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Writing Anxiety in English as a Foreign Language and How to Improve The Writing Skill

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Abstract: Writing is one of important skill in English, by mastering writing skill students can communicate and express their opinions or ideas to other. However, One of the obstacles in writing is Writing anxiety. Writing anxiety is also often experienced by students, especially when learning to write a second language or English. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the type of anxiety, the solution to overcome writing anxiety in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and the ways to develop writing skill in EFL. This study employed systematic review method which is made in a systematic and planned manner. It was found that the cognitive and somatic anxiety were the common type of anxiety faced by EFL students (n=11). Giving positive feedback and making a group work were an effective and easy ways to overcome the writing anxiety of EFL (n=4) . In addition, this study also found the effective ways to improve EFL writing skill by using three dimension : accuracy, complexity and fluently (n=2). Teacher plays important role during writing in the classroom. If teacher can maximize their role to create enjoy class, give positive feedback to the students and apply three dimension method, it helps students to reduce writing anxiety and improved their writing skill which is beneficial in their future life.

Key Words: Writing Anxiety; English as a Foreign Language; Writing Skill

Abstrak: Menulis adalah salah satu keterampilan penting dalam bahasa Inggris, dengan menguasai keterampilan menulis siswa dapat berkomunikasi dan mengungkapkan pendapat atau idenya kepada orang lain. Namun, salah satu kendala menulis adalah merasa cemas. Kecemasan menulis sering dialami siswa, terutama ketika belajar menulis bahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis kecemasan, solusi mengatasi kecemasan menulis untuk siswa dan cara mengembangkan keterampilan menulis. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode literature review. Ditemukan bahwa kognitif dan somatik adalah jenis kecemasan yang paling banyak dialami siswa (jumlah = 4). Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menemukan cara yang efektif untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa dengan menggunakan tiga dimensi : ketelitian, kerumitan dan kelancaran (jumlah = 2). Guru berperan penting dikelas, Jika guru dapat memaksimalkan perannya untuk menciptakan kelas yang asyik, memberikan umpan balik positif kepada siswa dan menerapkan metode tiga dimensi. Hal ini akan membantu siswa untuk mengurangi kecemasan menulis dan meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa yang bermanfaat untuk masa depan siswa.

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Kata Kunci: Kecemasan dalam Menulis; Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing; Kemampuan Menulis.

INTRODUCTION

English has four skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing stated by Kementrian dan Kebudayaan RI number 22 year 2016. Among the four skills, speaking and writing are very crucial skills because they reflect what people do with a language (Lestari, Leoneto, Ihsan, 2019). Writing is sharing ideas into written form or telling something to others through writing. Writing can also be translated as an expression of feelings as outlined in writing. In other words, we can communicate with others indirectly through the writing process Pranoto (2004). By writing an idea, many people can read and understand our argumentation. Moreover, writing skill is needed in this globalization era. Although the technology has increased rapidly but writing skill cannot be replaced by technology because in this writing process include of feeling. Well-writing is basically an enormous challenge for both native and non-native students (Muslim, 2004). To deliver an understandable piece of writing, students ought to have acquired language knowledge such as spelling, grammar, vocabulary and syntax. Furthermore, they should apply writing techniques, such as text genre, mechanics, organization, and coherence and unity. In this way, writing gets to be more complex, and most students argue that writing is the most difficult ability to master (Kurniasih, 2010). Writing is taken into account as a demanding skill especially for learners of a second or foreign language. It is a demanding skill because the learners need to think in their language then translate their thought or ideas into English. Moreover, in writing the learners must pay attention to the grammar. Beside it is demanding, it's necessary for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to have. Writing is taken into account to be for most complex and difficult skill to master, and as a rule, it's more complex and difficult than writing in one's language (Wahyuni and Umam, 2007). Generally, it's much bigger with the students of English as a far of language. Students nowadays have little or no interest in writing which is so important to fulfil the education requirements (Muslim, 2014).

