

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 459 671

HE 034 576

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TITLE The Relationship of Writing Apprehension and Self-Esteem to the Writing Quality and Quantity of EFL University Students.
PUB DATE 2001-00-00
NOTE 37p.; Study conducted at Mansoura University, College of Education, Pamietta, Egypt.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Anxiety; *College Students; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Self Esteem; *Writing (Composition); Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Egypt

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if both "writing apprehension" and "self-esteem" of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students are related to the quality and quantity of their writing. Instruments developed for the study included an English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire, a Foreign Language Self-Esteem Scale, and a 40-minute writing task. Statistical analyses included Pearson product moment correlations, a series of t-tests, and two-way analyses of variance. Participants were 132 third-year students enrolled in the English Department, College of Education, Mansoura University (Egypt). The writing apprehension of the EFL university students negatively correlated with their self-esteem. Low apprehension students wrote better quality compositions than their high apprehension counterparts. In other words, writing apprehension negatively influenced the quality of students' composition writing. Low apprehension students had higher self-esteem than high apprehension students, and low self-esteem students were more apprehensive in their writing than their high self-esteem counterparts. These findings have been supported in the literature. It is suggested that writing skills improvement courses be taught to university students in nontraditional ways. To lower anxiety levels among students, it is also suggested that teacher evaluation be reduced and replaced with peer or self-evaluation whenever possible. An appendix contains the English writing apprehension questionnaire. (Contains 11 tables, 1 figure, and 40 references.) (SLD)



Mansoura University

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ABSTRACT

The Relationship of Writing Apprehension and Self-Esteem to the Writing Quality and Quantity of EFL University Students

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The purpose of this study was to determine if both 'writing apprehension' and 'self-esteem' of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students are related to the 'quality' and 'quantity' of their writing. Instruments for this study included an 'English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire', a 'FL Self-Esteem Scale', and a 40-minute writing task. Statistical analyses included: Pearson product-moment correlations, a series of t-tests, and 2-way analyses of variance.

Major findings yielded from this study were: a) Writing apprehension of EFL Egyptian university students negatively correlated with their self-esteem, b) Low Apprehensive student writers wrote better quality compositions than their High Apprehensive counterparts, or in other words, writing apprehension negatively influenced the quality of students' composition writing, c) Low Apprehensive students had higher self-esteem than High Apprehensive students, and d) Low Self-Esteem students were more apprehensive in their writing than their High Self-Esteem counterparts.

Reported results give evidence of the negative influence 'writing apprehension' and 'low self-esteem' have on writing quality. This finding is supported in the literature. One way to counteract this situation is to improve the writing skills of students. It is suggested that writing skills improvement courses be taught to university students in non-traditional ways. To lower anxiety level among students, it is also suggested that teacher evaluation should be reduced. Instead, it should be substituted with peer or self-evaluation whenever possible. This way, students will feel more secure from the inside and will be able to produce better quality writing tasks.

INTRODUCTION:

Research into writing anxiety or 'apprehension' is an off-shoot of research into oral communication anxiety. It was thought at the beginning that people with high oral communication anxiety tended to compensate by writing. However, it was found later that the link between the oral and the written anxiety does not exist (*Aikman, 1985*).

The term 'writing apprehension', a subject and situation specific anxiety, was coined by *Daly and Miller (1975)*. They defined it as a general avoidance of writing and of situations perceived by the individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing. Estimates of the percentage of anxious writers in the student population, *Aikman (1985)* reports, are approximately the same as for anxious speakers - about 10 to 25 percent.

Possible causes of writing anxiety, according to *Holladay (1981)*, vary-- from neurolinguistic realities that underlie language processing, poor skill development, and inadequate role models to lack of an understanding of the composing process and an authoritative, teacher-centered, product-based mode of teaching.

Research also proves that predisposition toward writing-- positive or negative--is extremely important. No matter how skilled or capable individuals are in writing, if they believe they will do poorly or if they do not want to take courses that stress writing, then their skills or capabilities matter little (*Holladay, 1981*).

Researchers have identified the following characteristics of writing apprehensive learners: 1) they are frightened by a demand for writing competency, 2) they fear evaluation of their writing because they think they

will be rated negatively, 3) they avoid writing destructively (*Holladay, 1981*). Furthermore, one of the most frequent clues that a person is suffering from writing anxiety is that his/her writing tasks or assignments are late or non-existent (*Aikman, 1985*).

High apprehensive individuals, according to *Daly and Miller (1983)*, find writing unrewarding, indeed punishing. Consequently they avoid, if possible, situations where writing is required. When placed in such situations they experience more than normal amounts of anxiety. This anxiety is often reflected in their written products and in their behaviors in, and attitudes about, writing situations. Low apprehensives, on the other hand, don't mind writing, are confident in their abilities to do so, and often enjoy it.

In her review of research on writing anxiety, *Sylvia Holladay (1981)* concludes that attitudes definitely influence growth in writing. When actual writing samples are examined, she continues, analyses suggest that highly apprehensive individuals, when compared with low anxious people, write less, use fewer qualifications, and opt for lower levels of language intensity.

