

## EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES OF LEARNING TO WRITE: A CASE STUDY IN AN INDONESIAN ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE

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**Abstract:** While students' writing performance is a key focus in academic writing research, limited attention has been given to the emotional experiences students face in this area. This study addresses this gap by examining the emotions associated with academic writing among postgraduate students. Using photovoice data from 12 postgraduate students aged 23 to 39, this case study employed a thematic phenomenological analysis to examine student writers' emotional responses based on Pekrun and Stephen's (2012) framework. The findings reveal two main themes: negative and positive emotions. Negative emotions, including anxiety, frustration, and confusion, often motivated students, ultimately fostering positive emotions such as enjoyment, hope, pride, and relief. This study highlights the role of both negative and positive emotions in academic writing, offering new insights into the challenges and emotional dynamics students encountered in this process.

**Keywords:** academic emotion, academic writing, case study, photovoice, thematic phenomenological analysis

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## Introduction

Learning to write in another language in academic contexts is emotionally charged. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that emotion, one of the psychological dimensions, plays an important role in academic writing. For example, in higher education, academic writing in English is a crucial requirement that many university students must meet (Altinmakas & Bayyurt, 2019; Hyland, 2013). However, students often find this task challenging, viewing themselves as lacking the advanced language skills necessary for academic-level writing (Hyland & Hamp-Lyonsb, 2002). Cameron et al. (2009) observed that early academic writers frequently struggle with both technical skills and the emotions writing evokes. This process can stir complex feelings, such as anger, insecurity, fear, and self-doubt (Cameron et al., 2009; Sword et al., 2018). Emotions like happiness, frustration, satisfaction, resilience, excitement, and anxiety emerge throughout the writing process (Janke et al., 2020; Zhang, 2019). Additionally, whether drafting or responding to feedback, students often experience vulnerability, impacting their motivation and persistence, with emotions transforming writing “highs” into challenging “lows” (Cheong et al., 2023).

Extensive research has examined the interplay between academic writing and students’ emotions. Studies by Cameron et al. (2009), French (2016), Hammond (2021), Petersen (2014), Phakiti and Li (2011), Sword (2017), and Altinmakas and Bayyurt (2019) suggest that emotions in academic writing should serve as catalysts rather than barriers to learning. In addition, Sword et al. (2018) describe the “frustration-haunted terrain of academic writing” as a space of potential transformation rather than limitation. Huerta et al. (2017) found that students who are non-native English speakers experience significantly higher writing anxiety and lower self-efficacy than native speakers, highlighting how negative emotions, such as anxiety, can impact writing negatively. These studies reinforce the opinion that emotion is integral to the academic writing process. Brand (1990) notes that emotions in writing are inherently intertwined and can be classified as positive, negative passive, or negative active.

While extensive research has explored various aspects of academic writing – such as theoretical frameworks (McKinley, 2015), instructional strategies (Naghdipour, 2016; Sala-Bubare & Castello, 2018; Wale & Bogale, 2021), teaching methods (McNamara et al., 2018), and student challenges (Phakiti & Li, 2011; Sword et al., 2018; Walkinshaw et al., 2015) – there is a notable gap in studies addressing emotional experiences, specifically the interplay of positive and negative emotions in academic writing in non-Western context. Indonesian postgraduate students, who navigate unique sociocultural and linguistic challenges in academic writing, are an especially overlooked demographic. This study aims to fill this gap by examining EFL students’ emotional responses

using photovoice, a digital photography method to capture and reflect on personal experiences in writing (Call-Cummings et al., 2019; Latz, 2017). This research contributes empirical insights into students' emotional journeys in academic writing, as photovoice highlights the distinct emotional geographies of Indonesian EFL students and demonstrates the potential of visual data to deepen our understanding of the academic writing process.

## Literature review

### *Emotion in academic writing*

Emotions are crucial in shaping understanding and perception of experiences (Coffey & De Costa, 2023; Marvell & Simm, 2018; Pile, 2010; Urry, 2016; Wood & Smith, 2004). Emotions also play a vital role in mental processes since emotions may control, either positively or negatively, the flow of informational processing (Pekrun, 1992). Various emotions experienced by students may determine how the flow of information is processed, stored, altered, interrupted, and retrieved in memory processing (Kim & Pekrun, 2014; Pekrun, 1992). For EFL students, emotion deeply influences their journey in learning to write. This emotional journey often progresses through stages, from initial anxiety and discomfort to feelings of competence and accomplishment. These emotional shifts may arise in response to varying writing difficulty or feedback, illustrating how time and experience shape a student's emotional landscape.

