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The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

**Second-language Learners' Writing Anxiety:
Types, Causes, and Teachers' Perceptions**

A Thesis Submitted to

the Department of

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

By

Ehab El Shimi

May 2017

The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Second-language Learners' Writing Anxiety:
Types, Causes, and Teachers' Perceptions

A Thesis Submitted by

Ehab El Shimi

Submitted to the Department of Applied Linguistics

May 2017
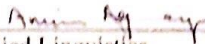
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
The degree of Masters of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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ii

Abstract

The American University in Cairo

Second-language Learners' Writing Anxiety and Teachers' Awareness

Under the Supervision of Dr. Amira Agameya

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the causes and most common types of second-language writing anxiety among students taking an intensive English course in the English Language Institute (ELI) at the American University in Cairo (AUC). Towards this end, the study examined the problem from both the learners' and teachers' perspective in order to provide the teachers with the issues they could consider to help their learners feel less anxious about their writing. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this exploratory study. A convenience sample of 51 Egyptian ESL learners enrolled in the Intensive English Program (IEP) in the ELI 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 (2011) in order to identify the causes and most common types of writing anxiety among them. To investigate the teachers' perspectives of L2 writing anxiety, interviews with six teachers in the IEP with varying years of teaching experience were conducted. The results of the quantitative data, using descriptive statistics, show that the most common types of L2 writing anxiety among the students were Somatic Anxiety (SA) and Cognitive Anxiety (CA). On the other hand, a very small percentage of the students suffered from Avoidance Anxiety (AA). The reason why their level of SA and CA were higher is because most of their causes of L2 writing anxiety were associated more with physiological and psychological effects resulting from their anxiety experience. The teachers' answers to the interview questions corresponded with the students' responses to the questionnaire items. They reported that they notice and observe symptoms related to L2 writing anxiety very similar to those indicated by the students.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

AA: Avoidance Anxiety

AEG: Academic English for Graduates

CA: Cognitive Anxiety

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELI: English Language Institute

ESL: English as a Second Language

FLA: Foreign Language Anxiety

FLCAS: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

IEP: Intensive English Program

L2: Second Language

PRCA: Personal Report of Communication Apprehension

PTs: Prospective Teachers

SA: Somatic Anxiety

SA: State Anxiety

SLWAI: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory

TA: Trait Anxiety

TOEFLiBT: Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-based Test

WAT: Writing Apprehension Test

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Chapter 1: Introduction

Psychologists describe anxiety as "a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (Hilgard, Atkinson, & Atkinson, 1971), as cited in Scovel (1991, p. 18). They have identified several types of anxiety, one of which is language anxiety. Language anxiety may be viewed as part of other more general types of anxiety or as a separate form of anxiety that the second language (L2) learner experiences in response to language learning (Horwitz & Young, 1991). After reviewing the literature on language anxiety, Scovel (1978) concludes that identifying the effects of language anxiety is difficult to determine because the instruments used in the studies to assess anxiety are inconsistent and due to the fact that other variables other than factors related to language learning, such as personality traits and motivation, may increase or limit learner anxiety in the process of language learning.

1.1 Context of the Problem

Test anxiety and public-speaking anxiety are two types of anxiety that most teachers are familiar with. Language learners tend to fear and often avoid communicating orally. Many scholars and researchers have exerted a lot of effort and spent considerable time to describe the phenomena and develop ways to assess it using various measures such as communication apprehension, speech anxiety, stage fright, social anxiety, and reticence. Oral communication is a common issue, but for language learners what is normal to-be-expected anxiety can be compounded by a lack of proficiency in the actual linguistic utterances.

Daly (1985) defines communication apprehension as the anxiety or fear of oral communication. There are also other constructs that emphasize and reveal people's anxieties about communication, such as writing apprehension. According to Daly (1985), writing apprehension is the anxiety or fear a person may feel about creating written materials. In addition, some research has been done on anxiety some people may experience when touching

1

and being touched by someone – touch avoidance (Anderson & Leibowitz, 1978). Receiver apprehension or the anxiety an individual may feel when listening or receiving information has also been researched (Wheeless, 1975). Lastly, a few studies have been done on singing apprehension – the anxiety people may feel about singing (Andersen, Andersen, & Garrison, 1978). Therefore, constructs tied to apprehension do not always have to be directly related to orality.

1.2 Behavioral Observations and Physiological Symptoms

Teachers must have a means for assessing the impact of their instructional activities on their learners' anxiety, attitudes, and beliefs. Behavioral observations or ratings, physiological assessments, and self-reports are three major ways used to measure communication apprehension. Behavioral observations are noticeable signs of fear or nervousness in a speaker. These include reduced gaze, fidgeting, stammering, and stuttering. Physiological symptoms, on the other hand, are more momentary and less visible reactions by a speaker such as temperature, galvanic skin response, heart rate, and blood pressure. Finally, self-reports are the most common means used in measuring communication apprehension. One of the most valid and reliable self-report is the 24-item self-report inventory "Personal Report of Communication Apprehension" (PRCA), which was developed by McCroskey (1984a). It can be divided into four subscales used to measure communication apprehension – public speaking, dyadic exchanges, groups, and meetings.

1.3 Communication Apprehension

The way communication apprehension develops is the least understood and researched issue in the scholarly literature. One of the causes of communication apprehension that was found in the literature is genetic predisposition. Some studies have focused on sociability,

activity, and other hereditary bases of different personality characteristics (Buss, 1988). Another factor that might play a major role in developing communication apprehension is the way one has been reinforced and punished when communicating from early childhood. An individual who receives consistent punishments and negative reactions towards communication may easily become apprehensive, and therefore finds staying quiet is more rewarding than talking. In addition to reinforcement and punishment, the inconsistency of punishments, rewards, and responses for completing a task of engaging in a given activity can lead to behavioral withdrawal (McCroskey, 1987). Communication skills acquisition from early childhood also plays a central role in the development of communication apprehension. Children who do not acquire good communication skills tend to be more apprehensive than those who receive a lot of experience in communication. Lastly, appropriate models of communication are tied closely to communication apprehension. Similar to communication skills acquisition, adequate communication models do affect children's communication apprehension. Children who have inadequate communication models tend to be more apprehensive than those who are exposed to adequate models. For instance, a child who has parents with high levels of Cognitive Anxiety (CA) has an increased risk of developing the same anxiety disorder, as he or she will try to emulate their communication behavior after observing them (McCroskey, 1984).

1.4 Anxiety and Foreign Language Learning

Research that aimed to explore the relationship between anxiety and foreign language learning has resulted in mixed and confusing results. Some studies found that there is a negative correlation between anxiety and language proficiency. For example, in their study of English-speaking French immersion children, Swain and Burnaby (1976) found that anxiety negatively affected the children's language proficiency level. However, they did not find any other

3

correlations between anxiety and other measures of language proficiency they examined. Similarly, Tucker et al. (1976) revealed that anxiety correlated with one of the measures of French proficiency, but found no correlations between anxiety and any of the three measures of language proficiency.

On the other hand, some studies found that there were significant correlations between a learner's academic performance in the classroom and anxiety measures. The results of these studies, however, contradict the results found in other studies with other learners and other languages. Backman (1976) did a study to find if there is a correlation between strong motivation and positive attitude and progress in L2 learning among 22 Venezuelan students learning English at Boston University. The findings of the study showed that the two very weak English-learning Spanish speakers scored the highest and the lowest on the attitude scale she adapted from Gardner et al (1974). Chastain (1975) found negative and positive correlations between anxiety and different teaching methods. While the French audio-lingual method student scores on tests were negatively correlated with anxiety, the German and Spanish traditional method student scores were positively correlated with anxiety. According to Chastain, the problem in these studies is "perhaps some concern about a test is a plus while too much anxiety can produce negative results" (p. 160).

While Chastain aimed to find the correlations between Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and different teaching methods, Kleinmann (1977) was able to discover two different types of anxiety, facilitative and debilitative anxiety, and the correlations between them and second language learning behavior. Kleinmann (1977) examined the relationship between the syntactic structures that foreign language learners tend to avoid the most and the syntactic structures of the students' native languages. He hypothesized that the learners would avoid using the English

4

structures that contrasted most markedly with the learners' native language. He was able to confirm his hypothesis after examining Arabic and Spanish students' English output using different tests. The results of the study indicated that the Spanish learners who scored high on facilitating anxiety measures used structures that other Spanish-speaking students are more likely to avoid, such as infinitive complements and direct object pronouns. Similarly, native Arabic learners who scored high on the facilitating anxiety measures tended to use grammatical structures such as the present progressive and the passive, which their Arabic-speaking peers tend to avoid because of their anxiety. In their studies, Chastain (1975) and Kleinmann (1977) do not only indicate the way anxiety can be appropriately investigated, but they also encourage us to consider and investigate other ways in which a significant variable like anxiety can be viewed.

In addition to the above-mentioned factors of language anxiety, which affect learners' academic performance, there are other intrinsic and extrinsic factors that should be considered. According to Kleinmann's (1977) study, anxiety itself is not simple, as it is not easily quantifiable. Therefore, intrinsic factors such as a learner's intelligence and extrinsic factors such as the teaching methodology or the materials being taught should be carefully examined. In addition, some researchers think that the reason why many studies resulted in conflicting results is because they did not distinguish between momentary anxiety and a more permanent tendency to feel anxious. Accordingly, some researchers felt that defining anxiety in terms of its potential effect on performance is important. Alpert and Haber (1960), for instance, developed the Achievement Anxiety Test in order determine one's level of facilitative and debilitative anxiety towards a certain subject. Also, Spielberger, Gorsuch, and Lushene (1970) decided to develop a measure to distinguish between two types of anxiety: state anxiety (SA) and trait anxiety (TA).

The Monitor Model for adult language acquisition is another consideration that has been incorporated into a number of research studies. According to Krashen (1976), adult language learners tend to engage in two different types of activities when mastering a new language. They pick it up in an unconscious and informal manner, which is known as language acquisition, and they study the language in a more formal way, which is known as language learning. Language learners are often predisposed to monitor their language output more in the latter type of activity. Hence, they are more likely to feel anxious in the formal activity of language learning than in the language acquisition process.

1.5 ESL Writing Anxiety and Its Effects on L2 Learners' Writing Performance

Recent studies showed significant negative correlations between ESL writing anxiety and writing performance. Using both a Writing Quality Task and a Writing Quantity Task, Hassan (2001) found that low anxious students do not only write better quality compositions, but also write more than their high anxious counterparts. Writing under time constraints was also found to be a detrimental effect of writing anxiety (Kean, Glynn, & Britton, 1987: 95-102; Cheng, 2002: 648). Cheng (2004) found a significant negative correlation between anxiety and performance after giving students a timed English essay writing task. The effects writing anxiety has on the writing processes and behaviors include cognitive interference in writing process, feelings of nervousness or tension, and avoidance of writing (Cheng, 2004).

1.6 Statements of the Problem

L2 learners very often consider writing in a language they are not yet familiar with a very difficult skill (Gupta, 1998). Writing is considered both a cognitive and an emotional activity, where learners reflect and feel while they are writing, and this is why they very often find it difficult (Cheng, 2002). Another possible reason could be the fact that writing requires them to

be able to express themselves, maintain a flow of ideas, develop their confidence, and enjoy writing using their L2 (Basturkmen & Lewis, 2002).

The majority of L2 learners must be able to know how to write, as nowadays writing is considered a requirement in almost any academic pursuit and is very often related to the extent to which they can succeed in different academic subjects (Daly, 1979; Onwuegbuzie, 1997). Most research on FL anxiety has focused mainly on the oral aspects (speaking and listening) of language use. In the last few decades, however, a number of studies have been done on L2 writing anxiety and its effect on L2 acquisition and learning (Kurt &Atay, 2007).

1.7 Rationale of the Study

The majority of the studies that were conducted on writing anxiety looked into the issue from the students' viewpoint only, where they examined the most common types and the major causes of L2 writing anxiety among the learners who participated in their studies. For example, Zhang (2011) and Rezaei and Jafari (2014) were able to identify the most common types of writing anxiety among the L2 learners who took part in their studies. In addition, Hassan (2001) examined the causes of writing anxiety and found that low self-esteem is one of the major issues that lead to L2 writing anxiety. Other researchers who investigated the cause of L2 writing anxiety discovered that fear of negative comments, unfamiliarity with the writing format, and lack of interest in the subjects assigned can also affect students' level of writing anxiety (Lin & Ho, 2009). Lastly, researchers, such as Kamaruddin (2009), conducted studies that show the psychological and physiological symptoms of L2 writing anxiety. Nevertheless, very few of these studies have provided possible solutions to L2 writing anxiety. Although the main aim of the current study is not to find solutions to this problem, it will investigate the issues associated with writing anxiety from both Egyptian students' and teachers' perspective. The results of this

study will provide teachers with the issues related to L2 writing facing the student participants, which can help them think of possible ways to help reduce learners' writing anxiety.

1.8 Research Questions

1. Do Egyptian ESL learners at the upper-intermediate proficiency level suffer from L2 writing anxiety?

   A. What are the main types of L2 writing anxiety among them?

   B. What are the main causes of L2 writing anxiety among them?

2. What are ESL teachers' perceptions of L2 writing anxiety?

1.9 Theoretical Definitions of Constructs

Writing Anxiety

Writing anxiety is defined 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" (Hassan, 2001: 4).

Cognitive Anxiety (CA)

According to Cheng (2004), CA is the cognitive part of experiencing anxiety, which refers to concern about others' perceptions, preoccupation with performance, and negative expectations.

Somatic Anxiety (SA)

SA refers to the way one perceives one's nervousness, tension, and other physiological effects resulting from the anxiety experience (Cheng, 2004).

Avoidance Anxiety (AA)

AA is the behavioral aspect of experiencing anxiety, which leads to avoidance of writing (Cheng, 2004).

1.10 Operational Definition

Writing Anxiety

      For the purposes of the present study, writing anxiety is defined as fear a student experiences when assigned a writing task. This fear or anxiety can result in avoiding or procrastinating in doing the writing assignment.

1.11 Delimitations of the Study

      This study will identify the causes of L2 writing anxiety among Egyptian ESL learners at the upper-intermediate level of proficiency, which is based on their TOEFL iBT or IELTS scores. IEP students' TOEFL iBT scores are between 48-75 with a writing score between 14-19, and their IELTS scores are between 5-5.5 with a writing score between 5-5.5. The learners were given a questionnaire based on the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) developed by Cheng (2004). The results of this questionnaire were compared to the teachers' answers to the interview questions about their perceptions of L2 writing anxiety, and the analysis of the results will show the differences, if any, between what causes the learners to feel anxious while writing in English and what their teachers actually observe and notice about their anxious learners when given a writing task. Therefore, the study will present the issues associated with ESL writing anxiety that teachers could consider to help reduce their learners' writing anxiety. The researcher, however, did not experiment different strategies and techniques to find out which ones are most effective in terms of helping learners feel less anxious while completing a writing task they are given. In addition, students at the upper-intermediate proficiency level only participated in this study. Comparison between them and students at a different proficiency level did not take place. Their writing samples also were not analyzed to find out how their anxiety affects their writing performance, especially in terms of their content and development of ideas.

Only the proficiency level of the students and the teachers' levels of experience were taken into consideration, but other variables, such as age, gender, and cultural background of both the students and the teachers were not taken into account.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Horwitz and Cope (1986) defined anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p. 125). Second language (L2) learners often have negative emotional reactions to learning a language they are not quite proficient in, which is known as Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). According to Saito et al. (1999), limitations of communicating in a language that L2 learners have not mastered yet causes FLA. Many researchers consider FLA an indicator of success in L2 learning (Al-Saraj, 2011). Others consider it a form of situation-specific anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

A number of studies found that L2 learners, especially those utilizing productive skills such as speaking and writing, very often feel anxious in the learning process (Hilleson, 1996; Zhang, 2011). This is why reading, on the other hand, is considered by many researchers to be the least susceptible to effects of anxiety (Saito et al., 1999). L2 learners, however, often experience anxiety when they have difficulties understanding a given text that they are unfamiliar with.

