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**A CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS
OF WRITING APPREHENSION**

THESIS BY

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ÖZET

BİR DURUM ÇALIŞMASI: ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN YAZMA ENDİŞESİ ÜZERİNE DÜŞÜNCELERİ

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Yabancı dil öğreniminde öğrencilerin yazma kaygısı üzerine birçok çalışma yapılmıştır ve bu çalışma da hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin yazma kaygısı üzerine görüşlerini araştırmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma, Toros Üniversitesi, Mersin, Türkiye’de okuyan 48 katılımcıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bilişsel kaygı, IVehavio kaygı ve kaçınma davranışı olarak üç alt kategoriden oluşan ve Cheng (2004) tarafından geliştirilmiş ‘İkinci Dilde Yazma Kaygısını Ölçme Envanteri’ ve üç adet açık uçlu soru sorularak öğrencilerin yazma kaygı seviyeleri ölçülmüştür. Öğrencilerin yazma kaygı seviyeleri en çok kaçınma davranışında gözlenmiştir ve kaçınma davranışı gösteren öğrenciler, İngilizce yazı yazarken yaşadıkları olumsuz deneyimlerin onları yazı yazmaktan uzaklaştırdığını ifade etmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yazma kaygısı, Yazma Kaygısı Üzerine Görüşler, Yazma Kaygı

Seviyeleri

ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS OF WRITING APPREHENSION

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A number of research has been conducted to be able to find out students' foreign language writing anxiety and the present study aimed at finding out preparatory school students' conceptions of writing apprehension. It was conducted with 48 participants who studied at Toros University, Mersin, Turkey. An inventory called SLWAI (Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) adapted by Cheng (2004) with three sub-categories; cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance Behaviour and three open-ended questions were used to measure students' writing apprehension levels. The data were analysed through descriptive and content analysis and the results of the SLWAI and the comments of the students on the three open-ended questions showed that students experienced moderate levels of writing anxiety. Students experienced the highest apprehension levels regarding the Avoidance Behavior and those who experienced Avoidance Behaviour stated that they abstained from writing in English because they had difficulties with learning how to write in English.

Key Words: Writing Apprehension, Conceptions of Writing Apprehension, Levels of Writing

Apprehension

ABBREVIATIONS

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

WAT : Writing Apprehension Test

WAQ : Writing Apprehension Questionnaire

SLWAI : Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory

L1 : First Language

L2 : Second Language

SPSS : Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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1.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem and the significance of the study in detail. Also, the operational definitions are discussed and uttered in this chapter.

1.2. Background of the Study

Learning a foreign language is a difficult process, which requires learners acquire different skills in order to become communicatively competent in the target language. Language skills include reading, speaking, listening and writing. Learning to use each of these skills in communication require learners practice various strategies. English language learners experience a lot of difficulties in the process of practicing and learning these strategies. The most difficult language skill that my students experience in learning English is writing; however, writing has always been considered as a key to learning English in Turkey because people are believed to know great English if they can write grammatically-correct sentences in a paragraph. This pressure on the students and English language teachers originates strict writing teachers and suppress students who fear to write anything and prejudge writing skill as a whole. Therefore, writing performances of the students may be influenced by a number of reasons and these reasons may cause anxiety or in other words “writing apprehension” among learners.

For this reason, researchers have conducted much research on foreign language anxiety. Some researchers worked on speaking anxiety in foreign language learning and they constructed measurements for speaking anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986), some others (Daly & Miller, 1975; Richmond & Dickson-Markman, 1985; Cheng, 2004) focused on writing apprehension and constructed writing anxiety scales (Horwitz et al, 1986). Horwitz

et al. (1986) wanted to find answers to the foreign language anxiety of foreign language learners and they created a “Support Group for Foreign Language Learning” and conducted a Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This scale was based on test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and communication anxiety. According to the research, they concluded that there were students experiencing high levels of foreign language anxiety and they should be treated differently. Also, decreasing the stress in the classroom and finding the most accurate error correction techniques can be useful in coping with the anxiety levels of students (Horwitz, et al., 1986).

Daly & Miller (1975) analysed communication apprehension and they widened their research to the concept of writing apprehension as they realised that there might be students who are anxious in writing, as well. They worked with composition teachers and came across with the fact that there were many students who refused to participate in writing lessons due to their fear of being evaluated and fear of failing. Therefore, they composed a measurement to examine the writing apprehension levels of students (Daly & Miller, 1975). According to the results of their study, they found out that the writing apprehension levels of students were very high and came to a solution that students should not be pressured to write, but they need to be supported in all stages of composing a written work (Daly & Miller, 1975).

