

An Investigation into Preparatory Class EFL Students' L2 Writing Anxiety*

İngilizce Hazırlık Sınıfı Öğrencilerinin Yabancı Dilde Yazma Kaygısı Üzerine Bir Araştırma*

Fahrettin Bilge KEYVANOĞLU, Çağla ATMACA

ABSTRACT

The current paper aims to investigate foreign language (L2) writing anxiety levels of Turkish EFL students with regard to their foreign language writing performance, gender, age and language level. The participants were 120 preparatory class students from A1, A2, and B1 levels at a state university in Turkey. The data were collected through an inventory, namely The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory by Cheng (2004a), and midterm and final exam scores. According to the results of statistical procedures, it was found that 43.3% of the participants had high levels of foreign language writing anxiety while 34.2% of them had moderate and 22.5% of them had low anxiety levels. Additionally, the participants from A1 level had the highest level of writing anxiety ($M=68.5$). Furthermore, it was revealed that females had higher anxiety levels than males. The results from multiple regression analysis indicated that all variables together accounted for 23.3% of variance. Writing anxiety was significantly predicted by gender ($\beta = -.33, p<.001$) and language level ($\beta = -.34, p<.001$). Finally, the results demonstrated that there was not a significant relationship between L2 writing anxiety of the participants and their writing performance.

Keywords: L2 writing anxiety, L2 writing performance, Preparatory class students, Turkish EFL students, Writing instruction

ÖZ

Bu makale, İngilizce hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin yabancı dilde (L2) yazma kaygı düzeylerini yabancı dilde yazma performansları, cinsiyetleri, yaşları ve dil düzeyleri açısından araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Katılımcılar, Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinde A1, A2 ve B1 seviyesinde öğrenim gören 120 hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisidir. Veriler, Cheng (2004a) tarafından hazırlanan İkinci Dil Yazma Kaygısı Envanteri adlı bir envanter ve ara sınav ve dönem sonu sınav puanları ile elde edilmiştir. İstatistiksel bulgulara göre, katılımcıların %43.3'ünün yüksek düzeyde yabancı dilde yazma kaygısına sahip olduğu, %34.2'sinin orta düzeyde ve %22.5'inin düşük düzeyde kaygıya sahip olduğu tespit

Keyvanoğlu F. B., & Atmaca Ç., (2023). An investigation into preparatory class EFL students' L2 writing anxiety. *Journal of Higher Education and Science/Yükseköğretim ve Bilim Dergisi*, 13(1), 73-85. <https://doi.org/10.5961/higheredusci.1135409>

*This study is derived from Pamukkale University Institute of Educational Sciences master's thesis titled "A research on English preparatory class students' writing anxiety in a foreign language"

*Bu çalışma Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü "İngilizce hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin yabancı dilde yazma kaygısı üzerine bir araştırma" başlıklı yüksek lisans tezinden türetilmiştir

Fahrettin Bilge KEYVANOĞLU

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8653-1993

Pamukkale University, Faculty of Education, English Language Teaching Department, 20070, Kınıklı, Denizli, Turkey
Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü, 20070, Kınıklı, Denizli, Türkiye

Çağla ATMACA (✉)

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7745-3839

Pamukkale University, Faculty of Education, English Language Teaching Department, 20070, Kınıklı, Denizli, Turkey
Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü, 20070, Kınıklı, Denizli, Türkiye
catmaca@pau.edu.tr

Received/Geliş Tarihi : 24.06.2022

Accepted/Kabul Tarihi : 18.04.2023



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edilmiştir. Ayrıca, A1 düzeyindeki katılımcılar en yüksek yazma kaygısına sahiptir (Ort=68,5). Buna ilaveten, kadınların erkeklere göre daha yüksek kaygı düzeylerine sahip oldukları ortaya çıkmıştır. Çoklu regresyon analizinden elde edilen sonuçlar, tüm değişkenlerin birlikte varyansın %23.3'ünü oluşturduğunu göstermiştir. Yazma kaygısı cinsiyet ($\beta = -.33$, $p < .001$) ve dil düzeyi ($\beta = -.34$, $p < .001$) tarafından anlamlı olarak yordanmıştır. Son olarak, sonuçlar katılımcıların yabancı dilde yazma kaygısı ile yazma performansları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığını göstermiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yabancı dilde yazma kaygısı, Yabancı dilde yazma performansı, Hazırlık sınıfı öğrencileri, Türkiye bağlamında İngilizce öğrenenler, Yazma eğitimi

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety, as an affective factor, has a major role in making students more nervous (Bekleyen, 2004) and L2 writing anxiety is stated to be distinct from L1 writing anxiety (Cheng, 2002). In terms of second/foreign language anxiety, various researchers have proposed different sources (Aydın, 1999; Hui, 2009; Young, 1991; Zhang & Zhong, 2012). For instance, Young (1991) categorized six possible causes of foreign language anxiety as individual and interpersonal anxieties, student perceptions about language learning, instructor perceptions about language teaching, classroom proceedings and language testing. In addition, Hui (2009) suggested four determinants of language anxiety as parental expectations, tolerance of uncertainty, irrational opinions about language learning and culture shock.

