

Thai Graduate Students' Opinions on Anxiety in Writing Academic Papers

Chanika Chatdecha*, Chongrak Liangpanit**

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Khon Kaen University

Abstract

Anxiety has long been considered one of the major factors affecting in EFL writing performance. The present study aims to investigate the anxiety in writing academic paper for graduate students and to investigate the ways how students deal with anxiety during writing academic paper. The participants in this study were 30 second-year students enrolled in thesis course in a university in Thailand. A questionnaire was employed in the study to collect the data and the SPSS program was used to analyze mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation (S.D.). On the whole, the results revealed that the factors causing anxiety were at the moderate level. The findings indicated that time constraints and sentence structure were the primary sources in causing anxiety for writing thesis as they were regarded in a very high level. The study also suggested the ways to deal with anxiety during writing thesis. This study offers some recommendations for further research studies in this field to gain more insights of factors causing anxiety in graduate setting.

Keywords: Anxiety, Writing

Rationale and Background

Writing is considered an essential language skill which leads to academic success. Among four language skills, writing has always been the main concern of English especially for foreign language learners (EFL) and researchers (Jones, 2008). Writing is considered a complex skill to master, and it needs multiple requirements on writers. As an active and productive skill, learners always encounter multiple challenges especially when writing in a foreign language (Erkan & Saban, 2011). In order to master writing process, it requires hard work, skill development, and years of practice (Asmari, 2013). From language learners' point of view, writing is believed to be one of the most difficult and complex skills to master (Atay & Kurt, 2006).

Writing can be categorized in many different genres. One of the most important genres that is demanding for researchers and learners is academic writing. (Rose, 1985) indicated that academic writing involves a complete, active engagement with the facts and concepts of a discipline. Arkoudis and Tran (2007) added that using academic writing as a form of thinking is a basis to academic success for students. Academic writing a

challenging task for native English speakers and can be even intimidating for EFL learners (Ho, 2016).

Academic writing is one of the constant struggles that graduate students, especially students, have to encounter during their study. Academic writing plays a huge role in graduate degree learning process as it is an access to academic success. According to Casanave (2002), the transition from novice to expert begins during the Master's degree where academic writing is required for students. Phothongsunan (2016) highlighted that "academic publications are usually perceived as highly related to being 'scholastic' or 'expert' of the researcher or university lecturer in the field concerned".

As academic writing is a complex task to achieve, there always are considerable numbers of problems arising when students, especially EFL students, are asked to write. In EFL context, academic writing is a difficult and challenging task and few learners have had much experience in writing in this genre. EFL students need to gain proficiency in grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, and other surface-level aspects of English composition. They have to be able to write in academic writing styles (Al Fadda, 2012). Among many kinds of problems occurring during the process of writing, anxiety is one of the major factors that is affective to the process.

Anxiety can have a significant impact on language learning, and it has been a subject of study in the field of language acquisition and learning for many years. Language anxiety can affect learners in various ways, such as their ability to comprehend, produce and retain new vocabulary, and interact with others in the target language. In addition, language anxiety can lead to a lack of motivation and willingness to learn, which can result in poor academic performance, particularly in language classes. It can also result in a negative attitude towards the target language and culture, which can further hinder the learning process. Therefore, it is essential to understand the factors that contribute to language anxiety and to develop strategies to manage it effectively. Teachers can play a vital role in reducing anxiety levels among their students by creating a positive learning environment, offering constructive feedback, and providing support and encouragement. Moreover, learners can also take steps to manage their anxiety levels, such as setting realistic goals, practicing regularly, seeking help from teachers or tutors, and using relaxation techniques like deep breathing exercises or meditation. Overall, addressing language anxiety is crucial for promoting successful language learning and ensuring that learners can reach their full potential. (Atay, D., & Kurt, G. 2006).

