

# Apprehensive Writers: A Qualitative Study on Signs and Causes of Writing Anxiety in ESL Writing

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## ABSTRACT

English language has been perceived differently by ESL learners. Seeing this second language as a tough language leaves most of them with much hassles to survive the challenges. The struggle gets tougher when they are overly committed to excel in English writing, one of the skills that involves various writing elements and mechanics such as vocabulary, syntax, grammar, sentence structure, strategies and lexical. ESL writers who are trapped in adjusting with the language will perceive writing as an additional trouble. Being bombarded with these struggles has caused them to become apprehensive writers. Nevertheless, there must be manifold reasons that lead them to experience such anxiety in writing. This study hence aims to determine some reasons of writing anxiety and to identify apprehensive signs through some features highlighted by the ESL writers. This qualitative study involved six students from a public university in Johor. To obtain the data, semi-structured interview and observation were used as the primary method for the data collection. Based on the findings, it was found that the ESL writers displayed anxious signs that can be associated with writing anxiety with some perceived reasons for the anxiety. Results of this study have given a great impact on teaching and learning of ESL academic writing.

**Keywords:** *ESL Writing, Writing Elements, Signs Of Anxiety, Apprehensive Writers, Reasons, Qualitative Study, Observation, Semi-Structured Interview, Esl Writers.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

ESL writing urges ESL writers to develop comprehensible text or essays with decent language use. In a different view, a writer should be concerned on vocabulary, coherent and cohesive, spelling, grammar and other writing mechanics besides applying critical thinking during a writing process. Azizi *et al.*, (2017) define writing as a systematic skill that allows learners to inculcate their knowledge including vocabulary, grammar, and structure.

To begin with, in ESL writing, the writers do not only apply the mechanism of writing, but they are expected to excel at using English language. The struggle that the writers encounter during the writing process has led to an apprehensive situation that deters them to perform well. The apprehensive situation or writing anxiety has been perceived as one of the factors that measures writers' writing ability. Rahim and Hayas (2014) affirmed anxiety as a significant factor that determines learners' performance in the second language learning. Additionally, writing anxiety is known as a situation in which the learners encounter uneasy feelings such as stress, nervous, panic, worried, and trembling during the writing process (Badrasawi et.al, 2016). Having said that, writing anxiety indeed a barrier in ESL writing, thus it is a crucial for the writers to be aware of any signs presented during the writing that can be associated with this hindrance.

Besides recognising writing anxiety as a writing barrier, identifying some decisive factors of writing anxiety during the writing process can be a helpful way to lessen the writers' struggles. Hence, the researcher aims to explore both areas that are considered as central elements of the study.

### **1.2. Problem Statement**

In ESL writing, ESL writers are expected to produce good essays with minimal errors. However, due to some difficulties encountered throughout the process, writing anxiety has occurred and has been perceived as a writing barrier that impedes the writers' writing performance. Therefore, it is tolerable for ESL writers to feel anxious, panic, worried and trembling during the process of writing. Although writing anxiety has been notified as one of the writing barriers, it is important for the ESL writers to be aware of its existence.

Nevertheless, it is quite challenging to determine the presence of writing anxiety during the writing process. Some researchers believe that writing anxiety can be recognised from writers' writing behaviour and attitudes. Researchers such as Kurniasih (2017), Huwari and Abd Aziz (2015); Cheng (2004) investigate writing anxiety from different angles and they found that writing anxiety can be figured out from writers' signs and behaviour throughout the writing process. Meanwhile, some other researchers; Sahid et.al, 2018; Indah et.al, 2018; Caganaga, 2015; Ekman, 2004; report that writers use their physical behaviours to express anxiety. By recognising the signs of anxiety during the writing process, writers will be more aware of its presence and prepare them to control the problem appropriately. Additionally, determining the main roots that lead to this problem is also important as it helps them to acknowledge and resolve the problems.

Hence, this qualitative study is intended to identify apprehensive signs through some features or writing attitudes highlighted by the ESL writers. Besides that, the researcher aims to identify the concrete reasons of writing anxiety experienced by the writers during the writing process. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following research questions.