RELATED LITERATURE:

Some studies have investigated the variables of interest in this study, namely, writing apprehension and self-esteem and their possible relationship to some different aspects of language learning and teaching. Following is a review of these studies.

A) WRITING APPREHENSION :

Cheshire (1984) attempted to determine whether the writing apprehension of college writers is diminished by regular freewriting and

whether apprehension affects the quality of writing. Results indicated that freewriting did not produce 1) significant effects on fluency or on any of the designated components of writing, or 2) measurable differences in writing apprehension. However, different teachers did not produce significantly different results in their class's writing apprehension. For most classes, some heightening of anxiety appears to result in better writing, although a few students may need to be taught adaptive responses to reduce or reverse the detrimental effects of apprehension.

Powell (1984) investigated the relationship between undergraduates' apprehensions about writing, their final grade in a composition course, and grade point average. It was found that most A and B students had low apprehension, while D and F students had high apprehension.

Using Daly and Miller's Writing Apprehension Scale, *Allen (1985)* tried to determine the degree of attitude improvement among University of Missouri-Kansas City freshman composition students during one semester. Results indicated that taking freshman composition does not necessarily reduce writing apprehension, and that writing apprehension tests need to be given at the beginning of a course to identify fearful students so that they can be helped.

The writing apprehension experienced by Puerto Rican students was examined by *Fayer (1986)*. Levels of apprehension when writing in English versus native Spanish, for males versus females, and for students enrolled or not enrolled in writing classes were compared. Results indicated that students, particularly females, were more apprehensive when writing in the second language. Students in writing classes reported less apprehension.

In an effort to reduce student writing apprehension, an in-class study was conducted by *Tighe (1987)* in a lower-level college writing course (N=16) at an Alabama university. Findings indicated that 13 students were less apprehensive about their writing after the course than before it. In addition, results showed that students wrote more in their later essays, suggesting a great willingness to commit themselves on paper. Sentence combining exercises from workbooks did not seem to improve writing skills. Finally, analysis revealed that students' later essays were superior to their earlier ones.

To examine the effects of background and personality on the attitudes of developing writers, *Hollandsworth (1988)* surveyed and interviewed 17 high school students from a 1988 summer school writing class. Results revealed a significant correlation between writers' attitudes and their personality traits, writing apprehension, and writing background. Eight of the ten students who tested "extraversion" were not writing apprehensive. The four students labeled "introversion" in their writing had no difficulty writing as long as it was teacher directed.

Gungle and Taylor (1989) suggested a positive correlation between ESL writing apprehension and attention to form (how one writes); i.e., the higher the writing apprehension score, the greater the attention to form. They expected a negative correlation to characterize English as a Second Language (ESL) writing apprehension and attention to content (what one writes); i.e., those students with low writing apprehension would also be more concerned with the content of their writing than the form. Finally, Gungle and Taylor posited a negative correlation between ESL writing apprehension and the perceived writing requirements of ESL students' majors, and a negative correlation between ESL writing apprehension and

ESL students' interest in pursuing advanced writing classes. The last two hypotheses were confirmed. However, no significant correlation was found between students' writing apprehension and attention to form, nor was there any significant negative correlation between students' ESL writing apprehension test scores and attention to content.

Teichman and Poris (1989) examined the initial effects of word processing on essay writing performance and on writing apprehension. They concluded that college freshmen using word processing showed greater progress in writing performance from pre to post essay tests than did those using traditional methods, but they did not show significant difference in writing apprehension.

Masny and Foxall (1992) investigated links between writing apprehension, preferred writing processes, and academic achievement in 28 adult ESL learners. Results indicated that high achievers had lower apprehension scores, as anticipated. It was also found that: 1) high and low achievers were more concerned about form than content; 2) low achievers were more concerned about form than were high achievers; 3) high and low apprehensive writers were more concerned about form than content; and 4) low apprehensive students were more concerned about form than were high apprehensive students. High apprehension also correlated with unwillingness to take more writing classes. Females were more apprehensive than males.

Featherston (1994) explored the effect of using a word processor on writing apprehension, as well as the quality and the quantity of the written product in a group of learning disabled (LD) (N=12) and non-learning-disabled (NLD) (N=12) college students.

Although the LD students were more apprehensive than the NLD students prior to writing, introducing the word processor condition decreased their apprehension to a level comparable to that of the NLD students. These findings may indicate that the word processor may help in efforts to motivate students to write and to improve their self-images as writers.

Holtz (1995) investigated the differences in attitudes about writing by male and female college composition students. Results indicate that some gender differences do exist among the population studied. Inexpressive male writers were identified and usually were found in the basic writing classes. The findings were interpreted in terms of the need for more encouragement, especially by males to write, by teachers, parents, and caretakers. Less attention should be paid to existing stereotypes.

Boening, Anderson, and Miller (1997) examined the relationship between writing apprehension and academic achievement among 75 male undergraduate honors students at the University of Alabama. The overall group mean score on the Daly and Miller's Writing Apprehension Scale was 50, with a range of 29 - 65, indicating a moderate writing apprehension for the group. Correlational analysis indicated a low to moderate negative correlation between writing apprehension and GPA. The responses indicated moderate levels of apprehension to writing, falling within the mid-range of the instrument, thus providing a perception that these students, who have excelled in the classroom, are capable writers.

