fear of criticism or rejection
4	Time Pressure	Anxiety caused by feeling rushed or having insufficient time to complete tasks or meet deadlines.
5	Language Difficulties	Struggling with communication due to lack of proficiency in the language.
6	Insufficient Writing Technique and Writing Practice	Inadequate writing skills, such as organizing ideas and grammar, along with limited practice, can lead to fear and difficulty in writing.

Several studies show that many EFL learners experience writing anxiety. (Saidah, 2023) found that limited practice makes students more anxious. (Olgamora, 2022) explained that students worry too much about grammar and evaluation, which lowers their writing quality. (Bayat, 2014) also showed that fear of mistakes and academic demands make writing even harder.

In conclusion, writing anxiety is caused by psychological, language, and classroom factors. Teachers need to understand these causes so they can create a supportive learning environment and help students build confidence in writing English.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. According to Schrieber and Asner-self in Iswanto, qualitative research examines occurrences in their natural surroundings, aiming to interpret events in terms of the meaning humans assign to them (Iswanto & Nur Fadilah, 2024). The purpose was to explore the factors causing writing anxiety among high school students in their natural learning context. The research was conducted at SMAN 6 Tanjungpinang during the 2024/2025 academic year. The subjects were 27 students from class X.2, selected through purposive sampling because they showed high levels of writing anxiety, along with one English teacher who provided supporting perspectives. Purposive sampling is a method of selecting samples based on specific criteria or predefined consideration (Sugiono,

2009).
Data were collected using two techniques: a student questionnaire and a semi-structured interview with the English teacher.

Sugiono in Iswanto, Questionnaire is a data collection method that involves presenting respondents with a series of written questions or statements to which they are expected to provide responses (Afdal et al, 2024). The questionnaire, distributed via Google Form, consisted of twelve statements (positive and negative) The statements include six positive and six negative items, Positive statements are located in odd-numbered items, while negative statements are located in even-numbered items.

The questionnaire measured students' perceptions of the causes of writing anxiety, such as lack of knowledge, low self-confidence, fear of negative evaluation, time pressure, language difficulties, and insufficient writing practice.

Table 2. Causes of Writing Anxiety in English Questionnaire

NO	STATEMENT	SD	D	U	ASA
1.	I feel confident in my ability to choose topics and organize ideas when writing in English.				
2.	I find it difficult to understand grammar, sentence structure and correct spelling when writing in English.				
3.	I am confident in my ability to produce good writing in				

	English.
4.	I was afraid of trying to write in English because I was afraid the results would be bad.
5.	I am confident in receiving input from teachers to improve my writing skills in English.
6.	I often anxiety that my writing will get a bad assessment from the teacher or classmates.
7.	I feel capable of producing good English writing even though the time given is limited.
8.	I feel anxiety and have difficulty writing in English when the time given is limited.
9.	I feel confident to write in a foreign language despite the linguistic challenges to face.
10.	I find it difficult and reluctant to write in a foreign language because of the many grammatical rules and sentence structures that must be applied."
11.	I feel confident in my ability to write in English because I have practiced writing regularly.
12.	I often feel anxiety about writing in English due to lack of practice and correct writing techniques.

The teacher interview provided

deeper insights into classroom observations and confirmed the patterns emerging from students' responses.

The collected data were analyzed qualitatively. Teacher interviews were transcribed, coded, categorized, and examined thematically to identify recurring patterns. Questionnaire responses were presented in percentages and visualized with bar charts generated by Google Form, then interpreted narratively. This combination allowed the researcher to compare and triangulate students' and teacher's perspectives, offering a comprehensive understanding of the dominant factors contributing to English writing anxiety.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The research results obtained from data collection, followed by an in-depth discussion of the findings. These findings will be discussed in detail and linked to relevant theoretical frameworks to identify significant patterns, anomalies, and strengths.

Table 3. Positive Statement

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Statement 1	18,5	14,8	3,7	48,1	14,8
Statement 3	14,8	29,6	3,7	33,3	18,5
Statement 3	11,1	40,7	0	29,6	18,5
Statement 7	11,1	48,1	3,7	25,9	11,1
Statement 9	22,2	33,3	3,7	22,2	18,5
Statement 11	14,8	37	0	37	11,1
Total of	15,41	33,91	2,46	32,68	15,41

percentage

Based on the table above, the highest percentage of positive statements is disagree category (33.91%), then followed by the agree category (32.68%). Then 15.41% are in the strongly disagree and strongly agree categories, the lowest percentage is in the uncertain category (2.46%). For a more detailed understanding, the examples of questionnaire results are displayed in the graph below.

