Assessing Iraqi ESL Fourth Year College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences Students' Writing Anxiety

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Abstract:

The study aims at assessing Iraqi ESL 4th Year College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences Students' Writing Anxiety. Writing is the most difficult linguistic ability and one of the four main language skills. Writing anxiety is a significant indicator that could hinder writing abilities and lead to performance inefficiency. The idea of writing anxiety involves a fear of the writing process that outweighs the benefits that are expected from being able to write, which may eventually result in relatively long-lasting predispositions to fear, avoid, or dislike writing. The cause of writing anxiety is likely a lack of confidence in one's ability to write or learn to write; this ability is known as writing self-efficacy. Iraqi ESL university students encounter greater difficulties and obstacles in this area than native writers do. The current study has a descriptive design. A scale with (20) items comprises the study's constructed instrument. The sample of the present study has randomly been selected from the College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at the university of Baghdad from the fourth-year total (300). Face validity and reliability have been calculated. The results of this investigation indicate that Iraqi university students unluckily faced real challenges and issues in this field. The conclusions and recommendations were then determined.

Keywords: Writing Skill, Anxiety

تقييم القلق الكتابي لدى طلاب المرحلة الرابعة لكلية التربية البدنية وعلوم الرياضة دارسي اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة ثانية

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الملخص:

هدفت الدراسة الى تقييم القلق الكتابي لدى طلاب المرحلة الرابعة لكلية التربية البدنية وعلوم الرياضةالعراقيين دارسي اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة ثانية .تعتبر الكتابة أحد المهارات الأساسية واكثرهم صعوبة، لذا سلطت الباحثة الضوء على اهم العوامل المؤثرة سلباً على مهارة الكتابة في اللغة الإنكليزية .ويعد القلق الكتابي مؤشر هام يمكن ان يعوق القدرات الكتابية والذي يؤدي الى عدم كفاءة أداء متعلمي اللغة. يواجه طلاب الجامعة دارسي اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة ثانية معوقات ومشاكل حقيقية في مجال الكتابة مقارنة بكاتبي اللغة الأصليين . للقلق أسباب ومصادر متعددة ويشكل عامل سلبي على الطالب وقدرته على تعلم اللغة واكتسابها بنجاح. تتضمن فكرة القلق الكتابي خوفًا من عملية الكتابة يفوق الفوائد المتوقعة من القدرة على الكتابة، مما قد يؤدي في النهاية إلى ميول طويلة الأمد نسبيًا للخوف أو تجنب أو كره الكتابة .ان سبب القلق الكتابي هو عدم ثقة الطالب في قدرته على الكتابة أو تعلمها؛ تُعرف هذه القدرة بالكفاءة الذاتية للكتابة . ان تصميم الدراسة هو تصميم وصفي واداة الدراسة تتكون من مقياس مؤلف من ٢٠ فقرة ،اما عينة الدراسة اختيرت عشوائياً من ٣٠٠ طالب من كلية التربية البدنية وعلوم الرياضة جامعة بغداد المرحلة الرابعة . احتسب الصدق الظاهري والثبات. وتشير الدراسة الى ان طلاب الجامعة العراقيين الذين يعانون من القلق واجهوا تحديات حقيقية في كتابة فقرة ثم حددت الاستنتاجات والتوصيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مهارة الكتابة، القلق

1.Introduction

1.1. *Problem and Significance*

Many studies have focused on the relationship between students' self-efficacy in writing and other affective factors associated with writing performance. According to this field's study, which is increasingly focusing on language learners and their affective characteristics, writing anxiety is the psychological variable that most strongly correlates with students' achievement.

writing anxiety is defined as "a situational aspect, which refers to the feelings of worries accompanied by reactions such as excessive sweating, pounding of the heart, and negative expectations as well as maladaptive behaviors of a learner's experience while performing a particular writing task at a given time and place." (Sabti etal.,2019:3).

