

Blogging for reducing EFL learners' writing anxiety: An experience of Barishal University, Bangladesh



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ABSTRACT

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inventory.

Research has shown in writing English, Foreign Language (EFL) learners experience a considerable amount of anxiety which negatively influences their achievement and performances in language classrooms. In Bangladesh, learners' foreign language anxiety is one of the main reasons behind learners' failure in learning English but research on Bangladeshi learners' writing specific anxiety is scant. Besides, no study has been done yet to find out the effectiveness of blogging in reducing the writing anxiety of the EFL learners of Bangladesh. So, this study aims to assess the writing anxiety of the undergraduates of the English department of Barishal University, Bangladesh, investigate the sources which trigger anxiety, and explore the effect of blogging in reducing their writing anxiety. This study was completed employing a mix-method research design and data revealed that EFL undergraduates of Barishal University suffered from moderately low to moderately high level of writing anxiety caused mainly for their lack of practice, lack of knowledge regarding different genres of writing, limited vocabulary stock, writing under time constraints, and fear of negative evaluation. Findings also showed that participants of this have a highly positive attitude towards blogging for reducing their writing anxiety in English.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is the first attempt to assess the writing anxiety level of the EFL undergraduates of Barishal University, Bangladesh and it contributes to the existing literature focusing on the role of interactive blogging in reducing learners' writing anxiety in English in the context of Bangladesh.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing in a foreign or second language is very challenging as it requires not only to produce grammatically correct sentences in terms of syntax and semantics but also to use an array of words, and punctuations and to exhibit critical thinking ability. Sometimes, writing in English may appear as a gruelling experience for EFL learners but, it is an inevitable skill to master to be successful academically and professionally in this fast-moving 21st century. In the context of Bangladesh "writing is the most focused but the least developed English language skill" (Uddin, 2014). Studies (Afrin, 2016; Ahmed, 1999; Alam & Sinha, 2009; Mustaque, 2014; Rahman & Hasan, 2019; Uddin, 2014) have identified different factors responsible for learners' poor writing skill in the context of Bangladesh but conspicuously ignored learners' anxiety which is a key variable in determining learners' success in foreign language learning and has been widely acknowledged as a predictors of learners' success in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Psycholinguistic researches. But, recently, some studies (Chowdhury, Tanni, &

Mamun, 2020; Ferdous, 2012; Nimat, 2013; Saha, 2020; Shurovi, 2022) identified the level of learners' foreign language anxiety and the sources of anxiety in different language skills. Still, literature documenting on Bangladeshi learners' writing specific anxiety in English is not adequate. Moreover, no research on the use of blogging to reduce EFL learners' writing anxiety has been conducted in Bangladesh, though, after COVID-19 pandemic, digitalization in education and integration of new technology in the classroom has become the most-talked topic. Therefore, to fill that gap in the existing literature, this study focused on measuring the level and identifying the causes of writing specific anxiety among the undergraduates of English department of Barishal University and explored the role of blogging in reducing these learners' writing anxiety. The findings of this study would have implications for EFL practitioners who deal with learners' foreign language writing anxiety and encourage students' efforts to overcome this and improve writing skill by integrating new technological tools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

According to Daly (1978), "Writing anxiety is a situation and subject-specific individual difference concerned with people's general tendencies to approach or avoid situations perceived to demand writing accompanied by some amount of evaluation". Sometimes, this anxiety can be so high that individual tends to choose major courses, careers without a writing demand (Daly & Wilson, 1983).

Hassan (2001) has also defined it as "the tendency for the writers to avoid situations demanding writing anything in second language which will be evaluated." This anxiety manifests itself in the form of avoidance behaviour, procrastinating homework, forgetting rules, and test anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Besides, highly anxious learners have been found to write shorter essays (Fagley, Daly, & Witte, 1981) have lower self-confidence (Hassan, 2001) and spend less time for planning and organization (Selfe, 1984).

Therefore, learners' foreign language writing anxiety is a skill-specific apprehension which has negative impact on learners' writing performances and in extreme cases forces them to skip writing situations.