Meanwhile, educators who understand students' emotional geographies can better support EFL writers by addressing the emotional factors that impact learning. By recognizing the diverse students' emotional experiences, teachers can implement strategies to reduce anxiety and build confidence, creating a more inclusive and emotionally responsive learning environment. This awareness allows educators to design writing instruction that not only boost engagement but also enhance overall learning outcomes for EFL students.

Further, Marvell and Simm (2018) and Liu and Yu (2022) underscore the importance of social dynamics in shaping emotional responses. Marvell and Simm (2018) defined that emotional geography emphasizes the impact of place, social interactions, and experiences on emotional responses and learning outcomes. Similarly, Liu and Yu (2022) highlight how emotions in academic settings reflect the relational dynamics in educational spaces. In a classroom setting, emotions such as frustration (for lower-rated competencies) or pride (for higher-rated competencies) likely emerge through peer interactions and teacher feedback. In an EFL writing class, students may exhibit varying levels of writing ability due to their differing language skills. Therefore, supportive feedback from peers and teachers is particularly impactful in EFL writing, as

it can significantly boost students' self-confidence and motivation. Conversely, a lack of positive reinforcement or overly critical feedback can cause students' anxiety or reluctance to write.

## **Research method**

### ***Research design***

This study examined participants' emotional experiences in English academic writing, a required course task. Using a phenomenological approach with photovoice, this case study sought to capture students' subjective emotions as they completed writing assignments. A phenomenological case study was adopted to look at the essence of experiences as perceived by student writers who took an academic writing course in an Indonesian postgraduate program (Neuman, 2014). In this respect, this approach provides a window into participants' lived experiences of learning academic writing, revealing the multiple realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of emotional encounters. Photovoice allowed participants to visually express and communicate the nuances of their feelings, enabling richer insight into their unique experiences with frustration, growth, and resilience (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wass et al., 2020). In documenting personal experiences, photovoice becomes a powerful method for uncovering the depths of participants' emotional landscapes in learning (Call-Cummings et al., 2019; Mulder & Dull, 2014).

### ***Participants***

The participants in this study comprised 12 Indonesian EFL learners (three male and nine female) enrolled in a postgraduate program at a state university in North Sumatra, Indonesia. Participant recruitment was conducted through a WhatsApp group associated with one of the authors, ensuring participants were fully informed about the study's purpose and their rights. Prior to participation, all individuals expressed their voluntary consent. A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) followed, during which the authors shared their academic writing experiences, prompting participants to reflect on their own experiences using photographs. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' profiles, including pseudonyms, gender, age, occupation, English learning experience, and preferred language skills, all while ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

**Table 1.** *Participants' demographic profile.*

| pseud-<br>onyms | Gender | Age | Occupation                         | English learning<br>experience (year) |                | Most preferred lan-<br>guage skills          |
|-----------------|--------|-----|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------|
|                 |        |     |                                    | Formal                                | Non-<br>Formal |                                              |
| CT              | M      | 39  | Teacher                            | 10                                    | 0              | Speaking & writing                           |
| DF              | F      | 23  | Student                            | 10                                    | 3              | Writing                                      |
| SPI             | F      | 24  | Teacher                            | 10                                    | 2              | Speaking, reading, lis-<br>tening, & writing |
| RA              | M      | 38  | Private em-<br>ployee              | 7                                     | 2              | Speaking & reading                           |
| IJ              | F      | 24  | Teacher                            | 13                                    | 13             | Speaking                                     |
| IOM             | F      | 23  | Office adminis-<br>trative staff   | 5                                     | 4              | Writing                                      |
| HK              | F      | 28  | Hospital admin-<br>istrative staff | 10                                    | 11             | Speaking                                     |
| ADP             | M      | 26  | Teacher                            | 6                                     | 2              | Reading & writing                            |
| VA              | F      | 23  | English private<br>teacher         | 4                                     | 1              | Reading                                      |
| MOI             | F      | 23  | English teacher                    | 19                                    | 0              | Listening                                    |
| SN              | F      | 24  | Teacher                            | 10                                    | 6              | Reading & listening                          |
| NAH             | F      | 27  | Teacher                            | 10                                    | 2              | Writing                                      |

