

Online Writing Class: EFL University Students' Perception of Teachers' Strategies in Alleviating Their Writing Anxiety

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Abstract

The current study aimed at investigating the teachers' strategies to alleviate students' writing anxiety and their perception of the teachers' strategies in online writing instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this study, the voices of teachers and students were considered by mapping out writing anxiety-reducing strategies and looking at students' perceptions of the teachers' strategies. This study employed a mixed-method design. The data were obtained from interviews with eight English teachers from several universities in Indonesia. Meanwhile, 274 students were given a questionnaire about their perception of the teachers' strategies to alleviate students' writing anxiety. The result of the data analysis showed that teachers have used some strategies, such as motivating the students to be confident, creating an enjoyable classroom, implementing self-select topics, implementing a writing process approach, implementing a combination of automated writing feedback tools, giving both oral and written teacher feedback, and assigning peer feedback. In addition, this study also affirms that students have a positive perception of the teachers' strategies for alleviating online writing anxiety. It is suggested that future researchers working on similar topics investigate specific strategies implemented to alleviate students' writing anxiety based on types of anxiety or their levels of anxiety.

Keywords: online writing class, students' perception, teachers' strategies, writing anxiety

Introduction

Students' emotions cannot be ignored in writing activities because they may become the source of difficulties in writing. Dewalee et al. (2019) emphasize that the

heart of language learning and teaching is related to emotions. The attention to language learning research rapidly changes from the dominance of cognitive perspective to the role of emotions, also formally known as language anxiety (Chuang, 2019). Most of the studies on anxiety examined the cause and the types of anxiety (Cheng, 2002; Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017; Kusumaningputri et al., 2018; Wahyuni et al., 2019; Zhang, 2011) and the effect on student's performance (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Gibriel, 2019; Zhang, 2011) before the Covid-19 pandemic. The outbreak gives a significant effect on education in which the learning process shifted from face-to-face classes to online learning. In the urgent situation, teachers adjusted the mode of delivery by making use of various learning platforms and the students were required to be independent and autonomous learners, especially in the writing class. Given that technology plays an important role in online writing classes, students become more anxious when they have problems accessing the materials from teachers and understanding those materials. Meanwhile, in the face-to-face writing class, students have more chances to interact with teachers and peers.

As English writing is considered a demanding activity due to its complex components, students who do not like writing activities are likely to experience writing anxiety. This study is conducted in an Indonesian context in which the EFL students are required to take the paragraph, essay, and academic writing courses. In the final year of study, they write a research report called the undergraduate thesis. This reflects the need to have good writing skills to complete their tasks. Previous research conducted in the Indonesian context has found that students experienced writing anxiety when writing English compositions (Kurniasih et al, 2021; Kusumaningputri et al., 2018; Wahyuni et al., 2019). Furthermore, research conducted in different contexts also showed that students were anxious when they are assigned to write (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Gibriel, 2019; Kabigting, 2020; Latif, 2015; Zhang, 2011). The findings of these studies also revealed that anxiety occurred in both online and offline settings. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Kurniasih et al. (2021) found that students have moderate anxiety in online writing classes. Meanwhile, Kabigting (2020) has figured out that students experience a high level of anxiety.

Moreover, in the situation where instructions were made online due to Covid-19, writing becomes more challenging because the materials were delivered through online platforms and video, and the feedback was given through feedback tools such as the comments feature for Word. Furthermore, oral feedback was also given through Screencast-O-Matic application. This made the students feel uneasy because they had limited time to have direct interaction with teachers and peers. In online learning, students are situated in a new mode of delivery in which they are expected to be responsible, disciplined and motivated, and independent learners to succeed in online learning (Russell & Murphy-Judy, 2020).

Previous studies have found some causes of writing anxiety such as linguistic difficulties, problems with writing topics, and fear of teachers' negative evaluation. Kelly and Gaytan (2019) pointed out that students become anxious due to unclear explanations about the materials and teachers' behavior in the classroom. Among the three types of writing anxiety, namely somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety, and avoidance behavior, most students experience cognitive anxiety which deals with students' mental changes related to feeling worried and afraid of teachers' and peers' negative evaluation (Cheng, 2002; Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017; Zhang, 2011). The causes and sources of anxiety result in students' high anxiety levels which influence their writing performance. The previous

research findings revealed that writing anxiety has a negative correlation with writing performance since anxious students produce poor compositions (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Gibriel, 2019; Latif, 2015; Zhang, 2011).

EFL writing necessitates that students have a thorough understanding of both writing and language to develop strong writing skills. Because writing is a skill, students should practice it both in and outside of class. As a result, their writing ability will improve with time. However, due to a variety of causes, pupils continue to struggle to express themselves in English. Some research has been carried out to investigate the causes of writing anxiety. Poor confidence in learning English, teacher assessment, lack of efficient feedback, and lack of writing practice are contributors to writing anxiety (Cheng, 2002; Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017; Kusumaningputri et al., 2018; Wahyuni et al., 2019; Zhang, 2011). These findings are in line with Latif's (2007) findings, which identified various factors of writing anxiety, among others, poor language performance, low foreign language self-esteem, fear of criticism, and negative feedback from others.

Research on writing anxiety is less in number compared to other studies investigating motivation or strategy use. Anxiety is exclusively investigated due to its significance (Chuang, 2019). It is also supported by the results of a meta-analysis showing that there has been more research on listening and reading anxiety compared to writing anxiety because writing anxiety is an area that requires much research effort (Zhang, 2019). Knowing the fact that anxiety becomes the source of students' low performance, some studies were carried out to investigate the students' strategies to cope with anxiety (Gibriel, 2019; Jawas, 2019). The results showed that students followed the process approach starting from developing an essay outline, brainstorming ideas, finding resources, making some pauses, taking a break in the writing process, discussing with peers, and staying focused and calm.