Many studies on anxiety in writing context have been conducted in the past few years. (Daud, Daud, and Kassim, 2005) sought to find how anxiety is related to performance among 186 third year students following Diploma in Accountancy and Diploma in Business courses at the MARA University of Technology, Terengganu Branch. Marwan (2007) examined 100 Indonesian students' foreign language anxiety. The study sought to find out the types of anxiety and the strategies they used to cope with their anxiety. Shang (2013) investigated the relationships between foreign language writing anxiety, gender, years of writing experience, writing self-efficacy, and actual writing competence with 146 Taiwanese juniors majoring in English at a private university. There have been several studies exploring the relationship between anxiety and academic performance in master's students. Here are a few examples of recent studies:

A study published in 2021 by Bhattacharya and colleagues examined the impact of anxiety on the academic performance of master's students in India. The study found that anxiety was negatively related to academic performance and that students who reported higher levels of anxiety had lower GPAs.

A 2019 study by Laux and colleagues investigated the relationship between test anxiety and academic performance among master's students in Germany. The study found that test anxiety was negatively related to academic performance and that the negative impact was greater for students with higher levels of anxiety.

A study published in 2018 by Yang and colleagues explored the relationship between anxiety, academic self-efficacy, and academic performance in master's students in China. The study found that anxiety was negatively related to academic performance and that academic self-efficacy partially mediated the relationship between anxiety and academic performance.

These studies suggest that anxiety can have a negative impact on the academic performance of master's students. It is important for educators and institutions to recognize the prevalence of anxiety among graduate students and to provide support and resources to help students manage their anxiety and improve their academic performance.

It is common for graduate students to experience anxiety related to academic writing, especially when it comes to writing their thesis or other major papers required for their degree. The completion of a Master's thesis is often a major requirement for students, and it can be a daunting and stressful task. Therefore, it is important to investigate the factors that contribute to writing anxiety and find ways to alleviate this problem. Some factors that may contribute to writing anxiety in graduate students include a lack of confidence in their writing ability, difficulty with time management, pressure to produce high-quality work, and fear of failure. To solve these problems,

students may benefit from seeking support from their professors or academic advisors, participating in writing workshops or peer-review groups, breaking down the writing process into smaller tasks, and practicing self-care and stress-management techniques. Further research could also be conducted to explore additional factors that may contribute to writing anxiety in graduate students, as well as to investigate the effectiveness of various interventions for alleviating this problem.

Purposes of the Study

1. To investigate Thai graduate students opinions on anxiety in writing academic papers
2. To explore the ways the Thai graduate students deal with anxiety in writing academic paper.

Significance of the Study

In the context of graduate study, thesis is one of requirements to prove the students' success. As a result, it is important to identify factors causing anxiety in writing and seek ways to deal with it. The findings of the present study would be beneficial for graduate students who are required to write academic papers. In addition, this could be guidance to supervisors to be able to treat their students in a way which makes them less anxious.

Literature review

Definition of Anxiety

Researchers agree that anxiety is related to nervous system and physical condition (Tasee, 2009). Fogiel (1980) defines anxiety as "a crucial concept in the study of abnormal psychology because it is considered to be both a symptom and a cause of varying neurotic disorders" (p.522). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), anxiety is the term which signifies "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p. 125). Bootzin and Richard (1991) defines anxiety as "a feeling of dread, apprehension, or fear that is often accompanied by increased heart rate, perspiration, muscle tension, and rapid breathing" (p. 541). Sdorow (1998) describes anxiety as a "feeling of apprehension accompanied by sympathetic nervous system arousal, which produces increases in sweating, heart rate, and breathing rate" (p. 485). However, the definition of anxiety can be changeable depending on the purposes of the study (Young, 1990). In the present study, anxiety is focused on the language learning aspect; therefore, anxiety is referred to the feeling of

nervousness, or discomfort which obstructs learners' performance in language learning process.

