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English Language Writing Anxiety among Diploma Engineering Students in Uitm

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Abstract
Over the past decades, researchers are becoming increasingly interested in the writing skills of second language (L2) learners. Although writing has been recognised as a complex skill, it is a crucial skill that (L1) and (L2) learners must master due to its widespread use in academic studies. Numerous scholars (Jennifer and Ponniah,2017; Altukruni,2019) believe that the writing process is influenced by cognitive, cultural, and social aspects, making it a difficult endeavour. All of this may cause the students to feel a great deal of concern and anxiety. In Malaysia, many studies were conducted in order to investigate anxiety in L2 classrooms, with the majority of them focusing on speaking skill (Sim et.al., 2020; Kamal et.al., 2020; Nurul Fatinah et.al., 2020). There are also studies on writing anxiety in first and second language but more detailed investigation and in-depth research on this needs to be done so both instructors and learners will be more aware of the perturbing issues involving writing anxiety in L2 classroom. Due to the complexity and multidimensional phenomenon of writing anxiety, a sequential explanatory mixed-method approach will be used in this investigation (Creswell, 1998). The outcomes from this research project are expected to assist L2 educators better understand how to teach writing. Next, it may aid the researcher in developing a mediated learning environment in the classroom, allowing learners to feel more at comfortable in approximating basic knowledge to create good essays and become less worried while writing essays autonomously.

Problem Statement/Research Objectives
In a tertiary education environment, academic expectations change from what is experienced by the students in their secondary schools. Students are assessed largely by what they write. English essays, lab reports, reflective papers and thesis are among the assessments that require the students' ability to practice and showcase their writing skills. But poor grasp of the English language among Malaysian university graduates has always been the concern of education of policy makers since the past decades (Ee, 2018; Cheng, 2020; Saravanan and Azlina, 2021; Kamaruddin et. al., 2021).
Many studies have proven that writing is the most difficult skill in language learning and many L2 learners are struggling with writing. Lack of vocabulary and linguistic knowledge,

limited knowledge on writing conventions and L1 interference are among the prominent reasons that cause the struggle among the learners (Adrea, 2018; Alfawzan, 2020; Kamarudin et al., 2021). This situation indirectly affects writers' mental and behaviour and the written product itself as it hinders ESL learners to produce a good composition (Altukruni, 2019).

In addition, the Diploma students in UiTM are required to pass three levels of English courses to graduate. The courses are ELC 121 for Semester One students which stresses in listening skill, ELC 151 for Semester Two students which focuses on reading skill and ELC 231 for Semester Three students that emphasises on writing skill. Because writing has traditionally been seen as a difficult ability to master, students must excel in the course, particularly ELC 231, in order to achieve academic success. Self-expression, flow of ideas, outsider expectations, rising confidence, and enjoyment of L2 academic writing are all related to writing success, and L2 students are known to struggle with this (Basturkmen and Lewis, 2002; Altukruni, 2019; Shidrah et. al., 2021). Thus, L2 learners need to deal with their apprehension when learning writing in ESL classroom to ensure their overall grade for the course is not affected.

In Malaysia, many studies were conducted in order to investigate anxiety in L2 classrooms, with the majority of them focusing on speaking skill (Sim et.al., 2020; Kamal et.al., 2020; Ahmad et.al., 2019; Nadjwa et.al., 2018; Latif, 2015; Fatinah et.al., 2020). There are also studies on writing anxiety in first and second language but more detailed investigation and in-depth research on this needs to be done so both instructors and learners will be more aware of the perturbing issues involving writing anxiety in L2 classroom. This could provide L2 learners towards a more pleasant learning experience in the long run.

This research focuses on these following questions:
1. What are the factors that are frequently reported to provoke writing anxiety among Diploma Engineering students in L2 writing classes?
2. What are the strategies employ to alleviate writing anxiety among L2 learners in L2 writing classes?

Objectives
This study proposes the following research objectives to be met:
1. To identify the factors that frequently provoke writing anxiety among Diploma Engineering students in L2 writing classes.
2. To identify the strategies employ in reducing writing anxiety among L2 learners in L2 writing classes.

Literature Review
Writing anxiety is an important factor in the development of a student's writing ability. Writing anxiety occurs when students experience negative feelings such as tension, nervousness, worry, and trembling when writing (Badrasawi et al., 2016; Badrasawi et al., 2020; Saravanan and Azlina, 2021). The complexity of the writing process, on the other hand, has caused concern among students. There have been numerous studies on this topic, however there are few studies on the association between different types of writing apprehension and ESL writers' writing skills.

Writing anxiety is investigated in the study because of its negative impacts on learners' composition. Writing anxiety was found to have a link to learners' writing performance, according to (Kamaruddin et al., 2021). Learners who encountered a distressing circumstance throughout the writing process, such as feeling frightened, apprehensive, panicked, or

nervous, eventually lost control of their emotions. As a result of this predicament, they produced bad writing. The process of developing or expressing thoughts was smoother when they were calmer and relaxed during the composing process (Turnuk and Aydin, 2020; Liu, 2020; Syarifudin, 2020; Saravanan and Azlina, 2021). Apprehension over being graded and time limits were the causes of writing anxiety among ESL students. The study also discovered that the lower the level of anxiety, the better the students' writing performance, which is consistent with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis argument (Krashen, 1985).

Jennifer and Ponniah (2019) study found comparable results, with students' writing fear level influencing their writing performance significantly. They claimed that cognitive anxiety was the most common sort of writing anxiety among students, and that students with high levels of anxiety performed badly in their writing production. In the study, the researchers also discussed the causes and effects of writing anxiety. Among the factors mentioned in the study were fear of being evaluated, fear of spelling and grammar errors, and fear of receiving poor grades. Meanwhile, students who had writing anxiety were believed to have mental incapacity because they had difficulty processing their thoughts, retrieving material from memory, and constructing paragraphs with important information. This proves that writing is not an easy skill to master and having to deal with anxiety impedes the students' language production consequently negative attitude towards learning is developed.