Scholars on this topic have investigated some strategies to cope with anxiety qualitatively. Chuang (2019) reports a list of teaching strategies implemented by teachers to mitigate foreign language anxiety, such as giving more preparation/practice time, providing scaffolding to support each other, and giving individual instruction. Wynne et al. (2014) proposed a design of a creativity group for graduate students to overcome their anxiety during dissertation writing. Empirical studies have proven that showing proper behavior, building students' self-confidence (Alrabai, 2014), integrating online resources and SFL (Zhang, 2019), and implementing peer feedback (Yastibaş & Yastibaş, 2015) are effective to alleviate students' anxiety. However, it is necessary to investigate individual perceptions about teachers' strategies used in the classroom; they usually bring with them their perceptions about what writing class should be. In terms of feedback, the teachers perceived feedback on content and organization to be more beneficial than feedback on vocabulary and grammar. However, students perceived it differently; they perceived that feedback on the linguistic aspects (vocabulary and grammar) is a lot more meaningful than feedback on content and organization (Nanni & Black, 2004). Thus, different perceptions between students and teachers will lead to students' writing anxiety since one of the causes of writing anxiety is due to the lack of linguistic knowledge, in terms of using sentence structure correctly.

The findings are still inconclusive because the results of the studies on teachers' anxiety-reducing strategies are conducted for the general type of anxiety, not skill-specific anxiety, in this case writing anxiety. In other words, those studies cannot be generalized for writing skills because two studies put a high focus on teachers' strategies to alleviate

students' anxiety for oral production rather than on writing anxiety; however, some of their strategies are also possible to help students reduce anxiety due to some of the causes of anxiety. Anxiety might happen during the whole writing process because negative emotional experiences happen during the pre-writing, during writing, and post-writing stages (Mante-Estacio et al., 2019). The findings of the present study were to figure out some strategies called 'specific productivity strategies' (Huerta et al., 2017) to maximize language acquisition, especially for writing. The teachers' strategies will help students to perform better in writing with no tension because anxiety can be alleviated; it is not innate.

Writing anxiety is found to be widely researched in the offline setting classroom, but it has been rarely examined in the online learning environment. From the previous findings, there has been a lack of exploration of the teachers' and students' voices. Furthermore, the new situation may influence students' emotional state in which they feel anxious due to the different learning atmospheres. In the online setting, student-teacher interaction and student-student interaction are limited. From the discussion above, it is crucial to conduct a comprehensive study investigating teachers' strategies for alleviating students' writing anxiety in online writing since the new mode of teaching writing creates different nuances, for example, teachers' material delivery through pre-recorded video, teachers' feedback is given through application, and limited classroom interaction.

Furthermore, previous studies have not accommodated students' voices on the teachers' strategies. In Chuang's (2019) study, none of the teacher-participants discussed the issue of language anxiety (LA) with the students. Horwitz (2017), however, strongly suggests language teachers accommodate students' perceptions. Discussing LA with the students is useful for both the students and the teachers. The teachers will have the opportunity to examine their perception of students' learning and adjust their teaching to suit the student's needs. For that reason, it is indispensable to acknowledge students' perceptions of the teachers' strategies to facilitate learning. The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What are the teachers' strategies to alleviate students' writing anxiety in online writing instruction?
2. How do the students perceive the teachers' strategies in alleviating their writing anxiety in online writing instruction?

Literature Review

Teaching Writing Online

During the pandemic, teachers are instructed to shift from offline learning to online learning. This rapid movement influences teachers' delivery and students' way of learning. In online learning, technology plays a prominent role to disseminate and transfer knowledge. To conduct online learning, technological tools used for learning include electronic devices, internet connections, and online learning applications (Alsudais et al., 2022; Anggraini et al., 2022). There are some online platforms used by writing teachers to deliver their materials, have a discussion, give the assignment, and give feedback on students' work, such as Google Classroom, Zoom, and WhatsApp. Some scholars have used Edmodo (Yavuz et al., 2020) and Flip classroom (Wu et al., 2019). Additionally,

some examples of online learning platforms which are used for writing classes are Google Meet and Google Classroom (Shelvam & Bahari, 2021). Shelvam and Bahari (2021) found that both Google Meet and Google Classroom are useful to help students boost their motivation and writing skills. In addition, another tool from Google, namely Google.doc is also commonly used in online writing because it allows students to correct their grammatical errors. Neumann and Kopcha (2019) implemented Google.doc in online writing classes for feedback activities. The results indicated that the use of Google.doc with a combination of peer and teacher feedback has a positive influence on the students' writing achievement. Meanwhile, the process of generating ideas, an online tool, Jam Board, may also facilitate students to brainstorm ideas in the form of mind mapping before writing. based on the information above, teachers are required to adjust to the usage of online materials due to the advancement in technology (Mohamed & Bahari, 2016).

Anxiety-reducing Strategies

It is obvious that anxiety becomes the most influential factor affecting students' performance; however, anxiety is not something innate that cannot be alleviated. Teachers have to choose either to focus on the student's existing anxiety-provoking environment or to create a non-threatening classroom to reduce anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). Horwitz et al. (1986) included several examples of classroom activities such as relaxation exercises, suggestions on successful learning tactics, behavioral contracting, and maintaining a journal. Those techniques are in line with the concept of the writing process approach which can help students to produce better essays through some stages. The writing process approach can also help students to be more confident in writing. According to Bayat (2014), the writing process approach has a favorable effect on lowering students' writing anxiety.

