

Investigating Writing Anxiety Among the ESL Learners

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to measure the level of writing anxiety experienced by the tertiary-level learners. In this research, the researcher tried to find out the factors responsible for writing anxiety among the tertiary-level learners. This study was based on quantitative research, and two questionnaires were used to collect data. The questionnaire survey result showed that there is a high level of writing anxiety in English as a Second Language among the tertiary-level learners. This study also examined the problem for the learners who feel anxious about their writing. A sample of 50 learners enrolled in the English Department was chosen to participate in the study. The researcher gave them a questionnaire adapted from the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) developed by Zhang (2004) in order to identify the causes and the most common type of writing anxiety among them. The result of the quantitative data show the most common types of L2 writing anxiety among the students were Somatic Anxiety (SA), Cognitive Anxiety, and avoidance anxiety.

Keywords: *Writing anxiety, Somatic Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, and Avoidance Anxiety.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the important parts of academic studies. Writing is a demanding skill, especially for learners of a second language .writing as a vital and productive skill and considered a complex and difficult skill, especially for learners in the ESL /EFL context. According to Nunan, 2003.88), Writing can also be defined as a physical and mental activity that is aimed at expressing and impressing. It is classified as a physical activity because the writer must act of performing ideas like typing an email into a computer. As a mental work, the activities of writing focus more on the act of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express and organise them into statements and paragraphs that enable a reader to understand the ideas of the written work. Brown (2001) also states that writing is the written products of thinking, drafting, and revising that requires specialised skills in generating ideas, and how to organize coherently, revising text for clear meaning, editing text for appropriate grammar and how to produce a final product. Writing is a productive skill which needs competence in other macro skills, namely listening, reading, and speaking. Silva (1993) had already stated that writing in a second language is definitely different in various aspects from writing in the first language. Thus, it is a demanding task, especially for second language learners, due to the undeniably difficult prerequisites to satisfy before being able to master writing.

Anxiety is said to be the most important factor that affects the process of learning . Anxiety arises while learning a second language in classroom situations. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) define Anxiety as a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension specially associated with second language contexts, involved in speaking , listening and learning. Horwitz and Cope (1986) contended that second language anxiety is composed of three parts: communication apprehension, fear of negative social evaluation and test anxiety. Communication apprehension appears during real interaction with others. As a result, students may avoid situations in which they are supposed to talk with someone. Fear of negative social evaluation is provoked by students' concerns that someone else would evaluate their performance. Writing anxiety is considered a barrier to enhancing the English language and performance. Students vary in writing anxiety from a high level to a low level, depending upon their past and present educational experiences and self-esteem. Test anxiety is experienced due to students' worry that they will perform poorly during an examination or that they will fail any form of test. Stress and nervousness connected with writing have been discussed in literature under different terms: writer's block (e.g. Rose 1980.1984).

Writing anxiety is also considered one of these problems. Grupe and Nitschke (2013) defined anxiety as “anticipatory affective, cognitive, and behavioural changes in response to uncertainty about potential future threat.” Specifically, Hassan (2001) defined writing anxiety as “a general avoidance of writing and of situations perceived by the individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing” (p. 4). Topuzkanamis (2015) defined writing anxiety as the worry a person feels toward a task of qualified writing. Writing anxiety is a multidimensional construct that causes a negative psychological reaction to writing. Writing anxiety is a kind of emotion with psychological and physiological aspects. The psychological components involve anxiety, fear, and so forth (Choi, 2013). The physiological aspects may not be experienced by everyone, but can include symptoms like stomach upset, sweating, trembling, and headaches. According to Liu and Ni (2015), writing anxiety has a significant negative effect on student performance when practising a foreign language (p. 46). This is mostly because of test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986). Students with a high level of anxiety can choose not to write (Rahim & Hayas2014) and feel distressed when they are compelled to write (Tiryaki, 2012).

Anxiety is said to be one of the factors that could affect the process of learning, and researchers such as MacIntyre (1995), Horwitz et al. (1986) and MacIntyre and Gardner (1989 and 1991) claim that language courses are very anxiety-provoking. Studies have also shown that students utilizing productive skills, namely writing and speaking, are found to experience a considerable amount of anxiety in the process of learning (Hilleson, 1996; Zhang, 2001). The issue to be addressed is whether anxiety is a cause or a consequence of poor achievement in second or foreign language learning.

