

## **WRITING ANXIETY FACTORS IN FOURTH-SEMESTER ENGLISH STUDENTS AT MUHAMMADIYAH KOTABUMI UNIVERSITY**

**By:**

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**Abstract:** This research aimed to investigate the factors of students' anxiety in writing class and identify the dominant factors of students' anxiety in writing class. This research used descriptive qualitative research methods. The data from this research were taken from the interview results with 10 students in the fourth semester of the English education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University academic year 2021/2022. The instrument used in this research is an interview. In the data analysis technique, the data using the Miles and Huberman model which consists of reduction data, display data, and conclusion drawing/verification. The research findings reveal eight key factors contributing to students' anxiety in writing classes. These include inadequate writing practice (4 respondents), low self-confidence in writing (6 respondents), anxiety from writing (8 respondents), inadequate writing technique (8 respondents), pressure for perfect work (8 respondents), time pressure (9 respondents), problem with topic choice (9 respondents) and language difficulties (10 respondents). The three most prominent factors are language difficulties, time pressure, and topic choice issues, affecting 10 and 9 respondents. These findings provided important insights for educators to understand the sources of students' anxiety and develop effective strategies to help them overcome barriers in learning to write.

**Keywords:** factors, students' anxiety, writing class

### **INTRODUCTION**

English has four skills, namely speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Of the four skills, one of the important skills to be mastered by students who often experience

problems in the process of conveying an idea to translate it into good and correct writing. Writing is the skill of expressing ideas, opinions, and ideas in written form (Setiani, 2017). Writing is one way of communication

used by someone in written form so that the information stated in the written form can be shared with other persons (Sundari et al., 2021). Writing is a tool used to disseminate information and interact with other people through written language (Novia, et al., 2024). This means that writing is important because it requires thoughts that can be put into writing.

Writing is crucially significant for students; nevertheless, most struggle with it (Sartika et al., 2024). Students struggle with writing due to several aspects, such as grammar, spelling, word choice, paragraph organization, verb agreement, capitalization, and punctuation (Ariyanti, 2016). Therefore, students must understand these aspects when pouring their thoughts into written form.

As for writing skills, students also often experience problems in delivering an idea to be poured into good and correct writing. This is partly due to the anxiety experienced by students in writing. Anxiety is an emotion consisting of feelings of fear, worry, and tension which are then expressed as a response to certain situations (Karamina et al., 2024). According to Prasetyaningrum et al. (2021), anxiety is related to a feeling of fear of something that will happen or has happened which in the end is expected to lead to a stigma that we will experience failure. This means that anxiety is one of the most influential factors in the student's learning process.

In this anxiety, usually, students who learn a foreign language or a second language will experience problems in writing skills. Some

aspects indicate students experience writing anxiety such as low self-confidence, lack of ideas in writing, lack of practice in writing English, panic when asking to write in English, and fear of writing exams (Prasetyaningrum et al., 2021). This means that anxiety plays a big role to students in having a negative influence on the progress of the student's writing process. Moreover, ideally, third-semester students should no longer experience anxiety in writing classes because writing is not the first experience that students learn and face when in writing courses. Students should already have self-preparedness and be better at taking writing courses.

An interview with a lecturer in an essay writing course in the third semester of the English education study program on November 12,

2021, revealed several common mistakes students make in their writing: First, students often need help with writing organization and grammar, struggling to structure their essays and use correct grammar. Second, they should ensure their content is aligned with the given topic, leading to irrelevant or incomplete ideas. Third, the student needed help with choice, punctuation, and spelling issues, reflecting a need for proper vocabulary and mechanics.

The lecturer observed that while some students progressed, many still needed to gain strong writing skills. These challenges were attributed to cognitive unpreparedness, such as limited mastery of writing techniques, rather than anxiety or mental readiness, as students appeared relaxed during writing activities.

Based on the results of interviews with third-semester students of the English education study program on Friday, November 19, 2021, students reported experiencing anxiety during writing activities. They mentioned several causes for their anxiety. First, they needed more vocabulary, which made it take longer for them to complete their writing tasks. Second, they felt the 100-minute time limit for writing practice in class needed to be increased to complete their work. Third, they found it challenging to apply grammar rules, such as using correct past, present, or future tense formulas and faced difficulties forming sentences. Fourth, they needed help to develop ideas, especially when working with unfamiliar topics.

Students also feared making mistakes when asking questions about their writing, as they often needed help understanding the material thoroughly. Many reported feeling panicked and nervous when the allotted time for completing their writing tasks ran out before they could finish. Additionally, frequent errors in punctuation and spelling, such as missing periods or incorrect letters, further increased their anxiety. Lastly, they admitted feeling insecure about their writing results, which made them anxious when submitting their assignments.