### ***Data collection***

The photovoice process involved students creating photographs to reflect on their academic writing experiences. The students controlled the camera, selecting which images to include in group discussions, allowing them to convey their feelings authentically. Following Liebenberg's (2018) three stages of photovoice – taking photographs, collective interpretation, and dissemination – participants first captured images representing their emotions about academic writing. They shared these photos during a focus group discussion, fostering critical dialogue among themselves and with researchers. In this phase, we followed Suwarno et al. (2022) that asked participants to write a caption on their photographs regarding their emotional reactions. Grounded in *SHOWED* technique (Wang, 1999; Wang & Burris, 1997), we guided the participants to share their emotions. The *SHOWED* stands for: What do you see here? What is really happening here? How does this relate to our lives? Why does this situation, concern, or strength

exist? How can we become empowered through our new understanding? What can we do about it?

### ***Analysis procedures***

Anchored in Liebenberg's (2018) second stage of photovoice – collective interpretation, thematic phenomenological analysis was employed to examine the visual and written data from the photovoice project (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Braun et al., 2019). This analysis unfolded in six stages: 1) familiarization with the data by reviewing photographs and transcripts from group interviews; 2) generating initial codes; 3) identifying themes based on those codes; 4) refining these codes into core themes; 5) naming or renaming the core themes; and 6) writing the research findings based on the previous phases. The analysis aligned with the researchers' theoretical framework and addressed the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Braun et al., 2019). Twelve personal photographs and written narratives were analyzed to distil the participants' emotional experiences, employing Pekrun and Stephens' (2012) framework to categorize emotions into positive and negative feelings.

### **Findings and discussions**

Nested in Liebenberg's (2018) third stage of photovoice – dissemination, this study shares the findings that indicate two major themes of emotions, i.e., negative and positive emotions. Grounded in the concepts of academic emotions (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012) and emotions in classroom language learning (Shao et al., 2019), our findings in this study show that participants' negative emotions are categorized as negative activating emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and confusion. The negative emotions induced their strong motivation to succeed in their writing course, resulting in various learning strategies. They avoid failure by performing their best in the task conditions, leading them to positive emotions such as enjoyment, hope, and pride.

#### ***Negative emotions***

This study identifies anxiety, frustration, and confusion as the sub-theme that emerges in the students' academic emotions within a negative continuum. As negative activating emotions, the emotional state of being anxious, frustrated, and confused led most participants to be positive when mediated with challenging and constructive conditions. Table 2 illustrates extracts of emerging data found in the participants' photovoice.

**Table 2.** *Negative emotions*

| Data Extraction                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Category    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- But writing a scientific paper is quite different from making short story [IO, photovoice data]</li> <li>- Firstly, I thought that writing was easy but it is not [MO, photovoice data]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing an essay is not like writing chat on Facebook [MO, photovoice data]</li> </ul> </li> <li>- But writing scientific papers is different from writing what I usually do [NH, photovoice data]</li> <li>- However, writing a scientific writing is not an easy thing [SN, photovoice data]</li> <li>- But writing scientific papers is different [AD, photovoice data]</li> <li>- At first, I thought writing would be easy on this level. But I was wrong [HK, photovoice data]</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                     | Anxiety     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Needs full concentration [CT, photovoice data]</li> <li>- I've stared on my desktop for about 1 hour straight [MO, photovoice data]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stuck and don't know what to do [DH, photovoice data]</li> <li>- Get stuck to choose a title [HK, photovoice data]</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Gave you headache/ 'pusing tujuh keliling' [MO, photovoice data]</li> <li>- My mind in bad situation, so I can't think well [VA, photovoice data]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Always get some problems when I am starting to write [HK, photovoice data]</li> </ul> </li> <li>- I got a trouble in writing, sometimes I can't find for a good resource [VA, photovoice data]</li> <li>- In academic writing, we can't do copy-paste in writing because it is plagiarism and we will get penalized [VA, photovoice data]</li> </ul> | Frustration |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Started to be confused about where to start [DH, photovoice data]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New thing [RA, photovoice data]</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Get confused when I read too many references [HK, photovoice data]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The references give a lot of ideas which make me don't know to create them in my own words [HK, photovoice data]</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Confusion   |