2.2. Researches on Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

Several psychologists, cognitivists, and researchers (Bloom, 1980; Cheng, 2004; Dar & Khan, 2015; Hassan, 2001; Hayes, 1981; Hayes & Flower, 1980; Holladay, 1981; Hui-Fang, 2013; Tsai, 2008) have studied learners' writing anxiety in different EFL contexts. Elif and Yayli (2019) reported that the most common sources of writing anxiety in the existing literature are traumatic past experiences, negative feedback from teachers, lack of writing competence, time limit, fear of negative evaluation, topical knowledge, and linguistic concerns including grammar and vocabulary knowledge. This study offered some suggestions for the teachers in reducing student's writing anxiety, for example, giving clear feedback, allocating more time for writing courses and for writing process and arranging exclusive vocabulary classes. Dar and Khan (2015) assessed the anxiety level of Undergraduate students of various disciplines in Pakistan and noted that 62% students suffered from an average level of writing anxiety. Research findings focusing on the causes of writing anxiety revealed that writing anxiety could result from the learners' poor linguistic competence, cognitive difficulties regarding the writing process, classroom context and lack of self-confidence (Hassan, 2001; Holladay, 1981). Tsai (2008) in a study also found that a high level of anxiety causes learners to believe that they have less expertise. Besides, the reception of negative evaluation in writing tasks also increases the students' anxiety, not only that, but a high level of anxiety also causes less self-confidence and in turn, less proficiency in writing; as a result, these students view themselves as poor performers (Hui-Fang, 2013). Similarly, the studies of Bloom (1980) and Hayes (1981) revealed that less anxious writers compose better because they can control their time and action better due to having more time to concentrate on the order of thoughts compared with the anxiety-stricken writers who remains obsessed with their apprehension.

In the EFL context of Bangladesh, a few researchers (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Ferdous, 2012; Nimat, 2013; Saha, 2020; Shurovi, 2022) conducted researches on learners' foreign language anxiety (FLA), its' causes and effects on learners' academic performances. Ferdous (2012) conducted a study among the 60 students from International Islamic University Chittagong, Bangladesh to find out 1st year non-English undergraduate students' English learning anxiety. Her study identified that learners have a moderate level of FLA that hinders their learning. She also offered some suggestions to reduce learners' FLA. But in this study, no specific attention was given to assessing and addressing learners' writing anxiety. Another study of Saha (2020) among the EFL Undergraduates of Barishal University, Bangladesh resonates the findings of Ferdous (2012). This study also explored the role Self-directed learning (SDL) in reducing FLA and it shows that SDL has significant positive impact on FLA minimization. Shurovi (2022) revealed that learners' medium of school, educated family background specially father's educational background has significant impact on anxiety.

Therefore, it is evident that learners' FLA is a crucial factor in determining learners' success in learning a foreign language and is a well-researched area in Psycholinguistics and SLA. Researchers have identified different causes and effects of FLA and emphasized its' reduction through different strategies.

2.3. Weblog/Blog

Weblogging is a popular media in the field of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The emergence of weblogs in English language learning afforded educators in higher learning institutions new technological tools for students to explore the target language in a new forum (Genzola, 2015).

Weblog/Blog is a virtual space for writing, editing, and managing textual information that could be immediately publicly available online via web browsers.

Genzola (2015) points out the benefits of weblogging by stating that it provides the students with extensive opportunities to put what they are learning in the classroom to use in expressive, interactive, and immersive ways. In addition to reading and writing practice, it allows the learners to share their thoughts and ideas through blog posts made on the forum section and walls wherein the resulting language exchanges expose them to authentic uses of language that supplemented classroom activities and experiences.

Therefore, it can be said that in this age of internet when our young generation immerse themselves 24/7 in the virtual world, weblogging can be an extension of their English language writing classes where they will expose themselves to the authentic uses of target language, share their ideas through collaborative writing activity and enhance their writing skill through interactive and immediate feedbacks.