In another study regarding writing apprehension, Richmond & Dickson-Markman (1985) tried to examine the validity of the Writing Apprehension Test created by Daly and Miller (1975) and they wanted to find out whether there were any relation between writing anxiety and test anxiety of the WAT. The results demonstrated that there were some issues about construct validity of the WAT. In other words, Richmond and Dickson-Markman (1985) observed that the construct validity of the WAT was not adequate enough for measuring writing apprehension.

In order to analyse the validity of the WAT, McKain (1991) worked on the items of the WAT and observed that most of the items in the test did not measure anxiety. Instead, it dealt with self-efficacy. Therefore, he constructed a questionnaire “Writing Anxiety Questionnaire (WAQ) which included items regarding the feeling of anxiety. This questionnaire aimed to strengthen the construct validity of the WAT. Later in his research, Cheng (2004) stated that WAQ is considered to be more valid compared to WAT by Daly & Miller (1975).

Cheng (2004) specifically worked on foreign language writing apprehension and tried to find an adequate test to be able to measure foreign language learners’ writing apprehension. According to Cheng (2004), "the anxiety types, reasons and cases may vary among native speakers of the language and foreign language learners" (p. 314). Therefore, he constructed a writing anxiety scale specific for language learners. This scale is called “Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory” (SLWAI). SLWAI focuses on the writing apprehension issue from the perspective of learners of English as a second language. This inventory analyses only the writing apprehension of learners of English.

1.3.Statement of the Problem

Most university students in Turkey are expected to learn how to write essays in English during their one-year language education at preparatory schools. For this reason, these students are taught how to write paragraphs and essays in English language. During this process, some students taking writing courses tend to feel anxious about writing something in the target language. When they are forced to formulate a paragraph, their levels of apprehension rises and they may not write proper sentences due to the anxiety they experience. Some other individuals in the classroom environment may have the fear of being criticized by their peers or teachers; therefore, they become reluctant to attend writing classes

as they think they might fail in writing. Von Wörde (2003) points out that learners dislike the fact that their teachers correct their errors before formulating their sentences. Von Wörde (2003) categorises the problems that the students face in foreign language classes as non-comprehension, pedagogical and instructional practices, and error correction. According to Von Wörde (2003), students especially criticize teachers' attitudes regarding their speed while talking, the way they correct their errors and the grammatical rules, which must be covered in a short time period. This prevents students from practicing their writing skills and their anxiety levels increase, so they become prejudiced against writing in English. All these factors contribute to the anxiety the students suffer throughout their school years. In Turkey, this problem continues in preparatory classes at the universities and students start their university education prejudiced against writing classes because of the similar reasons mentioned above.

1.4.Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the students' conceptions of writing apprehension that they experience while learning English at preparatory school. The aim arises from the need to solve the problems of these students as they fail to accomplish written work due to the writing apprehension they feel. These students are the ones who have studied English for more than 10 years and these ten years of prejudice along with the knowledge block their desire to learn and limit their competency in writing. These students graduate from high school with the prejudice and fear of writing in English as they are always forced to write about common topics, which have no purpose and they do not get any feedback in return. In some cases, teachers of English in high schools give a great amount of negative feedback to their students, so these students tend to avoid the writing classes and in time they carve out a fear of writing which is called "writing apprehension." Therefore, this study

wanted to find out the students' conceptions of writing apprehension in order to suggest some solutions to this problem.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The present study investigated the University students' conceptions of writing apprehension regarding their emotions, worries and the factors that trigger their writing. The study is significant as it deals with the writing anxiety that students experience in their first year at the university. Students have 24 hours of English at preparatory classes in Turkey and their experiences in writing classes have not been investigated much so far. For this reason, this study will shed light on the issue of writing apprehension at preparatory schools in Turkey.

1.6. Research Question

The following research questions guided the study in order to achieve its purposes:

1. What are EFL students' conceptions of Cognitive Anxiety in writing?
2. What are EFL students' conceptions of somatic anxiety in writing?
3. What are EFL students' conceptions of avoidance behaviour in writing?

1.7. Operational Definitions

Writing Apprehension: Daly (1979) defines writing apprehension as “the general avoidance of writing situations perceived by individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing” (cited in Alnufaie & Grenfell, 2013, p.79).