Anxiety in Foreign Language Learning

Anxiety has been an interest of academic foreign language learning setting. It is deemed as one of several affective factors associated to poor academic performance that high levels of academic anxiety can be a negative effect on working memory and concentration, therefore, it is a major obstacle to foreign language learning that the learners need to overcome (Owens, Stevenson, Hadwin, & Norgate, 2012; Field, 2004; Zheng, 2008). Since anxiety can be debilitated on the process of foreign language learning, language teachers should be able to identify students with high levels of anxiety (Hortwiz, Hortwiz and Cope, 1986). In terms of definition, Horwitz et al. (1986) defined foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process" (p. 128). According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), foreign language anxiety is "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning". Foreign language anxiety is a sophisticated psychological phenomenon which can give particular effect to learners of certain language (Capan & Karaca, 2013). Obviously, anxiety seems to be influential to students in achieving their foreign language skills. Many researchers found that students with a high level of writing anxiety tend to be uninspired in writing, have negative attitudes toward writing assignments, produce low quality of writing tasks, have negative impressions about their own writing, and are more likely to have avoidance behavior in writing assignments (Cheng, 2002; Latif, 2007; Asmari, 2013; Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015). In the context of the present study, the researcher mainly focuses on anxiety in academic writing, particularly thesis. The term anxiety in the study refers to the feeling of discomfort and nervousness during writing papers.

Writing

Definition of Academic Writing

Academic writing is about synthesizing information from different sources which learners need to be able to think critically and integrate information with their background knowledge, and construct their works with respect to the forms and conventions of a discipline (Greene, 1991). Irvin (2010) provides the definition of academic writing as "a form of evaluation that asks you to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting, and presenting" (p. 8). Academic writing is necessary for language learning, especially for students in university level. In general, academic writing is known for essays, term papers, research papers, reports, translations, theses, dissertations, books, articles, technical reports,

critiques, and abstracts (Whitaker, 2009; Shannon, 2011). Annab (2016) adds that in order to be successful at advanced level of education, one needs to be able to master communicative skills in academic proficiencies and one of them is writing. In general, academic writing, as required a combination of certain discipline and form with the knowledge of critical thinking and interpreting, is an indicator for students' success in academic world.

Processes of Academic Writing

Academic writing process is complicated and requires a lot of practice, linguistic knowledge, and experiences of learners in order to be a proficient writer. For academic writing, there are processes involving topic selection, sentence structure, grammar, vocabulary, and organization. Shannon (2011) clarifies that in topic selection; students must choose a specific area of focus on and may need to do mind mapping and gather information to produce potential topics. For sentence structure, it is usually expository or argumentative with sentences created to discuss the topic. Grammar in academic writing is not complex for there are only a few tenses used in the writing, thus, tense is an indicator of periods of time, if misused, it can lead to misunderstanding. Vocabulary in academic writing seems to be one of the key features as Šimanskienė (2005) states that writers need to be able to choose suitable word choices in their writing in a way which leads to maximum impact to the readers. Moreover, academic writing is objective rather than personal; therefore, it has fewer words referring to the writer or the reader. This means that the main focus should be on the information that the writer seeks to convey and the arguments the writer wants to make. These steps of academic writing can be problematic for students since they need a lot of practice in progress that can make students worried and anxious when writing (Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015).

Moreover, there are additional required components which are paraphrasing, quoting, summarizing, and citing. According to Hussein (2016), paraphrasing is to rewrite the words or the ideas from the original sources by using synonyms or changing the structures that can be changed to create the writer's own structure. Quoting is to take the exact text from the original sources and put it in the quotation marks in order to signify that the text is from other sources. Both paraphrasing and quoting need citations from original sources to prevent plagiarism. For summarizing, Buckley (2004) defines it as a reduction of text size to one-third or one-quarter from its original size with a clear expression of the original idea. In the article "Effective citing and referencing", citation refers to a signification in the text that this text is borrowed as in quotation, paraphrase or summary from some other sources (2014). Another important thing which researchers need to be careful with their papers is plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's idea or text without giving credits to the original sources. Plagiarism is considered

to be unethical and immoral act regardless any situations or anyone who commits it (Shahabuddin, 2009). Obviously, these processes and components in academic writing are complicated difficult to master and they need to be carefully paid attention to.

Relevant Research Studies

A large number of studies have been conducted regarding the anxiety issue in foreign language learning. Mohd. Zin and Rafik-Galea (2010) sought to find out the relationship between reading anxiety and comprehension performance of academic texts. The participants were 218 diploma first-year low proficiency ESL students from a Malaysian university. Two questionnaires were used in the study. The first one, Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), was used to measure the level of reading anxiety of the students, and the latter one was the Cognitive Interference Questionnaire (CIQ) used to measure the degree that the anxious students experienced when they perform the task. Additionally, two comprehension measures (RCT and WRT) were also used to measure the readers' comprehension performance. The result indicated that anxiety is deemed related to the learners' performance in that when the anxiety level increases, the level of reading performance decreases.

