

**STUDENTS' WRITING ANXIETY LEVELS, TYPES, AND CAUSES IN  
WRITING UNDERGRADUATE THESIS PROPOSAL: A STUDY AT  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT**

**Thesis**

*Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the requirements to Obtain Bachelor of  
Education (B. Ed) in English Language Education*



**Written by:**

**HANIFAH UMMUL KHAIRAH**

**NIM 18018128**

**Advisor:**

**SITTI FATIMAH, S.S, M.Ed, Ph.D**

**NIP. 197206151999032002**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS**

**UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG**

**2022**

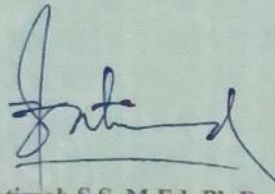
HALAMAN PERSETUJUAN SKRIPSI

Judul : **Students' Writing Anxiety Levels, Types, and Causes in Writing Undergraduate Thesis Proposal: A Study at English Language and Literature Department**

Nama : Hanifah Ummul Khairah  
NIM : 18018128  
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Departemen : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, Mei 2022

Disetujui oleh,  
Pembimbing

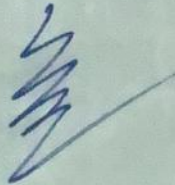


Sitti Fatimah, S.S., M.Ed, Ph.D

NIP. 197206151999032002

Mengetahui,

Ketua Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris



Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum., Ph. D.

NIP. 19710525 199802 2 002

## HALAMAN PENGESAHAN LULUS UJIAN SKRIPSI

Dinyatakan lulus setelah dipertahankan di depan Tim Penguji Skripsi Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas Negeri Padang dengan Judul

**Students' Writing Anxiety Levels, Types, and Causes in Writing Undergraduate Thesis Proposal: A Study at English Language and Literature Department**

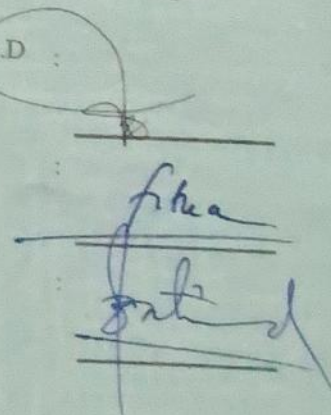
Nama : Hanifah Ummul Khairah  
NIM : 18018128  
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Departemen : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, Mei 2022

Tim Penguji

Tanda Tangan:

1. Ketua : Prof. Dra. Yenni Rozimela, M.Ed., Ph.D
2. Sekretaris : Fitrawati, S.S., M.Pd
3. Anggota : Sitti Fatimah, S.S., M.Ed, Ph.D



The image shows three handwritten signatures corresponding to the examiners listed in the table. The first signature is for Prof. Dra. Yenni Rozimela, M.Ed., Ph.D. The second signature is for Fitrawati, S.S., M.Pd. The third signature is for Sitti Fatimah, S.S., M.Ed, Ph.D. Each signature is written in blue ink and is positioned to the right of the respective name in the table.





UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG  
FAKULTAS BAHASA DAN SENI  
**DEPARTEMEN BAHASA DAN SAstra INGGRIS**  
Jl. Belibis, Air Tawar Barat, Kampus Selatan FBS UNP Padang, Telp/Fax: (0751) 447347

### SURAT PERNYATAAN TIDAK PLAGIAT

Saya yang bertandatangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Hanifah Ummul Khairah  
NIM/TM : 18018128/ 2018  
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : FBS UNP

Dengan ini menyatakan, bahwa Tugas Akhir saya dengan judul Students' Writing Anxiety Levels, Types, and Causes in Writing Undergraduate Thesis Proposal: A Study at English Language and Literature Department benar merupakan hasil karya saya dan bukan merupakan plagiat dari karya orang lain. Apabila suatu saat terbukti saya melakukan plagiat maka saya bersedia diproses dan menerima sanksi akademis maupun hukum sesuai dengan hukum dan ketentuan yang berlaku, baik di institusi Universitas Negeri Padang maupun masyarakat dan negara.

Demikianlah pernyataan ini saya buat dengan penuh kesadaran dan rasa tanggung jawab sebagai anggota masyarakat ilmiah.

