



Second Language Writing Anxiety of Thai EFL Undergraduate Students: Dominant  
Cause, Levels and Coping Strategies

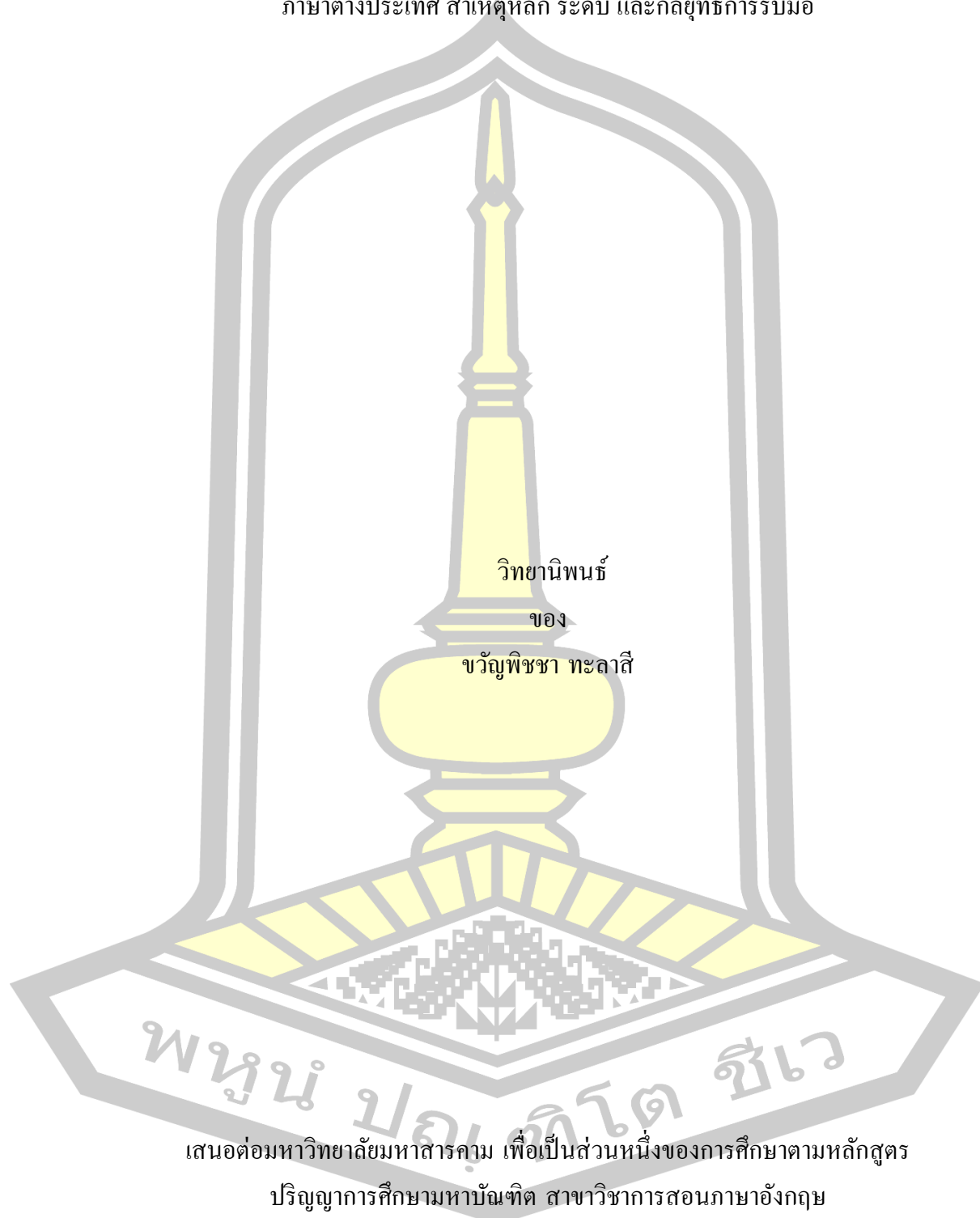
Kwanpicha Talasee

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Master of Education in English Language Teaching

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พหุบัณฑิต ชีวะ

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### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the dominant cause, levels, and coping strategies of second language writing anxiety among 55 second-year Thai EFL undergraduate students studying for their bachelor's degree in English for International Communication (international programme). This study used a mixed-methods design, which included a questionnaire and a stimulated recall interview. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire. Content analysis was used to look for themes that emerged from the data obtained from the stimulated recall interview. The finding indicated that the high frequency of writing assignments is the dominant cause of second language writing anxiety for Thai EFL undergraduate students. And this study also found that the overall mean score of the 55 Thai EFL undergraduate students who participated in the survey was 40 out of 55 for writing anxiety, which indicated that Thai EFL undergraduate students experienced high levels of writing anxiety. Furthermore, the results of how they coped with their anxiety in the stimulated recall interview can be divided into five themes, including positive self-talk, starting with a plan, relaxation techniques, goal setting, and social support.

Keyword : Second Language Writing Anxiety, Thai EFL undergraduate, Causes, Levels, Coping strategies

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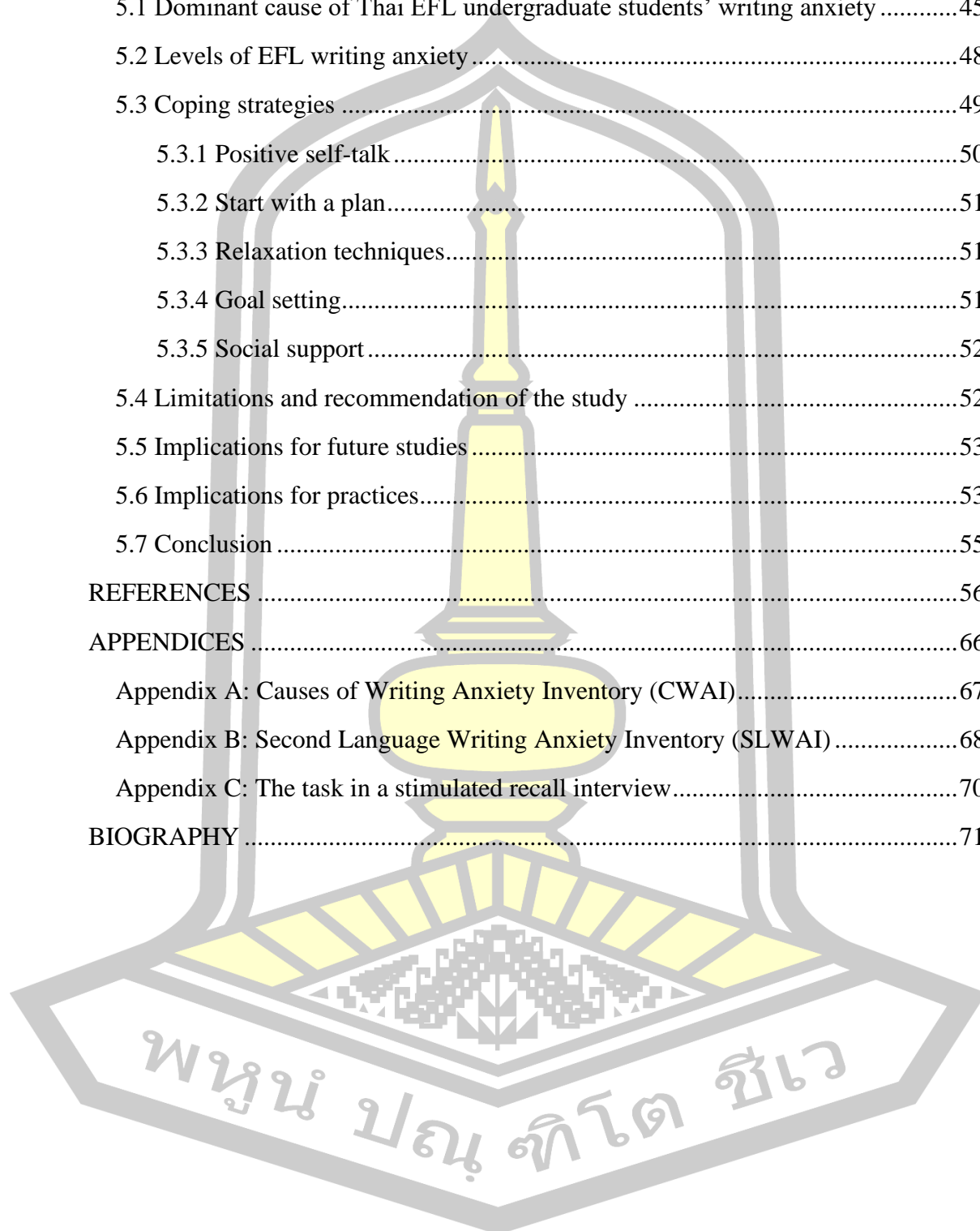
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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study, which consists of the background of the study, the purposes of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and definitions of the terms.

### 1.1 Background of the study

Writing skills are specific abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally interact with the message. There are some different definitions of writing explained by some different linguists. Writing is an integral part of a larger activity where the focus is on something else such as language practice, acting out or speaking (Harmer, 2007:33) On the other hand, writing is the representation of the language in textual medium through the use of a set of sign or symbols. Writing is the nature of the composing process of writing. Written products are often the result of thinking, drafting and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develops naturally (Brown, 2003: 335).

Some people consider that writing is difficult. Abu Rass (2015) indicated that "writing is a difficult skill for native and nonnative speakers alike because writers must balance multiple issues in their writing such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary and mechanics which means using the right punctuation, spelling and capitalization. Alsamadani (2010) pointed out writing in a second language is even more demanding because it is "a complex, challenging, and difficult process" since writers are expected to produce written samples that are syntactically accurate, semantically acceptable and culturally appropriate. Nunan (2003) noted that "writing is both a physical and mental act. At the most basic level, writing is the physical act of committing words or ideas to some medium. On the other hand, writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader". Byrne (1988) and Heaton (1990) pointed out that "writing is a complex process because it requires the mastery of grammatical devices, conceptual thinking and judgmental elements". Writing is seen as arduous, challenging, and frustrating

because students may feel poor in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, and language use. It is very common that students are asked to write only for assignments and exams. Without practice in class or after class, students may feel anxious and even frightened when asked to write in English. As Cheng (2000) and Lee (2005) said, writing in a foreign language is an acknowledged difficulty for a majority of EFL students because writing is an affective as well as cognitive activity. For second language writing, limited language knowledge and language ability is a challenge to second language learners who may lack the social and cultural awareness of writing in a foreign language and do not know how to achieve language functions in a proper way or do not understand the expectations of readers of different cultures. Motivation and emotional factors may also affect the normal performance of writing level (Zhou Baoguo & Tang Junjun, 2010).

Anxiety, as one of the affective factors, has been a popular research topic for decades. It is common for learners to have negative feelings such as anxiety, fear, and low motivation in foreign language classes. These feelings can be so serious that learners may skip language classes and even avoid language learning situations. It has been common to study specific skills anxiety for a few decades. Many studies have focused on speaking anxiety (Price, 1991; Phillips, 1992), but recently more research has been carried out on reading, listening, and writing anxiety (Sellers, 2000; Kim, 2000; Cheng, 2004).

Writing anxiety (Daly & Miller, 1975), in particular, is a persistent feeling of not being ready to write or not being good enough to write. Horwitz et al. (1986) conceptualize foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process. According to Hjortshoj (2001), anxiety in writing is a wide variety of apprehensive and pessimistic feelings about writing. However, these feelings do not pervasively characterize a person's writing life and it is naturally situational. As writing anxiety does not describe psychological attributes, students are likely to experience the anxiety in particular contexts caused by their negative or difficult experiences with writing (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012; Hjortshoj, 2001). It is a common fact that writing in foreign language is perceived as a

difficult task among EFL students (Blasco, 2016; Cheng, 2002; Daud, Daud, & Kassim, 2005; Kurt & Attay, 2007; Latiff, 2007). However, some problems experienced by EFL students in writing are related to their distinctive English language competence that is greatly influenced by their competence in their own native language (Silva, 1993).

The construct of Second Language Writing Anxiety is understood to be classified under three subscales; cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior (Cheng, 2004). He agrees that cognitive anxiety refers to learners' mental aspect when they experience anxiety, including negative expectations, preoccupation with performance, and concern about others' perceptions. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) believe that anxiety consumes cognitive resources because when a learner becomes anxious, he/she initiates negative self-related cognition such as 'thoughts of failure' (e.g., "I will never be able to do this."), self-deprecation (e.g., "I am just no good at this."), Furthermore, avoidance (e.g., "I wish this was over."). Somatic anxiety refers to one's perception of the physiological effects of anxiety. Learners with somatic anxiety increase their autonomic arousal and unpleasant feelings such as nervousness and tension. As a result, they tend to sweat, shake, increase their heart rate, suffer a headache and have rapid breathing. Meanwhile, avoidance behavior refers to the behavioral aspect of anxious learners. Learners with avoidance behavior, for instance, will find ways and situations so that they do not have to write in English or compositions not in the classroom.

Writing anxiety occurs due to some causes. Based on previous research, there are some possible causes of writing anxiety. Jawas (2019), for example, showed the main three causes are related to writing anxiety: arranging ideas for essay content development; types of essay assignment and time-restricted assignments; and classroom atmosphere. Arranging ideas for essay content development was the most likely essay writing process that created higher level of anxiety to the students compared to the other essay writing process. Types of essay assignments that potentially caused the students to feel most anxious were that of individual essay assignment done in the class with the topic decided by the lecturer and within time restriction. It also showed that the lecturer was the one of the classroom atmospheres

factors that was likely to produce anxiety to the students while their classmates had equal chance to cause them to feel anxious or not. Selma Kara (2013) found the reasons related to writing anxiety. They are (1) students have no writing habit, and (2) they are not used to writing and expressing themselves in writing. Zhang Hongxia and Zhu Yingying (2012) conducted a study among 96 English majors and got such findings that there are five main causes of ESL writing anxiety for English majors: language difficulties, lack of writing practice, fear of test writing, limited knowledge and lack of self-confidence. Bai Liru's research (2017) showed that there are two sources of writing anxiety — individual inducements and writing process inducements. Young (2009) pointed out that learners' anxiety in foreign language learning will vary in different teaching environments and Dewaele, et al. (2008) also believed that learners' foreign language learning environment will affect their foreign language learning anxiety. Fear of negative evaluation and fear of tests, language difficulties, lack of topical knowledge (Zhang, 2011), time pressure and high frequency of assignment (Rezai and Jafari, 2014), and low self-confidence (Hassan, 2001; Cheng, 2004), poor writing technique (Hassan, 2001), lack of experience or insufficient writing practice (Gunge and Taylor, 1989: 235-248), and pressure for perfect work (Bloom, 1981) are also found to be causes of writing anxiety.