As for foreign language (L2) writing anxiety, a number of studies have been conducted in different educational contexts (Al Asmari, 2013; DeDeyn, 2011; Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012; Zhang, 2011). To begin with, Lin and Ho (2009) examined the causes of university students' L2 writing anxiety in Taiwan context and concluded that time limitation, teacher's evaluation, peer competition, writing subjects and required writing format were the main causes of writing anxiety. In addition, Zhang (2011) investigated the effect of L2 writing anxiety on writing performance of students. The participants were 49 freshmen and 47 sophomores studying English in China. The results showed that there were significant negative correlations between writing anxiety and writing performance of the students.

Some individual factors were studied within the scope of L2 writing anxiety. For example, in northern Taiwan context, female students were found to experience significantly higher levels of L2 writing anxiety than male students while there were no significant differences in terms of grade (Cheng, 2002). In addition, Zhou, Wang and Wang (2022) administered a questionnaire to 340 Chinese high school students and revealed a negative relationship between L2 writing anxiety and L2 writing self-efficacy in that a higher level of L2 writing self-efficacy indicated a lower level of L2 writing anxiety.

Since L2 writing anxiety is considered to be a multifaceted phenomenon, it could be caused by several reasons such as time restrictions (Cheng, 2004b; Ho, 2016; Pasaribu, 2016); fear of negative assessment (Cheng, 2002; Cheng, 2004b; Ho,

2016; Lin & Ho, 2009; Pasaribu, 2016) and fear of failure in tests (Zhang, 2011). In this vein, portfolio-based writing instruction (Fathi, Derakhshan, & Safdari, 2020; Öztürk & Çeçen, 2007), online tools such as e-feedback via wikis (Iksan & Halim, 2018) and peer feedback activities (Sivaci, 2020) were suggested to develop writing performance of students and decrease their L2 writing anxiety in EFL and ESL contexts. Also, in order to reduce L2 writing anxiety, students should be helped to develop positive attitudes towards their writing capability (Cheng, 2002), student-centered and problem-based methodology could be adopted in language teaching (Singh & Rajalingam, 2012), and peer feedback activities can be integrated into writing courses (Çınar, 2014; Yastıbaş & Yastıbaş, 2015).

In light of the relevant literature, there are four starting points for the current study. First, the role of individual factors and psychological variables in L2 writing anxiety has been voiced in the relevant literature (Uzun, 2019; Zhou, Wang, & Wang, 2022). Second, the need for further studies on L2 writing anxiety in terms of social, contextual, and learner variables has been emphasized in previous research (Bailey, Lee, Vorst, & Crosthwaite, 2017). Third, the role of blended and conventional writing environments (Bailey, Lee, Vorst, & Crosthwaite, 2017), emergency remote teaching (ERT) (Bailey & Almusharraf, 2022) and blog-mediated instruction (Fathi & Nourzadeh, 2019) in L2 writing anxiety has been foregrounded in relevant studies. Finally, there have been inconsistent research findings about the variables which play a role in L2 writing anxiety and writing performance of students (DeDeyn, 2011; Erkan & Saban, 2011; Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012; Singh & Rajalingam, 2012; Susoy & Tanyer, 2013; Zhang, 2011). In this regard, further research in different contexts is needed to consider the effects of anxiety on writing abilities of students. Therefore, in order to fill this niche in the relevant literature, the current study aims to investigate L2 writing anxiety levels of the preparatory class students at a state university in Turkey. A1, A2, and B1 level participants were included in the current study and sub-dimensions of Cheng's Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (2004a) were analyzed in terms of four demographic features (gender, language level, age and faculty). In addition, the relationship between the participating students' writing anxiety levels and writing performances was investigated. In this way, the current study aims to shed light upon the changing nature of L2 writing anxiety studies.

REVIEW of LITERATURE

Role of L2 Writing Anxiety

There have been contrasting claims about the role of writing anxiety in the relevant literature. On the one hand, writing anxiety is stated to provoke students' concentration and accuracy (Brown, 2007). On the other hand, it is claimed to affect students' writing skill improvement negatively (Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012; Rezaei et al., 2014). Finally, moderate writing anxiety is reported to have a positive effect on students' writing skills (Brown, 2007) since students can cope with their writing assignments with the help of such facilitative anxiety.

As a response to the aforementioned claims, various research studies have been conducted in different contexts. To start with, Rodriguez et al. (2009) investigated the existence of foreign language writing anxiety among pre-service EFL teachers. The participants were 120 prospective teachers from two universities in Venezuela. It was concluded that female students had higher levels of general foreign language anxiety and foreign language writing anxiety than male students. Additionally, Takahashi (2010) aimed to examine writing anxiety of 139 students studying in an English course at a private university in Japan. It was revealed that the students who had higher levels of writing anxiety had weaker motivation towards learning the language, and there was a negative relationship between foreign language writing anxiety and self-perceived English ability.