Diketahui oleh,  
Kepala Departemen

Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum., Ph.D.  
NIP. 197105251.998022.002

Saya yang menyatakan,

Hanifah Ummul Khairah  
18018128/ 2018

## ABSTRACT

**Khairah, H.U (2022). *Students' Writing Anxiety Levels, Types, and Causes in Writing Undergraduate Thesis Proposal: A Study at English Language and Literature Department*. Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.**

Anxiety in recent years has become a hot issue discussed by many people one of them is foreign language anxiety which includes various anxiety in foreign language aspects. In terms of writing, this anxiety is known as writing anxiety. The aim of this research is to describe the level, type and causes of writing anxiety of English language and literature department students at UNP in writing Thesis Proposal. This research used descriptive study involving 70 fourth year students that have already taken Thesis Proposal Writing class and are currently writing their thesis proposals. Through random sampling technique 14 students (20% of the population) were selected. Data were collected through the SLWAI (Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) questionnaire adapted from Cheng (2004) and interview session. The results showed that students experienced anxiety at the medium level with cognitive anxiety being the most dominant type. Other results are four main factors that cause writing anxiety in writing a thesis proposal. They are low of self-confidence, language difficulties, insufficient writing technique, and pressure for perfect work.

**Key Words:** *writing anxiety, thesis proposal.*

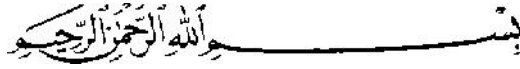
## ABSTRAK

**Khairah, H. U (2022). *Students' Writing Anxiety Levels, Types, and Causes in Writing Undergraduate Thesis Proposal: A Study at English Language and Literature Department*. Skripsi. Padang: Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.**

Kecemasan dalam beberapa tahun terakhir telah menjadi topik diskusi yang panas oleh banyak orang dan salah satunya adalah kecemasan dalam bahasa asing yang meliputi berbagai aspek dalam berbahasa asing. Dalam segi menulis, kecemasan ini disebut kecemasan dalam menulis. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memberi gambaran mengenai tingkat, tipe dan penyebab-penyebab kecemasan menulis yang dialami mahasiswa dalam menulis proposal tesis. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif yang melibatkan 70 mahasiswa tahun ke-empat yang telah menyelesaikan kelas *Thesis Proposal Writing* dan sedang menulis proposal tesis. Melalui teknik pengambilan sampel acak, 14 mahasiswa (20% dari total populasi) terseleksi. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuisioner SLWAI (Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) yang diadaptasi dari Cheng (2004) dan juga wawancara. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa mengalami kecemasan pada tingkat menengah dan kecemasan kognitif sebagai tipe yang mendominasi. Terdapat empat faktor utama penyebab kecemasan dalam menulis proposal tesis. Faktor-faktor tersebut adalah rendahnya tingkat percaya diri, kesulitan dalam bahasa, teknik menulis yang tidak memadai, dan tekanan untuk pekerjaan yang sempurna.

**Kata Kunci:** *kecemasan menulis, proposal tesis.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



*In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful*

*Alhamdulillahirrabil'alamin*, all praise is upon Allah *Subhanahu Wata'ala*, the lord of every living creature, with his uncountable blessing, mercy, kindness and great guidance, that has given the writer good health, welfare, and strength to finish this thesis entitled: *STUDENTS' WRITING ANXIETY LEVELS, TYPES, AND CAUSES IN WRITING UNDERGRADUATE THESIS PROPOSAL: A STUDY AT ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT*. Also, *Shalawat* and *Salam* are delivered to the greatest leader for human beings, the Prophet Muhammad *Sallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam*.

The writer would like to express her sincere gratitude to the honorable advisor, Sitti Fatimah, S.S, M.Ed, Ph.D. and academic advisors, Dr. Edi Trisno, M.A and Drs. Don Narius, M.Si., who have given much attention, support, suggestion, the best guidance, meaningful advice, and valuable time to supervise and help the writer to accomplish from the beginning stage until the finishing stage of this thesis. A special appreciation is also expressed to her examiners Prof. Dra. Yenni Rozimela, M.Ed., Ph.D. and Fitrawati, S.S, M.Pd. who have given suggestions and ideas for the completion of this thesis. In addition, the writer would like to express her thanks to the validator, Senorica Yulia Sari, S.Pd, M. Tesol. Great thanks also go to all lectures and staffs

for their kindness to share new knowledge and valuable experiences during these four years.

Furthermore, the writer would like to express her deepest thankfulness to her beloved father and mother, Zaitul Ikhlis and Yossi Agusta, her beloved sister Mutia Khairunnissa, and all the family members who always give their countless love, powerful prayer, and both mentally and financial supports.