Based on the aforementioned, many researchers have attempted to identify the causes of anxiety among anxious writers. Indeed, many studies have been conducted in EFL settings. Though second language writing anxiety has been increasingly recognized by more and more researchers and educators, few studies have paid attention to the situation of second language writing anxiety among Thai undergraduate students. In Thai context, most research focused on second language writing with regards to approaches, techniques, and learning strategies to cope with foreign language anxiety. For example, a study by Jindapitak and Intaraprasert (2017) investigated the coping strategies used by Thai university students to manage SLWA. The researcher found that students used a range of strategies, such as seeking help from teachers, practicing writing, and using dictionaries and translation tools. The study also found that students who used more strategies tended to experience lower levels of anxiety. Another study by Tepmongkol and Tepsuriwong (2018) investigated the factors that

contribute to SLWA among Thai university students. The researcher found that anxiety was related to a range of factors, including writing apprehension, lack of writing experience, and negative attitudes towards writing. A study by Tepmongkol and Tepsuriwong (2019) investigated the levels of SLWA among Thai university students. The researcher used the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (Cheng, 2004) to measure anxiety and found that the majority of students experienced moderate to high levels of anxiety. To conclude, Thai university students faced a lot of writing anxiety. For example, writing apprehension, a lack of writing experience, and negative attitudes towards writing.

Although many research studies pertaining to second language writing anxiety have been conducted in the Thai EFL context, little attention has been paid to investigating this topic among Thai undergraduate students who studied in an international program in Thailand. English writing anxiety is a common challenge faced by international university students in Thailand, particularly those whose first language is not English. The pressure to produce well-written academic papers in a foreign language can lead to feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, and fear of making mistakes. More studies should be conducted to investigate the causes of their writing anxiety, levels of their writing anxiety and their coping strategies when they were faced with writing anxiety. Therefore, this study was set out in order to investigate writing anxiety among Thai undergraduate students who were studying for their bachelor's degree in English for International Communication (the international program). Apart of using the writing anxiety questionnaire, this study utilized a stimulated recall interview in order to investigate how the participants coped with writing anxiety immediately after they had finished writing an assigned task. This study was expected to provide appropriate guidelines for EFL writing teachers about creating supportive classroom environments.

## **1.2 Purposes of the study**

This study aimed to investigate the dominant cause of second language writing anxiety of EFL undergraduate students, levels of second language anxiety and their



coping strategies when they encountered second language writing anxiety. Three research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What is the dominant cause of second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students?
2. What are the levels of second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students?
3. How do Thai EFL undergraduate students cope with their second language writing anxiety?

### **1.3 Scope of the study**

This study utilized a mixed method research design. The study aimed to explore the causes, levels and coping strategies of second language writing anxiety among 55 second-year undergraduate students studying for their bachelor's degree in English for International Communication (International program). The participants enrolled in an introductory university writing course taught primarily in English by a Thai English lecturer. Data was collected on-site using the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWA) developed by Rezai and Jafari (2014), the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SWAI) developed by (Cheng 2004), and a stimulated recall interview on the topic of "My idol". The duration of the study lasted two months. This study took place at a government university located in the northeastern part of Thailand.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

The current study may shed light on the English writing anxiety that Thai EFL undergraduate students experienced, which may have an impact on learners' academic performance. With the possible outcomes of this study, teachers can use them as a guideline for designing writing courses that could help students overcome their second language writing anxiety and later improve their English writing skills.

This research study was expected to yield fruitful results for various groups of related individuals. Firstly, the results may provide guidelines for EFL writing teachers when designing a curriculum that could help EFL learners reduce their writing anxiety. Secondly, various coping strategies in this study might be applied in the writing

classroom, and these can be effectively used to both prepare and deliver English writing to EFL learners more successfully.

### 1.5 Definition of key terms

**Writing** refers to the act of expressing thoughts, ideas, or information through the use of written language. It involves putting words on paper or in a digital format to communicate with others. Writing can take various forms, including essays, reports, stories, articles, or personal reflections.

**Writing anxiety** refers to a general avoidance of writing behavior and of situations thought to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing.

**Causes of second language writing anxiety** refers to the anxiety that occurs when individuals are asked to write in a language that is not their first language. The causes of second language writing anxiety are multifaceted and can be influenced by various factors, including fear of the teacher's negative comment, fear of writing tests, time pressure, low self-confidence, insufficient writing technique, linguistic difficulties, lack of topical knowledge, lack of experience or insufficient writing practice, pressure for perfect work, high frequency of writing assignments.

**Levels of of second language writing anxiety** refers a score indicated a high level, a low level, and a moderate level of writing anxiety.

**Coping strategies** refers to techniques or actions the participants in this study use to deal with challenging situations or stressors, helping them manage difficult emotions and reduce writing anxiety.

**Thai EFL undergraduate students** refers to 55 second-year students who were studying for their bachelor's degree in the English for International Communication (international program) at a government university located in the northeastern part of Thailand.

### 1.6 Organization of the thesis

The current research consists of five chapters.



**Chapter I** presents the introduction to the current study. The first chapter includes the background of the study, purposes, scope, and significance of the study, as well as the definition of key terms.

**Chapter II** presents the literature review of the present study, including an overview of an approach to second language writing anxiety, which includes the definition of writing, the definition of anxiety, and aspects of writing anxiety in a second language; causes of writing anxiety, which include fear of the teacher's negative comment, fear of writing tests, time pressure, low self-confidence, insufficient writing technique, linguistic difficulties, lack of topical knowledge, lack of experience or insufficient writing practice, pressure for perfect work, and a high frequency of writing assignments. followed by levels of writing anxiety and coping strategies for writing anxiety, and the review of previous studies on second language writing anxiety in an ESL/EFL context.

**Chapter III** presents the research methodology of the current study, including the research design, participants and setting, instruments, data collection, procedures, data analysis, and a summary of the chapter.

**Chapter VI** presents the results of the study on the causes, levels, and ways that Thai EFL undergraduate students deal with second language writing anxiety. The chapter is divided into four sections, including causes of writing anxiety, levels of writing anxiety, stimulated recall interviews, and a summary of the chapter.

**Chapter V** presents the research findings in the context of the current literature, and the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for further research were also provided.

พหุบัณฑิต ชีว

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter presents relevant literature on second language writing anxiety. The content was divided into four sections. The first section provides an overview of an approach to second language writing anxiety, which includes the definitions of both writing and anxiety. The second part presents writing anxiety in the second language, causes of second language writing anxiety, and coping strategies for second language writing anxiety. Finally, previous studies on second language writing anxiety in the global and Thai EFL contexts were discussed together with research gaps. Finally, the chapter summary was provided.

#### **2.1 Overview of approach to second language writing anxiety**

##### **2.1.1 Definition of writing**

Writing skills are specific abilities that help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and mentally interact with the message. Different linguists explain different definitions of writing. Writing is an integral part of a more significant activity where the focus is on something else, such as language practice, acting out, or speaking (Harmer, 2007)

Moreover, writing represents the language in a textual medium through a set of signs or symbols. Some people consider that writing is difficult. Elbow (1981) states that writing calls on the ability to create words and ideas out of yourself, but it also calls on the ability to criticize them for describing which ones to use.

Writing is the nature of the composing process of writing. Written products are often the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develops naturally (Brown, 2003). Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that definition of writing is a process of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs. The purpose is used to communicate something with other people indirectly. The student makes an effort to express their mind through language in writing.

Writing is a crucial skill in teaching and learning English as a Second Language (ESL). It is a comprehensive skill that helps reinforce vocabulary, grammar, thinking, planning, editing, revising, and other elements. In addition, writing also helps to improve all the other skills of listening, speaking, and reading, as they are all interrelated.

To sum up, writing is the act of expressing thoughts, ideas, or information through the use of written language. It involves putting words on paper or in a digital format to communicate with others. Writing can take various forms, including essays, reports, stories, articles, or personal reflections.

### **2.1.2 Definition of anxiety**

Anxiety is a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system (Horwitz et al., 1986). Gkonou (2011) stated that second or foreign-language learners tend to feel anxious because the students try to use a second or foreign language successfully. However, they have not fully mastered the language. Anxiety is experienced by most learners of a second/foreign language. Anxiety in EFL classrooms often occurs because foreign language learners have to master the foreign language. They rarely use it in the real world.

To sum up, anxiety is a state of heightened unease, apprehension, or worry. It involves feelings of tension, nervousness, and a sense of impending threat or danger, even if there is no immediate or identifiable cause. Anxiety can manifest both mentally and physically, often leading to symptoms such as restlessness, racing thoughts, increased heart rate, sweating, and difficulty concentrating.

### **2.2 Second language writing anxiety**

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, anxiety is a nervous feeling caused by the fear that something terrible will happen (Oxford, 1995). Anxiety can block and interfere with the process of learning. Second language anxiety is particular anxiety related to second language classes. Anxiety in learning a second language is different from other anxieties because language anxiety is a particular complex system of belief, feelings, self-perceptions, and behavior that usually happens in a

language classroom, which emerges because of the complex system of the learning process (Hortwiz, Michael B. Elaine K. Cope, Joan, 1986).

Second language anxiety is a feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with language skills, including speaking, listening, writing, and learning. However, second language anxiety is commonly expressed by second language learners and is considered a standard issue. FLA/SLA has been widely known as one of the main obstacles for learners when they are learning a second or foreign language because anxiety consistently contributes negatively to language achievement (MacIntyre, P.D & Gardner; R.C, 1994).

Second language anxiety can be related to three different anxieties that are related to academic and social evaluation situations. Those are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Hortwiz, Michael B. Elaine K. Cope, Joan, 1986).

Second language learners face multiple challenges, including those linguistic, rhetorical, strategical, and cultural barriers, which could lead to feelings of uneasiness, distress, confusion, or anxiety (Zhang & Zhong, 2002). Second, writing anxiety is described as a mixture of feelings, attitudes, or behaviors that interfere with one's ability to perform a writing task that s/he is capable of doing (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012). Cheng (2004) operationalized L2 writing anxiety in three dimensions: somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety, and avoidance behavior. Somatic anxiety entails trembling, perspiring, and other physiological arousals; cognitive anxiety describes negative perceptions towards writing, including pessimistic expectations and over-concern about others' comments; avoidance behavior refers to the tendency to avoid situations involving composing or writing.

Writing anxiety as a specific aspect of second language learning has occupied a significant body of research for the past few decades. Language research has shown the debilitating effect of writing anxiety on students' performance. Daly (1978) found that anxious writers tend to produce messages of lower quality with shorter and more straightforward structures. Using both Writing Quality and Quantity Tasks, Hassan (2001) concluded that low-anxious students produced better compositions than their highly anxious counterparts. Cheng (2002) found that higher anxious writers tend to

avoid writing courses and instead take majors that have little to do with writing. Later on, to develop an L2 writing anxiety scale, Cheng (2004) introduced a self-report L2 writing anxiety measure entitled Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and specified the physiological. The cognitive effects of writing anxiety on writing processes and behaviors were evaluated on sixty-five Taiwanese EFL learners to establish the validity and reliability of her proposed measure. This scale is now used as a measure of writing anxiety.

The concept of writing anxiety, also called writing apprehension was introduced by Daly and Miller in 1975. The term "writing apprehension" refer to writing-specific anxiety (Daly & Miller, 1975). The definition given by Daly and Miller regarding writing apprehension is that it is a situation and subject-specific individual difference associated with a person's tendencies to approach or avoid situation perceived to potentially require writing accompanied by some amount of perceived evaluation.

To sum up, second language writing anxiety refers to the specific type of anxiety experienced by individuals when writing in a language that is not their first language. It is the apprehension, fear, or stress that arises when attempting to write in a second or foreign language. Second language writing anxiety can be characterized by self-doubt, concerns about making grammatical errors, fear of being misunderstood, and a lack of confidence in expressing ideas effectively. It is a common challenge faced by language learners, particularly when they are required to write academically or in professional settings. This anxiety can hinder the writing process, negatively impact fluency and creativity, and result in decreased writing performance.

### **2.2.1 Roles of second language writing anxiety in writing performance**

Second language writing anxiety is characterized by feelings of apprehension, tension, and dread when writing in a foreign or second language. It can influence a person's writing performance in a variety of ways. Here are a few of the roles and impacts of second language writing anxiety:

***Reduced fluency and coherence***

Anxiety can disrupt the flow of thoughts and ideas, making it difficult for individuals to express themselves clearly and coherently in writing. They may struggle with organizing their thoughts, resulting in disjointed or fragmented writing.

***Decreased motivation and avoidance***

High levels of writing anxiety can demotivate individuals and lead to avoidance behavior. They may procrastinate or actively avoid writing tasks, fearing the negative emotions associated with the writing process. This avoidance further hinders their writing performance and skill development.

***Impaired language production***

Anxiety can affect language production by interfering with individuals' ability to retrieve vocabulary, grammar rules, and appropriate linguistic structures. As a result, their writing may contain more errors, inaccuracies, and limited vocabulary, leading to lower writing proficiency.

***Increased self-consciousness and self-criticism***

Writing anxiety often stems from individuals' fear of negative evaluation and criticism. They may become excessively self-conscious about their writing, constantly doubting their abilities and judging their work harshly. This self-critical mindset can hinder creativity and expression, negatively impacting the quality of their writing.

***Elevated cognitive load***

Writing anxiety consumes cognitive resources, diverting attention and mental energy away from the writing task itself. Individuals may become preoccupied with their anxious thoughts, making it harder to focus on generating ideas, organizing content, and revising their work effectively.

***Limited risk-taking and experimentation***

Anxiety can discourage individuals from taking risks and experimenting with their writing. They may become overly concerned about making mistakes or sounding unnatural, opting for safe and formulaic expressions instead. This avoidance of linguistic challenges can hinder their language development and creativity.