State anxiety: “State anxiety refers to transitory unpleasant feelings of apprehension, tension, nervousness or worry, often accompanied by activation of the autonomic nervous system; it reflects how threatening a person perceives his environment to be” (Spielberger, 2010, p. 1).

Trait Anxiety: “Trait anxiety may be defined as an individual’s likelihood of becoming anxious in any situation” (McIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p.86).

Somatic anxiety: Parnabas, Mahamood & Parnabas (2013) define somatic anxiety as “the physiological element, which is related to autonomic arousals” (p. 61).

Cognitive Anxiety: “Cognitive Anxiety is a subjective component that deals with perception of arousal, and worry, in particular, worry or fear of negative evaluation” (Cheng, 2004, p.325).

Avoidance Behaviour: “Avoidance behaviour is a strategy that the L2 learner may resort to when, with the knowledge of a target language word or structure, he/she perceives that it is difficult to produce” (Kleinmann, 1978, p.161).

Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).

CHAPTER II

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the review of literature about writing as a productive skill, self-efficacy and writing proficiency, writing apprehension, causes and effects of writing apprehension and finally it defines and presents the measures of writing apprehension.

2.2. Writing as a Productive Skill

Learning a foreign language requires particular skills to be obtained such as speaking, reading, listening and writing. Writing and speaking are productive skills that need to be focused specifically; therefore, learners who learn a second or a foreign language usually experience difficulties in gaining these two skills. According to Andrade & Williams (2008) producing a written work is a process of retrieving the information in the long-term memory and creating a brand new work, which is called a paragraph, an article or an essay According to Kellogg (2008), writing skill requires an authentic work to be created by our brain. She resembles it to playing instruments as one needs to improve his/her skills to be able to play an instrument and also needs be creative. Therefore, writing as a productive skill requires students to improve their writing skills and create new ideas to be able to compose an accurate written work. It becomes clear that, a learner needs to focus on thinking and memorising the vocabulary, grammar and information that is taught to him/her to be able to compose a written work and this may take a long time and effort (Kellogg, 2008).

Writing in a second language is very different from writing in the first language as the purpose of writing in a second language is teaching the language itself through grammatically correct sentences. In the history of teaching writing, we observe that the structural linguists

focused mainly on accurate grammar and error free sentences because the aim was to teach grammatically correct sentences and avoid any inaccuracies resulting from habit formation (Ferris, 2011). However, in the later years, the attention was on critical thinking and free writing which made the learners choose their subjects and write about their thoughts without giving importance to grammatical accuracy at the beginning of the writing process. This led to more independent writing environment in the classrooms and more teacher-student interactions (Ferris, 2011).

Andrade & Williams (2008) discuss that learning is a process, which has different stages, and “these stages are *input, processing (mental planning), and output*” (p. 183). Each stage has its own features and learners experience different mental processes in each stage of learning as it is the same in learning how to write in a foreign language; therefore, as we call writing as a productive skill, we need to focus on all the stages of learning while teaching writing to English language learners. MacIntyre & Gardner (1989) suggest that when students experience anxiety in the input process, they may be distracted or may not be able to synthesise the new information in their minds. Therefore, at this stage, we may need to provide our students with as much related data as possible since they are in the stage of taking in the information that we supply. This stage may require presenting interesting items to attract students’ attention. Therefore, writing teachers need to be careful about the way they present these items. Then, learners need to process that input by filtering the unrelated or maybe uninteresting information and intake the necessary data. At the output stage, learners organise the ideas in their minds and finally they create something on a piece of paper. If they cannot remember the information they have learnt before, they start to feel anxious and may not be able to complete a written task (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). The writing teachers should consider all these factors carefully as this is the process when students start to feel anxious about writing in a foreign language (Andrade & Williams, 2008). The writing

teachers should consider all these factors carefully as students start to feel anxious about writing in a foreign language at these stages. Therefore, the aim of the writing instructors should be teaching learners how to be able to write in a foreign language and guiding them until they can express themselves in a written work like native speakers of that language (Ur, 1996).

2.3. Writing Competency and Self-efficacy

Abu Shawish and Abdelraheem (2010) point out that writing is a versatile process, which requires learners to follow a number of ways before forming a written work. The writer needs to brainstorm the ideas, retrieve the background information and relate these ideas to the topic with meaningful and grammatically correct statements. To be able to combine all these elements together can be called as writing competence. Writers who are competent in writing are the ones who can take all these steps and create a work of art. That is the reason why writing is a compelling skill to acquire.