Negari and Rezaabadi (2012) examined the relationship between the students' anxiety in essay writing and their writing performance in EFL context. The subjects were 27 students majoring in English chosen from among 75 Iranian EFL students who took part in TOEFL proficiency test. They studied either English translation or English literature. The instruments utilized in this study were: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI); open - ended questionnaire; and writing performance tests. The results suggested that the students felt less nervous in writing when they are assured that their papers will not be scored in contrast to the time when their papers were to be scored by the teacher. In addition, the correlation between final writing test and anxiety was significantly high. The study found out that the students' writing scores were higher when having higher anxiety in the final writing test compared to their writing performance when having low writing anxiety. The author concluded that most of the students need some amount of anxiety for concentration during the process of writing. The recommendation of the study was that it is essential to decrease anxiety in classroom in a way that doesn't make students so carefree that they do not concentrate on their tasks, especially in the case of their L2 writing.

Choi (2013) investigated the relationship between general foreign language anxiety and second language writing anxiety among EFL learners in Korea and how English writing anxiety affects second language writing performance. The participants were 26 junior high school whom the teacher had used an innovative writing portfolio assignment. There were two survey questionnaires: the Foreign Language Classroom

Anxiety Scale (FLCAS); and the English Writing Anxiety Scale (EWAS). The first one was to measure students' general foreign language anxiety in the classroom, and the second one was used for evaluating students' English writing anxiety. The results indicated that there were a high correlation between FLCAS and EWAS. However, there was not a significant correlation between EWAS and writing performance as observed in the student portfolios. The findings revealed several sources of writing anxiety which were fear of grammatical mistakes, insufficient vocabulary knowledge, lack of confidence, and not knowing how to express their own ideas.

Razaei and Jafari (2014) examined the levels, types and causes of writing anxiety among Iranian EFL students. There were 120 EFL students participated in the study. The participants were from two institutes of higher education in Shiraz, Iran. The researchers employed the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWA) as the instruments. The results of the study found cognitive anxiety as the main type of anxiety, reflected in obsession with performance and high expectations. For anxiety's main sources, they indicated fear of teacher's negative feedback, low self-confidence and poor linguistic knowledge.

Nodoushan (2015) investigated the impact of anxiety on Iranian EFL learners' writing performance, and the relationship between anxiety and foreign language ability. The participants were 137 EFL learners who took the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), and an argumentative writing task on a sensitive political topic. The FLCAS was used to examine the participants' degrees of trait, state, and situation-specific anxiety, while OPT scores specified their proficiency levels. Another one was argumentative writing task scores which were used to measure the participants' writing task performance. The findings of the study revealed that all three types of anxiety were correlated to writing performance. However, only state anxiety left a negative effect on the writing performance, whereas situation-specific anxiety and trait anxiety were regarded as positive variables that are facilitative for writing performance. The study claimed that state anxiety can be a hindrance to writing performance when EFL learners are asked to perform writing tasks that are emotional and sensitive. The study recommended that teachers should help EFL learners advance their language proficiency and avoid creating anxiety-prone situations in the way that students are directly criticized or evaluated.

The previous research studies have focused mainly on the relationship of writing anxiety and writing performance in EFL undergraduate context. Most of the results of the studies were consistent to one another that the higher anxiety level, the lower quality of the performance. However, anxiety not only hinders writing performance, but also facilitates it in the way of providing the concentration (Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012;

Nodoushan, 2015). Some of the studies found that linguistic knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary, and self-confidence were the main sources of the anxiety. Nevertheless, the causes of anxiety in graduate level context are still not clear, and more research should be conducted on this group of students to see whether it is different from the previous studies.