### ***Negative affective filter***

Anxiety creates a psychological barrier that inhibits learning and language acquisition. The heightened negative emotions associated with writing anxiety, such as fear, frustration, and self-doubt, create a negative affective filter that hampers information processing and learning, making it harder for individuals to improve their writing skills.

It is important to note that while second language writing anxiety can significantly impact writing performance, there are strategies and interventions available to help individuals manage and overcome their anxiety. These may include providing a supportive writing environment, offering constructive feedback, promoting self-reflection, and teaching anxiety reduction techniques. By addressing writing anxiety, individuals can improve their writing performance and develop greater confidence in their second language writing abilities.

### **2.2.2 Causes of writing anxiety**

Writing anxiety occurs due to some causes, based on previous research there are some possible causes of writing anxiety as a basis for analyzing the causes of writing anxiety consisting of fear of the teacher's negative comment, fear of writing tests, time pressure, low self-confidence, insufficient writing technique, linguistic difficulties, lack of topical knowledge, lack of experience or insufficient writing practice, pressure for perfect work, high frequency of writing assignments. The causes will be explained as follows.

#### **2.2.2.1 Fear of the teacher's negative comment**

Fear of tests is very pervasive because writing tests is regarded as a productive activity that is influenced by time pressure firmly (Zhang, 2011). In a study by Swain and Pearson (2018), undergraduate students with writing anxiety reported feeling anxious about receiving negative feedback or criticism from their teachers, which they felt would confirm their fears about their writing abilities.

To conclude, fear of negative comments or feedback from teachers can contribute to writing anxiety by creating a sense of pressure or fear of failure. Strategies such as

providing constructive feedback and creating a supportive writing environment can help students overcome their anxiety and develop confidence in their writing abilities.

#### **2.2.2.2 Fear of writing test**

The students will feel anxious when their writing is not as good as their teacher's hope, and as a result, their teacher will negatively evaluate their writing. Reducing anxiety and stress levels for individuals taking writing tests could lead to better performance (Wang et al., 2020).

#### **2.2.2.3 Time pressure**

Rezaei and Jafari found that time pressure is one of the main causes of writing (Rezaei & Jafari, 2014b). Writing in English for students is needed more time than writing in their mother tongue or first language. They need extra time to plan, write and revise to ensure that their writing in English can be as good as writing in their first language. The students will feel anxious when they have to write under time pressure because they cannot concentrate on their writing and concentrate more on limited time.

#### **2.2.2.4 Low self-confidence**

Self-confidence is crucial in determining the response of the students toward writing tasks. Students with appropriate skills and capabilities in writing will encounter anxiety when they believe they will do poorly (Hassan, 2001). One study conducted by Khajavy et al. (2018) found that EFL learners in Iran exhibit moderate levels of writing anxiety. The study suggested that higher levels of writing anxiety were associated with lower levels of writing competence and a lack of self-confidence among learners. Even if students with high second language writing ability assume that they are not competent in writing something which is ordered, they also cannot avoid writing anxiety (Cheng, 2004).

#### **2.2.2.5 Insufficient writing technique**

Good skill in writing shows that the students have a relatively good understanding of composing process and good skill development (Hassan, 2001). Conversely, students who experience writing anxiety have poor skill development and a lack of understanding of the composing process, which means the anxious students are not skillful writers.



#### **2.2.2.6 Language difficulties**

Language difficulty is a common problem foreign language learners face when they write compositions in English. Linguistic difficulties make them reluctant or lazy to write compositions in English because of the difficulty in expressing ideas through correct and varied clauses, which must be written according to grammar rules. In addition, the amount of vocabulary the students know is still relatively inadequate, so they have difficulty in showing their composition in the form of English (Zhang, 2011)

#### **2.2.2.7 Lack of topical knowledge**

The low level of topical knowledge may cause the students to experience anxiety. For instance, when the lecturer introduces the learners to writing an essay about politics, whereas they only have a little knowledge about politics, they will become nervous and afraid to write down their ideas. They have to think of something strange and challenging for them. Therefore, it means that lack of knowledge dramatically affects writing anxiety among students. A study by Swain and Pearson (2018) found that undergraduate students with writing anxiety often reported feeling anxious about writing assignments that required them to write about topics they were unfamiliar with or had limited knowledge about.

Overall, lack of topical knowledge can contribute to writing anxiety by creating a sense of uncertainty and overwhelm. Strategies such as providing students with clear expectations and guidance on the topic, as well as opportunities for research and exploration, can help students overcome their anxiety and develop confidence in their writing abilities.

#### **2.2.2.8 Lack of experience or insufficient writing practice**

One of the reasons why students feel anxious when writing English compositions is due to the lack of practice in expressing something using English. The students who rarely practice when they are writing will concentrate excessively on the forms they write, not on the content of the essay. While the more focus is given to the form, the more writing apprehension will be presented. Although writing practice is critical in developing writing ability, the students who often practice their writing will be better at writing.

### **2.2.2.9 Pressure for perfect work**

Anxiety may occur because the learners feel the pressure to perfect their work. They believe that excellent writing work is that which demands work and has a more difficult standard (Bloom, 1981). This self-imposed pressure for excellent work usually makes the students experience writing anxiety and cause them to be reluctant to write. They have to achieve a high standard of writing, and it makes the students experience writing anxiety.

### **2.2.2.10 High frequency of assignment**

Another root cause of writing anxiety is a high frequency of assignments. According to Rezeai and Jafari (2014), the high frequency of assignments is one of the sources of writing anxiety. However, the percentages of the respondents from the study who choose it as a cause of writing anxiety are a few, and it becomes the least chosen item by the respondents.

### **2.2.3 Levels of writing anxiety**

Writing anxiety can be experienced at different levels of intensity, ranging from low to high. This literature review examined research on high, mid, and low levels of writing anxiety.

High levels of writing anxiety are typically characterized by intense negative emotions, self-doubt, and fear of failure. Individuals who experience high levels of writing anxiety may struggle to begin writing, or they may have difficulty completing writing tasks. Rezaei and Jafari (2014) investigated the levels, types, and causes of writing anxiety among Iranian EFL students. This study found that most students had a high level of writing anxiety. Research has shown that high levels of writing anxiety can have a negative impact on writing performance, including lower quality of writing and slower writing speed (Becker, 2013; El-Sayed, 2013).

Mid-levels of writing anxiety are less severe than high levels but can still interfere with writing performance. Individuals who experience mid-levels of writing anxiety may feel nervous or uncertain about their writing abilities. Research has suggested that moderate levels of writing anxiety can be beneficial for writing performance, as they can motivate individuals to work harder and strive for better writing outcomes (Bhargava & Kumar, 2014; Rose & Ewald, 2018). For instance, a study by Brink et

al. (2018) found that moderate levels of anxiety were associated with procrastination and avoidance behaviors, leading to poorer writing quality and increased stress levels. Another study by Chen (2018) investigating writing anxiety among Chinese EFL learners similarly found moderate levels of anxiety. The study suggested that Chinese EFL learners' writing anxiety was mostly attributed to negative attitudes towards writing as well as lack of proficiency and writing skills in English. Another study by Hafiz and Khan (2018) found that Pakistani EFL learners experienced moderate levels of writing anxiety due to various factors such as writing proficiency, cultural background, and lack of exposure to writing practice.

Low levels of writing anxiety are characterized by minimal or no negative emotions associated with writing. Individuals who experience low levels of writing anxiety may feel confident in their writing abilities and be able to write with ease. For instance, one study by Peker et al. (2019) found that low levels of writing anxiety were associated with better writing performance and greater creativity. The study suggested that writers who experience low levels of anxiety may feel more comfortable taking risks and exploring new ideas, leading to more creative and engaging writing. Another study by Leung (2011) found that low levels of writing anxiety were prevalent among Hong Kong EFL learners. Low anxiety was associated with higher writing proficiency and a high degree of comfort with the language. While low levels of writing anxiety can be beneficial for writing performance, they may also lead to complacency and lack of effort (Bhargava & Kumar, 2014).

Overall, research has shown that levels of writing anxiety can vary depending on the individual and the writing task at hand. Understanding the different levels of writing anxiety can help individuals and educators develop appropriate coping strategies to manage anxiety and improve writing performance.

#### **2.2.4 Coping strategies for writing anxiety**

Coping strategies for writing anxiety is a topic of interest for many researchers, particularly in the field of writing studies and education. Writing anxiety is a common experience among writers of all levels, from novice to expert, and can negatively impact the quality and quantity of writing produced. As such, understanding effective

coping strategies for writing anxiety can be helpful for writers, writing instructors, and researchers alike.

A review of the literature on coping strategies for writing anxiety reveals a variety of approaches and techniques that have been found to be helpful. For example, Cheng (2004) suggested several coping strategies for managing writing anxiety, such as time management, self-evaluation, seeking feedback, relaxation techniques, cognitive restructuring, and more. By implementing these strategies, individuals can manage writing anxiety and improve their writing performance. Moreover, Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) found cognitive, affective, and behavioral schemes are evident in students' coping tactics. This is consistent with the types of WA of foreign languages developed by Cheng (2004). Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) believed that cognitive tactics, which involve positive or optimistic thinking and peer-search, are strategies used to alter problematic thought processes correlated to language learning. They have also stated that, relaxation strategies categorized by their emotional quality are used to reduce the physical stress related to emotional arousal while preparation plans are used to reduce focusing on the behavioral components of language learning, which is related to effective performance in class (Kondo & Ying-Ling, 2004). Another research conducted by Nuranifar (2014) has identified 80 foreign language coping schemes that are used by EFL learners in Iran; however, those strategies are similar to Kondo and Ying-Ling's work. Therefore, this research relies greatly on Cheng framework to analyze strategies in dealing with writing anxiety.

One study by Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2001) explored the effectiveness of different coping strategies for writing anxiety. The study found that cognitive-behavioral techniques, such as positive self-talk, goal setting, and relaxation training, were effective in reducing writing anxiety. Similarly, Boice (1994) found that establishing a regular writing routine and setting achievable writing goals could also help individuals cope with writing anxiety. Moreover, Fiedler and Hänggi (2016) found that goal setting was effective in reducing writing anxiety and improving research productivity. Other coping strategies for writing anxiety include writing in a supportive environment, such as a writing group or with a writing partner (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2003), using prompts or writing exercises to get started (Hjortshøj,

2001), and using strategies to manage negative emotions, such as mindfulness meditation or journaling (Graham & Wells, 2001).

A study by Van der Meijden (2014) found that positive self-talk was effective in reducing writing anxiety and improving writing performance among Dutch primary school students. Another study by Silvia (2007) found that having someone to talk to about writing challenges and receiving feedback and encouragement can help to reduce anxiety and increase confidence. Having a support system, such as a writing group or a trusted friend or mentor, can provide emotional support and encouragement, which can help reduce anxiety and boost confidence. Many previous studies (e.g. Cumming, 1989; Hayes & Flower, 1986; Hayes, Flower, Shriver, Stratman, & Carey, 1987; Sasaki, 2000) have found that expert writers use more effective planning and revising strategies than inexperienced student writers.

Some studies have also explored the role of technology in coping with writing anxiety. For example, a study by Kato and Mynard (2015) found that using online tools, such as online writing forums or collaborative writing platforms, could help individuals overcome writing anxiety by providing support and feedback from others. Another study by Godwin-Jones (2018) found that using voice recognition software, such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking, could also help individuals overcome writing anxiety by making the writing process less physically demanding.

To conclude, coping strategies for writing anxiety can be effective in reducing anxiety and improving writing performance. Cognitive-behavioral techniques, time management, self-evaluation, seeking feedback, relaxation techniques, goal setting, writing in a supportive environment, using prompts or writing exercises, and managing negative emotions.

## **2.3 Previous research on second language writing anxiety**

### **2.3.1 In global context**

Previous research on second language writing anxiety (SLWA) has focused on various aspects of the phenomenon, including its causes, levels, and coping strategies. Some research has focused on identifying the causes of SLWA. For example, as mentioned in my previous response, Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) found that factors such as learners' proficiency levels, attitudes towards writing, and experiences with



writing in their first language were related to SLWA. Other studies have suggested that cultural factors, task characteristics, and individual differences may also contribute to SLWA (e.g., Matsuda, 2006; Riazantseva, 2001).

Similarly, Zhang (2011) investigated causes, effects, and coping strategies for ESL writing anxiety. One group consisted of 49 first-year students of Chinese English majors, and the other consisted of 47 sophomores. The results of the SLWAI showed a high level of ESL writing anxiety among Chinese English majors. Cognitive Anxiety is the most common type of ESL writing anxiety among Chinese English majors, and that language challenges, lack of writing practice, fear of testing, topical knowledge, and lack of self-assurance are the main contributors to the problem.

Another study, Rezai and Jafari (2014) conducted a study investigating the levels, types, and causes of writing anxiety among Iranian EFL students using a mixed-methods design. The participants were 120 EFL students in two institutes of higher education. The instruments used were the Second language writing anxiety inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng (2004) and the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI), developed by themselves based on observation and previous research. The results of this mixed-method study showed a high anxiety level among Iranian EFL students, with cognitive anxiety as the dominant type. Meanwhile, the leading causes of writing anxiety are fear of teachers' negative feedback, low self-confidence, and poor linguistic knowledge.

In the same way, Tuppong's study (2014) investigated the causes and types of writing anxiety among English students at an Islamic State College in East Java, Indonesia. Fifty English students in the fourth semester participated in this study. Two closed-ended questionnaires, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) proposed by Cheng and the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) proposed by Rezaei and Jafari, were employed to collect the data. According to the study, there are four leading causes of writing anxiety: students who have never taken a writing class before are afraid of their writing, are under teacher pressure, and must write within a certain amount of time. In addition, cognitive anxiety was the most prevalent type of writing anxiety.

Furthermore, Kusumaningputri et al. (2018) investigated the types, as well as the causal factors of writing anxiety experienced by 44 volunteered Indonesian student writers from the first and second year of college. This research applied two questionnaires to get descriptions of types and causal factors of writing anxiety; Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI), and interviews. The findings show that cognitive anxiety is found to be the most experienced type of writing anxiety among both students' levels. There is a slight difference in the result of the CWAI questionnaire in that three major causal factors of freshmen writing anxiety are language difficulties, time pressure, and insufficient writing practice. Meanwhile, the causal factors of sophomores are insufficient writing practice, language difficulties, and insufficient writing technique.