Whereas previous research on writing apprehension has apparently been carried out using only English, this study by *Lee and Krashen (1997)* attempted to determine whether writing apprehension and writing frequency and competence are related to speakers of Chinese in Taiwan. A

strong relationship was found between reported apprehension and frequency of leisure writing, confirming results reported by Daly and associates with North American English-speaking subjects. In addition, there was evidence of a relationship between writing apprehension and frequency of reading, suggesting that those who read more have lower writing apprehension.

In summary, it can be seen from the above reviewed research that high writing apprehension negatively affects writing quality (*Cheshire, 1984 ; Tighe, 1987*), final grade in a composition course (*Powell, 1984*), and academic achievement (*Masny and Foxall, 1991 ; Boening, Anderson, and Miller, 1997*). However, there is a contradictory evidence regarding whether taking a writing course (*Cheshire, 1984 ; Allea, 1984 ; Fayer, 1986*) or using word processing (*Teichman and Poris, 1989 ; Featherston, 1994*) helps to lower writing apprehension. Finally, it is worthwhile noting that none of these studies has attempted to explore the possible relationship between writing apprehension and writing quantity.

B) SELF-ESTEEM :

Self-esteem is an egocentric personality factor which means the worth that persons place upon themselves. *Coopersmith (1967)* defines self-esteem in the following manner: "By self-esteem, we refer to the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself, it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior"

Lawrence (1981) defines self-esteem as the person's effective evaluation of the sum of his/her characteristics both mental and physical. *Robison-Awana, Kehle, and Jenson (1986)* put forward a similar definition for self-esteem. They define it as the person's evaluation of himself.

Self-esteem in language learning, *Heyde-Parsons (1983)* explains, refers to evaluations students consciously make of their situations where they use the foreign language (English in this case) and to evaluations they make of individual aspects of specific self-esteem such as language learning ability, their actual language use, in-class relationships, and student behavior toward the foreign language.

While empirical research on the association between self-esteem and writing oriented variables is quite limited, according to *Daly and Wilson (1983)*, anecdotal evidence, as well as social theories of self-esteem suggest an inverse relationship will exist between apprehension and self-esteem. Comments from teachers of writing often include the suggestion that the way a student feels about himself or herself affects, and is affected by, how he or she writes. Teachers indicate, for instance, that students who are apprehensive about writing (e.g., don't like writing, are uncomfortable when writing) also tend to feel comparatively less positive about themselves (*Fritts, 1977; Torian, 1977*).

After reviewing three studies (conducted in three different settings in the United States) to investigate the possible relationship between writing apprehension and (both general and specific) self-esteem, *Daly and Wilson (1983)* conclude that writing apprehension and general self-esteem are inversely related to one another. While the magnitude of relationship is uniformly small (-0.31 and -0.23, $p < 0.001$), the consistency across two

measures of self-esteem [*Rosenberg (1965) and Pervin and Lilly (1967)*] as well as the directional replication with the Rosenberg measure (- 0.11, $p < 0.03$) is impressive.

In the case of the writing-specific self-esteem study (assessed by a 'naive' readers' reactions to writing measure), *Daly and Wilson (1983)* report that the multiple correlations between the dimensions of writing self-esteem and writing apprehension was - 0.73 ($p < .0001$) which was, as expected, substantially and significantly ($p < 0.05$) larger than the correlation obtained in previous studies. This apprehension- esteem relationship, *Daly and Wilson (1983)* conclude again, is substantially larger when the self-esteem measure is writing specific. Despite these findings confirming an inverse relationship between writing apprehension and self-esteem, some conflicting evidence about this relationship is reported by *Minot and Gamble (1991)*. Due to this conflicting evidence, a study investigating these two variables needs to be undertaken.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

Writing apprehension, according to *Lauer (1994)*, is a problem in writing classes because it has consequences for students' learning experience, and for the decisions they make about engaging in productive, fulfilling writing projects. It is also a problem for teachers who recognize apprehension in the behavior of students, but have no practical and reliable means of intervention.

As such, there is a need to investigate the variable 'writing apprehension' in an Arabic speaking context given that studies investigating writing apprehension and self-esteem in their relationships to the writing

quality and quantity of university students in such context, to the best knowledge of this writer, do not exist.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY :

The purpose of this study was to determine if both 'writing apprehension' and 'self-esteem' of EFL university students are related to the quality and quantity of their writing. More specifically, the study attempted to answer the following question :

- Are 'writing apprehension' and 'self-esteem' related to the writing quality and quantity of EFL university students?

HYPOTHESES:

- (1) There is a statistically significant negative relationship between writing apprehension and self-esteem of EFL university students.
- (2) There is a statistically significant negative relationship between writing apprehension of students and the quality of their writing.
- (3) There is a statistically significant negative relationship between writing apprehension of students and the quantity of their writing.
- (4) There is a statistically significant negative relationship between self-esteem of students and the quality of their writing.
- (5) There is a statistically significant negative relationship between self-esteem of students and the quantity of their writing.
- (6) There is a statistically significant difference between High Apprehensive and Low Apprehensive students in the quality of their writing.