In this literature review, several issues related to L2 writing anxiety are discussed. First, an overview of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is given. Then, a number of studies that were done on L2 writing anxiety, its causes, and its most common types are presented. Furthermore, since the feedback students receive from their teachers can affect the students' level of writing anxiety, research that has been done on Written Corrective Feedback and tone of feedback are discussed. Lastly, the research gaps that were identified are addressed.

2.2 Overview of FLA

There are different views regarding what tends to make L2 learners feel anxious in the classroom and when working on a given task. Two models have been introduced: the deficit model and the interference model. The deficit model claims that the learners' insufficiently developed skills and their cognitive-linguistic disability make them perform inadequately in class, which makes them feel anxious in class (Sparks, Ganschow, & Javorsky, 2000). On the other hand, Horwitz (2000) disagrees with this claim and finds this may be true of only some cases of language anxiety. This is why she leans more towards the interference model. She suggested a three-factor model, which claims that the learners fail to perform well in class because of the difficulties encountered to perform a task, and not because of their insufficient knowledge of the subject covered or their unsuccessful learning. Fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety are the three performance anxieties that are measured on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which is developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), which is probably why most of the research done on L2 anxiety is not based on the deficit model and based on the interference model (Musch & Broder, 1999).

Foreign language achievement, as Onwuegbuzieet et al. (2000) suggest, is not specific to a certain skill in language learning. It is experienced in reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

The three main causes of L2 reading anxiety were (1) personal factors such as not being able to guess the meaning from context and lacking self-confidence in reading effectively, (2) the complex linguistic structures in the reading text, and (3) the reading course itself in terms of the classroom environment, the course materials, and the teacher (Kuru-gonen, 2009). One of the reasons why such issues tend to cause L2 reading anxiety could be because L2 learners often feel

anxious about post-L2 reading oral and written assessment tasks as found among the 92 L2 learners who participated in the study that Brantmeier (2005) did.

As for listening, Golchi (2012) found similar results in a study he did to find out if there is a relationship between listening anxiety and listening comprehension among 63 Iranian IELTS learners. Using a Listening Anxiety Questionnaire and an IELTS listening test along with other research instruments, the researcher found that there is a negative correlation between listening anxiety and listening comprehension and listening strategy use, as those who were less anxious did better on the listening comprehension test. This is why Vogely (1998) suggested that both teachers and learners should consider changing the aim of listening comprehension activities from "listening for correctness" to "listening for a message," which would also increase the learners' motivation to understand what they are listening to and decrease their fear of being wrong. Golchi's (2012) study also showed that the students' use of metacognitive strategies, their characteristics, and their proficiency level had a significant effect on their listening anxiety.

In addition, Park and Lee (2005) found in a study they did that the main factors of anxiety among 132 Korean L2 college students were communication, criticism, and examination. Their self-confidence, more specifically their communication confidence and their self-image, and their oral performance were closely correlated. The results of this study showed that L2 learners' anxiety and self-confidence highly affected their oral performance, as those who were more anxious received lower scores on their oral performance. These results were very similar to the results of the study that Woodrow and Chapman (2002) did. They found a negative correlation between the L2 speaking anxiety of the 275 participants who participated in their study and their oral performance. L2 speaking anxiety might be also due to other factors such as students' proficiency level, the extent to which they are willing to express themselves in their L1, the way

the given task is planned and done (individually, in pairs, or in small groups), and the teacher's behavior (Osboe, Fujimura, & Hirschel, 2007).

2.3 L2 Writing Anxiety

In order to describe L2 learners' dysfunctional anxiety when they are given a writing task, Daly and Miller (1975) introduced "writing apprehension." A whole series of studies on writing apprehension have taken place especially after the development of Daly-Miller's Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) and the importance that Daly and his colleagues placed on anxiety and its significant effects on L2 writing (Cheng, 2002). The following are a number of studies conducted to find out the correlation between L2 writing anxiety and L2 learners' writing performance.

The three main themes of this review of literature are (1) the most common types of L2 writing anxiety, (2) the causes of L2 writing anxiety and (3) the types of written corrective (WC) feedback and their correlation with L2 writing anxiety.

2.4 Most Common Types of L2 Writing Anxiety

Zhang (2011) identified the type of anxiety that was most common among two groups of Chinese learners (49 freshmen and 47 sophomores) majoring in English and different strategies in which they can cope with them. Cognitive anxiety (CA) was the most common type of anxiety found among the participants. This also resulted in the study that Rezaei and Jafari (2014) did to investigate the causes of L2 writing anxiety among 120 Iranian EFL students. Unlike the previous study, this study is based on quantitative research, as the researchers collected data using three questionnaires. There were a number of causes of ESL writing anxiety among both groups, but the most common ones were linguistic difficulties, insufficient writing practice, fear of tests, and lack of topical knowledge. Fear of negative evaluation is also one of the causes,

which was also suggested by Horwitz (1986) and implied in Negari and Rezaabadi's (2012) study. In this study, the researchers found that when the participants (27 Iranian EFL learners) knew that their writing will not be scored, they felt less nervous and anxious while writing.

Abd Rahim and Hayas (2014) also conducted a study on L2 writing anxiety but from a slightly different angle. They aimed to find out how L2 learners' writing anxiety affects their choice of doing the writing task. The results of the questionnaire they used showed that out of the three types of anxiety (Cognitive Anxiety (CA), Somatic Anxiety (SA), and Avoidance Anxiety (AA), a high percentage of the learners had CA (87 percent), which confirms the results of the study that Shang (2013) conducted. All three types of anxiety, however, did have an impact on learners' choice to do the writing task, as 50 percent of the learners also suffered from a high level of SA and nearly 43 percent of the learners had a high level of AA. Those who suffered from CA and SA chose not to do the writing task itself mainly due to similar reasons like the ones mentioned in other studies such as other people's (teachers and peers) perceptions of their writing. On the other hand, those who suffer from all three types of anxiety to a minimal extent only think of more practices in writing as a way to help them improve their English language writing skill. The quantitative (multiple choice questions on questionnaire) and qualitative (open-ended questions) methods used in this study made its results somehow more reliable than other studies.

Both studies, however, show why cognitive anxiety was also found to be the most common type of anxiety among the 45 Iranian EFL students who participated in the study that Jebreil et al. (2015) did. "Distress associated with writing and a profound distaste for the process" were two major effects of L2 writing anxiety. As for the learners' learning preferences, the majority of them were auditory, kinesthetic, and visual learners. A few qualitative research

methods in addition to the questionnaire done would have confirmed the results of this study though.

Öztürk and Saydam (2014) examined L2 writing anxiety and self-efficacy among EFL Turkish learners. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, they found that out of the 240 learners (109 males and 121 females) who participated in their study, only 14 percent of them were found to be low-anxious learners, while the rest (about a third of them) were considered high-anxious learners. In this study, both gender and the proficiency level of the participants were put into consideration. The female participants showed a higher level of anxiety than the male participants, which was clear in the results of the interviews that the researchers conducted, and an insignificant difference was found among the three proficiency levels (beginner, elementary, and intermediate). As for the learners' self-efficacy, the causes of the learners' anxiety found in this study were also somehow similar to the ones found in other studies such as fear of negative evaluation and topic unfamiliarity. Other factors that lead to their anxiety include their inability to generate and organize their ideas, lack of vocabulary, and aim to writing perfectly.

2.5 Causes of L2 Writing Anxiety

One of the major causes of L2 writing anxiety is the learners' lack of self-confidence in their writing ability. This is why a number of studies focused mainly on writing apprehension and self-esteem. Hassan (2001), for instance, did a study to find out whether there is a correlation between L2 learners' writing apprehension and self-esteem and their writing ability (in terms of the quality and quantity of their writing). One hundred and thirty-two students from the English Department at Mansoura University participated in this study. The results of the English Writing

Apprehension Questionnaire and the FL Self-esteem Scale showed that writing apprehension negatively affected the students' writing quality.

The way L2 learners think of their English writing proficiency also increases their writing anxiety. It is not only their perceptions from teachers and peers that L2 learners feel anxious about as shown in Tuppang's (2014) study, but also the learners' own perceptions of their work. Two of the six causes of writing apprehension found in the study that Abdel Latif (2015) did were perceived language competence and perceived writing competence. The learners' writing achievements, the extent to which they improved their writing, and other people's feedback were considered the three main reasons behind their writing apprehension, which correlates with the results of other studies like that of Zhang (2011) and Öztürk and Saydam (2014).

This is also confirmed in another study that Erkan and Saban (2011) did, where they aimed to find out whether L2 learners' writing performance is related in any way to their writing apprehension, self-efficacy, and their attitudes towards writing. After giving 188 tertiary-level L2 learners a questionnaire on their attitudes towards writing, a writing apprehension test, and a writing task, the researchers found that writing apprehension did have a negative impact on the learners' writing performance.

Choi (2013) did a study on L2 writing anxiety by relating it to FLA in general. The study aimed to find out whether the learners' English writing anxiety has any effect on their writing performance. This study is based mainly on two surveys given to the participants, who are 26 ninth graders (13 females and 13 males). The first survey measured the FL classroom anxiety and the second survey measured the learners' English writing anxiety. The results of the study demonstrated a positive correlation between FL classroom anxiety and L2 writing anxiety, but surprisingly the learners' L2 writing anxiety did not affect their writing performance. The

learners' level of anxiety was measured according to six free writing assignments they were given. Even though the learners were asked to "free write" about certain topics, they were still worried about making grammatical errors in their writing. Some learners also mentioned that sometimes they have problems with word choice, as they think their vocabulary is not enough to produce English writing. These two causes lead the learners to fear sharing what they write with their peers. Although this study has covered many aspects pertaining to L2 writing anxiety including ways in which instructors can help learners feel less anxious about L2 writing, its results cannot be generalized to the entire population, as only one class participated in this study. Also, only quantitative research methods were used. Interviews or classroom observations could have been useful. Finally, the study was done over a period of time, which indicates that other factors might have affected the learners' L2 writing anxiety.

L2 writing anxiety is very often clear through certain psychological and physical signs as shown in Kamaruddin's (2009) study. Some of the psychological symptoms found among the 120 students from Sekolah Menegah Teknit Alor Setar, a technical school in Malaysia, who participated in the study were avoidance to volunteer and demotivation to finish the task. Daly and Miller (1975) found that sometimes highly apprehensive learners even avoid taking writing courses, or if they did, they would neither attend classes nor complete assignments (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1992). As for the physiological symptoms, the students often feel shaky and restless. These symptoms are very similar to the symptoms found in a number of other studies. Researchers found that some of the physiological signs also include sweaty palms, muscle contractions and tensions, perspiration, dry mouth, and increase in perspiration and heart rates (Chastain, 1975; Gardner, 1985; Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986).

In addition, Lin and Ho (2009) conducted a research study to identify the major causes of ESL writing anxiety among 161 learners taking an Advanced Writing course in southern Taiwan. During the first two months of the writing course, the learners were trained to write academic essays through topics from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). This study was carried out qualitatively through face-to-face interviews with the learners after two months of the beginning of the course. The researchers found that some of the possible factors of ESL writing anxiety were the time given to the learners to write about a certain topic, fear of negative comments on their writing, issues of peers' feedback and competitiveness, lack of interest in subjects assigned to write on, and unfamiliarity with and difficulty in writing in a required format. One of the major limitations of this study, however, is that its results cannot be generalized and are not representative of the English learners of Taiwan because the participants belonged to a higher-level proficiency group studying at a university in Southern Taiwan.

Similar causes of L2 learners' writing anxiety were found in another study done in 2014 by Younas, Subhani, Arshad, Akram, Sohail, Hamid, and Farzeen (2014). The researchers, who selected 60 Bachelor of Science (BS) English learners from University of Sargodha (UOS) Mandi Bahauddin (M.B.Din) Pakistan through convenience sampling, collected their data using a questionnaire. The three major causes of L2 writing anxiety found in this study were fear of negative feedback, lack of self-confidence in writing, and poor language proficiency, which were also the three major factors of L2 writing anxiety found in the study that Rezaei and Jafari (2014) did. The results of the study Rezaei and Jafari (2014) did are perhaps more reliable though, unlike this study which was based only on a questionnaire and whose participants were selected through convenience sampling and not according to specific criteria.

2.6 Written Corrective Feedback and L2 Writing Anxiety

As shown in some of studies mentioned above, teachers' feedback and the way L2 learners perceive it is one of the major causes of L2 writing anxiety. This is why a number of studies like Loreto and McDonough's (2014) aimed to find out the correlation between L2 learners' perceptions of feedback and their test anxiety. One of the findings of this study is that the way the 53 ESL learners who participated in the study perceived the usefulness and quality of the feedback affected their level of writing anxiety. The more positive their attitude towards feedback is, which somehow relies on the amount of positive feedback and encouragement they get from their teachers, the lower their L2 learning anxiety. This was also found in Cheng's (2002) study, which showed the necessity of encouraging the development of students' realistic perception and positive attitude towards their writing. The results of Loreto and McDonough's (2014) study, however, might have been affected by some students who answered the questionnaires they were given in favor of their teacher or by those who blamed him or her for the grades they received for the practice exams.

Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) found similar results in a study they conducted, where they found that the majority of the 33 L2 learners (93.3%) think that their teachers should mark all of their errors, and the majority of the 31 teachers (45.2%) who participated in the study also think they should mark all of their students' errors. However, there were still 25.8% of the teachers who think they should only mark the errors that would interfere with getting students' ideas across to the reader. The reason why the majority of the students find it important that their teachers mark all of their errors is that they consider it a learning tool, which corresponds with the results of the study that Di Loreto and McDonough's (2014) did. On the other hand, the students and the teachers did not agree on the same type of written corrective (WC) feedback.

While the majority of the students (58.8%) think the teachers are responsible for providing them with detailed and specific WC feedback and 23.5% in specific think that "errors are not enough, errors must be corrected too," the majority of the teachers (77.8%) think self-correction is more effective, as students will better remember the errors they made. Similarly, Hyland (2000) suggests that giving students more autonomy and control over their writing, more specifically though peer review, would be more effective than teachers' feedback.

Two of the main reasons why students think their errors must be corrected could be because they either do not understand the codes of the errors, which is what McCurdy (1992) found, that students sometimes find it difficult to understand the feedback they are given, or they find the feedback they receive on content more important than the feedback they receive on structure as found in Loreto's (2013) study. Even though the ratings for the quality and usefulness of feedback were relatively low, which supports Truscott's (1996) findings, 26 out of the 53 students who participated in this study were more confident to write their final exams because of the feedback they received on their writing. In addition, the feedback helped 22 of the participants actually improve their writing, which shows that feedback can be helpful as Ferris (1999) claims.

Huang, Eslami, and Hu (2010) compared between L2 learners' perceptions of teacher and peer support in relation to language-learning anxiety. In this quantitative study, the participants (158 Taiwanese college students), who share the same linguistic and cultural background, were given three questionnaires, one of which assessed their views on various aspects of classroom climate. In this questionnaire, 17 out of the 91 items are related to teacher and peer support. The results of this study showed that there is a negative correlation between teachers' academic support and fear of failing the class, fear of negative evaluation, and speech anxiety. The

researchers also found that there is a correlation between teacher personal support and students' comfort with learning English and their class failure. Although peer academic and personal support did lower students' L2 learning anxiety, they seemed to find teacher support the most effective in relation to their anxiety. The results of this study could have been more reliable though if qualitative research methods were also used.