2.4. Researches on Blogging in Reducing Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

Recently, Information Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionized every aspect of our life including education with a plethora of possibilities. Web 2.0 platform like weblogging is one of the blessings which has added a new dimension to teaching writing and provided learners with the opportunities for extensive writing for real audience and thus engaging them in interactive and collaborative learning. Due to its' educational benefits many researchers have explored the effects of blogging in developing EFL learners writing skill, their perceptions, and attitudes towards blogging in different EFL contexts (Aydin, 2014; Campbell, 2003; Cequena & Salle, 2013; Cequena & Gustilo, 2014; Downes, 2004; Genzola, 2015; Kitchakarn, 2014; Mcgrail & Davis, 2009; Sadikin & Saleh, 2016). Very recently a few researchers considering the crucial role of learners' writing anxiety, explored the possibilities of weblogging in minimizing their anxiety and thus improving their academic performances and facilitating language learning (Cequena & Gustilo, 2014; Murnahan, 2010; Öztürk & Çeçen, 2007). But research in this area is still scant. Öztürk and Çeçen (2007) investigated the effects of portfolio keeping, though not in the form of weblogging, on 15 EFL Turkish prospective teachers of English and revealed that it helped students improve their writing skills and overcome their anxiety as well. Murnahan (2010) also experimented on whether stress and

anxiety could be reduced in four learning conditions such as diaries, journals, e-mails, and weblogs. However, her findings revealed that none of these four learning conditions including weblogs could reduce students' anxiety. Challenging the findings of Murnahan (2010) a study was conducted by Cequena and Gustilo (2014) in the Philippine context and findings of this study showcase that blogging has improved learners' writing skill and has lessened their anxiety.

In the EFL context of Bangladesh a few studies have been conducted on learners writing anxiety. Though these studies have identified some sources of this anxiety and offered some recommendations to reduce this anxiety, still no work has been done to explore the impact of weblogging in minimizing writing anxiety. In Bangladesh, Chowdhury et al. (2020) explored perceptions and experience of educational blogs of the students of higher education. It revealed that both students and teachers have positive perceptions towards blogging although their use of blog is not satisfactory and this study did not focus on the potentiality of blogging in reducing writing anxiety. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by assessing Undergraduate EFL learners of level of writing anxiety in the context of Barishal University, Bangladesh as well as exploring the role of blogging in reducing their writing specific anxieties. Findings of this study will have implications for EFL teachers of Bangladesh who deal with learners' writing anxiety and intend to reduce it and for the students who aspire to develop their writing skill overcoming their writing-related anxieties.

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

This study aimed to answer the following queries:

1. What is the level of writing anxiety in English among the undergraduates of English department of Barishal University?
2. What are the major sources of their writing anxiety in English?
3. Can learners' writing anxiety in English be reduced through blogging in the context of Barishal University?

4. RESEARCH METHOD

This empirical study was conducted through a Mixed-method research design by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. This combined approach was the most suitable design for this study because it not only focused on the level of learners' writing anxiety but also aimed to give an in-depth analysis of the sources which hold them back in performing better in English writing classes. In addition, it explored learners' attitudes and perceptions towards blogging as a tool to reduce their writing anxiety in English through interactive blogging and Focus Group Discussions (FGD).

4.1. Participants

85 undergraduates of First Year Second Semester and Second Year 1st Semester of English Department of Barishal University, Bangladesh, who had Writing and Academic Writing courses as part of their curricula, are the sample of this study. They were selected based on convenient sampling. They took part in two questionnaire studies. Then, from these 85 participants 15 students voluntarily participated in three months blogging project and took part in Focus Group Discussions (FGD).

4.2. Procedure

Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) developed by Cheng (2004) was administered among the participants at the beginning of the study. This instrument has a five-point Likert response format (1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= No strong feelings, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree). When the statements of the SLWAI were negatively worded, then the score was reversed. In all cases, high score means high anxiety. This inventory has adequate validity and high internal consistency reliability with a reported Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.91

(Öztürk & Çeçen, 2007). The mean and average mean of these statements were calculated in SPSS version 20.0. Finally, mean, and average mean below 3 were interpreted as low anxious, 3 to 4 as moderate anxious and 4 and above as highly anxious. To identify the major triggers of writing anxiety among the participants, a self-developed questionnaire was also administered among them. It contains 15 statements having the response format of Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The items in this questionnaire were specified by careful reading of EFL and ESL academic writing course books, related journal articles and by the researcher’s teaching experience of writing in the EFL classroom for more than 9 years. After that, it was piloted among 25 students to be sure of the clarity of the statements and finally, the survey was conducted. Collected responses on this questionnaire was then calculated and analyzed in percentages.