Then, the writer would like to express her thanks to dearest friends who have been giving full encouragements, priceless motivation, and struggles during the completion of this thesis. Also, the writer would like to say thanks to K1 2018 class for sharing many things together and for unforgettable moments she had while studying in English Department UNP. Special thanks for 14 students for their sincere help during this research. Last but not least, the writer would like to thank the various works of her favorites, EXO, NCT, NIKI, PRETTYMUCH, Red Velvet, JB, Ariana, The 1975, and TULUS that have accompanied and encouraged her in compiling this thesis.

Padang, Mei 2022

The Writer



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	i
ABSTRAK .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	x
CHAPTER I .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
A. Background of the Problem .....	1
B. Identification of the Problem.....	6
C. Limitation of the Problem .....	6
D. Formulation of the Problem .....	7
E. Research Questions.....	7
F. Purpose of the Research.....	7
G. Significance of the Problem .....	8
H. Definition of the Key Terms .....	9
1. Writing Anxiety.....	9
2. Thesis Proposal Writing.....	9

CHAPTER II .....	10
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .....	10
A. Review of Related Theories .....	10
1. Overview of Academic Writing .....	10
2. Thesis Proposal Writing.....	11
3. Foreign Language Anxiety.....	18
4. Writing Anxiety.....	19
B. Previous Study.....	25
C. Conceptual Framework.....	26
CHAPTER III.....	27
RESEARCH METHOD.....	27
A. Research Design .....	27
B. Population and Sample .....	27
C. Instrumentation.....	28
1. Questionnaire .....	28
2. Interview Questions .....	29
D. Technique of Data Collection .....	31
E. Validity and Reliability.....	31
F. Technique of Data Analysis .....	32
CHAPTER IV.....	35

A.	Data Description.....	35
1.	Level of Writing Anxiety in Writing Thesis Proposal.....	35
2.	Type of Writing Anxiety in Writing Thesis Proposal .....	36
B.	Data Analysis and Findings .....	37
1.	Level of Writing Anxiety.....	38
2.	Type of Writing Anxiety.....	39
3.	Causes of Writing Anxiety.....	41
C.	Discussion.....	52
CHAPTER V .....		56
A.	Conclusion.....	56
B.	Suggestion .....	57
REFERENCES .....		60
APPENDECES.....		64

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3. 1. Spesification of SLWAI .....	28
Table 3. 2 Interview Guideline Adopted From CSLWAI by Razei and Jafari (2014).....	29
Table 3. 3 Reliability Range.....	32
Table 3. 4 Reliability Statistics of SLWAI .....	32
Table 3. 5. Likert’s Scale for SLWAI.....	33
Table 3. 6. Writing Anxiety Level adopted from Liu and Jackson (2008) .....	33
Table 4.1. Levels of Students Writing Anxiety in Writing Thesis Porposal	36
Table 4. 2 The Mean of Each Type of Writing Anxiety .....	37
Table 4. 4. The Statistical Result of Students’ Writing Anxiety Level .....	38

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Elements of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Proposal .....	12
Figure 2. Elements of Classroom Action Research Proposal.....	13
Figure 3. Conceptual Framework .....	26
Figure 4. Data Frequency Distribution of Type of Writing anxiety in Writing Thesis Proposal.....	40

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Writing Anxiety Questionnaire .....	64
Appendix 2. Interview Question.....	68
Appendix 3. SLWAI Positive Statement with the Number of Students Selecting Each Alternative .....	71
Appendix 4. SLWAI Negative Statement with the Number of Students Selecting Each Alternative .....	71
Appendix 5. SLWAI Questionnaire Results .....	73
Appendix 6. SLWAI Questionnaire Results by grouping the items into Three Type of Writing Anxiety.....	74
Appendix 7. Interview Transcript.....	75



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Problem

Anxiety in recent years has become a hot issue discussed by many people. In the field of foreign language, this type of anxiety is known as Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) or *xenoglossophobia*. It has recently become a matter of concern to educational researchers. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) defined FLA as the sense of tension and dread associated with second or foreign language settings, including speaking, listening, and learning, or the concern and negative emotional reaction aroused while learning or using a second or foreign language. Therefore, anxiety is believed to have some deleterious effects such as on students' confidence, self-esteem, and level of engagement.

