A Comparative Study of Writing Anxiety among Iranian University Students Majoring English Translation, Teaching and Literature

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Abstract

This study is designed to examine writing anxiety in three groups of EFL students who use English writing in their academic programs. The main purpose of this study is to determine the level and sources of anxiety that students experience while writing in English as a foreign language. To this end, 150 university students from Iranian EFL students majoring English related fields (Translation, Teaching, and Literature) in Tehran University, Faculty of Foreign Languages were asked to complete the EWAT questionnaire. The collected data will then be analyzed by the SPSS computer program; also the descriptive statistics were applied to examine the level and sources of anxiety that students experience while writing in English as a foreign language. Analysis of the EWAT results showed that participants felt most anxious about statements referring to evaluation and confidence in writing. They felt more secure about the statements referring to share their ideas. Writing was the least anxiety-provoking when statements were generally about enjoying writing. Finally, the students' answers to the open-ended question indicated that writing apprehension resulted from one or more sources: mainly the weakness of their past education, followed by a lack of confidence, and concern for the teacher's evaluation.

Keywords: anxiety, writing, writing anxiety

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Although English language is taught in schools in Iran, many students still need much more time to develop their English writing skills before actively using them in university. This could explain why Iranian students undergo a preparatory course of English before entering most universities and departments. English writing can be problematic; because at the time EFL students graduate from high school their writing proficiency does not match the university requirement for proficient written communication. Students need to become familiar with different writing styles and the important linguistic knowledge of the English language that they may never have learned in their previous education. The lack of sufficient English language proficiency can shake their self-confidence, leading to writing apprehension.

Based on the mentioned objectives of the study, the following research questions are raised for the present study.

1) Do Iranian EFL students majoring translation, teaching, and literature experience anxiety in their academic writing in university level?

2) Is there a difference between translation, teaching and literature students regarding writing anxiety?

3) What are the sources of writing anxiety in translation, teaching, and literature students?

1.2 Significance of the Study

The present study is considered unique because, up to my knowledge, it is the first to investigate writing anxiety in the Iranian context. Among the reviewed literature articles, only a few concentrated on writing in the ESL setting. This research also compares the sources of writing apprehension in groups of students from different universities and departments. Writing anxiety not only affects achievement, it can also affect self-esteem. In Iran, most of the studies focused on classroom anxiety as a general term in English language learning context rather than probing the anxiety associated with each skills of language. This study can add to the general body of knowledge about anxiety in language learning especially by focusing on writing skill. Given the fact that the

foreign language class is one of the most stressful courses for many EFL learners (Horwitz et al, 1986), the present study might be helpful for EFL students and teachers. This research acquaints students and teachers with the concept of foreign language writing anxiety. The research results may serve as a guide for teachers to understand and be aware of students' negative emotions specifically writing anxiety. Consequently, teachers can use different strategies to provide an appropriate language learning environment, as well to increase students' positive emotions, and make language acquisition less stressful.

1.3 Description of Relevant Scholarship

Several studies have tried to shed light on the sources of anxiety by examining the subject using various tools on different populations in a particular way. Houp's (2009) case study, for example, investigated writing anxiety in students learning English writing, and he concluded that the problem is mitigated when the early-experience stages of learning FL writing are highly concentrated. Barwick (1995) similarly gave importance to the initial practice of learning English writing, based on the way students express their attitude toward writing by means of avoidance, revision, and completion. Some researchers demonstrated that writing anxiety had a negative impact on grades on the written test (Lee & Krashen, 1997; Daly, 1985).

Some studies indicated that the gender issue was the reason for writing apprehension, since women were more anxious than men (Herrington, Matheny, Curlette, McCarthy, & Penick, 2005). Many studies supported both positions. Larson (1985) related writing anxiety to situational demands rather than individual characteristics like gender. More studies showed that the level of writing experience was the main factor causing writing apprehension. Some studies indicated that advanced students who were enrolled in writing courses were less anxious than novice and intermediate students (Daly & Miller, 1975a; Lee, 2002). Bandura (1989) suggested that higher writing self-efficacy helps to produce better performance. Similar findings by Klassen (2002) supported the importance of writing selfefficacy by reviewing 16 studies on the same topic. Further, a study by Martines, Martinez, Kock, and Cass (2011) examined the negative relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing anxiety. The study came as support evidence to Crumbo (1999), Klassen (2002), and Rechtien (1997).