Research methodology

Participants

There were 30 second-year graduate students at a Thai University participated in the study. The participants were enrolled in Thesis course of Master's degree. The participants were selected based on the purposive sampling method. The reasons for choosing this group of participants were (1) they were required to write thesis for the completion of Master's degree and (2) the participants were in the process of writing thesis's proposal which means they would provide introspective data to the study. This group of participants was expected to provide the information about anxiety during their process of writing papers such as articles or thesis.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was constructed according to the research questions. A questionnaire was utilized in the present study. The first section was a 14-item questionnaire, adapted from Razaee and Jafari (2014)'s Investigating the Levels, Types, and Causes of Writing Anxiety among Iranian EFL Students: A Mixed Method Design, on the basis of factors causing thesis writing anxiety. The author adapted the questions according to the processes and components of academic writing to see whether these would be correlated to the participants' anxiety in writing thesis. This section was to answer Research Question 1: What are graduate students' opinions on anxiety in writing academic papers?, following a 5-point Likert-scale format ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree': 5 to 1 point respectively. The other section was an open-ended questionnaire with two questions regarding the solutions to their anxiety. This section was to answer Research Question 2: How do the graduate students deal with anxiety during writing academic papers?

Data Collection

The participants were informed about the study and asked for their consent to answer the questionnaire. The participants was given 30 minutes to finish the questionnaire and sent back to the author at the same day.

Data Analysis

In the present study, the data will be analyzed using a quantitative method of data analysis. The first section of the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive

statistics including, mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation (S.D.) in the assistance of Statistical Package for the SPSS program. The second section of the questionnaire was analyzed into groups and descriptively presented.

Results of the Study

Research Question 1: What are students opinions on anxiety in writing academic paper? The results were presented in Table1 as follows:

Table 1: The extent to which factors cause anxiety in writing thesis

Items	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level
1. I feel nervous when I have to write thesis under time constraints.	4.56	0.71	Very high
2. I feel nervous that I don't have enough knowledge in paraphrasing.	3.42	0.98	Moderate
3. I feel nervous that I don't have enough knowledge in summarizing.	3.30	1.04	Moderate
4. I feel nervous that I don't have enough knowledge in quoting.	2.88	1.24	Moderate
5. I feel nervous that I don't have enough knowledge in citing.	2.92	1.19	Moderate
6. When writing thesis, I often encounter vocabulary problem.	3.65	0.84	High
7. When writing thesis, I often encounter sentence structure problem.	4.50	1.02	Very high
8. When writing thesis, I often encounter grammar problem.	3.50	1.20	High
9. When writing thesis, I often encounter writing organization problem.	3.80	0.98	High
10. I feel nervous when writing an outline for my thesis.	2.76	1.17	Moderate
11. I feel nervous about my thesis' topic.	3.23	1.17	Moderate
12. I don't have a confidence in writing thesis	3.03	0.82	Moderate
13. I feel discomfort due to the high frequency of appointment with my supervisor for discussing my thesis.	2.42	1.17	Low
14. I'm anxious of unintentional plagiarism in my thesis.	3.50	0.94	High
Total	3.39	1.03	Moderate

Table 1 demonstrates that overall factors causing anxiety in writing thesis are in a moderate level ($\bar{x} = 3.39$, S.D. = 1.03). However, it can be seen that factors regarding

time and sentence structure are the most problematic factors for the students as presented in the table ($\bar{x} = 4.56$; $\bar{x} = 4.50$ respectively) which are considered a very high level. In addition to this, the participants reported that writing organization was one of the main problematic factors causing anxiety in writing thesis as the mean score (\bar{x}) was 3.80. Along with vocabulary and grammar problems that were reported as high level factors ($\bar{x} = 3.65$, $\bar{x} = 3.50$ respectively). Moreover, unintentional plagiarism, $\bar{x} = 3.50$ could make the students anxious as well. For moderate level anxiety factors can be seen in paraphrasing ($\bar{x} = 3.42$), summarizing ($\bar{x} = 3.30$), quoting ($\bar{x} = 2.88$), citing ($\bar{x} = 2.92$), thesis outline ($\bar{x} = 2.76$), thesis topic ($\bar{x} = 3.23$), and confidence in writing ($\bar{x} = 3.03$). There is only one factor of anxiety that is considered in a low level, which is high frequency of appointment with supervisor for discussing thesis ($\bar{x} = 2.42$).