Background of the study

Anxiety or apprehension, which belongs to the affective variables category, has inspired particular interest in the field of language acquisition and learning over the last several decades (Atay & Kurt, 2006). The term writing apprehension was introduced by Daly and Miller (1975). The latest definition of writing apprehension could be traced to Lee & Krashen (2002), who referred to writing apprehension as anxiety about writing. Hence, writing apprehension could be used as a significant predictor to determine the success rate of acquiring Englishlanguage proficiency among ESL learners, Carlo Magno (2008). Researchers of ESL and EFL have proven that writing apprehension or anxiety has a positive correlation on writing performance and quality (Hassan, 2001). Hanna (2010) found that highly apprehensive writers yielded low-quality papers as their output, avoided writing assignment and even procrastinated compared to those students who had low apprehensive feelings. The study also showed that writing apprehension has an influence at all levels, even after the students have graduated from their courses.

Problem statement

Writing is an important component of academic studies. University programs consider writing as a vital and productive skill for students. Writing anxiety can negatively influence learners' writing performance. Therefore, as a result, the students feel demotivated and consider writing as a complicated and fruitless activity; it is very important to measure the writing anxiety among tertiary-level learners.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the writing anxiety among the tertiary-level learners. If there is, what are the main causes of writing anxiety? What strategies can be used to reduce writing anxiety? It is important to solve the problem, as this writing anxiety will affect our writing skills. The main purpose of this study is to know the reasons why learners experience writing anxiety.

Research objectives

The main objectives of this study were:

1. To investigate the perspectives of ESL students regarding writing anxiety.
2. To determine the level of writing anxiety among the ESL learners.

Research Questions

The general aim of this study was to meet the objectives of the study by formulating and examining the following research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of ESL students regarding writing anxiety?
2. To what extent do ESL students feel anxiety while writing in English?

Significance of the study

This study provides an understanding of the causes of language anxiety and how they can help students to overcome their anxiety. It is supposed that fulfillment of the above aims helps to provide educators with valuable information concerning writing anxiety as an essential factor that affects their students' writing ability.

Limitations of the study

The scope of the study is limited to only the English department students of the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University. Thus, the sample is not relevant for the other departments because the level of anxiety may be different and the findings may be different.

All the samples are from non-native speakers of English, and they all belong to different mother tongues. All these students use or study English only as their second Language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language Anxiety

Language anxiety has occupied a great body of research for the past few decades. Previous research findings on language anxiety have revealed the fact that anxiety can impede foreign language performance and its production. Most of the time, language learners face some kinds of problems in learning a new language. Language anxiety has long been recognized as an obstacle in second language

learning. Khattak, Jamshed, Mirza and Baig (2011) reported, “Anxiety experienced in learning the English language can be debilitating and may influence students’ achievements of their goals”. In other words, anxiety is one of the most significant factors affecting language learning. High level of language anxiety is correlated with poor performance in language learning. The experience of language anxiety varies from learner to learner. According to Ying (2008), language anxiety is caused by (1) personal and interpersonal, (2) learner beliefs about language learning, (3) teacher beliefs about language anxiety, (4) teacher-learner interactions, (5) classroom procedures, and (6) language testing.

The literature on language anxiety has offered several definitions of foreign language anxiety. Sanders and Wills (2003) described anxiety in general as “a complex, multifaceted experience, a feeling which comes flooding into our whole selves, affecting many different aspects of our being”. Foreign language anxiety is defined as the “worry and negative emotional reaction aroused.

when learning or utilizing a second language” (Young, 1999). Likewise, language anxiety is defined 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” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) have also provided a very similar definition of language anxiety; they believe that language anxiety is “the feeling of tension and apprehension specially associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and writing”.