Another study conducted by Altukruni (2019) on writing anxiety among Saudi female undergraduate students indicated that the majority of the students had a high level of writing anxiety, with cognitive anxiety being the most prevalent form. The study identified a number of factors that contributed to this, including learners' linguistic challenges, fear of poor instructor evaluation, insufficient writing practise, and time constraints. The researcher also proposed that reading skill be taught in enhancing the learners' writing skill as it is claimed as one of the best ways to enhance the learners' vocabulary list. It can be deduced from this study that a climate conducive to substantial reading needs to be created to assist the L2 learners who suffer from lack of vocabulary especially when English is not being used extensively in the students' learning environment. The positive outcome from this study indicates that more researches need to be commemorated concentrating on syntactic structures and word recognition which are essential for reading and writing alike. This study proves that anxiety in dealing with L2 writing among the non-native speakers can be looked at other angle and different approach using other language skill could yield positive results.

Recent teacher education research in Nigeria has mostly concentrated on creative instructional delivery, with little emphasis paid to learner-related variables like language anxiety and prior knowledge, which can influence learning results in ESL courses in English composition (Olagbaju, 2021). The study looked at the impact of language anxiety and prior knowledge on expository essay performance. 350 participants were chosen at random from four senior secondary schools to test three null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. An Achievement Test in Expository Essays and a set of questionnaires on writing anxiety were used as the instruments in this study. The findings revealed that there was no significant association between the independent factors and students' expository essay achievement. There were also no composite or relative contributions of language anxiety and prior knowledge to students' expository essay achievement. A more detailed questionnaires on L2 anxiety among the non-native learners and long-term observation in ESL classrooms by the ESL practitioners are needed to harvest a more accurate and detailed findings on issues at hand.

The association between students' foreign language classroom anxiety and cognitive test anxiety and their College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) performance was investigated by (Zheng and Cheng, 2018). To further understand the nature and degree of the analysed associations, 921 Chinese university students were given a questionnaire. The cognitive exam anxiety factor was a substantial negative predictor of language achievement, according to the findings. The associations discovered in the survey were not entirely supported by the results of the interviews. In their university environments, whether in lectures or during testing scenarios, most students did not feel themselves to be highly anxious. They did, however, voice concern about their English-speaking abilities in the classroom. Both studies revealed diverse perspectives on anxiety, indicating that a better knowledge of language classroom anxiety and cognitive test anxiety can aid students and teachers in improving their foreign language learning and teaching techniques. Although the study has managed to present some interesting insights which were similar to the study conducted by Olagbaju (2021), it unfortunately did not discuss the possible factors that could influence the non-standard findings.

According to prior studies on writing anxiety, ESL writers frequently suffer anxiety in their language acquisition because English writing is not their strong suit. Several studies conducted among L2 instructors and professional writers also revealed that they encountered writing anxiety despite the exposure and experience they had (Cheng, 2015; Liu, 2020). This demonstrates that writing apprehension is not a foreign topic in this field of study and still relevant to be researched for appropriate measures to be developed in assisting the L2 learners and language practitioners alike in dealing with the issue thus ameliorating their language competency.

Factors Provoking Writing Anxiety

A study conducted by Shidrah et.al (2016) on the causes of writing anxiety among 186 Diploma in Accountancy and Business courses students in Universiti Teknologi MARA revealed that poor mastery of writing knowledge is the main cause of writing anxiety among the low proficiency learners. The correlational research identifies L2 instructors' effort in guiding and mentoring the learners in L2 classes especially writing lessons is the key factor that can alleviate the learners' writing anxiety. Unfamiliar themes and topics are another reason that makes students nervous when they are asked to write. This shows learners need to improve their general knowledge in ensuring a smooth-sailing learning process. Nonetheless, because the respondents in this study came from two separate faculties with varied backgrounds, this study could not represent all Diploma students in Malaysia.

Prasetyaningrum et.al (2021) conducted a study on factors of students' writing anxiety for academic communication course of English education study program ad Hamzanwadi University, Indonesia. The small-scale descriptive quantitative study which involves 15 respondents who were chosen by using purposive sampling shows four main factors that trigger the learners' apprehensiveness when learning writing. The respondents were anxious because of the high frequency of writing assignments, low self-confidence in writing, time pressure, and issues with topic selection. The factors are in line with the findings in studies conducted by (Ningsih, 2015; Robichaud et.al., 2019; Dirgeyasa, 2017; Syarifuddin, 2020). These studies have proven that writing anxiety is primarily caused by the students themselves and their surroundings. The factors for the first root that caused the learners to be anxious when writing is low self-confidence, poor writing skill, linguistic challenges, a lack of topical knowledge, and a lack of experience or insufficient writing practise are the first. The second

source of stress is the environment, which includes things like dread of negative feedback, time constraints, pressure to produce flawless work, and a high frequency of writing projects. It can be deduced from these studies that a solid writing technique is essential to help the students reducing their writing apprehension thus achieving a decent writing result.

Based on previous studies, factors provoking writing anxiety in ESL classrooms can be divided into two main categories which are external factors and internal factors. External factors are those that closely related to the topics of essays and the learners' writing skill whereas internal factors are those which are related to the learners' feelings and emotions whilst doing writing activities. Anxiety over writing is normal, and it is typically an indication that a writer is serious about succeeding. However, most research show that writing anxiety has a detrimental impact on students by impeding their ability to write good essays but it is also important to be highlighted that this stress-induced attitude and mindset might have a beneficial impact if it drives the writers to give thought and effort to their writing. The table below summarises the external and internal factors of writing anxiety that are prevalent among the L2 learners.

Table 1
Factors of Writing Anxiety

External Factors	Internal Factor
Problems related to topic – little idea, no idea, unfamiliar topic	Afraid of feedback given by the instructors
Linguistics Difficulties – lack of vocabulary, sentence structures, grammatical errors	Pressure to produce good essays
Stagnant English Writing Skill	Stress about not knowing what to write
Lack of composition technique	Not motivated to write
Time constraints	Low self -confidence to write

Overall, there are many factors that can trigger the learners' anxiety in ESL classrooms and detailed and in-depth investigation on both the internal and external factors of writing anxiety will aid to better understanding of this issue to the researchers and practitioners alike.

Instructors' role in ESL Classroom

Because writing is such a difficult activity for most second language learners, both teachers and students struggle to learn and master it. As a result, teachers play a crucial role in assisting students in overcoming their difficulties in the writing classroom. When teachers are teaching pupils, one of the aspects that should be considered is the classroom atmosphere. They should prepare an enticing and appealing writing atmosphere for their kids ahead of time. This agrees to Rahmat (2019); Altukruni (2019)); Rahimi and Laurence (2020) that, writing teachers should create proper conditions and a conducive learning atmosphere in order to assist students in developing writing content while also making them comfortable while learning writing.