To get an in-depth insight of whether weblogs can reduce learners’ writing anxiety, a blogging project was conducted for three months where participants engaged in blogging. At the beginning of this project, they were given an orientation about blogging (how to open blog account, how to write a blog and how to post it). Participants were required to write one blog weekly. At first, they wrote their first draft and uploaded it in their personalized Goggle Drive where it was reviewed and checked by the researcher. Finally, doing necessary corrections and modifications based on the comments of the researcher, participants posted their individual blogs.

To determine the effects of blogging on participants’ writing anxiety, Six Focus Group Discussion sessions were conducted (twice in a month). During the sessions participants’ views were recorded and finally their comments were coded to enrich qualitative data.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

To investigate the research question.1, Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) developed by Cheng (2004) was administered at the beginning of the research project. Collected responses on SLWAI items are divided into two categories- Mean Value more than 3, Mean Value less than 3. Findings showed that among the 22 items, respondents of this study had moderately low to moderately high anxiety in 11 items as the average mean of these items is 3.35.

Table 1. Second language writing anxiety inventory (SLWAI).

SLWAI items (Mean more than 3) Total 85 Respondents						
1. I feel my heart pounding when I write English essays under time constraint.		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Frequency	6	53	8	17	1
	Percentage	7.06%	62.35%	9.41%	20%	1.18%
	Mean	3.54				
	Standard deviation	0.933				
2. When writing English essays, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		1	51	9	23	1
	Percentage	1.18%	60%	10.59%	27.06%	1.18%
	Mean	3.33				
	Standard deviation	0.931				
3. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on any English essay.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		7	38	17	20	3
	Percentage	8.24%	44.71%	20%	23.53%	3.53%
	Mean	3.31				
	Standard deviation	1.035				

SLWAI items (Mean more than 3) Total 85 Respondents						
4. I tremble or perspire when I write English essays under time pressure.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		8	47	15	13	2
	Percentage	9.41%	55.29%	17.65%	15.29%	2.35%
	Mean	3.54				
5. If my English essay is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		4	47	9	24	1
	Percentage	4.71%	55.29%	10.59%	28.24%	1.18%
	Mean	3.34				
6. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English essays under time constraint.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		7	47	14	14	3
	Percentage	8.24%	55.29%	16.47%	16.47%	3.53%
	Mean	3.48				
7. I often feel fear when I write English essays under time.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		9	54	5	14	3
	Percentage	10.59%	63.53%	5.88%	16.47%	3.53%
	Mean	3.61				
8. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English essays.	Frequency	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		5	49	9	19	3
	Percentage	5.88%	57.65%	10.59%	22.35%	3.53%
	Mean	3.40				
9. I usually feel my whole-body rigid and tense when write English compositions.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		1	35	21	25	3
	Percentage	1.18%	41.18%	24.71%	29.41%	3.53%
	Mean	3.07				
10. I am afraid of my English essays being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		6	35	16	25	3
	Percentage	7.06%	41.18%	18.82%	29.41%	3.53%
	Mean	3.18				
11. I do not worry at all about what other people would think of my English essays. *	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		8	28	8	37	4
	Percentage	9.41%	32.94%	9.41%	43.53%	4.71%
	Mean	3.01				
	Standard deviation	1.160				

Note: Reverse coded items are put in asterisk (*).

Source: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory, Cheng (2004).

The statements “I often feel fear when I write English essays under time pressure,” “I tremble or perspire when I write English essays under time-pressure,” “I feel my heart pounding when I write English essays under time constraint,” and “My thoughts get jumbled when I write English essays under time constraint” have the highest mean scores respectively- 3.61, 3.54, 3.54 and 3.48 conform with the findings of [Elif and Yayli \(2019\)](#) and [Lee \(2003\)](#). Besides, respondents also demonstrated moderately high level of anxiety in the statements “I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English essays,” and “If my English essay is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade” and the mean values are -3.40 and 3.34 ([Table 1](#)). The findings in these two statements revealed that when learners are required to write without preparation and when they think their writing may be evaluated negatively then their anxiety level becomes high which is congruent with other studies ([Daly & Miller 1975a, b, c](#); [Daly & Shamo, 1976, 1978](#); cited in [Onwuegbuzie and Anthony \(1998\)](#)).

Table 2. Second language writing anxiety inventory (SLWAI).