- a. What are the anxious signs used by ESL writers during the writing process?
- b. What are the reasons of writing anxiety perceived by ESL writers in ESL writing?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

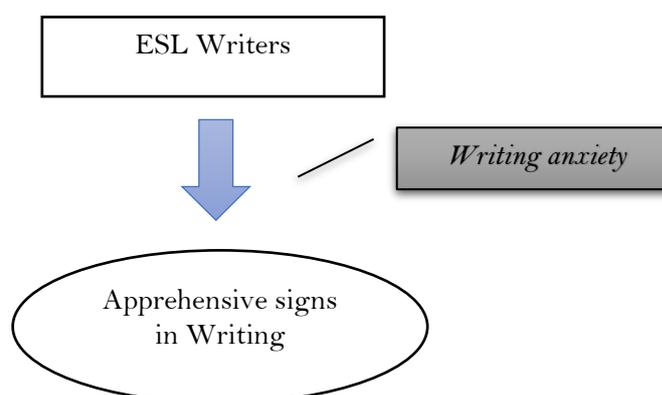
### **2.1. ESL Writing and ESL Writers**

Writing can be defined as a process of transferring ideas, information, and thoughts that writers plan and sketch in their mind into a written form. Guneyli (2016) describes writing as a process where the ideas are transferred by involving writers' emotions, opinions, thoughts, and past experiences based on language rules and letters. Besides that, writing is a demanding

skill that requires learners to get involved in both social and cognitive processes. It does not only entail writers to deliver or transform the ideas onto a paper, but also demands them to communicate the ideas with the readers. Rahmat *et.al* (2018) define writing as a social-cognitive process as the writers should ensure that the written ideas are conveyed and successfully understood by the readers. Additionally, Aluemalai and Maniam (2020) agree that when writing, writers do not only share the ideas, but they also share feelings and convince the readers from their reading.

In learning second language, writing becomes a challenging skill to most of ESL writers. This skill demands the writer to not only master writing strategies, technique and mechanics, but they need to excel at using their second language as well. As such, this process becomes complex when the language proficiency of the writers becomes a matter. According to Al-Sawalha *et al.* (2012) learning writing in the second language is more complex as the process is much more complicated than writing in their first language. In ESL writing, ESL writers commonly meet some language difficulties that cause them to struggle to write in English. Manifold researchers found that most ESL writers have problems in writing due to limited vocabulary (Liu, 2013; Mastan, Maarof and Embi, 2017), unable to use appropriate words and phrases, inability to generate ideas using English language (Mastan *et.al*,2017), lacking of writing strategies (Liu, 2013; Ismail,2011; Abdullah, 2015); problems in language use such as grammar (Mastan *et.al*,2017; Ghabool, Mariadass and Kashef, 2013) and interference of L1(Ghabool *et.al*, 2013;Jagabalan, Tan and Niehchisalem, 2016).

Moreover, a writer's writing capability can be associated with his or her attitudes and behavior while writing. This is when a writer undergoes writing anxiety that makes her or him to display physical or non-verbal languages to express the anxious, nervousness. Some scholars such as Sahid *et.al*, (2018); Indah *et.al*, (2018); and Caganaga, (2015) reported that writers use their physical behaviors to express anxiety, for example writers use facial expression, body movements, hand gestures, and other physical signs when they are anxious while writing under time constraints.



*Figure 1: ESL Writers, Writing Anxiety and the Signs in ESL Writing*

Figure 1 illustrates a connection between ESL writers, writing anxiety and the presence of apprehensive signs during the writing process. Based on the figure, when ESL writers who struggle with the language and get engaged in a writing process, they will have a higher tendency to experience writing anxiety. Hence, while writing, they will express the anxiety through physical attitudes, facial expressions and emotion.