The opposite, however, was found in Kurt and Atay's (2007) study which aimed to find whether there is a correlation between peer feedback and L2 learners' writing anxiety. The researchers divided the 86 prospective teachers (PTs) enrolled at an English Language Teaching Department in Istanbul who participated in the study into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The control group (42 students) received feedback on their essays from their instructors using a checklist, and the experimental group (44 students) worked in pairs where one student gives another student feedback on his/her writing and the other student corrects his/her paper accordingly. Even though there were only minor differences between both groups in terms of their L2 writing anxiety at the beginning of the study, the levels of writing anxiety in the experimental group decreased significantly at the end of the study. In addition, the interviews conducted in this study showed that the PTs found the peer feedback process very useful, as they feel less anxious and self-confident in discussing the mistakes they picked out, and they tend to look at their writing from a different perspective.

2.7 Tone of Feedback and L2 Writing Anxiety

Another major factor that affects L2 learners' motivation and perception of the feedback they are given is their teachers' tone of feedback. Burton (2009) described a teacher's pedagogical attitude towards errors as *climate*. The teacher's tone of feedback can be authoritative ("*Be more careful, we studied this last week.*") or sensitive and supportive ("*Can*

you notice your strengths and weaknesses?"). Burton (2009) argues that the teacher's priority in correcting learners' errors should not be to eliminate them, but to always remind the learners of the necessity of making errors in language learning. This way the learners would feel less stressed and less anxious about making errors. They would not try to avoid making errors by, for instance, taking fewer chances in grammar construction or writing shorter sentence (Burton, 2009).

In addition, the task type, stage at which feedback is given, and the learners' language ability may influence the teacher response style. This was found in a study done at a New Zealand university, where six writers from different language backgrounds were taking a 14-week, full-time English proficiency course. Two teachers gave feedback to all the learners who participated in this study, and their feedback was considered as praise, criticism, or suggestion (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). Praise was found to be the function of feedback that was used most frequently by both teachers. They gave the learners feedback indirectly by softening their suggestions and criticisms. The think-aloud protocols and the teacher interviews showed that it can help learners feel less stressed about their writing and can enhance teacher-student relationships. Although Ferris (2006, 2011) concluded that indirect feedback is effective in the long term in terms of helping learners monitor their writing autonomously, this indirectness often leads to miscommunication and incomprehension as found in this study (Hyland & Hyland, 2001).

Abbasi, Ghanbari, and Zare (2015) also examined the effects of teachers' feedback and praise on learners' motivation and achievements. Thirty learners at a high intermediate proficiency level from Navid English Institute in Jahrom in Iran participated in this study. They were divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The learners in the

experimental group received praise and verbal feedback on their writing. The findings of this study showed that teachers' praise and verbal feedback influences learners' motivation, which can have a positive impact on their achievements. Similarly, McGarrell and Verbeem (2007) found that teachers' formative feedback and praise motivates revision, which helps learners develop their writing. Nevertheless, very few learners participated in this study, and it was mostly done over a short period of time, which is why the results cannot be generalized (Abbasi, Ghanbari & Zare, 2015).

2.8 Research Gaps Addressed in the Present Study

In conclusion, the majority of the studies that focused on L2 writing anxiety seemed to shed light on the causes and the most common types of L2 writing anxiety, but almost none of them showed the causes of L2 writing anxiety from both the learners' and teachers' perspectives. While the causes of L2 writing anxiety and the most common types of L2 writing anxiety found in these studies are somewhat similar, the ways in which L2 teachers deal with students who suffer from FLA and from writing anxiety in specific have not been deeply researched until now. The majority, if not all, of the studies that were done on L2 writing anxiety examined the issue from the students' perspectives only, and none of them were conducted in the context of this study, Egyptian L2 learners studying at an English-medium university. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to analyze and compare the way L2 learners feel about their writing and what ESL teachers actually observe and notice about their learners' anxiety.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 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, Eslami, & Hu, 2010). Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to answer the research questions proposed. The questionnaire will constitute the quantitative component and the interviews will represent the qualitative method of research in the study. It is considered an analytical study, as it not only identified the causes of Egyptian ESL learners' writing anxiety, but also compared between their thoughts and attitudes towards writing in English, and what their teachers actually observe and notice about their writing anxiety and how they deal with them. This chapter provides details about both the learners and teachers who participated in this study, the data collection instruments that were used, and the procedures for data collection and analysis.

3.1.1 Participants

3.1.2 Learners' Sample

The learners' sample consisted of 51 learners enrolled in the Intensive English Program (IEP) in the English Language Institute (ELI) at a private English-medium university in Cairo. There are three academic English programs in the ELI: Intensive Academic English Program (IEP), Academic English for the Liberal Arts (English 0210), and Academic English for Graduates Program (AEG). The participants were freshmen students placed at the upper-intermediate proficiency level in the IEP, and their ages ranged from 18-20. They were considered a convenience sample, as they were on campus during the Spring 2017 semester and easy to contact and reach. The reason why learners from the IEP were chosen to participate in

this study is because in order to pass the course and start their undergraduate studies at the university, the learners must pass three writing tasks with an average score of not less than 64. Students' essays are scored based on content, language use, vocabulary, organization, and mechanics. Writing is a very important language skill in the IEP, and therefore many learners consider it a challenge. This is why many IEP learners often suffer from writing anxiety, so these participants were worth studying in order to find a solution(s) to the problem addressed.

3.1.3 Teachers' Sample

Six experienced ESL teachers with a minimum teaching experience of 15 years from the ELI were interviewed. These teachers also teach in the IEP, and were chosen according to their teaching experience. This showed what teachers with different years of teaching experience think the causes of L2 writing anxiety are, what they notice about learners who suffer from L2 writing anxiety, and how they deal with this problem in their classrooms.

Since this study involved human participants, I submitted an AUC Institutional Review Board (IRB) application that described the use of audio-recorded interviews and anonymous questionnaire for data collection. A consent form for participation in this research study was also designed and submitted electronically. The IRB approval was granted in January 2017 to allow this study to be done (see Appendix D for the consent form).

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

In order to increase the credibility of the study, two data collection methods were used:

1. Questionnaire

2. Interviews

3.2.1 Questionnaire

To answer the first research question, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) developed by Cheng (Cheng, 2004) was used (see Appendix I). 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 proved 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.

3.2.2 Interviews

The interview questions that were asked to the ESL teachers were partly based on the SLWAI (see Appendix I). They were also partially based on the ESL Writing Questionnaire developed by Zhang (Zhang, 2011). The main aim of the questionnaire, as mentioned above, was to measure the degree of anxiety of the L2 learners before, during, and after the writing process. Moreover, the reason why the interview questions that were asked to the ESL teachers were based on almost the same items in the questionnaire (SLWAI) was to analyze and compare between the way the learners feel about their writing and what ESL teachers actually observe and notice about their learners' writing.

These interviews not only confirmed the results of the learners' questionnaire, but also showed what ESL teachers with different levels of teaching experience notice about their learners who feel anxious about their writing and how they deal with them.

FLA in general has been associated with L2 learners at low proficiency levels (Golchi, 2012; Tuppang, 2014; Kuru-gonen, 2009; Younas, et al., 2014). Therefore, this study focused on L2 learners at the upper-intermediate proficiency level to also find out whether proficiency level is one of the factors that affect learners' writing ability as found in other studies. This would be an opportunity to generalize the results of the questionnaire to the entire population: learners at this proficiency level who take this intensive English course before their undergraduate studies.

3.2.3 Sample Interview Questions

2. Which language skill (reading, writing, speaking, or listening) do you think ESL learners usually feel anxious about? Why do you think so?

3. Do you think writing anxiety is a cause or an effect of poor writing performance? Why?

4. What are the main causes of L2 writing anxiety (education, feedback, grades, etc.)?

5. Students at which proficiency level tend to suffer from higher levels of L2 writing anxiety? Why?

6. Which type of feedback do your students prefer (instructor, peer, group, etc.)?

7. Do you think this has anything to do with their anxiety? If yes, how?

8. Which type of feedback (direct or indirect) do you think can make students more anxious about their writing skills? Why?

3.2.4 Procedure for Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was sent to three teachers in the IEP who agreed to administer it to their students. The researcher was given permission to give his students the questionnaire, as it

does not involve any questions related to the language skill he was teaching while conducting this study. After the learners participating in this study were given the 22-item questionnaire, six ESL teachers with different years of teaching experience were interviewed. The reason why the questionnaire was given first to the learners' participants was to get an overview of how learners at this proficiency level feel about writing in their L2, and to generalize its results to all L2 learners taking this intensive English course. Also, the questionnaire results raised issues that were used in the interviews conducted with the teachers. Therefore, the teacher interviews took place after the learners filled out the questionnaire.

3.2.5 Data Collection Instruments

As for the data collection instruments, Surveygizmo, a survey software, was used to distribute the 22-item questionnaire online. All of the IEP learners at the upper-intermediate proficiency level were sent the link to the questionnaire. The researcher used a recorder to make an orthographic transcription, and permission was first taken from the interviewees to record their answers.

3.2.6 Data Analysis

The resulting data of the questionnaire was divided into the three categories mentioned above (CA, SA, and AA) (see Questionnaire section above). Tables represent the degree of each category (RQ1). The analysis of these tables provided a detailed explanation of the major causes of anxiety among the participants (RQ 1). This analysis also drew connections between the results of the questionnaire and the answers of the interview questions that were asked. Furthermore, pie charts represented the level of each type of anxiety. In addition, the results of the interviews included the learning and teaching strategies that ESL teachers consider effective in terms of reducing their learners' anxiety, and what they can further consider in order to bridge

29

the gap between the learners and them (RQ 2), which would definitely have a strong positive impact on the learners.

In order to answer all three research questions, first, the researcher found what causes L2 learners to feel anxious about their writing and then interviewed the teachers in order to answer the third research question. Some of the data collected from the students were used during the teachers' interviews in order to find out if they observe or notice the way their learners feel about their writing. I am assuming that L2 writing anxiety is an issue that many L2 learners are facing primarily due to the gap between the way they feel when given a writing task or the way they feel about their writing in general and what their teachers already know or actually notice when they assign them a writing task.

To analyze the questionnaire results, the researcher divided the questions into three categories: CA, SA, and AA, and used Microsoft Excel to calculate the percentages and present the pie charts. The interview questions were divided into five main themes: general FLA (questions 1 and 2), causes of L2 writing anxiety (questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11), effects of L2 writing anxiety (questions 3 and 12), what ESL teachers observe and notice about anxious learners (questions 9 and 10), and possible solutions to L2 writing anxiety (questions 13, 14, 15, and 16). After data transcription and coding, comparisons will be drawn between the learners' responses and the teachers' responses to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

Two research questions were investigated in the present study. The first question attempted to identify the main types and causes of L2 writing anxiety among Egyptian ESL learners at the upper-intermediate level. The second question examined the teachers' perceptions of L2 writing anxiety.

An online questionnaire including 22 Likert scale items was sent to 51 students enrolled in the IEP early in Spring 2017 semester, and six interviews were conducted to collect data from ESL teachers in the same program. In this chapter, the results of the questionnaire given to the students enrolled in the IEP and the interviews done with the teachers are reported.

4.2 Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was posted on www.surveygizmo.com in early March 2017 and distributed to all 51 ESL students enrolled in the IEP. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify students' level of 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, the items were not grouped together, as mentioned in Section 3.2.1, to avoid perfunctory student responses. Each item in the questionnaire had four options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The rationale is that having an even number of choices forced the students to express their opinion rather than simply choosing the neutral response available. The statements in the questionnaire that are related to each type of anxiety are reported in separate tables and figures in order to clearly illustrate the level of each type of anxiety among the participants.

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 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 the percentages represent the extent to which the students agree or disagree with each item. However, the averages of the percentages are not reported in this table because there are both positive and negative items.

4.2.1 Cognitive Anxiety (CA)

Table 1. Cognitive Anxiety

Items	SA	A	D	SD
1. While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.	11.8%	54.9%	33.3%	0
3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.	25.5%	51%	21.6%	2%
7. I do not worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others'.	3.9%	52.9%	23.5%	19.6%
9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.	37.3%	41.2%	19.6%	2%
14. I am afraid that other students would deride my English composition if they read it.	9.8%	19.6%	31.4%	39.2%
17. I do not worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.	21.6%	45.1%	27.5%	5.9%
20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.	9.8%	19.6%	49%	21.6%
21. I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated very poor.	15.7%	13.7%	49%	21.6%

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 agreed more with Item 9 (78.5%) than Item 21 (29.4%). This shows that the participants have considered each statement and provided meaningful responses. For this reason, the items targeting CA were split by focus, as presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2. Cognitive Anxiety

Items	SA	A	D	SD
3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.	25.5%	51%	21.6%	2%
9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.	37.3%	41.2%	19.6%	2%
14. I am afraid that other students would deride my English composition if they read it.	9.8%	19.6%	31.4%	39.2%
20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.	9.8%	19.6%	49%	21.6%
Average	20.6%	32.9%	30.4%	16.2%
Total	54%		46%	
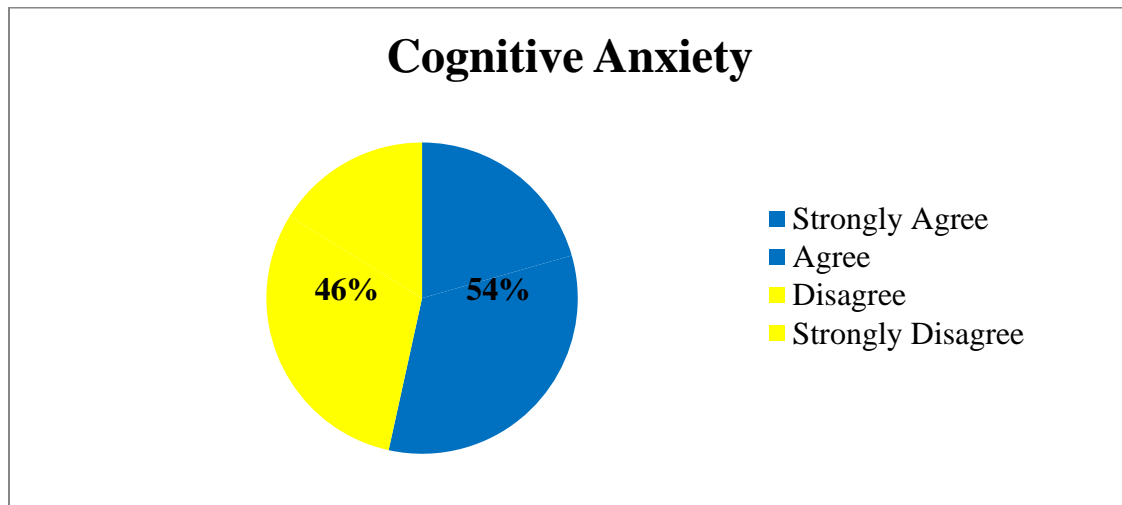
Figure 1. Cognitive Anxiety (Positive Statements)

In order to find out the level of CA among the 51 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. Although the total percentages of both the level of agreement and disagreement are relatively similar, there are certain items that the majority of the students seem to either agree or disagree about. For instance, in Item 3, 76.5% of the participants (39 students) feel worried while writing English compositions if they know they will be evaluated. This is why 78.5% of the participants (40 students) 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 about

sharing their written work with their peers, which is why 70.6% (36 students) 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 (Item 20).

