# THESIS WRITING ANXIETY AMONG INDONESIAN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS: LEVEL, FACTORS, AND REDUCING STRATEGIES

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## THESIS WRITING ANXIETY AMONG INDONESIAN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS: LEVEL, FACTORS, AND REDUCING STRATEGIES

Presented as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd.) in English Language Education Department

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I honestly declare that this *Skripsi* does not contain the work or parts of the work of other people, except those cited in the quotations and references.

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### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all, I want to praise God Almighty for His blessings and guidance so that I can complete my *Skripsi* on time this semester.

I would like to express my gratitude to my *skripsi* advisor, Adaninggar Septi Subekti, M.Sc., for guiding and helping me during my *Skripsi* writing by providing feedback during consultation. It helped me in every progress and encouraged me to finish it on time.

I thank all of the English Language Education Department (ELED) lecturers, staff, and ELED Batch 2019 for the help and knowledge that have been given to me.

I am grateful to my family, especially my mother, Arlien Ivrinie Taruh S.Pd., who has been my best support system financially and mentally. I also thank my grandparents, Mama Felmi, Mama Jein, Papa Fang, Archilia, and Aurellia, for their support and prayers.

I would like to thank my girl best friends, "Future Wife"; Angella, Brooklyn, Gabriella, Gincya, Griffita, and Jade, for always cheering me up during my skripsi writing journey.

Last, I would like to give special thanks to my best friend for life, Revanza Manuahe S.Ars., for always encouraging me to continue writing my *skripsi*. During my *skripsi* writing journey, his continuous understanding and support boosted my mood and motivation to complete my thesis.

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### ABSTRACT

Kawengian, G. E. (2023). *Thesis Writing Anxiety among Indonesian English Department Students: Level, Factors, and Reducing Strategies* (Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis). Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana: Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

For decades, anxiety has been a popular research topic and many researchers have found that students' writing anxiety and writing performance have a negative relationship. This study aimed to determine the levels, factors, and strategies of writing anxiety when writing a thesis in English. It involved 105 English education students in Indonesia who were writing their thesis. The questionnaire was distributed through social media. This study used mixed methods. Based on questionnaire results, this study found that the students had moderate thesis writing anxiety. Furthermore, the study involved six students selected from the questionnaire results and two thesis advisors in follow-up interviews regarding factors and strategies based on their experience of being the thesis advisors for at least 2 years. The results of the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Research question 2 which discussed the factors that cause thesis writing anxiety has two themes and research question 3 which has discussed strategies to reduce thesis writing anxiety has three themes. First, the factors causing students' writing anxiety when writing a thesis in English are not being able to express ideas through writing in English and fear of getting negative evaluations from the thesis advisor. Second, the strategies that students believe can reduce writing anxiety when writing a thesis in English are using tools to learn grammar, reading journal articles, and attending thesis consultations regularly. In addition, with this study, students can find out their level of writing anxiety, the factors that cause it, and strategies that might reduce it.

**Keywords:** writing anxiety, thesis, grammar, English vocabulary

### INTISARI

Kawengian, G. E. (2023). *Thesis Writing Anxiety among Indonesian English Department Students: Level, Factors, and Reducing Strategies* (Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis). Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana: Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Selama beberapa dekade, kecemasan telah menjadi topik penelitian yang populer dan banyak peneliti telah menemukan bahwa kecemasan dan kinerja menulis siswa memiliki hubungan yang negative. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tingkatan level, faktor, dan strategi writing anxiety pada saat menulis skripsi dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini melibat 105 mahasiswa pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia yang sedang me<mark>nul</mark>is skripsi. Kuesioner disebar luaskan secara bebas melalui sosial media. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran. Dari hasil survey, penelitian ini mene<mark>mukan</mark> bahwa para mahasiswa rata-rata memiliki tingkat kecemasan menulis yang sedang. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini juga melibatkan enam mahasiswa yang dipilih dari hasil kuesioner dan dua dosen pembimbing skripsi dalam wawancara la<mark>nj</mark>utan mengenai faktor dan strategi berdasarkan pengalaman mereka menjadi dosen pembimbing skripsi minimal 2 tahun. Hasil wawancara dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis tematik. Pertanyaan penelitian 2 yang membahas faktor-faktor penyebab kecemasan menulis skripsi memiliki dua tema dan pertanyaan penelitian 3 yang membahas strategi-strategi untuk mengurangi kecemasan menulis skripsi memiliki tiga tema. Pertama, faktor-faktor penyebab kecemasan menulis mahasiswa ketika menulis skripsi dalam bahasa Inggris adalah tidak mampu mengekspresikan ide melalui tulisan dalam bahasa Inggris dan takut mendapat penilaian negatif dari pembimbing skripsi. Kedua, strategi-strategi yang diyakini mahasiswa dapat mengurangi kecemasan menulis ketika menulis skripsi dalam bahasa Inggris adalah menggunakan alat bantu untuk belajar grammar, membaca artikel jurnal, dan menghadiri konsultasi skripsi secara rutin. Selain itu, dengan adanya penelitian ini, mahasiswa dapat mengetahui tingkat kecemasan menulis mereka, faktor-faktor penyebabnya, dan strategi yang mungkin dapat menguranginya.