Based on the findings, it was concluded that students experienced significant anxiety in writing classes. Contributing factors included limited vocabulary, time constraints, difficulty developing ideas, fear of making mistakes, lack of grammar

mastery, frequent errors in spelling and punctuation, nervousness, and a lack of confidence. These challenges highlighted the importance of studying writing anxiety to help lecturers identify its causes and improve students' writing skills.

This research aimed to investigate and identify the dominant factors contributing to students' anxiety in writing classes among fourth-semester students in the English education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University during the 2021/2022 academic year. The research focused on answering the question: "What are the factors and dominant causes of students' anxiety in writing classes in the fourth semester of the English education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University in the academic year 2021/2022?"

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. According to Moleong (2017), qualitative research is research that provides a view through words, and natural and detailed descriptions. This means that this research produces a view on the research subject analytically through words, naturally and specifically. This research was conducted at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University. Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University is the best university in North Lampung with good accreditation which is located on Hasan Kepala Ratu Street, No. 1052, Sindang Sari, Kotabumi, North Lampung, Lampung province. The data source was obtained from students of the Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University in the fourth semester of the English education

study program academic year 2021/2022. To select the sample, a purposive sampling technique was applied. Based on students' midterm exam scores, therefore, 10 students out of 43 students were taken as samples. Their initials were AM, MMAF, RP, AA, DEP, ES, MNA, RMY, RDS, and SMP.

To collect the research data, an interview technique was carried out. The interview consisted of 10 questions which aimed to obtain more information related to the required data. To test the validity of the data collected, expert judgment was used. As a result, the interview was declared valid by the validator.

Data collection was carried out for five days, starting from 18 to 22 July 2022. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive analysis. As Miles and Huberman model

(1980), the qualitative data consists of reduction data, display data, and conclusion drawing/verification.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data obtained, the factors of students' anxiety in writing class during the fourth semester of the English education study program Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University academic year 2021/2022 were presented as follows.

**Table 1**  
**Result of Data Display from the Interview**

No	Factors of Students' Anxiety in Writing Class	Informants										Total		
		A	M	R	A	D	E	M	R	R	S		O	
1	AW	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
2	TP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	9
3	LSCW	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	6
4	IOT	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	8
5	LD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
6	PTC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	9
7	IWP	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	4
8	PPW	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8

Description:

- AW : Anxiety from Writing
- TP : Time Pressure
- LSCW : Low Self-Confidence in Writing
- IWT : Inadequate Writing Technique
- LD : Language Difficulties
- PTC : Problem with Topic Choice

- IWP : Inadequate Writing Practice
- PPW : Pressure for Perfect Work
- ✓ : have subcategory
- : did not have a subcategory

The study conducted during the 2021/2022 academic year at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University identified eight key factors contributing to writing anxiety among fourth-semester students in the English Education Study Program. The first factor, anxiety from writing, affected eight students (AM, MMAF, DEP, ES, MNA, RMY, RDS, and SMP) who reported feeling anxious when uncertain about what to write.

The second factor, time pressure, was experienced by nine students (AM, MMAF, RP, AA, DEP, ES, MNA, RMY, and SMP), who found it challenging to complete tasks within the allocated time frame.

The third factor, low self-confidence in writing, impacted six

students (AM, MMAF, DEP, ES, MNA, and SMP) who expressed insecurities about their writing abilities, particularly when they felt unprepared.

The fourth factor is inadequate writing technique. Eight students (AM, MMAF, AA, DEP, ES, MNA, RMY, and SMP) reported inadequate writing techniques and needed help organizing and structuring their writing effectively.

The fifth factor, language difficulties, emerged as the most significant, with all ten students (AM, MMAF, RP, AA, DEP, ES, MNA, RMY, RDS, and SMP) citing limited vocabulary knowledge as a significant source of anxiety.

The sixth factor, problems with topic choice, was experienced by nine students (AM, MMAF, RP, AA, DEP, ES, MNA, RMY, and SMP), who

found it challenging to write on unfamiliar or complex topics.

The seventh factor, inadequate writing practice, was reported by four students (MMAF, RP, ES, and SMP), who felt their lack of regular practice increased their anxiety.

The eighth factor, pressure for perfection, affected eight students (AM, MMAF, DEP, ES, MNA, RMY, RDS, and SMP) who were anxious about producing flawless work due to fear of low grades. These findings show that writing anxiety has multiple causes and highlight the importance of addressing these issues to help students improve their writing confidence.

Eight key factors contributed to students' anxiety in writing classes for fourth-semester English education students at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University are explained as follows.

The first factor, anxiety from writing, occurs when students feel confused and anxious because they do not know what to write. According to Prasetyaningrum et al. (2021), students often fear others' assessments of their writing, and time-constrained written exams exacerbate this anxiety. Interviews revealed that 10 students felt confused when unsure of what to write during practice, with 8 experiencing significant anxiety and 2 feeling less anxious. For instance, one student stated, *“Yes, I am very confused, because it starts with ignorance and worry”* (AM, July 18, 2022).