SLWAI Items (Mean less than 3) Total 85 Respondents						
1. While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Frequency	3	31	14	34	3
	Percentage	3.53%	36.47%	16.47%	40%	3.535%
	Mean	2.96				
	Standard deviation	1.029				
2. I usually do my best to avoid writing English essays.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		3	11	15	48	8
	Percentage	3.53%	12.94%	17.65%	56.47%	9.41%
	Mean	2.45				
	Standard deviation	0.949				
3. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		7	21	12	40	5
	Percentage	8.24%	24.71%	14.12%	47.06%	5.88%
	Mean	2.82				
	Standard deviation	1.125				
4. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write essays.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		6	27	13	35	4
	Percentage	7.06%	31.76%	15.29%	41.18%	4.71%
	Mean	2.95				
	Standard deviation	1.094				
5. I am afraid that other students would laugh at my English essays if they read it.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		8	28	2	36	11
	Percentage	8.24%	32.94%	2.35%	42.35%	12.94%
	Mean	2.84				
	Standard deviation	1.280				
6. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English essays.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		4	30	10	35	6
	Percentage	4.71%	35.29%	11.76%	41.18%	7.06%
	Mean	2.89				
	Standard deviation	1.113				

SLWAI Items (Mean less than 3) Total 85 Respondents						
7. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English. *	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		14	47	10	14	0
	Percentage	16.47%	55.29%	11.76%	16.47%	0%
	Mean	2.28				
8. I don't worry that my English essays are a lot worse than others. *	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		6	28	17	32	2
	Percentage	7.06%	32.94%	20%	37.65%	2.35%
	Mean	2.95				
9. I usually seek every possible chance to write English essays outside of class. *	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		6	33	15	27	4
	Percentage	7.06%	38.82%	17.65%	31.76%	4.71%
	Mean	2.88				
10. I am not afraid at all that my English essay would be rated as very poor. *	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		7	28	14	33	3
	Percentage	8.24%	32.94%	16.47%	38.82%	3.53%
	Mean	2.96				
11. Whenever possible, I would use English to write essays. *	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		11	37	13	20	4
	Percentage	12.94%	43.53%	15.9%	23.53%	4.71%
	Mean	2.64				
	Standard deviation	1.122				

Note: Reverse coded items are put in asterisk (*).

Source: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory, Cheng (2004).

On the other hand, lowest mean scores have been recorded respectively-2.28, 2.45, 2.64 (Table 2) in the statements “I often choose to write down my thoughts in English”, “I usually do my best to avoid writing English essays”, “Whenever possible, I would use English to write essays”. These low mean values in the above three statements indicate that though learners in the context of Barishal University suffered from moderately low to moderately high level of writing anxiety, they did not have avoidance behaviour or they did not want to skip writing in English which echoes the findings of Cequena and Gustilo (2014).

To explore research question-2, a self-developed questionnaire survey was also conducted among those 85 EFL undergraduates of Barishal University who participated in the SLWAI survey. The purpose of this study was to locate the major triggers of writing anxiety among these learners. In response to the questionnaire (Table 3), participants identified a lack of sufficient topic-related knowledge, limited vocabulary, lack of genre knowledge, time-pressure, fear of negative criticism from the teachers, lack of writing practices as their major sources of writing anxiety. 81% of the respondents strongly agree and agree with the statement “I feel nervous in writing English essays because I have limited vocabulary and whenever I write I fail to express my thought due to this.” Besides, 72% of them opined that they feel anxious because they do not know how to write in English in different genres.

Table 3. Major triggers of writing anxiety.

