A Systematic Review: Strategies to Reduce Writing Apprehension

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Abstract

Writing apprehension is not a new problem faced by most ESL (English as a second language) /EFL (English as a foreign language) learners. There are many studies done to determine the reasons and suitable strategies to overcome this issue. In the present study, an analysis of a systematic review based on the past studies published between 2012 and 2022 on strategies to reduce writing apprehension is presented. A total of seventeen articles were reviewed in a detailed search procedure. The main goal of this systematic review is to demonstrate an empirical information formulation discovered through different techniques in previous scholarly research on strategies to reduce writing apprehension. In this systematic study, there are two study questions to be addressed: i) What strategies should be used to reduce writing apprehension in ESL/EFL classrooms? ii) How should the defined strategy be effectively applied in ESL/EFL Classrooms? The findings of the reviews revealed that there are five main strategies: Behaviour strategy, interaction strategies, process-based strategies, technology integrated strategies and genre-based strategies. Collaborative learning was mostly employed in ESL/EFL classrooms. The findings indicated peer feedback as one of the components of collaborative learning. It is mostly employed by ESL/EFL learners as it reduces learners' writing apprehension and improves their writing skills.

Keywords: Strategies, Reduce Writing Apprehension, EFL Learners, ESL Learners

Introduction

English is widely used in science, technology, business, education, tourism and travel. Therefore, it has become a common and global language that is used worldwide and its significance has attracted several of the world's most powerful economies, such as China, Japan, Russia, France and Brazil, to focus on the English language after discovering its global importance (Rao, 2019). The English language consists of four main skills which are reading, writing, listening and speaking. Writing is regarded as the most difficult language ability to learn, namely when the language is not the people's first language (Dixon & Nessel, 1983). Many ESL/EFL authors have claimed that the writing task is complicated due to its complex elements which include content, grammatical functions and mechanics like punctuation, capitalization and spelling added the lack of vocabulary and grammar mastery makes it challenging for learners to perform well in writing. Nevertheless, the importance of grasping the language well is crucial to producing learners who can be global competitors in every field.

Literature Review

The Significance of Writing Skills

Mastering the writing skill is essential as it is claimed to play an important role in intellectual development and career preparation (Gere, 1985). Every learner should be equipped with good writing skills to ensure a good foundation for the career is built Badrasawi et al (2016), for instance, described English writing skills as the cornerstone of university learners' success in both academic and career life, so it is important to help them to improve their writing skills. So, good language skill is essential for learners to accomplish their educational and employable requirements. Learners need to be able to prove their ability to write ideas, knowledge, information and feelings. This is essential for the learners so they can survive the academic challenges. Thus, writing is a good tool for developing the self-examination skill, which is necessary for successful learning activities (Khudoyberdievna 2021). Lee & Schmidgall (2020) in their research memorandum discussed the importance of writing skills in the workplace as it is seen to facilitate business communication, standardizes professional workplace documents and enable collaboration in a multifaceted team environment. Meanwhile, Durga & Rao (2018) in their paper stated writing skill is important in writing technical documents, and research papers, searching for and obtaining jobs and improving communication skills. Therefore, writing is seen as an essential factor of a language and it's crucial for ESL/EFL learners to master it.

Writing Issues in ESL/EFL Classrooms

Writing issues have been explored by many researchers and new dimensions are discovered to be improved. A few studies done in the ESL/EFL context have highlighted some similar issues faced in writing skills. Several studies revealed a lack of knowledge of appropriate vocabulary as a major issue in their findings (Muhammad et al., 2016; Nurul et al., 2021; Hidayati, 2018). Inadequate vocabulary becomes a setback for learners when they start to channel their ideas through writing. Besides that, grammar plays an important role in mastering writing skills but learners often find difficulties in grammar and syntax which leads them to make mistakes in subject-verb agreement, pronouns, articles, prepositions and basic sentence structure (Muhammad et al., 2016; Nurul et al., 2021: Siti & Lilliati, 2021: Hidayati 2018). Other than that, L1 interference is regarded as one of the major issues ESL/EFL learners face in writing (Nurul et al., 2021). Similarly, Siti & Lilliati (2021) in their study highlighted those common errors made in grammar could be from the interference of L1. Thus, the influence of L1 should be paid attention and necessary measures must be taken to tackle these errors in their writings. Further, Kumar (2020) in his findings' stated learners is not strong, comfortable or have less motivation to write especially writing articles, description writing, story writing and essay writing as they are given fewer chances to bring in new concepts or insights in school. Next, Hidayati (2018) revealed classroom conditions and the aids for teaching as one of the challenges in teaching writing which are supported by (Dhanya & Alamelu, 2019). Hidayati (2018) also added low reading habit as one of the contributing factors to issues in writing which are aligned with Muhammad et al (2016) which highlights lack of ideas in learners affect their writing skill. Hence, these issues need to be addressed and necessary measures will help ESL/EFL learners to write better.