Table 3. Cognitive Anxiety

Items	SA	A	D	SD
1. While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.	11.8%	54.9%	33.3%	0
7. I do not worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others'.	3.9%	52.9%	23.5%	19.6%
17. I do not worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.	21.6%	45.1%	27.5%	5.9%
21. I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated very poor.	15.7%	13.7%	49%	21.6%
Average	13.3%	41.7%	33.3%	11.8%
Total	55%		45%	
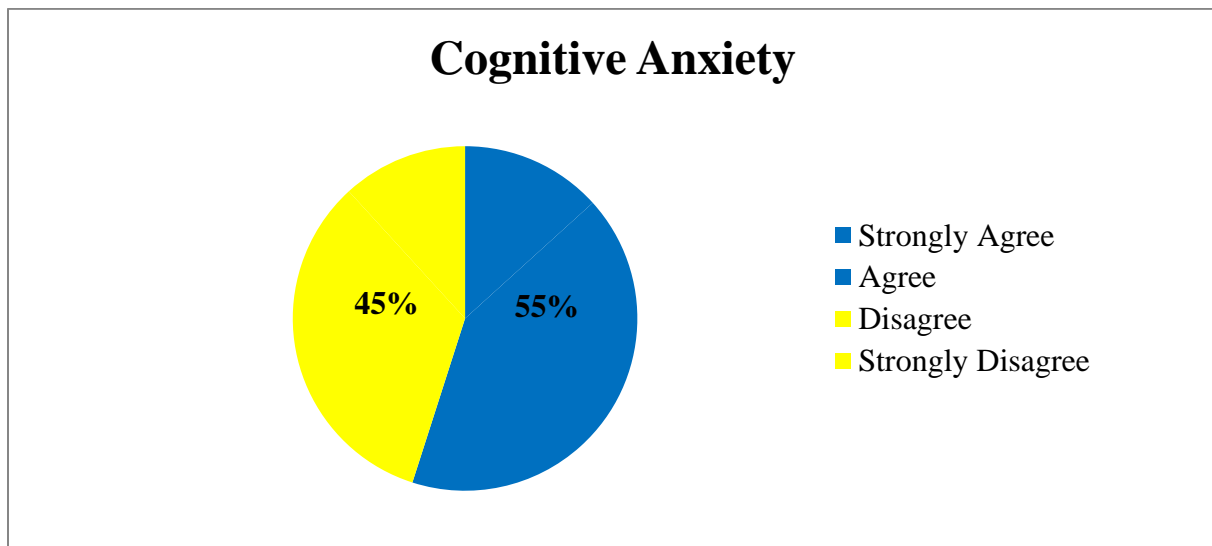
Figure 2. Cognitive Anxiety (Negative Statements)

Table 3 illustrates the average of the negative items in the questionnaire related to CA. As shown in Table 2, the total percentages of the level of agreement and disagreement are relatively similar. Therefore, it is clear why the percentages of the level of agreement and disagreement in the negative items are somewhat close as well. Nevertheless, there are certain items that the majority of the students either agree or disagree with. For example, in Item 1, 66.7% of them (34

students) agree that they are not nervous while writing in English. Although thirty-four students also agree that they do not feel worried about what other people think of their writing (Item 17), which corresponds with the results of Items 14 and 20 in Table 2 that address the same issue, more than half of the students (56.8%) do feel worried that their writing is a lot worse than others' (Item 7). Lastly, 36 students (70.6%) disagree that they do not feel afraid that their writing would be rated very poor (Item 21). This percentage is very close to that of Items 3 and 9 in Table 2, which are also about the extent to which they feel worried when they know their English compositions will be evaluated.

4.2.2 Somatic Anxiety (SA)

Table 4. Somatic Anxiety

Items	SA	A	D	SD
2. I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.	19.6%	51%	25.5%	3.9%
6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.	9.8%	37.3%	47.1%	5.9%
8. I tremble or perspire when I write English composition under time pressure.	19.6%	52.9%	21.6%	5.9%
11. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.	13.7%	56.9%	27.5%	2%
13. I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.	9.8%	37.3%	45.1%	7.8%
15. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.	5.9%	19.6%	54.9%	19.6%
19. I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.	7.8%	17.6%	60.8%	13.7%
Average	12.3%	38.9%	40.4%	8.4%
Total	51%		49%	
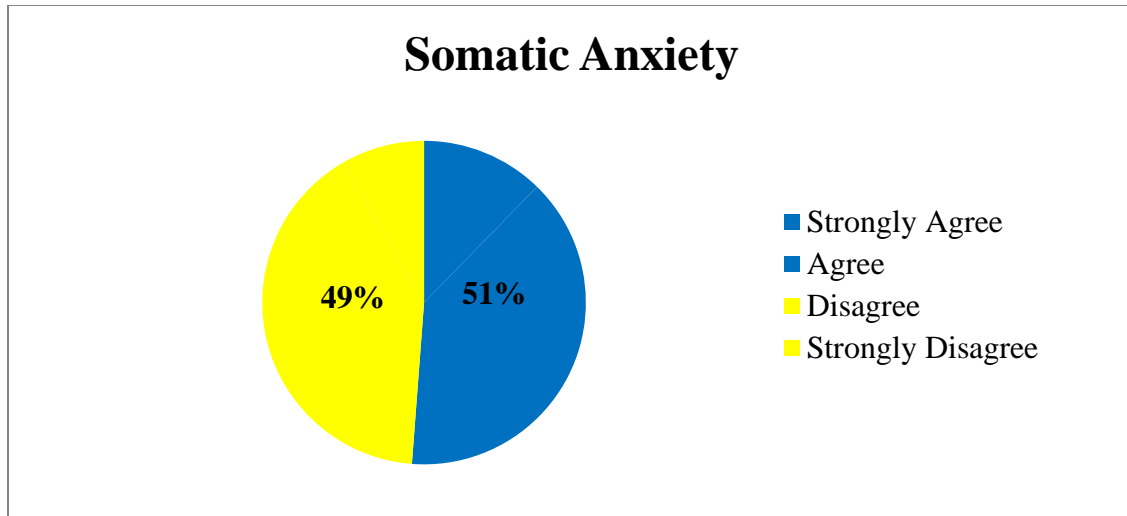
Figure 3. Somatic Anxiety

Table 4 presents 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). Unlike the items related to cognitive anxiety in the questionnaire, all of the items associated with SA are positive statements, so they are reported in the same table. As shown in Table 4, the total percentages are almost the same. However, there are certain items where the majority of the students either agree or disagree with. For instance, the majority of the students seem to feel anxious when they write English compositions under time constraint, which is why 37 students (72.5%) indicated that they tremble or perspire when they write English compositions under time constraint (Item 8) and probably why almost the same number of students (36 students–70.6%) agree that they feel their heart pounding (Item 2) and 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 time constraint, only 24 of them (47.1%) seem to panic (Item 13) and their mind goes blank when they start to work on an English composition (Item 6). Lastly, 38 students (74.5%)

neither freeze up when they are unexpectedly asked to write English compositions (Item 15) nor

feel tense while writing (Item 19).

4.2.3 Avoidance Anxiety (AA)

The level of Avoidance Anxiety (AA), which according to Cheng (2004) is the

behavioral aspect of experiencing anxiety that leads to avoidance of writing, among the students

is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Avoidance Anxiety

Items	SA	A	D	SD
4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.	19.6%	64.7%	11.8%	3.9%
5. I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.	5.9%	25.5%	58.8%	9.8%
10. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.	3.9%	17.6%	54.9%	23.5%
12. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write my composition.	2%	17.6%	60.8%	19.6%
16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.	5.9%	13.7%	56.9%	23.5%
18. I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.	7.8%	60.8%	31.4%	0
22. Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.	29.4%	60.8%	9.8%	0

Since the items related to AA are similar to those related to CA in that they both have

positive and negative statements, the averages of the percentages in Table 5 for the two types of

items are reported separately (see Tables 6 and Table 7 below).

Table 6. Avoidance Anxiety

Items	SA	A	D	SD
4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.	19.6%	64.7%	11.8%	3.9%
22. Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.	29.4%	60.8%	9.8%	0
Average	24.5%	62.8%	10.8%	2%
Total	87%		13%	
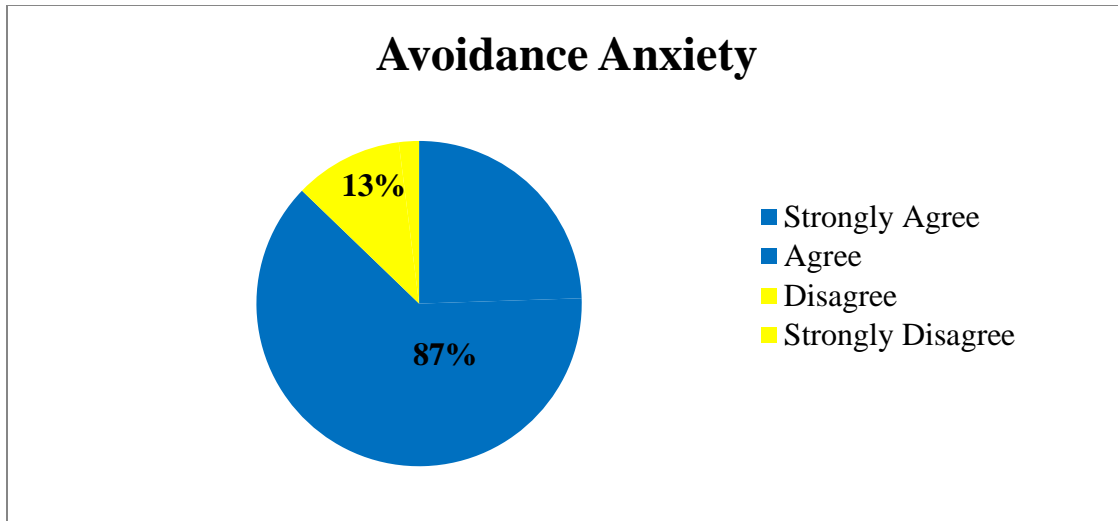
Figure 4. Avoidance Anxiety (Positive Statements)

Only two of the seven items related to AA are positive statements, and they clearly show the students' willingness to write down their thoughts in English and use English to write their compositions. Forty-three students (84.3%) agree that they would choose to write down their thoughts in English, which is probably why almost all of them (46 students–90.2%) agree that they would choose English to write their compositions.

Table 7. Avoidance Anxiety

Items	SA	A	D	SD
5. I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.	5.9%	25.5%	58.8%	9.8%
10. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.	3.9%	17.6%	54.9%	23.5%
12. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write my composition.	2%	17.6%	60.8%	19.6%
16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.	5.9%	13.7%	56.9%	23.5%
18. I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.	7.8%	60.8%	31.4%	0
Average	5.1%	27%	52.6%	15.3
Total	32%		68%	
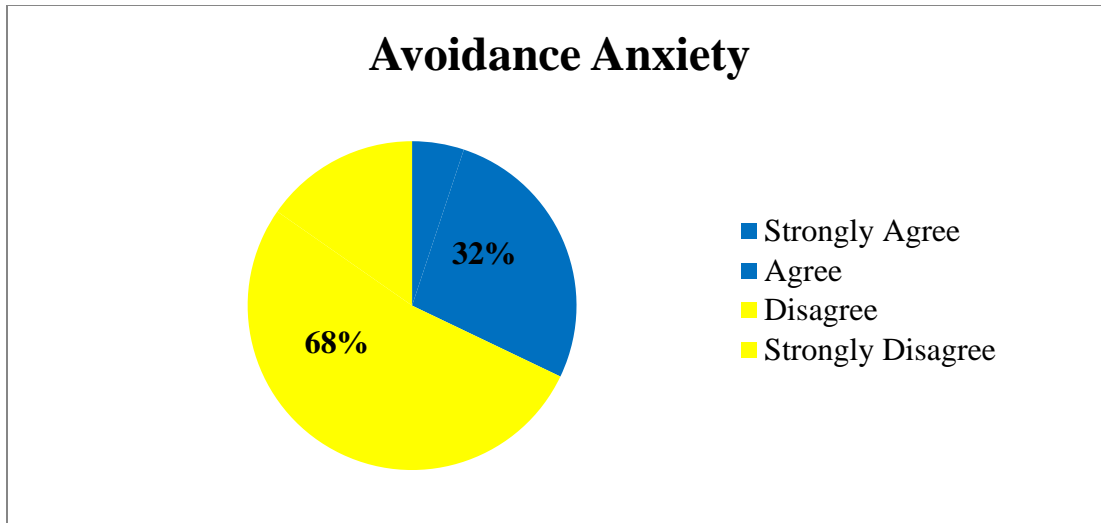
Figure 5. Avoidance Anxiety (Negative Statements)

The students' responses to the items in Table 7 correspond with their responses to the items in Table 6 to a great extent. The items related to AA in Table 7 are relatively similar, so the percentages are almost the same. Since the majority of them are willing to use English to write down their thoughts and while writing their compositions as shown in Table 6, most of them (35 students—68.8%) do not try to avoid writing English compositions (Item 5). Also, 40 students (78.4%) 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 (41—80.4%) disagree with the fact that they would not use English to write their compositions. Lastly, 35 students (68.6%) would prefer to write their English compositions outside of class, which is probably because most of them feel anxious while writing under time constraint, as presented in Table 4.

To summarize, the results of the questionnaire indicate that Cognitive Anxiety (CA) and Somatic Anxiety (SA) are the two most common types of writing anxiety among the participants, 40% and 42%, respectively, as presented in Figure 6. Even though the total percentages of both the students who agreed and disagreed with the items related to each of these types of anxiety are

relatively similar, there were certain items that the majority of the students either agreed or disagreed with. On the other hand, impressively, the majority of the students are willing to write English compositions in English and only 18% of the students avoid situations where they have to write in English.

Types of L2 Writing Anxiety Among Participants

18%
40%
42%

CA
SA
AA
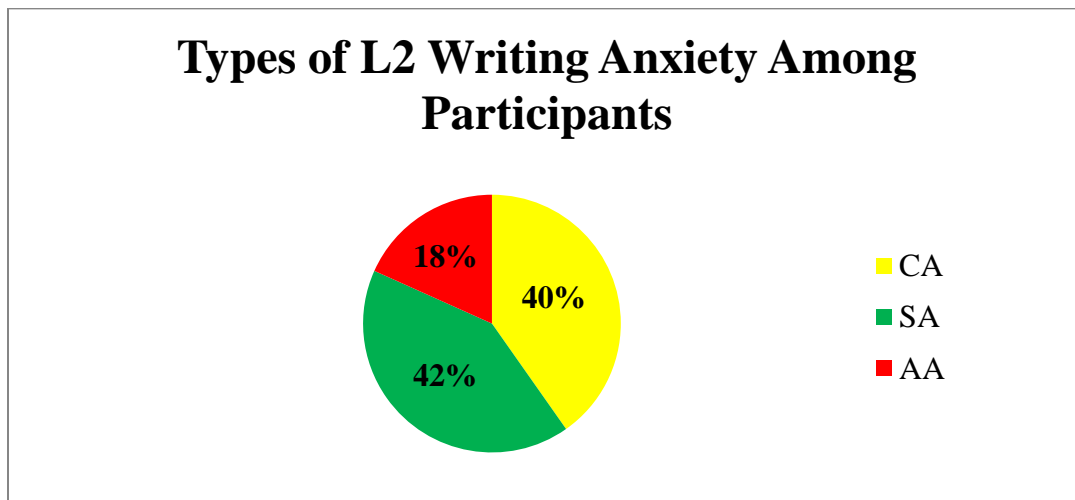
Figure 6. Types of L2 Writing Anxiety among Participants

4.3 Teachers' Perceptions of Writing Anxiety

In order to answer the second research question, interviews were conducted with six ESL teachers in the IEP, and the data collected from the interviews are presented within the five themes mentioned in Chapter 3: general FLA, causes of L2 writing anxiety, effects of L2 writing anxiety, what ESL teachers observe and notice about anxious learners, and possible solutions to L2 writing anxiety (See Appendix II for interview questions).