In terms of the type, FLA is divided into several types and one of them is writing anxiety. Writing anxiety is defined by Hassan (2001) as a general avoidance of writing and situations considered by the persons to potentially need some quantity of writing, followed by the possibility of assessment of such writing. Based on one of the results of a study conducted by Tsui (1996 as cited from Liu and Ni, 2015), it was found that learning to write in the foreign language involves as much anxiety as learning the other skills since writing is primarily product-oriented and needs individual effort. Unpleasant feelings always arise when someone reads our writing, such as the fear of making mistakes, the fear of

writing something that doesn't make sense, and the fear that the writing does not convey the message the author intended. Based on the explanation above, it can be inferred that writing anxiety might affect or hinder a person's writing performance.

As English Language and Literature students of UNP, they must write a thesis before completing their education. As written in “Peraturan Akademik Universitas Negeri Padang” in 2015, in Chapter VII article 53 about the language of the final project, it is written that the thesis is written in English, especially for students of the English study program. Therefore, as an English education student, the thesis must be written in English. In the process of writing theses, students' writing skills are needed. Based on pre-observations of fourth-year students in UNP's English education study program, it was discovered that only about half of the students had acquired an advisor and had begun writing their thesis proposal. This is due to several things, such as some students who have not passed the previous course, students have not met the minimum required credit, students have not received the title to be studied, students have not made and submitted their mini proposals, and some students who have submitted mini proposals but were rejected or are waiting for an advisor. According to data from the English education study program's head, only 5 fourth-year people attending for the proposal seminar exam till January 2022. So it can be seen that there are still many students who have difficulty in writing their thesis proposals. Is this difficulty also more or less influenced by the writing anxiety they have?

Therefore, this research was conducted in order to see what level of anxiety these students had.

Prior's (1998, as mentioned in Starfield and Paltridge, 2019) conducted a study that support the phenomenon above, where in that depth study of graduate students writing in US within their subjects clearly reveals that even competent students struggle with advanced writing. There are many issues relate to the difficulties of writing faced by students. In his book, Starfield and Paltridge (2007) develops these four issues into four categories; Behavioral issues, rhetorical issues, social issues and emotional issues. In terms of behavioral issues, Starfield and Paltridge stated that students had difficulty in writing because they had not become used to writing. This is due to the students' "fictional" belief that writing is a creative and inspiring activity, and that people write only when they are inspired. However, according to Zerubavel (1999), writing should become a habit. Therefore, there needs to be habituation and awareness among students that writing requires a process, not something simple where when you get an idea, your writing is guaranteed to be complete and good. What student writers must understand is that thinking and writing are closely intertwined.

According to Paltridge and Starfield (2007), the rhetorical issue is concerned with how thesis writing is utilized to persuade the reader of the validity of the writer's arguments. Advanced academic literacy requires not only linguistic skills but also 'rhetorical insight' to create and convey information. However, problems develop when students are unable to relate existing theories to their

ideas, causing readers to doubt the legitimacy of their papers. Supervisors must empathize with possible issues of self and identity that students may be experiencing, as they can have an impact on their writing. The second issue is social issues which concern how students engage with advisors and other close friends and relatives during the writing process. Students' tendency of closing themselves off or engaging in "isolation" has an impact on their writing. However, writing difficulties can be reduced if they are more open to feedback from their advisors and peers. This is supported by Caffarella and Barnett's (2000) findings on 45 doctoral students, who found that preparing critiques for their peers and receiving critiques from professors and peers were the most important factors in helping them in understanding the processes of scholarly writing and improving their academic writing.

On the emotional aspect, as the closest aspect to psychology, these are lack of confidence, sometimes known as the "impostor syndrome," and fear of failure and rejection, or its synonym, perfectionism. From the examples above, we can see from these issues that they may cause 'writer's block,' or the inability to write is the writer's concern that they are incompetent to produce a research thesis; they are an impostor who will be 'found out' and unmasked. We can find a link between students' writing difficulties, emotional issues, and writing anxiety. Similarly, anxiety about probable thesis failure or rejection might paralyze a foreign student that the consequences are that much higher. As Prior mentioned, the phenomenon of students' writing struggles was also found at the English Language and Literature Department at UNP. Many final-year students have not

yet been assigned a supervisor, have not completed a mini-proposal, and have not even submitted the title of their thesis.

A study conducted by Rezaei and Jafari (2014) analyzed the levels, types and causes of writing anxiety among Iranian EFL students. The findings of this study revealed a high level of writing anxiety, with cognitive anxiety as its main type, as reflected in preoccupation with performance and high expectations, and fear of negative feedback from teachers, low self-confidence, and poor linguistic knowledge as its main factors. Imaniar (2016), in her study “Students’ Writing Anxiety Levels in Proposal Writing Course in Fifth Semester at English Education Department State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya”, found indicates 59 percent of the participants experienced unusual levels of writing anxiety. The most common difficulty with pupils' writing anxiety is the inability to write down a backdrop. This issue was classified as a novelty of the research problem and a title factor.