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is one's trusting and relying on himself/herself in the conditions where s/he needs to accomplish something. Self-efficacy in writing is also a quality that the learners should have while composing a written work because if the learners do not think that they can write, they may fail from the very beginning of the writing process. Singh & Rajalingham (2012) found out in their studies that self-efficacy beliefs and writing apprehension levels are related to each other, so we can infer that students who lack self-efficacy in writing may have high levels of apprehension. Therefore, self-efficacy may play an important role in a learner's writing process because a learner lacking self-efficacy may not feel comfortable while writing and this may result in writing apprehension.

Writing competency is also related with the emotions, which motivate a writer even though s/he has some anxious feelings about writing itself. Mcleod (1987) describes this feeling as a supportive emotional state that may motivate a student in the process of composing a written work. Mcleod (1987) also points out that motivation is an issue which is often overlooked by writing teachers and discusses that motivating students with interesting writing tasks may be a way of involving students in the writing classes with enthusiasm. Therefore, we can conclude that motivation and positive emotions towards writing may be a step to be taken by students who want to increase their writing competency. However, we should always remember that the role of writing teachers couldn't be overlooked.

In her study, Honeck (2013) puts an emphasis on the importance of self-efficacy beliefs and discusses how difficult it is to be able to acquire all the skills required for being able to write accurately. Honeck (2013) describes the difficulties of being successful in writing:

Therefore, believing in one's capabilities to succeed is essential. Writing is a key language skill for academic success. Students must have a basic knowledge of critical analysis, synthesis, linguistics, and the elements of writing. Even with prior academic experience in one's native country, there are still many challenges to acquiring this knowledge in a second language context. Expressing ideas coherently with accuracy and logic in an academic setting using another language is extremely difficult and a significant accomplishment when achieved (p.12).

Moreover, Honeck (2013) suggests that being confident in writing is not always sufficient for adopting writing skills as self-efficacy cannot be ignored in the process of writing. That is to say, the students not only need to hold positive ideas towards writing, but also be capable of writing in a second language.

Bandura (1997) notes that our beliefs and our actions are related to each other as we depend on them and act accordingly. Believing in what you do is the key to success in every part of life as it is in writing because even if you are capable of composing a written work, you may not be able to complete it if you do not believe you will be successful. Self-efficacy beliefs affect people's lives thoroughly; therefore, acquiring writing skills is a process of believing yourself that you are going to accomplish it (Honeck, 2013). Moreover, according to Zimmerman (2000), the way students feel about learning a foreign language is linked to their self-evaluation. That is, if they see that they can accomplish learning a foreign language, their self-efficacy beliefs increase. By increasing their self-evaluation, students learn how to judge themselves, be aware of their capacity and learn how to improve their writing skills by implementing different strategies. Schunk (1991) found that the students obtain self-efficacy after observing their success during their writing tasks and they become more competent in writing day by day.

2.4. Writing Apprehension

Foreign language anxiety has been researched for many years by a number of scholars such as Horwitz (1986), Daily & Miller (1975), Cheng (2004), etc. Foreign language anxiety was first studied by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986). They define foreign language anxiety as a complex feeling composed of nervousness, worry and tension that each individual feels (Horwitz et. al., 1986). They carry on specifying this apprehension in language learning by giving examples of some learners who are not anxious in other fields but get nervous in foreign language classrooms (Horwitz et. al., 1986). As can be observed from this definition, anxiety is a distinctive sense of tension, which may differ from one person to another. Furthermore, it may not be right to call a person anxious by only observing tension in foreign language learning environment. Therefore, foreign language learners may only get anxious in language learning environments like classrooms and we can help them overcome these

uncomfortable feelings by analysing the foreign language anxiety and its reasons (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986).

Another definition of foreign language anxiety by Horwitz et. al. (1986) brings another point of view in this field. In their definition, they highlight the argument that foreign language anxiety occurs in foreign language classrooms and it arises from learners' beliefs, emotions and behaviours. As we can easily conclude from this definition, every individual experiences different types of emotional and mental processes while conducting a written work or in an oral communication. While trying to compose a natural conversation, foreign language learners are challenged by the limitations of not being able to have a meaningful communication or misunderstandings as they are trying to express themselves orally and in writing (Horwitz et. al., 1986). My observations in classroom situations and my dialogues with non-native English speakers support the definition above as foreign language learners experience high levels of lack of confidence when they try to communicate with people. In one of my speaking classes, I came across with a situation when a student of mine told me that she felt like she was a different person as she tried to speak English and this uncomfortable feeling made her very anxious because she could not express herself accurately.