Other research has focused on measuring the levels of SLWA among second language learners. Various instruments have been developed to measure SLWA, such as the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (Cheng, 2004) and the Foreign Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Studies using these instruments have found that SLWA is a common experience among second language learners, particularly those who are less proficient in the target language (e.g., Liu & Huang, 2011).

Furthermore, Ningsih's study (2015) investigated the role of three levels of writing anxiety (high, moderate, and low) in giving the effect of students' achievement among three English department students and found that cognitive anxiety was the dominant type of writing anxiety. Students' three significant factors of writing anxiety are insufficient practice, language difficulties, and poor writing technique. The three significant factors of writing anxiety in the first semester are language difficulties, time pressure, and insufficient writing practice.

Similarly, Jebreil et al. (2015) studied the level of writing anxiety among 45 Iranian EFL students with different proficiency levels (elementary, intermediate, and advanced learners). They were selected randomly among students at Azad University in Iran. The second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) was used to collect data. The study's findings indicated that Iranian EFL students

experienced a high level of anxiety. Furthermore, participants of the elementary level suffered a higher level of EFL writing anxiety than participants of the intermediate and advanced levels. In terms of anxiety type, findings showed that the most common type among the students was cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior. It was concluded that teachers have to be careful about the negative effect of anxiety on students' language learning and performance. They should provide effective feedback to improve students' self-confidence.

Furthermore, Wahyuni and Umam (2017) studied the writing anxiety of English students at an Islamic State College in East Java, Indonesia. This study described the levels, dominant type, and main factors of writing anxiety in English students. Fifty English students in the fourth semester participated in this study. Two closed-ended questionnaires, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) proposed by Cheng, and the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) proposed by Rezaei and Jafari were employed to collect the data. The findings revealed that 54% of the students experienced a high level of writing anxiety, 44% experienced a moderate level of writing anxiety, and 2% experienced a low level of writing anxiety. Furthermore, the dominant type of writing anxiety was cognitive writing anxiety, based on the highest mean among the two other types of writing anxiety. The four main factors causing writing anxiety were found. They are linguistic difficulties, fear of teacher's negative comments, insufficient writing practice, and time pressure.

Moreover, Jennifer and Ponniah (2017) investigated the causes of different types of writing anxiety among 18 first-year students majoring in English literature that prohibits them from acquiring English as a second language. The study also investigates the levels of anxiety experienced by the students and identifies the prevailing type of anxiety which widely affects the written performances of the students. The Instrument of this study was the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) developed by Cheng (2004) and a written test. The results of this study showed that cognitive anxiety is the most common type of writing anxiety found in the writing situation among student writers. Somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior were the following most common types of anxiety that inhibited writing.



In addition, Wahyuni et al. (2019) investigated writing anxiety experienced by Indonesian EFL learners studying at Universitas Negeri Padang. The participants involved in this survey were 132 sophomores, juniors, and senior students. This research employed three research instruments: the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) to collect data on students' levels of writing anxiety; the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) to gauge information about sources of students' writing anxiety; typologies of tactics to cope with writing anxiety. This research reveals that the level of students' writing anxiety is moderate. In addition, no significant relationship between students' writing anxiety and academic level is revealed. It can be suggested that moderately anxious students outnumber those with high and low writing anxiety at any academic level. In addition, students' writing anxiety sources are problems with topic choice, linguistic difficulties, and lack of writing practice. Finally, the coping strategies used by students to overcome writing anxiety are preparation, positive thinking, relaxation, peer-seeking, and resignation (most frequent to least frequent, respectively).

As well, Xie and Yuan (2020) investigated the English writing anxiety experienced by preservice English as second/foreign language teachers in Hong Kong and its impact on their written corrective feedback (WCF). Thirty-four highly proficient preservice teachers responded to the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (Cheng, 2004), which measured writing anxiety in three dimensions (i.e., cognitive, somatic, and avoidance anxiety). Ten were selected to provide WCF to a sample student writing and receive an individual interview immediately afterward. Over half of the 34 participants were suffering from moderate or high writing anxiety levels, especially in the cognitive dimension. In addition, their WCF practices were affected by five factors: their conception of English writing, concerns about teacher professional credibility and work ethics, student cognition and motivation, confidence in students' ability, and their feedback experience as students and teachers during teaching practicum.

Additionally, Wern and Rahmat (2021) investigated the level, types, and causes of writing anxiety among Chinese Independent Middle School students. A convenience sample of 30 Chinese Independent Middle School students was purposely chosen to

participate in this study. This research adopted two survey questionnaires: the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng (2004) and the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) by Rezaei & Jafari (2014). The findings revealed that these students experience a high level of cognitive anxiety, a moderate level of somatic anxiety, and a low level of avoidance behavior. Furthermore, it was discovered that the level of writing anxiety the students experienced was moderate to high. Meanwhile, in terms of the causal factor for writing anxiety, the results reported high means scores for each causal of writing anxiety theme which includes 'afraid of writing tests' for the negative writing experience theme, 'feel worried about writing under time constraints for negative writing attitude theme and 'often encounter some linguistic problems' for limit writing knowledge and skill theme.

Li, L., and Zhang, L. (2011) A review and some observations on anxiety and EFL writing 2(5), 977-988. *Journal of Language Education and Research* This piece offers a thorough analysis of earlier work on anxiety and second-language writing, including studies on coping mechanisms. The authors contend that cognitive and metacognitive techniques, such as goal-setting and encouraging yourself, can be successful in reducing writing anxiety among second-language learners.

Kormos and Trebits (2012) looked into how well a cognitive-behavioral intervention helps second language learners feel less anxious about writing. The intervention was teaching students specific ways to deal with negative feelings and thoughts about writing. The results showed that the intervention worked to make people less anxious and help them write better.

Finally, research on SLWA has also focused on coping strategies that learners can use to manage their anxiety. Some studies have examined the effectiveness of specific coping strategies, such as self-talk (e.g., Zhang & Li, 2011) and teacher feedback (e.g., Lee, 2010). Other studies have investigated more general coping strategies, such as mindfulness (e.g., Matsuda & Gobel, 2004) and cognitive-behavioral interventions (e.g., Kormos & Trebits, 2012). Overall, this research highlights the importance of developing effective coping strategies for managing SLWA and supporting learners' writing development.

### 2.3.2 In the Thai EFL context

Research on second language writing anxiety (SLWA) in the Thai context has also explored causes, levels, and coping strategies. One study by Tepmongkol and Tepsuriwong (2018) investigated the factors that contribute to SLWA among Thai university students. The authors found that anxiety was related to a range of factors, including writing apprehension, lack of writing experience, and negative attitudes towards writing.

Another study by Tepmongkol and Tepsuriwong (2019) investigated the levels of SLWA among Thai university students. The authors used the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (Cheng, 2004) to measure anxiety and found that the majority of students experienced moderate to high levels of anxiety.

A study by Jindapitak and Intaraprasert (2017) investigated the coping strategies used by Thai university students to manage SLWA. The authors found that students used a range of strategies, such as seeking help from teachers, practicing writing, and using dictionaries and translation tools. The study also found that students who used more strategies tended to experience lower levels of anxiety.

Research on writing anxiety in the Thai context has identified several factors that contribute to writing anxiety among Thai learners. One study by Kanoksilapatham (2006) found that Thai students' anxiety towards academic writing was linked to cultural differences, linguistic challenges, and psychological factors such as self-efficacy and confidence. Another study by Buntat et al. (2015) found that Thai university students exhibited high levels of writing anxiety due to fear of losing face or being ridiculed by their peers. Additionally, the anonymity of computer-mediated communication was noted to increase writing anxiety among Thai learners who value face-to-face interaction and personal relationships.

Research has also identified the importance of classroom practices in alleviating writing anxiety among Thai learners. A study by Tangkoosidchai and Usaha (2019) found that providing writing instruction, feedback and support in a supportive classroom environment can help reduce writing anxiety and improve writing performance among Thai learners. Moreover, a recent study by Srichanyachon and Termprayoon (2021) highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on writing

anxiety among Thai university students. The study found that the shift to online learning has increased writing anxiety among students due to challenges such as technology-related issues, isolation, and lack of social interaction.

Rungruangthum (2011) investigated the factors that lead to writing anxiety as perceived by EFL learners and the strategies they use to cope with their anxiety while writing research papers in English. Four postgraduate students (three Thai and one Chinese) studying in the first-year international Ph.D. program in Applied Linguistics were asked to submit their research papers at the end of the course. The results showed that the factors causing anxiety about their writing were teachers and grading. In addition, Leki's (1995) coping strategy framework reveals that these participants frequently used Focusing strategies and stopping writing when writing research papers in English.

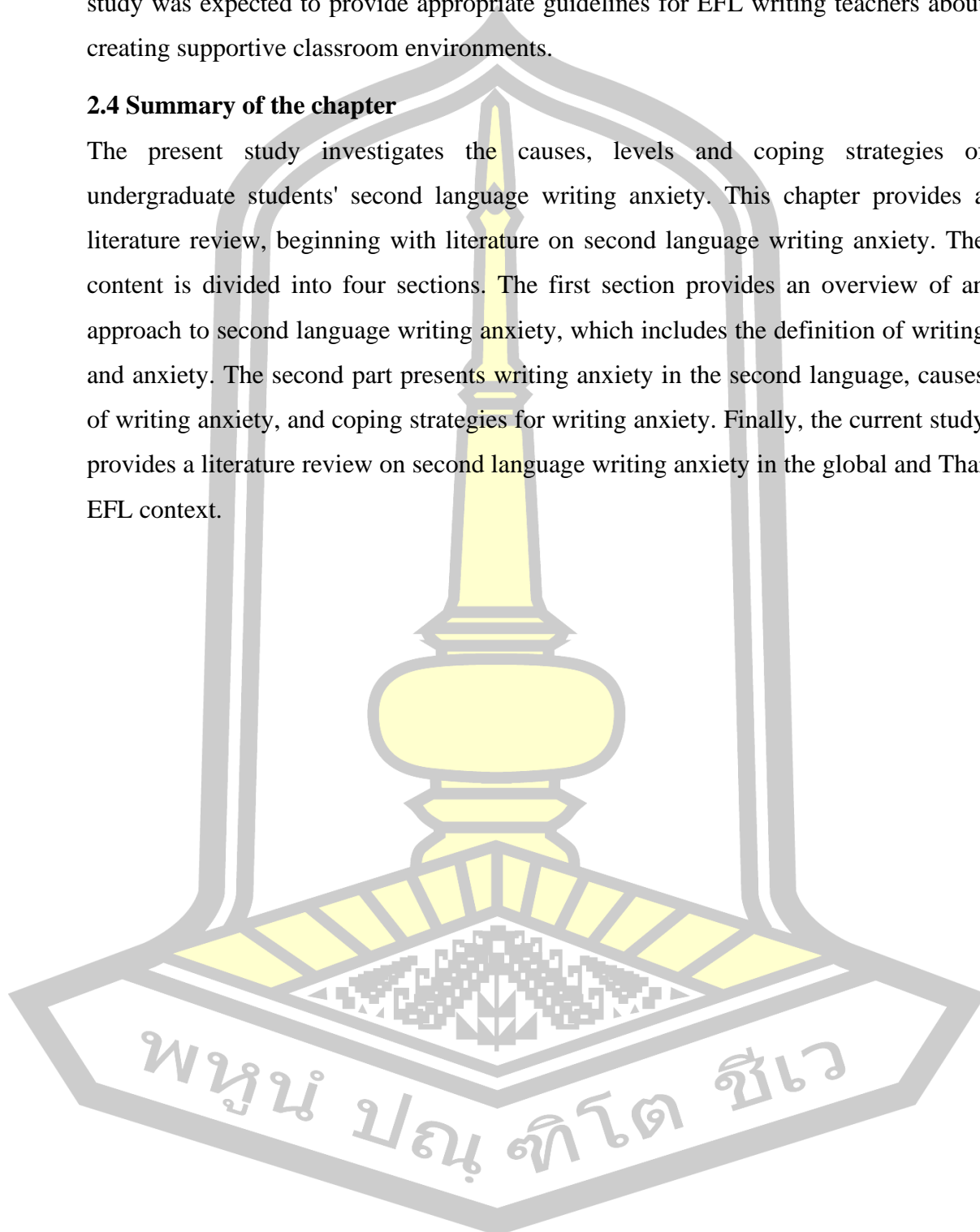
Overall, these studies suggest that SLWA is a common experience among Thai university students and can be related to a range of factors. Coping strategies such as seeking help and practicing writing can be effective in managing anxiety. Understanding the causes and levels of SLWA in the Thai context is important for educators and language learners in order to provide appropriate support and strategies to manage anxiety and improve writing skills. A review of previous studies on second language writing anxiety in the global and Thai contexts was also provided. The conceptual framework of second language writing anxiety was adopted from Cheng (2004) and Rezaei & Jafari (2014).

Although many research studies pertaining to second language writing anxiety have been conducted in the Thai EFL context, little attention has been paid to investigating this topic among Thai undergraduate students who studied in an international program in Thailand. More studies should be conducted to investigate the causes of their writing anxiety, levels of their writing anxiety and their coping strategies when they were faced with writing anxiety. Therefore, this study was set out in order to investigate writing anxiety among Thai undergraduate students who were studying for their bachelor's degree in English for International Communication (the international program). Apart of using the writing anxiety questionnaire, this study utilized a stimulated recall interview in order to investigate how the participants coped with

writing anxiety immediately after they had finished writing an assigned task. This study was expected to provide appropriate guidelines for EFL writing teachers about creating supportive classroom environments.

#### **2.4 Summary of the chapter**

The present study investigates the causes, levels and coping strategies of undergraduate students' second language writing anxiety. This chapter provides a literature review, beginning with literature on second language writing anxiety. The content is divided into four sections. The first section provides an overview of an approach to second language writing anxiety, which includes the definition of writing and anxiety. The second part presents writing anxiety in the second language, causes of writing anxiety, and coping strategies for writing anxiety. Finally, the current study provides a literature review on second language writing anxiety in the global and Thai EFL context.



## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODS

This study aims to investigate the causes of second language writing anxiety in EFL undergraduate students and their coping strategies when encountering foreign language writing anxiety. This chapter explains the research methodologies used in the study in detail, including the research design, participants and setting, instruments, data collection, procedures, data analysis, and a summary of the chapter.