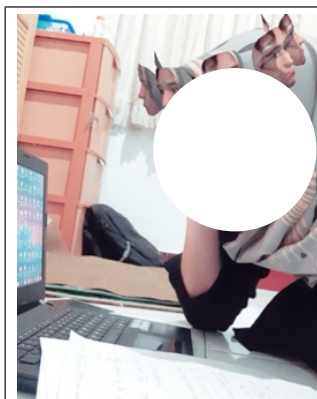
**Note:** The excerpts represent the participants' original use of English and are presented verbatim. No corrections or alterations have been made by the researchers.

### ***Anxiety: It's not like writing chat on Facebook***

Anxiety is closely related to "emotions induced by achievement outcomes" (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012, p. 5). Sabti et al. (2019) highlighted that writing anxiety denotes feelings of worry complemented by reactions such as heart pounding, excessive sweating, and maladaptive conduct during a learner's experience when performing a particular writing task. Although anxiety has

been related to failure since it can reduce the efficiency of the working memory load (Eysenck, 1997), this study found an interesting phenomenon. At the beginning of the writing course, the participants were mostly developing anxiety due to different expectations of the course from their previous experiences of writing activities. The following extract from the participants' narrative photo voices illustrates their anxiety at the beginning of the course.

**Figure 1.** *Anxiety as a negative emotion (MOI, WhatsApp interview)*



**Figure 1 Alt Text:** *A photo of a young woman wearing a hijab sitting at a desk, looking contemplative, with her hand on her temple. The image is overlaid with a humorous, text-based reflection on her anxiety as a negative emotion and learning process in academic writing at university, emphasizing the challenges, benefits, and intellectual satisfaction of writing.*

I began to write my academic writing during my university years. Firstly, I thought that writing was easy but it was not. Academic writing can be very humorous. It is done to express a collection of thoughts as simply and unambiguously as possible rather than to amuse, as in literature. Academic writing gives you a headache, or I called it “*pusing tujuh keliling*.” Can you see my face in that picture? I’ve stared at my desktop for about 1 hour straight. Because writing an essay is not like writing a chat on Facebook. You have to validate your data, have a “good” source, be able to find problems to be written, be sensitive to the reader’s condition, be able to compile a writing plan, be able to use language, able to start writing, and the most important thing is your mental health condition must be in good condition. Second, even if it **gives you a headache**, writing is **very important**. Writing **helps us train to develop** effective reading skills and **to combine** readings from various sources. Trust me, writing is **so amazing**. When was the last time you went to the library? I think it can be counted on the fingers. Writing makes us go to the library. Library is a **place full of ideas**. And don’t forget that writing can **improve** the organization of facts/data **clearly** and **systematically** and, of course, **get intellectual satisfaction**.

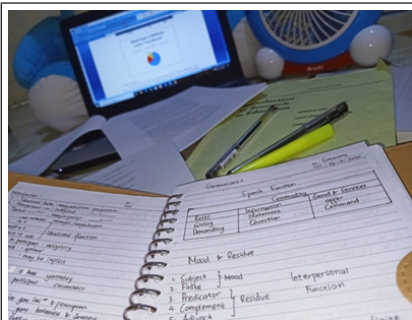
Most participants voiced their anxieties since writing essays or scientific articles is unlike writing a short story or novel, chatting on Facebook, or writing stories on WhatsApp. As indicated in the data presented in Figure 1, there are many aspects to consider, such as ideas generation and organization, data presentation, language appropriateness, and mood in writing. In addition, their anxieties,

however, were then induced by the motivational mechanism revealing their relationships between anxiety and performance, such as learning strategies to succeed in the writing course. Anxiety in this study, therefore, has motivational effects on the participants since they were tempted to study harder and be more resilient throughout the course. Anxious feelings of individuals intensify their strategies to compensate for the improved cognitive demands, which leads to enhanced outcomes (Nurfaidah, et al., 2020; Shao et al., 2019). It can be implied that the motivational mechanism of anxiety seems to be a collateral aspect of the students' capacity to organize their anxiety in learning writing.