A previous study conducted by Masriani et al. (2018) investigated the levels and types of writing anxiety and writing strategies used by the 3rd year English department students of Universitas Negeri Padang. Findings reported moderate levels of writing anxiety, with cognitive anxiety being the most prevalent. Another study “Analysis of Students’ Writing Anxiety in Academic Writing Class at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang” was conducted by Putrimiati (2021) she found that the level of anxiety is on low level and the type of anxiety that is dominant is cognitive anxiety.

Different from previous studies, this research focuses on the level, the types, and the causes of writing anxiety in writing thesis proposal by undergraduate English Education students in UNP. This study is conducted to fill the gaps in existing theory of anxiety, writing anxiety itself, and writing anxiety measures in writing Thesis Proposal. It is beneficial for students and lecturers to know the level, types, and causes of anxiety so that they can be considered when writing or choosing on writing strategies. The researcher chooses the fourth year students (first enrolled in 2018) of English Department at UNP as the subject of the research.

#### **B. Identification of the Problem**

After conducting a preliminary observation at the fourth year English Department students at UNP, it is clear that there are some problems in writing a thesis proposal. Students identified as having problems in writing caused by emotional issues. Some of them are lack of confidence, fear of failure and rejection, or its antonym, perfectionism, and impostor syndrome. This emotional issue is then categorized as writing anxiety. Therefore, it can be assumed that students of the English Language and Literature Department at UNP experience writing anxiety.

#### **C. Limitation of the Problem**

Related to the identification of the problem, the researcher focuses on analyzing the levels, types and causes of writing anxiety in writing a thesis



proposal. The researcher selects writing a thesis proposal of the many types of writing that exist.

#### **D. Formulation of the Problem**

The research problem can be formulated into: “What are the level, type and causes of writing anxiety in writing a thesis proposal experienced by English Language and Literature Department of UNP students?”

#### **E. Research Questions**

Several issues regarding EFL students’ writing anxiety and writing ability have been identified in the background. The questions proposed for the study are as follows.

1. What is the level of writing anxiety experienced by English Language and Literature Department students of UNP in writing a thesis proposal?
2. What is the type of writing anxiety experienced by English Language and Literature Department students of UNP in writing a thesis proposal?
3. What are the causes of writing anxiety experienced by English Language and Literature Department students of UNP in writing a thesis proposal?

#### **F. Purpose of the Research**

Departing from the problems mentioned in the statement of the problem, this study aims at:

- A. To describe the level of writing anxiety experienced by English Language and Literature Department students of UNP in writing a thesis proposal.
- B. To describe the type of writing anxiety anxiety experienced by English Language and Literature Department students of UNP in writing a thesis proposal.
- C. To describe the causes of writing anxiety experienced by English Language and Literature Department students of UNP in writing a thesis proposal.

#### **G. Significance of the Problem**

This research would be important to be done as it can contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the results of the research are expected to give significant information about writing anxiety, the level, type and causes, experienced by the students of English Department at Universitas Negeri Padang in writing the Thesis Proposal. The researcher also hopes that this research may provide knowledge and information about writing anxiety, the level of anxiety, types of writing anxiety and the causes of writing anxiety for the next researcher. Practically, the researcher hopes the results of this research can be used as consideration for lecturers and students when guiding and writing thesis proposals. It is hoped that the results of this research can be used as consideration for lecturers and students when guiding and writing thesis proposals. The result of the study is hoped to make the proposal writing process less stressful by knowing students' writing anxiety level and students' honest responses. So that teachers can analyze it to make the solvency. Lastly, hopefully, this research might serve as a

reference for other researchers interested in students' determinants of writing anxiety as second language learners and students' anxiety levels, particularly with regard to writing ability.

## **H. Definition of the Key Terms**

### **1. Writing Anxiety**

Writing anxiety is an uncomfortable emotion or feeling created by the fear of negative feedback and a lack of desire in writing because students regard writing as a task rather than a needed skill.

### **2. Thesis Proposal Writing**

A thesis proposal is a document that specifies the thesis topic, defines the problem or issue that will be addressed in the thesis, and demonstrates why the topic justifies further investigation. It should identify a problem and suggest a solution to that problem.