## *2.2. Writing Anxiety*

The complexity in writing makes writers to get trembled every time they engage in a writing process. This situation has caused them to encounter writing anxiety, an obstacle in writing. Writing anxiety is a situation in which learners experience unpleasant feelings such as stress, nervous, worried, and trembling during the writing process (Rezaei & Jafari, (2014); Badrasawi *et.al* (2016). It is also known as a type of situational anxiety that is associated with the writing process (Bayat, 2014). Meanwhile, Huwari & Abd Aziz (2011) found that writing anxiety is a complex term and a critical problem which eventually affects the learners' learning process. Hence, it can be said that writing anxiety is uneasy feelings that occur during the writing process of ESL writers due to some reasons.

Writing anxiety happens when writers have problems or issues with their writing. For example, there are writers who overthink about other's evaluation or judgement. Hassan (2001) justifies writing anxiety as a situation where a writer starts to feel anxious when he or she will be evaluated for his or her writing. A similar finding was proposed by Razaei and Jafari (2014) who said that a person will avoid writing that accompanied by some amount of evaluation.

## *2.3. Apprehensive Signs of Writing Anxiety*

During writing, when writers feel nervous and afraid, they might as well sweating, shaking, trembling which also lead to rapid breathing and increased heart rate. All these apprehensive signs are displayed by the writers through some physical signs or traits such as facial expressions, body and hand movements, hand gestures, postures, and other physical signs. Some scholars such as Sahid *et.al*, (2018) reported that writers use their physical behaviours to express anxiety. According to Aripin & Rahmat (2021), there are some behaviour or signs presented by the writers that are associate with writing anxiety such as writer's body posture, hand movements and facial expression.

### *2.3.1. Hand movement*

Hand movements are common gestures associated with anxiety. During a writing process, writers who are anxious tend to make more hand movements especially when they have limited ideas with limited time to write. In writing, hand movements can be related to the writer's way of touching and when they fidget pen or pencil. In a study by Sahid *et.al* (2018), it was reported that anxious individuals tend to use hand movement or gesture to cover their anxiety or nervousness. The researchers also mention in their study that a female participant repeatedly touched her scarf when she felt anxious during a seminar presentation as she tried to control and hide her nervousness by touching her head using both her hands.

### *2.3.2. Facial expression*

During the writing process, writers show their anxiety through facial expressions such as raising and lowering brows, rolling eyes, grinning and smiling. The writers use the signs whenever they meet any writing difficulties, for example when they are clueless, confused and worried with their writing. Learners usually use facial expressions as the way to express emotion and feelings like happiness, anger, surprise, fear and sadness (Caganaga & Barabar, 2015)

### 2.3.4 Eye- contact

Writers who are too nervous or anxious will not dare to make any eye-contact either with their teachers or lecturers. They will avoid any eye-contact in order to lessen their nervousness. According to Sulistyorini (2018), students who are coping with anxiety will avoid to have any contact to reduce the tense. Eye contact can measure the writers' level of self-confidence or assurance especially during writing process. Having more eye-contact shows that they are confident with the assigned task.

### 2.3.5 Shaking

Shaking is considered as a physical movement displayed by writers during the writing process. The act of shaking can be related to anxiety when the writers repeatedly commit to the actions while writing such as shaking hands and legs, tapping fingers on the table and tapping pen or pencil. Najarzagdegan and Dabaghi (2014) stated that some repeated movements such as shaking leg and tapping pen or pencil on the desk are considered as signs of nervousness.

## 2.4. Reasons of Writing Anxiety

As far as the writing anxiety is concerned, many researchers have recognised reasons of writing anxiety among apprehensive ESL writers. Since writing anxiety is affirmed to influence students' performance, the contributing factors that lead to writing anxiety have been extensively explored. Due to the numerous researchers, worried about negative evaluation and comments, lack of linguistic knowledge and writing mechanics are among the most common causes of writing anxiety experienced by ESL writers.

Main condition	Causes
Learners' self-reasons/causes	Low self-confidence, insufficient writing technique, language difficulties, lack of topical knowledge, lack of experience and insufficient writing practice.
Environment	Fear of negative evaluation, time pressure, pressure for perfect work and high frequency of high assignment.