#### **3.1 Research design**

A mixed-method design is usually understood as a research strategy that combines qualitative and quantitative analytical procedures in a single study or research project, namely with respect to data collection and data analysis (Creswell, 2014). Instead, when multiple types of qualitative data (e.g., interviews and observations) or, respectively, multiple types of quantitative data (e.g., surveys and databases) are examined, the expression "multimethod research" is used (see, however, Seawright 2016; Goertz 2017). Mixing methods implies accepting—at least implicitly—the pragmatist assumption that qualitative and quantitative methods are not only compatible but also complementary for producing knowledge that is scientifically relevant and societally useful (Morgan 2007; Feilzer 2010). Therefore, this study collected data using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

#### **3.2 Participants and setting**

There were 55 second-year undergraduate students, with more females (66.67%) than males (33.33%). The participants are majoring in English for International Communication. They will enroll in an introductory university writing course titled English Writing for Communication (the international program) in the second semester of 2022. The participants' ages range from 19 to 21, with different English abilities. They had learned English for more than ten years, and their English proficiency was mixed. All participants had studied English for at least six years in primary school and six years in high school. Purposive sampling was used to recruit the participants for this study. They usually used their Thai (L1) to communicate with others in or outside of school. They write in English almost exclusively during



English courses, especially in English writing for communication. This writing course aimed to improve students' English writing skills regarding the rules, parts, structures, types, and processes of writing paragraphs. They learned persuasive, expository, narrative, and descriptive writing. Therefore, the researcher selected second-year English major students to participate in this research.

This study took place at a government university in northeastern Thailand, which offered undergraduate and postgraduate programs. It was a large university with a total enrollment of 39,104 undergraduate students.

### **3.3 Research instruments**

#### **3.3.1 Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) questionnaire**

The Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) developed by Rezaei and Jafari (2014) was adopted to investigate the causes of second-language writing anxiety. The Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory questionnaire was adopted to assess the causes or underlying factors that contribute to writing anxiety in individuals. This questionnaire was adopted based on the understanding that writing anxiety could stem from various sources and identifying these causes could help researchers and practitioners better understand and address the specific triggers of writing anxiety. This inventory was used to analyze causes of second language writing anxiety with particular reference to fear of the teacher's negative comments, problems with the topic choice, fear of writing tests, insufficient writing practice, pressure for perfect work, linguistic difficulties, time pressure, a high frequency of writing assignments, insufficient writing techniques, and low self-confidence in writing. The questionnaire included ten items called the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI), which was adopted following a Likert-type 5-choice response format: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). The Cronbach's Alpha of the Inventory for each item is 0.87, which is within the acceptable range of reliability.

#### **3.3.2 Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) questionnaire**

The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) adopted by Cheng (2004) to investigate the levels of writing anxiety among the participants. Four participants (two from the high-anxiety group and two from the moderate-anxiety group) was

participate in a stimulated recall interview. This questionnaire contained 22 items about the anxiety students experience when writing in English. The questionnaire also contains a demographic section. This was perceived as consisting of three independent components: cognition, physiology, and behavior. More specifically, it consists of three subscales, namely, somatic anxiety (as reflected in negative feelings such as tension), cognitive anxiety (as reflected in negative expectations and preoccupation with performance), and avoidance behavior (as reflected in avoidance in writing). This inventory was chosen to measure writing anxiety because it has been proven highly reliable and valid through correlation and factor analysis (Cheng, 2004). The Cronbach's Alpha of the Inventory for each item is 0.89, which is within the acceptable range of reliability. The questionnaire followed a Likert-type 5-choice response format: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). The distribution of items across the three subcategories is as follows: cognitive anxiety (1,3,7,9,14,17,20,21), somatic anxiety (2,6,8,11,13,15,19), and avoidance behavior (4,5,10,12,16,18,22).

### **3.3.3 A stimulated recall interview**

Stimulated recall can be viewed as a subset of introspective research methods that access participants' reflections on mental processes. The stimulated recall technique was originally adopted in philosophy and psychology (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Lyle supports the view that stimulated recall is a family of introspective research procedures through which cognitive processes can be investigated by inviting subjects to recall when prompted by a video sequence, their concurrent thinking during that event (Mackey, cited in Lyle, 2002). A stimulated recall interview (SRI) was used to obtain qualitative data to discover the participants' coping strategies when encountering second language writing anxiety.

Using a stimulated recall interview approach can be an effective way to explore the coping strategies used by second language writers in response to writing anxiety. Stimulated recall interviews involved asking participants to reflect on their experiences while they were engaged with a writing task. This technique allowed researchers to gain deep insight into the thoughts, emotions, and cognitive strategies that writers used during the writing process.



The researcher collected their writing before the interview took place. Originally, the researcher planned to include six participants from each of the three levels of anxiety—high, moderate, and low—but the findings have shown that the participants have a high and moderate level of anxiety, no low level of anxiety. As a result, four participants were recruited, two of whom had high and moderate levels of writing anxiety. The task asked the participants to write a descriptive paragraph. A topic for the task was "My Idol." The task took 20 minutes. After that, the four participants participated in the SRI. The interview was conducted in the participants' mother tongue to ensure accurate understanding. The interview was conducted face-to-face at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. It was recorded and subsequently transcribed for data analysis.

### **3.4 Data collection procedure**

**Step1:** Contacted the program director to explain the research process and purposes to get the students' name list.

**Step2:** The researcher met the participants on-site to explain the research procedure, research purposes, and type of participation.

**Step3:** The participants were asked to complete the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) questionnaire.

**Step4:** To select four participants to participate in the stimulated recall interview, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) questionnaire was administered to investigate their levels of writing anxiety. The participants were selected, two from the high-anxiety group and two from the moderate-anxiety group.

**Step5:** The stimulated recall interview was conducted with these four participants. They were asked to write a descriptive paragraph of about 100 words. The researcher collected writing tasks from the participants before the interview. The task asked the participants to write a descriptive paragraph on the topic of "My Idol". To ensure accurate understanding, the interview was in Thai. The interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed for data analysis.

### 3.5 Data analysis

To analyze research question 1, the quantitative data obtained from The Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) Questionnaire was analyzed by using percentage (%). The higher the percentage of cause items, the higher the degree of agreement among the students on the cause items.

To analyze research question 2, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) questionnaire was analyzed by using percentage (%), mean, standard deviation (S.D.). According to Cheng (2004), the mean score above 65 points indicates a high level of writing anxiety, the mean below 50 points indicates a low level of writing anxiety, and the mean score in between 50 and 65 points indicates a moderate level of writing anxiety.

To answer research question 3, content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the stimulated recall interview. Firstly, the researcher was familiar with the data and transcribed data, reading and re-reading them, noting down initial ideas. Secondly, coding interesting features of the data systematically across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code initially. Then, the researcher collated codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. Inferred the interview content, summarized and coded the theme, and understood the subjective ideas of the interviewees. Next, ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. Finally, the researcher combined and classified the data and summarized it in detail.

### 3.6 Summary

This research aimed to investigate the dominant causes of Thai EFL undergraduate students' writing anxiety and their coping strategies when they encounter their writing anxiety. The chapter outlined the methodology of the current study, including the participants' settings, research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis. This research involved two stages of data collection: a questionnaire and a stimulated recall interview. The next chapter will present the results of the current study.

## CHARTER VI

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results from the data analysis of the responses made by the participants in answering the questions, based on the research questions set in chapter one:

1. What is the dominant cause of second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students?
2. What are the levels of second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students?
3. How do Thai EFL undergraduate students cope with their second language writing anxiety?

This chapter presents the results of the study on the causes, levels, and ways that Thai EFL undergraduate students deal with anxiety about writing in a second language. The chapter is divided into five sections, including causes of writing anxiety results (4.2), levels of writing anxiety results (4.3), stimulated recall interview (4.4), and a summary of the chapter (4.5).

#### 4.2 Causes of writing anxiety

The first one was a 10-item questionnaire called the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAII) (see Appendix A). This questionnaire was adapted on the basis of causes of writing anxiety (including fear of a teacher's negative comment, fear of writing tests, insufficient writing practice, insufficient writing technique, problems with topic choice, linguistic difficulties, pressure for perfect work, high frequency of writing assignments, time pressure, and low self-confidence in writing) proposed by researchers in the field (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Bloom, 1981; Cheng, 2002; Claypool, 1980; Horwitz et al., 1986; Hyland, 2003). To investigate the causes of students' writing anxiety, the ten causes of anxiety were ranked from one to ten, which were based on the number of students who chose the items and turned into a

percentage. The higher the percentage of cause items, the higher the degree of agreement among the students on the cause items.

Descriptive statistics of the CWAI is presented in Figure 1.

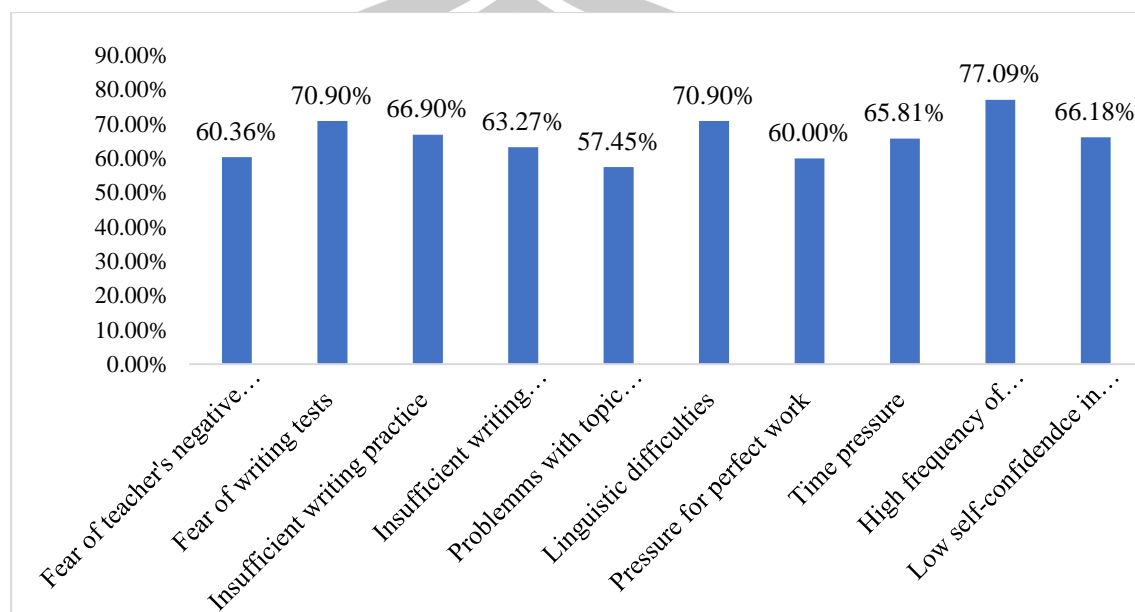


Figure 1. Descriptive statistics of the CWAI

By comparing the percentages between the ten causes, the researcher can determine which cause has the greatest impact on students. As shown in the figure above, the primary source of writing anxiety is the high frequency of writing assignments (77.09%). It is the highest percentage among nine causes of writing anxiety. The same score of students reported linguistic difficulty and fear of writing test (70.9%). Insufficient writing practice and low self-confidence in writing are the next causes of writing anxiety, with almost the same percentage (66.9% and 66.18%). Poor linguistic knowledge, consequently, results in low self-confidence and discourages student to write. Whereas most of the students (65.81%) mentioned that time pressure made them feel anxious, 47% suffered from insufficient writing techniques, which made them upset and unable to write. Fear of a teacher's negative comment and pressure for perfect work were the next causes of writing anxiety, with almost the same percentage (60.36% and 60%). Problems with topic choice (57.45%) was the least chosen item by the students. The dominant cause is chosen based on the highest percentages among the ten causes of writing anxiety. The causes are followed by

First, the fact that 77.09% of students experience anxiety when they have a lot of writing assignments to complete can help to explain the high frequency of writing assignments.

Second, the fact that 70.9% of them felt anxious helps to explain their linguistic difficulties.

Third, the fact that 70.9% of them made them feel anxious can explain their fear of writing tests.

Fourth, as 66.9% of the students had insufficient writing practise, students who rarely practise will concentrate excessively on the form in which they write, not on the content of the essay. While the more focus is given to the form, the more writing apprehension will be presented. Although writing practise is critical to developing writing ability, students who often practise their writing will be better at it.

Fifth, the fact that 66.18% of students are dissatisfied with their writing achievement and improvement explains why they have low self-confidence. Frustration may come from high expectations of the objectives but low self-confidence in accomplishing them in English.

Sixth, the fact that 65.81% of respondents mentioned that time pressure made them feel anxious explains time pressure. Some Thai EFL learners would be too concerned about linguistic components when writing in English, such as sentence structure, grammar rules, and correct spelling, because accuracy is always regarded as the principal objective for L2 teaching and learning, especially for evaluation.

Seventh, the fact that 66.9% of students lack adequate writing skills explains their lack of proficiency. On the other hand, students who suffer from writing anxiety have low skill development and a lack of understanding of the writing process, indicating that they are not skilled writers.

Eighth, the fact that 60.36% of respondents mentioned their fear of the teacher's negative comment means that students will feel anxious when their writing is not as good as their teacher hopes, and as a result, their teacher will negatively evaluate their writing.

Ninth, the fact that 60.36% of students feel pressure to produce perfect work provides an explanation. This self-imposed pressure for excellent work usually makes the students experience writing anxiety and makes them reluctant to write. They have to achieve a high standard of writing, and it makes the students experience writing anxiety.

Tenth, the fact that 57.45% of them made them feel anxious can explain their problems with topic choice.

In conclusion, the calculation of ten main causes of writing anxiety stand on the percentage is high frequency of writing assignments, linguistic difficulty and fear of a writing test, insufficient writing practice, low self-confidence in writing, time pressure, insufficient writing techniques, fear of a negative comment from a teacher, pressure for perfect work, and problems with topic choice. The dominant cause in this study is the high frequency of writing assignments.