Language research has shown the effect of language anxiety on students’ achievement and performance in English language learning. Early studies found a strong relationship between language anxiety and language learning and achievement (Horwitz et. al., 1986). If a student he or she feels anxious in the classroom, the possibility of having a frustrating and bad experience with the foreign language increases (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Ewald (2007) found that high levels of anxiety usually had a negative effect on the language acquisition process. Language learners who experienced language anxiety will lead them to feeling of worried about failing. Yan and Horwitz (2008) conducted a study to examine the factors associated with students’ anxiety in language learning in China and found that comparison with peers, learning strategies, and language learning interest and motivation were the most immediate factors. Another study conducted by Woodrow (2006) to examine the correlation between anxiety and language performance among EFL learners who attended English For Academic Purposes (EAP) courses. The findings indicate that the most frequent reported cause of anxiety was fear of interacting with native speakers, giving or all presentations and performing in front of classmates. Language anxiety is also a strong indicator of negative attitudes towards language learning. Chao (2003) conducted a study that employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the level of anxiety among private college students who learned English as a foreign language in Taiwan. The findings of this study revealed that the level anxiety was moderately high. On Wuegbuzie, Baily and Daley (1999) examined the factors that predicted foreign language anxiety and found significant relations between the following variables: age, academic achievement, prior high school experience with foreign languages, and expected overall average for current language course. In terms of students’ age, it was found that older students had higher language anxiety than did younger students.

Writing Anxiety

Language anxiety causes students’ negative attitudes towards the foreign language writing skill. Writing anxiety has an effect on students’ writing performance. Writing anxiety is considered a barrier to enhancing English language learning and performance. Cheng (1997) found a negative correlation between FL writing anxiety and FL writing achievement. Cheng (2002) believes that writers with a higher level of anxiety tend to avoid taking writing courses. Horwitz et al. (1986) indicated that students with higher writing anxiety write shorter compositions, have difficulty concentrating and grasping the content of input, have problems discriminating the sounds and structure, become forgetful, or even over-study.

Theoretical Background

This section reviews the studies on second language anxiety, especially on second language writing anxiety, concerning whether SLA (SLWA) is a state anxiety or specific-situation anxiety, whether it is harmful or helpful for language performance, which factors are associated with language anxiety and how to deal with language anxiety in the language classroom. The main focus is to illustrate SLWA concerning its definition and types, causes, effects, as well as learning and teaching strategies for coping with it.

Definition and types of second language writing anxiety (SLWA)

SLWA is a specific facet of SLA and has been studied as a distinct form of SLA in the recent decade, with the development of theories and research findings in SLA.

Anxiety

Anxiety or apprehension, which belongs to the affective variables category, has been particularly studied in the field of language acquisition and learning over the last several decades (Kurt, 2006). The term writing apprehension was introduced by Daly and Miller (1975). The latest definition of writing apprehension could be traced to Lee and Krashen (2002), who referred to writing apprehension as anxiety about writing. Anxiety is “a subjective feeling of tension, worry, apprehension, and nervousness related to an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.” (Horwitz, 1986).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This focuses on the methodology that the researcher has used to conduct the study. Designing of the instrument which has been used by the researcher also discussed in this chapter. The steps that the researcher has taken to ensure the sampling of the study, reliability and validity of the questionnaires, data collection and procedure of data analysis and the limitations of this study.

Research design

L2 writing anxiety needed to be studied in more depth, especially since the majority of the studies mentioned in Chapter 2 included the use of quantitative research methods only (Choi, 2013; Rezaei Jafari, 2014; Huang, Eslam, & Hu, 2010). The questionnaire will constitute the quantitative component, which will represent the qualitative method of research in the study. This study made use of the quantitative research design is used in this study. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire is used for the collection of data. The questionnaire was determined by the literature reviewed, the aims and the research questions of this study, as well as by the theoretical positions. Data is collected based on the questionnaire made available to the tertiary level students selected as a sample. The data collected is managed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Research Sample

The participants for this study were students from the University of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, Shaheed Benazirabad. Researcher choose English department of the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University located in Shaheed Benazirabad city for collecting the data for her study. The tertiary-level learners are a sample of this study. The population of this study is 50 students. There were 27 females and 23 male participants for this study.