Table 2: Main conditions that cause writing anxiety (Wahyuni&Umam,2017)

Table 2 shows the two main conditions that cause writing anxiety to happen. Wahyuni and Umam (2017) have classified the two roots that cause students to experience writing anxiety; (1) Learners' self-reason and (2) Environment. Learners' self-reasons or causes are related to learners' personal issues such as their low self-confidence, insufficient writing practice and technique, language difficulties, lack of topical knowledge and lack of writing experience. Meanwhile, the factors that caused by environment are fear of negative evaluation, time pressure for work and overload of assignment. Normally, learners have a control over self-reasons compared to environment.

In addition, a study by Rezaei and Jafari (2014) have affirmed that writing anxiety can be caused by several factors which are: (1) writers have a very limited time to plan, compose and review; (2) lack of writing skills including writing practice (Liu and Ni, 2015), brainstorming ideas, translating ideas as well as limited writing mechanics such as vocabulary and punctuation (Rezaei *et.al*, 2014; Daud, *et.al* 2003; Kurniasih, 2017); (3) teacher's negative evaluation (Kirmizi & Kirmizi, 2015). Other sources of writing anxiety have been asserted by other researchers in their studies including; lack of self-confidence in second language writing

(Cheng, 2002; Rezaei,*et.al* , 2014), inability to present ideas in English language (Hyland, 2003) and fear of negative comments (Horwitz et al, 1986).

In terms of reasons for writing anxiety among the ESL learners, less exposure to English language, insufficient writing practice, poor reading habits, low self-confidence, lack of topical knowledge, lack of motivation to write and bad experience in writing due to fear of negative evaluation and comments are among the causes of writing anxiety experienced by ESL learners (Golda, 2015; Min and Rahmat, 2014). Some causes echo to Wahyuni and Umam's (2017) two main roots of writing anxiety causes which are (1)self-reasons: Low self-confidence; insufficient writing technique; language difficulties; lack of topical knowledge; lack of experience and insufficient writing practice; and (2) environment: Fear of negative evaluation, time pressure, pressure for perfect work and high frequency of high assignment.

### *2.5 Past Studies*

In a study by Sahid et.al (2018), it was reported that anxious individuals tend to use hand movement or gesture to cover their anxiety or nervousness. The researchers also mention in their study that a female participant repeatedly touched her scarf when she felt anxious during a seminar presentation as she tried to control and hide her nervousness by touching her head using both her hands. Having said that, it is factual that writing anxiety can be expressed not only emotionally and psychologically but physically.

Moreover, a study by Kusumaningputri *et.al* (2018), there are several causes of writing anxiety identified in the study that investigates second language writing anxiety of Indonesian learners. In the study, the researchers have found that the primary cause of writing anxiety among the students is insufficient writing practice. Based on the survey, the students feel that the writing practices should be doubled in dosage. They believe that practice outside the classroom helps them to write better. Another significant cause revealed is language difficulties as the students are struggled to write in English. They are too concern on the grammar, structure and vocabulary which cause them to feel burden and tense.

## **3. 0 METHODOLOGY**

### *3.1. Research Design, Sampling and Instrumentation*

This qualitative descriptive study aims to explore the physical and kinesics signs presented by the writers during the writing process that can be associated with writing anxiety. Besides that, the study is intended to determine the reasons of writing anxiety perceived by the writers when they engage in a writing process. The selected sample for this study is a male and five female writers from a public university in Johor, Malaysia who have attended an English course called Integrated Language Skill III(Writing) for a semester. In addition, the instrument used for this study is semi-structured interview and observation. The aim of employing the interview is to urge the participants to reveal their thoughts and opinion about writing anxiety and how they perceive this writing barrier when writing. According to Hyland (2003), interviews allow the subjects to freely share their experiences, opinions, feelings, and perception as writers. Meanwhile, the observation is conducted to determine the signs displayed by a female writer during the writing process. These signs then analysed to link with writing anxiety. Hence, the researcher believes that this research tools are practical and useful to provide the researcher with additional information for the study.