Vielhaber (1983) explained some strategies to alleviate anxiety. Before implementing specific strategies, teachers should identify and analyze students' anxiety. Concerning the specific roles of teachers in the class, they should commit to creating a less anxiety-provoking atmosphere to make the students feel more comfortable when doing writing activities in the class. After identifying the students' anxiety and setting a positive classroom environment, teachers encourage the students to control their emotions, eliminate their anxiety, and focus on their writing tasks. If they fail to control their emotions, it will make them stuck and not able to start writing. Furthermore, teachers can implement a writing process approach. First, teachers help the students to be ready to write by preparing an outline before composing. It is believed that outlining can alleviate some of the burdens. Then, teachers can suggest the students divide their writing into stages, so the students do not try to complete the essay in the last minutes which can add more cognitive load and under pressure feeling. Once they have prepared, they can start and keep writing. They can do the editing phase later after they have completed their drafts since one of the causes of writing anxiety is that the students attempt to produce and edit at the same time.

Vielhaber (1983) gives additional strategies to cope with students' anxiety. Apprehensive writers are suggested to have a daily journal for free writing exercises for 10 minutes each day to train them to write without editing and fear of negative evaluation. In addition, teachers should be able to change the students' attitudes toward writing.

Students with writing anxiety perceive good writers do not have problems with writing they can produce well-organized and accurate essays the first time they write. Teachers' role is to make the apprehensive writers understand that most of the writers' experience is stuck. The notion that good writing teachers can cure writing anxiety should be eliminated because it is the students who can control their emotions, teachers can be supportive by creating non-threatening classrooms and suggesting strategies to alleviate anxiety. Finally, the students can alleviate their anxiety and write confidently. Furthermore, teachers train students to do positive self-talk to eliminate negative perceptions towards writing, then their self-confidence will gradually increase (Abdurahman & Rizqi, 2020).

In addition to the previous strategies, Tomlinson (1981) suggests some strategies to alleviate students' writing anxiety. The first strategy is the creative process. Teachers are expected to discuss and exemplify some activities to increase students' creativity in writing. The second strategy is the writing process. It has been implemented by Bayat (2014). By introducing and informing students about the stages of writing, students will learn both writing strategies and they will also have a positive attitude toward writing. They will also understand that writing is a process, and is flexible. Students will go through some steps of writing from the pre-writing to the editing stage. The third strategy is the processes of experienced writers. It is meant to show students how experienced writers also have gone through a long and stressful process. Teachers demonstrate to the students that the quality of the experienced writers' first drafts needs to be revised many times before eventually being published. It can be said that sufficient writing activity will help them to become a better writer. Therefore, it will increase their self-efficacy (McGee, 2019).

According to Tomlinson (1981), the fourth strategy is strategies for initiating. Teachers are expected to be aware that students should be told about the ways to avoid procrastination habits. Teachers could suggest to students how to avoid habits of delaying to start writing and how to avoid the negative impact of procrastination. The fifth strategy is strategies for inventing. This strategy can be used for students who are reluctant to write and are afraid of writing situations. Therefore, students should be told about various strategies about how to generate ideas through, for example, freewriting strategies, emotional control, and others. The sixth strategy is product characteristics and evaluative criteria. This strategy is important to help students understand the level of quality of the writing product they are expected to write. If the students are not sure about how they should go about their assignments, they will become more anxious. The last strategy is curricular structure. It refers to adapting the curriculum based on the problem encountered by students. This is to overcome students' problems by creating more flexible writing activities, emphasizing the writing process, and grouping students under the same interest.

Method

Research Design

This study is intended to map and identify some teaching strategies implemented by teachers to help students reduce their writing anxiety in online writing classes. This study also investigated the students' perception of the strategies used by teachers to create enjoyable, comfortable, and less anxiety-provoking classroom situations. This study

adopts a mixed-method approach for the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were obtained from students' responses to three questionnaires. The qualitative data were gathered through interviews with teachers and students' responses to the close-ended and open-ended questions.

Participants

The current study took place in an online setting or emergency remote teaching situation because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Not only teachers who experienced teaching online writing were involved in this study, but also EFL students who had attended an online writing class are eligible to be the participants. The participants were selected following the convenience sampling technique. Eight writing teachers (five females and three males) were recruited based on some reasons, namely teaching online writing classes during the pandemic, accessibility, and willingness to participate in the process of data collection. Another consideration was that they taught a writing course online during the pandemic. The next consideration was that they taught a higher level of writing class, such as essay writing with the assumption that their students have enough writing exposure. The last consideration was their students in the online writing class also agreed to participate in this study. Teachers and students who participated in this study are from five universities (two public universities and three private universities). Two of the universities are from East Java, one university is from Central Java, one university is from Jakarta, and one university is from Sumatra. By considering students from different backgrounds, the findings of the study provide rich data in which the findings are more comprehensive to the various contexts. The teachers taught essay writing, such as argumentative, expository essays, and academic writing. Each teacher has a different number of students in the class. To maintain confidentiality, their names have been replaced by T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, and T8. To select the participants, the convenience sampling technique was used since the participants were recruited based on their willingness and accessibility principle following some criteria which were mentioned earlier. The demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Information of Teacher-participants

Respondents	Age (years)	Gender	Teaching Experience (years)	Qualifications	Number of Students
T1	35	Female	7	Master	17
T2	41	Female	13	Master	72
T3	42	Female	14	Ph.D.	18
T4	42	Male	8	Ph.D.	33
T5	35	Male	8	Master	21
T6	48	Male	18	Master	17
T7	33	Female	7	Master	41
T8	32	Female	7	Master	55

The second group is English students from the same universities as the writing teacher-participants in this study. The students were invited to be the participants of this study by the gatekeeper, in this case, the writing teachers. The writing teachers informed

the students about the purpose of this research, the research instruments, their roles, and their involvement during the data collection process. Those teachers have a different number of students in their writing classes. A total of 274 students from five universities participated in this study. They were 19-20 years old and in their second and third years of study. In the writing class, they wrote essays and academic writing. The demographic information of the student-participant is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Demographic Information of Student-participants

Gender	Second-year students	Third-year students	Total
Female	83	132	215
Male	33	26	59
Total	116	158	274