Apart from the afore-mentioned studies, a number of studies focused on the effect of online tools on L2 writing anxiety levels of students. To start with, Bailey, Lee, Vorst, and Crosthwaite (2017) examined the impact of blended and conventional writing environments and L2 proficiency on cognitive, somatic, and behavioral components of L2 English writing anxiety in South Korea. It was found that behavioral anxiety was the highest for both groups and this was followed by somatic and then cognitive anxiety. Also, the students in the blended learning had increases in behavioral anxiety whereas the ones in the conventional learning had increases in somatic anxiety. Finally, there was a positive linear relationship between L2 writing anxiety and L2 proficiency in that the students with higher L2 proficiency levels had higher levels of L2 writing anxiety. In a similar vein, Fathi and Nourzadeh (2019) analyzed the influence of blog-mediated instruction on students' L2 writing anxiety in Iranian EFL contexts. It was found that the students who received blog-mediated writing course had a better performance on the post-test writing performance task than the ones who received traditional writing instruction. It was also found that the blog-mediated course decreased the participants' L2 writing anxiety and resulted in positive student opinions. Finally, Bailey and Almusharraf (2022) employed structural modeling to examine the types of L2 writing strategies students employed in emergency remote teaching (ERT) in relation to L2 writing anxiety during the Covid-19 pandemic in South Korean EFL context. The participants had high levels of L2 writing anxiety and females had higher levels of L2 writing anxiety. Also, translation strategies produced a significant positive relationship with L2 writing anxiety.

L2 writing anxiety has attracted attention in Turkish EFL context as well. To illustrate, Atay and Kurt (2006) conducted a study with 85 prospective EFL teachers who were all fourth-year students and native speakers of Turkish. While majority ($N=69$) of the participants had high or moderate writing anxiety, those with high or moderate writing anxiety had difficulties in organizing their thoughts and producing ideas while writing in English. Also, it was reported that L2 learners in Turkish EFL context held moderate to high level of L2 writing anxiety and male students had lower level of anxiety (Kırmızı & Dağdeviren Kırmızı, 2015). Additionally, Ekmekçi (2018) revealed that 60% of the participating pre-service English teachers in Turkey had moderate L2 writing anxiety and there was a statistically significant difference between the freshmen and seniors with regard to general and somatic anxiety levels; however, there was no significant difference in terms of avoidance behavior and cognitive anxiety. Finally, Genç and Yaylı (2019) indicated that the participating Turkish EFL learners had high to moderate level of L2 writing anxiety and felt more anxious during exams than writing in class or at home.

L2 Writing Anxiety and Writing Performance

A number of studies investigated the correlation between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance. To illustrate, DeDeyn (2011) indicated that there was no significant correlation between students' writing performance and writing anxiety levels. On the other hand, Singh and Rajalingam (2012) examined how writing anxiety level and writing self-efficacy beliefs influenced writing proficiency level. The participants were 320 Malaysian pre-university students. It was concluded that there were moderate levels of writing anxiety among the participants. Also, a significant moderate opposite relationship between writing anxiety and self-efficacy beliefs was observed and a positive relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing proficiency was revealed. Finally, Negari and Rezaabadi (2012) investigated the impact of writing anxiety on writing performance of students. There were 27 participants who were studying English at a university in Iran. Data collection instruments were The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng (2004a) and an open-ended questionnaire to find writing anxiety level of the students in two different writing settings. The first setting was writing in class without grades or evaluation, which was expected to provide low anxiety setting. The second setting was writing in the final exam, which was expected to provide high anxiety setting. The authors suggested that students' writing performance could be improved thanks to the facilitative feature of anxiety since some degree of concentration could occur among students.

Writing anxiety and writing performance were investigated in Turkish EFL context as well. To exemplify, Erkan and Saban (2011) conducted a correlational study upon writing performance with regard to writing anxiety, self-efficacy in writing and perceptions towards writing. The participants were 188 EFL students who were studying at the school of foreign languages at a state university in Turkey. The participants completed various tests in two hours on the same day. After the completion of the questionnaires, the students were

given a topic to write a composition in 45 minutes. The results revealed that L2 writing performance of the students was negatively correlated with writing anxiety and writing self-efficacy, and a positive relationship existed between writing anxiety and writing attitude. In a similar vein, Susoy and Tanyer (2013) examined L2 writing anxiety levels of pre-service English teachers via SLWAI, an open-ended questionnaire and their midterm exam scores in Turkey. It was revealed that 60% of the participants held moderate level of anxiety while 21% held low level of anxiety and 19% held high level of anxiety. Additionally, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between writing anxiety and writing performance. However, there was no significant difference between their writing scores and anxiety levels.

Purpose of the Study

Inconclusive research results in the relevant literature and call for more research studies upon L2 writing anxiety were the starting points of the current study. As for Turkish EFL context, there have been several studies on foreign language writing anxiety of preparatory class university students (Kurt & Atay, 2007; Ateş, 2013; Genç & Yaylı, 2019; Kara, 2013; Öztürk & Çeçen, 2007; Susoy & Tanyer, 2013; Yastıbaş & Yastıbaş, 2015). However, it appears that participants from different linguistic proficiency levels were not addressed in the same study. Thus, A1, A2 and B1 level participants were included in the current study. Also, sub-dimensions of Cheng's SLWAI (2004a) have been heavily used in a number of studies but various demographic features are still in need of further research to get a detailed understanding about L2 writing anxiety. Therefore, these sub-dimensions (cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior) were analyzed in terms of four different demographic features (gender, language level, age and faculty). Finally, midterm and final exam results of the students were also examined to reveal the relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance. With these data collection tools, the current study aims to offer a more complete picture about L2 writing anxiety. To this end, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are L2 writing anxiety levels of the participating preparatory class students in Turkey?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference between L2 writing anxiety levels and English language proficiency levels of the participating students?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference between L2 writing anxiety levels and gender of the participating students?
4. Is there a statistically significant difference between L2 writing anxiety levels and age of the participating students?
5. Is there a statistically significant difference between L2 writing anxiety levels and faculty of the participating students?
6. Is there a statistically significant relationship between L2 writing anxiety levels and writing performances of the participating students?