Writing Apprehension

Several studies have been carried out to see ESL/EFL learners writing apprehension from many different perspectives. For instance, causes of writing anxiety (Toh & Noor, 2021;

Hartono & Maharani, 2020; Ahmed et al., 2019), writing anxiety and its correlation with writing performance (Fitrinada et al., 2018; Balta, 2018). The phrase 'writing apprehension' was introduced and defined as "A subjective complex of attitudinal, emotional, and behavioral interaction which reinforces each other" by (Daly and Miller, 1975). Writing apprehension is seen as an issue in ESL/EFL classrooms as it affects learners' writing skills. Apprehension can affect second language assessments which mean the quality of a learner's performance in writing tasks can be affected (MacIntyre, 1995). A good piece of writing requires the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and mechanics whilst there are a few reasons identified to cause writing apprehension and low-quality scripts. Studies have shown a relationship between writing apprehension and low-quality scripts. Apprehensive writers tend to produce short and low-quality papers with less developed language and sentence structure (Daly ,1978).

According to Qadir et al (2021), there is a moderate level of writing apprehension among postgraduates' learners while writing in English and further research indicates that writing anxiety affects people of all ages, genders, academic levels, and socioeconomic classes. Writing under pressure with limited knowledge about writing aspects is one of the reasons for writing apprehension (Toba et al., 2019; Kusumaningputri et al., 2018). This is closely linked to the fear of making mistakes which contributes to writing apprehension too (Miri & Joia, 2018). As a result, when student writers are required to produce their writing in an assessment environment, they will experience mind blank syndrome and panicked feelings (Zhang, 2019). Other than that, low linguistic competence also contributes to writing apprehension among ESL/EFL learners. Grammatical problems and vocabulary are the major sources of anxiety (Hartono & Maharani, 2019; Miri & Joia, 2018). Learners with high levels of anxiety lack confidence and would be anxious to write which results in them not enjoying the process of writing (Ahmed et al., 2019; Miri & Joia, 2018). Hence, the causes of writing apprehension need to be addressed and suitable strategies need to be applied by learners to overcome writing apprehension.

In a separate study, Toh & Rahmat (2021) proposed 4 strategies that can be used by learners to reduce the weight of writing apprehension: process writing approach, affective strategies, positive error correction, and vocabulary knowledge enhancement. Correspondingly, several suitable strategies have been identified to improve writing skills. For instance, the genre-based approach improved learners' motivation to write and enhanced their vocabulary as they can share meaning, information, and knowledge during discussions (Haerazi & Irawan, 2019; Herman et al., 2020; Li & Abu, 2019). Additionally, collaborative and blended learning is seen to have significantly improved learners' writing skills. Interesting group activities given through collaborative learning provided learners a better chance to work (Syamsuarni & Rozimela, 2021; Yusof et al., 2019; Isyaku et al., 2021). In addition, peer review is seen to be an effective way to improve learners' grades on written assignments (Yalch et al., 2019). There are similarities in the strategies used to improve writing skills and strategies used to reduce writing apprehension. Fitrinada et al.= (2018) through their findings stated that there was a fair negative correlation between writing anxiety and writing achievement. Higher writing anxiety resulted in lower writing achievement whereby lower writing anxiety resulted in higher writing anxiety. So, there is a need to identify other strategies that can be employed by educators and learners to reduce writing apprehension. Therefore, this systematic review aims to identify the different types of strategies used to reduce writing apprehension in ESL/EFL classrooms.

Methodology

This systematic review is based on five steps proposed by (Khan et al., 2003). The first step involved was "framing questions for a review". Before beginning the review, the problems to be addressed should be specified as clear, unambiguous, and structured questions. Then, modifications to the protocol should only be permitted if new means of identifying populations, interventions, outcomes, or research designs become evident after the review questions have been established. The criterion for this review was set to be learners from all levels, from primary to tertiary education levels in ESL/EFL context. Secondly, relevant studies were identified. First, we started with three international databases: Google Scholar, Education Resources Centre (ERIC), and Journal Storage (JSTOR). We searched the full articles using the term 'strategy to reduce writing apprehension". We did not use other terms like "ways" or "approaches" to reduce writing apprehension as there were many studies that focused on the ways to improve writing performances but it did not narrow down to writing apprehension. We managed to get a few articles but it was not adequate. So, we extended our search to other online bibliographic databases such as Science Direct Springer e-journals and ProQuest Education Journals and downloaded all the articles. Our initial searches were articles written in English and published between 2017 to 2022 but we could not get the number of articles wanted. Thus, we extended our search again and started to look into articles published from 2012 to 2022 in which we managed to gather the articles which met our criterion of search. The third step was assessing the quality of the studies where a step-to-step review took place. We made sure all the articles were published within the timeline set and the objective was to identify the strategy used to reduce writing apprehension. This is because many studies employed strategies to improve writing performances but there were no further findings that indicated the strategies reduced writing apprehension. 19 out of 38 articles were finalized. Lastly, the fourth step, "summarizing the evidence collected and tabulation" was done. Each article was read thoroughly to identify the research design, instrument, duration of intervention, a strategy employed and the results. Finally, the study was summarized with recommendations.