Anxiety has a considerable impact on English Second language (ESL) students' writing abilities, and although it is often considered to be one of the fundamental language-learning obstacles, every time a student is assigned a writing assignment, they experience writing anxiety, which is a negative and uneasy feeling. According to Fakeye & Ohia (2016:82), Writing anxiety was initially described as the amount

of writing-related worry that outweighs the situation's expected benefit. When writing, students who are nervous may misread instructions, not have enough information to write about, not be able to explain their ideas rationally, or, if they can, not use the right words to communicate their ideas. Writers in general have been found to occasionally face "the terror of the blank page," whether they are professionals, amateurs, or students. Low language proficiency and self-confidence significantly affect the rating scores of second language writing anxiety (SLWA)in the context of ESL writing.

Language anxiety (LA) "harms students'" performance in numerous ways, including directly by lowering class engagement and overtly avoiding the language as well as indirectly through fear and self-doubt. (He ,2018:3).

Anxiety may impact a student' ability to write well. This is because anxieties about unrelated information to the task and undesirable cognitive self-concern interfere with processing of the pertinent information by the student's cognitive systems. There is a description of the relationship between anxiety, cognition, and conduct as having a cyclical influence on one another. On the other hand, there is a chance that anxiety may also encourage individuals to do tasks more effectively, since they will exert more effort to submit to the cognitively demanding activity. The only way to know for sure whether anxiety improves or worsens performance depends on how willingly a student feeling anxiety would engage in amplifying their attempts to compensate for the disrupted or diminished cognitive process by the efficiency with which they do their tasks. Alternatively put, the emergence of anxiety has an impact on the subject's degree of effort and ability to generate quality task accomplishment. (Wern and Rahmat, 2021:21). Research on English Foreign Language (EFL) writing demonstrates that EFL writing anxiety can significantly impact ESL writing performance. (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012; Özmen & Altun, 2014 -Huang,2018), In conclusion, anxiety has negative effects on students who experience it. Some problems have been found based on the researcher's knowledge, experience, and comprehension of the literature around the ESL written paragraph. Students will quit writing because of tension and anxiety, which is what causes these problems. As a result, it becomes challenging to write paragraphs that are convincing and reasonable. A student 's own personality trait of anxiety has an impact on his ability to successfully learn and acquire a language. Every student may get anxious in some situations and under certain circumstances, but some students may become more anxious than others. Due to their anxiety, such students do not seem to fare as well as others in terms of language learning.

According to the researcher, no student research of this scope has ever been done at the undergraduate stage. Consequently, investigation is necessary to fill the gap.

1.2 Aim

The present study aims at assessing Iraqi ESL 4th Year College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences Students' Writing Anxiety.

1.3 Limits of the study

The present study is limited to Iraqi ESL 4th year college students, University of Baghdad, for the academic year 2022-2023.

1.4 Value of the study

It is hoped that the following benefits will come from this research:

1. Clarifying if anxiousness should be considered when teaching English in ESL classrooms.

2. The findings of this study may provide encouraging feedback to English instructors and students in colleges of education in Iraq. As a result, teachers may be made aware of the frequency of anxiety in the classroom when teaching English.

3. Finding out from the students' own perspectives the various causes of writing anxiety among Iraqi college students majoring in ESL and then suggesting appropriate solutions for this issue.

4. Offering strategies, tactics, and approaches that make an effort to reduce stress and anxiety in order to facilitate the study of writing.

5. Providing a way for others with an interest in this subject to conduct additional research.

2. The Writing Skill

Writing is the most difficult linguistic ability and one of the four main language skills, along with speaking, listening, and reading. It is a comprehensive skill for communication that combines syntax, vocabulary, conception, and rhetoric. Not only is it difficult to come up with and organize ideas, but it can also be challenging to turn those thoughts into writing that is understandable. Writing requires a great level of complexity in its talents. Writing in a second language requires writers to focus on both higher-level planning and organizing abilities as well as lower-level spelling, grammar, word choice, and other writing abilities. If their language skills are lacking, the problem increases much more. (Richard and Renandya,2002:303).