METHODOLOGY

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at the School of Foreign Languages at a state university in Turkey. In this school, preparatory class students are taught English in four different modules for a year. Before the first module starts, a placement test is administered in order to organize the classrooms according to the English levels of students. The first term starts with A1, A2 and B1 level classrooms. These levels are arranged according to the CEFR descriptors (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Students who get 0-40 points from the placement test are classified as A1 (elementary), the ones with 41-60 points are classified as A2 (pre-intermediate) and the ones with 61-100 points are classified as B1 level (intermediate). Each module lasts for eight weeks. If students get 70 points as an average of their exams, they can pass to the next module. If they fail in one of these modules, they take the same module once more. They all have 24 hours of English each week and these courses include nine hours of main course, five hours of reading, five hours of writing, three hours of speaking and two hours of listening skills. Writing skill courses are conducted on Thursdays and each module has a different syllabus. Students are generally taught about paragraph and essay types, and how to write essays in an organized way. Table 1 shows the demographic features of the participants according to their genders, ages, faculties and language levels.

Table 1: Demographic Features of the Participants

		n	%
Gender	Male	60	50.0
	Female	60	50.0
	Total	120	100.0
Age	18	46	38.7
	19	52	43.7
	20	14	11.8
	21	7	5.9
	Total	119	100.0
Faculty	Education	9	7.6
	Science and Arts	20	16.8
	Economics and Administrative Sciences	63	52.9
	Engineering	27	22.7
	Total	119	100.0
Language Level	A1	51	42.5
	A2	45	37.5
	B1	24	20.0
	Total	120	100.0

This study was conducted in the first module of the 2020-2021 academic year. Educational activities were carried out online during that module due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Convenience sampling via recruiting participants from available

individuals (Mackey & Gass, 2005) was adopted to reach the participants. The data collection tools were given online with the help of the other English teachers. The participants sent their forms through e-mails. In total, there were 120 participants from A1, A2 and B1 levels. 60 were males and 60 were females.

The education was carried out online during the module in which this study was conducted. The data collection tools were given online with the help of the other teachers and they were also collected online. The participants sent their forms through e-mails. It was difficult to reach all the students and the researcher reminded the participants three times in eight weeks via online tools and their advisors. Since there were some difficulties to reach all the students and the participation was on voluntary basis, there were 120 participants in total.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study employed quantitative research design to reach more participants and increase objectivity and accuracy although it offers a less detailed picture about the phenomenon in question (Creswell et al., 2003; Dörnyei, 2007; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012; McKay, 2006). The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng (2004a) was used as the data collection. In addition, the midterm and final exam grades of the students were used to compare L2 anxiety levels and writing performances of the participants.

The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)

The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004a) was administered to reveal the participants' writing anxiety. This inventory includes 5-point Likert-type 22 items, ranging from the anchors 'strongly agree (5 points)' to 'strongly disagree (1 point)'. Seven items (1, 4, 7, 17, 18, 21, 22) in SLWAI were reverse-coded during the analyses. The original version of SLWAI (Cheng, 2004a) was used as the data collection tool for A2 and B1 level participants in the study. Its Turkish version, which was adapted by Öztürk and Saydam (2014), was used for A1 level students who may have had difficulty in understanding the items in English correctly. Öztürk and Saydam (2014) translated SLWAI into Turkish and then back translated this inventory, and their translated version has the reliability of .89. To determine reliability level of the inventory, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Urbina, 2004) was obtained. In this study, the reliability of the English version of the inventory was calculated as .836 while it was .876 for the Turkish version and .871 for the whole inventory. It was also found that the

reliability values for all levels and sub-dimensions of the inventory were reliable in that the Cronbach Alpha value was .764 for cognitive anxiety, .840 for somatic anxiety and .737 for avoidance behavior. For A1 level, the general reliability value was .876 while it was .684 for cognitive anxiety, .853 for somatic anxiety and .755 for avoidance behavior. As to A2 level, the general reliability value was .836 while it was .774 for cognitive anxiety, .809 for somatic anxiety and .714 for avoidance behavior. Finally, for B1 level, the general reliability value was .836 while it was .774 for cognitive anxiety, .829 for somatic anxiety and .714 for avoidance behavior.

The required permissions were also received from these scholars. Finally, the researchers got the official permission from the Ethical Committee of the university where the study was conducted. The SLWAI was sent to the participants through e-mails in the sixth week of the first module and they had three weeks to respond.

Kurtosis and Skewness tests were conducted in order to determine whether the general and sub-dimensions of the inventory were compatible with the normal distribution or not. According to Table 2, the results were compatible with normal distribution since normal distribution is accepted if Kurtosis and Skewness values range between -1.5 and +1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Thus, relevant tests were used for further analysis.

Writing Section Grades in the Midterm and Final Exams

The grades given for student essays in the midterm and final exams were included to investigate the relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance. The standard rubrics that were provided by Testing Office of the institution were used by the writing instructors to evaluate exam papers. Out of 100 points, A1 level exams devoted 15 points to the writing section while A2 and B1 level exams devoted 25 points to the writing section. Since the materials, examinations and evaluation criteria were all determined by the Testing Office of the School of Foreign Languages to ensure standardization at the school, no changes were allowed in the content, timing or scoring system in the midterm and final examinations. Also, the views of the experts in the Testing Office were taken for the intervals. Finally, the average scores of the exams were used for the study.