Latif (2007) defined several factors that negatively affected writing anxiety and caused low self-efficacy among Arab students. These factors were: "the lack of linguistics knowledge," "low foreign language competence self-esteem," "poor history of writing achievement and perceived writing performance improvement," "low English writing self-efficacy," "instructional practices of English writing," "fear of criticism," and "others' evaluation of the student's writing." In addition, Zughoul (1987) had the opportunity to evaluate the syllabi of several Arab Universities, and found that "two components of the syllabus—namely, language and linguistics—show a lack of balance in the curriculum, where the language component, in particular, stands out as the weakest" (1987).

Another qualitative study was conducted by Lin (2009), who examined the feasible factors of students' anxiety in writing. The study offered some potential solutions that could improve their English writing courses. The researcher, along with the teacher and 16 advanced writing students, worked together for two months conducting 20-minute interviews to find an answer to the question: Why do you sometimes feel anxious during writing activity? Lin concluded her research by saying that the lack of working together among teachers and peers increased the level of writing apprehension. Atay and Kurt (2006) aimed to measure the extent of writing anxiety among prospective ESL/EFL teachers (PTs). The 85 participants of the study were a carefully-selected specimen of senior students. In this study, the data was collected using two tools: the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and an open-ended questionnaire. The inventory test showed that the majority of the PTs had writing anxiety. In addition, the questionnaire indicated that the PTs had some trouble organizing their thoughts and ideas in their L2. The PTs blamed their writing anxiety on the university instructors and on their past L2 writing experiences. Atay and Kurt concluded by showing that PTs' writing skills might influence their teaching in the future.

Another study of prospective teachers was conducted by Karakaya (2010) to develop their reliability-of-anxiety scale to investigate writing anxiety among students. Using this tool, the researchers concluded that a lack of out-of-school and in-class practice sessions increased writing apprehension. By reviewing all of these studies, we see that writing anxiety is caused by many factors that need to be explored and presented for future studies. The following section concentrates on writing apprehension in the scientific fields.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are constructed based on the research questions of the study:

Hypothesis 1: Iranian EFL students majoring translation, teaching, and literature do not experience anxiety in

their academic writing in university level.

Hypothesis 2: There is no difference between translation, teaching and literature students regarding writing anxiety.

Hypothesis 3: There is no specific reason for having writing anxiety in translation, teaching, and literature students.

2. Method

In this chapter, first, the design of the study is mentioned. Then some information about the participants is presented. After that, the instrument is explained. The procedure of administration and scoring is explained. The analysis of the data used in the study is elaborated.

2.1 Research Design

The main purpose of this study is to determine the level and sources of anxiety that the students experience while writing in English as a foreign language. A suitable tool is needed to achieve the explicit goals and assess the students' feelings toward writing in English. Therefore, the study design is quantitative, because of the instrument that is adopted to answer the raised research questions and it can help to cover a considerable amount of people which is more than the qualitative study could do. Furthermore, Creswell (2004) articulated that quantitative research is a translation from human practices into numbers. It has been characterized as numeric, deductive, objective, artificial (Bavelas, 1995).

2.2 Participants

The targeted participants were Iranian EFL students majoring English related fields (Translation, Teaching, and Literature) in their 4th or 5th semester out of 8 in Tehran University, Faculty of Foreign Languages. The study was conducted on 150 participants.The researcher chose the Tehran University, Faculty of Foreign Languages because the presence of three majors there. Also the students were both male and female.

2.3 Instrument

The instrument which was used in this study was English Writing Apprehension/Attitude Test (EWAT). It consisted of 26 items, with an equal number of positive and negative statements, such as "I have no fear of my English writing being evaluated," and "I am not good at English writing." Among several scales that measure writing anxiety in the ESL/EFL context, EWAT (Daly & Miller, 1975a) was a reliable scale for conducting this study appropriately for several reasons. First, this well-respected scale has been adopted in over than 30 studies as either the main scale or a supplementary tool. Second, more than any other scale in the ESL/EFL context, the EWAT statements measure sentiments including: "My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on my composition," "I would enjoy submitting my writing to journals for evaluation and publication," and "I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing." Third, the EWAT uses simple statements, so it can be conducted in less than 10 minutes. Last but not least, it is easy to calculate EWAT results.