Moreover, it is best for the teachers to actively involved in the process of writing with

the students (Rajaram, 2021). Collaborative activities between the teachers and students could help the L2 learners to increase their retention and self-esteem. The study highlighted that proper guidance and instruction from the instructors are important in improving the students' writing ability. In addition, the study also concluded that interaction and discussion in group with peers that being closely monitored by the teachers can aid in a success ESL writing classroom. Thus, this shows that the role of L2 instructors is very vital in ensuring the L2 learners could benefit from the lessons and activities conducted in the class. This study is in line with a study conducted by Moses and Mohammad (2019) where they found that weak foundation in writing can affect the students adversely and it is the job of the teachers to ensure the L2 learners could grasp good foundation of writing before embarking on any writing task or activities. The researchers concluded that teachers' guidance and direct feedback were the most essential tools for productive lessons.

A research conducted by Zhi (2021) on automated writing evaluation (AWE) system revealed that teachers' role is still needed albeit the use of AWE in ESL classroom. The learners preferred if their teachers could provide additional feedback aside from the one, they could get from AWE system. This means to say, although technology can lighten the load faced by teachers, it is still undeniable that human touch in education can bring significant impact to the learners and teachers' role could not be fully substituted by any machine or system. This study agrees to Atif (2021) that even though web0-based technology namely blogs and social networks can facilitate peer feedback, learners were still reluctant to share their writing online to avoid public criticism and they still prefer to receive comments and evaluation from their own teachers.

Overall, it is apparent that L2 instructors play a significant part in students' writing processes because of their active involvement in instilling the skill in the classroom. In fact, teachers' contributions will have a substantial impact on students' writing abilities, resulting in a high-quality essay.

Strategies to Alleviate Students' Writing Anxiety

There are several strategies that can be done to help the L2 learners to reduce their writing anxiety. Cheng (2004) proposed a whole class discussion to help the learners manage their anxiety better. This made the learners to be more confident and felt less shy to share their thoughts as the discussion provided emotional support to them. Sarkawt (2021) revealed that students preferred to discuss their ideas with their teachers and peers as the process can make them feel less worry about their limited knowledge on L2 structures and writing convention. This agrees to (Sabati et.al, 2019) where prewriting process is essential for it could aid the learners to organise their ideas thus dodging mental block syndrome among the learners.

Toyama and Yamazaki (2021) conducted a study on classroom interventions and FLWA where they suggested a positive, friendly and relaxed learning environment created by the instructors made a huge impact towards students' anxiety. A positive self-talk made the respondents felt more confident to learn a new language. In addition, the instructors are the persons who can identify if the students were dealing with anxieties by analysing their behaviour in the ESL classrooms. If this could be identified early, proper strategies can be adapted to help those who were experiencing emotional turmoil hence making them less anxious and increase their productivity in classes. This in return would be beneficial to the teachers too as it can better enhance their teaching mode.

York et.al (2020) conducted a study on computer-mediated communication (CMC)

approach as a non-traditional approach in dealing with learners' writing anxiety. It is found that support from teachers through voice chat, virtual reality and video chat reduced the respondents' apprehension. This shows, teachers play a very crucial role in helping the students dealing with their anxiety. Another study by MacIntyre et al. (2019) found that positive psychology interventions in the classroom can help students feel less anxious. The incorporation of linguistics, namely the process of imparting essential knowledge on L2 writing conventions, as well as non-linguistics components, into L2 education has been shown to result in less worried L2 students. This supports the findings of (Kralova et al., 2017, 2018; Toyama and Yamazaki, 2019), who found that counselling and training were equally helpful in the ESL classroom to help students deal with their FLA, particularly in speaking and writing activities. Creating a helpful setting and climate fosters psychological trust, which aids learners' collaboration.

Another study by MacIntyre et.al (2019) revealed that positive psychology interventions in class help the learners to alleviate their anxiety. The integration of linguistics namely the process of imparted essential knowledge on L2 writing convention and non-linguistics aspects into L2 education has been proven effective in producing less anxious L2 learners. This agrees to (Kralova et al., 2017, 2018; Toyama and Yamazaki, 2019) that counselling and training were equally important in ESL classroom to help the students deal with their FLA especially for speaking and writing activities. The creation of a supportive environment and climate fosters psychological trust, which aids students in dealing with stressful situations.

In addition, there are also studies revealed that interventions namely language game, drama, listening to music and storytelling activities during ESL classes are among the proven strategies that can help the students deal with their anxiety (Saglamel and Kayaoglu, 2013; Galante, 2018; Ustuk and Aydın, 2018; Kwiecien-Niedziela et al., 2020). Such interventions can improve student-student and student-teacher interactions as well as promote personal mood. These studies hypothesised that L2 learners who collaborated gained more information and experienced less FLA. Students who participated in the activities also scored higher on tests than those who learnt on their own, according to the data.

Ratnasari (2020) did research into the role of teachers in lowering Indonesian students' English writing anxiety. Questionnaire and interview protocols were used to collect data. This small-scale study included six L2 learners and three L2 teachers. The respondents' main source of anxiety was their inability to produce ideas, particularly for challenging themes in the target language. This mainly due to their limited vocabulary and limited linguistics knowledge. The findings indicated that the L2 teachers needed to identify the root causes of students' apprehension first and proper interventions namely class discussion and peer mentoring were able to change the students' perception of ESL classroom. Whole class discussion made the students more confident to share their opinions and peer mentoring gave weaker students more space to discuss their thoughts with their friend and different viewpoints shared by the friend was an added value to them. These strategies alleviated the respondents' writing anxiety. It is supported by changes in students' attitudes toward writing tasks, which have shifted from anxiety to enjoyment.

Based on literature, the strategies to alleviate writing anxiety among L2 learners can be categorized into two namely teaching strategies and learning strategies. The table below

illustrates the strategies based on its categories.

Table 2
Strategies to reduce writing anxiety

Strategies to reduce writing anxiety	Characteristics
Teaching strategies	Validate students' feelings, discuss about the issues face by the students, provide emotional support to the students, private tutoring with the students.
Learning strategies	Prefer to work in groups than individually, be well-prepared for tests, less individual tasks, more practices and less assessments.