The second factor, Time Pressure, involves the stress of producing essays under strict time limits, which affects students' focus. Prasetyaningrum et al. (2021)



emphasized that writing activities require sufficient time for planning, organizing, and revising. Interviews revealed that 9 students felt anxious due to the time constraints given by lecturers, while 1 student reported not being concerned about time limits. Among these, 4 students found the allocated time insufficient, while 6 thought it was adequate. One student shared, *“The duration of time given by the lecturer was not enough for me and makes me feel anxious when writing, because I don’t think there’s enough time to finish the writing that I have made”* (RP, July 18, 2022).

The third factor, low self-confidence in writing, stems from students doubting their ability to write effectively in a foreign language or organize their writing well. Wern and Rahmat (2021) noted that writing challenges directly affect students’

confidence. Interviews showed that 6 students felt insecure when writing without preparation, while 4 felt confident under similar circumstances. One student stated, *“I feel insecure when writing without any preparation. Sometimes, if we write what we know, maybe self-confidence. But if we do not know the material, it makes us less confident or brings us down”* (DEP, July 19, 2022).

The fourth factor, inadequate writing techniques, reflects students’ poor skills in structuring their writing and understanding the writing process. Alfiansyah et al. (2017) described this as a lack of skill development. The interviews showed that 8 students felt anxious about their writing techniques, while 2 did not share this concern. Six students were unsure if their techniques were

correct, while 4 did not question their methods. For example, one student said, *“Yes, because the spelling and punctuation are still missing. Yes, it makes me anxious”* (MMAF, July 18, 2022).

The fifth factor, language difficulties, is a significant source of anxiety caused by limited vocabulary knowledge. Tupang (2014) argues ESL learners often struggle with inadequate vocabulary. All 10 students reported feeling anxious about limited vocabulary during writing exercises or exams. One student explained, *“I feel anxious when there is a lot of vocabulary that I don’t know during writing exercises or exams, because it makes it difficult for me to write”* (ES, July 19, 2022).

The sixth factor, problems with topic choice, occurs when students are asked to write about unfamiliar or

challenging topics. Prasetyaningrum et al. (2021) identified limited topical knowledge as a source of anxiety. Interviews showed that 9 students felt anxious when given unfamiliar topics, while 1 student felt less anxious. Additionally, 8 students mentioned that lecturers often assigned unfamiliar topics, while 2 disagreed. One student noted, *“I am often given topics that are rarely known when practicing writing, such as science or astronomy. Yes, I am very worried because there are so many vocabularies I don’t know”* (RMY, July 22, 2022).

The seventh factor, inadequate writing practice, arises from a lack of opportunities to practice writing. Serewara Tupang (2014) found that low-performing students experience more anxiety due to insufficient practice. Interviews revealed that 4

students rarely practiced writing in English, while 6 reported practicing two to three times a week. One student noted *“I often do English writing practice because writing is fun. It could be two or three times a week”* (AA, July 19, 2022).

The eighth factor, pressure for perfect work, reflects students' anxiety about producing flawless writing and achieving perfect scores. Wahyuni and Umam (2017) noted that demands for perfection often heighten anxiety. Interviews showed that 8 students felt anxious about achieving perfection, while 2 did not. Seven students admitted to thinking about achieving perfect scores, and all 10 students reported receiving unsatisfactory grades at some point, which exacerbated their anxiety. One student explained, *“I want good grades in the work I do, and I become*

*anxious when working on my writing. I have received unsatisfactory grades because of minimal preparation, and I automatically get a low score”* (ES, July 19, 2022).

The dominant factors contributing to students' anxiety were language difficulties, which affected all 10 students, followed by time pressure and problems with topic choice, which each impacted 9 students. These findings emphasize the need to address these issues through targeted interventions to reduce anxiety and enhance students' writing skills.

## **CONCLUSION**

Students' anxiety in writing classes during the fourth semester of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University in the academic year

2021/2022 is influenced by eight factors, namely anxiety from writing, time pressure, low self-confidence in writing, inadequate writing techniques, language difficulties, problems with topic choice, inadequate writing practice, and pressure for perfect work. Among these, the dominant factors were identified as language difficulties, time pressure, and problems with topic choice.

This study recommends that students, as English language learners, address the factors contributing to their writing anxiety by adopting effective strategies. These include improving their mastery of grammar and vocabulary, managing their time effectively when completing writing tasks, and developing a deeper understanding of the topics assigned by lecturers or

teachers. Intense practice and consistent effort in mastering writing-related skills are essential to reduce anxiety and improve performance in writing tasks.

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