2.4 Data Collection

The written questionnaire was distributed among the three groups of students in their 4th or 5th semester out of 8. The data survey was administered by the researcher. The short survey took no more than ten minutes. The collected data then entered into the SPSS computer program for analysis. The study participants started answering the 26 questions of the questionnaire with a range of responses: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree. The next page had the last question that is raised by the researcher about the source of writing anxiety to answer the third research question.

2.5 Data Analysis

The EWAT questionnaire was scored using the Daly and Miller 5-point likert scale. Responses to statements on the survey ranged on the scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).The total score on the EWAT scale may range from 26 to 130. The scale is organized such that the score is read by adding 78 to the positive statements and subtracting the negative statements. A total score in the range of 26-59 indicates a high level of writing anxiety, 60-96 indicates a moderate level of writing apprehension, and 97-130 indicates a low level of writing anxiety. For example, when one chooses strongly disagree for the statement, "I avoid writing," the response is scored as 5 points. On the other hand, when strongly agree is chosen for the statement, "My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on my composition," that is counted as 1 point for this response.

Daly and Miller (1975c) applied the formula on 98 undergraduate students at West Virginia University and they discovered that those who scored above 90 were having a low level of writing anxiety. On the contrary, those

scoring less than 54 were high in writing anxiety. Scores between 90 and 54 showed moderate anxiety. Later, Daly (1978) investigated 3,602 undergraduate students by using the WAT, and results broke down into three groups: the low (96.50), the high (55.45), and the moderate (75.04).

For analyzing open ended question the researcher anticipate the responses and give categories for the respondents to check rather than categorizing the responses after the fact. Each response was read to get a feeling for the data. As the researcher read through the responses, the common theme emerged. The second step was to develop categories for the different themes. As the researcher read through the comments, at least one category was assigned to each response. This is what is called "coding". Once the data has been studied and categories determined, the next step is to see what categories are related and where can trends and patterns be identified. Once I have analyzed the data and identified the major patterns and trends the next step is to write a summary of what I have found. This would normally be a descriptive text incorporating comments directly from the respondents For example: "In providing feedback on the website, some half of the respondents spoke about content. The main issues raised included the inability to find content and the lack of up-to-date content on management themes. To a lesser extent, the high quality of the product information and the desire for more information on the management team were mentioned. The following comment from a respondent illustrates these points "I find the quality of the product information very good. However, the information is often difficult to find and is hidden on the website". As you see, the terms such as "some half", "main issues" and "to a lesser extent "is used to illustrate the magnitude of the trends identified.

3. Results and Discussion

The ultimate goal of this research is to learn more about L2 writing anxiety, and more specifically to answer the research questions that were raised in Chapter Three: 1) Do Iranian EFL students majoring translation, teaching, and literature experience anxiety in their academic writing in university level? 2) Is there a difference between translation, teaching and literature students regarding writing anxiety? 3) What are the sources of writing anxiety in translation, teaching, and literature students?

Therefore, the data were analyzed according to three main themes: a) the level of English writing anxiety experienced by all of the participants, b) The Mean, Standard Deviation, and the correlation for All Participants, and c) the sources of anxiety. The scores were computed using the method described below.

3.1 The Overall Levels of Anxiety among the Three Groups

Descriptive statistics were assessed by using the EWAT scale to examine the level of anxiety that 150 EFL students majoring English related fields (translation, teaching, and literature) in Tehran University, Faculty of Foreign Languages experienced when writing in English. The students answered a 26-item survey using a 5-point Likert-type response format. The range of choices was: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree. The statements were intended to measure different aspects of anxiety: stress apprehension, evaluation apprehension, and organization apprehension. Through the mean, standard deviation, and the percentages of this study, it appeared that the target student sample that participated in the study experienced moderate writing apprehension (M = 83.7). The total score for each participant was computed by subtracting all the positive statements and all the negative statements separately. Then, the difference of these two sums (positive minus negative) was added to the mean of 78 given by Daly and Miller (1975a).