Overall, these studies have shown that appropriate strategies from both end the instructors and students themselves can make the L2 learners experience better L2 classroom setting. When the learners are less anxious, more input is believed able to penetrate their language acquisition device (LAD) hence enhancing the quality and quantity of their output. Therefore, both parties need to work hand in hand in ensuring the learning and teaching process could be benefited from maximally.

Research Method
This study will utilise and adapt a sequential explanatory mixed-method design (Creswell, 1998). Both quantitative and qualitative method will be used to answer the research questions of the study. Mixed-method design will be employed in this study due to the complexity and multidimensional phenomenon of writing anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). According to Skehan (1998), complexity refers to the level and evolution of the underlying interlanguage system, which employs intricate and structured language interlinks. Kellogg (2001) stated that writing is a cognitive process that checks memory, reasoning capacity, and verbal command of properly conveying ideas and this what makes it a complex skill to be learned especially among the L2 learners. In addition, since the 1980s, Krashen (1981) suggested that affective elements (anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence) link with FL acquisition performance, specific language anxiety has been extensively researched. The majority of FLA study has concentrated on FLA that occurs in a classroom environment in a non-English speaking country (Horwitz et al., 1991; Phillips, 1992; Aida, 1994). Early research studies yielded inconclusive results in evaluating the relationship between FLA and achievement in FL - some studies discovered negative relationships between anxiety and achievement, some discovered positive relationships, and still others discovered no relationship at all. Consequently, recent studies have used a mixed-method design to elicit more accurate and consistent results from participants (Razaei and Jafari, 2014; Cocuk et.al., 2016; Zhang, 2019). Thus, mixed-method research design is appropriate for this study for the issues relating to writing anxiety can be researched on extensively and in depth.
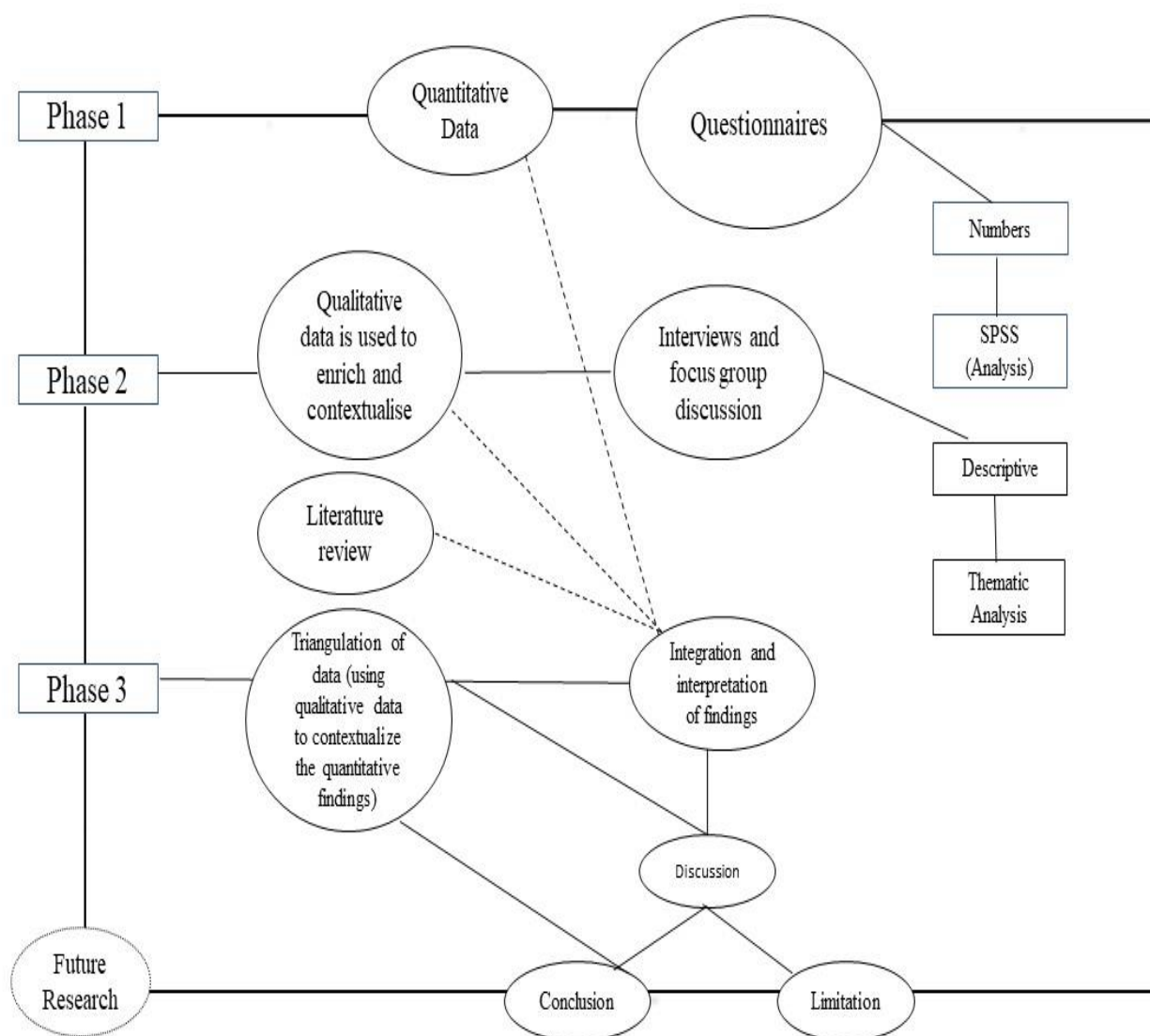
Figure 1: Sequential explanatory mixed-method design

Based on Figure 1, the first phase entails collecting, analysing, and evaluating quantitative data; the second phase involves organising and conducting interviews, as well as analysing and evaluating qualitative data; and the third phase entails contextualising the quantitative findings with qualitative data.

Phase 1 : Quantitative

This study will use online questionnaires as completing paper-based questionnaires can be tedious and time consuming (Marshall, 2002). Web-based questionnaires and surveys are more likely to be user-friendly and flexible (Gosling and Johnson, 2010). According to Lee, Fielding, and Blank (2008), the internet has an impact on research in many sectors, therefore it is not surprising that researchers have been drawn to online research methodologies (Evans and Mathur, 2005). It is therefore unsurprising that the use of web-based questionnaires looks to be expanding, with around one-third of questionnaires being completed online (Evans and Mathur, 2005).