Anxiety could be a natural feeling that will happen in several situations (Miri and Jola: 2018). It is actually a standard emotion that folks feel in their lives during difficult times, and it's feasible to occur to students in educational setting. Anxiety is an inevitable feeling that affects learners in their learning process. However, due to the challenges that need to be encountered in writing, majority of the learners may feel strained or discouraged (Rohmah and Muslim: 2020), worried (Karlina and Pancoro, 2018) and uncomfortable (Wahyuni and Umam, 2017) which is called writing anxiety. Writing anxiety may eventually cause them to discharge themselves from even trying to put in writing because of this anxiety. Thus, students that suffer high levels of anxiety, may suffer in their learning process. Several studies within the area of English writing instruction have highlighted that writing anxiety is a crucial factor that affects the quality in addition as perception of writing among students. (Rohmah, Muslim, 2020) Writing collectively of productive skills, is thought to be sensitive to learner's anxiety (Karlina and pancoro 2018).

Writing anxiety in EFL classroom can interfere with the unity of student's belief in writing. In the globalization era, writing in foreign language or English is a crucial Language skill for communication(Wahyuni and umam, 2017). An essential role in the development of language learning especially writing played by students and teacher (Mulyono, Warni, Suryoputro, 2020). Poor linguistic knowledge, time pressure, lack of negative motivation, fear of negative feedback (Wahyuni & Umam, 2017), lack of knowledge of writing anxiety and role models who are not peoficient enough (Demircivi, 2020) are the factors that influence writing

anxiety. Students cannot reflect ideas and organize writing self - efficacy due to high anxiety. On the other hand, students will perform better in writing skill and achieve higher test score (Wern & Rahmat, 2021) and came up with better quality compositions with low anxiety (Ozkan & Degdeviren, 2015). Unfortunately, EFL students in Indonesia has writing experience, writing self efficacy and writing competence is far from the average (Wahyuni & Umam, 2017).

As we know that writing anxiety is one of the important problems in learning English. Writing anxiety is also often experienced by students, especially when learning to write a second language or English. Writing anxiety happened in all level student's backgrounds. Shame, fear of guilty, lack of confidence, anxiety, are the physic factors which influence a person's language ability. However, increasing a person's ability to learn a second language affected by motivation and confidence. The Process of second language acquisition effected by high motivation, high self-esteem and low anxiety. On the other hand, The Process of second language acquisition hindrance by low motivation, low self-esteem, and anxiety according study by Wijayanti (2012). Likewise, study by Rohmah and Muslim (2020) If they have positive perception toward writing, they will make writing as their hobby. They will encourage to participate in writing, if they have more positive experiences with writing. They are highly comfortable in different situations because they have regular writing habits (Rohmah and Muslim, 2020).

Despite the causes of writing anxiety in EFL learner, there is still a lack of comprehensive research on the types of writing anxiety for EFL learners. Although there are a number of review articles about a writing anxiety, none focuses on the ways to improve EFL learner's writing skill. The present study is importance in the field because a systematic review of the findings yielded by the previous studies in the literature can pave the way for future studies and provide an insight for researchers. In addition, of the many studies into the writing anxiety, only a few were conducted in EFL. Finally, overall the literature suggested that there was a lack of research into the solutions to overcome writing anxiety for EFL learners. Therefore, for the purpose of the study, response to the following research questions were sought:

Research Question 1 (RQ1). What are the trends in writing anxiety in EFL research?

Research Question 2 (RQ2). What were the main findings from the available literature?

METHOD

This study used a literature review. Hasibuan, Zainal A. (2007), argues that the Literature review contains a description of the theory, conclusion, and other research materials obtained from reference materials to be used as the ground for research activities. From systematic reviews, the findings of earlier research can be verified for consistency and generalizability to other scopes or samples (Mulrow, 1994). The different between systematic review and literature review are Systematic Review is a literature review that is made in a systematic and planned manner. while the literature review is a review that discusses information published in certain subject areas with a certain period of time. We have read several articles and have analyzed 34 articles about game based learning. By using theoretical analysis which makes it easier for us to get a lot of pictures related to the problems we are researching.

On 7 june 2021, a systematic research was conducted in the data bases Google Scholar, Science direct, Taylor and Francis and ERIC. The data bases were selected since they contain the highest number of education - related studies. The search term used included "Writing anxiety in EFL", "writing anxiety for junior high school", "writing anxiety for senior high school", "writing anxiety for university". The result returned, only research studies were taken into account.