Kata Kunci: kecemasan menulis, skripsi, tata Bahasa, kosa kata bahasa Inggris

### **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is divided into four sections, and there is research background, research question, research objectives, and research benefits.

### A. Research background

For decades, anxiety has been a popular research topic (Yayli & Genc, 2019). A recurring feeling of not being ready to write or not being good enough to write is known as writing anxiety (Jawas, 2019). According to Zhang (2011), many researchers have found that students' writing anxiety and writing performance have a negative relationship. Students with low writing anxiety have a greater chance of succeeding, whereas students with high language anxiety have a higher probability of worse performing and failing in language learning (Hartono & Maharani, 2020). The difficulties will affect the overall quality of students' writing, where the problems are in choosing vocabulary or grammar words and organizing ideas (Sabti et al., 2019). It is prevalent for students to have negative feelings such as fear, anxiety, and low motivation in foreign language classes, especially in writing classes, because writing in a foreign language is more challenging than other skills in learning English (Aglina et al., 2020). Students with a high level of writing anxiety are more likely to feel demotivated in writing, have unfavorable attitudes about writing tasks, create low-quality papers, have wrong impressions about their writing, and avoid circumstances where writing is necessary (Ho, 2016). Writing under anxiety causes difficulties by returning to the beginning and re-checking the text frequently (Güneyli, 2016). Therefore, studies on writing anxiety are often carried out because writing anxiety is often experienced by students.

Specific thesis writing is the writing of research reports that follow specific research formats and organizations, and it is a compulsory subject that students must take to graduate from college following the context of education in Indonesia (Diasti & Mbato, 2020). Writing a thesis is more complex than any other type of writing (Dwihandini et al., 2013). Most millennial college students in Indonesia believe that the undergraduate thesis is challenging (Situmorang, 2018). To get a bachelor's degree, students studying at a university or college must complete their education

program by writing a thesis (Puspita, 2019). According to Diasti and Mbato (2020) many students can finish writing their thesis on time, while others take more than four years to complete. Though not conducted in an L2 context, a study by Situmorang (2018) found that the low skills possessed by students to write and low interest in research are the causes of high anxiety toward the thesis. It may suggest that writing a thesis is challenging, let alone in L2.

Many foreign or second-language (L2) writing anxiety studies were conducted in various contexts (Ho, 2016 in Taiwan; Sabti et al., 2019 in Iraq; Syarifudin, 2020 in Indonesia). It is investigating research writing anxiety and self-efficacy beliefs among English- as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) graduate students in engineeringrelated fields. In the Indonesian context, L2 writing anxiety was investigated in several studies (Aunurrahman, 2019; Harahap & Syarif, 2022; Hartono & Maharani, 2020; Jawas, 2019). For example, a study about writing anxiety was conducted by Jawas (2019), which found several factors that could cause essay writing anxiety. It is essay assignments that must be done in class, which is the most dominant factor causing writing anxiety experienced by students. In the Indonesian context, Situmorang (2018) found that the researcher studied writing thesis anxiety in Indonesian. Then, a study about writing anxiety was conducted by Harahap and Syarif (2022) investigated students' anxiety in writing introductions of thesis proposals. However, studies explicitly investigating thesis writing anxiety may be rare. Therefore, the problem of students' writing anxiety is very influential on students' writing activities or writing performance in the English Department students, especially in writing a thesis where the participants have difficulty.

A study by Dwihandini et al. (2013) involving Indonesian English Department students taking a thesis found that students face several difficulties in writing a thesis. Also, a study by Jawas (2019) was designed in quantitative descriptive research where the participants were 80 English Department students from four parallel essay writing classes. The difference between Dwihandini's study and this study is in the participants where the study's participants involve English Department students throughout Indonesia and two thesis advisors. So, involving a thesis advisor makes this study unique because the same topic can generate various opinions from each individual based on their position and experience as a thesis

advisor.

Related to the comparison among previous studies, most writing anxiety studies only use qualitative or quantitative methods, while this study uses mixed methods. Many researchers believe that the studies need to be placed both qualitatively and quantitatively approaches (Leech et al., 2010). For example, in a study by Harahap and Syarif (2022), the researcher used qualitative methods to collect data, using questionnaires and interviews as instruments. Combining the two methodologies, especially given the time, additional resources, and expertise required to conduct a mixed methods study, is essential to understand the perceived value (McKim, 2017). According to McKim (2017), mixed methods research adds value to understanding and interpreting studies compared to purely qualitative or quantitative studies. In the first research question, the researcher uses quantitative where the questionnaire will be distributed to English Department students throughout Indonesia to generalizable data on thesis writing anxiety. In addition, many writing anxiety studies have used this questionnaire because it is considered valid and reliable for use in research (Syarifudin, 2020). The second and third research questions use qualitative, where the researcher involves students and two thesis advisors, where interviews are the instrument. The qualitative paradigm is interpretivism, where it often seeks answers to research by shaping and sustaining multiple understandings of an individual's worldview, whereas interpretivism accepts various points of view from different individuals (Nguyen et al., 2015). Therefore, the researcher will collect data from students and thesis advisors' views based on their positions and experiences which are still rarely found in previous studies.