Murcia & Mcintosh (2001:207) define writing skill as an act of interaction between the writer and the reader through the text, and it can be viewed as a form of communication.

Huy (2015:54) states writing skill as a "Writing is a complex metacognitive activity that draws on an individual's knowledge, basic skill, strategies, and ability to coordinate multiple processes."

Lindsay (2000) describes writing skill as cited in (Alodwan, & Ibnian ,2014:141) that crafting a cohesive, fluent, and lengthy piece of writing is perhaps the most difficult thing to achieve in language.

Writing is viewed as an experience of discovery because writers struggle to think, compose, and put all their thoughts together as they attempt to navigate the writing process. Thus, it is seen as a cognitive, social, and dynamic process rather than a static one. (Ismail,2011:73).

Setting goals, gathering information, choosing acceptable language, creating a draft, reading and reviewing it, then modifying and editing it are all part of the complex process of writing, which is the end result of using techniques to manage the composing process. (Hedge,2000:302).

Crystal (1999: 214) states that writing is not only a mechanical task, a simple matter of putting speech down on paper. It is an exploration in the use of the graphic potential of a language -a creative process- an act of discovery.

Writing, according to Widdowson (2001:62), is the utilization of a visual medium to make the grammatical and graphological structure of a language clear. In a particular way, writing is the creation of sentences that serve as usage examples.

Writing, according to Wilson and Glazier (2013:204), is a system of interconnected structures, starting with words that join to make phrases, clauses, and sentences, which in turn connect to construct paragraphs and essays. There is a unique set of "blueprints" for each level.

Ramadhan (2019:89), states the main foundations for developing excellent writing: Topic: The writer needs to focus more on the subject that has been given to them, Vocabulary: Before beginning to write, the writer should be aware of the type of vocabulary they will use. Grammatical structure: The writer's choice of grammatical structures is the next crucial factor that improves the effectiveness of their writing, it is a well-known truth that punctuation is crucial while writing in the

English language, and coherent: The ability to connect thoughts coherently in writing is the most crucial quality of good writers.

2.1The Importance and Value of Writing

The importance of writing ability is highly required among university students as a fundamental learning step in their academic development. The goal is to assist students in mastering the skill of writing and to enable them to write effectively and interactively, especially given that communicative goals are currently the top priorities in the field of English language teaching. (Alodwan, & Ibnian ,2014:141-142).

The goal of writing instruction is to assist students in developing the abilities and skills necessary to produce the kinds of written texts that an educated person would be expected to produce in his or her native tongue. (Hunt & Timothy, 2009:55).

Writing is a form of expression and communication which enables learners to communicate ideas, feelings, and different attitudes in a written mode. Writing can be an individual, personal, and social endeavor even though the writing production is an expression of one's individuality and personality, it is important to remember that writing is also a social endeavor, a way of communicating with people. (Richards & Renanya,2003:25).

Writing is one of the four primary language abilities that language learners need to acquire, according to Banat (2007), who also noted that this skill is crucial for assisting students in communicating and understanding how language functions. The process of writing is no longer regarded as a straightforward linear activity with distinct, sequential stages. In contrast, writing is today understood to be a complex, integrated set of activities that are interactive and recursive.

It is more difficult for students to write in a language other than their first language since writing is a complicated and multifaceted process. It is crucial to comprehend how much English second language university students use writing strategies when producing their L2 writing and how their writing proficiency is related to their use of writing strategies given the complexity of L2 writing and the importance of writing proficiency in academic settings. (Raoofi, at el., 2017:192). Within any disciplinary discourse, writing is seen as a crucial skill for the production and transmission of knowledge. It is true to say that the evaluation of students' academic performance in academic settings heavily depends on their capacity to communicate their knowledge and ideas. It aids pupils in completing important assignments, developing their capacity for critical thought, and growing their mental abilities and performance.