Table 1. Sub categories Research questions

No	Research question	Subcategories
	RQ1. What are the trends writing anxiety in EFL?	<p>Distribution of the studies by years: The reviewed articles were analysed in terms of their indicated.</p> <p>Research methods used in articles: The reviewed articles were analysed with the aim of defining the research methods used.</p> <p>The methodology sections of the articles were examined and their methods were categorised under the headings of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed.</p> <p>Education levels of samples: The articles were found to be categorised junior high school students, Senior high school students, university students, , and EFL and ESL learners with various backgrounds.</p> <p>Countries of articles: The country of each publication was determined through a detailed analysis of the abstract and methodology sections. The workplace of the authors and the location of the study treatment.</p>
	RQ2. What were the main findings from the available literature?	<p>The types of writing anxiety for EFL: The reviewed articles were analysed in terms of their focus on the types of writing anxiety. Each articles was read from start to finish, with the abstracts, research questions and results sections being examined indetail.</p> <p>The solutions to overcome writing anxiety for EFL learners: open coding strategy was adopted and the codes found in the reviewed articles were analysed through content analysis.</p> <p>The ways to improve EFL learner's writing skill: The first step was to analyze the articles which is included the ways to improve EFL learner's writing skill. Then the abstract, results and discussion sections were examined in detail.</p>

All the studies examined in this paper were analysed and made a matrix references by three researchers. For the analysis, the researchers followed content analysis method, which is commonly used for textual analyses and allows for comparing, contrasting and categorising the data (Frankel & Wallen,2000). The results of the analysis were created using Microsoft Word. Each article was summarised, and possible arguments related to the research questions were picked out categorised. The categorise were based on features such as aims and research questions, year/place, method, findings and conclusion. The form was filled with related information after a careful reading of each article. After completing the form for each study, Microsoft Excel was used for making a matrix references. As seen in Table 1, The first research question (RQ1) and related subcategories, on other hand, sought detailed information about the reviewed articles. To define the advantages and challenges, the first step was to read all studies after which codes and categories were identified. The second research question (RQ2) and related subcategories included descriptive information which is directly stated in the reviewed articles.

Our search for articles to be reviewed returned 69 articles from four different databases. Upon removing the duplicates, there were 58 articles to be reviewed. After an examination of

the titles and abstracts, 34 of those 58 articles were removed since they were not relevant to EFL and writing anxiety.