The exam scores were classified as low (0-5 pts.), moderate (6-10 pts.) and high (11-15 pts.) for A1 level participants. The total score of the final exam for the writing section was 15 points

Table 2: The Results of Kurtosis and Skewness Tests

	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Cognitive	120	10.00	40.00	22.7083	6.34498	.189	.221	-.162	.438
Somatic	120	7.00	34.00	21.0583	6.41335	.013	.221	-.746	.438
Avoidance	120	9.00	33.00	19.2333	5.37147	.386	.221	.055	.438
Valid n (listwise)	120								

for A1 level. There were two different writing tasks in the exams. The students were asked to do sentence completion tasks (5 pts.) and write a paragraph about a picture (10 pts.). The average score of their writing exam was 11.91 points. As to A2 level students, their exam scores were classified as low (0-9 pts.), moderate (10-18 pts.) and high (19-25 pts.). The views of some experts were taken for the intervals. The total score of the final exam for the writing section was 25 points for A2 level. The writing section was composed of two different writing tasks in the exams. The students were required to make a full sentence using the given pictures and details (10 pts.) and write a narrative paragraph about a person according to the information given in a chart (15 pts.). The average score of their writing exam was 20.45 points. Finally, as for B1 level students, their exam scores were classified as low (0-9 pts.), moderate (10-18 pts.) and high (19-25 pts.). The total score of the final exam for the writing section was 25 points for B1 level. The writing section was composed of five different writing tasks in the exams. The students were asked to write a suitable topic sentence for the given paragraph (1 point), write suitable major and minor supporting sentences for the given paragraph (2 pts.), complete the given paragraph by writing a suitable concluding sentence (1 point), find the irrelevant sentence in the given paragraph (1 point) and write an opinion paragraph by organizing their ideas according to the order of importance (20 pts.) The average score of their writing exam was 20.30 points.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics of L2 Writing Anxiety

Table 3 demonstrates the general descriptive statistics of SLWAI according to the levels.

According to Table 3, item 2, 'I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under a time constraint.' had the highest mean score ($M=3.67$) for A1 level participants. However, item 16, 'I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.' had the lowest mean score ($M=2.39$) for A1 level participants. The item that had the highest mean score ($M=3.40$) for A2 level participants was item 18, 'I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.' On the other hand, item 20, 'I'm afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.' had the lowest mean score ($M=1.96$) for the same level participants. For B1 level participants, item 11, 'My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under a time constraint.' had the highest mean score ($M=3.46$) while item 10, 'I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.' had the lowest mean score ($M=1.33$).

According Table 4, A1 level participants had the highest level of L2 writing anxiety while B1 level participants had the lowest anxiety level, and A2 level participants had a moderate level of writing anxiety. Thus, it is seen that the overall inventory differs significantly according to the language level ($p<0.05$).

Table 5 demonstrates the categorization of the participants based on SLWAI anxiety levels according to the results of

the chi-square test. When the total percentage is taken into consideration, it is seen that 27 out of 120 participants had a low level of writing anxiety, with the lowest percentage in general (22.5%). This is followed by 34.2% of the participants ($n= 41$) who had a moderate level of anxiety while the highest percentage belongs to 52 participants (43.3%) who had a high level of anxiety. It was also seen that A1 level participants had the highest level of anxiety (62.7%, $n= 32$). Additionally, the statistics of A2 level demonstrated that 21 participants (46.7%) had a moderate level of anxiety and 10 B1 level participants (41.7%) had the lowest level of anxiety. Finally, it was found that there was a significant relationship between language levels and L2 writing anxiety levels ($p<0.05$).

Table 3: Level-based Descriptive Statistics of SLWAI

	Language Level		
	A1	A2	B1
Item 1	3.35	2.73	2.54
Item 2	3.67	3.02	3.17
Item 3	3.61	2.71	2.79
Item 4	3.29	3.31	2.88
Item 5	2.75	2.38	1.67
Item 6	3.08	2.69	2.42
Item 7	3.14	2.62	2.63
Item 8	3.00	2.64	2.75
Item 9	3.57	3.22	2.83
Item 10	2.47	2.20	1.33
Item 11	3.57	3.27	3.46
Item 12	3.18	2.80	1.83
Item 13	3.53	2.84	3.25
Item 14	2.43	2.04	2.08
Item 15	3.45	3.07	2.67
Item 16	2.39	2.69	2.00
Item 17	2.96	2.36	2.58
Item 18	2.98	3.40	3.25
Item 19	2.61	2.13	2.04
Item 20	2.75	1.96	2.92
Item 21	3.27	3.13	2.92
Item 22	3.51	2.89	2.63

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA results of SLWAI

		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
Total	A1	51	68.5	15.0	7.740	0.001*
	A2	45	60.1	12.4		
	B1	24	56.6	13.4		
	Total	120	63.0	14.5		

* $p<0.05$

Comparison of L2 Writing Anxiety in terms of Gender

In order to see the relationship between L2 writing anxiety level of the participants and their genders, a chi-square test was run.

According to Table 6, there was a significant relationship between gender and L2 anxiety level at A1 level ($p < 0.05$) while no significant relationship was found for A2 or B1 levels ($p > 0.05$).