- (7) There is a statistically significant difference between High Apprehensive and Low Apprehensive students in the quantity of their writing.
- (8) There is a statistically significant difference between High Apprehensive and Low Apprehensive students in their self-esteem scores.
- (9) There is a statistically significant difference between High Self-Esteem and Low Self-Esteem students in the quality of their writing.
- (10) There is a statistically significant difference between High Self-Esteem and Low Self-Esteem students in the quantity of their writing.
- (11) There is a statistically significant difference between High Self-Esteem and Low Self-Esteem students in their writing apprehension scores.
- (12) There are significant interactions between writing apprehension and self-esteem of students in the quality of their writing.
- (13) There are significant interactions between writing apprehension and self-esteem of students in the quantity of their writing.

SUBJECTS :

One hundred and thirty two third year students enrolled in the English Department, College of Education, Mansoura University served as the subjects for this study. Data for this study was collected in the Fall Semester of the 1998/99 academic year.

INSTRUMENTS:

(1) The English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire:

Based on related literature (*Daly and Miller, 1975; Daly, 1978; Gungle and Taylor, 1989; and Masny and Foxall, 1992*), an English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire (Appendix A) was prepared to measure student degree of writing apprehension in English.

Following a five-point Likert scale format, the Questionnaire is made up of 21 statements on which students have to indicate their degree of agreement/disagreement by checking the appropriate column. Possible scores on the Questionnaire range from 21 to 105.

(2) The FL Self-Esteem Scale:

The second independent variable, self-esteem, was assessed by the Foreign Language (FL) Self-Esteem Scale (see Appendix B). The purpose of this self-report measure is to account for the degree of self-esteem among foreign language learners.

An extensive survey of related literature on existing self-esteem scales and questionnaires (*Coopersmith, 1967 and 1981; Lawrence, 1981; Heyde-Parsons, 1983; Hassan, 1992; and Francis, James, and Jones, 1998*) was conducted prior to the development of the FLSES.

The FLSES is made up of 25 items. It includes four sections: a) language ability, b) actual in-class language use, c) in-class relationships, and d) attitude toward/behavior in the FL class. This classification of the different sections of the FLSES is partly based on *Coopersmith (1967)* and *Heyde-Parsons (1983)*. *Coopersmith (1967)*, for instance, indicates that one aspect of self-esteem is the extent to which an individual believes himself capable of doing.

FLSES items are statements to which students respond on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement. To correct for the effects of acquiescence, some items were worded negatively (e.g., I don't feel at ease when I talk to my FL instructors). Possible scores on the FLSES range from 25 to 125. For this study sample, scores ranged from 17 to 97 ($\bar{X}=77.21$, $SD=7.79$).

The FLSES was submitted to two experts in the fields of Education and Educational Psychology to check whether the individual items of the scale actually measure what they propose to measure. Based on their feedback, necessary adjustments were made.

PROCEDURE:

- (1) Third year English language specialists studying an "EFL Methodology" course were asked to participate in this study on a voluntary basis.
- (2) Subjects were administered both the English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire and the FL Self-Esteem Scale in one class session. Instructions for both instruments made it clear that there were no right or wrong answers to the statements of the questionnaires. They were asked to respond only as applicable and not to spend a long time on reading the statements.
- (3) In another class session, students were asked to write a 40-minute composition on the following topic: "My Teaching Practice Experience in the Preparatory Schools." Students were encouraged to write as good and as much as they can during this time limit.

(4) How was writing quality measured?

The researcher trained two instructors at the college to rate the students' writing using the scale for Evaluating Expository Writing developed by *Quellmalz (1982)*. This is a holistic analytic instrument that has six-point scales for assessing four dimensions of writing competence, focus/organization, support and mechanics. Thus, the total score for the Scale (six points for each of the four dimensions) will amount to 24.

The raters were trained by the researcher using procedures similar to those described by *Myers (1980)*. The training consisted first of having the raters study Quellmalz's scale definitions and discuss any questions they had about them with the researcher. The researcher was present during the scoring sessions to monitor the rating process and assist the raters in maintaining rating consistency. All papers were scored by both raters. The interrater correlation across all papers was .84, indicating satisfactory reliability.

(5) How was writing quantity measured?

Yaghi (1994, p. 189) reports that measuring writing quantity could be done by either counting the number of words or the number of syllables written/produced in a certain period of time. The correlation coefficient for the two methods was very high (.936). In this study, the number of words for each composition was counted and the composition with the highest number of words (636 words) was considered the maximum obtainable score for this writing task. A similar technique was followed by *Li-Nim-Yu (1990)* when he measured writing quantity by counting the number of words written.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Results of the study will be reported according to the research hypotheses. A series of statistical analyses were computed using the SPSS/PC+ Statistical Software Program.