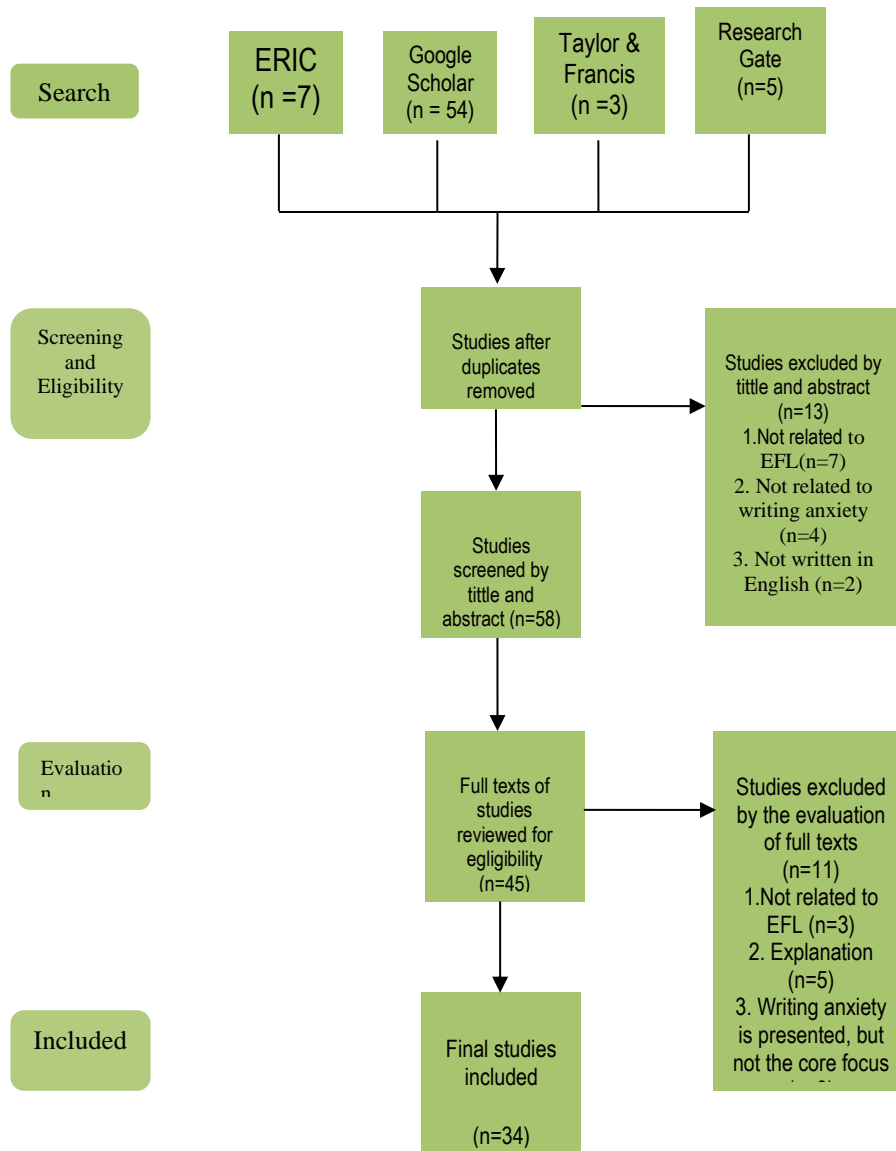


Figure 1. Diagram of systematic review process (adapted from Liberati et al., 2009)

Another two were excluded from the study since they were not written in English. The remaining 58 articles were reviewed for eligibility, and the results showed that four of the studies were not related to ELT. In addition, other five articles included only descriptive information about writing anxiety and were not scientific research studies. In three of the articles, the writing anxiety was not the focus of the research, and thus they were removed from the present study. After the above-mentioned process, there finally remained a total of 34 studies to be reviewed.

RESULTS

Trends in writing anxiety in EFL

In response to RQ1, the subcategories examined by the authors included the distribution of the studies by year, research methods used, education levels of the participants, and the distribution of the countries where the studies were conducted. The following section covers descriptions of each category.

Research methods used in the reviewed articles.

As shown in Figure 2, the most commonly used research method was the questionnaire ($n = 14$), closely followed by the mix method ($n=7$). The least commonly used methods were the qualitative method ($n = 6$), quantitative method ($n=6$) and post test ($n = 1$).

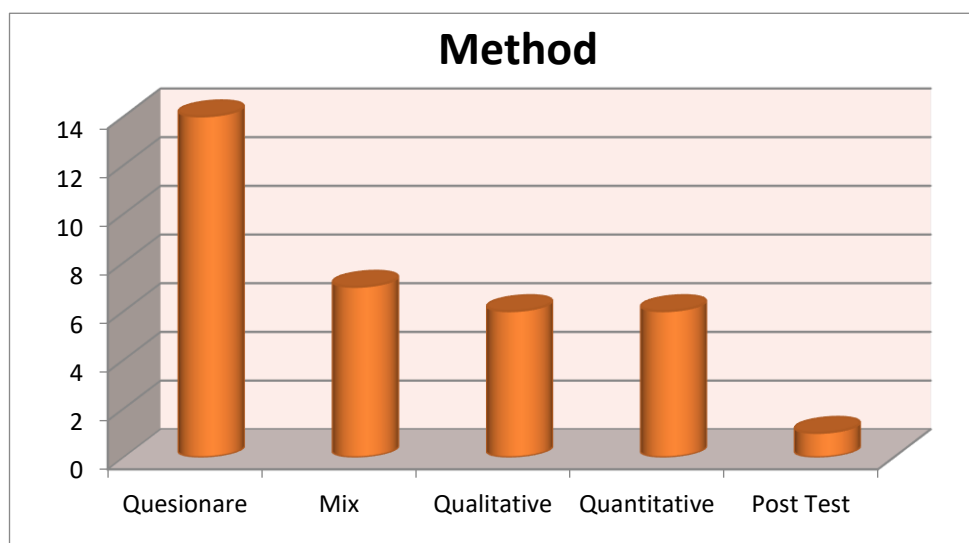


Figure 2. Research methods used in the reviewed article

The education levels of the samples in the articles.