Findings and Discussion

Total of 19 studies based on the strategies to reduce writing apprehension from the year 2012 to 2022 were chosen for the systematic review and the findings as

	Study	Num of participants/ Study/Research Design	Strategy used	Instrument	Duration of intervention	Results
1	Fathi & Khodabakhsh (2020)	46 English major students from Islamic Azad University (Random sampling) Experiment research design (Pretest & Posttest) and control group	Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment	● Language Proficiency Test (OPT-Oxford Placement Test) - to homogenize the participants of the study. ● Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) Cheng (2004)	12 weeks (2-hour session class every week).	● Results indicated both self - and peer - assessment activities significantly contributed to reducing writing anxiety of participants. ● Writing anxiety in the peer-assessment group significantly lower suggesting that peer-assessment activities were more effective in reducing writing anxiety of the participants.
2	Sivaci (2020)	26 pre-service English teachers of the 1st grade in English Language Teaching Department (random sampling) Mixed design	Peer Feedback	● Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) Cheng (2004)	28 weeks (2 hour a week)	● Applying peer feedback in writing class decreased writing anxiety of participants.

		Quantitative data (Pretest & posttest) Qualitative data (semi structured interviews)				
3	Iksan and Abdul Halim (2018)	30 ESL university students (random sampling) Experiment research design - Quantitative method (Pretest & Posttest) and control group	E-feedback Via WIKIS	Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) Cheng (2004)	12 weeks	• Traditional face-to-face feedback and e-feedback through Wikis has proven to lower student's anxiety. • E-feedback proved to be more effective.
4	Challob et al (2016a)	12 secondary male students from an international school in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (purposive sampling) Qualitative case study research design	Blended Learning	• Pre- and post-study focus group semi-structured interview • Pre- and post-study descriptive writing tasks.	13 weeks	• Students' writing apprehension improved very well and students improved better as a whole. • Integrating online discussion and learning activities with in class activities increase students' positive feelings towards writing and decreases writing apprehension
5	Jawas (2019)	80 university	• Developing essay	Questionnaire	6 weeks	• Collaborative works in pairs or

		students of English Department from four parallel Essay Writing classes Quantitative descriptive research	outline ● Building better background knowledge ● Finding supporting references ● Making pauses during writing process ● Taking breaks ● Discussing problems with peers ● Staying focused and calm			small groups to brainstorm ideas minimize the anxiety.
6	Challob et al (2016b)	12 male students enrolled in Class Ten in one of the international schools in Malaysia (purposive sampling) A Qualitative case study	Collaborative Blended Learning - face-to-face, online learning via class blog and online Viber discussion	● Semi-structured interview, learning diaries and observation	13 weeks	● Students had positive perception towards collaborative blended learning environment and the activities had helped them to reduce their writing apprehension
7	Hassan et al (2020)	74 graduates of EFL	Process writing	● The Literary	10 weeks	Process writing approach technique considerably

		pursuing language education Quasi-experimental system of pretest-posttest control category		Fear Review (1975) and to compose scholarly papers. ● The Writing Apprehension Test was issued at the beginning of the study.		decreases anxiety and enhances writing performances.
8	Bayat (2014)	74 first-year students studying preschool teaching at Akdeniz University (random sampling) Quasi-experimental design pretest-posttest control group	Process writing	● Writing Apprehension Test by Daly & Miller (1975) and adapted by Zorbaz (2010) ● students writing	10 weeks	● Process writing approach decreased writing anxiety
9	Uzun & Topkaya (2018)	78 second year undergraduate students of English Language Department	Genre-based instruction	● Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (Cheng 2014) ● Interview sessions	12 weeks	● Genre-based approach has been seen to reduce the level of writing anxiety among pre-service English teachers in foreign language contexts.

		Embedded Mixed Methods Design				
10	Ajmal & Irfaan (2020)	80 pre-university students Quasi-experimental study (post-positivist)	Process-Genre Approach	● Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (Cheng 2014) ● interview sessions	12 weeks	● This approach helps to frame the purpose of writing, different genres have different purposes and a clear purpose is important for the students to perform better. ● These different features of process writing help reduce ESL academic writing anxiety.
11	Yasser Al-Shboul (2016)	21 Jordanian undergraduate students majoring in English language and literature at Zarqa University A Qualitative case study	Behaviour strategy and expert review and feedback strategy	Semi structured interview		● Two main strategies were discovered from the interview which reduced students' apprehension of writing: Behaviour strategy and expert review and feedback strategy. ● Other included using technology programs and peer seeking
12	Wahyuni et al (2019)	132 students comprising of sophomores, juniors and senior students Quantitativ	Coping Strategies	● Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) Cheng (2004) ● Causes of Writing	July-December	● Students use all 5 categories of coping strategies proposed by Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) which are preparation, positive thinking, relaxation, peer-seeking and avoidance.