4.3.1 Demographic Data

The interviewees' demographic data is presented in Table 8, and it shows the participants' pseudonyms, their teaching experience in years, age group, and gender.

Table 8. Demographic data

Names	Gender	Age Group	Teaching Experience (approximately)
Mary	Female	60-69	35 years
Michelle	Female	60-69	35 years
Elizabeth	Female	60-69	35 years
Brenda	Female	50-59	25 years
Karen	Female	35-45	15 years
Alice	Female	35-45	15 years

4.3.2 Introduction

As mentioned above, the questions of the interview are divided into five themes mentioned in Chapter 3: general FLA, causes of L2 writing anxiety, effects of L2 writing anxiety, what ESL teachers observe and notice about anxious learners, and possible solutions to L2 writing anxiety.

4.3.3 General FLA

The main aim of Questions 1 and 2 is to find out what FLA is from the teachers' perspectives and which language skill they think L2 learners usually feel anxious about. Mary, Karen, and Alice stated that FLA means the way students feel afraid or stressed about not being able to express themselves in a language they are not quite familiar with. Mary and Karen also mentioned that one of the reasons why they feel vulnerable about expressing themselves in their L2 is because they have already formed their identity, which makes them think that other people will not understand what they are saying or judge them if they speak their L2.

"FLA means being afraid that either people won't understand you when you attempt to communicate, mock you, silly, adults (child-like or stupid). I had a roommate in Turkey, but she was afraid to end a sentence. People thought I knew more because I was not afraid. It is the feeling of judgment or fear of being wrong," Mary said.

Karen said: "FLA means the fear of doing something that is outside of your comfort zone. Their identity is sort of left behind, and they feel vulnerable, cannot bring the same intellect and cannot express themselves in the new language. They feel foolish or that people are judging them."

Alice said: "FLA would refer to being stressed in your ability to speak or write fluently." Elizabeth and Brenda also implied that FLA is the lack of self-confidence that the students feel while they are learning and expressing themselves in their L2.

"It is the anxiety that comes with learning something new. Will it be easy? Will I Understand it? Will I learn it? How will I be assessed? Will I be able to show how much I know? What are the skills and strategies I need to learn? All of this causes anxiety," Elizabeth said.

Brenda said: "It is the student feeling that they want to communicate in writing or speaking, but because of their weaknesses they are unable. They want to, but they fall short, which causes the anxiety."

On the other hand, the teachers' answers to Question 2 varied. Each teacher, according to her experience, thinks that students feel most anxious about different language skills. For instance, Elizabeth, Michelle, and Alice asserted that L2 learners feel anxious about all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Elizabeth and Michelle, however, mentioned that the students' anxiety about these skills depends mainly on whether the task they are given is graded.

Elizabeth said: "All of the skills when it comes to grading, passing, and failing will cause anxiety…It is really writing that causes the most anxiety because the writing grade is separate from the other skills."

"All four skills. It is all related to the tests. Open-ended reading counts 22% of their final grade. The higher the grade, the greater anxiety they feel though," Michelle said.

Alice said: "I do believe they are stressed about all of them, but their biggest challenge is reading, mostly because they do not like to read."

Karen and Brenda, however, indicated that the language skills that L2 learners usually feel anxious about are speaking and writing.

Karen said: "Probably the one they generally feel most anxious about is speaking, especially if it is a formal situation, such as a presentation or speech, and I think it is true in any language: the fear of public speaking, but I also think some students feel anxious about writing. In any case the productive skills are probably what they fear most, but often the receptive skills are what the weakest skills are."

Brenda said: "Number 1 is speaking. Number 2 is writing. Speaking because they have to communicate face-to-face. They can see immediate direct action from the person they are trying to communicate with, so they can see the shock or misunderstanding, which makes them feel very anxious. Then, writing, of course, especially in our department because writing counts a 100% of the final grade. 100 out of 200, so for them this is a very high stakes exam…"

Alice supports both Karen's and Brenda's point of view by mentioning that students feel anxious about their writing because it involves many issues, such as content, grammar, and punctuation.

Lastly, Mary thinks the language skill that a student feels anxious about depends on the student himself.

"Several students who hate reading, they either avoid it or do as little as possible.

Whatever the student is weak at is the skill that student feel anxious about," she said.

4.3.4 Causes of L2 Writing Anxiety

The teachers were asked questions on the causes of L2 writing anxiety in order for the researcher to compare and draw connections between their answers and the students'. They were first asked whether they think L2 writing anxiety is a cause of an effect of poor writing performance. Their answers to this question varied. While three of the interviewees think that writing anxiety is a cause of poor writing performance, two of them think it is both a cause and an effect, and one teacher implied that it is an effect.

Elizabeth, Mary, and Alice think that writing anxiety is a cause of poor writing performance. Elizabeth believes it is a cause by simply saying "It is a cause. He is anxious. It affects his performance. We know the distinction between competence and performance. What he knows might be more than what he performs." Similarly, Mary agreed that it is most often a cause, especially when students cannot think of ideas. However, she thinks it does not really affect their writing performance as much as it affects their content. In addition, Alice's point of view is very similar to that of Elizabeth.

"Mostly, I would say it is a cause rather than an effect. It is because they are too stressed. Maybe they are good, but they get very worried," she said.

Both Karen and Brenda, nevertheless, believed writing anxiety is both a cause and an effect of poor writing performance.

Karen, for instance, said "I think both contribute, maybe equally. Once you have had, sort of, unfortunate or negative past experiences with writing, then the anxiety would

44

increase, so sure poor performance could cause it, but also the fact you are anxious can lead to poor writing performance."

Brenda also affirmed it is both a cause and an effect because she thinks that when the students start writing, there are several factors that make them feel anxious, such as the time they are given and their writing in terms of coming up with ideas and not making language errors. She also mentioned that afterwards students very often feel anxious about their performance and worry about their grades, which is why she thinks it is both a cause and an effect.

Lastly, Michelle implied that it is an effect by saying that "It is all related to the test. Of course students who are aware they are not strong writers or were told by their teachers that they are not good writers are going to be more anxious because it is an exam." Therefore, it is the fact that they feel their writing is not good enough that makes them fail to do well on a writing task.

Furthermore, all six teachers provided different causes for L2 learners' writing anxiety. However, they all believe that the students' previous education is one of the main reasons why students feel anxious about their writing. Each teacher provided a certain aspect within the students' educational background that makes them feel anxious when they are given a writing task to complete. For example, Brenda thinks that the students tend to feel anxious because they are not well-prepared to write academic papers and they are not used to the process itself.

She said "…they have come to this place with very little preparation in academic writing. Some of them might have not written academic writing at all."

Similarly, Alice compared between the processes of writing that most of them go through at their schools to the way they are expected to write at the university, which is why she asserted that they should practice writing at their schools on regular basis.

45

"If the school system helps them, they would feel less anxious, but not everyone can afford it, she said."

The four other teachers, furthermore, mentioned certain issues within the students' previous education that makes them feel anxious while writing in English. For instance, Karen believes that it is far beyond their capacity for them to produce a good essay because they have not been exposed to readings of a formal nature, which is probably why they find the formal language and vocabulary very challenging to understand.

"They cannot master sentence structure and variety of sentence structure and grammar and have virtually no errors. And when you talk about content, in some ways that is where I feel it is more serious. The problem is far more serious when it comes to content," she said.

Brenda also believes that the students' previous education affects their level of writing anxiety. Nevertheless, she believes the main issue related to their education that could be making them feel anxious is the fact that they have not been used to thinking on their own.

"They want the teacher to spoon-feed, not give feedback, but spoon-feed the errors by actually correcting them," she said.

Michelle also stated that the students tend to think of writing in terms of quantity and not quality, which is at least partly based on their previous education.

She said: "They have the attitude from their schools that the more they write the better. They do not know that it is not about quantity, it is about quality.

The factor that five out of the six teachers believe causes students to feel anxious about their writing is grades. Mary, for instance, mentioned that parental pressure to get high grades is one of the causes of cheating in writing. Alice also believes that the primary cause of writing

anxiety is the grades. Furthermore, Karen thinks that grades or the exam situation itself is a big factor. She even said "It is something that is hanging all over their heads. It is kind of hard to even figure out how much that contributes to anxiety. When I am reading their essays, I realize this is far below what they were doing even in just in-class writing practice under the same conditions, just not an exam." Moreover, Elizabeth and Michelle mentioned how students in the IEP in specific tend to feel anxious about their writing because in order to pass the course they need to get a certain grade in writing.

In addition to previous education and grades, the feedback the students are given can affect their level of writing anxiety.

Karen said: "For sure, I think feedback is huge. It can be a huge factor in lowering or raising anxiety."

She clarified that when she gives the students too much written feedback, she very often starts to feel they are discouraged. This is why she believes it is always important to praise them for their progress and to find something meaningful that they have written, which can give them a chance to reflect on their progress. Mary had a similar viewpoint because she thinks that the students' lack of self-knowledge, self-efficacy, analytical abilities, and the fact that they cannot look internally to know their strengths and weaknesses can cause anxiety.

Karen said: "I used to give them too much feedback, I used to circle too many things and write too many comments on their papers and I have tried to reduce that. I thought they need to improve and this is their only chance, so I put everything. This was overwhelming and they think like 'Is it that bad?' They would even say that to me, and I say that these are just suggestions."

Karen and Elizabeth seem to agree on the fact that oral feedback helps lower their anxiety more than written feedback.

Karen said: "I think written comments can often cause anxiety, whereas if you meet with them, at least these students here, and discuss their writing face-to-face, this is the factor that can lower their anxiety the most. There is warmth, support, encouragement, and the tone of your voice, which helps them feel they are on the right track and there are things they can do to improve. In this context, it is the most effective way to give feedback to help reduce their anxiety, and I get a sense they feel much better."

"Research says that students get overwhelmed with too much feedback. Conferences are very effective to give students a chance to speak," Elizabeth said.

Another factor that Karen and Brenda seem to have opposing views about is the students' relationship with their teacher. Karen thinks that this relationship can make a big difference in terms of raising or lowering the students' anxiety.

"If the student feels comfortable with that teacher, I think this helps to lower the anxiety vs. a teacher who is strict or cold, or a teacher who is judgmental or has a critical way of speaking," she said.

Brenda, on the other hand, does not think the teacher can be a source of anxiety. She believes that it is important that teachers show the students what exactly they need to improve.

She said: "I don't think the teacher is a source of anxiety. The teacher basically, in my opinion, the very good writing teachers are a mirror to tell the students what exactly is going on, showing them reality like it is. It is better than telling them 'This is wonderful, this is great, and reduce their anxiety'."

In addition, Michelle and Brenda mentioned that one of the reasons why students feel anxious while writing is because of the fact that they need to finish the task they are given in a specific amount of time. Michelle stated that her students often know the errors they made, but do not have enough time to proofread their essays. However, in her answer to Question 10, she mentioned that her students prefer to write in class because they cannot concentrate while writing at home.

Brenda said: "They can miss a verb or an "s," or a vocabulary word, but they know the right word or correction, but it is because of this idea of transfer from their brain onto the paper and the mismatch. 'How could I make this mistake, I know better than this.' Of course, the time factor, the speed, and lack of editing, all this adds to their anxiety, but remember we are asking them to do a difficult task, which is to put pen-to-paper, write accurately in a specific period of time, which takes time to work on and improve."

Lastly, Elizabeth briefly mentioned that L1 background very often causes students to feel anxious while writing.

To find out whether the students' proficiency level affects their writing anxiety, the researcher asked the teachers students at which proficiency level tend to feel anxious about their writing. Four out of the six teachers do not think that the students' proficiency level affects their level of anxiety. Mary, Michelle, and Brenda believe that writing anxiety comes from the students themselves, and that it corresponds to their personality. In fact, one of the reasons why Brenda thinks it is a student's personality trait and not his proficiency level is that native English speakers also often feel anxious about their writing.

Mary said: "It is their own individual personalities, not really the level."

Michelle said: "I find very much that writing corresponds to personality. Very often, when I am grading essays, there are some students whose writing are very easy to grade. The mistakes they make are very easy, and it correlates with a very easy type of personality."

Brenda said: "I think writing anxiety comes from the student himself. I think it is a personal trait or characteristic…It is more of a personality trait and how they perceive their final product. The final product, for me, is a source of anxiety for the students, and it differs, as the perfectionist will keep improving, no matter how weak they are, but the person who is slipshod thinks of it as a one-time thing, you know. So, I feel it is a personality thing that causes this anxiety."

Karen also does not think that a student's proficiency level affects his level of writing anxiety. In her point of view, students can feel anxious about their writing at any level of proficiency. She believes that the students who are enrolled in the lower level in the IEP might feel more anxious, but only because they feel they have further to go in order to pass, which is a different factor. However, she thinks the way a student perceives the level of others around him in comparison to his or her level could make him or her more anxious if he or she thinks his or her level is lower than his or her classmates.

"I have not ever noticed there is a difference in anxiety depending on the level," she said.

Elizabeth and Alice, however, affirmed that there are students at certain proficiency levels that tend to feel anxious about their writing more than others. Elizabeth, for instance, thinks that students at the intermediate and advanced level of proficiency feel more anxious than beginners.

"When it becomes freer at the intermediate level after the guidance they received at the basic level, they feel anxious. Also, students at the advanced level feel anxious because their writing is expected to be of higher quality," she said.

Alice has the exact opposite point of view though. She thinks that students at lower proficiency levels feel more anxious than those who are in a more advanced level. To clarify her answer, she compared between students enrolled in the IEP and those in the Department of Rhetoric and Composition (RHET).

She said: "The higher the level of the students, the more relaxed and satisfied they are about their writing. The anxiety issue in the IEP is because we focus on the language. In the RHET Department, the students know that even their language is not that strong, the teachers' concern is not language; it is the content, the ideas, the analysis, references, citations, and overall format."

In addition, the teachers were asked which type of feedback their students prefer and whether it is related to their writing anxiety. Three out of the six teachers clearly stated that the students prefer their teachers' feedback, one of whom said that she never has her students give each other feedback on their writing. Even though the three other teachers also implied that their students might prefer their teachers' feedback, they still think the students find the feedback they get from each other very effective in terms of reducing their anxiety and improving their writing.

Karen and Alice were in agreement that the students prefer the teacher's feedback because they think it is more valuable or credible than their peers or their group. However, they both had different point of views about whether peer feedback makes them feel more anxious about their writing. While Alice thinks that students feel less anxious when they are giving each

other feedback, Karen believes that peer feedback can make students feel anxious because the students at this age tend to care so much about what their peers think of them.

> "…they are in a new place. They are outside their comfort zone. They are still adolescents, so they are trying to fit in. So, for sure I can see that that can cause anxiety for a peer to look at their work," she said.

Elizabeth also agrees with Karen and Alice that the students trust the teacher more than their peers. Nevertheless, unlike Karen, she believes that not only is peer feedback helpful for both the student giving and receiving the feedback, but she also thinks students feel less anxious about their writing when they receive feedback from their peers than from their teacher.

Similarly, Mary and Brenda use very similar strategies to give their students feedback. Mary asks her students first to self-correct their essays and then write a second draft. Afterwards, she has them give each other feedback in class, which she thinks is often very useful. Lastly, after they write another draft based on their peers' feedback, she has individual conferences with them to give them feedback on their writing. Brenda uses a similar strategy. After asking her students to write an essay on a certain topic, she first asks them to exchange their essays. Then, she gives them feedback on their essays after they have written a second draft based on their peers' feedback. Both teachers, in addition to Alice, have their students focus on specific criteria while discussing their written work and giving each other feedback.

> "Content and organization are the two most important criteria in peer feedback, not language use because they might not be able to give each other correct feedback," Mary said.