Figure 3. reveals that the vast majority of articles ($n = 28$) selected university students as the sample, followed by junior high school students ($n=3$) and the remaining groups were senior high school ($n = 2$) and elementary school ($n=1$).

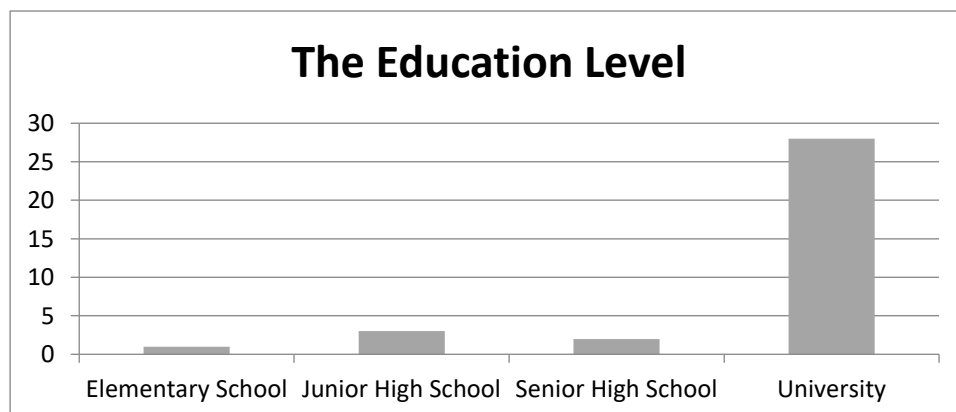


Figure 3. The education level.

Distribution of the studies by years.

As shown in the Figure 4, The distribution of studies referring to the writing anxiety of EFL shown in Figure 3. The first research into area was published in 2004 (n =2), after which there was a decrease in the number of the studies. After that increase in the 2020, the cut-off year 2021, only 1 article was included.

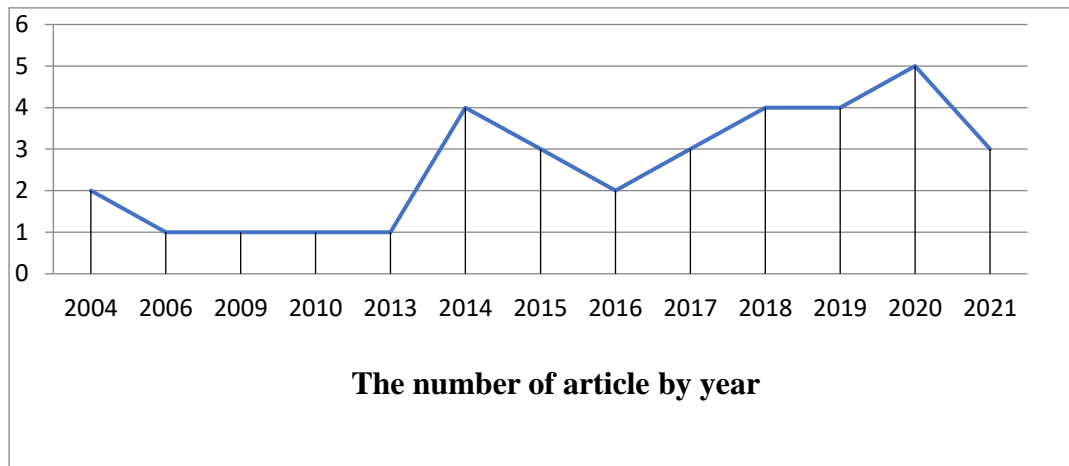


Figure 4. The number of articles by year

Countries of the reviewed articles

Most of the studies investigating the writing anxiety in EFL were conducted in Indonesia (n = 16) and Turkey (n = 3), with a number of studies carried out in China (n = 3) and Taiwan (n = 3) (Figure 5). There was a good range of countries in which studies into flipped classroom method in the ELT field were implemented.

