

CHAPTER II:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Writing

Writing is a productive language skill that allows individuals to express ideas and communicate through written text. It involves both physical actions (e.g., handwriting or typing) and cognitive processes such as planning, organizing, and revising ideas (Nunan, 2003). Wingersky (1999) describes writing as a process of discovery through which individuals explore and structure their thoughts.

In academic contexts, writing is especially demanding because it requires mastery of both content and language, as well as adherence to academic genres and conventions. Academic writing also has special language features, including the use of subject-specific vocabulary, abstraction, and lexical density (Hyland, 2022). For EFL learners, the challenges of writing are compounded by limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

2.1.1 The Writing Process

The writing process typically includes five stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Tompkins (2012) outlines this process as beginning with idea generation (prewriting), followed by drafting paragraphs, revising content and organization, editing for grammar and mechanics, and finally publishing or presenting the final text. Similarly, Sasaki (2010) emphasizes that the process is recursive, allowing writers to move back and forth between stages as needed.

For final-year students, this process becomes especially intensive due to the academic standards and expectations associated with thesis writing.

2.1.2 Types of Writing Difficulty

Writing difficulties in EFL contexts can be broadly categorized into linguistic, psychological, and cognitive challenges (Byrne, 1988; Divani, 2018). Linguistic challenges involve limited vocabulary and grammatical competence. Psychological issues include fear of making mistakes and anxiety over evaluation. Cognitive difficulties refer to organizing ideas, using proper punctuation correctly, and paraphrasing source materials.

Humairoh (2021) identifies specific areas of difficulty such as tense usage, subject-verb agreement, and the construction of complex sentences. These challenges highlight the importance of explicit writing instruction and structured practice to improve students' confidence and ability.

2.2 Anxiety

Anxiety is a psychological state characterized by tension, apprehension, and physiological arousal such as sweating, rapid heartbeat, and restlessness (Spielberger, 1972; Cheng, 2004). In academic contexts, anxiety can negatively affect concentration, motivation, and performance. Anxiety arises as a response to perceived threats or uncertain outcomes (Ellis, 2011; Hakim & Syam, 2019).

According to Spielberger (1983), anxiety can be categorized into trait anxiety and state anxiety. Trait anxiety refers to a person's general tendency to feel anxious across a variety of situations. In contrast, state anxiety is temporary and context-dependent, triggered by specific tasks such as thesis defense or

exams. Students with high trait anxiety are more likely to experience stress even in low-pressure situations, while those with state anxiety may react only to specific academic demands.

In thesis writing, students may experience anxiety related to prolonged tasks, supervisor interactions, or fear of failure (Wakhyudin & Putri, 2020). Akbar and Rizdanti (2022) found that high anxiety levels among final-year students led to emotional fatigue, hyper-vigilance, and avoidance behavior—factors that can significantly hinder academic progress.

2.3 Writing Anxiety

Writing anxiety is a type of performance anxiety that interferes with students' ability to write effectively, particularly in evaluative settings. Daly and Miller (1975) define writing apprehension as a person's tendency to avoid writing when they anticipate judgment. Takahashi (2009) emphasizes that writing anxiety is often linked more to the act of writing itself than to the final product.

Al-Sawalha and Chow (2012) observe that students with good writing skills may still feel paralyzed by fear, resulting in delays or avoidance. Negative self-perceptions, fear of judgment, and lack of confidence are common contributing factors. These psychological barriers prevent students from realizing their full academic potential, especially in high-stakes contexts like thesis writing.

2.3.1 Dimensions of Writing Anxiety

Writing anxiety dimensions have been identified by Cheng (2004) into three dimensions. The first dimension is cognitive anxiety, which involves mental blocks, fear of criticism, and negative self-evaluation. Cognitive anxiety often

marked by perfectionism and self-doubt, which may lead to writer's block (Sabti et al., 2019). Landman (2016) found a strong correlation between cognitive anxiety and difficulty in initiating writing tasks.

The second dimension is somatic anxiety, referring to physical symptoms such as shaking, sweating, or elevated heart rate when faced with writing tasks. Both Arisman (2023) and Arindra & Ardi (2020) found that students with somatic anxiety may experience exhaustion and insomnia. Wakhyudin & Putri (2020) found that these symptoms intensified during thesis writing.

The last one is avoidance behavior, which involves students' tendency to avoid writing tasks through procrastination or withdrawal. Students may delay meetings with their supervisors or postpone writing altogether due to fear of evaluation (Cheng, 2004).

2.4 Possible Causes of Writing Anxiety

Writing anxiety stems from a combination of internal and external factors. Internal causes include low self-confidence, perfectionism, and past negative experiences (Wahyuni & Umam., 2017; Cheng, 2004). External causes include time constraints, pressure from supervisors, and high academic expectations (Khairah & Fatimah, 2022).

Linguistic limitations, such as fear of grammatical errors or using the wrong vocabulary, are also prominent causes of writing anxiety (Hartono & Maharani, 2020). In the Indonesian educational context, cultural hierarchies between students and lecturers can intensify anxiety, especially during thesis consultations and thesis trial (Setyoko & Siswoyo, 2024; Sariyanto et al., 2015).

2.5 Previous Studies

Several studies have explored writing anxiety among EFL students:

1. Fajaryani et al. (2024): Found that female students experienced higher somatic anxiety than males. The study used SLWAI with MANOVA analysis on 225 students at Jambi University.
2. Rohmah and Muslim (2021): A qualitative study identifying grammar concerns, fear of judgment, and lack of practice as anxiety triggers. The limited sample size restricts generalizability.
3. Quvanch and Kew (2022): Found cognitive anxiety as the dominant type among 133 Afghanistan EFL students, with significant variation by proficiency but not gender.
4. Hartono and Maharani (2020): Reported high cognitive anxiety due to lack of confidence in grammar and limited writing practice.

While these studies offer valuable insights, few have examined writing anxiety specifically in final-year students during thesis writing. This study fills that gap by exploring both the levels and dimensions of writing anxiety experienced by final-year English students at Jambi University using a validated instrument (SLWAI).