### ***Frustration: I'm stuck and don't know what to do***

As a psychological response to an obstacle introduced between a subject and his or her goal (Sword et al., 2018), frustration emerges as “the result of the cognitive qualities of task information and the processing of such information” (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012, p. 5). In this study, the participants revealed that writing is not an easy, challenging, and complicated activity that deals with knowledge aspects of writing stages and complex referential tasks. Such phrases as *not easy, difficult, quite difficult, quite difficult and complicated, one of my difficult lessons, and the first word is the most difficult* show the participants' struggle with the cognitively demanding activities. Their emotions are also portrayed in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.** *Frustration as a negative emotion (DH, WhatsApp interview)*



**Figure 2 Alt Text:** *A photo of a workspace featuring a notebook with handwritten notes, a pen, and a digital tablet displaying a document. The accompanying text describes the writer's challenges and frustrations with scientific writing, highlighting the difficulty of starting, seeking inspiration, managing distractions, and ultimately pushing through the process.*

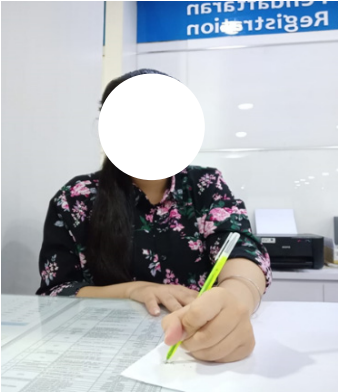
Scientific writing is **interesting** and **challenging** to me. I think of many ideas in my brain when I want to write. However, when I started to open a laptop and write pages, I was confused about where to start. The data and method I want to use are in mind, but the first word is the most difficult. Then, I started looking for some sources that might give me a way to get my brain to work. When I'm stuck and don't know what to do to keep going, I sometimes **lie down with mixed thoughts, go out looking for fresh air, disturb the kids just to get the mood back**, and often **play games**. Often also, in the middle of the interlude, I get an idea of what I'm supposed to do to keep my scientific writing going, and I keep going then. Scientific writing is difficult but it is challenging as I must **push and challenge myself** to be able to do more.

As the findings of this study reveal, frustration is one of the negative activating epistemic emotions experienced when the participants need to delve into some ideas that require attentional tasks. During this cognitive activity, they experienced a variety of sources of frustration, such as finding ideas to write, struggling with the first word to write, and navigating reliable resources while avoiding the trap of plagiarism. This finding aligns with previous research, which has indicated that frustration denotes not just a single emotion but a whole slew of feelings, mostly connected to or conflated with anger, disappointment, or helplessness (Sword et al., 2018).

***Confusion: There are too many references!***

Many emotions can be experienced during learning, either as achievement emotions or as epistemic emotions. It can be considered an epistemic emotion if the focus is on cognitive dissonance resulting from an unsolved problem or as an achievement emotion if the focus is on personal failure and the inability to solve problems (Craig et al., 2008; Pekrun & Stephens, 2012). The emotions are depicted in a participant’s voice, presented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3.** *Confusion as a negative emotion (HK, WhatsApp interview)*

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>As a student, writing is <b>not something new</b> for me. I have written my thesis before and am now in the post graduate program. At first time, I thought writing would be easy at this level. But I was <b>wrong</b>, I always <b>have some problems</b> when I start to write. Sometimes, I <b>get stuck in choosing a title</b> for my academic writing, and I must pay attention from the first chapter until the last. I must follow the rules step by step for good scientific writing. Once I get the idea, I will finish it soon. However, sometimes I <b>get confused</b> when I read too many references. The references give a lot of ideas, which makes me <b>don't know how to create</b> them in my own words. And sometimes, because I have <b>no idea what to write</b>, it <b>makes me blank</b>.</p> |
| <p><b>Figure 3 Alt Text:</b> <i>A photo of a woman sitting at a desk, writing on a piece of paper with a focused expression. The accompanying text reflects on her struggles with academic writing, including challenges in starting, selecting a title, organizing ideas from multiple references, and dealing with moments of confusion and writer's block.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

Confusion can occur when expectations are not met. As Dewey (1933, p.24) mentions, “the origin of thinking is some perplexity, confusion, or doubt”. In

this case, it can be seen from the data (see Figure 3) that some students get confused when reading too many references. Here, students get confused when they get lots of ideas from the references that they get. At first, they hoped to get a good idea and could immediately start writing based on relevant references, but because there were so many references, they became confused and did not know how to start writing. Sometimes, reading too many references causes them to be confused and cannot focus on what will be explicitly written. They become unsure about which references are appropriate and relevant to their research. Finding a reference source that is relevant to their research is indeed not easy. The more references they get, the more confused they will be in deciding, synthesizing the reading source, and translating the scientific concepts obtained into something that the general public can understand.