1. I feel confident in my ability to choose topics and organize ideas when writing in English.
27 responses

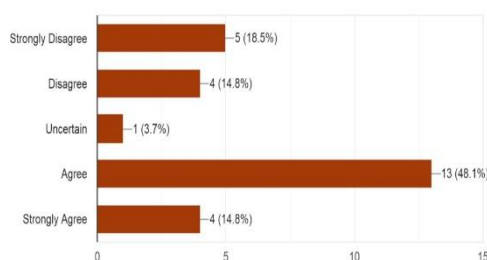


Figure 1. Grafic of 1st Statement

Based on the picture above Specifically, 13 respondents (48.1%) stated "Agree" and 4 respondents (14.8%) stated "Strongly Agree", so that a total of 62.9% of respondents felt sure. On the other hand, there was a significant proportion of respondents who were less or not sure, with 5 respondents (18.5%) stating "Strongly Disagree" and 4 respondents (14.8%) stating "Disagree". Only 1 respondent (3.7%) stated "Uncertain". This data comes from a total of 27 respondents. It showed that most respondents showed their confidence in choosing topics and organizing ideas when writing in English.

3. I am confident in my ability to produce good writing in English.

27 responses

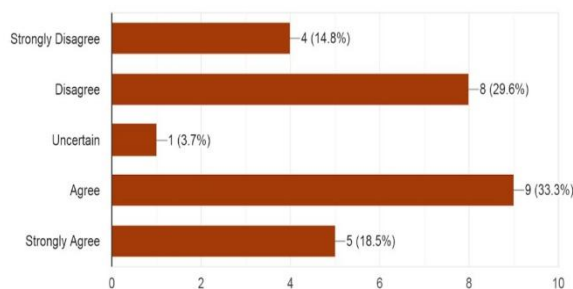


Figure 2. Grafic of 2nd Statement

Based on the data above, specifically, 9 respondents (33.3%) stated "Agree" and 5 respondents (18.5%) stated "Strongly Agree", so that a total of 51.8% of respondents felt confident in this ability. On the other hand, there was a substantial proportion of respondents who were less or not confident, with 8 respondents (29.6%) stating "Disagree" and 4 respondents (14.8%) stating "Strongly Disagree". Only 1 respondent (3.7%) stated "Uncertain". This data comes from a total of 27 respondents. The data showed that most respondents show their confidence in their ability to write in English.

Table 4. Negative Statement

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Statement 2	0	14,8	3,7	66,7	14,8
Statement 4	7,4	37	0	40,7	14,8
Statement 6	3,7	14,8	7,4	44,4	29,6
Statement 8	0	18,5	7,4	44,4	29,6
Statement 10	0	25,9	3,7	51,9	18,5
Statement 12	7,4	25,9	0	40,7	25,9
Total of Percentage	3,08	22,81	3,7	48,13	22,2

Based on the table above the highest percentage of negative statements is in the agree category which is 48.13%,

then followed by the disagree category with a score of 22.81%. Then 22.2% in the strongly agree category. 3.7% in the uncertain category. The lowest percentage is in the strongly disagree category with a percentage of 23.08%. For a more detailed understanding, the examples of questionnaire results are displayed in the graph below.

2. I find it difficult to understand grammar, sentence structure and correct spelling when writing in English.
27 responses

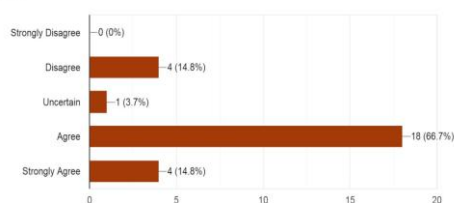


Figure 3. Grafic of 7st Statement

Based on the picture above specifically, 18 respondents (66.7%) stated "Agree" and 4 respondents (14.8%) stated "Strongly Agree", so that a total of 81.5% of respondents acknowledged the existence of the difficulty. On the other hand, there was a very small proportion of respondents who did not feel any difficulty, with 4 respondents (14.8%) stating "Disagree" and no respondents (0%) stating "Strongly Disagree". Only 1 respondent (3.7%) stated "Uncertain". This data comes from a total of 27 respondents. It showed that most respondents find it difficult to understand grammar, sentence structure, and correct spelling when writing in English.

4. I was afraid of trying to write in English because I was afraid the results would be bad.
27 responses

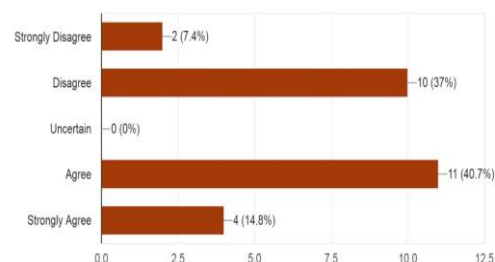


Figure 4. Grafic of 8th Statement

Based on the data above specifically, 11 respondents (40.7%) stated "Agree" and 4 respondents (14.8%) stated "Strongly Agree", so that a total of 55.5% of respondents felt the concern. On the other hand, there was a significant proportion of respondents who did not feel the fear, with 10 respondents (37.0%) stating "Disagree" and 2 respondents (7.4%) stating "Strongly Disagree". No respondents (0%) stated "Uncertain". This data comes from a total of 27 respondents. The data showed that most respondents were afraid to try writing in English because they were worried that the results would be bad.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify the factors that cause writing anxiety among tenth-grade students at SMAN 6 Tanjungpinang. Based on the questionnaires and teacher interviews, it was found that most students experienced a fairly high level of anxiety during writing activities. Out of six factors examined, the three most dominant were fear of negative evaluation (74%), time pressure (74%), and language difficulties (70.4%). Other factors such as lack of knowledge, low

self-confidence, and inadequate writing practice and techniques were also present, but with lower percentages.