According to Daly and Miller (1975), a total score between 25-59 shows a significant level of writing apprehension; scores in the middle range from 60-96 indicate that the anxiety is moderate, or not significantly unusual. Scores in the range from 97-130 indicate a low level of L2 writing anxiety. Therefore, the mean score of 83.7 sits clearly in the moderate range.

To further understand this result, the test was first run on the groups separately, in order to compare the different levels of writing anxiety each experienced: Translation, Teaching, and Literature. The mean EWAT score (M) of Translation students was 81.18. So the translation students turned out to be the most anxious students, compared to the other two groups. The findings showed that the teaching students were in the middle (M = 83.30) and the Literature students were the least anxious when writing in English (M = 85.48).

To conclude, all three groups scored in the moderate writing anxiety range, but at different levels. Next, the researcher examined the data more closely, using all participants as a group.

3.1.1 The Mean, Standard Deviation, and the Correlation for All Participants

In studies reporting the results of experimental manipulations or interventions, clarify whether the analysis was by intent-ta-treat. That is, were all participants assigned to conditions included in the data analysis regardless of whether they actually received the intervention, or were only participants who completed the intervention

satisfactorily included? Give a rationale for the choice.

Table 1. The mean and standard deviation for statements with a negative in meaning

Negative Statements	N	Min	Max	M	SD
(4) I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.	150	1	5	2.58	1.204
(21) I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.	150	1	5	2.66	1.194
(24) I don't think I write as well as most other people.	150	1	5	2.87	1.236
(18) I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.	150	1	5	2.97	1.167
(16) I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly.	150	1	5	2.99	1.265
(25) I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.	150	1	5	3.01	1.272
(7) My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on my composition.	150	1	5	3.02	1.263
(22) When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.	150	1	5	3.11	1.156
(13) I'm nervous about English writing.	150	1	5	3.21	1.192
(26) I'm not good at English writing.	150	1	5	3.49	1.355
(1) I avoid English writing.	150	1	5	3.56	1.130
(5) Taking a writing course is a very frightening experience.	150	1	5	3.67	1.107
(8) Expressing ideas through English writing seems to be a waste of time.	150	1	5	3.75	1.202

Table 1 above represents the EWAT statements that had a negative meaning. The first column of the table lists the statements; the second is the number of participants. The scale ranges from 1, the maximum score of anxiety in English writing, to 5, the least amount of anxiety. Finally, the mean and standard deviation are symbolized by M and SD.

This table examines the negative statements as a measure of the students' writing anxiety based on a scale of five levels of agreement: 1) Strongly agree, 2) Agree, 3) Uncertain, 4) Disagree, 5) Strongly disagree. Therefore, the students who had no problems with anxiety had the highest points, and students with the highest anxiety had the lowest points. In other words, if a student picked 1 or 2, this meant that he had a problem with writing apprehension. The negative statements are organized from the most provoking statements to the least.

After analyzing the data according to Daly and Miller (1975a) rating scale, the participants' scores averaged above 3 overall for most of the questions (11 out of 13). This means that, in general, the students were not experiencing severe issues regarding writing apprehension. Table 1 was organized starting with the most apprehension-provoking statements about writing in English. For example, the mean of the first statement was M = 2.58, which proved that more than moderate fear was provoked when the students knew their essays were to be collected for evaluation. (By comparison, moderate fear would have produced a mean of 3.00, and strong fear 1.00.) The students' generally moderate fear peaked when the subject was evaluation. Perhaps the teacher's evaluation seemed frightening because the students were not clear on what factors affect the score when their paper is assessed in English. Another explanation may be that the students have anxiety about evaluation in general. The next statement deals with having trouble organizing ideas in an English writing course. The mean, M = 2.66, showed that the students' concern about arranging their thoughts in order to write a good essay generated a slight level of anxiety. This problem could occur if their past teachers focused more on the theory of writing rather than the practice. The next statement showed that the students thought they did not write as well as other students did. The mean, M = 2.78, was a little higher than the previous statements, indicating a level of uncertainty about the whole idea. This uncertainty might have cropped up because the students rarely experienced peer review; rather they waited for the teacher's assessment to see their grade.