### 3.2 Data Collection Procedure

A female student voluntarily presented to be the participant for the observation. After receiving a short brief on how the procedure would be conducted, the participant was instructed to write an essay. The time allocated for the writing session was one hour. The participant was aware of the presence of the researcher (to observe the writing behavior and attitude) besides videotaping the process. During the writing process, the researcher jotted down some field notes on the physical and kinesics signs presented by the writer. After the writing session and observation were complete, semi-structured interviews were then conducted with five participants to get first-hand in-depth information regarding writing anxiety. The students get to share their thoughts and opinion about self-experience of writing anxiety. After both procedures were complete, the field notes of the observation and the interview answers were then interpreted and analysed by the researcher to attain the findings for the study.

## 4. 0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study based on the data obtained from observation and semi-structured interview procedures. The findings are discussed according to the following research questions.

- (i) What are the anxious signs used by ESL writers during the writing process?
- (ii) What are the reasons of writing anxiety perceived by ESL writers in ESL writing?

#### 4.1.1 Findings for Research Question 1

##### (i) What are the anxious signs used by ESL writer during the writing process?

##### (a) Facial expression

Signs	Description
<b>Staring</b>	<i>When the writer could not get the ideas to write, she was staring straight at the corner of the room while forcing herself to quickly get the ideas</i>
<b>Rolling eyes</b>	<i>When the writer had no ideas to write, to get the ideas as wanted. At this stage she rolled her eyes, the writer was believed to experience anxiety.</i>
<b>Lowering brows</b>	<i>She lowered her brows when she was unsure about the points she talked about.</i>
<b>Smirk</b>	<i>The smirked when she was confused about the ideas that she wrote. She tried to recall her prior knowledge about the topic.</i>

Table (a) presents the signs that the write used during the writing process. Rolling eyes and staring were among the common signs displayed by the writer whenever she had issues during writing. For example, she stared when she could not get the ideas or unable to elaborate the ideas. Besides that, the writer was seen rolling eyes several times when she had some language difficulties such as spelling, sentence structure, grammar. A facial expression such as raising and lowering brows is strong to express anger, fear, surprise, disgust, sadness, distress and enjoyment (Ekman, 2004). Based on the finding, the researcher could relate these signs to writing anxiety due to the presence of the signs during the problems faced by the writer. According to Caganaga and Barabar (2015) facial expressions were used by learners as a way to express emotion and feelings of happiness, anger, surprise, fear and sadness.

(b) Hand movement

Signs	Description
<b><i>Fidgeting pen</i></b>	<i>The writer was unable to elaborate the ideas. While trying to do so she was fidgeting the pen and her face looked stress after spending too much time on this task.</i>
<b><i>Hand gestures</i></b>	<i>The writer was nervous when she could not think of meaning of the word that she wanted. She was rubbing her face using both her hands while saying the word in the Malay language.</i>

Based on Table (b), the writer was seen committing touching behaviour during the writing process. According to Ekman (2004), when a person feels anxious, and nervous, the most common touching behaviour that she or he would perform are scratching, twirling hair, fidgeting with fingers or hands, coughing and throat clearing. During the observation, the researcher noticed that the writer would touch her face with her hands whenever she could not get construct the ideas. She also tried to fix her scarf to cover her panic. At times, the writer was fidgeting pen while thinking of ideas.

(c) Eye-contact

Sign	Description
<b><i>Eye-contact</i></b>	<i>When elaborating or proposing ideas for her writing, the writer was avoiding from having any eye-contact with the researcher.</i>

Based on table (c), the writer was avoiding from having any eye-contact with the researcher. She would rather stare at the corner or the ceiling of the room. Based on the field note from the observation, the researcher noticed that the writer was more

comfortable to look at other area instead of at the researcher especially when she paused while thinking of any ideas for her writing.

#### 4.1.2 Findings for Research Question 2

##### (ii) What are the reasons of writing anxiety perceived by ESL writers in ESL writing?

###### (a) Writer 1

Question	Answer
1. What did you think were the causes of writing anxiety when writing?	<i>I have issues with the language, unable to think of the ideas for the topic"</i>
2. What makes you feel nervous, anxious, or worried when writing in English language?	<i>"I have problems thinking of the points. I am worried if I could not get points for my writing."</i>

Based on the data presented, writer 1 stated that *language issues* and *having problems to brainstorm ideas* for the writing are the main reasons that cause her to feel anxious during the writing process. The writer also stated that when she was anxious, she would shake or fidget pen and sometimes her hands were shaking and sweating.