#### 4.3 Levels of writing anxiety results

The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), which is a 22-item questionnaire developed by Cheng (2004) about the anxiety student writers experience when writing in English, This is perceived as consisting of three independent components of cognition, physiology, and behavior, so it consists of three subscales, namely, somatic anxiety (as reflected in negative feelings such as tension), cognitive anxiety (as reflected in negative expectations and preoccupation with performance), and avoidance behavior (as reflected in avoidance in writing) (Appendix B). To investigate some causes of students' writing anxiety, the ten causes of anxiety were ranked from one to ten, which was based on the number of students who chose the items and turned into a percentage.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of type of writing anxiety

Type	N	Mean	STD
Cognitive Anxiety	55	25.4	1.14
Somatic Anxiety	55	22.69	1.01
Avoidance Behavior	55	22.09	1.10



The mean score of cognitive anxiety was 25.4. The next kind of writing anxiety is somatic anxiety with a mean score 22.69, and the least type of writing anxiety is avoidance behavior with a mean score 22.09.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of SLWAI (Questionnaire II). As can be seen, there is a high to moderate level of ESL writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students. According to Cheng (2004), the mean score above 65 points indicates a high level of writing anxiety, the mean below 50 points indicates a low level of writing anxiety, and the mean score in between 50 and 65 points indicates a moderate level of writing anxiety.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the SLWAI

	Number	Percentages	Minimum score	Maximum score	Mean
High anxiety	40	72.73%	66	94	74.02 $\geq$ 65
Moderate anxiety	15	27.27%	53	65	60.13 $\leq$ 65
Low anxiety	-	-	-	-	-
					Total mean: 67.08

Table 2 showed that the overall mean score of 55 EFL undergraduate students at a Thai university who participated in the survey was 67.08 in second language writing anxiety. The student's overall second language writing anxiety were at a high level.

It also showed that students' second language writing anxiety were generally high. There were 40 participants (72.73%) whose second language writing anxiety level was high, while 15 participants (27.27%) whose second language writing anxiety level was moderate. On the other hand, there is no low level of second language writing anxiety. This result was also acceptable. The questionnaire analysis showed that students generally have second language writing anxiety, and the second language writing anxiety level is high.

#### 4.4 Coping Strategies

The stimulated recall interview of the 4 students (2 from each category of High-anxious and Moderate-anxious levels). The researcher aimed to know the students' coping strategies in writing anxiety based on the students' opinion. The researcher asked to students write the essay on the topic of "My Idol". After that participants answer the questions which asked the students to specify the contexts and situations in which they feel anxious to write, and the difficulties they experience when they write in English is presented. The data obtained from the interview showed that students, particularly in the high and moderate-anxious group, found data resulted from the individual interviews reveals the high-anxious and moderate-anxious student participants' viewpoints and experiences which mainly focus on how they cope with writing anxiety. Students have diverse strategies to overcome anxiety in writing English namely positive self-talk, start with plan relaxation techniques, goal setting and social support (see below).

##### 4.4.1 Positive self-talk

The first strategy is positive self-talk, which can reduce their writing anxiety. In the context of writing anxiety, positive self-talk can help writers overcome feelings of self-doubt and fear of failure, which can often lead to writer's block or other forms of procrastination. The result is in line with a study by Meijden (2014) which state that positive self-talk was effective in reducing writing anxiety and improving writing performance among Dutch primary school students. All respondents, student 1, student 2, student 3 and student 4 mentioned it. Student 1 believed that reframing negative expectations as challenges will help him improve. student 2 thought that she doesn't care about other negative expectations and just wants to improve herself. student 3 thought he should just forget bad things. I'm the best. And student 4 thought she's doing her duty. The excerpt below showed the participants claimed.

*"For me, reframe negative expectations as challenges and opportunities for growth and focus on my own personal goals and motivations for writing rather than others' perceptions." (student 1)*

*"I never mind because I accept the responses of other people because everyone has their own thoughts and I can do nothing. I just improve myself better." (student 2)*

*"Trying to think that we are doing our job is enough. Whatever is bad, just let it go and forget about it. Think that I do the best." (student 3)*

*"I always thought that I had to be good at English." So, I have tried to learn and write for my better skills." (student 4)*

The excerpts above illustrate that engaging in positive self-talk while writing can lead to higher levels of self-efficacy, greater persistence, and better writing quality. In addition, positive self-talk can help writers take risks, experiment with new writing strategies, and build confidence in their abilities. Overall, the practice of positive self-talk can be a powerful tool for writers struggling with anxiety or self-doubt.

#### **4.4.2 Start with a plan**

The second strategy is starting with a plan, which can reduce their writing anxiety. Starting with a plan can be an effective strategy for reducing writing anxiety and improving writing performance. By taking the time to plan out the structure, content, and organization of their writing, writers can reduce the uncertainty and ambiguity that often lead to anxiety and procrastination. In addition, having a clear plan in place can help writers stay focused and on track, which can be especially important when working on longer or more complex writing projects. Many previous studies (e.g. Cumming, 1989; Hayes & Flower, 1986; Hayes, Flower, Shriver, Stratman, & Carey, 1987; Sasaki, 2000) have found that expert writers use more effective planning and revising strategies than inexperienced student writers. 3 of 4 respondents, student 1, student 2, and student 4 mentioned it. student 1 believed that starting by organizing ideas makes him more focused on writing. student 2 believed that grouping ideas into categories or themes is very important when writing. And student 4 thought reviewing and revising the outline will fit the ideas together. The following excerpt revealed the students' perceptions

*"I start by organizing ideas and then write down any and all ideas that come to mind. And I also take time to focus on it." (student 1)*

*“I usually take time to group them into categories or themes. This will help me see how ideas fit together and identify any gaps or areas that need more development.”*  
(student 2)

*“I usually take time to review and revise my outline as I go. Don't be afraid to make changes as you work through your ideas and start to see how they fit together.”*  
(student 4)

The excerpts above illustrate that writers who start with a plan tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy, greater confidence in their writing abilities, and better overall writing performance than those who do not plan ahead. By taking the time to plan out their writing, writers can reduce the stress and anxiety that often accompany the writing process and increase their chances of success.

#### **4.4.3 Relaxation techniques**

The third strategy is relaxation techniques, which can reduce their writing anxiety. One relaxation technique that has been shown to be effective for reducing anxiety is deep breathing. By taking slow, deep breaths, writers can reduce their heart rate and promote feelings of relaxation and calm. The result is in line with a study by Kondo & Ying-Ling (2004) which state that relaxation strategies categorized by their emotional quality are used to reduce the physical stress related to emotional arousal while preparation plans are used to reduce focusing on the behavioral components of language learning, which is related to effective performance in class. All respondents—student 1, student 2, student 3, and student 4—mentioned it. student 1 thought that taking deep breaths and relaxing his body will help him improve. student 2 pointed out that concentrating myself and letting my thoughts calm down helped her figure it out. student 3 stated that clearing my brain as much as possible would make him flow in it. And student 4 thought she will relax before writing. The excerpt below shows what the participants claimed.

*“First, I take deep breaths and relax my body. Next, write down my thoughts and feelings in a journal, to help me process and clarify them. Sometimes I practice writing regularly to build confidence and improve my skills.”* (student 1)

*“First, I have to concentrate myself and then I slowly thoughts calmly as picture when I thought like this It's make me figure it out.” (student 2)*

*“Try not to be too stressed, clear my brain as much as possible, and then my brain will flow in order to figure out it.” (student 3)*

*“For me, when I feel stressed or tension about my writing, I will relax before writing, like going out with friends, listening to music, or watching a movie.” (student 4)*

The above excerpts show that writers who use relaxation techniques before and while writing tend to feel less anxious, write better overall, and feel like they have more control over their writing. By adding relaxation techniques to their writing routine, writers can lessen the bad effects of anxiety and have a better, more productive time writing.

#### **4.4.4 Goal setting**

The fourth strategy to deal with anxiety is to set goals. Goal setting can be an effective strategy for reducing writing anxiety and improving writing performance. By setting specific, achievable goals for their writing, writers can increase their motivation, focus, and sense of control over the writing process. This can be especially important for writers who struggle with anxiety or self-doubt, as having clear goals in place can help to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity. The result is in line with a study by Fiedler and Hänggi (2016) which state that goal setting was effective in reducing writing anxiety and improving research productivity. 3 of 4 respondents, student 1, student 2, and student 3, mentioned it. student 1 believed that focusing on his own personal goals and motivations for writing will make his goal more achievable. student 2 believed that setting goals and creating a clear target can give him a sense of purpose and direction. And student 3 thought setting goals is helpful during times of stress, anxiety, or uncertainty. The following excerpt revealed the students' perceptions

*“I focus on my own personal goals and motivations for writing, rather than others' perceptions. First, I Identify the root cause of avoidance behavior and try to break it. Then set an achievable goal for me.” (student 1)*

*“When I set goals, I create a clear target for myself to work towards, which can give me a sense of purpose and direction.” (student 2)*

*“I usually set goals before writing because I think it helpful during times of stress, anxiety, or uncertainty, when we may feel overwhelmed or unsure of what to do next.” (student 3)*

The above excerpts show that writers who set specific, challenging goals tend to have higher levels of motivation, greater persistence, and better overall writing performance than those who do not set goals. By setting goals for their writing, writers can get over feelings of anxiety and self-doubt and have a more positive and productive writing experience.

#### **4.4.5 Social support**

The last strategy to deal with anxiety is social support. Social support can be an effective strategy for reducing writing anxiety and improving writing performance. By seeking out support from others, writers can reduce feelings of isolation and increase their sense of belonging and connection within the writing community. This can be especially important for writers who struggle with anxiety or self-doubt, as social support can help provide encouragement and validation. One way to seek social support is by joining a writing group or community. This can provide a space for writers to share their work, receive feedback, and connect with other writers who may be facing similar challenges. The result is in line with a study by Silvia (2007) which state that having someone to talk to about writing challenges and receiving feedback and encouragement can help to reduce anxiety and increase confidence. 2 of the 4 respondents, student 1 and student 4, mentioned it. student 1 stated that going out with friends helps her reduce anxiety. student 4 said that talking to others who have experienced similar writing anxieties can provide a sense of camaraderie and reduce feelings of isolation. The following excerpt revealed the students' perceptions.

*“I like going out, listening to music, and watching a movie with friends. It makes me reduce anxiety” (student 1)*

*“I usually talking to others who have experienced similar writing anxieties. it can provide a sense of camaraderie and reduce feelings of isolation.” (student 4)*



The above excerpts show that writers who receive social support tend to have more confidence in their writing abilities and better overall writing performances. By seeking out social support, writers can overcome feelings of anxiety and self-doubt and create a more positive and connected writing experience.

To conclude, coping strategies such as positive self-talk, relaxation techniques, goal setting, and social support can help reduce writing anxiety and achieve writing goals to help individuals overcome writing anxiety and achieve their writing goals.

#### **4.5 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter indicated the result of causes, levels and coping strategies. First, based on the reported results, the researcher found that the participants faced many causes of writing anxiety. The results indicated that the highest causes score of students' writing anxiety are the high frequency of writing assignments, linguistic difficulty, fear of a writing test, insufficient writing practice, low self-confidence in writing, time pressure, insufficient writing techniques, fear of a negative comment from a teacher, pressure for perfect work, and a high frequency of topic choice problems. Second, based on the reported results, a high level of anxiety among Thai EFL students. Such a high level of writing anxiety among English major students is concerning and reflects the inadequacy of our writing contexts and practices. On the other hand, there is no low level of writing anxiety. For coping strategies, the data obtained from the interview showed that students, particularly in the high and moderate-anxious groups, found data resulted from the individual interviews reveals the high-anxious student participants' viewpoints and experiences, which mainly focus on how they cope with writing anxiety.

พหุ ประถมศึกษา

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the research findings in the context of the current literature, and the study's limitations for further research was also be provided.

This chapter primarily focuses on the causes and levels of writing anxiety among Thai undergraduate students. Furthermore, the results of how students cope with their writing anxiety revealed in the stimulated recall interviews were also discussed in this chapter. The results from the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to examine writing anxiety experienced by Thai EFL undergraduate students and to answer three specific research questions:

1. What is the dominant cause of second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students?
2. What are the levels of second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students?
3. How do Thai EFL undergraduate students cope with their second language writing anxiety?

#### **5.1 Dominant cause of Thai EFL undergraduate students' writing anxiety**

The quantitative data of the current study showed that, overall. There are many causes that contribute to English writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students, including fear of a teacher's negative comment, fear of writing tests, insufficient writing practice, insufficient writing technique, problems with topic choice, linguistic difficulties, pressure for perfect work, high frequency of writing assignments, time pressure, and low self-confidence in writing. (See Figure 1). The results referred that high frequency of writing assignments is the dominant cause of second language writing anxiety among 55 Thai EFL undergraduate students.

The results showed that students felt anxious and experienced second language writing anxiety due to their high frequency of writing assignments. Indeed, the high frequency of writing assignments was the dominant cause of second language writing anxiety among the participants in the current study. which is consistent with Rezeai

and Jafari (2014), who claimed that a high frequency of writing assignments is one of the causes that highly correlates with second language writing anxiety.

Depending on the individual, the frequency of writing assignments can have an effect on the occurrence of writing anxiety. Some people may experience increased apprehension when confronted with frequent writing assignments, while others may find it beneficial for their writing skills and self-assurance. For some people, the pressure to generate consistent written work within short timeframes can increase anxiety. In such cases, the fear of failing to meet expectations, the need to generate ideas rapidly, and the perception of a lack of time for thorough revision can all contribute to writing anxiety.

On the other hand, frequent writing assignments may help some individuals develop a routine and improve their writing abilities over time. Regular exposure to and practice with writing tasks can increase familiarity, confidence, and writing skills. These individuals may not experience increased apprehension as a result of the increased frequency of writing tasks.

It is important to recognize that the relationship between the frequency of writing assignments and writing anxiety is influenced by multiple factors, such as individual differences, prior writing experiences, self-perceptions of writing abilities, and the support and guidance provided by teachers or mentors.

Educators and institutions can help reduce writing anxiety by providing explicit instructions, scaffolding assignments, providing constructive feedback, and fostering a supportive learning environment. By balancing the frequency of writing assignments and providing adequate support, educators can assist students in developing their writing skills while minimizing the stress associated with a heavy burden. The excerpts below support this claim:

Student 1 experienced anxiety due to the pressure to meet deadlines and maintain a consistent level of performance, making writing a daunting task.