Writing abilities provide us the power to communicate with people over time and distance. In today's internet-driven world, students need to be proficient in it. It is a legitimate method for transmitting culture, information, and concepts from one generation to the next, directly affecting the development and preservation of sociocultural, educational, and anthropological facets of human life. In other words, writing is an essential tool for producing and sharing knowledge in any educational and cultural system, not just as a means of acquiring it. (Raoofi, at el., 2017:191-192).

The nature and significance of writing are frequently undervalued, which has an impact on its development. Writing is frequently seen as merely a component of instruction and acquisition of grammar and syntax. According to Nunan (1989) as cited in (Fareed at el.,2016: 82), writing is a very challenging cognitive activity that calls for the learner to have control over a number of variables. These variables range from the author's educational background and personal interests to different psychological, linguistic, and cognitive issues.

According to Jenks (2003:1), the writing process can be divided into five stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Writing proficiency is a crucial skill and a crucial component of learning when learning a second language. Writing encourages students to become active consumers of knowledge as well as shapers and organizers of what they already know. It needs to be possible to experiment without worrying about the results. Worthington (2002:1).

Writing skill is important for several reasons: First, it encourages one to explore their thoughts and clarify their thinking. In addition, writing entails much more than just putting thoughts on paper; creating entails more than just putting thoughts into words. It is a method for building meaningful and long-lasting social connections through investigating and developing ethical principles and moral principles. Additionally, writing could be seen as the most fundamental of the liberal arts because it undoubtedly includes the majority of the linguistic arts. (Tchudi 1999: 244 - 245)

2.2 Major Factors Affecting Writing Skill in English Language
2.2.1. Anxiety

The cause of writing anxiety is likely a lack of confidence in one's ability to write or learn to write; this ability is known as writing self-efficacy. (Pajares & Valiante, 1997:354). Writing assignments are frightening, difficult, and worry-inducing for apprehensive students. They have low self-esteem and think they

would fail at writing; therefore, they tend to avoid it whenever possible since they anticipate receiving a poor grade on their work. Writing anxiety is a filter that hinders the student from using prior knowledge about the writing task and the abilities needed to successfully complete it. This filter is known as a writer's block, which is defined as the inability to begin or maintain a piece of writing for reasons other than a lack of basic skill.

2.2.2 Students' Prior Knowledge

Hailikari at el., (2008:1) claims Prior knowledge as "Multidimensional and hierarchal entity that is dynamic in nature and consists of different types of knowledge and skill". Prior knowledge has traditionally been seen as the most significant factor impacting learning and student accomplishment, and both the quantity and quality of prior knowledge have a favorable impact on both the capacity to acquire new knowledge and the ability to use higher order cognitive problem-solving skills. Anderson (1984: 34) demonstrates the importance of pre-reading or pre-writing exercises as useful stimulus to students' prior knowledge of comprehension and composition.

2.2.3. Attitudes

language attitude refers to the learner's attitudes toward the language's grammatical structure, its native speakers, and its culture in general. Additionally, students who have a favorable attitude regarding writing in general and their personal writing proficiency in particular are more likely to engage in writing tasks and to exert additional effort to improve their writing abilities. (Richards and Schmidt,2010:298). A triode model of attitude is based on three elements: affect, behavior, and cognitive. The beliefs and thoughts that influence student's emotions and moods are referred to as the cognitive element of their attitudes. The behavioral component illustrates the attitudes of ESL students. (Zimbardo & Leippe1991:30).

2.2.4 Motivation

One of the key components of writing is motivation. Students will find it challenging to complete writing assignments without significant drive. Ideally, motivation is all the inner force that propels everyone to action. Writing motivation, then, is an innate force that governs productive writing work. The students must be motivated to write, since without it they wouldn't engage in writing activities. Despite this, students will still encounter several issues with sentence structure, grammar, diction, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation. The students have the ability to write well-written compositions. It demonstrates the necessity for writing inspiration among students. (Aryanika,2016:3)

There are two types of motivation: Extrinsic and Intrinsic, according to Deci and Ryan (2000:58-60), Extrinsic motivation causes students to choose writing assignments that are simple and would save them time and energy, such as writing about a subject they have already covered in earlier courses. They are content with what they write and lack the desire to try new writing endeavors or take risks. They also lack the desire to explore new subjects. While students who are intrinsically motivated try to take on difficult and unfamiliar writing tasks and take chances. The motivation of students to write as well as their attitude toward the setting and circumstances under which they complete the writing assignment might have an impact on how well they write. If they are engaged in the topic and inspired to write, this effect might be favorable; but, if they are uninspired, it might have the opposite effect.