Types of L2 Writing Anxiety

According to Cheng (2004b), SLWAI is a three-dimensional anxiety inventory that includes cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior. Items 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15 and 19 demonstrate somatic anxiety type while items 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17,

20 and 21 demonstrate cognitive anxiety type, and items 4, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18 and 22 demonstrate behavioral avoidance type. It was found that there were slight differences among these anxiety types and cognitive anxiety was the most common type of writing anxiety. This is followed by somatic anxiety and behavioral avoidance, respectively.

Sub-dimensions of L2 Writing Anxiety in Terms of Demographic Features

The results of the t-tests were analyzed to investigate whether there exists a significant difference between SLWAI scores and gender.

According to Table 7, while the overall, somatic and cognitive sub-dimensions of the inventory differed significantly according

Table 5: L2 Writing Anxiety Levels and Language Levels

			Anxiety Groups			Total
			Low	Moderate	High	
Language Levels	A1	n	7	12	32	51
		%	13.7	23.5	62.7	100.0
	A2	n	10	21	14	45
		%	22.2	46.7	31.1	100.0
	B1	n	10	8	6	24
		%	41.7	33.3	25.0	100.0
Total	n	27	41	52	120	
	%	22.5	34.2	43.3	100.0	

$p = 0.002$.

Table 6: L2 Writing Anxiety Levels and Gender

		Low		Moderate		High		p
		n	%	n	%	n	%	
A1	Male	7	26.9	8	30.8	11	42.3	0.003*
	Female	0	0.0	4	16.0	21	84.0	
A2	Male	5	21.7	12	52.2	6	26.1	0.707
	Female	5	22.7	9	40.9	8	36.4	
B1	Male	6	54.5	3	27.3	2	18.2	0.494
	Female	4	30.8	5	38.5	4	30.8	

Table 7: L2 Writing Anxiety Types and Gender

Gender		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Total	Male	60	58.8	13.8	-3.275	0.001*
	Female	60	67.2	14.1		
Somatic	Male	60	19.0	6.3	-3.799	0.000*
	Female	60	23.2	5.8		
Cognitive	Male	60	20.7	5.8	-3.709	0.000*
	Female	60	24.8	6.3		
Behavioral	Male	60	16.2	4.8	0.039	0.969
	Female	60	16.1	4.6		

to gender ($p<0.05$), behavioral avoidance did not differ significantly. In other words, overall anxiety level ($M=67.2$), somatic ($M=23.2$) and cognitive anxiety levels ($M=24.8$) of the females were significantly higher than those of the males.

As to language level, one-way analysis of variance results are given in Table 8. According to the table, the overall inventory and all sub-dimensions were seen to differ significantly

according to the language levels of the participants ($p<0.05$). Tukey's HSD Test was further conducted to determine group differences. For overall L2 writing anxiety, somatic anxiety and cognitive anxiety, the anxiety level of A1 level participants was significantly higher than that of A2 and B1 level participants. On the other hand, behavioral avoidance level of A1 and A2 level participants was significantly higher than that of B1 level participants.

Table 8: ANOVA Results for Language Levels and L2 Writing Anxiety

		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
Somatic Anxiety	A1	51	22.9	6.8	3.841	0.024*
	A2	45	19.7	5.5		
	B1	24	19.8	6.5		
	Total	120	21.1	6.4		
Cognitive Anxiety	A1	51	25.1	5.9	6.853	0.002*
	A2	45	20.8	5.9		
	B1	24	21.3	6.6		
	Total	120	22.7	6.3		
Behavioral Avoidance	A1	51	17.1	4.9	7.735	0.001*
	A2	45	16.8	4.5		
	B1	24	13.0	2.9		
	Total	120	16.1	4.7		

* $p<0.05$.

Table 9: L2 Writing Anxiety Types and Age

		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
Total	18	46	58.89	13.83	2.678	0.050
	19	52	65.90	15.12		
	20	14	61.93	12.98		
	21	7	70.57	12.30		
	Total	119	63.00	14.56		
Somatic Anxiety	18	46	19.04	6.37	3.277	0.024*
	19	52	22.04	5.87		
	20	14	22.07	6.68		
	21	7	25.43	7.48		
	Total	119	21.08	6.43		
Cognitive Anxiety	18	46	21.00	5.85	3.325	0.022*
	19	52	24.31	6.90		
	20	14	20.79	4.42		
	21	7	25.71	5.56		
	Total	119	22.70	6.37		
Behavioral Avoidance	18	46	15.76	4.72	0.149	0.930
	19	52	16.38	4.36		
	20	14	16.29	6.21		
	21	7	16.00	4.40		
	Total	119	16.11	4.69		

* $p<0.05$.

As is seen in Table 9, while somatic and cognitive anxiety sub-dimensions differed significantly according to age ($p<0.05$), behavioral avoidance sub-dimension did not differ. Thus, Tukey's HSD Test was conducted for further analysis. Somatic anxiety level of 21-year-old participants was significantly higher than the other age groups. In addition, 19 and 20-year-old participants had significantly higher somatic anxiety level than 18-year-old participants. Moreover, cognitive anxiety level of 19 and 21-year-old participants was significantly higher than that of the other age groups.