Data Collection Instruments

In order to increase the credibility of the study, data collection methods were the questionnaire. A close ended questionnaire is distributed to the students for with short description and information about

protecting their privacy. The data collection instrument is a closed-ended questionnaire data collection instrument. It contains questions formulated based on the research questions and research variables. Cognitive anxiety (as reflected in negative expectations, preoccupation with performance), and Avoidance behaviour (as reflected in avoidance in writing) (Appendix A). The reason for selecting this inventory as a measure of writing anxiety was that it has been proved as being highly reliable and valid by means of correlation and factor analysis (Cheng, 2004). 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).

Questionnaire

To answer the research questions, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventor (SLWAI) developed by Cheng (Cheng, 2004) was used. The questionnaire consists of 22 items that measure the degree of CA, SA, and AA. The items that are in the first category (CA) are 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20, and 21. The items in the second category (SA) are 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, and 19. Lastly, items 4, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18, and 22 are in the third category (AA). Its main aim was to measure the extent to which L2 learners feel anxious about their writing and during the writing process itself. The SLWAI is considered reliable and valid, as it has been proven by means of factor analysis and correlation and has been used and adopted in many recent studies related to L2 writing anxiety (Al Asmari, 2013; Atay& Kurt, 2006). In addition, the fact that it identified the most common types of writing anxiety among the students, which also showed the major causes of their anxiety, made it reliable in the context of this study.

Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used for data entry and analysis. Descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviation and frequency table were used to calculate the writing anxiety among the tertiary level learners.

Ethical Consideration

This study fulfils all terms of ethics and morals. This study is defined in terms of fairness. There is fairness while gathering the data. This study shows honesty towards investigation. The study is carefully gathered. Here carefulness code of ethics means that data analysis and results are done by an appropriate method and in an effective manner.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This analyses the data collected from the students of the English department of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Benazirabad. Participants of the study were 50 undergraduate students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University; all the participants were students of English literature and linguistics. There are 27 females and 23 male participants for this study.

Questionnaire Results

The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify students' level of writing anxiety, such as Cognitive Anxiety(CA), Somatic Anxiety (SA), and Avoidance Anxiety (AA). Even though each anxiety type was targeted by a number of items in the questionnaire . Each item in the questionnaire has four options: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. In order to clearly illustrate the level of each type of anxiety among the participants.

Male					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	23	46.0	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	27	54.0		
Total		50	100.0		

Table 1:

The above table 1 shows that the male ratio of participant of the study. The table shows that the total number of participant was 50; among them 23 are male, and the total percentage of male was 46%. The table 1.1 shows the frequency of participants for this study.

Female					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	27	54.0	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	23	46.0		
Total		50	100.0		

Table 2:

The table 2 shows the number of female participants of the study. The total numbers of female participants were 27 from 50. The total percentage females were 54%. The table 1.1 and 1.2 shows the frequency of students of the study.

1. I feel my heart pounding when I write English composition under time constraint.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	8	16.0	16.0	20.0
	Neutral	15	30.0	30.0	50.0
	Agree	19	38.0	38.0	88.0
	Strongly agree	6	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 3:

The above table 3 shows that there are a total of 50 participants, and from them 38% agree with the statement that “I feel my heart pounding when I write an English composition under time constraint.”

2. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	11	22.0	22.0	24.0
	Neutral	16	32.0	32.0	56.0
	Agree	21	42.0	42.0	98.0
	strongly agree	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The table 4 shows that there are total 50 participants and from them 42% agree with the statement that “While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated”.

3. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Disagree	8	16.0	16.0	24.0
	Neutral	8	16.0	16.0	40.0
	Agree	25	50.0	50.0	90.0
	strongly agree	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows that there are a total of 50 participants, and from them, 50% agree with the statement that “I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.

4. I usually do my best to avoid writing English composition.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Disagree	23	46.0	46.0	58.0
	Neutral	6	12.0	12.0	70.0
	Agree	11	22.0	22.0	92.0
	strongly agree	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 6:

The Table 1.6 shows that there are a total of 50 participants, and from them, 22% agree with the statement that “I usually do my best to avoid writing English composition”.

5. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	20	40.0	40.0	42.0
	Neutral	12	24.0	24.0	66.0
	Agree	14	28.0	28.0	94.0
	strongly agree	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The table 7 shows that there are total 50 participants and from them 28% agree with the statement that “My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition”.