2.3 What is Anxiety

The idea of foreign language anxiety has been around since the 1970s, and many academics have been drawn to it since then. Among these, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) were the first to treat the problem of foreign language anxiety as a distinct sort of anxiety and attempt to offer a practical description of it. To measure the specific kind of anxiety that has developed during the language learning process, they created a tool. Based on discussions by beginning foreign language students about anxiety, many of whom frequently exhibit symptoms like anxiety, such as classroom depression, dizziness before exams, and mumbling before entering the classroom, they described the physiological and psychological symptoms of anxiety. (Homayouni et al.,2020:139)

Anxiety is characterized by feelings of unease, annoyance, self-doubt, fear, or worry. The concept of anxiety plays a significant role in learning a second language. Scovel advocates against viewing anxiety as a straightforward, monolithic concept. Anxiety should be assessed physiologically by recording autonomic arousal responses, behaviorally by observing the behaviors that people engage in when they are anxious, and through structured surveys that ask participants about their experiences with anxiety. All these measurements were extensively used and accessible in psychology, which at the time had a significant impact on second language anxiety research. (Scovel,1978:134).

Scovel (1991: 18) defines anxiety as "anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object".

Spielberger (1983:1) describes anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system."

MacIntyre(1998: 27) illustrates anxiety as "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language"

Recognizing language anxiety as a complicated system can help us better understand how it functions and how to support second language learners who experience it. In addition to several other elements, internal physiological processes, cognition, emotional states, personality qualities, situational demands, relationships with other persons involved, and the setting can all contribute to second language anxiety. (Hardacre and Güvendir,2020:3). The three phases of cognition—Input, Processing, and Output—can all be affected negatively by anxiety. In other words, anxiety arousal, which is frequently accompanied by negative self-talk, worry about failing, or worry about how one is performing, may use up cognitive resources that would otherwise be needed for normal cognitive processing. When the processing and output are malfunctioning, anxiety occurs. In other words, anxiousness never manifests itself in students when any activity takes place in their minds and the outcome is positive. Anxiety will manifest in both their body and mind when the process is interrupted. When students demonstrate their knowledge or their skills, the poor process's reaction is panic or worry. (Tobias 1979 as cited in Putri et al.,2020:37).

According to Eysenck 1979, there are two types of anxiety: worry and emotionality. His definition of "worry" includes cognitive behaviors like comparing one's performance to that of peers, thinking about the repercussions of failure, having poor self-confidence in one's abilities, and worrying excessively about evaluation. The term "emotionality component" refers to the simultaneous unpleasant emotions brought on by physiological activity, such as heightened skin reaction and heart rate, nausea, dizziness, and panicky feelings. As a result, the task-irrelevant processing activities "preempt some of the available effort and capability of working memory," according to Eysenck, who claimed that anxious students were more frequently engaged in task-irrelevant cognitive processing than their non-anxious colleagues. (Zheng & Cheng:2018;19).

2.3.1   Category of Anxiety

Anxiety has been divided psychologically into three categories:

2.3.1.1 Trait Anxiety

It represents the global and deepest level. Anxiety about numerous things is a more permanent tendency. Trait anxiety hasn't been shown to be a reliable indicator of success in second language acquisition. When a person has a persistent tendency

to react to a potentially dangerous circumstance by intensifying their state anxiety, this is referred to as trait anxiety. This propensity is constant in a wide variety of circumstances and is momentarily steady. (Tovilović et al., 2009:492)

2.3.2.2 State Anxiety

It is on a more temporary or contextual level. Anxiety about a certain event or action is known as state anxiety. According to Spielberger (1983) as cited in Tovilović et al.,2009:492), state anxiety is described as a negative emotional reaction to potentially dangerous or frightening conditions.