### B. Research Questions

This study focuses on three questions discussed based on the research questions mentioned above. The research questions we would discuss and analyze are:

- 1. What is the English Department students' level of writing anxiety?
- 2. What are the possible factors of the student's thesis writing anxiety?
- 3. What strategies do students and lecturer advisors believe may help reduce

students' thesis writing anxiety?

### C. Research Objectives

This study concerns three important things about writing anxiety experienced by students of the English education department in writing a thesis. This study intends to:

- 1. Find out the level of writing anxiety of English Department students.
- 2. Find out the possible factors of the student's thesis writing anxiety.
- 3. Describe the strategies students and lecturer advisors believed may help reduce students' thesis writing anxiety.

### D. Research Benefits

As the following points, hopefully, this research can help students, lecturer advisors, and other researchers:

### 1. Students

With this research, hopefully, they will be aware of the factors that cause writing anxiety and find strategies to reduce their writing anxiety which may help them deal with it when writing a thesis.

### 2. Thesis Advisors

With this research, hopefully, the lecturers can pay attention to their students and help them deal with writing anxiety in writing a thesis.

### 3. Others Researches

Hopefully, this research can help other researchers who want to research thesis writing anxiety and those who experience writing anxiety in writing anything other than writing a thesis.

### **CHAPTER V**

### CONCLUSION

This chapter will discuss the summary, implications and contributions, limitations, and future studies.

### A. Summary

This study found that English Department students experienced writing anxiety when writing a thesis in English. This study conducted a survey and was freely distributed on the internet to determine the level of thesis writing anxiety among English education students in Indonesia. This study found that students had moderate thesis writing anxiety from the survey results. Furthermore, six selected students from the previous survey were interviewed to gain in-depth information about factors and strategies of thesis writing anxiety. Two students from each level: low, moderate, and high. From the interview results, two factors caused thesis writing anxiety experienced by most English Department students. First, the inability to express ideas in English. Students found it difficult to generate or develop their ideas because they did not know how and what to write about in their thesis. Also, they could not express their idea because of a lack of grammar and limited vocabulary. Second, fear of negative evaluations from the thesis advisors during the consultation was also a factor causing thesis writing anxiety. In addition, two thesis advisors had been thesis advisors for at least two years to be asked about strategies to help reduce students' thesis writing anxiety. The interview revealed three strategies to reduce writing anxiety; using existing tools to learn grammar, reading journal articles, and regularly attending consultations could reduce students' thesis writing anxiety.

### **B.** Implications and Contributions

Based on the results of this study, there will be several implications. Firstly, from research question 1, it was found that the average student experienced moderate anxiety when writing a thesis in English. It is good for students to know their level of writing anxiety to find out the causes and the solutions to reduce the anxiety. Secondly, from research question 2, this study found several factors that were the main causes of students experiencing writing anxiety when writing a thesis in English. The factors were unable to express ideas in writing and the fear of getting

negative evaluations from the thesis advisors during consultation. By knowing the factors that cause thesis writing anxiety, students can find solutions to reduce it, such as learning grammar and increasing vocabulary, reading journal articles about the topic or finding to understand what to write, and preparing thesis progress well before the consultation. Lastly, from research question 3, several strategies can reduce thesis writing anxiety; using existing tools to learn grammar, reading journal articles, and regularly attending consultations. So, the students can use this strategy to help them reduce their anxiety when writing a thesis in English. In addition, thesis advisors can also help students by providing consultation sessions according to student needs so that students can attend consultations regularly and get feedback on their thesis progress, which can reduce their thesis writing anxiety.

Furthermore, this study contributes to increasing the literature on this topic, considering the scarcity of research investigating thesis writing anxiety. Also, the participants used in this study were quite rare: English Department students in Indonesia working on their thesis. As this study used mixed methods, it also interviewed six selected students from the survey and two thesis advisors who had been thesis advisors for at least two years. This research may help other researchers who want to research further about thesis writing anxiety.

### C. Limitations

This study has some limitations. First, the limitation of this study was the number of participants. This study only selected English department students working on their thesis as participants. The number of participants was not proportional because not all universities in Indonesia with English Department students participated. Second, the comparison between female and male participants was not balanced, and there were more female participants in this study. Last, to answer research question 3, this study only interviewed two thesis advisors because it was disproportionate to the number of students who filled out the questionnaire and were interviewed.

### D. Future Studies

Based on the limitations, there are several recommendations for future studies. First, in future studies, it is better if the participants come from many universities in

various cities in Indonesia. Second, this study is in the Indonesian context, and maybe it can be from the context of other countries in future studies. Third, future studies could collect data from non-English majors such as management, architecture, and many more.



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