6. I do not worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Disagree	14	28.0	28.0	40.0
	Neutral	10	20.0	20.0	60.0
	Agree	14	28.0	28.0	88.0
	strongly agree	6	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 8:

The table 1.8 shows that there are total 50 participants and from them 28% agree with the statement that “I do not worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others”.

7. I tremble or perspire when I write English composition under time pressure.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	6	12.0	12.0	14.0
	Neutral	18	36.0	36.0	50.0
	Agree	22	44.0	44.0	94.0
	Strongly agree	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows that there are a total of 50 participants, and from them, 44% agree with the statement that “I tremble or perspire when I write English composition under time pressure”.

Discussion of the questionnaire survey result

This section discusses the results found in the table; in the table, questions 1, 3, 7,9,14,17,20,21 focused on the cognitive anxiety. To interpret the results found from this part, the following interpretation was used:

Cognitive Anxiety (CA)

Cognitive anxiety (CA) is the cognitive part of experiencing anxiety, which refers to concern about others’ perceptions, preoccupation with performance, and negative expectations (Cheng, 2004) . Table 1 to 3 gives an overview of the level of CA among the participants. It includes the items in the questionnaire that are related to this specific type of anxiety, and their percentages represent the extent to which the students agree or disagree with each item. However, there are positive and negative items presented in this table.

Cognitive Anxiety (CA)

Items	S.DA	D.A	N	A	SA
1. While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.	2	14	12	18	4
3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.	1	11	16	21	1
7. I do not worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others.	6	14	10	14	6
9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.	5	9	12	14	10
14. I am afraid that other students would deride my English composition if they read it.	3	14	15	11	7
17. I do not worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.	6	6	11	21	6
20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.	2	15	13	16	4
21. I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.	6	12	8	22	2

For instance, although item 9 is positive and item 21 is negative, they both indicate that the students feel anxious about their writing if they know it will be evaluated so they agree more with item 21 (44%)

than item 9 (28%). This shows that the participants have considered each statement and provided meaningful responses.

Cognitive Anxiety

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.	1	11	16	21	1
9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade	5	9	12	14	10
14. I am afraid that other students would deride my English composition if they read it.	3	14	15	11	7
20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.	2	15	13	16	4
Average	2.75	12.25	14	15.5	5.5
Total	15%		21%		

In order to find out the level of cognitive anxiety among the 50 students who participated in the study, the researcher first calculated the average of the positive items in the questionnaire related to this type of anxiety. There are certain items that the majority of the students seem to either agree or disagree about. For instance, in Item 3, 42% of the participants feel worried while writing English compositions if they know they will be evaluated. This is why 28% of the participants also agree with item 9, which shows that students feel worried about getting a very poor grade. On the other hand, the students do not seem to be afraid of sharing their written work with their peers, which is why 28% are neither worried about other students deriding their English compositions (Item 14) nor afraid of their written work being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.

Cognitive Anxiety

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.	2	14	12	18	4
7. I do not worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others.	6	14	10	14	6
17. I do not worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.	6	6	11	21	6
21. I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.	6	12	8	22	2
Average	5	11.5	10.25	18.75	4.5
Total	16.5%			23.25%	

This table shows that the average of the negative items in the questionnaire related to CA. There are certain items that the majority of the students either agree with or disagree. For example, in Item 1, 36% agree that they are not nervous while writing in English. Item 17, 42% agree that they do not feel worried about what other people think of their writing. In item 21, 44% agree that they do not feel afraid that their writing would be rated very poor.