2.3.2.3 Situation-Specific Anxiety

It concentrates more on state anxiety's situational aspect. The process of learning a language can be negatively impacted by foreign language anxiety, which can be separated from other types of worry. (MacIntyre and Gardner,1991:112). Although it is persistent over time, it is deeply tied to certain circumstances where one condition differs from another. Examples of situation-specific concerns include language and math anxiety. Language experts think that learning a foreign language is more closely tied to situation-specific anxiety than trait anxiety because trait anxiety is a stable trait in which all scenarios create anxiety, while a situation-specific anxiety is connected to unique situations. (Oteir and Al-Otaibi, 2019:311)

2.4 Major Sources of Language Anxiety

The major anxiety sources in English language classrooms. They are as follows:

2.4.1. Communication Apprehension

Communication anxiety happens when students lack adult communication abilities despite having mature ideas and thoughts. It alludes to a reluctance to engage in genuine interpersonal conversation. The standard definition of communication apprehension is, " level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person." (McCroskey Beatty 1984: 13)

2.4.2 Fear of Negative Evaluation:

Fear of negative evaluation refers to a kind of apprehension about others' evaluation. Watson and Friend (1969:449) describes fear of evaluation as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively."

2.4.3 Test Anxiety:

Test anxiety is a fear of being evaluated academically. It might be characterized as a phobia of failing exams and an unpleasant memory that many

students hold subconsciously or consciously. This kind of anxiety is based on apprehensions about academic assessment and a fear of failing. (Horwitz and Young 1991, as cited in   Shabani, 2012: 2379).

2.5 Writing Anxiety in English Language Classroom

Some students consider writing a pleasant activity, and they regard the act of putting their thoughts or ideas on paper as enjoyable exercise. Every time they encounter a written task, students who struggle to express themselves in writing will find the writing activity to be extremely unpleasant, if not downright terrifying. When students struggle with their writing, they may have experienced writing anxiety. (Wahyuni & Umam, 2017:105-106).

The idea of writing anxiety involves a fear of the writing process that outweighs the benefits that are expected from being able to write, which may eventually result in relatively long-lasting predispositions to fear, avoid, or dislike writing. Prior to being done in their ultimate written form, it involves many mental processes. To develop the main idea, or theme, of the topic, the writer must consider, compose, and create ideas; then, check their relatedness to one another and to the topic's main idea; memorize and recall lexical items thought to be more relevant than others; filter and discard irrelevant ideas; and organize these ideas relating to their importance. Furthermore, the writer must connect his ideas, express them vocally on paper as a first draft, and then rewrite and polish them to produce the final document.

Writing anxiety in a second language is "highly situation specific, seems to be self-limiting, is relatively visible, and more importantly appears to be relatively easily overcome by rational instruction." (Bloom ,1981: 104)

According to Hassan (2001: 4), second language writing anxiety is "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."

According to Karakaya and Ülper (2011:704), students who struggle with writing anxiety find the writing process difficult and demanding. Additionally, they asserted that "anxiety is a critical and decisive notion in language learning process and writing process."

Cheng (2004) classified writing anxiety into three types: 1. cognitive anxiety, 2. somatic anxiety, and 3. avoidance anxiety. The term "cognitive anxiety" denotes the cognitive component of anxiety, which includes unfavorable expectations, performance obsession, and perceptional worry. One's sense of the physical symptoms of worry, such as tightness and nervousness, is referred to as somatic anxiety. Writing is avoided by students who are experiencing avoidance anxiety.

The effects of writing anxiety on writing processes and behaviors were outlined by (Ibid). These effects included physiological effects, which appear as uncomfortable tension or uneasiness, cognitive interference with the writing process, and avoidance of writing. In order to examine the associations between the specific writing anxiety and writing performance, he also used the participants' performance on a timed English writing task as an index of their English writing performance.