		e research		Anxiety Inventory (CWAI)		● Preparation and positive thinking are most used strategies.
13	Jalok & Idris (2020)	12 Form 5 students Action research design (pre and post writing test were conducted)	Metacognition in Lowering Writing Anxiety	● Cheng's Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (2004) ● Semi structured interview	-	● Writing performance improved when metacognition is employed in writing task ● Metacognition helps to lower writing apprehension
14	bt Nordin, et al (2019)	68 participants from two faculties in UiTM Melaka, Malaysia. (Purposive non-random sampling method) Quantitative study	Free Writing	Cheng's Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (2004)	4 weeks	● Free writing had a positive influence in reducing writing anxiety among participants.
15	Jalili & Shahrokhi (2017)	60 female EFL intermediate Iranian learners Quantitative study	Collaborative Writing	● Oxford Placement Test ● Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng (2004) ● Collaborative Writing Questionn	2 weeks	● Results revealed that collaborative writing reduced learners' writing anxiety rates

				aire (CWQ) by Wu (2005)		
16	Yastibas & Yastibas (2015)	16 students studying English in an English Language Preparation Department of a Turkish university Mixed method research designs	Peer feedback	● Two interviews ● Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng (2004)	8 weeks	● Students have positive perception about peer feedback as it reduces their anxiety and allows them to be more confident in writing class.
17	Choi (2013)	75 college students Mixed design (Experimental and control group)	Peer Feedback	● Statistical analysis ● L2 writing anxiety survey ● Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng (2004)	4 weeks	● Peer feedback combined with teacher feedback appeared to have benefitted the learners and increased L2 knowledge and lowered writing anxiety.
18	Bolourchi & Soleimani (2021)	48 intermediate EFL learners Quasi - experimental design (pretest-posttest)	Peer Feedback	● English Language Placement est ● Pre-test and Post-test ● Second Language Writing Anxiety	7 weeks	● Peer Feedback decreased the writing anxiety of the participants.

				Inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng (2004)		
19	Kamaruddin et al (2021)	9 Malaysian ESL Diploma in Banking Studies participants who have taken a writing course online. Qualitative study	Coping strategies	● Online based interview	4 weeks	● The participants revealed external and internal reasons as cause factors to their writing anxiety. ● Participants suggested a few coping strategies which helped to overcome writing anxiety.

Table 1: Summary of past related studies of strategies used to reduce writing apprehension in ESL/EFL context

Strategies to Reduce Writing Apprehension
Several studies have been done to show the success of using particular strategies used to reduce writing apprehension which resulted in better writing performances among learners. The 19 studies selected are categorized according to the 5 categories: Behaviour strategies, Interaction strategies, process-based strategies, technology integrated strategies and genre-based strategies.
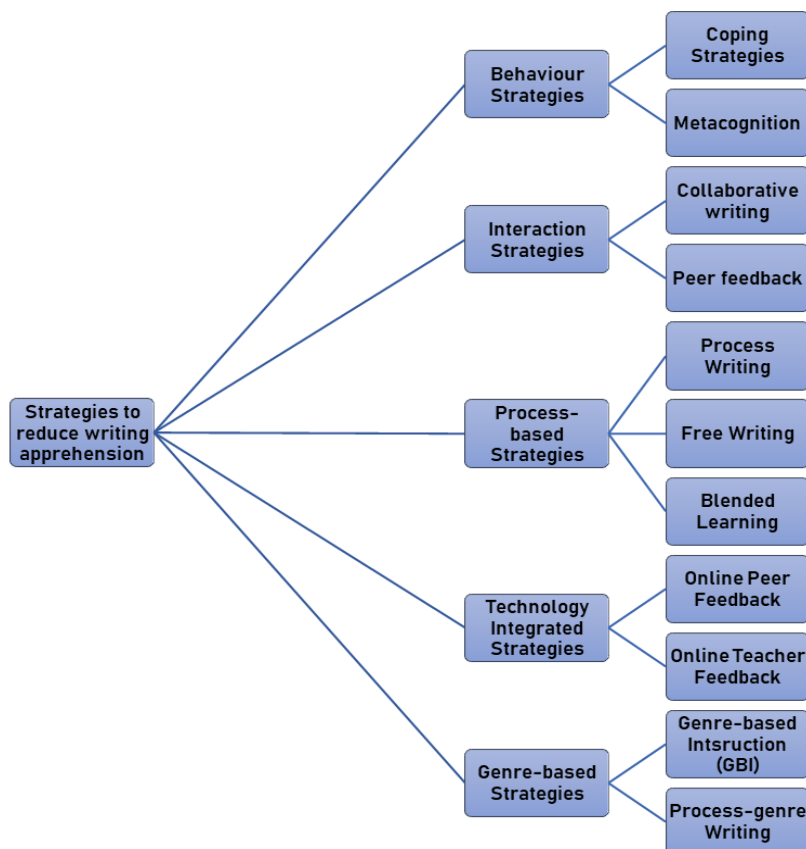
Figure 1: Strategies to reduce writing apprehension

Behaviour Strategies
Coping Strategies
A study done with Emirati students revealed different tactics and strategies which were suggested and mentioned particularly by the low-anxious interviewees. Self-confidence building, background knowledge enhancement, good attitudes toward making mistakes, peer correction, and relaxation exercises are among the ways. Other cognitive tactics include solid preparation, additional practice and training in essay writing, and imitating some writing model samples. Other test-related tactics include practicing some examinations, taking practice exams, learning how to outline and guess tough words, and using dictionaries in writing tests (Qashoa, 2014). In another study, Wette & Furneaux (2018) through their semi-structured interviews identified a few coping strategies employed by the participants which included being knowledgeable in the research area, internalizing key concepts, reading thoroughly, attending intensive courses and tutorials, practicing, and feedback from peers and teachers. The five subcategories of coping methods offered by the participating teachers are addressed below: writing tests, process writing approach, emotional techniques, error correction, and vocabulary knowledge, all of which lowered the participants' writing anxiety (Qashoa, 2014).