(1) Descriptive Statistics Results:

Table (1)
Descriptive Statistics for the Different Variables of the Study

| Variable | N | \bar{X} | SD | Min. | Max. |
|------------------|-----|-----------|--------|------|------|
| Apprehension | 132 | 59.11 | 12.91 | 15 | 98 |
| Self-Esteem | 132 | 77.21 | 5.79 | 17 | 97 |
| Writing Quality | 132 | 16.02 | 5.03 | 5 | 24 |
| Writing Quantity | 132 | 316.93 | 100.93 | 85 | 636 |

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the study sample (N=132) on the English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire, FL Self-Esteem Scale, Writing Quality and Writing Quantity tasks. Bearing in mind that the highest obtainable score for the Writing Quantity task is 24, it can be noted that the study sample scored (\bar{X} =16.02) above the mean. It can be noted also that while one student could write up to 636 words in forty minutes, another student wrote only 85 words in the same period of time.

(2) Pearson Product-Moment Correlations:

Table (2)
Correlation Matrix for the Variables of the Study Sample (N=132)

| Variable | Writing Apprehension | Self- Esteem | Writing Quality | Writing Quantity |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Writing Apprehension | - | -0.17* | 0.04 | -0.002 |
| Self-Esteem | | - | -0.07 | 0.02 |
| Writing Quality | | | - | 0.22* |
| Writing Quantity | | | | - |

*=Significant at the .05 level.

The correlation matrix for the different variables of the study sample reported in Table 2 indicates that both writing apprehension and self-esteem of students ($r = -0.17$) are negatively related at the .05 level of significance. Thus, of all the first five hypotheses, only the first one can be upheld.

This finding means that students with high apprehension about writing may, to some degree, also suffer from lower self-esteem than their counterparts with low apprehension. This finding was expected and is consistent with previous research findings (*Daly, Witte, and Faigley, 1981, cited in Daly and Wilson, 1983*) and with the conceptual framework for the apprehension-esteem relationship since both esteem and apprehension are, to some extent, a function of the evaluation reactions of others.

It can be noted also that although the correlation was negative between writing apprehension and writing quantity on the one hand and between self-esteem and writing quality on the other hand, it did not reach the acceptable level of significance. It was also surprising not to find a

negative correlation for the entire study sample between writing apprehension and writing quality.

For the purpose of further statistical analysis, the continuous scores of both the English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire and FL Self-Esteem Scale were classified into ordinal scores; thus yielding four groups (two highs and two lows) for both scales: students obtaining high scores [designated as High Apprehensive (N=43) and High Self-Esteem (N=40) hereafter] and others obtaining low scores [designated as Low Apprehensive (N=39) and Low Self-Esteem (N=32) hereafter]. The following equation (*EL-Sayyed, 1978*) was used to conduct this classification: Mean (\bar{X}) \pm 0.5 of the Standard Deviation (SD). The cutting point for High Apprehensive was greater than or equal to the score 65 on the Questionnaire and it was 52 for the Low Apprehensive. Also, the cutting point for High Self-Esteem was 81 and 73 for Low Self-Esteem.

(3) T-test Results:

Table (3)
A Comparison of High and Low Apprehensive Students' Mean Scores on the Writing Quality Task

| Group | N | \bar{X} | SD | T | P |
|-------------------|----|-----------|------|------|------|
| High Apprehensive | 43 | 15.81 | 3.49 | 2.14 | 0.05 |
| Low Apprehensive | 39 | 17.48 | 3.54 | | |

Table 3 reports the means and standard deviations for both High Apprehensive and Low Apprehensive students on the Writing Quality task. While the mean score for High Apprehensive students was 15.81 with a standard deviation of 3.49, the mean score for Low Apprehensive students was 17.48 with a standard deviation of 3.54.

The results shown in Table 3 indicate that the mean score difference between the two groups is statistically significant ($t=2.14, p < .05$) in favor of Low Apprehensive students. Thus, the sixth research hypothesis can be retained. This result means that Low Apprehensive students wrote better quality compositions than their High Apprehensive counterparts.

This finding is supported by several studies (Powell, 1984; Allen, 1985; and Teichman and Poris, 1989) which indicate that writing apprehension negatively influences the quality of student composition writing.

Table (4)
A Comparison of High and Low Apprehensive
Students' Mean Scores on the Writing Quantity Task

| Group | N | \bar{X} | SD | T | P |
|-------------------|----|-----------|--------|-------|----|
| High Apprehensive | 43 | 313.21 | 107.79 | -0.07 | NS |
| Low Apprehensive | 39 | 329.59 | 93.85 | | |

Table 4 reports the means and standard deviations of both High and Low Apprehensive groups in their performance on the Writing Quantity task. The mean score for the High Apprehensive group was 313.21 words with a standard deviation of 107.79, and 329.59 with a standard deviation of 93.85 for the Low Apprehensive group.

It must be noted that the calculated t-test value is very small (- 0.07) and is not statistically significant at the .05 level. This results leads to the rejection of the seventh research hypothesis.