In general, students with low anxiety do better on writing tasks than writers with high anxiety, which enables them to perform better on written assignments and get higher exam scores. Low anxiety students are good at encoding information, which makes them confident and satisfied writers. High anxiety students prefer to avoid writing tasks, which limits their opportunity to practice and receive helpful criticism for the improvement of their writing abilities for future success. In contrast, low anxiety students regularly experience the joy of writing. (Wern& Rahmat,2021:22).

3.*Procedures and Methodology*

3.1 The population of the current study consists of the Iraqi ESL College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences fourth- year students during the academic year 2022–2023 at the University of Baghdad. The current study's sample consists of (300) university fourth-year students who were randomly chosen from the Physical Education and Sport Sciences College, as illustrated in table (1):

Table (1)
The Population of the Present Study

No.	University	Male	Female	Total Number
1.	College of Physical Education & Sport Sciences/Al-Jadriyah University of Baghdad	180	120	300
2.	College of Physical Education & Sport Sciences for Women/Al-Waziriyah University of Baghdad	/	300	300
	Total	180	420	600

Table (2)
The Sample of the Present Study

No.	University /College	Male	Female	Total Number
1.	**College of Physical Education & Sport Sciences/Al-Jadriyah University of Baghdad**	**180**	**120**	**300**

3.2 *The Construction of the Scale*

The scale used in this study was adapted from Cheng (2004: 313–315), with a few minor changes made to make it more appropriate for ESL students at Iraqi universities. The scale consists of a total of 20 items, each of which is rated on a scale of five as given in appendix 1. The scale received the following score: agree, strongly agree, partially agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

3.3 *Face Validity*

Face validity is the extent to which, based on the subjective evaluations of an observer, a test appears to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to evaluate (Richards and Schmidt, 2002:196-7). The instrument has been presented to a number of jurors who are experts in applied linguistics and ELT in order to guarantee the face validity of the test. The instrument items' appropriateness and suitability were both 100% agreed upon.

3.4 *Item Validity*

The validity of each item has been measured through the application of Person Correlation Coefficient Formula. Table (3) below shows that.

Table (3)
Correlation Coefficient for each Item of Writing Anxiety Scale

Item n.	Correlation	Item n.	Correlation
1.	**0.421**	**11.**	**0.179**
2.	**0.344**	**12.**	**0.316**
3.	**0.276**	**13.**	**0.409**
4.	**0.305**	**14.**	**0.523**
5.	**0.319**	**15.**	**0.169**
6.	**0.186**	**16.**	**0.318**
7.	**0.297**	**17.**	**0.341**

8.	0.402	18.	0.210
9.	0.329	29.	0.341
10.	0.546	20.	0.466

The critical value of correlation coefficient is (0.113) in the level of significant is 0.05 and the free degree is (298), this shows that all the correlation coefficients are significant to the critical degree. So, all the scale items are homogenous and that improves that construct validity has been achieved.

3.5 *Reliability*

According to Harmer (2001:322), reliability is increased by making test instructions explicit, limiting the potential for answer variety, and ensuring that test settings remain stable. The Alpha-Cronbach Formula was used to calculate the reliability coefficient. This technique involves choosing (50) students randomly from the total population. Their data has been calculated using the procedure above. It has been determined that the reliability coefficient is (0.82). It is considered acceptable according to Lehmmen and Mehrens (1991:255).

3.6 *Final Application of the Instrument*:

The instrument has been applied to the sample of the current study, which consists of (300) male and female fourth- year ESL University students, after achieving face validity and computing reliability coefficient. The students have been given (25) minutes to thoroughly study the scale items and make the proper decision.