Metacognition
Metacognition, or "thinking about thinking," is a well-known internal psychological process that is required for effective learning and problem solving (Flavell, 1976). There is a very positive relationship between teaching metacognition in schools and pupil outcomes. Metacognitive teaching and learning approaches have the potential to significantly improve

children's results and life chances, with some data suggesting that this is particularly true for disadvantaged children (Perry & Golder, 2018). Students' learning, control over their learning, and planning for each step of their writing performance are all regulated by thinking about cognition. This also reduces their learning anxiety and gives them confidence in their ability to complete the language task (Aglina et al., 2020).

Interaction Strategies
Interaction provides a special learning environment to ESL/EFL learners. Strategies like collaborative writing and learning strategy and peer feedback has benefitted learners, helped to reduce writing apprehension which resulted in better writing performances.

Collaborative Writing
Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning in groups where learners work together to solve an issue or problem, for example, a writing task. Human growth, according to Vygotsky & Cole (1978), is intrinsically a socially situated activity, and individuals can gain self-regulation through social interactions with more knowing others. According to Villarreal & Gil-Sarratea, (2019) on holistic measures of content, structure, and arrangement of ideas, the collaboration resulted in more accurate writings of higher quality, however, there were modest or no advances in complexity and fluency. When compared to competitive and individualistic efforts, collaborative learning offers various advantages, including increased accomplishment and productivity, more loving, supporting, and devoted relationships, and improved psychological health, social competence, and self-esteem (McDonough et al., 2018). On the other hand, collaborative activities build learners' confidence through increasing speaking time, promoting autonomy and involvement, and reducing nervousness (McDonough, 2004). The evidence from the study done by Veramuthu & Shah (2020) showed that collaborative writing facilitates effectiveness in learning and offers positive outcomes to learners. To add, the collaboration resulted in students who created texts with better structure and organization of ideas, as well as more number and quality of arguments. Collaborative writing appears to be a viable method for increasing meaning interaction and language development in the classroom. (Villarreal & Gil-Sarratea, 2020).

Peer Feedback
Peer feedback is a frequently used strategy in ESL/EFL classrooms. Findings from Mercader et al (2020) show participating in long-term peer feedback activities improves students' perceptions of learning, especially when students give feedback rather than receive it. This emphasizes the significance of both giving and receiving feedback for learning. Learners benefit more from long-term peer feedback interventions. This is in line with Al-Qunayeer (2020) who stated postgraduates must be well-educated and regularly schooled on peer feedback over a longer length of time to be confident providers of constructive criticism because the interaction is a critical component of good peer feedback that aids postgraduates in improving their skills, know what they're doing.

Process-based Strategies
A process approach assists students in understanding that writing is a process with distinct methods for different types of writing. Making students aware that writing is typically a journey of discovery in which ideas are formed rather than just transcribed is a key component of process writing pedagogies. In other words, process writing is a pedagogy in

which the teacher participates in the writing process with the student. Many ESL/EFL writing teachers now believe that process writing approaches may be adopted with a range of writing theories, that they are appropriate to both personal and academic writing, and that they are concerned with students' final outputs as well as their writing processes (Susser, 1994).

Process Writing

Pre-writing processes such as defining the audience, consulting a variety of resources, preparing the writing, as well as drafting and revising, are all included in "process writing." Students of teachers who consistently support specific parts of the writing process, such as planning and establishing goals and audience, were shown to be typically better writers than students of teachers who never encourage similar activities. Similarly, learners whose teachers encourage more than one writing method have a greater average writing skill (Goldstein & Carr, 1996). In a study by Yeung (2019), after experiencing the process writing approach, ESL students showed improvements that suggested progress in their writing autonomy, such as decreased reliance on the teacher, more self-reliance in writing, and higher reflection on the writing process, and growth in metacognitive knowledge. This is supported by a case study approach by Ilyana (2019) where the teacher's assistance helped learners to perform better. Teacher as a mediator in the writing process guided learners through interaction and feedback to complete the process well.

Free Writing

Elbow (1998) describes free writing as a continuous flow of written words that is simple, unaffected and is the most effective way to learn to write. Park's (2020) study does not claim that freewriting is the only solution to EFL writers' problems; rather, it demonstrates how allocating a small amount of class time to regular freewriting practice can have significant benefits for struggling EFL writers, including the formation of a writing habit, improved writing fluency, increased confidence, and reduced writing apprehension. John (2019) stated students admitted free writing increased their speed of writing and flow of thought. On the other hand, Li (2007) provided classroom-based evidence to support the use of focused freewriting and revealed Freewriting can improve student engagement in higher education and they will be empowered to think through problems, make discoveries, gain insights, and express themselves with confidence through spontaneous writing focusing on a specific topic when focused freewriting is fully implemented and becomes a regular and essential component of the teaching and learning process.