Instruments

Two research instruments were used to gather data and answer the research objectives of this study. The data for the first research question was intended to figure out and map the teachers' strategies to help students reduce anxiety which was obtained from the interview session. The interview session was conducted via zoom meeting. The interview session was guided using several questions. The teachers were asked to describe their online writing class and how it was different from their offline classes before the pandemic. The next question was about the teachers' strategies to alleviate students' writing anxiety, especially related to the cause of anxiety, for example, how do they deal with students' problems due to linguistic difficulties, lack of topical knowledge, gaining ideas, fear of negative comments, and writing test under time pressure. More questions were developed based on participants' responses. The data from this session were used as a guideline to design a questionnaire to answer the last research question. The validation process had been done to find expert suggestions about the items in the questionnaire. Since the items are based on the items in the WACQ by Zhang (2011) about strategies to alleviate anxiety due to the seven causes, the questionnaire can be used right after it has been validated by the experts. Then, the questions can be developed on the basis of the teachers' responses in the interview session.

The second research question is intended to investigate students' perceptions of the teachers' strategies to alleviate students' writing anxiety. Furthermore, the questionnaire was also designed by considering the result of the previous studies; some of which are Bayat (2014), Chuang (2019), Zhang (2011), Tomlinson (1981), and Vielhaber (1983), and Young (1981). In addition, the results of the interviews were also considered. The interview results were analyzed to find out the teachers' strategies for each cause of writing anxiety, while the previous research was used as a guideline on whether the teachers' strategies were in line with the previous study. The questionnaire is a five-point Likert scale with strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), and strongly agree (1). The questionnaire consists of 29 items which are divided into seven parts. The validation process showed that all the items in the questionnaire were clear and divided into seven sections that dealt with the teachers' strategies for the seven causes of writing anxiety. The item distribution is shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Writing-Anxiety Reducing Strategies

Part	Topic	Number of Items
A	Increasing self-confidence	3
B.	Writing practices	3
C.	Writing topics	6
D.	Writing techniques	5
E.	Linguistics difficulties	4
F.	Fear of Teacher/Peer Negative Evaluation	3
G.	Insufficient Feedback	5
Total		29

In addition, an open-ended question is attached to allow respondents to share their thought by answering the following question “*The most effective strategy (s) to make me feel comfortable and less anxious in writing class is..... Explain your reason.* The respondents were allowed to respond in English or *Bahasa Indonesia*.

Procedures

The online writing class was carried out during the global pandemic. The online writing classroom was done almost in a similar way to offline teaching. The main difference is in the integration of various learning platforms, such as Zoom, Google Meet, Edmodo, E-learning management system, Google Classroom, and Google Docs. Those applications were used for different purposes. For instance, the learning materials were uploaded and shared via the E-learning management system before the class, then, the follow-up activity was a synchronous meeting via Zoom to discuss the materials which have been shared. Additionally, teachers also provide video-based materials to substitute the teachers’ presence in the class. To build a writing community, collaborative writing activities were carried out by making use of Google Docs and other applications in which students are allowed to comment on each other’s writing products. For some teachers, materials and assignments were given through Google Classroom to help the teacher control the assignment submission.

The procedures of collecting data began with the expert validation process. The questionnaire and the interview guideline were sent to the experts for the validation process. The criteria for selecting validators are those whose expertise is in the field of psychology in language learning and English language teaching. After getting the feedback, questionnaires were revised based on the comments and suggestions from the experts. The next step was distributing the questionnaire to the students. The process of data collection starts as soon as the instruments have been validated.

To obtain data for the research questions were done in the following steps:

1. Conducting online interviews with the teachers via zoom meetings with a time allotment of 45-60 minutes for each teacher. The interview with seven teachers ran very well, there is no disturbance. Meanwhile, an interview with one teacher faced a little problem due to an unstable internet connection. So, we had to reconnect the zoom meeting several times. The solution was to use the *WhatsApp* voice note application when the zoom meeting was disrupted.
2. Distributing an online questionnaire about students’ perceptions of the teachers’ strategies to alleviate anxiety. Inviting the students to fill in the third questionnaire

needed more time and effort. Intensive followed up was carried out to make sure those students have filled in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process had gone through some procedures. For the first question about the teachers' strategies, the result of the interview was analyzed using content analysis. The teachers' responses were coded following the interview guideline more specifically the causes of writing anxiety. For the second research question, data from the questionnaire about the students' perception of the teachers' strategies to alleviate anxiety were analyzed using descriptive statistics to find the mean of each strategy that helps them reduce anxiety at most. As mentioned earlier, this questionnaire was completed with an open-ended question to allow students to share their thought on which strategies help them reduce their writing anxiety. Furthermore, results from open-ended questions were analyzed using content analysis to be presented under similar categories. To maintain confidentiality, the names were replaced by S1, S2, S3, and so forth.

Findings

Teachers' Strategies to Alleviate Writing Anxiety

The data obtained from the interviews with teachers are summarized in the following list of anxiety-reducing strategies by referring to the causes of anxiety mentioned earlier, such as linguistics difficulties, lack of topical knowledge, limited time, fear of negative comments from others, stagnant writing skills, lack of writing practice, lack of writing technique, and ineffective and insufficient feedback. The strategies reported in this study refer to general strategies used by teachers for all students regardless of their level of anxiety. The results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of writing anxiety-reducing strategies

No.	Causes of Anxiety	Strategies
1	Linguistics difficulties	allowing students to use Automated Writing feedback tools during the writing process allocating proofreading sessions providing more resources introducing some vocabulary
2	Lack of topical knowledge (esp. writing under time constraints)	giving familiar/latest topics giving some alternative topics allowing students to choose their topics (self-selected topics) doing brainstorming activities providing enough time to complete their essay (2 days – 3 weeks) implementing collaborative writing
3	Fear of negative evaluation from peers and teachers	showing a positive attitude motivating the students to be open-minded with any comments