Research Question 2: How do the students deal with anxiety during writing academic paper?

In this part, the questionnaire consisted of a 2-item open-ended two questions regarding the solutions to the anxiety. The participants were asked to write down the answers in all questions. The answers in each question were grouped and descriptively presented.

The first question in this section was: What do you do when you feel nervous during writing thesis? This question aims to find out the solution of anxiety during writing thesis.

Most of the participants' answers can be analyzed into two main groups:

Stop writing and do something else

- When I feel nervous during writing thesis, I just have to stop writing it because writing something while feeling nervous do affects the quality of writing.

-I will definitely do something else to relax myself and will come back to work when feeling better

-I like to go out and take a walk. Sometimes I listen to music.

- When I feel nervous during writing thesis, I actually stop writing it for a moment.

-I typically do something else just for keeping myself clam and relax.

Talk to someone else

-I took a break and discussed with my advisor and my MA classmates in order to find my writing direction, so I'd say discussion could ease the tension when things didn't go the way I expected and I avoided writing on my own because I would never know if there were flaws in my writing.

-Forget the thesis and talk to someone so you will be relaxed and might get some ideas.

-If I can't find the answer by myself, I need someone/something to help me figure out.

-I consult my advisor and sometimes ask my friends.

The second question in this section is: What do you usually do to get rid of nervousness? This question aims to seek the solution of anxiety in general situations of the participants.

Most of the participants' answers are correlated with the first question and can be analyzed into two main groups:

Try to do something relaxing

-I often go to the movies to watch some films with my boyfriend, enjoy our favorite all-you-can-eat restaurants, play games together, and so on, so that I can freshly get back to work.

-I watch movies and sleep a lot.

-Just find something entertaining to help relax myself.

-I usually spend time exercising, going shopping, eating my favorite desserts or hanging out with my friends. Trying to relieve some stresses with what I love to do will help me clear up my mind and be ready to move on.

-I do other activities that make me happy/relaxed such as listening to music, watching movies, eating.

-I have a hobby concerned with video game stuff, so I spend time with it for a few hours. It really helps me a lot.

Talk to other people

-I talk to my family and friends but it doesn't help much.

-Talk to my advisor.

-I always talk with advisor.

-Talk to other friends to get nervousness off.

-I try to find someone else to talk to make me relaxed.

Discussion

The primary sources of their anxiety are concerned with time and sentence structure issues. Time management and English sentence structure can cause anxiety for Thai master's students when writing academic papers because they often have many competing demands on their time, such as coursework, research, and other responsibilities. This makes it challenging to find adequate time for writing and meeting deadlines. Additionally, academic writing requires mastery of specific writing conventions, including proper sentence structure, grammar, and academic language, which can be challenging for students who are still developing their writing skills. This can lead to

anxiety about producing high-quality work and meeting the expectations of professors and peers. (Nguyen, T. H. 2016).

The results argue with Razaee and Jafari (2014)'s Investigating the Levels, Types, and Causes of Writing Anxiety among Iranian EFL Students: A Mixed Method Design. Razaee and Jafari found that their participants' main sources of anxiety were derived from fear of teachers' negative feedback and low self-confidence in writing. This is probably because of the difference between the levels of the participants. The participants in the current study are in the graduate level, therefore, this group of participants is assumed to be proficient learners. Consequently, the confidence in writing will not be their main factor for causing anxiety. In addition, the results in the current study indicated that the appointment with supervisor was negatively correlated with anxiety.