### *Positive emotions*

Data analysis on positive emotions revealed that the participants indicated three positive activating emotions, i.e., enjoyment, hope, and pride (see Table 3).

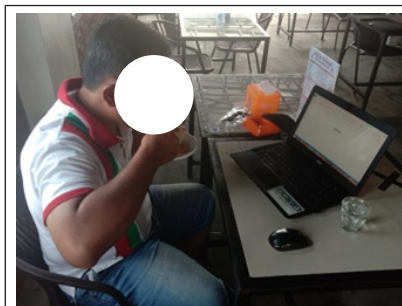
**Table 3.** *Positive emotions*

| <b>Data Extraction</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Category</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interesting [DH, photovoice data]</li> <li>- Challenging [DH, photovoice data]</li> <li>- I like the most [IO, photovoice data]</li> <li>- I seemed to have a very high enthusiasm for doing the task [IO, photovoice data]</li> <li>- Trust me, writing is so amazing [MO, photovoice data]</li> <li>- Fun lesson [NH, photovoice data]</li> <li>- We can pour expressions, ideas, and emotions into words [NH, photovoice data]</li> <li>- I like writing the literary when I was in college, I know about the scientific work, and start to writing the scientific work [SPI, photovoice data]</li> <li>- I'm more like to writing without being confused anymore [VA, photovoice data]</li> <li>- Writing is fun. Writing is a form of our creativity ... [AD, photovoice data]</li> <li>- Ordering coffee, drinking till 'aahhh' [CT, photovoice data]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Best place to do writing [CT, photovoice data]</li> <li>- Easy idea, easy to develop idea [CT, photovoice data]</li> </ul> </li> <li>- I used to write a short story through Wattpad [IO, photovoice data]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Library is a place full of ideas. [MO, photovoice data]</li> </ul> </li> <li>- One of my favourite activities in junior high school [SPI, photovoice data]</li> </ul> | Enjoyment       |

| Data Extraction                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Category |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- I still learn about good writing now [<i>IJ, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- I hope I can do the best of my writing [<i>IJ, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- Hopefully I can be the one of experts or professionals [<i>IJ, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- Advantage for my own self [<i>IO, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- Could reach more scientific vocabularies [<i>IO, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- Help us train to develop effective reading skills [<i>MO, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- To combine readings from various sources [<i>MO, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- By learning how to write scientific papers, we will be able to make a scientific paper by ourselves [<i>NH, photovoice data</i>]</li></ul> | Hope     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Writing is very important [<i>MO, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- And don't forget, writing can improve the organization of facts/ data in a clear and systematic manner and of course, get intellectual satisfaction [<i>SN, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- We can express points of view, emotions, and opinions into a bunch of words [<i>SN, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- Writing can train speed in writing and typing [<i>SN, photovoice data</i>]</li><li>- Writing can also train the brain to process words and put them in writing [<i>SN, photovoice data</i>]</li></ul>                                                                                                                                         | Pride    |

***Enjoyment: Trust me, writing is so amazing***

Academic writing in the processing phase requires complex input, starting from reading many resources and mastering writing abilities such as paraphrasing, as well as cultivating a positive attitude toward the writing activity. The findings reveal that some students feel writing activity is enjoyable since they successfully meet the required competencies of academic writing (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012). The writing process is regarded as intrinsically rewarding, with positive appraisals, including “interesting”, “high enthusiasm”, and “challenging”, reflecting writers’ favorable disposition toward the activity. The expressions of enjoyment suggest that academic writing could raise students’ positive emotions since it fosters the dynamic expression of knowledge.