For this study, Qualtrics Online Survey will be used in conducting the surveys. Qualtrics CoreXM enables the users to save results to a wide variety of formats namely SPSS and CSV for further data management and many studies use this software in conducting the surveys as questionnaires can be designed easily and real-time feedback on the data collected help the researchers in collecting the data easier.

The Qualtrics Online Survey will be utilised to conduct the questionnaires for this study. Qualtrics CoreXM allows users to save results to a variety of formats, including SPSS and CSV, for further data management. Many studies use this software in conducting surveys because questionnaires can be easily designed and real-time feedback on data collected assists researchers in collecting data more easily (Mertens et. al., 2020; Czeisler et. al., 2021; Chow, 2021). Each participant will be contacted via email and referred to the online questionnaires. All participants will be emailed individually over a two-week period, followed by a reminder e-mail in another two weeks, after which the questionnaires will be available online for a total of four weeks.

Phase 2: Qualitative

Qualitative research is a popular approach in the social science field because it allows the researcher to go deeper into discovering the feelings and ways of thinking of individuals, as well as how people cope with specific events and situations (Kahn and Canell, 1957; Seale, 2004; King and Horrocks, 2010). The goal of qualitative research is to explain and characterise events and experiences (Willig, 2008). In this study, semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussion are the instruments that will be used for qualitative design. Interviews, according to Kvale (1996), are vital for gaining information about the social world and how others make sense of the world around them (Willig, 2008). It can also improve and enrich quantitative data findings (Smith, 1983; Taylor and Trumbull, 2005). The findings may reveal themes, providing a detailed and extensive explanation of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2008). The goal of phase 2 of this study is to collect personal experiences and information that can then be used to identify themes with the help of thematic analysis. Semi- structured interviews will be employed in this study.

Structured interviews would not allow for enough flexibility, whereas unstructured interviews would be too flexible. According to Willig (2008), semi-structured interviews include components from both formal and informal interviews which centred on personal experience, that may yield unexpected results to improve findings (Hair et.al., 2011).

A focus group discussion will also be conducted to acquire a thorough knowledge of the topic from the instructors' point of view. The participants will be asking questions on the strategies they employ in alleviating writing anxiety among the learners in L2 writing classes. In this study, the strategy seeks data from a deliberately selected group of individuals rather than a statistically representative sample of a larger population. Interviews, particularly semi-structured "one-on-one" and "group interviews," are commonly confused with focus group discussions (Parker and Tritter, 2006). The similarities between these strategies stem from their proclivity to reveal people's perceptions and ideals (e.g. Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Mac Ghaill, 1994; Sewell, 1997; Skeggs, 1997). As a result, there have been instances where authors have mistaken and jumbled these two independent methodologies (Parker and Tritter, 2006). Existing information on the role of the researcher and the relationship with the participants, on the other hand, indicates a fundamental difference between the two methodologies (Smithson, 2000). Interviews are one-on-one, qualitative, in-depth discussions in which the researcher assumes the position of an "investigator." This suggests that the

researcher asks questions, directs the dynamics of the discussion, or converses with a single person at a time. In contrast, during a focus group discussion, researchers take on the position of "facilitator" or "moderator." In this case, the researcher facilitates or moderates a group conversation among participants rather than between the researcher and the participants. In contrast to interviews, the researcher takes a side-line rather than a centre-stage position in a focus group discussion (Bloor et al., 2001; Hohenthal et al., 2015; Johnson, 1996; Kitzinger, 1994). The information from the discussion will be analysed using thematic analysis where the data will be transcribed and words and phrases can be identified and themes may be formed and patterns arise (Braun and Clarke, 2008; Namey, Guest, Thairu and Johnson, 2008). The benefits of employing thematic analysis are that it can be applied in a variety of situations (Bryman, 2012).

Phase 3: Data Triangulation

Data that will be obtained in Phases 1 and 2 will provide essential information for developing and contextualizing findings in Phase 3. Denzin (1978) defines triangulation as the combination of two or more sources and the investigation of phenomena. The goal is to compare and contrast facts, looking for inconsistencies, convergence, and complementarity in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomena (Courtney and McCutcheon, 2010; Robinson, David, and Hill, 2016). Triangulation aids in providing meaning by getting a larger and more precise knowledge than using a single method or data source, and it can help boost validity (Denzin, 1978; Wald, 2014).

The use of triangulation in this study will help to improve the rigour and validity of the research, reducing bias and constraints in the creation of new information. The issue of writing anxiety in L2 classrooms may be thoroughly examined and explained by incorporating the triangulation method. This will enrich the data for this research by providing a variety of datasets to explain various elements of writing anxiety. It also aids in resolving cases where one dataset invalidates a hypothesis developed by another, as this study will include both questionnaires and interview tools. It can aid in the confirmation of a theory when one set of findings confirms another set of findings. Finally, triangulation might aid in explaining the findings of a study. The idea behind triangulation is that methodologies that provide the same results increase confidence in the research findings (Noble and Heale, 2019).

Participants

A total of 172 Diploma engineering students from Universiti Tekonologi MARA of Pasir Gudang branch will be participating in this study. The participants will range from 19 to 21 years old, with a mean age of 20 years. Diploma students will be chosen as the participants for this study. This is because, based on the curriculum for English language classes, students are expected to have a particular level of competency before graduating and must sit for various tests ranging from listening to writing skill. The in-class activities, which include group discussions, pair work exercises, and writing tasks, are intended to provide students with more opportunities to utilise the language. In addition, in semester three, the students' writing skills will be tested and graded. As a result, it is necessary to investigate diploma students' writing anxiety to see if it is one of the causes of their mediocre performance. In addition, studies involving writing anxiety and students writing performance among Diploma Engineering students in Malaysia are scarce too and this gives another motive for this current study. The first language of the participants is Bahasa Melayu and English, is the second

language for all of them. All of the participants had been studying English for around twelve years, beginning with six years in primary school, five years in high school, and a year in the Diploma programme before enrolling in a fourteen weeks course of ELC 231 in Semester three.