In general, these findings indicate that writing anxiety is not only triggered by limited academic ability but also strongly influenced by students' psychological conditions. The interview with the teacher supported this conclusion, showing that many students often displayed hesitation, procrastination, or even refused to complete writing tasks. The teacher also emphasized that students with lower English proficiency tended to experience higher levels of anxiety compared to those who were more proficient.

Lack of Knowledge

Lack of knowledge appeared as one of the factors that contributed to writing anxiety. Students who did not fully understand the topic or were unable to organize their ideas effectively often felt pressured when they started to write. Many admitted that they felt confused when constructing sentences, choosing the right vocabulary, or arranging coherent paragraphs. This confusion reduced their confidence because they believed their writing was not good enough. Therefore, limited knowledge served as an early trigger for writing anxiety.

Low Self-Confidence

Low self-confidence also played an important role in writing anxiety. Some students admitted that they doubted their writing results even after trying hard. This uncertainty prevented them from freely expressing their ideas.

As a result, they tended to write less, delay tasks, or even avoid writing completely. Their lack of confidence made them constantly assume that their writing would be wrong or unacceptable. Instead of focusing on the process of writing, they focused more on their fear, which made writing feel stressful and unenjoyably.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation was one of the strongest factors, with the same percentage as time pressure (74%). Many students worried that their writing would receive poor comments from teachers or classmates. This fear put them under pressure and stopped them from fully developing their ideas. Rather than seeing feedback as constructive input, students considered it as frightening criticism. As a result, they often avoided writing practice. The teacher also confirmed that students' defensive attitudes toward evaluation often made their anxiety worse in class.

Time Pressure

Time pressure also emerged as a dominant factor, with 74%. Students reported that they struggled when asked to write within a time limit, such as in exams or in-class assignments. They admitted that it was difficult to think clearly in such situations. This often caused them to panic, rush, and produce lower-quality writing. Over time, repeated experiences of time pressure increased their reluctance to face writing tasks, as they felt unable to write quickly and effectively.

Language Difficulties

Language difficulties were another major factor, with 70.4%. The most common problems were limited vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. These limitations often forced students to pause while writing because they did not know how to continue their sentences. Some admitted that they needed a long time just to create one correct sentence. This made writing feel like a burden instead of an enjoyable activity. The teacher also noted that students often repeated the same grammar mistakes, which only increased their sense of fear and anxiety. Inadequate Writing Practice and Techniques

In addition to the main factors above, inadequate writing practice and poor understanding of writing techniques also contributed to anxiety. Students who rarely practiced writing found it more difficult when they were given assignments. The lack of consistent practice made them unfamiliar with expressing ideas in written form. Moreover, their limited knowledge of writing techniques such as making an outline, developing paragraphs, or structuring sentences made the situation worse. As a result, students often felt unprepared and anxious when facing writing tasks.

The findings of this study clearly show that writing anxiety is not only caused by language limitations but also influenced by psychological aspects and classroom conditions. The dominant factors fear of negative evaluation, time pressure, and language difficulties, demonstrate that writing is often seen as a stressful activity by

students. Meanwhile, other factors such as lack of knowledge, low self-confidence, and inadequate practice highlight the complex and interconnected nature of writing anxiety.

From an academic perspective, this study provides a deeper understanding of high school students' challenges in learning English in Indonesia. It contributes by identifying the key factors that teachers and educators can use to design more effective strategies for writing instruction. Practically, teachers are encouraged to create a more supportive learning environment, reduce excessive pressure, and provide gradual writing practice that can build students' confidence. With such approaches, writing anxiety can be reduced, and students' writing skills can improve more effectively.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that English writing anxiety among tenth-grade students at SMAN 6 Tanjungpinang is mainly caused by three factors: fear of negative evaluation (74%), time pressure (74%), and language difficulties (70.4%). Other factors such as lack of knowledge, low self-confidence, and limited writing practice also play a role. These findings answer the research question by showing that psychological, linguistic, and situational factors all influence students' writing anxiety.

The results support the Foreign Language Anxiety Theory (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), which explains that fear of evaluation and limited language ability are important causes of

anxiety in learning a foreign language. In practice, this research suggests that teachers should build a supportive classroom atmosphere, give constructive feedback, provide enough time for writing, and use step-by-step writing activities to reduce students' anxiety and increase their confidence.

This research has some limitations because it only involved a small number of students in one class. Future research should include more participants, compare results across different schools, and consider other factors such as technology, learning styles, or social support.

Based on the findings, teachers are advised to guide students more actively, avoid excessive negative judgment, and encourage regular writing practice. For students, the results highlight the need to build self-confidence and practice writing consistently. For future researchers, this research can be a starting point for exploring more strategies to reduce writing anxiety in foreign language learning.

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