**Figure 4.** *Enjoyment as a positive emotion (CT, WhatsApp interview)*

**Figure 4 Alt Text:** *A photo of a man sitting at a table in a coffee shop, drinking coffee and working on a laptop. The accompanying text describes his writing process, emphasizing the importance of relaxation and creating an enjoyable environment. He shares that going to a coffee shop helps him focus, generates ideas, and makes it easier to develop his writing, combining leisure with productivity.*

Writing an essay or article is not easy. It needs full concentration to complete the writing. My technique to start writing is to have a **relaxing day**. I always take an **enjoyable day** to start my writing. Even though you have a **fresh and enjoyable day**, it **doesn't mean you can write easily**. **A good technique is needed** to start it. Well, normally, when I started writing, I would **go to a coffee shop to give myself time to relax my mind** before starting to write. Normally, I order a cup of coffee and drink it till said "**aahhh**". I will go directly to start my writing after drinking it. Coffee shop is my **best place** to do everything, which is dealing with academic tasks, especially writing essays or articles. At coffee shop, I find it **easy to write** essays or articles. It gives me **ideas**, and it is **easy to develop** my ideas.

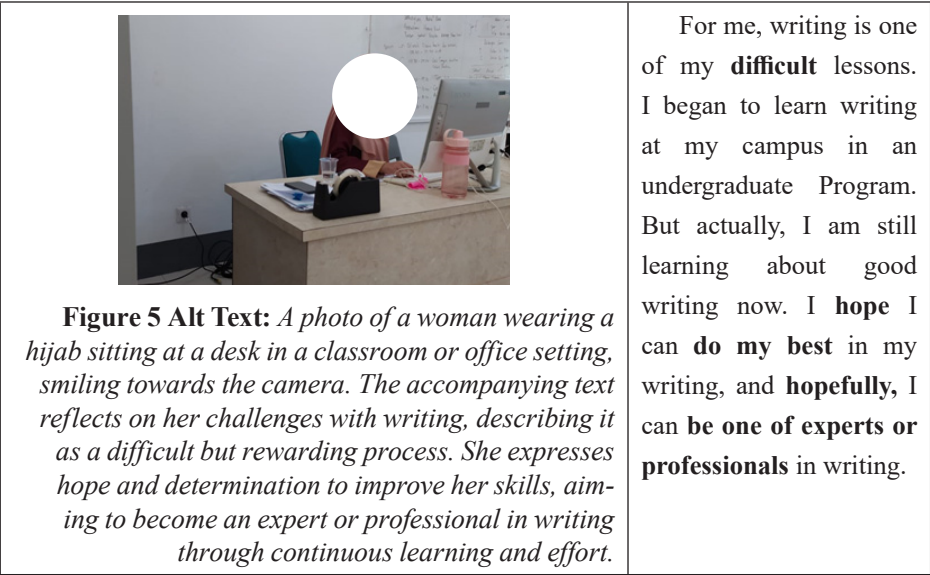
Further, this study also reveals spatial factors that influence enjoyment. The students' voices indicate that the location of the writing activity matters when it comes to ideas. For instance, as shown in the photovoice extraction (see Figure 4), a student claims a coffee shop is a place for ideas, while another argues that the library is the home of ideas. These two realms describe how the surroundings and writers' preferences affect the writing process. In line with Cloutier (2016), the researchers of this study feel that it is necessary to investigate the daily practice of writing, the factors that assist the authors to come up with their ideas (location, time, ritual, and process), how they write, and the experience of their articles being published or not. Badley (2020) even emphasizes that academics should imagine the process not as a tedious task but an activity that could be enjoyed in daily writing practice.

### ***Hope: I hope I can do the best of my writing***

The tough process of academic writing is overcome because students also have expectations about the outcome of the activity. Pekrun (2011) defines this as hope, which is part of positive emotion activation expected by writers as it can positively impact the desire to accomplish the activity. Participants' voices indicate the various experiences they will gain at the end of the academic writing course in an attempt to enrich and expand their expertise. For instance,

voices expressed in phrases or clauses, e.g., *advantage for myself, help us train to develop effective reading skills, learn about good writing, and reach more scientific vocabularies* suggest their intentions in the whilst- and post-writing process. These represent their personal feelings and will also affect the quality of their writing products. The linguistic evidence of the emotion is presented in Figure 5.