Items Total 85 respondents						
Items	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	1. I feel worried in writing English essays because I do not have sufficient knowledge of the topic.	6	4	13	10	2
	Percentage	7.06%	63.53%	15.29%	11.76%	2.35%
2. I feel nervous in writing English essays because I have limited vocabulary and whenever I write I fail to express my thought due to this.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	16	53	8	8	0	
	Percentage	18.82%	62.35%	9.41%	9.41%	0%
3. I feel anxious because I do not know how to write different genres of writing.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	13	48	18	6	0	
	Percentage	15.29%	56.47%	21.18%	7.06%	0%
4. I feel nervous because when I have to write under time pressure my thoughts get jumbled up.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	20	49	13	3	0	
	Percentage	23.53%	57.65%	15.29%	3.53%	0%
5. I am afraid of writing in English because I don't have sufficient knowledge regarding the structure of writing.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	6	47	5	23	4	
	Percentage	7.06%	55.29%	5.88%	27.06%	4.71%
6. I feel worried because I don't know adequate transitional words and phrases.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	7	36	17	24	1	
	Percentage	8.24%	42.35%	20%	28.24%	1.18%
7. I am anxious of writing English because I have limited knowledge of formal writing.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	6	43	13	21	2	
	Percentage	7.06%	50.59%	15.29%	24.71%	2.35%
8. I am afraid of writing English because I lack knowledge of coherence and cohesion.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	6	43	18	18	0	
	Percentage	7.06%	50.59%	21.17%	21.17%	0%
9. I try to avoid writing in English because I think if they are evaluated, I would get poor grade.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	6	32	14	28	5	
	Percentage	7.06%	37.65%	16.47%	32.94%	5.88%
10. While writing I get worried because I think if I make mistakes, I will lose my face.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	8	36	8	25	8	
	Percentage	9.41%	42.35%	9.41%	32.94%	9.41%
11. I avoid writing in English because if they are remarked negatively, I would be demotivated.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	11	39	8	22	5	
	Percentage	12.94%	45.88%	9.41%	25.88%	5.88%
12. I avoid writing in English because I am afraid of the feedback coming from both the teachers and the peers.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	4	39	7	31	4	
	Percentage	4.71%	45.88%	8.24%	36.47%	4.71%
13. I feel worried when asked to write English essays because I do not get enough writing practices.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	19	41	13	11	1	
	Percentage	22.35%	48.24%	15.29%	12.94%	1.18%
14. Writing English essays is frightening because I cannot generate ideas and arrange them coherently under time constraint.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	9	42	15	17	2	
	Percentage	10.59%	49.41%	17.65%	20%	2.35%
15. I feel anxious in the English writing classes because I think I won't be able to think critically and write creatively as there is time pressure.	Frequency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	11	44	9	18	3	
	Percentage	12.94%	51.76%	10.59%	21.17%	3.53%

Also, 70% of the respondents located a lack of sufficient topic related knowledge as one of the significant triggers. Again, a same number of participants strongly agree and agree with the statement “I feel nervous because when I have to write under time pressure my thoughts get jumbled up.” 65% of the respondents also opined that when they must write under time pressure they cannot think critically and write creatively. Moreover, 60% of the respondents blamed lack of enough writing practices for their high level of writing anxiety and an equal number also agreed with the statement “I avoid writing in English because if they are remarked negatively, I would be demotivated.” The major sources of writing anxieties identified by the participants of this study match the findings [Elif and Yayli \(2019\)](#).

To determine the role of blogging in reducing learner’s writing anxiety in English 15 EFL undergraduates out of 85 participants participated in the questionnaire studies voluntarily participated in the 3 months interactive blogging project and shared their opinions in 6 Focused Group Discussion sessions.

One of the participants of this study stated, *“Previously, I had serious writing anxiety and could not write long essays and could not maintain sequence in writing. But, now, as I am writing blogs on recent issues, I read newspaper extensively which enriches my topic-related knowledge. After writing 5/6 blogs, I get confidence that I can write long essays”*.

This same problem is also articulated by another participant. He also added the *“Before starting blogging, I could not generate ideas quickly, particularly under time pressure. It made me very anxious in the writing classes and I performed poorly in those classes. After starting blog writing, I eventually came to learn how to generate ideas and sequence them even within a very short time.”*

These statements have similarity with [Faigley et al. \(1981\)](#) who mentioned ‘highly anxious learners have been found to write shorter essays’ and with [Selfe \(1984\)](#) who mentioned ‘highly anxious spend less time for planning or organization.’