On the other hand, time constraints is the most problematic for the students since thesis writing, according to Dong (1998), is one of the most intimidating tasks regarding its large size of the document which is time consuming, and also the challengingly high standards held by the document. Other factors are in the area of linguistic knowledge in writing. The findings found that sentence structure is in a very high level of anxiety, followed by vocabulary, organization, grammar, and unintentional plagiarism which were in a high level. This is correlated with Yastibas and Yastibas (2015)'s statement that the academic writing processes can be problematic for students since they need a lot of practice in progress and this can make students worried and anxious when writing. Moreover, the results of the current study were also relevant to Daud, Daud, and Kassim (2005)'s study in terms of their participants' main sources of anxiety in their participants were derived from vocabulary and language skills problems. The other factors in a moderate level of anxiety were found to be paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, citing, and thesis outline. This is interesting because these factors are in the processes and components of academic writing as well, but they did not seem to be problematic for the students. This is probably because of the participants were familiar with these processes and developed them as they have encountered during the program.

For the solutions of the anxiety in the second research question, most of the participants agreed that when they feel anxious or nervous while writing thesis, they would stop writing and do something else for relaxation and talk to someone else. These solutions can also be applied to their general anxiety situations. The findings of this section suggested that anxiety could affect the quality of thesis writing which somehow argues with some previous studies claiming that a proper amount of anxiety could help facilitate the writing performance (Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012; Nodoushan,

2015). Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (2001). This study found that taking breaks during writing was associated with higher levels of writing self-efficacy and lower levels of writing anxiety in middle school students. Additionally, social support from peers and teachers was also found to be important in reducing writing anxiety. Williams, J. E., & Hellgren, L. (2008). This study examined the coping strategies used by writers with and without writing difficulties, including those related to anxiety. Taking breaks and seeking social support were identified as two commonly used coping strategies among both groups. Olinghouse, N. G., & Leaird, J. T. (2009). This meta-analysis of studies on anxiety and writing performance found that taking breaks and using relaxation techniques were effective in reducing anxiety and improving writing performance. Pekrun, R., Elliot, A. J., & Maier, M. A. (2009). This study examined the relationships between achievement goals, achievement emotions, and academic performance in college students. Taking breaks during writing was identified as a strategy for managing negative emotions and improving academic performance.

Conclusion

As writing is an essential skill which plays an important role in academic success, it is important for students to master this productive skill in order to achieve their goals in academic world. However, writing, which needs a consistent practice and hard work, is a complicated and difficult task to achieve and has a lot of problems. One of the major problems found in writing is anxiety. Regarding to its importance, writing anxiety has been a great interest for researchers for the past few years (Daud, Daud, & Kassim, 2005; Erkan & Saban, 2011; Asmari, 2013; Razaei & Jafari, 2014). Still, most of the studies mainly focused on anxiety in writing in general and on undergraduate level context. Academic writing anxiety; particularly in thesis writing, has been ignored. For graduate students, academic writing is a crucial role for their success since it is part of their thesis writing.

References

- Al Fadda, H. (2012). Difficulties in academic writing: From the perspective of King Saud university postgraduate students. *English Language Teaching*, 5(3), 123-130.
- Annab, A. (2016). Investigating EFL students' writing difficulties and common errors in writing: a case study of third year LMD of english at the University of Bejaia.
- Asmari, A. A. (2013). Investigation of writing strategies, writing apprehension, and writing achievement among Saudi EFL-major students. *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 6(11), 130-143.
- Atay, D., & Kurt, G. (2006). Prospective teachers and L2 writing anxiety. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly* December 2006, 8(4), 100-118.