**Figure 5.** *Hope as a positive emotion (IJ, WhatsApp interview)*



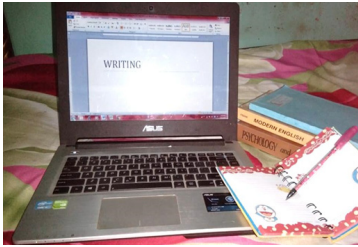
From the photovoice extract, the participant visualizes herself in a room with a desktop in front of her and a whiteboard, which indicates her role as an educator. The responsibility to be a good teacher by having adequate skills such as writing ability may be the reason behind the statement in the written voice form. It can be clearly identified in the statement, “I hope I can do the best of my writing, and hopefully I can be one of the experts or professionals in writing”. The lexis chosen, “hope” and “hopefully,” suggest positive emotions of hope. Further, the participant also dreams of being an expert in writing. Badley (2020) highlighted that writing is an act of hope to be bound up with the notion of the community, as writing is a social activity embedded within a community of writers (Elkins, 2013).

***Pride: It is an intellectual satisfaction***

In activating positive emotion, pride also appears in participants’ voices. Sometimes, writers feel pride as an internal cause toward academic writing success (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012) since they have anticipated the outcome of the activity. This may arise when the participants have already understood the

consequences of being a magister holder. Writing in accordance with academic context is quite different from other writings in that it demands critical ideas and complex ethical and technical writing. One of the photovoice data expressing positive emotion can be seen in Figure 6.

**Figure 6.** *Pride as a positive emotion (SN, WhatsApp interview)*



**Figure 6 Alt Text:** *A photo of an open laptop displaying a document titled “WRITING”, surrounded by books and stationery. The accompanying text highlights the joy and challenges of writing, describing it as a fun activity for expressing thoughts and emotions while emphasizing the structured and fact-based nature of scientific writing.*

Writing is a **fun activity**. By writing, we **can express points of view, emotions, and opinions** in a bunch of words. Writing can train speed in writing and typing and can also train the brain to process words and put them in writing. However, scientific writing is **not an easy thing** because there are steps that must be taken to write a scientific paper. Scientific writing must be equipped with pre-existing theories. It must be in accordance with existing facts, in contrast to writing stories or poetry that can be composed according to our wishes. Scientific writing also has a separate writing format that has been arranged, starting with an introduction and background, followed by related theories, then discussion and findings, and ending with conclusions and suggestions.

The excerpt verbalizes the feeling in several statements, e.g., “writing a scientific writing is not an easy thing”. The participant accentuates the notion that academic writing requires specific skills and competencies. When the participant passes through the process, her experiences can be worth having. Other expressions of pride are presented in the phrases of the photovoice data, e.g., “writing is very important”, “writing can also train the brain to process words and put them in writing,” and “writing can improve the organization of facts/data in a clear and systematic manner and of course, get intellectual satisfaction”. The participant displayed that writing activity is not easy, and once she had gone through the academic writing process, she had already achieved a privilege: the opportunity and ability to participate and succeed in academic writing.

## Conclusions

This research explores Indonesian students’ emotions when learning to write academic papers. It is frequently regarded as a cognitively and emotionally laden activity that offers emotionally dynamic, expansive, and intense experiences. They are encapsulated with negative and positive emotions, which affect how

students put their interest in it, how they are motivated, and how they resist all obstacles to achieve their target. The findings reveal that anxiety, frustration, and confusion are the negative emotions indicated by the participants in learning writing. This study revealed that those negative emotions were catalysts of the participants' strong drive to thrive in their writing course, resulting in exploring various learning strategies.

Additionally, positive emotions of enjoyment, hope, and pride were indicated in their process of learning writing. These findings indicate that emotions are essential to students' language learning and writing performance. Thus, identifying and organizing students' emotional reactions to writing can be significant in improving students' writing performance. This research implies that teachers should be aware of their students' emotions to know how to give proper scaffolding, facilitate students' needs in fostering their writing skills, raise their awareness of their writing competence, and engage them with meaningful tasks.

Our analysis has drawn attention to the positive and negative emotions the students faced. The study findings we highlighted also have particular implications for institutions in Indonesia, a non-English-speaking country that wishes to support students' academic writing purposes better. Beyond this, this research does not offer prescriptions for dealing with the students' emotions. However, it provides a conceptual framework for better understanding how Indonesian students can contribute to improving their academic writing and identifying their emotions in the EFL context.

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