This participant also mentioned, *“If I continue writing blogs, eventually it will reduce my writing anxiety and develop my overall writing skill.”*

One of the participants pointed out, *“The thought if I know nothing about the topic how am I going to write-haunts me in the writing classes. But, in blogging, I can choose topic of my interest and that is a great relief for me.”*

The same idea is also reflected in another participant’s comments. He said, *“In blogging, I can choose topic of my interest which increases my motivation for writing.”*

One of the students said, *“The source of my writing anxiety is lack of practice. I did not write other than assignments. For this, I could not find proper diction to express my ideas and made lot of spelling mistakes and as a result, I used to avoid writing in English. But when I write blogs, I spend some time in generating ideas, looking up words, and checking their spelling. In a word, blogging allows me to write.”*

Another participant shared that she used to maintain personal diaries in English but that did not help her to improve writing skill as she did not get any feedback on her writing. She said, *“My main problem in the writing class was that how others will evaluate my writing...how will they react if my ideas do not match with them.”* She also shared *“in the blogosphere as I do not have to reveal my identity, I feel more motivated and less anxious in writing blogs. Besides, when people give positive feedback, my confidence level gets boosted.”*

This statement is also echoed in [Ward \(2004\)](#) when he shared his experience of Computer Aided Classroom. He stated that some of the most vocal “disinhibited” students in this online discussion were the more inhibited students in class. When browsing through my students’ weblogs, I noticed that some of the quietest students had the loudest blogs!

Another participant shared, *“I used to write diaries but, as I did not get feedback, my writing skill did not develop. As blogging is interactive process of writing, it improves my skill through feedback. It is also less anxiety provoking because we do not know who is our audience.”* She added, *“I feel a sense of achievement after finishing a blog.”*

One of the participants stated, *“The best part of blogging is no one is going to give me marks.”*

6. OVERALL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Technology has changed the way teachers teach and learners learn in these days. Considering this reality, this study measured writing-specific anxiety level of EFL Undergraduates of Barishal University, pointed out some of the factors which trigger writing anxiety responsible for poor performances in writing classes and analyzed the role of blogging in reducing EFL learners' writing anxiety in the context of Barishal University. In this mixed-method research, 3 different types of data collection tools were used- SLWAI developed by Cheng (2004) a self-developed questionnaire and FGD from 3 month of interactive blogging projects.

From the collected data on SLWAI scale, it is evident that on an average participants had moderate level of writing anxiety and comparatively high anxiety when they had to write under time constraints. In cases of timed writing, they also exhibited some physical symptoms like heart-pounding, trembling, perspiring. They also added they could not think critically and their thoughts got jumbled up in cases of timed writing. Moreover, this study also showed that learners had moderately high anxiety when they had to write without preparation and when their writing was evaluated negatively. But it is also obvious from the SLWAI data that despite having a moderately high level of anxiety, participants of this study do not have avoidance behaviour in writing classes rather they seek every possibility to practice writing in English. The self-developed questionnaire study was administered to find out the major causes of writing anxiety. It is conspicuous from the collected data that learners suffer from writing anxiety due to their limited stock of words, lack of topic-related knowledge, lack of genre knowledge, writing under time pressure, fear of negative evaluation from the teachers and lack of writing practices.

To determine the role of blogging in reducing learners' writing anxiety, 15 participants involved in a three-month interactive blogging project and shared their experiences in six FGD sessions. Collected data from these sessions reflect that interactive blogging helped learners in several ways to reduce their writing anxiety. They reported that it gives them opportunities to read and write extensively which increases their topic-related knowledge, vocabulary, and spelling knowledge. Besides, as there was no time pressure, they could concentrate more on generating ideas and organizing their writing which consequently helped them to write longer essays. They also mentioned blogging gave them autonomy to choose a topic of their interest which was motivating. The findings of the FGD also revealed that blogging heals learners' anxiety of negative evaluation. In the blogosphere, the audience are unknown and the writers can maintain anonymity which creates a comfort zone for the learners. The participants also mentioned that in comparison with traditional writing classes blogging is less anxiety provoking as learners do not have to worry about marks.

Therefore, it is evident from the collected data that blogging has a significant positive impact on reducing EFL learners' writing anxiety in the context of Barishal University. The results of this study revealed that the triggers which hold back learners' from performing well in the writing classes can be lessened greatly by involving learners in interactive blogging. Though due to small sample size, this study cannot generalize the role of blogging on reducing writing anxiety, this present study can establish that positive experiences in blogging help developing writing proficiency and reduce writing anxiety. It also points directions for further researches regarding technology integration in teaching and learning foreign language in Bangladesh. An experimental comparative study can be conducted between traditional writing instruction and technology-mediated writing instruction with large samples in the EFL context of Bangladesh. Research can also be conducted to find out learners' motivation in learning writing through blogging and other Web 2.0 platforms.

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