###### (b) Writer 2

Question	Answer
1. What did you think were the causes of writing anxiety when writing?	<i>"In my opinion, the biggest cause is grammar and the language itself"</i>
2. What makes you feel nervous, anxious, or worried when writing in English language?	<i>"I am always worried about time allocated for the writing"</i>

During the interview, writer 2 reported that *inability to compose in English and grammar* are the issue that led him to writing anxiety. Besides that. The writer also worried about the *time allocated* for the task. He was anxious if he could not complete the writing task within the time frame. This situation became a distraction to him while writing the essay.

###### (c) Writer 3

Question	Answer
1. What did you think were the causes of writing anxiety when writing?	<i>"In my opinion, the causes are time allocation, lecturer-they might scold me for grammatical errors, lacking ideas."</i>
2. What makes you feel nervous, anxious, or worried when writing in English language?	<i>"I am nervous when I do not have ideas to write (lacking ideas). I also nervous to use the language itself especially the writing term that I have learnt"</i>

Writer 3 stated that *time allocation, lecturer, lacking of ideas and grammar* were among the reasons that caused writing anxiety. The writer was worried she might get scolded by the lecturer for any grammatical errors she committed in her writing. In addition, lacking of ideas about the assigned topic could lead to anxiety because she might spend too much time thinking of the ideas to write.

**(d) Writer 4**

Question	Answer
<b>1. What did you think were the causes of writing anxiety when writing?</b>	<i>"One of the causes is the problem in language use. In my opinion, the other causes are time allocation, lecturer-they might scold me for grammatical errors I made"</i>
<b>2. What makes you feel nervous, anxious, or worried when writing in English language?</b>	<i>"I am nervous when I do not have ideas to write (lacking ideas) about unfamiliar topics. I also nervous to use the language itself especially the writing term that I have learnt"</i>

In the interview, writer 4 was anxious about *the language* itself. She stated that learning writing in English was challenging as she was not only required to apply the writing terms that she learnt, in fact to *develop ideas about unfamiliar topic*. In addition, *time and lecturer* were also reasons that made her nervous while writing the essay as she was overly concerned about the lecturer's comments about her writing.

**(e) Writer 5**

Question	Answer
<b>1. What did you think were the causes of writing anxiety when writing?</b>	<i>"Since English language is not our first language, we always have problems with the language itself. When writing, we normally think of insufficient time to write, getting low marks and difficulties to provide relevant ideas for the topic."</i>
<b>2. What makes you feel nervous, anxious, or worried when writing in English language?</b>	<i>"Based on my previous experience, I notice that my anxiety is about time constraints. I am worried if the time allocated is not enough. Besides that, I also worried about getting low marks for my essay."</i>

Moreover, writer 5 answered that she had problem with the language as she claimed that adapting the second language is every ESL learner's struggle. The writer also mentioned *time* as her major worry while writing the essay, besides being fussy about having enough time to complete her writing. Additionally, the writer was terrified about *getting low marks* for the writing task due to some *difficulties in providing relevant ideas* for the assigned topic.

**(f) Writer 6**

Question	Answer
1. What did you think were the causes of writing anxiety when writing?	"Struggle with the language itself. I am worried that I might have written a low-quality essay.
2. What makes you feel nervous, anxious, or worried when writing in English language?	"I am anxious when I have problem to elaborate my ideas using English language."

Writer 6 confessed that she might have written a low-quality essay due to the *language difficulties* that she encountered. When writing in English language, the writer was anxious about *elaborating the ideas prudently* since she was struggling with the language itself.

**4.1.3 Reasons of Writing Anxiety Gathered from the Study**

Based on the findings gathered from the interview with all six participants, the researcher could recap several major reasons of writing anxiety experienced by ESL writers during their writing process. The reasons are presented in the following table.