*"Throughout the semester, we were required to submit a writing assignment every week. The constant demand for written work became overwhelming, and I started experiencing heightened levels of anxiety. I constantly felt rushed, fearing that*

*I wouldn't have enough time to produce quality work. The pressure to meet deadlines and maintain a consistent level of performance added to my stress levels and made writing a daunting task." (student 2)*

Moreover, student 2 experienced anxiety due to the infrequent nature of their writing assignments, which increased their fear of failure and stress.

*"In our course, we only had one major writing assignment for the entire semester. While some may see this as a relief, it actually heightened my anxiety. The thought of putting all my writing skills and efforts into one assignment felt like an immense burden. I was constantly worried about making it perfect since there was no opportunity for revision or improvement. The infrequent nature of the assignments intensified my fear of failure and made the writing process extremely stressful." (student 2)*

In addition, student 3 claims that the professor designed the course with a balanced approach to writing assignments, allowing students to dedicate enough time to each assignment without feeling overwhelmed.

*"The professor designed the course with a balanced approach to writing assignments. We had regular writing tasks throughout the semester, but they were spaced out appropriately. This structure allowed me to dedicate enough time to each assignment without feeling overwhelmed. The consistent practice helped me develop my writing skills and build confidence over time. Knowing that I had multiple opportunities to engage with writing reduced my anxiety and allowed me to approach each task with a focused mindset." (student 3)*

These excerpts provide how the frequency of writing assignments can impact an individual's experience of writing anxiety. The first student demonstrates the potential stress and pressure that can arise when faced with a high frequency of writing assignments. The second student highlights how the infrequent nature of assignments can contribute to anxiety due to the pressure of producing a single, high-stakes piece of writing. In contrast, the third student illustrates how a balanced approach to writing assignments can create a supportive environment, allowing for consistent practice and growth while managing anxiety levels.

Several other studies have also found that the high frequency of writing assignments is one of the main causes of second language writing anxiety. In a study conducted by El-Koumy and Al-Awadi (2018), they found that excessive writing assignments can increase writing anxiety among university students, as it leads to an increased workload and pressure to meet deadlines. In another study by Cheng and Wang (2019), they found that the frequency of writing assignments was positively associated with writing anxiety among Chinese university students. In a study conducted by Liu and Shi (2020), they found that the high frequency of writing assignments was one of the significant predictors of writing anxiety among Chinese graduate students. In a study conducted by Safitri and Fitriyani (2021), they found that the high frequency of writing assignments was one of the major causes of writing anxiety among Indonesian EFL learners.

In summary, these studies suggest that high frequency of writing assignments can contribute to writing anxiety among students. However, it is important to note that other factors, such as individual differences and writing task characteristics, can also impact writing anxiety.

## **5.2 Levels of EFL writing anxiety**

Responding to Research Question 2, participants were divided into three anxiety level groups based on their summed-up scores collected by SLWAI. According to Cheng (2004), the mean score above 65 points indicates a high level of writing anxiety, the mean below 50 points indicates a low level of writing anxiety, and the mean score in between 50 and 65 points indicates a moderate level of writing anxiety.

The results of the SLWAI (See Table 2) show a high level of EFL writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students. After analyzing the data, the researcher found that 70.23 percent of students had a high level of anxiety, 60.13 percent had a moderate level of anxiety, and no student had a low level of anxiety. Based on these data, the dominant level experienced by students is a high level of anxiety. Therefore, Rezaei and Jafari (2014) investigated the levels, types, and causes of writing anxiety among Iranian EFL students and found that most students had a high level of writing anxiety. Likewise, Wern (2021) investigated the level of ESL writing Anxiety among Chinese independent middle school students and found that a total percentage of 70%

of students experienced a high level of writing anxiety, 30% of them experienced a moderate level of writing anxiety, and no student had a low level of anxiety.

Therefore, consistent with previous studies, the results of the present study demonstrated that Thai EFL undergraduate students generally have a high level of writing anxiety, and no student had a low level of anxiety.

### 5.3 Coping strategies

The qualitative data shows that the participants were use various coping strategies to reduce writing anxiety, including positive self-talk, start with a plan, relaxation techniques, goal setting, and social support.

The strategies to overcome the anxiety of Thai EFL undergraduate students in writing English based on the result of research conducted by researchers are relatively diverse. There is positive self-talk, start with a plan, relaxation techniques, goal setting, and social support.

The strategies of students are inseparable from several factors, based on their own opinions, the anxiety factor, and their own experiences. This research has investigated coping strategies for second-language writing anxiety. The excerpts below illustrate the coping strategies that participants use to reduce second language writing anxiety:

*"Trying to think that we are doing our job is enough. Whatever is bad, just let it go and forget about it. Think that I do the best." (student 3)*

*"I start by organizing ideas and then write down any and all ideas that come to mind. And I also take time to focus on it." (student 1)*

*"First, I take deep breaths and relax my body. Next, write down my thoughts and feelings in a journal, to help me process and clarify them. Sometimes I practice writing regularly to build confidence and improve my skills." (student 1)*

*"I focus on my own personal goals and motivations for writing, rather than others' perceptions. First, I Identify the root cause of avoidance behavior and try to break it. Then set an achievable goal for me." (student 1)*

*"I usually talking to others who have experienced similar writing anxieties. it can provide a sense of camaraderie and reduce feelings of isolation." (student 4)*



Several previous studies have also mentioned coping strategies to overcome second language writing anxiety. For example, Kaya and Çakir (2015) investigated the coping strategies employed by Turkish ESL learners to manage writing anxiety. The findings identified various coping strategies, including seeking social support, engaging in self-reflection, using positive self-talk, and employing time management techniques. Cheng (2016) explored the coping strategies used by a Chinese graduate student in managing writing anxiety. The participant employed strategies such as planning and organization, seeking feedback from peers and instructors, utilizing online resources, and engaging in self-reflection to cope with writing anxiety.

Furthermore, Xu and Liu (2017) examined the coping strategies employed by Chinese EFL undergraduates to alleviate writing anxiety. The findings revealed a range of coping strategies, including seeking social support, employing cognitive strategies (e.g., positive self-talk, setting realistic goals), using writing strategies (e.g., brainstorming, outlining), and utilizing technology tools for writing assistance. He (2019) explored the coping strategies employed by Chinese graduate students to cope with writing anxiety. The findings identified strategies such as seeking support from peers and instructors, using online resources, engaging in pre-writing activities, seeking revision assistance, and engaging in self-reflection as effective coping mechanisms.

Therefore, according to the previous findings, it was suggested that these studies provide insights into the various coping strategies utilized by second-language writers to manage writing anxiety. By identifying and understanding these strategies, educators and learners can develop effective interventions and support systems to alleviate writing anxiety and promote a positive writing experience.

### **5.3.1 Positive self-talk**

Positive self-talk is an effective coping strategy for writing anxiety. Studies have shown that individuals who engage in positive self-talk are more likely to feel confident about their writing ability and experience less anxiety. Positive self-talk can be an effective way to reduce writing anxiety (Beilock & Carr, 2001). When writers engage in positive self-talk, they remind themselves of their writing abilities and reassure themselves that they can succeed. This can help counteract negative thoughts

and feelings contributing to writing anxiety. Positive self-talk can also help writers approach their writing tasks with a more optimistic and confident mindset. This can help writers counteract negative thoughts and feelings that contribute to writing anxiety (Sarapukdee & Jiraporncharoen, 2020).

### **5.3.2 Start with a plan**

Having a clear plan can help you feel more confident and focused. Start by outlining your ideas and organizing your thoughts before you start writing. By outlining and organizing your thoughts before you start writing, you can save time and energy in the long run and ensure that your writing is clear, focused, and effective. Locke and Latham (2002) found that goal setting, which involves starting with a plan, was an effective technique for improving writing performance and reducing writing anxiety. Setting specific, achievable goals for your writing projects can help you manage your anxiety by providing a clear direction and motivation for your writing. A plan can also help you break down a large writing task into smaller, more manageable pieces, which can reduce feelings of overwhelm and anxiety.

### **5.3.3 Relaxation techniques**

Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or meditation, are effective in reducing writing anxiety. These techniques can help individuals to calm their minds and reduce physical tension, making it easier to focus on writing. A study by Di Benedetto et al. (2012) found that relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation effectively reduced writing anxiety and improved writing performance.

### **5.3.4 Goal setting**

Goal setting can be an effective coping strategy for writing anxiety. Setting achievable goals can help individuals to stay focused and motivated while also reducing feelings of overwhelm and anxiety. Goals should be specific, measurable, and realistic. A study by Locke and Latham (2002) found that goal setting was an effective technique for improving writing performance. It provided writers with a clear direction and motivation for their writing projects. Similarly, Saengsuwan (2014) found that setting specific, achievable goals for writing projects can help manage writing anxiety and increase motivation.

### **5.3.5 Social support**

Social support from peers or mentors can also be an effective coping strategy for writing anxiety. Having someone to talk to about writing challenges and receiving feedback and encouragement can help to reduce anxiety and increase confidence. A support system, such as a writing group or a trusted friend or mentor, can provide emotional support and encouragement, which can help reduce anxiety and boost confidence (Silvia, 2007).

Overall, coping strategies such as positive self-talk, start with a plan, relaxation techniques, goal setting, and social support can be effective in reducing writing anxiety. These strategies can be used individually or in combination to help individuals overcome writing anxiety and achieve their writing goals.

### **5.4 Limitations and recommendation of the study**

Although this research has drawn some research conclusions and pedagogical implications, the conclusions and suggestions of the research still have to be further verified and refined because there are still some limitations in this research.

First of all, the sample is limited. This study only chooses 55 Thai EFL undergraduate students. The sampling range is limited, and the research results are not representative of all Thai undergraduate students. If more subjects are randomly selected participants from other Thai universities, the study will be more effective. One type of bias that can occur with purposive sampling is selection bias. Since researchers choose participants based on specific criteria, there is a risk of excluding individuals who do not fit these criteria or who may have different experiences or opinions than those included in the study.

Second, this research focuses only on second-year students majoring in English for international communication. Additionally, focusing solely on one group can lead to the underrepresentation or exclusion of other groups, reinforcing existing biases and contributing to systemic inequalities. For example, studies that only include male participants may not provide insights into how certain medications or treatments affect women or non-binary individuals. To reduce bias when studying specific groups, it is helpful to ensure that the sample is representative and diverse. This may involve recruiting participants from various backgrounds and ensuring an equal

representation of different age groups, genders, races, and ethnicities. It is essential to ensure the inclusion of all individuals and related variables as much as possible in the study.

This study was conducted in the EFL context of Northeast Thailand only. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a similar study nationwide to gain a more thorough understanding of second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students. However, there is no study investigating the writing anxiety levels among Thai EFL undergraduate students in a Thai EFL setting. Thai EFL learners' writing anxiety remains relatively scarce, and more studies are needed to raise awareness and gain further insight into Thai EFL undergraduate students, such as investigations on the relationship between second language writing anxiety and other variables such as gender, educational background, age, attitude, learning style, and personality type. Moreover, as this study focused on second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students, studies in other educational contexts are still needed.

### **5.5 Implications for future studies**

This study was conducted in the EFL context of Northeast Thailand only. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a similar study nationwide to gain a more thorough understanding of second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students. However, there is no study investigating the writing anxiety levels among Thai EFL undergraduate students in a Thai EFL setting. Thai EFL learners' writing anxiety remains relatively scarce, and more studies are needed to raise awareness and gain further insight into Thai EFL undergraduate students, such as investigations on the relationship between second language writing anxiety and other variables such as gender, educational background, age, attitude, learning style, and personality type. Moreover, as this study focused on second language writing anxiety among Thai EFL undergraduate students, studies in other educational contexts are still needed.

### **5.6 Implications for practices**

The findings of this study could have significant ramifications for language and teacher education programs. Instructors should know that worry harms learners' writing in their second language, even if they are experienced EFL teachers. Instructors should also be aware of this detrimental effect before attributing learners'

inability to write to a lack of enthusiasm, skills, or boredom with the lesson. Some anxiety-relieving activities may aid learners in overcoming the unpleasant emotions that they bring to the foreign language lesson. Therefore, some teacher training programs or seminars on how to motivate their learners to write and how to react to their written products in terms of choosing the proper error correction strategy and organizing the class so that other learners do not comment or laugh at someone's mistake can be arranged. Furthermore, teachers may provide some intriguing and current themes to the class to encourage learners to write, or they may use topics with which the learners are already familiar (Rankin-Brown & Fitzpatrick, 2007).

Peer feedback (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), ungraded writing tasks such as journal writing on a topic (Clark, 2005), and teaching vocabulary-expansion tools may also aid in resolving the issue. Discussions before writing tasks on learners' compositions may be linked to worry, but they also facilitate writing by providing a more secure ground to focus.

Pre-writing strategies can benefit individuals who experience writing anxiety such as brainstorming, outlining, and clustering, to organize their thoughts before beginning to write (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Collaborative writing can be helpful for individuals with writing anxiety as it provides social support and helps to reduce anxiety levels (Faigley, 1985).

Freewriting, which involves writing continuously without stopping or editing for a set period, can help individuals with writing anxiety overcome their fear of writing and increase their confidence (Elbow, 1973).

Writing workshops can provide a supportive environment where individuals can receive feedback on their writing and develop their skills in a non-threatening way (Murray, 1972).

Educators should provide constructive feedback that focuses on strengths as well as areas for improvement rather than solely criticizing weaknesses. This can help to reduce anxiety levels and increase motivation to improve (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

Positive reinforcement, such as praise for effort and improvement, can help build confidence and motivation in individuals with writing anxiety (Bandura, 1997).

Writing instruction that emphasizes the process of writing rather than just the final product can be beneficial for individuals with writing anxiety as it focuses on building skills and reducing anxiety levels (Emig, 1971).