This finding is rather peculiar since it was expected that Low Apprehensive students write more than High Apprehensive students because they are supposed to be more at ease while accomplishing the

Table (5)
A Comparison of High and Low Apprehensive Students' Mean Scores on the Self-Esteem Scale

| Group | N | \bar{X} | SD | T | P |
|-------------------|----|-----------|-------|-------|------|
| High Apprehensive | 43 | 75.60 | 10.37 | -2.23 | 0.05 |
| Low Apprehensive | 39 | 79.72 | 5.37 | | |

Table 5 reports the means and standard deviations of both High and Low Apprehensive groups on the FL Self-Esteem Scale. For the High Apprehensive group, the mean score was 75.60 with a standard deviation of 10.37, and for the Low Apprehensive group the mean score was 79.72 with a standard deviation of 5.37.

It can be noticed that the obtained t-value ($t = -2.23$) is statistically negatively significant at the .05 level. This result, leading to the retention of the eighth research hypothesis, means that Low Apprehensive students had higher self-esteem than High Apprehensive students and vice versa. It is not surprising to find that Low Apprehensive students outperformed High Apprehensive ones on the FL Self-Esteem Scale.

Table (6)
A Comparison of High and Low Self-Esteem Students' Mean Scores on the Writing Quality Task

| Group | N | \bar{X} | SD | T | P |
|-------------------|----|-----------|------|-------|----|
| High Apprehensive | 40 | 15.70 | 3.25 | -0.41 | NS |
| Low Apprehensive | 39 | 16.38 | 8.86 | | |

Results shown in Table 6 indicate that the mean score difference for both High and Low Self-Esteem students in their performance of the Writing Quantity task is not statistically significant. Thus, the ninth research hypothesis can be rejected.

This finding was not expected since not only conventional wisdom but also previous research (*Fink, 1962; Williams and Cole, 1968; Fitts, 1972*) would associate high self-esteem of learners with better performance on the different learning tasks.

Table (7)
A Comparison of High and Low Self-Esteem Students' Mean Scores on the Writing Quantity Task

| Group | N | \bar{X} | SD | T | P |
|-------------------|----|-----------|--------|------|----|
| High Apprehensive | 40 | 313.83 | 84.75 | 0.70 | NS |
| Low Apprehensive | 32 | 297.03 | 112.17 | | |

Table 7 reports the means and standard deviations of both High and Low Self-Esteem groups in their performance on the Writing Quantity task.

The same trend of not obtaining significant results continues to hold true for this case also ($t=.70$) where it did not make any difference for students with high or low self-esteem to have any influence on the quantity of writing they produced during the writing task. Therefore, the tenth research hypothesis can be rejected also. This finding is not in line with other research findings reported in the literature (*e.g., Fink, 1962; Fitts, 1972*).

Table (8)
A Comparison of High and Low Self-Esteem Students' Mean Scores on the English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire

| Group | N | \bar{X} | SD | T | P |
|-------------------|----|-----------|-------|-------|------|
| High Apprehensive | 40 | 54.40 | 11.40 | -2.18 | 0.05 |
| Low Apprehensive | 32 | 61.59 | 15.56 | | |

Table 8 reports the means and standard deviations of both High and Low Self-Esteem groups in their performance on the English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire. While the mean score for the High Self-Esteem group was 54.40 with a standard deviation of 11.47, it was 61.59 with a standard deviation of 15.56 for the Low Self-Esteem group.

Results indicate that Low Self-Esteem students obtained significantly higher writing apprehension scores than their High Self-Esteem counterparts. Thus, the eleventh hypothesis can be retained. This result means that Low Self-Esteem group was more apprehensive/anxious than the other group. This finding is logical and is in agreement with other findings reported by *Daly and Wilson (1983)*.

(4) Analysis of Variance Results:

Table (9)
Analysis of Variance of the Writing Quality Task
According to Writing Apprehension and Self-Esteem

| SV | SS | DF | MS | F | P |
|----------------------------|---------|----|--------|------|------|
| Main Effects | 10.85 | 2 | 5.40 | 0.10 | NS |
| Writing Apprehension | 3.66 | 1 | 3.66 | 0.07 | NS |
| Self-Esteem | 3.66 | 1 | 3.66 | 0.07 | NS |
| 2-way Interactions | 226.37 | 1 | 226.37 | 4.27 | 0.05 |
| Apprehension X Self-Esteem | 226.37 | 3 | 226.37 | 4.27 | 0.05 |
| Explained | 237.17 | 3 | 79.06 | 1.49 | NS |
| Residual | 2335.31 | 44 | 53.08 | | |
| Total | 2572.48 | 47 | 54.73 | | |

Table 9 reports the ANOVA interaction effects of the Writing Quantity task according to writing apprehension and self-esteem. It can be noted that the ANOVA results for 2-way interactions are statistically significant. Thus, the twelfth hypothesis (stating that there are significant interactions between writing apprehension and self-esteem of students in the quality of their writing) can be retained.

This result means that students with low self-esteem and with low apprehension scored less than their counterparts on the Writing Quantity task. (See Table 10 below for group mean scores and Figure 1 for plotted interactions).