Finally, in terms of the faculties of the participants, mean scores of overall and sub-dimensions of the SLWAI, and the results of one-way analysis of variance are presented. Table 10 demonstrates that overall mean score, cognitive anxiety and behavioral avoidance levels differed significantly according to the faculties of the participants ($p<0.05$). Tukey's HSD Test was also run for further analysis.

Overall L2 writing anxiety level and behavioral avoidance level of the students from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences were significantly higher than the students from the other faculties. Also, the students from the Faculty of Education had the highest level of cognitive anxiety.

However, no significant results were found for somatic anxiety type.

Finally, according to Table 11, the results from multiple regression analysis indicated that all variables together accounted for 23.3% of variance and L2 writing anxiety was significantly predicted by gender ($\beta = -.33, p<.001$) and language level ($\beta = -.34, p<.001$)

The Relationship between L2 Writing Anxiety and Writing Performance

The relationship between L2 writing anxiety levels of the participants and their writing performance in the midterm and final exams is investigated in this section. The midterm exam was conducted in the fifth week while the final exam was conducted in the last week of the module.

Table 12 demonstrates the relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance of A1 level participants. The number of participants who had low anxiety was seven, and all of these participants had high grades from their exams. According to the results, there was not a significant relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance for A1 level participants ($p>0.05$).

Table 10: L2 Writing Anxiety Types and Faculties

		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
Total	Faculty of Education	9	62.9	13.2	5.631	0.001*
	Faculty of Science and Arts	20	54.3	10.6		
	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	63	67.4	13.7		
	Faculty of Engineering	27	58.9	16.0		
	Total	119	62.9	14.5		
Somatic Anxiety	Faculty of Education	9	22.3	5.9	2.661	0.051
	Faculty of Science and Arts	20	18.4	6.2		
	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	63	22.3	6.2		
	Faculty of Engineering	27	19.5	6.6		
	Total	119	21.0	6.4		
Cognitive Anxiety	Faculty of Education	9	24.7	6.0	5.542	0.001*
	Faculty of Science and Arts	20	20.2	5.9		
	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	63	24.5	5.6		
	Faculty of Engineering	27	19.8	6.9		
	Total	119	22.7	6.4		
Behavioral Avoidance	Faculty of Education	9	13.2	3.6	5.680	0.001*
	Faculty of Science and Arts	20	13.2	2.3		
	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	63	17.3	5.0		
	Faculty of Engineering	27	16.5	4.4		
	Total	119	16.1	4.7		

* $p<0.05$.

Table 13 indicates the relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance of A2 level participants. According to the results of chi-square test, there was not a significant relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance for A2 level participants ($p>0.05$).

Table 14 provides the relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance of B1 level participants. The number of participants who had low anxiety was nine and five of them got high grades while four of them had moderate grades. According to the results, there was not a significant relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance for B1 level participants ($p>0.05$).

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION and PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study results bear some similarities and differences with the relevant literature. First of all, the results of the study revealed that 43.3% of the participants experienced a high level of L2 writing anxiety while 34.2% of them experienced a moderate level and 22.5% of them experienced a low level of anxiety. These results contrast with some earlier studies. For instance, Ateş (2013) showed that the prospective EFL teachers showed moderate levels of L2 writing anxiety ($M=58.01$, $50 < 58.01 < 65$). The reason for this difference might result from different group of participants. In the present

Table 11: Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Predictors	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
(Constant)	28.296	30.725		.921	.359
Gender	-9.655	2.794	-.326	-3.456	.001
Age	2.262	1.597	.128	1.416	.160
Faculty	-.144	1.780	-.008	-.081	.936
Department	.276	.218	.113	1.267	.208
Level	-7.458	2.046	-.343	-3.645	.000

$F_{(5,99)} = 6.012$, $R = .483$, $R^2 = .233$, $p < .001$.

Table 12: L2 Writing Anxiety and Writing Performances of A1 Level Participants

			Writing Performance			Total
			Low	Moderate	High	
Writing Anxiety	Low	n	0	0	7	7
		%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
	Moderate	n	0	3	9	12
		%	0.0	25.0	75.0	100.0
	High	n	2	6	24	32
		%	6.3	18.8	75.0	100.0
Total	n	2	9	40	51	
	%	3.9	17.6	78.4	100.0	

* $p = 0.516$.

Table 13: L2 Writing Anxiety and Writing Performances of A2 Level Participants

			Writing Performance		Total
			Moderate	High	
Writing Anxiety	Low	n	0	10	10
		%	0.0	100.0	100.0
	Moderate	n	4	16	20
		%	20.0	80.0	100.0
	High	n	5	8	13
		%	38.5	61.5	100.0
Total	n	9	34	43	
	%	20.9	79.1	100.0	

$p = 0.079$.