4	Stagnant writing skills/unconfident	creating a less anxiety-provoking classroom doing positive self-talk reminding them that writing is a process inviting students to recall their writing journey from the early semester
5	Lack of writing technique	analyzing text models (bad and good essays) writing an outline implementing freewriting activities comparing different essays' characteristics
6	Lack of writing practice inside and outside the classroom.	asking students to do more writing practice asking students to write in English frequently (on social media training students to write more essay
7	insufficient and ineffective writing feedback	giving written feedback giving oral feedback implementing whole class (general) feedback implementing peer review activity informing the criteria of evaluation

As shown in Table 4, the anxiety-reducing strategies which refer to the causes of anxiety mentioned earlier include linguistic difficulties, lack of topical knowledge, limited time, fear of negative comments from others, stagnant writing skills, lack of writing practice, lack of writing technique, and ineffective and insufficient feedback. These strategies are general strategies used by teachers for all students regardless of their level of anxiety.

The above data were supported by a sample of the teachers' responses during the interviews. The interview excerpts are presented under the causes of anxiety categories.

Linguistic difficulties

The interview transcript below indicated that four teachers (T1, T2, T5 & T8) have implemented some strategies to help students overcome their writing anxiety by introducing some technological tools or automated feedback applications to check their grammar and improve vocabulary mastery. Some of the tools are *Grammarly*, *digital dictionary*, *essay writer*, *paper writer*, and other available Artificial Intelligent (AI). The excerpt can be seen below:

I recommend the students have a Grammarly application to help them check their grammar and vocabulary use. I also recommend them to use a dictionary. (T1)

I prefer to suggest my students find out and compare the word usage. Then we consult the electronic dictionary together. (T2)

Related to students' problems with grammar and vocabulary, the main strategy is they have to read a lot (T7)

To be honest, I did not recommend digital tools for offline learning. Bu now, I recommend many digital tools such as Grammarly, essay writer, paper writer, and so forth. There have been so many Artificial Intelligent (AI) nowadays. I have

informed my students including free premium applications to help my students overcome their difficulties. (T8).

Lack of Topical Knowledge

The result of the interview revealed some teaching strategies to deal with generating ideas due to some lack of topical knowledge, moreover when they are assigned to write under time constraints. The teachers used various strategies. Six teachers (T2, T3, T4, T5, T7 & T8) implemented teacher-selected topics with some alternatives, and four teachers allowed the student to select their topics. Furthermore, five teachers (T1, T2, T4, T5, & T6) had given enough time for the students to complete their essays ranging from two days to three weeks following Writing Process Approach (WPC). Two teachers (T4 & T8) also suggest students have enough background knowledge about the topic before they start writing. The interview transcript is given below.

In most cases, I give them the topics. I allow the students to choose their topic from some alternative topics to make them more focused. If it is free. They will not start writing, but they feel confused about finding out topics. (T3)

I think it is impossible to give them the spot writing test. We force the students to think and write in 90 minutes. If we were instructed to do on the spot writing, we cannot perform maximally (T7)

For vocabulary, I always remind myself that reading is a fundamental aspect of any activity, especially writing activities. It is like eating nutritious food to make our bodies healthy. (T5)

Writing assignments in a pandemic are more flexible. I consider students feeling because they complain about getting assignments from other teachers. So, It is more flexible, I gave them around one week to complete the writing assignment. (T6)

Negative Comments from Teachers and Friends

Students have negative responses to the feedback and comments from their teachers and friends. Understanding this situation, teachers implemented some techniques. Four teachers (T1, T2, T3, and T5) trained the students to be open-minded to feedback, appreciate their strengths, and give feedback for a specific part. Two teachers (T2 & T4) created a less provoking classroom by giving general feedback when having a live meeting on Zoom/Google meet platforms. The teachers' responses in the interview can be seen below:

I implement the learning pyramid. I remind them that 90% of their learning input is from each other. So that is why I create peer feedback activities and I explain explicitly its purposes. I tell them that peer feedback activity allows you to learn from others. (T2)

Another way of delivering feedback is by giving positive comments and appreciating students' strengths for their writing product. (T6)

I focus mainly on the content if the content is good. I don't give any comment on the grammar individually. Basic grammar errors, like SV agreement, are usually discussed with the whole class. (T5)

Lack of self confidence

Students perceived that they have low writing ability makes them unconfident. To overcome the problems, two teachers (T2 & T6) invited them to recall their writing journey and compared their writing product with the previous one. It is done to motivate the students to keep writing and gradually enhance their writing skills.

I ask them to read their previous post on their blog, then I ask them to read the current post. Then I tell them about their improvement. I motivate them to keep up the good work and improve their writing skills from their errors.... So they can see their improvement because they will see their improvement (T2)

First, I motivate the students that writing is a demanding activity moreover writing in English since it is not our native language. We have to understand some factors, such as grammatical, vocabulary, writing procedures, and others. We are still in the process of learning. (T7)

Lack of Writing Practice

In the interview session, the teachers shared some ways to make the writing activities unlimited. Four teachers (T1, T2, T5 & T7) created writing activities through social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Wattpad. In addition, the majority of the teachers (T1, T2, T3, T5, & T8) agreed that writing a diary to help them improve their vocabulary and grammar mastery. The teachers' responses can be observed below:

I found the fact that they preferred to express their thought on WhatsApp, and Instagram, and some students prefer to write on a Wattpad (T1)

I suggest they make friends through social media. they obtain positive results from using social media to help them practice the languages in written form (T2)

I suggest they write an intellectual diary before or after the writing class. They can write anything, for example about the materials and other things. They do it every day. I remind them to write in English. (T6)

Today is the era of social media. They like posting and sharing their thought on social media. We can give one-day special time for them to share their stories in

the WhatsApp group to help them improve their vocabulary bank and grammar usage (T7).