Table (10)
Writing Apprehension by Self-Esteem
Mean Scores of the Writing Quality Task

| Apprehension Self-Esteem | High Apprehensive | Low Apprehensive |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| High Self-Esteem | 13.25 (8) | 17.00 (19) |
| Low Self-Esteem | 18.77 (13) | 13.25 (8) |

Figure (1)
Writing Apprehension and Self-Esteem on the Writing Quality Task

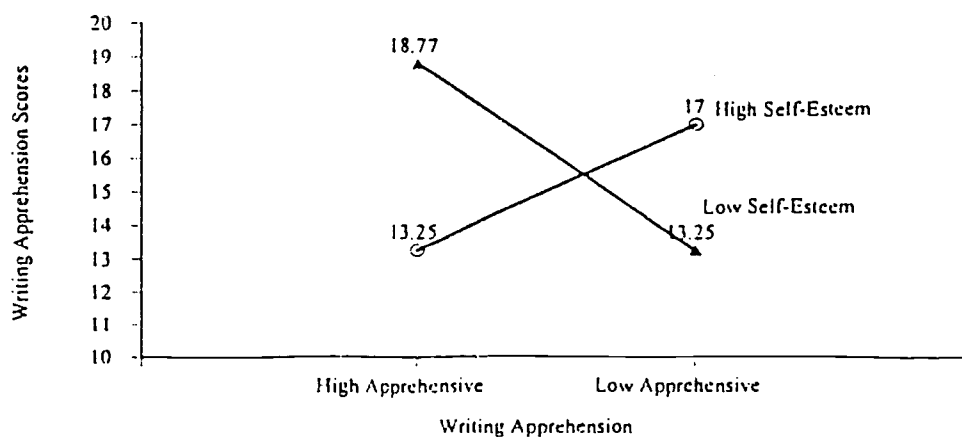


Table (11)
Analysis of Variance of the Writing Quantity Task
According to Writing Apprehension and Self-Esteem

| SV | SS | DF | MS | F | P |
|----------------------------|-----------|----|----------|------|----|
| Main Effects | 19524.17 | 2 | 9762.08 | 1.09 | NS |
| Writing Apprehension | 9924.12 | 1 | 9924.12 | 1.11 | NS |
| Self-Esteem | 3670.41 | 1 | 3670.41 | 0.41 | NS |
| 2-way Interactions | 23540.83 | 1 | 23540.83 | 2.63 | NS |
| Apprehension X Self-Esteem | 23540.83 | 1 | 23540.83 | 2.63 | NS |
| Explained | 43065.00 | 3 | 14355.00 | 1.61 | NS |
| Residual | 393204.67 | 44 | 8936.47 | | |
| Total | 436269.67 | 47 | 9282.33 | | |

Table 11 reports the ANOVA interaction effects of the Writing Quantity task according to 'writing apprehension' and 'self-esteem'. No significant results are found between the different variables. Therefore, the thirteenth research hypothesis can be rejected.

This finding means that both writing apprehension and self-esteem independent variables of the study sample did not have any effect on the Writing Quantity task.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The main findings obtained from this study can be summarized as follows: a) writing apprehension of EFL Egyptian university students negatively correlated with their self-esteem, b) Low Apprehensive student writers wrote better quality compositions than their High Apprehensive counterparts, or in other words, writing apprehension negatively influenced the quality of students' composition writing, c) Low Apprehensive students had higher self-esteem than High Apprehensive students, and d) Low Self-Esteem students were more apprehensive in their writing than their High Self-Esteem counterparts.

One way to counteract writing apprehension/anxiety and its negative influence on the quality of student writing is to improve the writing skills of students. It is suggested that writing skills improvement courses be taught to university students in non-traditional ways. To lower anxiety level among students, it is also suggested that teacher evaluation should be reduced. Instead, it should be substituted with peer or self-evaluation whenever possible. This way, students will feel more secure from the inside.

Actually, reducing student writing anxiety by changing the context of foreign language learning is the most important and considerably the most challenging task for teachers to try to achieve. Teachers might closely monitor the classroom climate in order to identify specific sources of student writing anxiety. As students appear to be acutely sensitive to target language corrections, the selection of error correction techniques should be based on a sound instructional basis in order to reduce students' defensive reactions.

Although EFL writing instructors cannot completely eliminate writing anxiety in their students, they can create a positive environment

inside their classrooms and offer strategies that will help reduce students' fears and build confidence in their writing skills. Such strategies could focus on involving students in more communicative writing tasks making use of, for example, the currently available technology of the computers and the Internet. Egyptian EFL teachers can team up their classes with other native speaking secondary or college level classes to exchange e-mail messages on the Internet. Of course, this will require close monitoring from teachers by making sure that topics of their students' writings are culturally appropriate.

Accomplishing all this will also require Internet lab facilities which are available, though not at a large scale, in many Egyptian universities. There will be a need for more writing classes' contact hours which could be obtained by making necessary adjustments in the Colleges of Education teacher in-service programs.

Establishing 'Writing Labs' at Egyptian universities may be a novel idea that is worth trying in the attempt to create an ideal setting for helping students regain confidence in their writing. In such labs, the opportunity for peer interaction is especially valuable since peer tutoring is often less inhibiting than working with regular class instructors who might be insensitive to student problems. Lab activities such as timed writing or revising are effective in overcoming writing blocks because tutors are there to help with oral prewriting exercises.