The next four statements: "I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them," "I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly," "I don't like my compositions to be evaluated," and "My mind seems

to go blank when I start to work on my composition," were scored in a range of M = 2.97, M = 2.99, M = 3.01, and M = 3.02, respectively. A mean of 3.00 literally means that the students were *uncertain* about their feeling toward the statements; however, this score is considered a moderate feeling of anxiety. An explanation for this score on these four statements could be that the students had problems with their previous personal experience with the course or the instructor.

The statement, "When I hand in a composition, I know I am going to do poorly" elicited a mean, M = 3.11. The students had moderate anxiety toward their self-esteem when handing in their writing and waiting for the results to be announced. The following negative statements: "I am nervous about English writing," "I avoid English writing," and "Taking a writing course is a very frightening experience," show the mean increasing from M = 3.21 to M = 3.49, M = 3.56 to M = 3.67, respectively. The higher the mean, the more students were leaning from uncertain toward only a low anxiety in their feelings. Therefore, the mean M = 3.67 for the previous statement indicates that the students were uncertain and leaning toward disagreeing that writing class is a frightening experience. It could be observed that the statements in this range are more general compared to the more specific ones about evaluation and organization. Finally, a mean of M = 3.75 proved that the participants had an equal mixture of uncertainty and rejection of the statement, "Expressing ideas through English writing seems to be a waste of time."

Table 2. The mean and standard deviation for statements with a negative in meaning

Positive Statements	N	Min	Max	M	SD
(14) People seem to enjoy what I write in English.	150	1	5	3.12	1.036
(19) I like seeing my thoughts on paper.	150	1	5	2.89	1.123
(12) I like to have my friends read what I have written.	150	1	5	2.86	1.119
(9) I would enjoy submitting my English writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.	150	1	5	2.82	1.209
(23) It's easy for me to write good compositions.	150	1	5	2.82	1.110
(11) I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing in English.	150	1	5	2.78	1.145
(10) I like to write down my ideas in English.	150	1	5	2.72	1.199
(3) I look forward to writing down my ideas in English.	150	1	5	2.70	1.228
(2) I have no fear of my English writing's being evaluated.	150	1	5	2.66	1.162
(20) Discussing my English writing with others is enjoyable.	150	1	5	2.59	1.155
(6) Handing in an English composition makes me feel good.	150	1	5	2.45	1.122
(17) Writing in English is a lot of fun.	150	1	5	2.38	1.181
(15) I enjoy English writing.	150	1	5	2.33	1.132

Table 2 lists the EWAT statements that are positive in meaning. In this table, therefore, the scale is reversed, because strong agreement (1) with a positive statement is a lower number than strong disagreement (5). A student who is anxious about writing in English would give the statement a higher number.

Table 2 starts with a high level of uncertainty for the statement, "People seem to enjoy what I write in English" (M = 3.12), followed by "I like seeing my thoughts on paper," (M = 2.89). It seems that the students were not sure what people would say about their writing, which may similarly explain their reaction to the third statement, "I like to have my friends read what I have written," with a lower mean of M = 2.86. Enjoying submitting a piece of writing to a magazine and the ease of writing good compositions both had the same mean, M = 2.82, which is located in the range indicating that the students agree with the statements, or a moderate to low level of writing anxiety. Feeling confident in their ability to express was not necessarily a big issue among the students, as shown by the mean of M = 2.78, between uncertain and low anxiety.

The following statements: "I like to write down my ideas in English," "I look forward to writing down my ideas in English," and "I have no fear of my English writing's being evaluated," were found to range from M = 2.72 to M = 2.70 to M = 2.66, respectively. It could be said that when there were general statements like these on the EWAT, the students were unsure but leaned toward agreeing. Similarly, the general statements "Writing is a lot

of fun" and "I enjoy English writing," at M = 2.38 and M = 2.33 respectively, were the most broadly accepted of all. Discussing English writing and handing it to the instructor were located in the range of M = 2.59 and M = 2.45 respectively. Thus, these two actions did not provoke anxiety in writing.