Reasons of Writing anxiety
1. Limited time to write/ time constraints
2. Having problems to brainstorm relevant ideas.
3. Limited knowledge of writing mechanics.
4. Teachers' negative evaluation and feedback/Fear of negative comments.
5. Difficulties to write in English/ grammar
6. Low confidence in writing-worried of writing low-quality essays

Based on the findings gathered from the interview sessions with all the participants, the researcher recapped that there were six major reasons that caused writers to encounter writing anxiety during the writing process. The table presents limited time to write, having problems to develop ideas, limited knowledge of writing mechanics, teacher's evaluation, difficulties to write in English, and low self-confidence towards writing as the reasons obtained from the study.

**4.2 Discussion**

Based on the findings presented and discussed above, it can be concluded that some of the writing signs portrayed by the writers during the writing process could be associated with writing anxiety. It was found that facial expression (staring, rolling eyes, lowering brows and smirking, eye-contact, and hand movements (fidgeting, touching and rubbing) were among the signs shown by the writer during the observation. All the actions displayed were related to the writing anxiety as researchers (Ekman, 2004; Caganaga and Barabar,2015) affirmed that facial expressions were used by the writers to express their emotion and feelings including nervousness and fear. In addition, Sahid *et.al* (2018) reported in their study that a female participant repeatedly touched her scarf when she felt anxious during a seminar presentation as she tried to control and hide her nervousness by touching her head using both her hands. In the present study, the researcher notified that most writers were touching and rubbing when they paused their writing due to some difficulties. The researcher also found

that the writers were avoiding eye-contact with the researcher while writing. They would prefer to stare at the corner of the room or to close their eyes instead of engaging with the researcher. According to Sulistyorini (2018) students who are coping with anxiety will avoid any eye-contact to reduce the tense.

On the other hand, it can be assured from the interview with all the participants that there were six major reasons of writing anxiety experienced by the writers during the writing process. Manifold researchers in the previous studies (Hudayani, Husein &Dirgeyasa,2020; Liu&Ni,2015; Parichut ,2014; Kurniasih ,2017; Kirmizi and Kirmizi, 2015) affirmed that time constraints, negative attitudes, lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem, inability to write in English, pressure of perfect writing, and fear of negative comment are among the common personal factors that make them anxious to write. Moreover, Liu&Ni (2015); Parichut (2014); Kurniasih (2017); Kirmizi and Kirmizi (2015); Golda (2015); Min and Rahmat (2014) found that negative evaluations or comments from teachers and poor linguistic knowledge are some external factors that also influence the writers' writing anxiety.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### *5.1. Summary of Findings*

In the writing process, ESL writers who struggle to excel in the language would experience writing anxiety, a situation that hinders them from having a good writing performance as well as producing well-arranged essays. During the writing task, apprehensive writers could be traced by adhering some obvious signs that could be associated with writing anxiety. It has been proven in the study that hand movements or gesture, facial expressions and eye-contact are measured as vivid signs of writing anxiety due to valid justifications from the previous researches. Besides that, the present study also managed to verify some possible reasons of writing anxiety based on the participants' answers during the interview sessions. Hence, this can be summarized that apprehensive ESL writers could be identified from the signs and reasons acknowledged in the study.

### *5.2. Pedagogical Implications of the study*

Based on the discovered findings in the study, it is affirmed that apprehensive ESL writers could be identified during the writing process through classified signs and reasons. Hence, the findings will provide new data and information to writing teachers, lecturers and educators in terms of understanding this writing barrier better. In fact, by recognising signs and reasons of writing anxiety, they could figure out appropriate learning methods for the apprehensive writers during the writing process. This would help the ESL writers to produce good essays with minimal anxiety regardless the struggles and challenges in learning their second language.

### *5.3 Suggestions for Future Research*

Future research should explore a more thorough investigation on consequences of unrestrained writing anxiety for the ESL writers, besides allocating some efficient ways and methods to deal with this writing barrier. In fact, writing anxiety can also be explored from different angles with varied methods and instruments such as narrative enquiry and think-aloud protocols. This would help researchers to probe deeper on writing anxiety during the writing process.

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