> Brenda said: "There is always a guiding assignment sheet that tells them what they are supposed to give each other feedback on, very detailed guidelines, step-by-step."

Michelle, on the other hand, does not think that peer feedback is as effective as the teacher's feedback, so she almost never has her students give each other feedback on their writing. However, she very often photocopies or projects students' well-written essays and discusses them with the students in class, which is very similar to what Brenda does.

"At the end of the process after I give them feedback, I select the best essay from that lot; it differs from each essay to another. This essay, Essay 5, for example, I put it on Blackboard, and I highlight in it certain vocabulary expressions, certain structures, and certain ideas. Then, I color coded and I put it there," Brenda said.

In terms of reducing the students' writing anxiety, Brenda stated that the students feel more anxious when they get feedback from their teacher. Michelle and Alice, on the other hand, strongly believe that having individual conferences with the students is the most effective way to give them feedback. Michelle thinks that conferences give students a chance to express how they feel about their writing, which they most likely would not do with their peers. Alice agrees with Michelle in that students feel more comfortable discussing their written work with their teachers during individual conferences, but she mentioned that it often depends on the teacher and the approach he uses to give students feedback.

Michelle said: "If a student feels insecure about his writing, he can express it in a conference, and the teacher can work on it. If a teacher does not have conferences with his students, peer feedback would not reduce anxiety."

The teachers were also asked whether their students prefer direct or indirect feedback on their writing, more specifically on their content and development of ideas, and whether the type of feedback they prefer makes them feel less anxious. Mary, Karen and Alice believe direct feedback makes the students feel less anxious. However, they do not think it is the most effective

way in terms of helping them improve their writing. This is why Mary, for instance, gives direct feedback, more specifically on language use, at the beginning of the semester only. Karen also thinks the reason why students prefer direct feedback is because many of the students are used to it, which is why she feels the students feel anxious when she does not give them the correct answer.

Alice said: "Direct feedback makes them less anxious. They would not spend much time rewriting their essays. They simply copy and paste without thinking about the errors they made."

This is probably why all of the teachers think that the students benefit more from indirect feedback. In fact, Mary, Michelle and Karen use very similar strategies while giving their students feedback on their writing. As mentioned above, Mary starts by correcting the students' errors. Then, after the students have practiced writing several essays, she gives them a code for the type of error they need to correct or underlines the error and have them correct it. Michelle also underlines her students' errors with different colors, and Karen uses codes while giving her students feedback.

"I will usually circle something and use like a code, such as SVA. So, they know that there is an error in subject-verb agreement and fix it, but I will not circle every SVA. Sometimes I just say here are two examples of SVA, and have the student look through the rest of his paper for anymore," Karen said.

Brenda also gives both types of feedback and thinks they are both important, but she believes students feel more anxious when they are given indirect feedback. She also thinks that written comments make them feel very anxious, which is probably why Karen has tried to reduce the amount of feedback she gives her students.

Both Mary and Karen give their students more detailed feedback on content than on language use. Karen mentioned that the students find it very challenging to come up with ideas, which is why they often address the easiest comments and not think carefully about the comments associated with content.

"Of course, I address the language because we have to in the IEP, but I also focus on the content because I feel this is the weakest and it is the most important part. If you have got nothing to say, nothing valuable, and nothing original or interesting, then why are you writing? This is why I focus more on content," she said.

Lastly, although Michelle and Elizabeth also prefer giving their students indirect feedback, they believe that the students' anxiety is not affected by the type of feedback they are given, whether it is direct or indirect.

Even though the teachers had different views about the way feedback affects the students' anxiety, all of them strongly agreed that students feel anxious when they know their writing will be graded.

Karen said: "For sure. 'Of course.' It is huge. I still think anxiety exists when there are no grades, but it is far worse when there are grades. I mean the whole point is to actually write well, produce something that is worth reading, not to just follow a bunch of formula and make sure you are ticking all the boxes in certain criteria in a rubric. I feel it kills the possibility for developing a love for writing or just even a love for learning at all. It just becomes cold."

This is probably why Elizabeth thinks that giving grades on the first drafts the students write affects their anxiety. Brenda also does not give them too many grades throughout the semester. She thinks it helps reduce their anxiety and makes them focus on improving their

writing than on getting a certain grade. Alice thinks that parental pressure and major specific criteria in order to declare a major often cause the students to think too much about their grades.

4.3.5 Effects of L2 Writing Anxiety

As mentioned above, the teachers believe there are several issues that cause students to feel anxious about their writing, such as the students' educational background, the type of feedback they receive, grades and parental pressure. Three out of the six teachers think that writing anxiety is more of a cause than an effect of poor writing performance. However, all six teachers clearly stated that anxiety has a negative effect on the students' writing performance. Five out of the six teachers asserted that writing anxiety affects the students' ability to come up with and develop their ideas.

Mary, Karen and Elizabeth, for instance, think that students spend too much time trying to come up with ideas, which affects their language use and mechanics because they very often do not have enough time to proofread what they have written, which is probably why Mary and Karen, as mentioned above, give their students more feedback on content than on language use. One of the strategies Mary uses to help her students come up with ideas is by encouraging them to use mind maps. Similarly, Alice believes that students very often make mistakes that they do not normally make when they are given a writing task to do in class or for homework. Even though, according to Brenda, IEP students are given a reading on the same topic they will write about to give them some ideas before they start writing, they still get confused and cannot decide on the main ideas of their essays while writing under time constraint. Elizabeth also supports their point of views, as she also believes that the students do not only find it challenging to come up with ideas, but also find it difficult to think of meaningful support for their claims.

Michelle, however, stated that writing anxiety affects students' self-confidence and self-esteem. She mentioned that low self-confidence, which is often a result of the students' educational background and their study habits, leads to high levels of anxiety.

> "Anxiety is connected to learner's self-confidence, even from primary school. Those who come from good schools, for instance, come with high self-esteem, which positively affects their writing," she said.

4.3.6 Symptoms of L2 Writing Anxiety

In addition to the causes and effects of writing anxiety that the teachers reported, there were several symptoms of anxiety that they very often noticed while there students are working on a writing task.

Karen, Michelle, Brenda and Alice, for instance, notice similar physical manifestations that show that a student is anxious while writing. All four of them stated that very often students who are anxious will erase what they have written several times, which does not give them enough time to proofread their essays. Michelle, Brenda and Alice believe that another reason why they do not have enough time to write their entire essay is because they write very slowly when they are nervous. Alice stated that they sometimes end up not writing an entire paragraph because of spending too much time brainstorming ideas.

> "Some of them write until the very last minute, which is another sign. When you tell them 'You have 15 minutes,' they say 'Oh my God, I have not started my second body paragraph.' Some of them say 'how much time do we have left.' They set their watch at the beginning and keep looking at it," Michelle said.

Both Karen and Brenda also affirmed that students who are anxious tend to lose focus and stare for a while before they start writing. Karen has very often seen students sweating or

57

trembling, and Brenda notices that the students freeze up when they are giving a writing task. She also mentioned other symptoms she notices while students are writing:

She said: "The girls sometimes play with their hair, and the boys sometimes start tapping their pens on the table. They also sometimes keep on sharpening their pencils. I often notice the leg twitching as well."

While the majority of the teachers observe physical manifestations that indicate that students are nervous or anxious while writing, Mary notices students are anxious when they tell her that they are anxious, which is what Alice has experienced with her students before.

"They have a problem with self-trust. They always want reassurance, which prevents them from being fluent. They tend to write very simple language and short sentences." Alice said.

One of Mary's students, for instance, keeps asking her how she is doing. She believes that it is fear and lack of self-efficacy that leads to anxiety on any test, and for that reason she has them practice in what she calls the "learning zone," which helps them feel more confident in the "performance zone."

Although the majority of the teachers observe symptoms that indicate students are anxious while writing, they sometimes also notice them before and after the students are given a writing task. Four out of the six teachers believe students are more anxious before they start writing. Mary, as she mentioned above, stated that the students often struggle to come up with ideas. Alice is agreement with Mary, as she also thinks students feel most anxious before they are given a writing task for the same reason, which is probably why Karen's students ask her many questions before they start writing.

Karen said: "In advance, they tell me they are scared, for example. They keep asking questions. What should I do for this or that? Give us more tips. You feel the tension and anxiety."

Brenda also thinks that students feel most anxious before writing, but for different reasons. She asserted that part of it is test anxiety in general. She also believes that students feel anxious before they actually start writing because they do not know the different factors associated with writing, such as the content, language use, vocabulary, organization and mechanics. When she compared between writing and reading to clarify her point of view, she mentioned that writing is more difficult for students than reading. However, Alice affirmed that the students' reading abilities affect their ability to come up with ideas.

"They do not read in the level of sophistication that they need, which is why they struggle to develop their ideas, she said."

In the same vein, Michelle, Elizabeth and Alice are in agreement with Brenda that students feel anxious after they are given a writing task because they are very keen about finding out how well they did, which corresponds with the major causes of writing anxiety they stated above. According to Mary, in order to make sure they did not go off topic, the students ask each other about the ideas they have written.

Elizabeth said: "The grade is very important for them. They worry more about the grade than why I got this grade. They feel this is the best I can do, so they feel disappointed about the grade."

4.3.7 Possible Solutions to L2 Writing Anxiety

To help reduce the students' writing anxiety, the teachers use several strategies. The methods that five out of the six teachers believe are very effective in terms of helping students

feel less anxious about their writing are praising them and having individual conferences with them. Mary, for instance, always assures her students that they can pass the course. She always tries to build their self-confidence and self-efficacy and encourage persistence, which is probably why Alice gives students positive feedback and compliments in class. Michelle also asserted that praise is very important for students with low self-esteem, which is why she does not only praise them when she has individual conferences with them, but also in front of their classmates in class. Also, Brenda uploads her students' essays on their class site for their classmates to see how a certain aspect in their peers' writing, such as their grammar or use of vocabulary, has improved. Similarly, Karen believes that it is very important to praise students and have them reflect on the aspects they think have improved in their writing.

> She said: "It is not just external kind of praise or boosting, but they also start to develop their own ability to boost themselves."

> Additionally, Michelle and Alice often use encouraging words and phrases to help reduce their students' writing anxiety. Michelle, for instance, mentioned that she sometimes makes favorable comments with a smiley face on their writing. Alice's expressions and the way she treats her students is what makes them feel comfortable.

> She said: "I believe I am a very easy person to approach. I never make them feel worried about approaching or asking me for a favor, such as postponing a deadline. I meet them with a smile. I never underestimate their anxiety in anyway even if I think there is no reason for it. Each student has a positive thing even if it is not in language. It can be in his personality, so positive feedback or compliments in class are also important."

> Elizabeth and Karen use indirect methods to build their students' self-confidence. In addition to praising her students, Elizabeth always tries hard to find topics that interest them. She

believes that if students are familiar with a certain topic or find it interesting, the quality of their writing will be better, which would eventually make them feel more confident when they are given a writing task on the same topic. Karen, on the other hand, always tries to make her students feel that she is also part of their learning process, which is probably why she asserted that it is very important for them to set goals for themselves.

"I try to let them see that I also am still improving my writing and that if I write a draft, I can also improve it and I show them. I write a draft in front of them, and I show them how I improved it afterwards, so that they would see how real revision looks like, and the fact that something can always be improved," she said.

Even though Karen, in her answer to Question 7, mentioned that students prefer her feedback over that of their peers because they tend to think too much about what their peers think of them, she believes that peer review can sometimes make them feel less anxious about their writing. Brenda agrees with her point of view, and they both give their students very few graded assignments in order to help them improve their writing by focusing more on making progress than on getting a certain grade.

I was also keen to know whether the teachers have talked about writing anxiety with their students, and I was surprised to know that all six teachers have not discussed this issue with their students in class. However, they use different methods to help their students feel less anxious. For instance, Mary discusses anxiety in general with her students in class before the first writing exam, and she gives them some tips, such as breathing deeply and sleeping well the night before the test, which she thinks helped two of her students in particular feel more confident. Unlike Mary, Karen encourages her students to come up with ideas and strategies that she hopes can make them worry less before the test.

She also said: "I do not necessarily put it as an agenda item, but I think it comes up, and when it comes up, we talk about it."

Although Brenda and Alice also do not discuss writing anxiety with their students in class, they use very similar techniques to try to make their students feel more confident that they will do well on a given test. Brenda, for instance, believes that if she mentioned the word *anxiety* in class, students will feel anxious, so she tries to prove to the students that what they will find on the test is very similar to what they have been practicing in class.

"What I do in class is tell them how to do well on a writing task. I do not mention the word *anxiety*, I do not think I should bring it up, personally because I do not want to highlight it, but I tell them what to do, which I think helps them become less anxious. I also tell them that the writing exam is just one other essay we have written in class. 'We have already written so many essays, this is just another essay.'"

Alice also stated that she has not discussed writing anxiety with her students in class, but she always tries to assure them that they will do a good job, and she receives positive feedback from them about the way she encourages and supports them. She believes it is unnecessary to spend time discussing writing anxiety in class. Nevertheless, she affirmed that if there is a serious issue that one of her students is facing, she would ask him to come to her office and discuss it with him, which is the same way Elizabeth deals with very anxious students, or she encourages him to see a counselor or a mentor.

Lastly, in addition to the strategies that the teachers use to help their students with their writing anxiety, I asked them about other possible solutions that they think could be effective in terms of making students worry less about their writing performance.

All six teachers asserted that the way writing is assessed in the IEP needs to be changed; five of whom suggested alternative ways to have students practice and improve their writing. According to the teachers' answers to the interview questions, doing a graded writing task under time constraint is what most of the students find challenging and feel anxious about.

Michelle said: "The way writing is tested in the IEP is wrong, and it does not show the potential of the students. We do not rethink. We have been doing things over and over again. Why not have student write multiple drafts? Giving them the prompt, having them write an essay in an hour, this creates anxiety."

Karen supports her point of view by saying:

"Obviously, I wish that we did not have to grade them. I wish it did not have to be a timed situation in an exam."

Therefore, one of the possible solutions that Mary, Karen and Elizabeth suggested is to have students write periodically because they believe writing should be more of a process, where the students see how they are making progress, which is probably why Karen believes it is necessary that students develop their own sense of wanting to improve and seeing themselves as the agent of their own growth instead of just receiving praise from their teachers.

She also added: "I think this would help in their own anxiety because if they see themselves as someone who is making progress and someone who is setting goals, someone who is in control and someone who is taking responsibility for their own learning, I think this is a big factor."

Similarly, Alice affirmed teachers should encourage students to focus more on achieving the course learning outcomes than on getting a certain grade, which she thinks can motivate them rather than discourage them to improve their writing performance. Another suggestion she

mentioned was to bring a well-known figure, such as a CEO of a company or organization, to speak about how he or she was able to overcome his anxiety.

Karen also strongly believes students find it very challenging to come up with good ideas, so she suggested giving students take-home writing tasks where they would have enough time to think of and develop their ideas.

Karen said: "They struggle to come up with ideas and everything just sort of falls apart for them. They are so worried about the time as well as the fact that it is an exam that they become less efficient and they are unable to think as clearly."

Elizabeth supports Karen's viewpoint, which is why she suggested writing portfolios instead of high-stakes exams to assess students' writing.

"Maybe moving away from grades, and going to process writing and portfolios. Moving away from having students write under time constraint. I wish we could move away from this basic academic essay and move to freer and creative written work. If they have more time to think, research, come up with better ideas and support, this can reduce their anxiety," she said.