The semester three students will be the respondents for this study because they are enrolled in ELC 231, which is an Integrated Language Skill III, a fourteen weeks academic writing course. Diploma students in UiTM are required to attend three mandatory English language courses which focus on proficiency. All the three courses are pre-requisite and ELC 121 or Integrated Language Skill 1 is the first English course is the first compulsory English course which focuses on listening skills and is required of all Semester One Diploma students. This course is a pre-requisite subject for ELC 151 or Integrated Language Skill II which focuses on reading skills for Semester Two Diploma students. ELC 151 is a pre-requisite subject for ELC 231 course or Integrated Language Skill III that focuses on writing skills. Third semester students are purposefully chosen as respondents because writing skills are only taught in a generic manner to both Semester One and Two students. As a result, examining the relationship between writing anxiety and writing performance among them is inappropriate. Moreover, the ELC 231 course provides three credit units and four contact hours per week, for a total of fifty-six hours in a semester. This proficiency course integrates all four skills of English language namely listening, reading, speaking and writing. The core of this course, however, is Writing Skill, which carries the maximum weightage of 50% in the ongoing evaluations. There are three course outcomes for ELC 231 and one of them is to make sure the students are able to demonstrate the ability to write an expository essay and evaluative commentary in academic/non-academic context individually and in pair. The first six weeks of the ELC 231 course will focus on expository essays because the first assessment for this course is due in Week 6 and students must write a 250 to 300-word expository essay with a weightage of 20%.

For the purpose of sampling, this study will use a subset of a population picked at random, which is a simple random technique. This technique is chosen because it uses the simplest of all probability sampling methods because it just includes a single random selection and requires little prior knowledge of the population. Because it employs randomization, any research conducted on this sample should have a high level of internal and external validity. Therefore, this technique is the most apt method to be used as samples can be taken at random without knowing which class would be evaluated in advance when the classes are homogeneous.

Slovin's formula will be used to determine the number of samples in this study. This formula enables the researcher to sample a population with the necessary degree of precision. It informs the researcher about how large his sample size should be to ensure reasonable accuracy of results. Slovin's formula is written this way:

$n = N/1+Ne^2$

where n = number of samples, N = total population and e = error tolerance.

For this study, an error tolerance is 0.05 given the confidence level of 95 percent. Respondents for this study will be Diploma students who are now enrolled in ELC 121 and will be enrolling in ELC 231 in October 2022 semester. Therefore, the sample size for this study is as follows:

$n = 664/1 + (1148(0.05)^2)$

$n = 664/3.87$

n = 172

All 172 participants will answer two sets of questionnaires namely SLWAI and CSWAS (Appendix A and B) on types and causes of writing anxiety and strategies to alleviate writing anxiety in the first phase of the study. The data from this phase will be using for the second phase where semi-structured interview will be conducted. With the saturation principle serving as the foundation in the framework of inductive thematic analysis, ten highly anxious and ten low anxious participants will be involved in the interview session.

In addition, five lecturers who are teaching ELC 231 course will be participating in a focus group discussion. The main purpose of this discussion is to look into how the lecturers use their teaching experience to help students overcoming writing anxiety. The major criterion for lecturers who will participate in the focus group discussion is that they have taught the course for at least three years. This is to ensure that the lecturers are familiar with the course subject and have encountered cases of students with writing anxiety.

Data Collection
In this study, there will be three instruments each for quantitative and two instruments for qualitative approach in investigating writing anxiety among the Diploma engineering students in UiTM as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3
Data Collection

Instrument	Purpose	Number of participants
Causes and Strategies to Alleviate Writing Anxiety Survey (CSWAS)	To identify the causes and ways to reduce writing anxiety	172 participants
Semi-structured interview 1	To identify the possible factors for writing anxiety from the highly anxious participants	10 – based on saturation principle
Semi-structured interview 2	To identify the possible strategies in coping with writing anxiety from the lowly anxious participants	10 – based on saturation principle
Focus group discussion	To investigate the strategies employed by the lecturers in alleviating writing anxiety among the L2 learners	5

Based on Table 3, there will be three instruments utilised to collect data for this study. The tools for the qualitative approach will be a set of questionnaires, whereas the instruments for the quantitative approach will be semi-structured interviews and a focus-group discussion.
The CSWAS questionnaires will be used to investigate the causes of writing anxiety among respondents, as well as the strategies they utilise to minimise their anxiety while coping with L2 writing. These questionnaires will be answered by all 172 participants.
Two semi-structured interviews will be conducted with twenty participants, ten of whom are highly anxious and ten of lowly anxious. The major goal of these interviews is to discover the reasons that lead to students' anxiety in L2 writing classes and to learn about the

possible coping methods they use. Finally, a focus group discussion will be held with five English lecturers who have been teaching the ELC 231 course for at least three years to gather information on the strategies they employ to reduce the students' writing anxiety. The data gained through the qualitative technique will provide more evidence and aid to improve the findings obtained through the quantitative approach.

Conclusively, three data collection instruments will be used for this study to capture all data, both statistically and qualitatively. The instruments are further elaborated below.

Questionnaires

In this study, a set of questionnaires will be utilised to investigate the various types of writing apprehension, the factors that influence ESL learners' experiences with writing anxiety and strategies to deal with writing anxiety. Questionnaires are chosen as the instrument in eliciting the findings to the research questions as aside from being economical, questionnaires are also a convenient approach to collect data. They can be targeted to certain groups and handled in a variety of ways. The researchers have complete control over the questions as well as the format (open-ended or multiple choice). Moreover, they also provide a means to collect massive amounts of data on any subject. Other reason on why questionnaires will be used as one of the instruments is with the help of the internet, researchers can literally send the questions to anyone with an internet connection, around the globe. This is beneficial to the researchers and the respondents alike.

In addition, questionnaires provide the most anonymity and privacy. This is beneficial to the researchers and respondents alike as when the respondents have the chance to complete the questionnaires anonymously, the results will be considerably more accurate. Finally, since there is no time limit and no one on the other end of the line waiting for the answers, respondents can complete the questionnaires, worry-free.

Causes and Strategies to Alleviate Writing Anxiety Survey (CSWAS)

In order to investigate the causes or reasons that trigger writing anxiety among the L2 learners and the strategies employ to alleviate the anxiousness in L2 writing classes, a set of questionnaires was developed based on four different established questionnaires namely CWAI, WAT, ESL Writing Anxiety Questionnaire and ARSS.

Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI)
Rezaei and Jafari developed CWAI in 2014 to elicit information on the factors that contribute to writing anxiety among the L2 learners. It is a 10-item questionnaire based on the causes of writing anxiety, which range from fear of unfavourable teacher criticism to a lack of writing self-confidence. This is a Likert-type instrument on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree.

Writing Apprehension Test (WAT)
Daly and Miller (1975) created the first systematic instrument to assess writing anxiety. It is a standardised self-reporting test used to assess native speakers' writing apprehension. It is regarded as the most extensively used instrument for measuring writing anxiety in L1 and L2 contexts. This is a Likert-type instrument on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree. This 26-item questionnaire contains 13 items that are positively phrased and 13 items that are adversely written. WAT has exhibited acceptable internal consistency reliability, as well as concurrent and predictive validity (Cheng, 2004). The

measure's internal consistency was quite high (.94), as was its test-retest reliability (.92). (Daly, 1985). However, the validity of its construct was called into question. Only four items measuring writing anxiety were discovered. WAT was also thought to be a measure of people's self-efficacy beliefs rather than their writing apprehension because 9 of the 26 items assess people's writing self-esteem (Cheng, 2004).

ESL Writing Anxiety Questionnaire II (ESLWAQ II)
This instrument is developed by Zhang Hongxia in 2011. This questionnaire which consist of 8 items (lack of topical knowledge, linguistic challenges, fear of unfavourable evaluation, low self-esteem, insufficient writing practise, poor writing skill, lack of effective feedback, and test phobia), was created to identify the most prevalent issues related with ESL writing anxiety that Chinese students have during their ESL writing practice.

Anxiety Reducing Strategy Scale (ARSS)
Satomi Fujii created this questionnaire in 2016 to focus on ways for reducing language anxiety. ARSS is based on studies by Crookall and Oxford (1991), Oxford (1999), Phillips (1999), and Young (1999). There is a total of 20 items, and each item must be answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (strongly agree). The questionnaire asks students if the statements are beneficial in reducing their language worries (for example, "My anxiety lessens if competition in the classroom is lessened.")

Based on the stated instruments, a new data collection instrument, Causes and Strategies to Alleviate Writing Anxiety Survey (CSWAS) (Appendix B) which includes causes and strategies to alleviate writing anxiety will be developed by the researcher to fit in the purpose of the present study. The CSWAS consists of 25 items and all the items will be positively written to ensure the respondents able to understand the items well. The questionnaire will use the Likert-types 5-choice response which are; 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree). The summary of the items in CSWAS is as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4
Summary of the CSWAS

Category	Items	Criteria
Factors	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14	Afraid of comments by teachers, lack of confidence, lack of practice, inadequate knowledge on topics, lack of writing techniques, overwhelm by the number of assignments, pressure with time-constraint.
Learning strategies	15,17,18,22,23,24	Prefer to work in groups than individually, be well-prepared for tests, less individual tasks, more practices and less assessments.
Teaching strategies	16,19,20,25	Validate students' feelings, discuss about the issues face by the students, provide emotional support to the students, private tutoring with the students.

As the CSWAS is developed based on several previous questionnaires, Table 3.4 summarises the details of the items.

Table 5
The details of the adapted items for the CSWAS

Statement	Adapted From:
1. I am concerned about the teacher's comments and evaluation.	The CWAI (Item 1)
2. I am afraid of writing tests.	The CWAI (Item 2)
3. I don't have a good command of English writing techniques.	ESLWAQ II (Item 6)
4. I don't know what to write on the topic given by the teacher.	The CWAI (Item 5)
5. I often encounter some linguistic problems such as inadequate mastery of vocabulary and poor sentence structures issue.	The CWAI (Item 6)
6. I am frustrated because I am under pressure to deliver perfect work.	The CWAI (Item 7)
7. I feel anxious due to the high frequency of writing assignments.	The CWAI (Item 8)
8. I feel worry when I have to write under time constraints.	The CWAI (Item 9)
9. I have a low-confidence in English writing.	The CWAI (Item 10)
10. The teacher's feedback on my English writing is insufficient	The ARSS (Item 7)
11. I can't put what I learn in writing classes into practice.	The WAT (Item 7)
12. I don't get enough writing practice inside and outside classroom.	ESLWAQ II (Item 5)
13. My anxiety decreases if competition in the classroom reduced.	The ARSS (Item 2)
14. My anxiety reduces when I am told it is okay to write not perfect essays.	The ARSS (Item 3)
15. I feel that writing essays that will not be graded is less stressful than writing essays that will be graded.	The WAT (Item 25)

17. I feel more relaxed when writing essays in a group than by myself.	The ARSS (Item 18)
18. I feel better when I have individual tutoring from the teacher.	The ARSS (Item 9)
19. I feel relieved if I can discuss successful language learning with my teacher on a regular basis.	The WAT (Item 20)
20. Doing smaller group and pair work reduces my anxiety.	The ARSS (Item 11)
21. I feel relieved if the test followed the same format, I was taught in class	The ARSS (Item 12)
22. I don't get nervous when I am well-prepared for writing tests.	The ARSS (Item 13)
23. I feel relieved if my classmates and I teach each other.	The ARSS (Item 17)
24. I feel relieved if teachers are concerned about my anxiousness.	The ARSS (Item 20)
25. I feel relaxed if my essays will not be expected to be perfect	The ARSS (Item 15)

The CSWAS will assist the researcher in gathering essential data on the sources of writing anxiety among the respondents and the strategies for lowering anxiety when dealing with L2 writing and this instrument will be pilot tested to measure its feasibility.

Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews (Appendix E) will be conducted to better contextualise the questionnaire findings and so enhance the quantitative data (Creswell, 2013). The interview will be conducted face to face with 20 participants, 10 of whom will be very anxious and 10 of whom will be lowly anxious. The main purpose of the semi-structured interview is to elicit information from key informants with personal experiences, attitudes, views, and ideas about the issue of interest Semi-structured interviews can be used to obtain fresh, exploratory data relating to a research topic, triangulate other data sources, or validate findings through member checking (respondent feedback about research results). Semi structured interviews can also be utilized in a qualitative phase to explore new concepts in order to produce hypotheses or to explain results from a quantitative phase that examines hypotheses when utilizing a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2013).