To minimize writing apprehension in the learner-centered classroom, *Reeves (1997)* recommends certain techniques which include: write more; listen to fearful writers; talk about past writing experience; find patterns in student errors; conference during drafting stages; collaborate with students for evaluation criteria; encourage positive self-talk; be aware of possible gender differences; vary writing modes; monitor attitudes; share

writing; etc... . It is recommended that these techniques or similar ones should be incorporated into the Egyptian EFL writing class.

Other suggestions to be considered by teachers for reducing their students' writing anxiety might include: a) using the word processor which may help in students' effort to write and to improve their self-images as writers, b) gradually increasing students' writing activities such as journal writing, c) assessing student writing samples in non-threatening ways and using positive reinforcement when doing so, d) abandoning grammar correction in foreign language classes because it is ineffective, harmful, and unhelpful, e) making use of peer review of student writing since it fosters a feeling of equality between the writer and the reader and thereby reduces the writer's apprehension, f) conducting peer group workshops, and g) teaching about the writing process and indicating to students that learning to write is a multi-step process.

To conclude, writing apprehension needs to be understood and solutions found for it so that students' fears can be lessened and their success with writing increased. Composition teachers need to be real, empathic, and accepting. They should value their students' feelings, opinions, and individuality.

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APPENDIX A

THE ENGLISH WRITING APPREHENSION QUESTIONNAIRE

* Indicate the degree of your agreement/disagreement to each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate column:

* [Note: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Uncertain, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree]

| Statements | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| (1) I avoid writing in English. | | | | | |
| (2) I look forward to writing down my ideas in English. | | | | | |
| (3) I am afraid of writing compositions in English when I know they will be evaluated. | | | | | |
| (4) Taking an English composition class is a frightening experience. | | | | | |
| (5) I worry a lot about my ideas when I write in English. | | | | | |
| (6) Handing in a composition makes me feel good. | | | | | |
| (7) Discussing my English writing with others is not a good experience to me. | | | | | |
| (8) My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition in English. | | | | | |
| (9) I don't like my English compositions to be evaluated. | | | | | |
| (10) I feel confident that I can express my ideas clearly when writing in English. | | | | | |
| (11) I like to have my colleagues read what I have written in English. | | | | | |
| (12) I have a wonderful time organizing my ideas when writing an English composition. | | | | | |
| (13) I'm nervous about writing in English. | | | | | |
| (14) I don't think I write as well as other students. | | | | | |
| (15) I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas. | | | | | |
| (16) Writing in English is a lot of fun. | | | | | |
| (17) I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I start them. | | | | | |
| (18) I like seeing my thoughts on paper. | | | | | |
| (19) Expressing ideas through writing in English seems to be a waste of time. | | | | | |
| (20) It's easy for me to write good compositions in English. | | | | | |
| (21) I'm not good at writing in English. | | | | | |

APPENDIX B
The Foreign Language Self-Esteem Scale (FLSES)
By
Badran A. Hassan, Ph.D.
College of Education, Mansoura University

NAME: -----

SEX: ----- Male, ----- Female

FACULTY: -----

ACADEMIC YEAR: ----- Freshman
 ----- Sophomore
 ----- Junior
 ----- Senior

DATE: / / 199

INSTRUCTIONS:

- (1) The purpose of this self-report measure is to account for the degree of self-esteem among foreign language learners.
- (2) Read the following statements and express your degree of agreement/disagreement by marking 'X' in the appropriate column.
- (3) There are no right or wrong answers, so choose the column that is most applicable to you.
- (4) Note that SA=Strongly Agree, N=Agree, N=Neither Agree nor Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree.

| Statements | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| (1) My ability to learn the foreign language (FL) is high. | | | | | |
| (2) I express myself freely in the foreign language. | | | | | |
| (3) I have a problem with some grammatical rules when writing in the foreign language. | | | | | |
| (4) I participate effectively in the FL discussions. | | | | | |
| (5) I can speak the FL very well. | | | | | |
| (6) My understanding of what others say in the FL is limited. | | | | | |
| (7) I speak the FL with a heavy foreign accent. | | | | | |
| (8) I have some FL reading habits. | | | | | |
| (9) I can write very well in the foreign language. | | | | | |
| (10) I feel good about myself when speaking in the FL classroom. | | | | | |
| (11) I feel happy when I am with my FL classmates. | | | | | |
| (12) I can read very well in the foreign language. | | | | | |
| (13) I don't feel at ease when I talk to my FL instructors. | | | | | |
| (14) I find difficulty talking in the FL in front of my classmates. | | | | | |
| (15) My classmates are better FL learners than me. | | | | | |
| (16) My FL instructors have high expectations of me. | | | | | |
| (17) My FL classmates do not like me. | | | | | |
| (18) I can understand the FL very well. | | | | | |
| (19) I am always attentive to my FL instructors. | | | | | |
| (20) I attend the FL class sessions on time. | | | | | |
| (21) I volunteer myself for any FL classroom activities. | | | | | |
| (22) I miss many FL class sessions. | | | | | |
| (23) I avoid any discussions in the foreign language. | | | | | |
| (24) I read for pleasure in the foreign language. | | | | | |
| (25) I reluctantly participate in the FL classroom activities. | | | | | |

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