Lack of Writing Ability

To produce a good piece of writing, students are expected to master their writing skills. Understanding the importance of knowledge to write to support the students' performance, Teachers implemented some teaching strategies, such as analyzing essay models (T1), outlining (T1, T3, T4 & T7), implementing freewriting steps (T2, T3, T5 & T6), and explaining essays characteristics (T1). The interview excerpts can be seen below:

I gave examples from good essays taken from their classmates' work or the internet (T3)

Insufficient writing Feedback

Feedback places an important role in the writing process. The teachers made sure that more than 50% of the teachers have given enough feedback to the students by integrating both written and oral feedback. They also have implemented both teacher and peer feedback. Their experience can be read in the interview transcripts below.

I give both written and oral feedback. I worried students missed understanding if I only give written feedback, then I use a Screencast application for the oral feedback. I also use the voice note application on WhatsApp to clear their confusion (T1)

I don't give formal instruction to the students, but they have done the peer feedback before submitting their final draft (T3)

Yes, after completing their essays in two days, they submit their work in the google group to be read by their friends. I always use peer feedback with different partners for different assignments. (T4)

The feedback is not only from the lecturer or known as teacher feedback. I also use peer feedback to help me reduce the workload by checking the students' work. My feedback comes after the per feedback session. (T8)

Students' Perception of Teachers' Strategies

This part presents the students' perception of teachers' strategies for alleviating anxiety. The data obtained from the questionnaire was broken down into seven sections based on the causes of anxiety and followed by samples of students' responses to an open-ended question.

Table 5*Students' perceptions of teachers' strategies caused by stagnant writing/not self-confident*

No.	Statements	M	SD
<i>I feel more relaxed and less anxious in the writing class when my teacher ...</i>			
1.	keeps reminding me that writing is a process and needs intensive practice	4.2	0.7
2.	suggests me to do <i>positive self-talk</i> to make me confident.	4.1	0.8
3.	helps me to recall my writing journey from the early semester to understand my progress	4.1	0.8

Table 5 shows that students have positive responses to the strategies used by teachers to reduce writing anxiety due to low self-confidence. The students become less anxious when they receive suggestions from teachers that writing is a process that needs intensive training (4.2). In addition, the students admit that they feel relaxed when the teachers suggest doing positive self-talk to make them more confident (4.1). Concerning the cause of writing anxiety due to their perceived stagnant writing competencies, the students feel better when the teachers help them to recall their writing journey from the early semester (4.1). The followings are samples of students' responses to the open-ended question about their opinion about the most effective strategies to reduce their anxiety.

To me, the most effective strategy is positive talk. For example, when my lecturer said that "You are not alone. We will write an essay together." The magic words make me comfortable and I have friends in writing the essay. (S12)

Table 6*Students' perception of teachers' strategies caused by a lack of writing practice*

No.	Statements	M	SD
<i>I feel more relaxed and less anxious in the writing class when my teacher</i>			
1.	Trains me to write a diary for more writing practice	4.1	0.8
2.	Asks me to use English to express my feeling and thought on social media	4.1	0.8
3.	Trains me to write a long essay to have more writing practice	3.9	0.9

Table 6 displays that students perceived positively the teachers' strategies to provide the chance for students to write a diary (4.1). Furthermore, most of the students agree with the idea of obtaining writing practice through social media (4.1). The statement about giving students enough writing practice by asking them to write long essays in the classroom obtains a lower mean score (3.9). An example of the students' responses is shown below:

I think by writing a reflection on my blog because I can express my ideas freely. in this course. (S18)

Table 7*Students' perception of teachers' strategies caused by a lack of topical knowledge*

No.	Statements	M	SD
<i>I feel more relaxed and less anxious in the writing class when my teacher</i>			
1.	Allows me to choose my topic	4.3	0.8
2.	Gives me enough time to complete my essay	4.3	0.8
3.	Uses some brainstorming activities (like discussion, watching the video, etc.) to get ideas before writing	4.2	0.8
4.	Picks up a topic from familiar/latest issues	4.1	0.8
5.	gives some alternative topics to write to choose from	4.0	0.8
6.	Invite students to write together for one topic	3.9	0.9

Table 7 reveals some strategies to overcome students' difficulties related to generating ideas for a particular topic. The students give positive responses for all the anxiety-reducing strategies, namely giving topics from familiar/latest issues (4.1), giving some alternative topics (4.0), choosing their topic (4.3), making use of some brainstorming activities (4.2), Giving me enough time to complete their essay (4.3), and implementing collaborative writing (3.9). An excerpt from one of the students is shown below:

The most effective strategy which makes me comfortable in my writing class is. when my teacher allows me to select my topic and gives me enough time to write. (S28)

Table 8*Students' perception of teachers' strategies caused by a lack of writing technique*

No.	Statements	M	SD
<i>I feel more relaxed and less anxious in the writing class when my teacher</i>			
1.	Asks me to do freewriting to gain ideas	4.2	0.8
2.	implements writing process approach (outlining, drafting, editing, revising, publishing)	4.2	0.8
3.	Asks me to write an outline before writing	4.1	0.8
4.	Explains clearly the characteristics of each type of essay, including the essay organization	4.1	0.8
5.	Analyzes text models to help me understand the organization	4.0	0.8

Table 8 presents the strategies to overcome students' problems due to a lack of writing techniques. Teachers implemented a process approach in the class. The students perceived positively the teachers' activities in analyzing text models to help the students understand the essay organization (4.0), asking students to write an outline (4.2), implementing a writing process approach (4.2), and giving a clear explanation of the specific characteristic of essays (4.1). The following response represents students' opinions of the most effective strategies:

I'm so glad that my lecturer this semester uses excellent methods. Starting from. writing an outline in the first week, the upcoming week submitting the rough draft, and revision, the final product. So, that students can finish their work on time. She also become our friend so I don't feel afraid of her but I respect her. (S5)