For the recent study, the participants will be asked questions that can elicit in depth understanding of the factors that cause anxiety in L2 writing classes, as well as the strategies use in dealing with the anxiety. They will be asked to identify the circumstances and situations in which they are most and least anxious to write. Some of the questions taken from Golda (2015), (Appendix E) that will be posed to the participants are as follows:

Table 6
Questions for Semi-structured

Item	Question
1	How often do you write?
2	What do you think are the causes of writing anxiety?
3	In what ways do you think you can improve your writing skills?
4	What do you do when you feel nervous in L2 writing classes?

In addition, the interview will be conducted by the researcher in the participants' first language. The main purpose for using Malay Language during the interview session is to make the participants feel more comfortable and at ease in sharing their thoughts and opinions. The whole process will be audiotaped, translated and transcribed by the researcher. The data will be triangulated to provide detailed information about the students' experience in L2 writing classes.

Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion will be conducted in this study to elicit ESL instructors' opinions, attitudes and perceptions about the coping strategies they use or suggest to reduce the levels of writing anxiety among the learners. Five ESL instructors will be selected to participate in the focus group discussion which will be moderated by the researcher. The focus group participants will be chosen based on the years of teaching experience they have in ELC 231 course. All participants must have at least 3 years of experience teaching the course. This is to make sure they encounter the problem of anxiety writing in the classroom and take various steps to deal with   it. Discussion will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher and later checked by an inter-rater examiner to ensure the reliability and validity of the transcription.

Data Analysis

There are some processes for data analysis that the researcher will use in the study. The data will be analysed based on the three proposed research questions. The table below illustrates the summary of data analysis procedure for the present research.

Table 7
Data Analysis

Research Questions	Instrument	Data Analysis
1. What are the factors that are frequently reported to provoke writing anxiety in Diploma Engineering students?	1) Questionnaire II CSWAS 2) Semi-structured interview	1) SPSS (V27) • Descriptive statistics (i.e., **frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation**) • Thematic analysis by Braun and Clerk (2006)
4. What are the strategies employ to alleviate writing anxiety among the L2 learners?	1) Questionnaire II CSWAS 2) Focus Group Discussion	1) SPSS (V27) • Descriptive statistics (i.e., **frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation**) • Thematic analysis by Braun and Clerk (2006)

Table 7 presents steps on how the data from the study will be analysed based on the four proposed research questions. To begin with, the CSWAS will be used to find the causes of writing anxiety and strategies to alleviate writing anxiety among the L2 learners. The total scores for all twenty-five (25), the CWAS items will be calculated, and the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) will be examined to determine which of the elements is/are the most provocative to the respondents. To make it easier for the researcher to see the changes in each item in the CSWAS, the data will be calculated as a percentage. The standard deviation will be used to identify the most provoking factor of writing anxiety as it is a useful metric of spread or dispersion. It will tell the researcher how far the outcomes deviate from the mean on average. As a result, if the standard deviation is small, it can be concluded that the findings are close to the mean, and if the standard deviation is large, the results are more dispersed.

Semi-structured interview (Appendix E) and a focus group discussion (Appendix F) are two instruments that will be used to garner the qualitative data for this study. The data will be analysed using thematic analysis procedure as proposed by Braun and Clark (2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) offer a six-phase guidance that is a highly effective foundation for undertaking this type of study (see Table 3.7).

Table 8
Braun & Clarke's six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis

Step 1: Become familiar with the data
Step 2: Generate initial codes
Step 3: Search for themes
Step 4: Review themes
Step 5: Define themes
Step 6: Write-up.

Based on the framework proposed by Braun and Cark (2006), the recorded transcriptions will be read several times to make sure the researcher is familiar with the data before initial codes will be generated. Next, potential themes will be extracted from the coded and collated data. The themes will be defined and narrated qualitatively and the data will supplement the quantitative findings.

Finally, the collected qualitative data will be triangulated to contextualised the quantitative findings in Phase One. In doing so the researcher would ultimately arrive at a broader and more wholesome picture of the investigated issue (Altritcher et.al., 1996).

Conclusively, it is clear that there will be three main instruments and three phases that will be involved in this study in proving the research questions encompass in the present research.

Novel Theories/New Findings

The formation of second language essays is a complex process that combines cognitive and social factors. Knowing how these traits, as well as the underlying ideas, facilitate or inhibit successful orientation of L2 students' text creation will assist L2 educators better understand how to teach writing. Moreover, because there is a scarcity of comprehensive research on L2 writing with Diploma students, L2 instructors are frequently left to their own strategies and policies in the classroom (Hyland, 2003; Chu, 2012; Sofia, 2020). As a result, research that informs practise in the production of L2 writing instructions at the postsecondary level is urgently needed. The findings of the study might also help the researcher to create a mediating learning context in the classroom, either between teachers and students or among the students themselves. This could make the learners feel more comfortable in approximating core knowledge to construct effective essays and become less anxious when independently composing essays. The mediating learning context could give an insight to the educators so similar steps can be employed and used in their ESL classrooms as a guide in the attempt to improve students' writing skills thus promoting a better learning environment to the learners.

Next, this study will look at factors that contribute to the writing anxiety in ESL classroom and the factors will be classified into internal and external factors (Ningsih ,2015; Robichaud et.al., 2019; Dirgeyasa, 2017; Syarifuddin, 2020). Hence, it will present a more detailed information on the types of factors that trigger and contribute to their anxiety in L2 writing classes. Most studies involving the factors of writing anxiety only focus on the factors in general but this study will analyse the contributing factors differently.

According to Cheng (2002), there have been only a few studies that directly deal with L2 writing anxiety. Those that exist have been done with ESL students from heterogeneous first language backgrounds. Thus, there is even less research on anxiety among linguistically homogenous second language groups studying in ESL contexts. This means we should turn the research spotlight on L2 writing anxiety and on ESL contexts. Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) stated that writing anxiety is a "language-skill specific anxiety," which is different from a general classroom type of anxiety. Also, according to Daly (1978), writing apprehension is a "situation and subject-specific individual difference" (p. 10), and highly apprehensive writers have a tendency to avoid the very activities they need to be successful writers: writing, practicing writing, and getting feedback on writing. As a result, many apprehensive learners end up showing quite poor performances in writing. According to Faigley, Daly, and Witte (1981), extremely nervous authors generated shorter and less fluent work than low anxiety writers. In Malaysia, Unversiti Teknologi MARA is well-known for its homogeneous first

language students. As a result, the current study is required to contribute to the literature on writing anxiety among L2 learners who share the same first language.

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