Somatic Anxiety (SA)

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
2. I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.	2	8	15	19	6
6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.	1	20	12	14	3

8.I tremble or perspire when I write English composition under time pressure.	1	6	18	22	3
11.My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.	5	6	10	25	4
13.I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.	2	1`2	13	20	3
15.I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions .	2	14	12	19	3
19.I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.	4	15	11	18	2
Average	2.42	11.57	13	19.57	3.42
Total	13.99%			22.99%	

This table shows the students' level of Somatic Anxiety (SA), which refers to the way one perceives one's nervousness, tension, and other physiological effects resulting from the anxiety experience (Cheng, 2004). All of the items associated with SA are positive statements, so they are reported in the same table. However, there are certain items with which the majority of the students agree or disagree. For instance, the majority of the students seem to feel anxious when they write English composition under time constraint, which is why 44% students indicated that they tremble or perspire when they write English composition under time constraint (item 8) and probably most of the students 38% agree that they feel heart pounding (item 2), confused when they have to write English compositions under time pressure (item 11). Although there are several physical symptoms that show that the majority of the students feel anxious while writing under a time constraint, only 40% of them seem to panic (item 13), and their minds go blank when they start to work on English composition (item 6). Lastly, 38% of the students agree that they freeze up when they are unexpectedly asked to write English compositions (item 15) 36% of the students agree they feel tense while writing (item 19).

Avoidance Anxiety (AA)

According to Cheng (2004), the level of Avoidance Anxiety (AA), which is the behavioural aspect of experiencing anxiety that leads to avoidance of writing among the students, is presented in a table.

Avoidance Anxiety

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.	4	8	8	25	5
5.I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.	6	23	6	11	4
10.I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.	3	11	8	23	5
12.Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write my composition.	3	11	19	14	3
16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.	4	11	13	19	3
18.I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.	4	13	14	19	3
22 Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions	4	10	13	17	5

Since the items related to Avoidance Anxiety are similar to those related to cognitive Anxiety in that they both have positive and negative statements, the averages of the tables for the two types of items are reported separately.

Avoidance Anxiety

Items	S.DA	D.A	N	A	SA
4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.	4	8	8	25	5
22. Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.	4	10	13	17	5
Average	4	9	10.5	21	5
Total	13%		26%		

Only two of the seven items related to Avoidance Anxiety are positive statements, and they clearly show that the students' willingness to write down their thoughts in English and use English to write their compositions. 50% students agree that they would choose to write down thoughts in English, 36% students agree that they would choose English to write their compositions.

Avoidance Anxiety

Items	S.DA	D.A	N	A	SA
5. I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.	6	23	6	11	4
10. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.	3	11	8	23	5
12. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write my composition.	3	11	19	14	3
16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.	4	11	13	19	3
18. I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.	4	13	14	19	3
Average	4	13.8	12	17.2	3.6
Total	17.8%		20.8%		

In this table, 23% students do not try to avoid writing English compositions (item 5). Also, 11% students do not try to avoid situations in which they have to write in English (Item 10). Items 12 and 16 are somewhat similar, which is probably why the same number of students 11% disagree with the fact that they would not use English to write their compositions. 38% students would prefer to write their English compositions outside of class, which is probably most of the students, who feel anxious while writing under a time constraint.

To summarise, the results of the questionnaire indicated that Cognitive Anxiety and Somatic Anxiety are the two most common types of writing anxiety among the participants, 44% and 22% , respectively, as presented in the table . On the other hand, impressively, the majority of the students are willing to write English composition in English, and 20.8 %of the students avoid situations where they have to write in English.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the levels, causes and effects of second language writing anxiety among the ESL learners. The main findings obtained from this study can be mentioned as follows.

The results of the questionnaire indicated that Cognitive Anxiety and Somatic Anxiety are the two most common types of writing anxiety among the participants, 44% and 22%, respectively presented in the table. On the other hand, impressively, the majority of the students are willing to write an English composition in English and 20.8 %of . The students should avoid situations where they have to write in English. Second language writing anxiety among the tertiary level learners has negatively effects with their English writing under a time constraint, which provides specific evidence for the negative effect on writing performance. It can be said that at the tertiary level, learners suffer from writing anxiety in

second language due to various factors, such as Linguistic difficulties, insufficient writing practice, fear of test, lack of topical knowledge, and low self-confidence in writing performance, which constitute the main sources of second language writing anxiety.

In conclusion, English as a Second Language writing is a cognitive, emotional and cultural process. English as a Second Language, writing anxiety and its role in second language learning achievement need to be understood and deserve attention from English as a second Language writing researchers and second language writing teachers as well as learners. Only if we acknowledge the existence of ESL writing anxiety and identify the causes and effects of it can we cope with it successfully and effectively.

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