Blended Learning

Husamah (2014) stated that blended learning is a blend of face-to-face and virtual learning. Blended learning is not a new methodology, but it is receiving increasing attention and refinement, particularly in the face of pandemics. Blended learning is effective in multidisciplinary settings, but it requires autonomous curriculum and pedagogy renovation to be effective (Tan et al., 2022). On the other hand, blended learning is also seen to have a positive influence on the teaching and learning of English in rural primary ESL classrooms (Jerry & Melor, 2021). Blended learning, according to Wahyuni et al. (2019), helped many students become more metacognitively aware of their English writing process, which improved their writing talents.

Technology integrated strategies

One of the most promising educational tools for improving students' argumentative essay writing and learning is online peer feedback. Peer feedback, for example, has been found to increase students' writing quality researchers (Huisman et al., 2018). Learners provided comments synchronously rather than asynchronously, they were more engaged and motivated. They posted the majority of their comments on forms, and they paid little attention to the textual level, such as content, structure, cohesion, and coherence. The students' writing skills improved in all four scaling categories: content, cohesion and coherence, lexical resources, and grammatical range and accuracy, according to the inferential statistics. In comparison to other types of essay writing, the students were able to enhance their grammatical variety and accuracy the most (Al-Abri, 2021). Researchers have identified that educators and learners of the English language use two sorts of platforms: social media and wikis. As a result, the evidence suggests that using social media and wikis can have a good impact on students' writing abilities (Haidari et al., 2020).

Genre-based Strategies

A genre is a collection of communicative occurrences that all have the same set of communicative goals. These goals are recognized by subject experts of the parent discourse community, and they serve as the genre's rationale. This rationale affects the discourse's schematic structure and informs and constrains content and stylistic choices (Swales, 1990). The genre approach is also defined as a usage of language that conforms to specific schematic and textual rules, as approved by a particular discourse community (Widdowson, 2007).

Genre-based instruction (GBI)

According to Hajibah (2004), GBI follows a sequence that includes an introduction to the genre to be taught, identification of the text's goal, analysis of the rhetorical maneuvers, and their joint and independent constructions. Due to the analytical character of GBI and the focused, metalinguistic, and indirect components of Genre Focused Feedback, learners gain both subject and genre knowledge while also strengthening pre-planning skills in writing (Uzun & Topkaya, 2018).

Process-Genre writing

Theorists of genre methods are rarely open about their learning theories. The usage of model texts and the concept of analysis, on the other hand, show that learning is a combination of imitation and understanding and intentionally applying norms. In brief, genre-based approaches consider writing as primarily concerned with language knowledge and strongly linked to a social purpose, whereas the development of writing is mostly viewed as the analysis and imitation of teacher-provided information in the form of texts (Badger & White, 2000). The process-genre method of teaching English writing is the most effective because it allows students to comprehend the relationship between purpose and form for a specific genre, which they can apply to the prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing processes (Jasrial, 2019). The strategies identified above are used in the 19 studies selected for this systematic review and researchers have highlighted the success in using them to reduce writing apprehension in ESL/EFL learners.

Summary of the 19 Studies

In total, 19 studies were identified from five categories to reduce writing apprehension. The

studies are at different levels of ESL and EFL classrooms, from tertiary to primary level. Four studies were identified in the behavior strategy category. Through their action study methodology, Qadariah & Fazilah (2020) discovered that explicitly teaching metacognition reduces learners' writing apprehension, resulting in improved writing performance. Respondents who were 12 Form 5 ESL learners highlighted that after the implementation of metacognition, respondents employed more metacognitive strategies to complement the cognitive strategies in writing. The next study employed the coping strategies proposed by Kondo et al (2004): preparation, positive thinking, relaxation, peer-seeking, and avoidance. A total of 132 students participated in the survey design research, including sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The researchers discovered that learners employed preparation and positive thinking skills to lower their anxiety (Wahyuni et al., 2019). Consequently, Siti et al (2021) from their findings experienced anxiety due to both external (noisy surroundings and teacher's evaluation standards) and internal (cognitive writing anxiety, affective elements, and motivation) factors, prompting them to use various coping strategies such as taking a deep breath, taking a break from writing, finding some entertainment, and practicing relaxation. On the other hand, a case study conducted by Huwari & Al-Shboul (2016) with 21 Jordanian undergraduates where a face-to-face interview was conducted revealed that undergraduate students employed two main strategies which helped to reduce writing apprehension: behavior and expert and feedback strategy. Preparation, use of technology programs, and peer seeking were all part of the behavior plan, while expert evaluation and feedback focused on assistance from lectures.