Table 9*Students' perception of teachers' strategies caused by linguistic difficulties*

No.	Statements	M	SD
<i>I feel more relaxed and less anxious in the writing class when my teacher ...</i>			
1.	Allows me to use automated feedback tools for their writing (Grammarly etc.)	4.2	0.8
2.	Allows me to have my draft proofread by my classmates	4.1	0.9
3.	Provides more readings to obtain new words	4.1	0.8
4.	Provides me with some specific vocabulary for the topic	4.0	0.9

As shown in Table 9, students' difficulties also stemmed from a lack of English competencies in terms of using correct grammar and vocabulary. The students perceived positively the use of automated feedback tools such as Grammarly applications and other tools (4.2). In addition, proofreading (4.1), giving more sources, and providing specific vocabulary for specific types of essays (4.0) are considered to be effective strategies to reduce their writing anxiety. The following is one of the students' points of view of the teachers' best strategies:

Giving enough time to write an essay and using Grammarly applications. because writing an essay needs extra time to make a coherent paragraph. By using the Grammarly application, we know our errors and we can easily revise them. (S71)

Table 10*Students' perception of teachers' strategies is caused by fear of negative evaluations*

No.	Statements	M	SD
<i>I feel more relaxed and less anxious in the writing class when my teacher ...</i>			
1	Create a non-threatening classroom atmosphere (good sense of humor, friendly, and patience)	4.4	0.8
2	Reminds me to be open-minded with any suggestions/comments for my writing	4.3	0.7
3	shows a positive attitude towards my errors (not overcorrection or overreaction)	4.1	0.9

Table 10 indicates that students feel less anxious when the teachers show a positive attitude toward their errors (not overcorrection and not overreaction) (4.1). To reduce students' anxiety due to worry of getting a negative evaluation, the teacher reminds them to be open-minded if they receive feedback on their draft (4.3). The comments and suggestions given to the students will be beneficial for the quality improvement of their English composition. The last item "Creating a non-threatening classroom atmosphere" obtains the highest mean score (4.4) in which students become less anxious if the teachers create enjoyable classroom situations to facilitate learning. One of the students' positive responses toward teachers writing anxiety-reducing strategies can be observed below:

What makes me feel relaxed is that ma'am xxx can create happy situations and make some jokes during class. So, the classroom is very fun. Then, during the feedback session, my lecturer is very sincere and patient in explaining the

feedback. That makes me feel so comfortable with her. Thanks, Ma'am. I love you. Stay healthy Ma'am 🍷🌻. (S8)

Table 11

Students' perceptions of the teachers' strategies caused by insufficient feedback

No.	Statements	M	SD
<i>I feel more relaxed and less anxious in the writing class when my teacher</i>			
1.	gives written feedback on my writing	4.1	0.8
2.	informs me of the criteria of evaluation (the scoring rubric)	4.1	0.8
3.	gives oral feedback on my writing	4.0	0.8
4.	uses samples of students' work for whole class feedback on live meeting	4.0	0.9
5.	allows me to do peer review before submitting the final draft	4.0	0.9

One of the causes of writing anxiety is ineffective teacher feedback. As indicated in Table 11, students perceived that both written (4.1) and oral feedback (4.0) are effective. The oral feedback can also be done by using samples of students' work for the whole class feedback (4.0). Furthermore, feedback may also come from their peers (4.0) before they submit the final draft. Students respond positively when teachers inform the criteria of evaluation (4.1) so that they can produce an excellent piece of writing by considering the scoring rubric. Students' positive responses toward teachers writing anxiety-reducing strategies can be observed below:

What makes me feel relaxed is that ma'am xxx can create happy situations and make some jokes during class. So, the classroom is very fun. Then, during the feedback session, my lecturer is very sincere and patient in explaining the feedback. That makes me feel so comfortable with her. (S8)

From the above explanation, the data trend emerges from the students' responses to the strategies implemented by teachers to reduce writing anxiety. Students showed a positive perception of most of the teachers' strategies such as providing adequate time to write their essays, providing more writing exercises through social media and diary writing, and implementing the writing process approach through pre-writing strategies such as free writing activities to generate ideas. Furthermore, students perceived that teachers' suggestions to use automated feedback tools reduce their anxiety. As writing will be implementing peer feedback, and creating a non-threatening classroom.

Discussion

The purpose of this current study is to provide comprehensive results by mapping out teaching strategies to reduce students' writing anxiety in the online setting and students' perceptions of the strategies implemented by the teachers. They have implemented some strategies such as providing adequate writing time, collaborative writing, automated feedback tools, and peer feedback. Students showed positive perceptions of those strategies to alleviate their writing anxiety. This study supports Horwitz's (2017) suggestion that accommodating both teachers' and students' voices to

discuss anxiety is important to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Meanwhile, the previous studies focus on the students' or the teachers' strategies separately. Writing anxiety can occur in both offline and online settings. Some studies have been carried out in different contexts. In the offline setting, research has figured out that students experience high anxiety when writing English compositions (Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017; Zhang, 2011). The findings of the previous studies conducted during the online learning environment due to the pandemic provided evidence that EFL students experienced moderate levels of anxiety conducted in Afghanistan (Quvanch & Na, 2022) and the Chinese context (Wern & Rahmat, 2021). In terms of the level of anxiety, the previous study supports the study carried out by Kurniasih et al. (2022) that Indonesian EFL students have a moderate level of writing anxiety. It is clear that students experienced a certain degree of writing anxiety in offline and online modes that need to be solved by teachers.