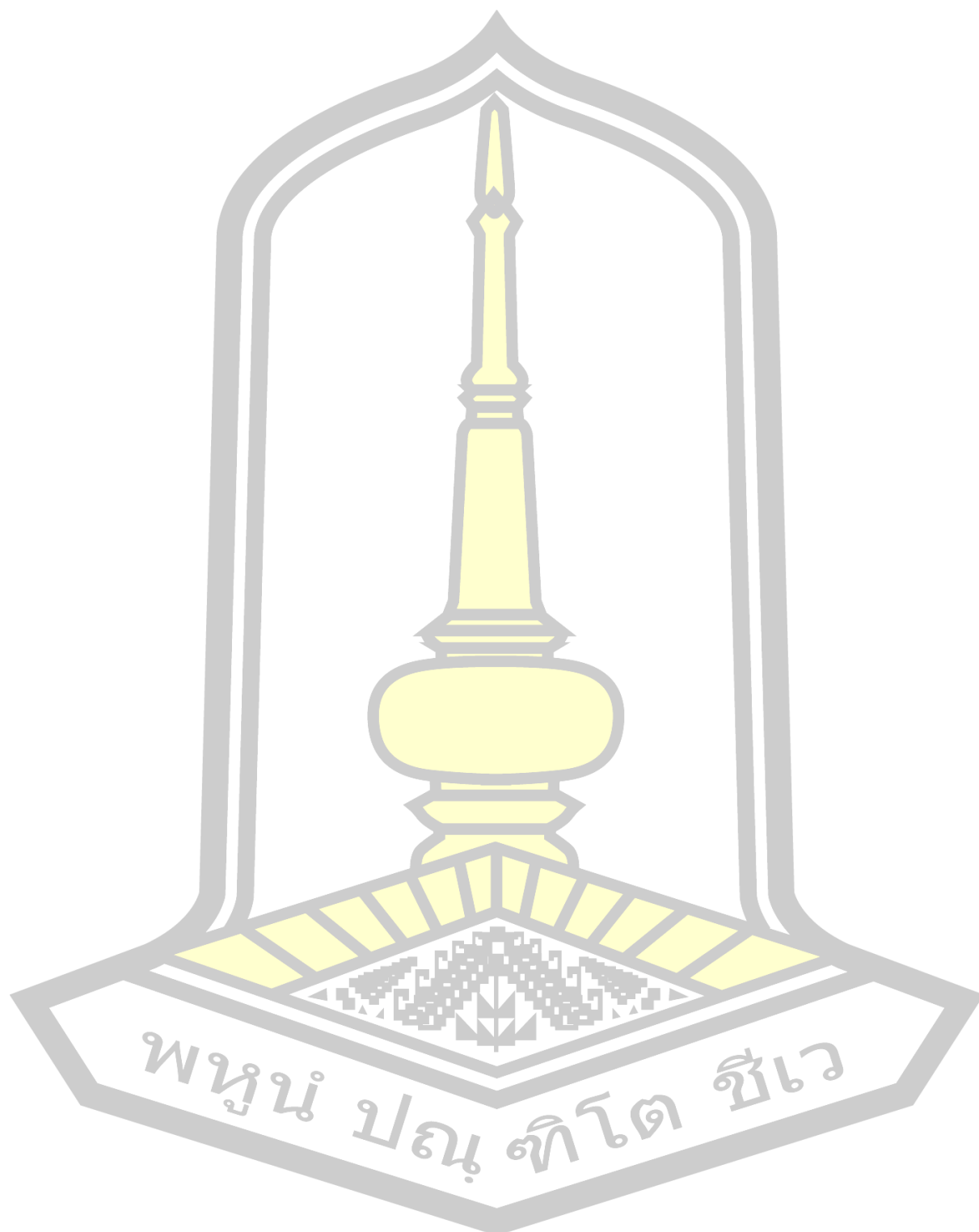
In summary, students with writing anxiety can benefit from a variety of strategies and practises to reduce anxiety and improve their writing skills. Educators can play an important role in providing support and guidance to help them overcome their writing anxiety and achieve their writing goals.

### **5.7 Conclusion**

To conclude, investigation causes, levels, and coping strategies all affect students' writing anxiety. In terms of causes of writing anxiety, high frequency of writing assignments, linguistic difficulty and fear of a writing test, insufficient writing practice, low self-confidence in writing, time pressure, insufficient writing techniques, fear of a negative comment from a teacher, pressure for perfect work, and a high frequency of topic choice problems were the main causes of writing anxiety. The results of this study also indicated that a high frequency of writing assignments is the most influential cause for Thai EFL undergraduate students when writing English. And the current study also found that the overall mean score of 55 Thai EFL undergraduate students who participated in the survey was 40 out of 55 in writing anxiety, which indicated that Thai EFL undergraduate students experienced a high level of writing anxiety. From the result, some suggestions for teachers were put forward to help students reduce writing anxiety and improve their English writing. Instructors should be aware of the detrimental effect of worry on learners' writing in their second language and avoid attributing it to a lack of enthusiasm, skills, or boredom. Finally, positive self-talk, start with a plan, relaxation techniques, goal setting, and social support strategies, can help resolve writing issues.



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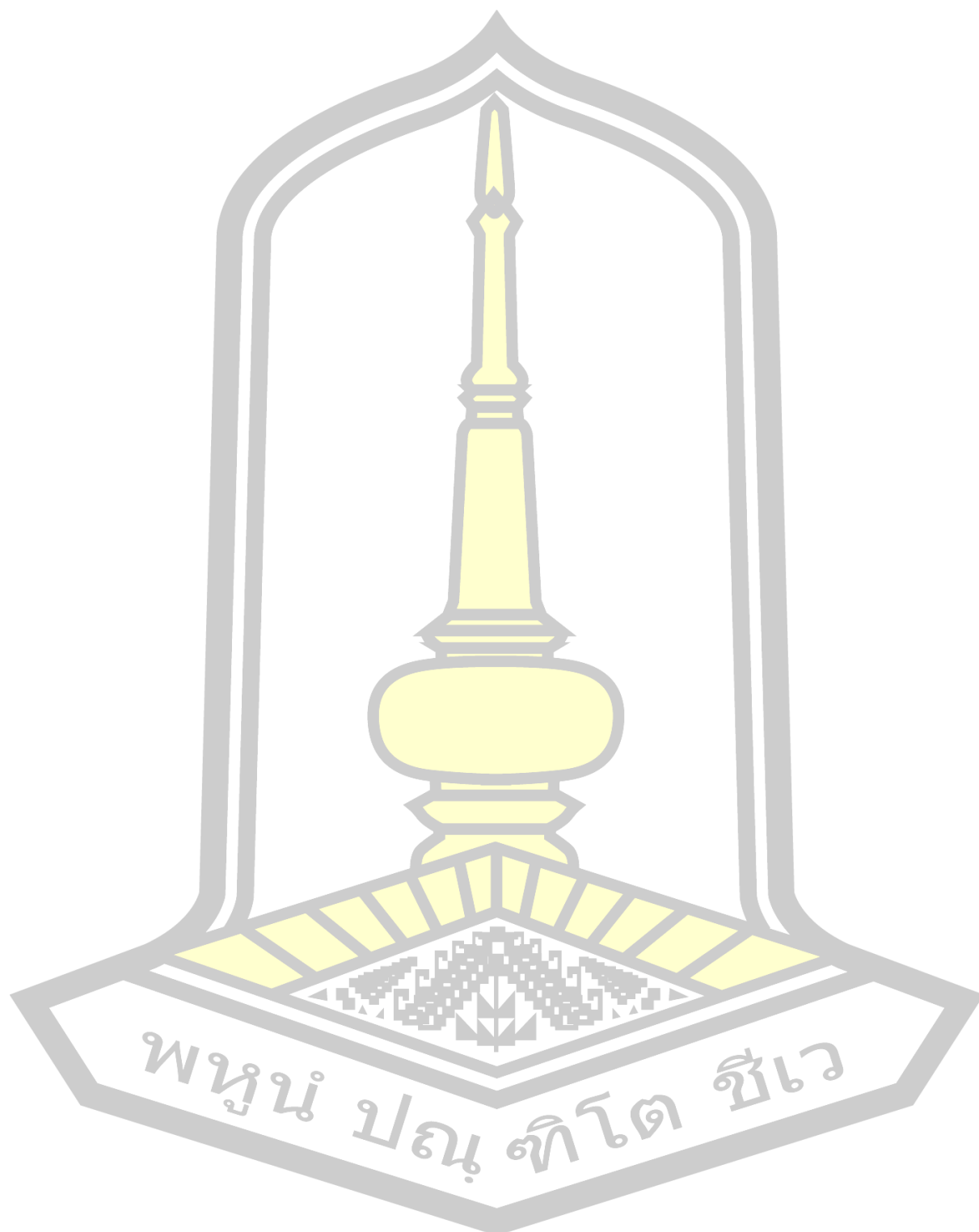
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## APPENDICES



## Appendix A: Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI)

Demographic information Name:

.....

Gender:

.....

Academic Year:

.....

Date:

.....

### Instruction

Read the following statement and express your degree of agreement/disagreement by ticking (✓) the appropriate column.

Check the appropriate column.

Note that

SA: Strongly Agree (5)

A: Agree (4)

U: Uncertain (3)

D: Disagree (2)

SD: Strongly Disagree (1)

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
When I write English essays:					
1. I worry about the negative comments and evaluation of the teacher.					
2. I'm afraid of writing tests.					
3. I have lack of sufficient English writing practice which makes me feel anxious.					
4. I don't have a good command of English writing techniques which makes me feel anxious.					
5. I don't know what to write on the topic given by the teacher, so I feel upset.					
6. I often encounter some linguistic problems such as inadequate mastery of vocabulary, sentence structures, grammatical errors, etc.					
7. I'm under pressure to offer a perfect work which makes me upset.					
8. I feel anxious due to the high frequency of writing assignments.					
9. I feel worry when I have to write under time constraints.					
10. I have a low confidence in English writing.					



## Appendix B: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)

Demographic information Name:

.....

Gender:

.....

Academic Year:

.....

Date:

.....

### Instruction

Read the following statement and express your degree of agreement / disagreement by ticking (✓) the appropriate column.

Check the appropriate column.

Note that

SA: Strongly Agree (5)

A: Agree (4)

U: Uncertain (3)

D: Disagree (2)

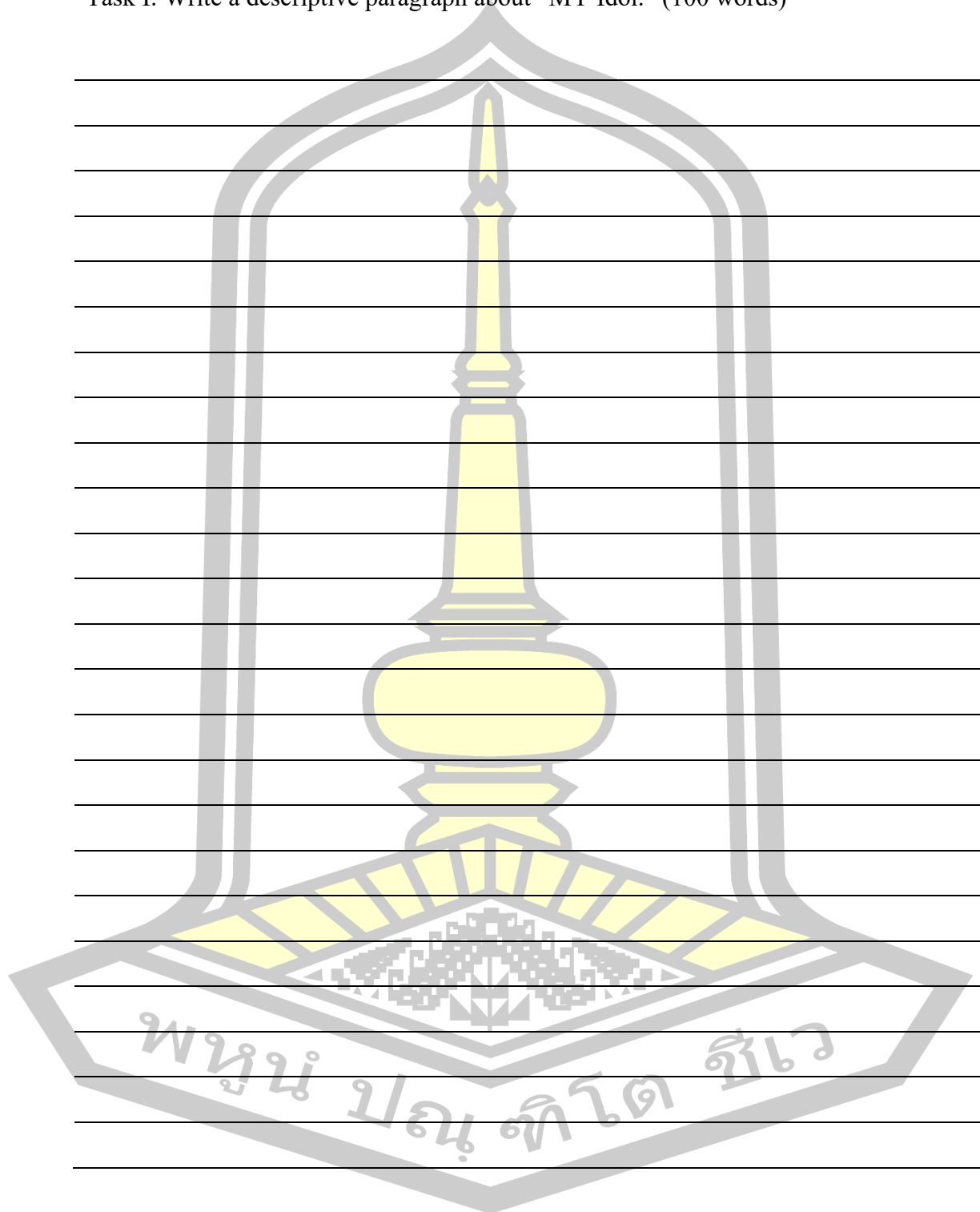
SD: Strongly Disagree (1)

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. While writing in English, I'm not nervous at all.					
2. I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.					
3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.					
4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.					
5. I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.					
6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.					
7. I don't worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others'.					
8. I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure.					
9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.					

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.					
11. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.					
12. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write composition.					
13. I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.					
14. I'm afraid that other students would deride my English composition if they read it.					
15. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.					
16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.					
17. I don't worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.					
18. I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.					
19. I usually feel my whole-body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.					
20. I'm afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.					
21. I'm not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.					
22. Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.					

**Appendix C: The task in a stimulated recall interview**

Task I: Write a descriptive paragraph about “MY Idol.” (100 words)



## BIOGRAPHY

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