4.4 Interpretations of Findings

4.4.1 Types of L2 Writing Anxiety

The first purpose of the present study was to find out the type of anxiety Cognitive Anxiety (CA), Somatic Anxiety (SA) or Avoidance Anxiety (AA) that the majority of IEP students suffer from. The results of the questionnaire that was given to the students show that they have almost the same levels of both SA and CA, with 42% and 40%, respectively. The students' high level of SA was mainly due to writing English compositions under time constraint (70.6%). This was also clear in their responses to Items 2, 8, 11 and 13, which address the same

issue. Their responses to Items 3, 9 and 21 also show that the majority of the students suffer from CA mainly because they feel worried while writing English compositions when they know they will be evaluated (76.5%). The results of the questionnaire indicate that the students are very concerned about their grades and other people's perceptions of their writing performance (CA), and, as a result, they experience tension, nervousness, and other physiological effects (SA). Also, their responses to the items in the questionnaire related to AA show that even though the majority of them (87%) are willing to write their thoughts and English compositions in English, they would prefer to write them outside of class, which confirms their responses to the items related to SA about writing under time constraint.

4.4.2 Causes of L2 Writing Anxiety

Both the students' and teachers' responses show that fear of negative evaluation and writing under time constraints are the two main causes of writing anxiety. Elizabeth and Michelle affirmed how students in the IEP in specific tend to feel anxious about their writing because in order to pass the course they need to get a certain grade in writing, and this corresponds with the students' responses to Item 3 (76.5%), Item 9 (78.5%), and Item 21 (70.6%) in the questionnaire, which show how the students feel about their writing when they know it is going to be evaluated. Also, Michelle and Brenda mentioned that one of the reasons why students feel anxious while writing is because of the fact that they need to finish in a specific amount of time, which corresponds with the students' responses to Item 2 (70.6%), Item 8 (72.5%), and Item 11 (70.6%) in the questionnaire. The majority of the students find it challenging to finish a writing task in the given time, and this is probably why, as presented in the questionnaire results, most of them would prefer to do their writing outside of class (Item 18—68.6%).

Table 6. Peer Review

Teachers' Answers to Interview Questions	Students' Responses to Questionnaire Items
Two of the teachers believe that peer review can sometimes make students feel less anxious about their writing.	Students' responses to Item 17 showed that the majority (**66.7%**) do not worry at all what their colleagues would think of their writing.
Two teachers use peer feedback strategies to help reduce students' writing anxiety.	**70.6%** of the students are willing to share their writing with their classmates (Items 14 and 20).

Karen believes that peer review can sometimes make students feel less anxious about their writing. Also, as mentioned above, the students' responses show that they are willing to share their writing with their classmates. According to their responses to Item 17, the majority of them (66.7%) do not worry at all what their colleagues would think of their writing. Brenda agrees with her point of view, and they both give their students very few graded assignments in order to help them improve their writing by focusing more on making progress than on getting a certain grade. Michelle and Brenda also use peer feedback strategies to help reduce their writing anxiety. The strategies they use show why the students' responses to Items 14 and 20 in the questionnaire indicate that the majority of the students (70.6%) are willing to share their writing with their classmates, and they are neither afraid that other students would deride their essays if they read them nor feel worried about their essays being chosen as sample to be discussed in class.

4.4.3 Teachers' Perceptions of L2 Writing Anxiety

Table 7. Symptoms of L2 Writing Anxiety

Teachers' Answers to Interview Questions	Students' Responses to Questionnaire Items
Two teachers affirmed that students who are anxious tend to lose focus and stare for a while before they start writing.	One of the reasons they probably lose focus is because, as **70.6%** of them responded to Item 11 in the questionnaire, their thoughts become jumbled when they write under time constraint.
One of the teachers often notices students going blank while observing students working on a writing task.	Almost half of the students who participated in this study (**47.1%**) also reported that their minds often go blank when they start to work on a writing task (Item 6 in the questionnaire).
One of the teachers has often seen students sweating or trembling.	**72.5%** have reported that they tremble or perspire when they write English compositions under time constraints.
One of the teachers notices that the students freeze up when they are giving a writing task.	Only very few students (**25.5%**) have agreed that they freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions (Item 15 in the questionnaire).

IEP teachers have also reported several physiological symptoms of students who feel anxious about their writing. Both Karen and Brenda, for instance, affirmed that students who are anxious tend to lose focus and stare for a while before they start writing. One of the reasons they probably lose focus is because, as 70.6% of them responded to Item 11 in the questionnaire, their thoughts become jumbled when they write under time constraint. Almost half of the students who participated in this study (47.1%) also reported that their minds often go blank when they start to work on a writing task (Item 6 in the questionnaire), which is also what Karen often notices while observing students working on a writing task. Additionally, Karen has very often

seen students sweating or trembling, and this corresponds with the students' responses to Item 8 in the questionnaire, where 72.5% have reported that they tremble or perspire when they write English compositions under time constraint. Although Brenda notices that the students freeze up when they are giving a writing task, only very few students (25.5%) have agreed that they freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions (Item 15 in the questionnaire).

4.5 Conclusion

The results of the questionnaire show that the majority of the IEP students suffer from both Somatic Anxiety (SA) and Cognitive Anxiety (CA), with 42% and 40%, respectively, and only some students (18%) suffer from Avoidance Anxiety (AA). The responses of the IEP teachers clearly show that they have different point of views about several issues related to L2 writing anxiety, such as its causes, effects, symptoms, and possible solutions to it. Their answers to the interview questions also very often matched the students' level of agreement or disagreement with certain items in the questionnaire. These issues will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The present study aimed to compare between IEP students' thoughts about and attitudes towards writing in English and ESL teachers' perceptions of L2 writing anxiety. Both student and teacher perceptions about writing anxiety have been examined through questionnaire responses and interviews. Two research questions were presented in the present study. The first question attempted to indicate the types and causes of L2 writing anxiety among the students, and the second question looked into the teachers' perspectives of L2 writing anxiety. In this chapter, the findings of the study will be presented and analyzed in relation to other research studies done on L2 writing anxiety. This chapter also presents the implications and limitations of the study, as well as suggestions for further research.

5.2 Discussion of Results

5.2.1 Types of L2 Writing Anxiety

While the level of SA among the students in the present study was almost the same as that of the learners who participated in Abd Rahim and Hayas's (2014) study (50%), the level of CA (87%) was relatively different. The majority of students who participated in the present study suffered from high levels of CA, which is why they very often feel worried about how other people, such as their teachers and peers, would perceive their writing. Eventually, they choose not to do the writing task they are given. Also, the level of AA among the students in the current study was only 18%, which is also much lower than that of the student participants in Abd Rahim and Hayas (2014) study (43%). These results indicate that the students in the present study are more willing to write down their thoughts and compositions in English than those who participated in Abd Rahim and Hayas (2014) study. However, the results of the current study

partly correspond with the results of the study that Zhang (2011) conducted, as it showed that both groups of Chinese learners who participated in her study suffered mainly from CA. The 120 Iranian EFL students who participated in the study that Rezaei and Jafari (2014) did also suffered from high levels of CA mainly because of linguistic difficulties, fear of tests, and fear of negative evaluation.

5.2.2 Causes of L2 Writing Anxiety

The items in the questionnaire and the interview questions also intended to investigate the causes of L2 writing anxiety among the students who participated in the study. Both the students' and teachers' responses show that fear of negative evaluation and writing under time constraints are the two main causes of writing anxiety. These results seem to confirm the findings of Negari and Rezaabadi (2012), whose results showed that students felt less anxious when they knew in advance that their writing will not be graded. Also, Lin and Ho (2009) found that fear of negative comments and writing under time constraint were two of the major factors of writing anxiety among ESL learners.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the feedback that ESL students receive on their writing is one of the major factors associated with L2 writing anxiety. Karen, for instance, mentioned that her students prefer to receive feedback from her than from their peers. However, she believes that peer review can make students feel less anxious about their writing, which was found in the study that Kurt and Atay (2007) did. The level of anxiety of the students in the experimental group who received feedback from their peers decreased significantly, which is why Hyland (2000) also argues that peer review would be more effective than teachers' feedback, as it gives learners more control over their writing. As for the type of feedback, IEP students prefer direct feedback, which is partly because they are used to it, as Karen mentioned. These findings echoed

those of Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), whose results showed that students think that their teachers are responsible not only for giving them detailed feedback on their writing, but also for correcting their errors.

Another reason why students prefer their teacher's feedback is because they find teacher support the most effective in terms of helping them feel less anxious (Huang, Eslami, & Hu, 2010). Similarly, Karen stated that written comments can often cause anxiety, which is why she prefers to discuss students' writing with them face-to-face, where there would be more support and encouragement. Additionally, the argument that Karen made about the teacher's priority in correcting students' errors is very similar to that of Burton (2009). She believes that teachers should not aim to eliminate the errors students make, but to remind them that making errors is an essential part of language learning, which could make them feel less anxious and less stressed about making errors. Also, Mary believes that students' lack of self-efficacy and analytical abilities can make them feel anxious about their writing, which is most likely why Erkan and Saban (2011) found that lack of self-efficacy negatively affects writing performance. These results also correspond with the findings of Bandura (1993), who found that the students' level of aspiration, motivation, and academic achievement are highly affected by their level of self-efficacy. This is probably why they tend to exert more effort, which contributes to higher writing performance, when they maintain high levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989).

Lastly, the majority of the teachers mentioned that they praise their students to help them feel less anxious, and several studies show that praise can help learners develop their writing. For instance, McGarrell and Verbeem (2007) found that praise and verbal feedback can make learners more motivated and can have a positive impact on their writing performance.

5.2.3 Teachers' Perceptions of L2 Writing Anxiety

The present study also aimed to find out what ESL teachers notice about students who suffer from L2 writing anxiety. The IEP teachers interviewed reported that students who are anxious about their writing tend to start losing focus, staring, sweating or trembling. These observations and results also seem to confirm the findings of other researchers, who found that sweaty palms, muscle contractions, perspiration and dry mouth are some of the physiological signs associated with writing anxiety (Chastain, 1975; Gardner, 1985; Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986). On the other hand, the responses of the students in the current study show that they do not try to avoid situations where they have to complete a writing task. Therefore, these results contradict the findings of Daly and Miller (1975), whose results showed that sometimes highly apprehensive learners tend to avoid taking writing courses, or if they did take these courses, they would neither complete their assignments nor attend all classes (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1992).

5.3 Implications of Findings

The implications of the findings of this study indicate that developing adequate assessment measures and finding new strategies to help L2 learners feel less anxious about their writing will not only improve the quality of their writing, but also enhance their writing self-efficacy. Also, in order to make students feel more comfortable while writing, teachers could allow them to write at home or produce a written text in groups before they do a graded writing task under time constraint in class. It is inevitable that real writing ability would not be expected to really develop if the sole conditions under which students produce their written work are test-like, which is why numerous studies have suggested several strategies and techniques to help L2 learners feel less anxious about their writing. For instance, some of the suggestions that

72

Thompson (1980) made include having learners focus more on the writing process itself, which involves several stages. After they write their first few drafts, students receive feedback from their peers or teacher on their content and development of ideas. Language errors in this writing approach are addressed last, since the more students write, the more their language grows with their writing. Eventually, they would be introduced to language development by seeing how their language use has developed overtime. Consequently, the learners would start to feel that mistakes are considered an essential aspect of the learning process (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013).

The present study has also shown that teachers should not only provide their learners with a non-judgmental, motivating learning environment, but also show interest in their opinions and give extra attention to those who suffer from L2 writing anxiety (Attia, 2015). For instance, teachers can help reduce their students' anxiety by giving them feedback in person, where they provide suggestions and encouragement as well as criticism (Thompson, 1980). ESL Teachers familiarizing themselves with the issues related to L2 writing anxiety and discussing them with their learners could also be useful.

In addition to teacher evaluation, IEP teachers should use other means to giving feedback to their students on their writing. Fox (1980) suggested using peer group evaluation and clarifying the objective of each writing lesson to help reduce L2 learners' writing apprehension. This involves developing clear objectives for each lesson and planning activities for students to be able to fulfill those objectives. These activities should be fun and engaging, and teachers should consider adapting them to suit their learners' different learning styles. Breaking down the writing task can also better prepare them for each element of the task and make them perceive it as a series of steps that can help them improve their writing instead of a series of challenging

tasks (Fox, 1980). This approach can also help them improve their writing performance and reduce their anxiety.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

There were some limitations in the current study that are likely to have influenced its results. First, only 51 students and six teachers participated in the study, and such low response rate would make it difficult to generalize the findings of the study to the target population of IEP students and teachers. Second, all of the students who participated in this study were at the same proficiency level. Although the majority of the teachers agreed that students' proficiency level does not affect their level of writing anxiety, it would have been beneficial to distribute the questionnaire to students in higher levels and find out if they also feel anxious about their writing. Third, it would have been useful to interview the students, as it would have provided the researcher with richer data that can provide more information about writing anxiety from the students' perspectives. In addition, the questionnaire included Likert scale items only, so it would have been worthwhile to add open-ended questions for students to provide more details about their thoughts and attitudes towards writing. This could have better clarified other possible correlations between both their perspectives and the teachers' perspectives.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

In order to try to help L2 learners feel less anxious about their writing, the issue first needed to be examined from both the teachers' and students' perspectives, which is what this study aimed to achieve. The present study is only the first step in a series of steps that can be taken to solve this issue. For instance, this current study could be replicated with a bigger and more diverse sample in order for the results to be more accurate and generalizable. The results of the present study show that certain variables, such as grades and the time given to complete a

writing task, can affect students' level of writing anxiety. Therefore, conducting a confirmatory study, where a bigger sample of students is divided into a control group and an experimental group and given a writing task to complete, could allow researchers to find out which of these factors affect students' level of anxiety and writing performance the most. It could also be useful to analyze their writing samples to find out how their anxiety affects their content and development of ideas.

In addition, the results of both the questionnaire and interviews show that students feel more anxious when they know their written work will be graded, which is why several teachers suggested having students write periodically instead of giving them high-stakes exams. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to compare between the level of writing anxiety among students in the IEP and students enrolled in other universities or programs where writing is more of a process. A longitudinal study could also be conducted over two or three semesters to find out whether anxiety increases or decreases as the student makes progress and moves to a higher level. Conducting such longitudinal study could also allow researchers time to do behavioral observations to notice and report physiological symptoms of students while they are completing a writing task. It could also be useful to compare between L2 writing anxiety among native speakers and L2 learners. Moreover, researchers could experiment different strategies and techniques to find out the most effective ones in terms of reducing learners' writing anxiety. Lastly, other variables such as the age, gender and cultural background of the students and teachers are also suggested to be taken into consideration while doing these studies.

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Appendices

Appendix I

ESL Writing Anxiety Questionnaire I: Adopted from Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004)

Read the following statements and express your degree of agreement/disagreement by ticking.

Check the appropriate column.