In the online setting, the feedback delivery could not be done using face-to-face writing conferences, but through some online learning platform. Students receive oral feedback through the application, i.e., Screencast. Students also received feedback on their posts on the Learning Management System. On some occasions, however, there were no questions about the feedback, or they do not follow the feedback when revising. This situation creates difficulties for teachers to monitor students' progress. On the student's side, they need more motivation and attention to complete their task. Understanding that anxiety contributes to students' success, teachers have implemented the students' anxiety based on its causes. For example, to overcome students' anxiety due to limited background knowledge about the problem, teachers allowed students to choose their topic or gave some alternative topics for the students to choose. Those strategies perceived positive responses from the students which can reduce their anxiety due to lack of information about the topics they are going to write.

In addition, the teachers have implemented various strategies, such as increasing students' self-confidence and self-efficacy through training students to do positive self-talk and recall their writing journey to appreciate their progress. Those strategies are beneficial for students to enhance their self-efficacy (McGee, 2019) so their anxiety levels drop down. The students in this study perceived positively doing positive self-talk or positive thinking strategies to reduce students' anxiety towards the task ($m=4.1$). A recent study showed that positive self-talk reduces students' negative emotions and increases self-confidence (Abdurahman & Rizqi, 2020). Teachers on some occasions allow students to select their topics with some terms and conditions from the teachers since it is important to engage students' participation in writing and significantly reduces students' writing anxiety (Robertson et al., 2020). Furthermore, teachers explained that they created collaborative writing activities to help students generate ideas easily because students have the opportunity to discuss and solve their difficulties within a small group (Al-Ahmad, 2003). Concerning previous research, students who are taught to use Automated Writing Corrective feedback (AWCF), such as Grammarly, produced more accurate compositions and outperformed those with no exposure to AWCF (Barrot, 2021). It is in line with teachers' response in a recent study conducted by Kurniasih and Saukah (2021) that students are given the chance to use Grammarly to help themselves cope with linguistic difficulties. This is because AWCF provides some features that allow students to learn why they make mistakes, and Grammarly also provides an explanation of how to correct the sentences. Furthermore, the main benefit is that AWCF facilitates students to

be autonomous and self-directed learners. In this study, students responded positively to the use of a combination between teacher feedback, peer feedback, and automated feedback with a high mean score (4.2).

The data showed that most of the students have a positive perception of strategies implemented by teachers. For example, collaborative writing is considered to be effective by students to reduce their anxiety. In collaborative writing, students have the opportunity to share and learn from each other. It is the chance to get linguistic input and knowledge of the topic they have written. In addition, the role of the writing process approach does play a significant role in which students do their work step by step and finish their work on time. It is also to monitor the students' progress and avoid procrastination habits. This strategy helps students prioritize and focus on their work without delaying it. A study carried out by Kafipour and Jafari (2020) has found that procrastination habits significantly influence students' writing quality as contributing factors to the students' errors in writing. In terms of the writing process approach, the previous study has proved that the writing process approach is useful to reduce students' anxiety (Bayat, 2014; Kurniasih et al., 2021).

This study offers solutions to writing anxiety problems experienced by students since this study also accommodates students' perceptions of the strategies implemented by teachers. The findings of the current studies have shed light on the strategies the students think the best work for them to alleviate their writing anxiety. The previous studies have not involved the students' voices on the strategies implemented by teachers to overcome anxiety. Another difference is the teachers' support of the importance of integrating technology in writing for delivering materials, providing feedback, creating collaborative tasks, and checking sentence structure. The previous study conducted by McGee (2019) has not touched upon the strategies which integrate technology. He found some ways to reduce students' writing anxiety, such as peer review, writing process approach, and increasing students' self-efficacy.

The findings of the study provide useful information on how writing online classes should be carried out to suit the students' expectations. It is important to note that online writing required more effort and preparation from both students and teachers. In addition, teachers have to be able to integrate technology and are familiar with various online platforms. Students are also encouraged to be independent, autonomous, and self-directed learners to become successful. The teachers have also designed a motivating, enjoyable, and less anxiety-provoking classroom by showing positive attitudes and not overreacting to students' errors. This study sheds light that students' emotional condition still becomes one condition that requires focused attention from teachers because students also have a high level of anxiety during online learning. It is also important to note that teachers are expected to build a conducive, motivating, and good rapport with students to make the writing process becomes easy and successful for learners. It is important to do because when students are anxious, they tend to feel panicked and worried, and get blank to write. Those strategies will contribute to the students' emotional state if the strategies are implemented intensively.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the data analysis, the findings of this study can be summarized into two conclusions. First, the result of mapping out teachers' anxiety-reducing strategies revealed that teachers have used various strategies to help students cope with the causes of anxiety. Some of the strategies are implementing the writing process approach starting from prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and submitting their final products to their teacher. Second, as a follow-up of the teachers' strategies to alleviate students' writing anxiety, it is also necessary to listen to students' voices on the implementation of those strategies., such as giving enough time for students to write their topic, providing adequate writing exercise through diary writing and social media, implementing process approach started with a free writing activity, allowing students to use automated feedback tools, implementing peer feedback, and creating non-threatening classroom. Students perceived positively the strategies implemented by teachers. The findings also confirmed that creating an enjoyable, stimulating, and motivating classroom supported by teachers' positive personalities is necessary and more convenient to the student's emotional states which reduces their writing anxiety.

Some recommendations for further researchers and teachers are also given. Based on the limitations of this study, it is suggested for future researchers who conduct a study on a similar topic investigate specific strategies implemented for students based on types of anxiety or students' levels of anxiety. Furthermore, it is also necessary to conduct a comprehensive study using an experimental design because the findings of the current study revealed that students showed positive perceptions towards the teachers' strategies, meanwhile they have high anxiety. This highlights the need for more empirical studies exploring the effect of the teachers' writing anxiety-reducing strategies on the student's level of anxiety before and after the implementation of those strategies in the online class. It is also important to include observation as the supporting data. Teachers are suggested to implement the strategies found in this study to create a supportive and conducive academic environment. More specifically in online learning, teachers are expected to make use of learning platforms.

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