To add, seven articles were identified under the interaction strategies. Collaborative activities integrating online discussion and learning activities with in-class learning activities promoted learners' positive feelings towards writing while decreasing their writing apprehension. Similarly, the same researchers extended their research into creating a collaborative blended learning environment to see the effect of it on the learners' writing apprehension. Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, learning diaries, and observation revealed that learners profited greatly from online writing discussion and collaboration in Viber groups because it exposed them to the knowledge of micro and macro elements of writing. As a result, collaborative blended learning has reduced their writing apprehension and improved their writing skill (Challob et al., 2016). Correspondingly, Jawas (2019) stated when learners are given the chance to choose their preferred strategies, they can manage their anxiety better. Also, learners frequently use collaborative work in pairs or small groups to alleviate their fear of writing. Jalili and Shahrokhi (2017) looked at the impact of individual and collaborative teaching on sixty females intermediate EFL students and found that cooperation helped to minimize writing anxiety. Furthermore, the participants showed a favourable attitude toward collaborative writing, according to the data. Peer feedback is also another strategy identified under the interaction strategies to reduce writing apprehension. Fathi & Khodabakhsh (2020) discovered that both self-assessment and peer-assessment activities contributed to the participants' reduction of writing anxiety. Further study revealed that learners in the peer-assessment group had less writing anxiety than those in the self-assessment group. Thus, peer assessment is found to be more effective than self-assessment. In a similar study, according to the researchers, content analysis of the interviews and diary narrative indicated that providing peer criticism in writing class reduced anxiety. The researchers discovered that learners were more confident and that connecting and collaborating helped them to learn from one another, resulting in a less tense and stressful learning environment (Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015). Meanwhile, Sivaci (2020) employed 26 pre-

service teachers of English in Turkey as participants and conducted a pretest-posttest with semi-structured interviews. Most of the participants preferred peer feedback in their writing classes as it decreased their writing anxiety levels. Another quasi-experimental design study by Bolourchi & Soleimani (2021) found that peer feedback improved learners' overall writing performances and that the interaction assisted them in creating a good writing environment, which reduced writing anxiety and tension.

Process-based strategies included four studies. Bayat (2014) in his research found that the process writing technique aided participants in achieving written success while also reducing their fear of writing. A quasi-experimental method, with 74 participants where the experimental community used the process writing and the control group used conventional form revealed the process approach to writing had a significant impact on learners' writing performance and anxiety (Hassan et al., 2020). On the other hand, Challob et al (2016a) carried out a qualitative case study research design with 12 male secondary schools from one of the international schools in Malaysia where the researchers used different writing stages in three collaborative groups in conventional learning method (face-to-face) and online writing activities through the class blog and online discussion via Viber groups. The findings of the qualitative results indicated amazing improvement in learners' writing apprehension. Lastly, Nor et al (2019) gave free writing tasks as pre-writing activities to all the participants for each writing class. A questionnaire was given before and after treatment which indicated learners were most anxious when their writing tasks were to be graded and free writing had a positive influence on reducing writing apprehension among the participants.

The next two studies have technology integrated into their peer feedback strategy. Halimatussaadiah & Huzaina (2018) revealed that e-feedback was more effective in lowering learners' writing anxiety. Participants in the control group completed all writing stages in class while those in the control group published their works asynchronously online using Wikispace and peers posted feedback on each of the group's pages. The pretest-posttest results showed learners benefited more from e-feedback through wikis. Choi (2013) stated combining peer input with teacher feedback helped to improve L2 knowledge and flower anxiety. SWoRD (Scaffolded Writing and Rewriting in the Discipline), web-based writing assistance, was employed in peer feedback activities in the experimental group, the teacher-peer combined group. Further findings showed both types of feedback were helpful where providing peer feedback was better than receiving peer feedback and teacher-peer feedback is more significant in the affective aspects of L2 writing.

In two studies, the process-genre approach and genre-based instruction were used as strategies that impacted learners' writing apprehension positively. The first study by Uzun & Topkaya (2018) was carried out in an embedded mixed methods design. Learners were taught to employ GBI (Genre-Based Instruction), which consists of an introductory paragraph, the main body in which the thesis is supported by other literary works, and a conclusion paragraph in which the thesis is restated or consolidated. The intervention was done every week where learners investigated 4 previously done literary analyses and peer collaboration was done. The findings showed that genre-based writing modules had a positive effect on participants' writing anxiety and genre-based writing instruction can be an effective tool to promote positive psychology among pre-service English teachers. The next study employed a process-genre-based approach to the experimental group to improve their writing skill and reduce writing apprehension. The interview and further analysis revealed the process-genre approach was conducive as participants focus on the purpose and form of writing related to a particular genre which involves the writing process stages, for instance, pre-writing,

drafting, and revision. This conducive approach has been seen to have helped the learners reduce their writing anxiety (Ajmal & Irfan, 2020). In most of the studies, 13 out of 19 studies have employed Cheng's (2004) Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) while others used semi-structured interviews, observations and diaries as instruments to identify writing apprehension in learners.