Note that:
SA: Strongly agree
A: Agree
D: Disagree
SD: Strongly disagree

Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1. While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.				
2. I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.				
3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.				
4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.				
5. I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.				
6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.				
7. I do not worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others'.				
8. I tremble or perspire when I write English composition under time pressure.				
9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.				
10. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.				
11. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.				
12. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write my composition.				
13. I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.				
14. I am afraid that other students would deride my English composition if they read it.				
15. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.				
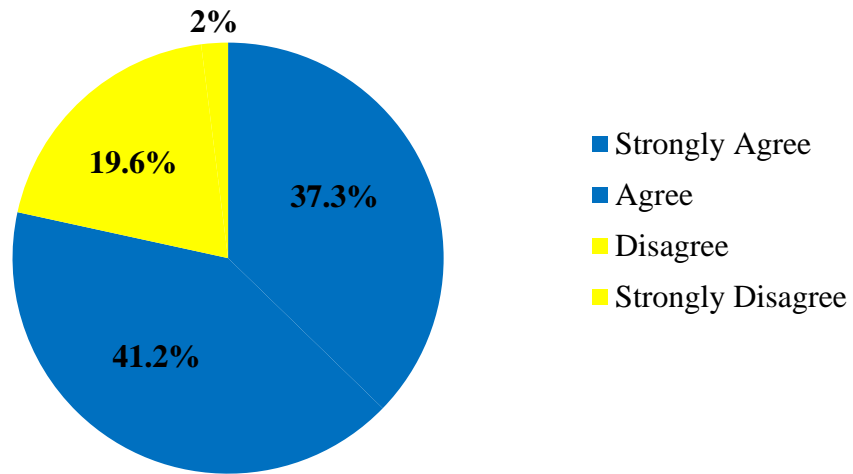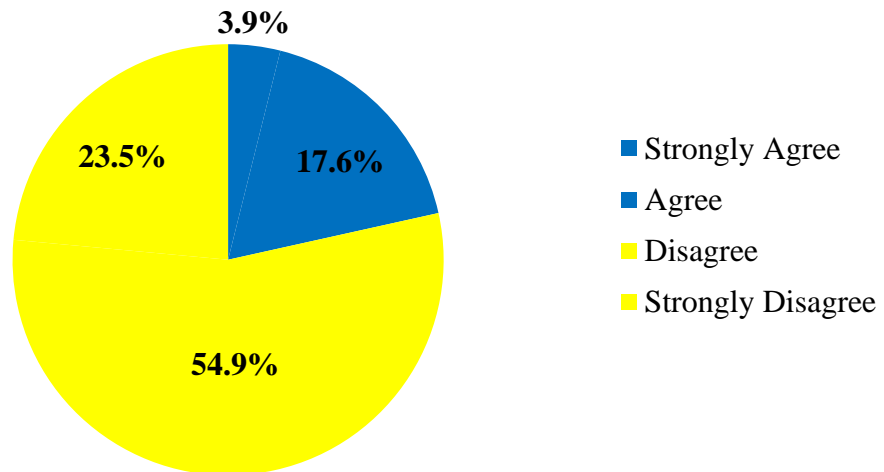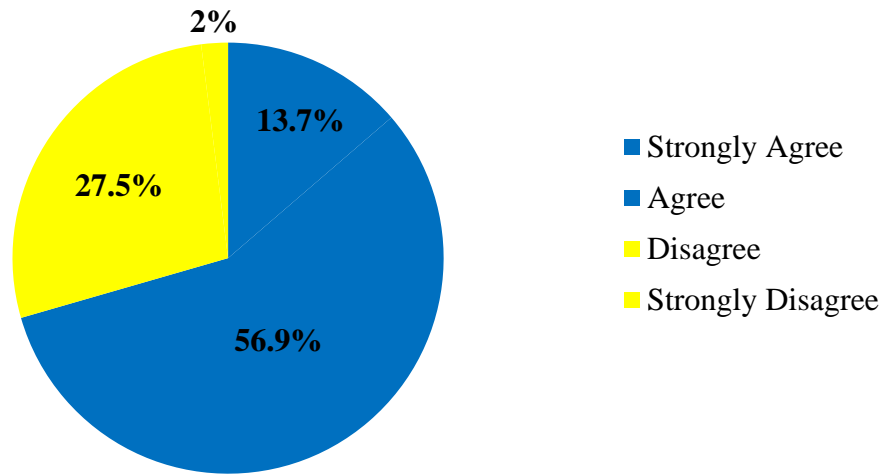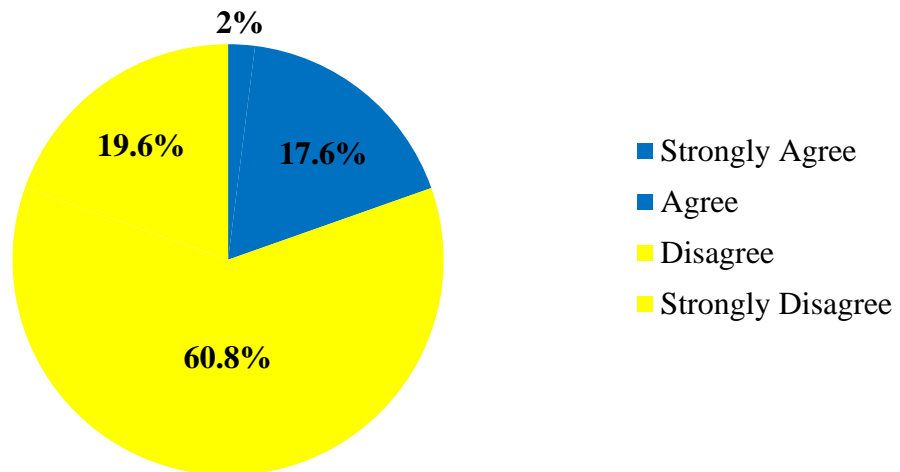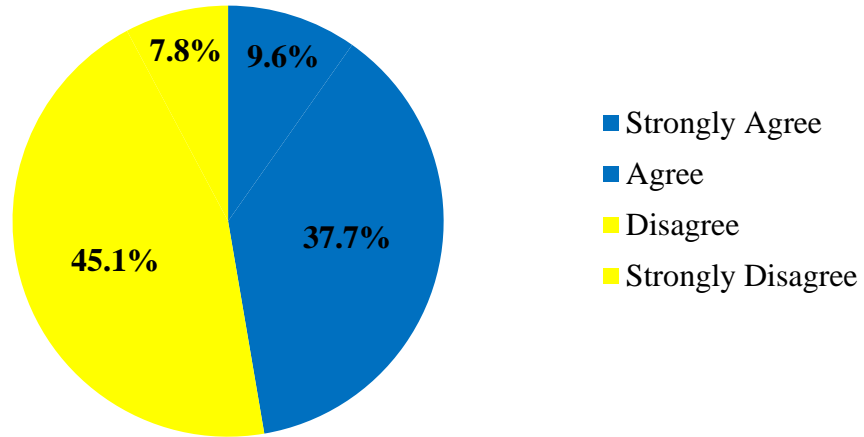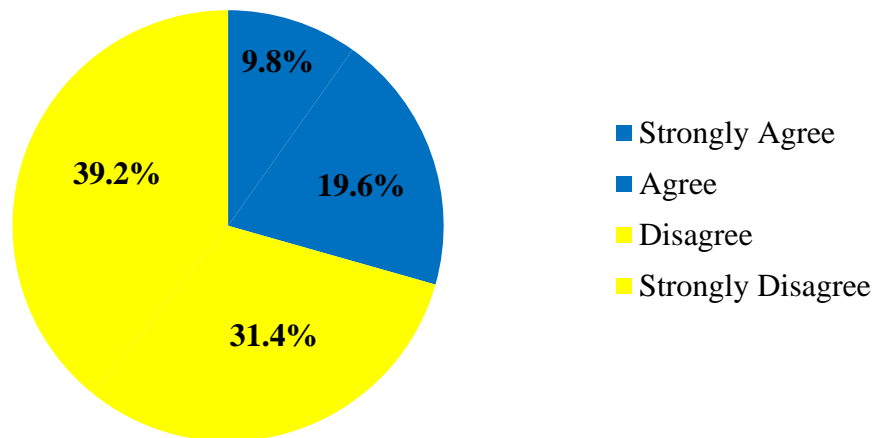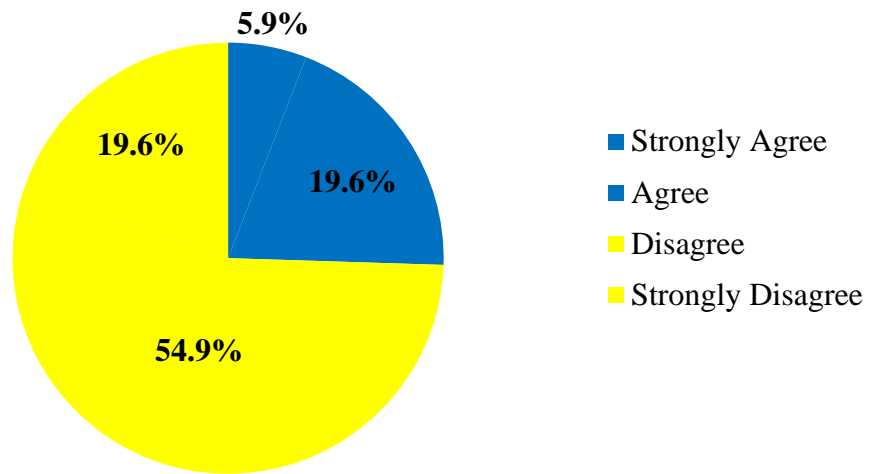
16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.				
17. I do not worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.				
18. I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.				
19. I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.				
20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.				
21. I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated very poor.				
22. Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.				

Appendix II

Interview questions asked to teachers: Adopted from Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) and Foreign Language Anxiety: Perceptions and Attitudes in the Egyptian ESL Classroom (Attia, 2015).

1. What does foreign language anxiety mean?

2. Which language skill (reading, writing, speaking, or listening) do you think ESL learners usually feel anxious about? Why do you think so?

3. Do you think writing anxiety is a cause or an effect of poor writing performance? Why?

4. What are the main causes of L2 writing anxiety (education, feedback, grades, etc.)?

5. Students at which proficiency level tend to suffer from higher levels of L2 writing anxiety? Why?

6. Which type of feedback do your students prefer (instructor, peer, group, etc.)?

7. Do you think this has anything to do with their anxiety? If yes, how?

8. Which type of feedback (direct or indirect) do you think can make students more anxious about their writing skills? Why?

9. What do you notice about students who are anxious about their writing?

10. When do you notice this (before, during, or after a writing task)?

11. Does students' anxiety depend on whether the writing task is graded?

12. How does writing anxiety affect your students' writing performance?

13. What do you do in order to reduce L2 learners' writing anxiety?

14. Have you discussed writing anxiety in class with the students?

15. If yes, did this help reduce their anxiety? To what extent?

16. What do you think are possible solutions to L2 writing anxiety?
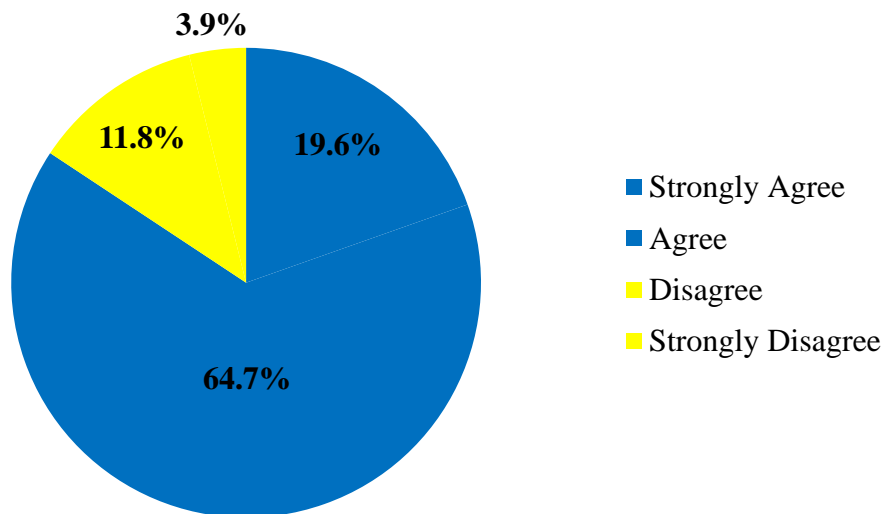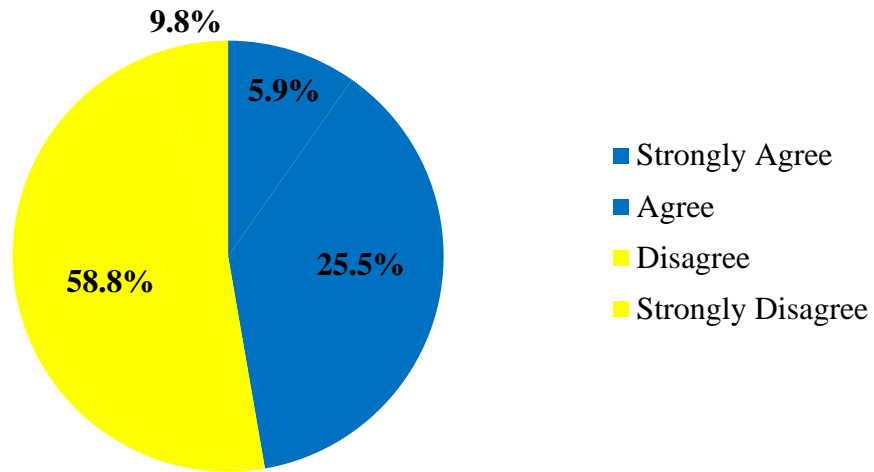
Appendix III

Questionnaire Results

1. While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.

0%

11.8%

33.3%

54.9%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

2. I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.

3.9%

19.6%

25.5%

51%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.

2%

21.6%

25.5%

51%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.

3.9%

11.8%

19.6%

64.7%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.

9.8%

5.9%

58.8%

25.5%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.

5.9%

9.8%

47.1%

37.7%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7. I do not worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others'.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

3.9%
19.6%
23.5%
52.9%

8. I tremble or perspire when I write English composition under time pressure.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

5.9%
19.6%
21.6%
52.9%

9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.

2%

19.6%

37.3%

41.2%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.

3.9%

23.5%

17.6%

54.9%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.

2%

13.7%

27.5%

56.9%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write my composition.

2%

19.6%

17.6%

60.8%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7.8% 9.6% 37.7% 45.1%

14. I am afraid that other students would make fun of my English composition if they read it.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9.8% 19.6% 31.4% 39.2%

15. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.

5.9%

19.6%

19.6%

54.9%

- ■ Strongly Agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly Disagree

16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.

5.9%

23.5%

13.7%

56.9%

- ■ Strongly Agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly Disagree

17. I do not worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.

- 5.9%
- 21.6%
- 27.5%
- 45.1%

Legend:
- ■ Strongly Agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly Disagree

18. I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.

- 0%
- 7.8%
- 31.4%
- 60.8%

Legend:
- ■ Strongly Agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly Disagree

19. I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.

- 7.8%
- 17.6%
- 13.7%
- 60.8%

Legend:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.

- 9.8%
- 19.6%
- 21.6%
- 49%

Legend:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated very poor.

- 15.7%
- 13.7%
- 21.6%
- 49%

Legend:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.

- 0%
- 9.8%
- 29.4%
- 60.8%

Legend:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Appendix IV

Consent Form

Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: Second-language Learners' Writing Anxiety and Teachers' Awareness

Principal Investigator: Ehab El Shimi (eshimi@aucegypt.edu).

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is to analyze and compare the way L2 learners (L2 = English) feel about their writing and what ESL teachers actually observe and notice about their learners' anxiety. The expected duration of your participation is 30 minutes.

The procedures of the research will be as follows: you will be given a 22-item questionnaire and then 6 ESL teachers with different years of teaching experience will be interviewed. The reason why the questionnaire will be given first to you is to get an overview of how you feel about writing in English as a Second language and to generalize its results to all L2 learners taking this intensive English course. There is a good possibility that the questionnaire results will raise issues that can be used in the interviews conducted with the teachers. Therefore, the teacher interviews will not take place until after you have filled out the questionnaire. Lastly, the results of the questionnaire will be compared to the teachers' answers to the interview questions in order to analyze the way you feel about L2 writing and what their teachers notice about your anxiety.

There will not be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research.

There will not be direct benefits to you for participating in this study.

The information you provide for purposes of this research is not anonymous because the assistants know you and I know the teachers. It is also not confidential because the assistants distributing the questionnaire have not signed a confidentiality statement.

Questions about the research, my rights, or research-related injuries should be directed to Ehab El Shimi at +2001223748141.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____