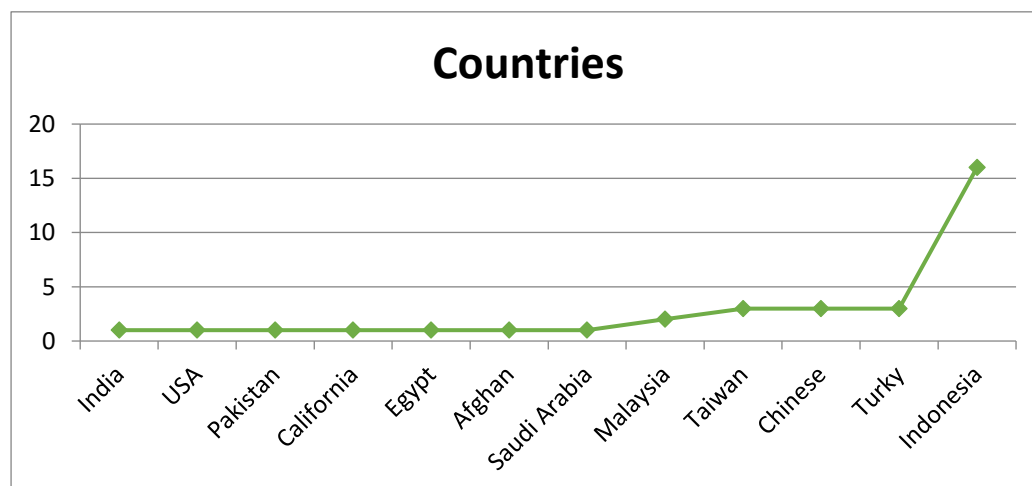


Figure 5. The articles by countries

Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5 are collected by reading the research method section of the data and Microsoft excel to make the chart. The results show that the research mostly using questionnaire methods in collecting data, University is the highest reviewed research, writing anxiety by year were mostly conducted in 2020 and Indonesia is the most frequently reviewed for writing anxiety research.

The main findings of the writing anxiety

For the purpose of answering RQ2, the following subcategories were defined and examined by the researchers: type of anxiety, solution to overcome writing anxiety, the ways to improve EFL writing skill. In the following section, the subcategories are described in detail.

Type of writing anxiety

Only 15 directly stated type of writing anxiety, which were somatic anxiety and cognitive anxiety (n=11), avoidance behavior (n=9), trait anxiety and state anxiety (n=4), situation specific anxiety (n = 3) and the lowest article reviewed about behavioral anxiety (n = 1) in(Figure 6).

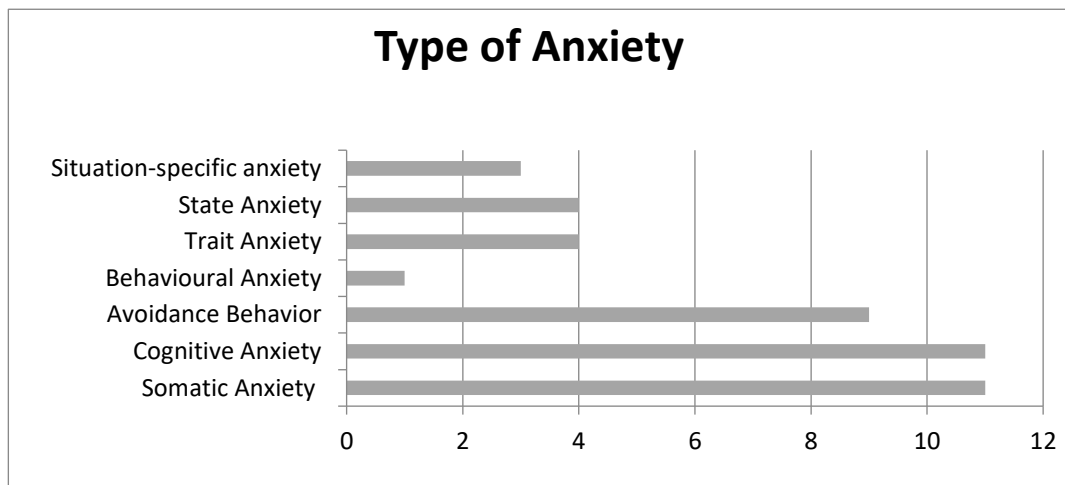


Figure 6. Type of Anxiety

The solution to overcome writing anxiety in EFL

Table 2. reveals the solution to overcome writing anxiety in EFLThe most commonly mentioned include making pair work or group (n = 4).and give positive feedback to students (n = 4) and teacher should guide students (n = 3).