Table 14: L2 Writing Anxiety and Writing Performances of B1 Level Participants

			Writing Performance		Total
			Moderate	High	
Writing Anxiety	Low	n	4	5	9
		%	44.4	55.6	100.0
	Moderate	n	2	6	8
		%	25.0	75.0	100.0
	High	n	0	6	6
		%	0.0	100.0	100.0
Total	n	6	17	23	
	%	26.1	73.9	100.0	

p=0.158.

study, the participants were preparatory class students while the participants in that study were ELT students. In addition, Masny and Foxall (1992) found that writing achievement was negatively correlated with writing anxiety, which means that low achievers had high anxiety. Also, Onwuegbuzie' (1997) stated that there was a negative correlation between writing anxiety and research proposal quality. Furthermore, Zhang (2011) Cheng (2004a) found a significant negative relationship between writing anxiety and writing performance of the participants. Finally, Singh and Rajalingam (2012) reported that there was a positive relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance. In the current study, however, 91 out of 117 participants had high grades and 38 of them had a high level of anxiety. Only two of the participants got low grades and both of them had a high level of anxiety. Further analysis of the chi-square tests also revealed that there was not a significant relationship between L2 writing anxiety and writing performance for all levels ($p>0.05$). This difference may be attributed to the online educational system carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic since the students may have referred to some sources during their online exams or experienced L2 writing anxiety at different levels during the unusual period of the pandemic.

In this study, the results from multiple regression analysis indicated that all variables together accounted for 23.3% of variance and L2 writing anxiety was significantly predicted by gender ($\beta = -.33$, $p<.001$) and language level ($\beta = -.34$, $p<.001$). In terms of similarities, echoing Cheng (2002) and Rodriguez et al. (2009), in the present study it was demonstrated that female participants had higher levels of L2 writing anxiety than male participants in general. Additionally, the results of the current study are in parallel with those of DeDeyn (2011) who concluded that there was no significant relationship between L2 writing performance and writing anxiety. The data collection instruments that were used in this study were similar to those that were used in the current study, which could be the reason for similar findings. Furthermore, Singh and Rajalingam (2012) reported that there were moderate levels of writing anxiety among the participants. Similarly, in the current study, there were 40 participants who had moderate anxiety. While

31 of them got high grades from their exams, nine of them got moderate grades. Finally, Negari and Rezaabadi (2012) suggested that most of the students need some degree of anxiety as a facilitative factor. The number of participants who had a high level of anxiety and had high grades from the exams in the current study can be given as a supporting example for their findings.

There exist a number of studies with similar results in Turkey. For example, Atay and Kurt (2006) indicated that most of the participants (69%) had high or moderate level of writing anxiety. In another study, Öztürk and Çeçen (2007) revealed that most of the students (40%) had high levels of L2 writing anxiety. Finally, Genç and Yaylı (2019) concluded that most of the participants had high to moderate levels of L2 writing anxiety. They felt more anxious during exams than writing in class or at home. In a similar vein, in the current study, 43.3% of the participants had a high level of anxiety while 34.2% of them had a moderate level of anxiety. In addition, when the sub-dimensions of the SLWAI are taken into consideration, it could be seen that cognitive anxiety was the most-experienced type of anxiety followed by somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior, which is in parallel with Ateş (2013) and Zhang (2011). This result may indicate that students mostly experience anxiety while finding topics, supporting ideas, giving details and examples in their writing especially under time limits during exams. In this vein, time limitation can be regarded as a negative cause for L2 writing anxiety (Atay & Kurt, 2006; Ateş, 2013; Cheng, 2004b; Zhang, 2011).

The participants in this study were found to experience L2 writing anxiety at different levels, which requires the need for finding ways to reduce their anxiety. To start with, similar to Zhou, Wang, and Wang (2022), writing instructors should assist students to set specific L2 writing aims, provide positive feedback to sustain student motivation and provide some techniques to cope with writing anxiety. Specifically, some students may not feel comfortable while writing in an online environment and need instructor guidance due to lack of learner autonomy or technological access. In this sense, writing instructors should pay attention to giving individual feedback to students in online environments by capitalizing on their strong aspects and

then moving to weak aspects to build self-confidence. Echoing Cheng (2002, 2004), it can be suggested that instructors should promote a positive environment and students can be offered the opportunity to choose their writing topics without time limits, go through various drafts and exchange opinions with their peers to overcome their fears. Additionally, in parallel to Kirmızı and Dağdeviren Kirmızı (2015), Kurt and Atay (2007), and Susoy and Tanyer (2013), alternative assessment types such as peer review or self-evaluation can be integrated to reduce L2 writing anxiety. Finally, much in line with Fathi and Nourzadeh (2019), employing online tools such as blog-mediated instruction may reduce L2 writing anxiety as it gives the opportunity to be involved in self-study outside the class under less time limits. In this vein, online learning tools can be employed in writing classes to increase student involvement and achievement.

All in all, to reduce L2 writing anxiety levels of students: (1) Some extra activities can be given as self-study or group work outside the class, (2) Portfolio-assessment can be employed, (3) Pre-writing stages can be conducted during lessons and writing stage can be given as homework, (4) Students should be informed about the genres to be covered at the beginning of the module, and (5) Student reflections about evaluation can be gathered via diaries and journals.

LIMITATIONS and SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was conducted during an unusual period since the students were away from school because of the pandemic danger. The inventory was sent online and also received online, and the study was conducted with a small number of participants in only one institution. Thus, its results cannot be generalized to other settings and future studies can be conducted with a larger population in different contexts to bring about a more comprehensive picture of L2 writing anxiety. Also, in this study, the participants were preparatory class students from A1, A2 and B1 levels at a state university. Therefore, future studies could investigate different age groups, language levels and departments. Finally, in the current study, an inventory and exam results of the participants were used as the data collection tools. However, some different data collection tools such as student diaries, classroom observations, face-to-face interviews and teacher reflections can be employed to triangulate data in future studies.

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