Conclusion

This systematic review contains a total of 19 studies that employed different strategies from 2012 to 2022. All the studies are based on primary to tertiary levels in ESL/EFL context. These strategies are categorized according to the three writing approaches which are product-based, process-based and genre-based. The strategies recognised under the product based are behavior, metacognition, collaborative writing and coping strategy. The process-based approach consists of blended learning, collaborative learning, free writing, collaborative blended learning, process writing, peer feedback and technology-integrated peer feedback. Lastly, the genre-based instruction and process-genre writing strategy are categorized under the genre-based approach. All the studies identified possible reasons behind the writing apprehension faced by ESL/EFL learners and suitable strategies used by them to reduce writing apprehension and improve writing performances. Writing skill has imposed a certain amount of writing apprehension on ESL/EFL learners and peer feedback has been seen to have helped to reduce writing anxiety among the learners. Peer feedback created a conducive environment for learners to interact and collaborate to complete writing tasks. Several studies have shown the effectiveness of peer feedback through their findings. Peer feedback is a time-consuming strategy but learners are happier to be corrected by their peers than the educators. In addition, technology-integrated peer feedback is a popular new trend that is welcomed well by learners. Wikis, social media platforms like Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams and others have made interaction to channel opinions easier. This study shows that knowing the learner's background and catering the right teaching and learning method would help to reduce their writing apprehension and improve their writing performances too. Learners writing apprehension should not be taken lightly as it affects their writing performances. This systematic review sheds light on the available strategies to reduce writing apprehension and shows how peer review can be a powerful tool if used wisely by teachers and learners. Hence, selecting the suitable strategy according to the learners' needs and context is important to improve their writing skills and reduce writing apprehension.

What strategy can be used to reduce writing apprehension in ESL/EFL Classrooms?

The findings of the 19 studies used for this systematic review have shed light on the strategies used to reduce writing apprehension in ESL/EFL learners. It can be concluded that the interaction strategies are popularly employed by educators. Specifically, peer feedback has been used by many educators around the world to tackle the writing apprehension issue. This strategy is widely used at the tertiary level and has a positive impact on the learners. Peer feedback provides a less stressful environment for learners as they deal with their peers and lowers their anxiety. The not too formal relationship shared between learners helps them to be more honest and willing to share or give feedback compared to educators' feedback. Besides, peer feedback strategy can be used by educators at any time and place as technology-integrated peer feedback has become the new trend. Social media has become a good platform for ESL/EFL learners to give and take feedback. Not to mention it is less time-

consuming and becomes more interesting with current creative applications. At the same time, peer feedback should be adapted to suit the young learners so it can be employed successfully and benefitted by them. Furthermore, the duration of the peer feedback strategy needs to be given attention to as applying it for a very short or long term may be a challenge to the educators to obtain the objective. This strategy has helped learners from low, intermediate and high levels of proficiency which shows peer feedback can be adapted according to the learner's proficiency. Nevertheless, an educator's guidance and observation are essential. Hence, a good collaboration of learner and educator would ensure the success of this strategy to reduce writing apprehension and improve learners' writing significantly.

How should the defined strategy, peer feedback be effectively applied in ESL/EFL Classroom?

i) Know the learners' level of proficiency
Learners' level of proficiency will help the educators to plan the activities well. The duration of peer feedback can be adjusted according to the learner's proficiency and needs. Besides, group peer feedback would be more effective among young learners and can be adapted to suit adult learners.

ii) Know learners' background
Learning more about the learner's background would help the educators to determine their social status and also provide extra assistance to those who need it. For instance, technology-integrated feedback requires learners to have devices and WIFI or data connection. Thus, knowing the learners' background would enable the educators to plan well ahead.

iii) Plan well
Knowing the learner's proficiency and the background will ensure planning takes place coherently. Other strategies like collaborative learning and blended learning can be integrated with peer feedback so a more interesting lesson could be conducted. Getting the learners to take part in the planned lesson will be easier if the lesson is interactive and engaging. Therefore, a good plan will be helpful to the educators too.

Limitations
The limitation of this systematic review is that the strategies are the well-known ones. Firstly, there are other strategies apart from those selected for this systematic review and missed even if they had met our criteria for selection. For instance, self-efficacy, cognitive, affective, effort regulation strategy, strategies before starting the writing of an essay, during the essay writing and strategies during revision and other technology integrated strategies. Many strategies identified did improve the writing performance but only the ones which proved to have reduced writing apprehension were chosen. Next, this study did not include other data from the systematic review, it focused only on the advantages and success of the strategy in reducing writing apprehension. For the future systematic review, other strategies, the advantages and disadvantages of the strategies and the implementation of the strategies may be included.

Recommendations
Teachers should identify the reasons for ESL/EFL learners' poor writing performance and the causes for writing apprehension as different learners from different contexts may face

different challenges. Thus, identifying the issues will help the teachers to select the correct strategy to be applied in the classroom to correct the specific challenges faced by learners. This will lead to the reduction of writing apprehension among the learners. Further research should be done focusing only on one strategy to identify in detail the effectiveness of the strategy. This will give a better insight to educators to understand a certain strategy better which leads to a better implementation. Hence, educators play a vital role in the teaching of writing and employ the appropriate strategy to reduce writing apprehension to provide a conducive and happier learning environment for the learners.

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