Table 3. Positive and negative correlation of statements across the 26 variables

Statements	Correlation	Negative	Positive
(1) I avoid English writing.	Pearson correlation	.174**	-.259**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0.000
	N	150	150
(2) I have no fear of my English writing's being evaluated.	Pearson correlation	-.237**	.136*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.019
	N	150	150
(3) I look forward to writing down my ideas in English.	Pearson correlation	-0.051	.191**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.379	0.001
	N	150	150
(4) I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.	Pearson correlation	.245**	-0.079
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.174
	N	150	150
(5) Taking a writing course is a very frightening experience.	Pearson correlation	.181**	-.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.000
	N	150	150
(6) Handing in an English composition makes me feel good.	Pearson correlation	-.210**	.314**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	150	150
(7) My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on my composition.	Pearson correlation	.256**	-.207**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	150	150
(8) Expressing ideas through English writing seems to be a waste of time.	Pearson correlation	.229**	-.416**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	150	150
(9) I would enjoy submitting my English writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.	Pearson correlation	0.004	.199**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.939	0.001
	N	150	150
(10) I like to write down my ideas in English.	Pearson correlation	-0.058	.260**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.321	0.000
	N	150	150
(11) I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing in English.	Pearson correlation	-.157**	.305**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.007	0.000
	N	150	150
(12) I like to have my friends read what I have written.	Pearson correlation	-0.113	.323**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.052	0.000
	N	150	150
(13) I'm nervous about English writing.	Pearson correlation	1	-.208**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	150	150
(14) People seem to enjoy what I write in	Pearson correlation	-0.008	.248**

English.	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.897	0.000
	N	150	150
(15) I enjoy English writing.	Pearson correlation	-.208**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	150	150
(16) I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly.	Pearson correlation	.278**	-0.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.159
	N	150	150
(17) Writing in English is a lot of fun.	Pearson correlation	-.196**	.536**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.000
	N	150	150
(18) I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.	Pearson correlation	.207**	-.204**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	150	150
(19) I like seeing my thoughts on paper.	Pearson correlation	-0.015	0.102
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.799	0.079
	N	150	150
(20) Discussing my English writing with others is enjoyable.	Pearson correlation	-.145*	.265**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.013	0.000
	N	150	150
(21) I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.	Pearson correlation	.298**	-0.112
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.055
	N	150	150
(22) When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.	Pearson correlation	.244**	-.227**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	150	150
(23) It's easy for me to write good compositions.	Pearson correlation	-.194**	.210**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.000
	N	150	150
(24) I don't think I write as well as most other people.	Pearson correlation	.222**	-.141*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.015
	N	150	150
(25) I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.	Pearson correlation	.280**	-0.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.063
	N	150	150
(26) I'm not good at English writing.	Pearson correlation	.328**	-.276**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	150	150

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation table above correlates the negative and positive statements on the EWAT survey with each of the variables. By looking at the statements, it is noticeable that the positive statements supported each other, and similarly, the negative statements supported each other. The strongest negative statement toward English writing was, "I am nervous about English writing." It has almost the same meaning as "I am anxious about English writing." Therefore, it is no surprise that this statement correlated with almost all of the negative items on the

scale.

3.1.2 Sources of Writing Anxiety

The third research question was created in an attempt to explicitly articulate the sources of L2 English writing anxiety. It was an open-ended question where the participants wrote what was in their minds: "From your point of view as a science specialist, what is the source of any writing anxiety that you have (e.g. because of the teachers' evaluation, lack of self-esteem, past education)?" Upon analysis, three sources of writing apprehension were found among the students participating in this study: 1) the weakness of their past education, 2) their lack of confidence, 3) and concern over the teacher's evaluation. Among the students who answered the question, some wrote one reason for their writing anxiety and some wrote two or more.

The participants wrote freely about the sources of their writing anxiety. From their descriptions, the researcher interpreted and categorized the sources into four themes. The findings showed that, by far, the majority (81 students) attributed writing anxiety to the weakness of their pre-university education. As an example, if a student wrote that the poor quality of their elementary, intermediate, and high school education affected their performance on the university level, the researcher included it in this category. The second identified source of writing anxiety was lack of confidence. Less than a third (27 students) thought that writing apprehension occurred because they were not confident enough in learning the English language, specifically in L2 writing.