4.*Data Analysis, Results, Conclusions and Recommendations*

4.1 Results and Data Analysis

The T-test formula was used to analyze the data that was collected. The following table (4) shows the data analysis:

Table (4)
T-test Value and Means and SD on the Anxiety Scale

Items	Groups	N.	Mean	St. deviation	T-test
1	Upper	81	2.7037	.74907	9.704
	Lower	81	1.5679	.74058	
2	Upper	81	2.7407	.54263	15.013
	Lower	81	1.4074	.58689	
3	Upper	81	2.7160	.57521	10.962
	Lower	81	1.6543	.65499	
4	Upper	81	2.9630	.66039	4.255
	Lower	81	1.7901	2.39121	
5	Upper	81	3.4938	.93706	15.864
	Lower	81	1.5185	.61464	
6	Upper	81	3.1235	.76457	15.039
	Lower	81	1.4444	.65192	
7	Upper	81	2.8395	.79776	11.594
	Lower	81	1.5432	.61338	
8	Upper	81	2.9877	.67996	11.235
	Lower	81	1.6914	.78489	
9	Upper	81	3.1111	.68920	12.297
	Lower	81	1.7037	.76558	
10	Upper	81	3.6049	.99598	14.093
	Lower	81	1.6790	.72158	
11	Upper	81	3.3457	.88262	13.062
	Lower	81	1.6543	.76093	
12	Upper	81	3.2099	1.29147	9.668
	Lower	81	1.6543	.65499	
13	Upper	81	3.7778	1.28452	11.334
	Lower	81	1.9383	.69544	
14	Upper	81	3.4198	1.05906	10.222
	Lower	81	1.8272	.91910	
15	Upper	81	3.5062	1.18452	13.645
	Lower	81	1.4691	.63416	
16	Upper	81	3.9012	.91658	18.080
	Lower	81	1.5309	.74308	
17	Upper	81	3.9877	.84401	20.273
	Lower	81	1.5309	.69077	
18	Upper	81	4.0123	.87312	19.192
	Lower	81	1.6296	.69722	

19	Upper	81	3.3333	1.23491	11.181
	Lower	81	1.5432	.74245	
20	Upper	81	3.3704	1.26930	12.710
	Lower	81	1.4198	.54461	

The means, standard deviations, and t-values for the upper and lower groups for each item are shown in Table (3). The item which has a computed t-test value which is higher than the tabulated value which is (1.96) is discriminating, when the level of significance is (0.05). Consequently, all the items have been approved to be discriminating. This shows that Iraqi ESL university students do experience high level of anxiety. The above table shows that items (17 - 18 - 16) have the higher T-test Value, which means that these are the major anxiety levels. The causes behind these are:

1- The learning of the target language in writing is particularly affected by high levels of anxiety, which are linked to poor performance and learning.
2- Writing anxiety may be caused by a lack of writing practice both within and outside of the classroom, by ESL university students being unfamiliar with the subject or not knowing what to write, or by worrying when writing an English paragraph in a short amount of time.
3- In addition, poor self-esteem causes students to fear criticism from both teachers and their peers.
4- Furthermore, inadequate writing approaches or teachers' criticism of students' English paragraphs is thought to be a contributing factor in their anxiety as writers.

4.2 *Conclusions*

The following conclusions are put forward:

1. ESL writing anxiety has been associated mostly to a fear of receiving critical comments from teachers, a lack of self-confidence in writing, and limited linguistic proficiency.
2. Writing an English paragraph causes high levels of anxiety for Iraqi ESL university students.
3. Education for ESL students is profoundly impacted by anxiety. Their capacity to acquire and use the English language effectively has been hindered by anxiety.

4.3 *Recommendations*

The conclusions mentioned above allow for the following recommendations:
1. Writing anxiety among Iraqi ESL students can be reduced with enough writing practice and knowledge of writing strategies.

2. As motivation is adversely and strongly correlated with anxiety, teachers should foster a friendly environment to encourage pupils to study English. This is because more motivation among students reduces anxiety. Hence, language instructors should encourage students to feel less anxious throughout English class.

3. To minimize student writing anxiety, teachers should encourage, reassure, provide positive reinforcement, and empathize with students to increase their confidence and self-esteem in their foreign language skills.

4. It is advised that teachers use a variety of strategies and techniques to teach writing while avoiding some of the more conventional methods.

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