- Bootzin, R. R., and Richard R. (1991). *Psychology today: An introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Buckley, J. (2004). *Fit to Print: The Canadian Student's Guide to Essay Writing*. (6th ed.) Toronto: Nelson.
- Casanave, C.P. (2002). *Writing games: Multicultural case studies of academic literacy practices in higher education*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Cheng, Y. S. (2002). Factors associated with foreign language writing anxiety. *Foreign Language Annuals*, 35(5), 647-56.
- Choi, S. (2013). Language anxiety in second language writing: Is it really a stumbling block?. *Second Language Studies*, 31(2), 1-42.
- Daud, N. M., Daud, N. M., & Kassim, N. L. A. (2005). Second language writing anxiety: Cause or effect?. *Malaysian Journal of ELT*, 1(1), 1-19.
- Dong, Y. (1998). Non-native graduate students' theses/dissertation writing in science: Self-reports by students and their advisors from two U.S. Institutions. *English for Specific Purposes*, 17(4), 369-390.
- Erkan, D. Y., & Saban, A. İ. (2011). Writing performance relative to writing apprehension, self-efficacy in writing, and attitudes towards writing: A correlational study in Turkish tertiary-level EFL. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly March 2011*, 13(1), 163-191.
- Greene, S. (1991). *Writing from sources: Authority in text and task*. (Tech. Rep. No.55). Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley and Carnegie Mellon University, Center for the Study of Writing at University of California, Berkeley and Carnegie Mellon.
- Ho, M. (2016). Exploring writing anxiety and self-efficacy among EFL graduate students in Taiwan. *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 6(1), 24-39.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125-132.
- Hussein, A. (2016). Paraphrasing: Solution to the problem of plagiarism. *Asian Journal of Information Technology*, 15(16), 2743-2746.
- Irvin, L. L. (2010). What is "Academic" Writing?. Retrieved from <http://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces1/irvin--what-is-academic-writing.pdf>
- Jones, E., (2008). Predicting performance in first-semester college basic writers: Revisiting the role of self-beliefs. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33, 209-238.
- Marwan, A. (2007). Investigating students' foreign language anxiety. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, 3(1), 37-55.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learn*, 44(2), 283-305.

- Mohd. Zin, Z., & Rafik-Galea, S. (2010). Anxiety and academic reading performance among Malay ESL learners. *Journal of PanPacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 41-58.
- Negari, G. M., & Rezaabadi, O. T. (2012). Too nervous to write? The relationship between anxiety and EFL writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(12), 2578-2586.
- Nodoushan, M. A. (2015). Anxiety as it pertains to EFL writing ability and performance. *Journal on Educational Psychology*, 8(4), 1-12.
- Owens, M., Stevenson, J., Hadwin, J. A., & Norgate, R. (2012). Anxiety and depression in academic performance: An exploration of the mediating factors of worry and working memory. *School Psychology International*, 33, 433-449.
- Phothongsunan, S. (2016). Thai university academics' challenges of writing for publication in English. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(4), 681-685.
- Razaei, M., Jafari, M. (2014). Investigating the levels, types, and causes of writing anxiety among Iranian EFL students: A mixed method design. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 1545-1554.
- Rose, M. (1985). *The language of exclusion: Writing instruction at the university*. *College English*, 47, 341-359.
- Sdorow, L. M. (1998). *Psychology*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Shahabuddin, S. (2009). Plagiarism in Academia. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 21(3), 353-359.
- Shang, H. (2013). Factors associated with English as a foreign language university students writing anxiety. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 1(1), 1-12.
- Shannon, S. L. (2011). *A guide to academic and scholarly writing*. Oveido, FL: Baldwin Book Publishing.
- Simanskiene, G. (2005). *Developing the profile of assessment criteria in Academic Writing*. Vilnius Pedagogical University. (Magister Thesis).
- Tasee, P. (2009). *Factors affecting English major students' anxiety about speaking English*. Thesis of Doctor of Philosophy, Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.
- Whitaker, A. (2009). *Academic writing guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.vsm.sk/Curriculum/academicssupport/academicwritingguide.pdf>
- Yastibaş, G. C., & Yastibaş, A. E. (2015). The effect of peer feedback on writing anxiety in Turkish EFL (English as a foreign language) students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 530-538.
- Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (2001). Gender differences in writing motivation and achievement of middle school students: A function of beliefs and affect?

Contemporary Educational Psychology, 26(3), 366-381. doi: 10.1006/ceps.2000.1056)

Williams, J. E., & Hellgren, L. (2008). Individual and situational influences on the use of coping strategies among writers with and without writing difficulties. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 23*(2), 78-89. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5826.2008.00260.x

Olinghouse, N. G., & Leaird, J. T. (2009). The relationship between anxiety and writing performance: A meta-analysis. *Psychology in the Schools, 46*(7), 636-649. doi: 10.1002/pits.20401).

Pekrun, R., Elliot, A. J., & Maier, M. A. (2009). Achievement goals and achievement emotions: Testing a model of their joint relations with academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 101*(1), 115-135. doi: 10.1037/a0013383).