There were many reasons for a lack of confidence in performing L2 writing tasks. One possible reason, in fact, was the lack of student training in the stage before entering the university. The third source of anxiety was the teacher's evaluation. 42 students found that their concern over the prospect of the teacher's evaluation affected their writing negatively. It can be clearly seen that the weakness of the previous education is higher than the lack of confidence and concern for the teacher's evaluation.

4. Conclusion and Future Considerations

This empirical study first examined the level of L2 writing anxiety among EFL university students in Iran; then investigated which of the three groups, Translation, Teaching, and Literature, was more anxious; and finally discovered the sources of writing anxiety among the participants. Using a quantitative approach, the researcher administered the Daly and Miller (1975a) anxiety writing scale (EWAT) to students in three groups. The survey was filled out by 150 participants. The objective of this study was to test the hypotheses that 1. Iranian EFL students majoring translation, teaching, and literature do not experience anxiety in their academic writing in university level. 2. There is no difference between translation, teaching and literature students regarding writing anxiety, 3. There is no specific reason for having writing anxiety in translation, teaching, and literature students. The first hypothesis about the level of anxiety of EFL students was examined, and the data proved that the students in the EFL fields experienced only a moderate level of writing apprehension. The mean score of the participants was 83.7, which, according to the Daly and Miller rating scale is not considered a significant, unusual level of writing apprehension.

The second hypothesis was examined by adding the scores for each group separately and dividing by the number of students in the group. The results proved that the Translation students experienced a slightly higher level of writing anxiety, the Literature students were the least anxious, while the Teaching participants were in the middle. The hypothesis was that there is no difference between translation, teaching and literature students regarding writing anxiety. The results indicated that the participants in each group showed a different level of writing anxiety.

The third hypothesis predicted that there is no specific reason for having writing anxiety in translation, teaching, and literature students. The researcher added an open-ended question to the end of the EWAT for the students to speak their minds about the sources of their writing anxiety. The participants' responses clustered around three main themes. The majority assigned their writing anxiety to the weakness of their previous education. A lack of confidence was chosen by many participants as the second reason for writing apprehension. The third reason given was the teacher's evaluation.

This study documents students as having an insignificant level of writing anxiety when writing through a foreign language. However, when anxiety mounts to a hindrance, it should be presented as a problem and hopefully solved. Although this study has some limitations, it took the lead in empirically examining the structure of EFL students' anxiety in writing in English. The findings of this study apply not only to the question of anxiety among students in the mentioned fields, but also provide a basis for future studies to build upon to discover more language hindrances and help students to overcome these obstacles. It is hoped that with more research on language learning, specifically writing skills, students will feel more confident in their skills and willing to write

with less anxiety.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the people who helped me make this thesis possible, especially my thesis advisor, Dr.Farhad Fahandezh, for his support. Also, I would like to acknowledge my spouse for his encouragement, and the time he spent for me.

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Appendix A

English Writing Apprehension/Attitude Test (The Daly-Miller Test)

Dear student,

There are no correct answers, only give your honest response to each item. Please write your answers based on the following scale.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Uncertain

(4) Disagree

(5) Strongly disagree

		SA 1	A 2	U 3	D 4	SD 5
1	I avoid English writing.					
2	I have no fear of my English writing's being evaluated.					
3	I look forward to writing down my ideas in English.					
4	I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.					
5	Taking a writing course is a very frightening experience.					
6	Handing in an English composition makes me feel good.					
7	My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on my composition.					
8	Expressing ideas through English writing seems to be a waste of time.					
9	I would enjoy submitting my English writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.					
10	I like to write down my ideas in English.					
11	I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing in English.					
12	I like to have my friends read what I have written.					
13	I'm nervous about English writing.					
14	People seem to enjoy what I write in English.					

15   I enjoy English writing.

16   I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly.

17   Writing in English is a lot of fun.

18   I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.

19   I like seeing my thoughts on paper.

20   Discussing my English writing with others is enjoyable.

21   I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.

22   When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.

23   It's easy for me to write good compositions.

24   I don't think I write as well as most other people.

25   I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.

26   I'm not good at English writing.

Appendix B

Open Ended Question

What is your opinion about the source of writing anxiety?

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