Table 2. The solution to overcome writing anxiety

The solution to overcome writing anxiety	f	Chan and Wu (2004)
Talking about feeling of English learning	1	Liu (2006)
Making pair work or group	4	Lin and Ho (2009)
Appropriate teacher training and curriculum design	1	Kurniasih, Shalihah, Umamah & Sung (2010)
Writing process approach	2	Parilasanti, Suarnajaya & Marjohan (2014)
Teaching strategy.	1	Younas, Subhani, Arshad, Arkam, Sohail, Hameed, Farzeen (2014)
Appreciation of the students	1	Rohmah & Muslim (2020)
Writing practice and techniques	2	Miri & Joia (2020)
Teacher should guide students	3	Dar & Khan (2015)
Give positive feedback to students	4	Dar & Khan (2015)
Teaching reading and writing concurrently	1	Karlina & Pancoro (2018)

Flowing the ideas smoothly	2	Septiani, Hidayanti & Shalihah (2021)
Having an enjoyment writing process class	3	Wern & Rahmat (2021)
Vocabulary knowledge enhancement	1	Wern & Rahmat (2021)
Student's believe with their own capacities	1	Chan and Wu (2004)

The ways to improve EFL writing skill

There are many ways to improve EFL writing skills, as shown in Table 3. The most using ways is using three dimensions: accuracy complexity, and fluency (n =2).

Table 3. The Ways to Improve Writing Skill

The ways to improve writing skill	f	Sample article
The approach process writing	1	Kurniasih, Sholihah, Umamah&Sung (2010)
Using the RAF (Role audience format topi) strategy	1	Parilasanti, Suarnajaya&Marjohan (2014)
Practise expository writing	1	Budiharso (2014)
Using WhatsApp on Richard's threewriting steps	1	Susanti&Tarmuji (2016)
By insuring that curricular and counseling strategies	1	Tomlinson (2017)
Habits of discussion ,give feedback,answer question and make suggestion	1	Koura&Zahran (2017)
Using three dimensions : accuracy,complexity,and fluency	2	Karlina&Pancoro (2018)
Using TBL Approach	1	Mugableh&Khreisat (2019)

DISCUSSION

In this study, 34 articles retrieved from Eric, Taylor & Francis and Google Scholar and Science direct were analysed in terms of their trends and main findings. The analysis showed a rapid increase in the number of the articles on the writing anxiety in EFL in 2004. The rising number of studies might be attributed to solution to overcome writing anxiety and the ways to improve it. It can be seen that there has been an intense interest in the topic particularly in the last two years, which suggests increased popularity in the coming years. In the analysed articles, the most commonly used research methods were found to be questionnaire methods, which might be due to the impetus to thoroughly examine the writing anxiety in EFL. Although the proportion of questionnaire studies is high, such studies are scarce in mix, qualitative and quantitative methods. For instance, our search retrieved 34 available studies that fulfilled the criteria for review in the current research. However, 5 of the 34 reviewed studies provided empirical data pertaining to the type of anxiety, which suggests that there is still a lack of research in the field.

In the examined studies, the most common sample group consisted of university students, with a lower number of studies undertaken with elementary school students. Parallel to this finding, Aida and Ganshow (1994) also commented that most of numerous studies on student's foreign language anxiety focused on either college level or high school level (Chang, 1999; Ganschow ; & Sparks 1996; Liao, 1996). Only the study of Chan and Wu(2000) which focused on elementary school. The reason for this might be the fact that most of university students feel writing anxiety during learning.

However, this study which is believed to be beneficial in the field of EFL needs to be further investigated in Elementary school. This systematic review revealed a number of studies into the writing anxiety in EFL in a wide range of countries, with Indonesia hosting to the highest number of studies. The reason for this might be many Indonesian students who feel writing anxiety during writing in the classroom. Conducting more studies on the writing anxiety in EFL in countries with different cultures and educational trends can offer new and valuable insight into the topic which is beneficial for each country.

This study intended to find out the type of anxiety, the solution to overcome writing anxiety and the ways to improve EFL writing skill. The finding shows that Cognitive and Somatic Anxiety are the highest type which is reviewed by many studies ($n=11$). However this Study is quite similar with the finding of Tupang's study (2014) that the most common type of anxiety is cognitive anxiety. Avoidance behavior also the high type of Anxiety which is reviewed by many studies ($n=9$), for the middle type of anxiety is state anxiety and trait anxiety ($n=4$), the low type of anxiety is situation specific anxiety ($n=3$) and the lowest type of anxiety is behavioral anxiety ($n=1$). The reason that cognitive and somatic anxiety are the highest type of anxiety might be many students fear to get negative feedback and low score for writing from the teacher. And when students think negatively or experienced cognitive anxiety, it will automatically stimulate student's body, they will feel shaking, cold hands or it could be stomach pain.

Another finding of this study was the solution to overcome writing anxiety. The most effective solution to overcome writing anxiety was give positive feedback to students and making a pair work or group ($n=4$). The other effective ways to overcome the writing anxiety were having an enjoyment writing process class and the teacher guides students ($n=3$). This argument is corroborated by Rezaei, Jafari, and Younas' (2014) study, which indicated that teachers should guide their students to minimize their writing errors. The reason might be give positive feedback and make a pair work decrease their anxiety because of the students feel that their teacher support them. Making pair or group work also helps students to discuss with their friends and exchange their ideas, so that they feel more confident for writing. The reasons of the other findings showed that having an enjoyment writing class and teacher guides students might be increase student's motivation and braveness for writing.

This study also showed the ways to improve EFL writing skill. This study found that the effective ways to improve the writing skill using three dimensions: accuracy, complexity and fluency ($n=2$). These studies are in line with studied by (Karlina & Pancoro) stated that the three dimensions involved by many researchers to measure foreign learner's writing proficiency. Because by using this method, students will be more focused in improving writing guided from error analysis, namely in accuracy, to determine the fluency of the author and assess the complexity in writing. So, it will be guided from word errors, then in sentences to paragraphs.

The findings of this study can help teachers and researchers develop ideas regarding the writing anxiety in EFL and how to improve the writing skill. First, based on the findings, teacher can create a working group for students and guide them, so students feel more confident for writing. In addition, creating an enjoyment class of writing and giving positive feedback are needed by learner. If students feel enjoy to write, they are avoided by cognitive and somatic anxiety. Moreover, if students get positive feedback from the teacher, they feel more spirit for writing and it helps to reduce a writing anxiety. Writing skill is crucial thing, this study suggested teacher can involve the three dimensions: accuracy, complexity and fluency, the student's writing skill could be improved.

CONCLUSION

Briefly, this study is significant in that it is the first review study on type of writing anxiety, solution to overcome writing anxiety in EFL, and the ways to improve EFL Writing skill. By creating an enjoyment class, giving positive feedback can motivate and encourage the students to less and avoid their anxieties. This study is also expected to guide researchers who want to conduct studies writing anxiety in EFL classroom. Finally, based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are given.

Further experimental studies on the type of writing anxiety, solution to overcome writing anxiety in EFL, and the ways to improve EFL writing skill should be undertaken. In addition, qualitative studies are necessary to provide insight into writing anxiety in EFL. There need to be more studies into solution to overcome writing anxiety in EFL and the ways to improve writing anxiety in EFL in Elementary school. The researcher hoped that this study can be used as additional reference by other researcher that has a similarity with this study.

For students; in learning English, the students have to be brave to writing English in the class room and not feel worried to write the material. To reduce the writing anxiety, the students have to practice to write English in home and campus. For lecturer; in learning process, the lecture needs to create the enjoyable and interesting situation to get more attention from students so the students will be easy to learn and express themselves in writing without feeling anxiety. The lecturer has given the students motivation to improve their writing skill.

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