From the Daly's (1979) definition of writing apprehension "the general avoidance of writing situations perceived by individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing" (cited in Alnufaie & Grenfell, 2013, p.79), we can conclude that writing apprehension arises from avoiding the writing process as it involves an evaluation. Students develop writing apprehension because they are afraid of being evaluated and they abstain from negative judgments; therefore, they resist to writing.

According to Thompson (1980), writing apprehension is experienced by learners when the focus is not the writing ability but the anxiety itself. This definition mainly clarifies the fear itself and how this fear over shades learners' ability to write in L2. This definition directs us to the main point, which is the ability to write. Learners should be canalised towards their abilities in L2 rather than their fear of writing.

Furthermore, McLeod (1987) defines writing anxiety as a hinder for the learners in the process of learning how to write. In other words, anxiety hinders the process of writing in every aspect as it makes learners feel uncomfortable and nervous, so they cannot develop their writing skills. Instead, they start to lose their desire to learn how to write in L2. McLeod (1987) points out that writing cannot only be considered as a brain activity, it is also an emotional activity; therefore, writing anxiety should be seen as a part of the writing process and teachers need to be aware of this fact and treat their students accordingly. However, Young (1990) notes that research should focus on the language skills such as writing, reading or speaking and the effect or cause of anxiety on these skills separately so that the sources of anxiety can be identified better. This way of analysing the data that we acquire regarding the anxiety in learning a foreign language may direct the researchers to get better results in their studies. Additionally, the research on anxiety and language learning is discursive since studies fail to include every aspect of language while measuring the anxiety levels of the foreign language learners (Young, 1990).

In summary, the researchers believe that writing is a tough process which requires a lot of competencies to be acquired and measuring the apprehension levels of foreign language learners should be rather detailed so as not to fail to notice all factors regarding anxiety and foreign language learning.

2.5. Causes of Writing Apprehension

There are a number of reasons to writing apprehension such as teacher-student relationships, fear of pressure, time pressure, students' attitudes towards writing, etc. Al-Sawallah & Foo (2013) acknowledge that teacher feedback has a great influence on students' writing apprehension. They state that negative feedback or giving no feedback may increase the writing apprehension levels of the students.

In another study by Buley-Meissner (1989), she notes that students feel uncomfortable when their writing is evaluated and this causes them to be more anxious while composing a writing task. She also suggests that learners feel anxious in writing classes since they do not know the strategies of composing a writing task. According to the recordings of students regarding their fear of writing, some state that they cannot find the right words to make a sentence or they cannot concentrate on writing since they have a number of ideas but they do not know how to put them into order and complete their tasks. Moreover, some others report that they feel under pressure while they wait for the right words to come to their minds and write in accurate English, therefore, this process makes them nervous and anxious (Buley-Meissner, 1989).

In an effort to find out the reasons of writing apprehension on students, Kara (2013) emphasises that writing performance may have an effect on writing anxiety and it is not clear that whether the writing anxiety affects the performance of the students negatively or students' bad performance results in writing apprehension. Some learners may feel anxious and therefore may demonstrate poor performance in writing, however, some others may feel anxious as a result of failing to display a good performance in writing. Furthermore, in a qualitative study, Lin (2009) measured 16 junior university students' levels of writing apprehension. At the end of the study, it became clear that some students feel anxious while writing an essay in a limited time as they think it is a long and difficult process. Some others

attributed their anxiety to the peer review or teacher review as they had the fear of being criticised negatively.

According to Shawish & Abdelraheem (2010), it is inevitable for the learners to feel anxious in writing classes as writing requires a great deal of effort and a person needs to think of ideas, organise them, relate them to each other, try not to drift away from the topic and summarise the main points and complete the writing task. Additionally, Shawish & Abdelraheem (2010) conclude that “the factors with regard to teaching practices, negative feedback, linguistic, cognitive and affective factors are the most significant key elements, which researchers should pay attention to” (p.25). The fact that writing involves a lot of competences to be acquired bores the students and they try to abstain from writing tasks or classes.

Naghadeh & Naghadeh & Kasraey & Maghdour & Kasraie & Naghadeh (2014) found out in their study which they conducted on 62 EFL learners that the reasons of writing anxiety are various. For instance, some students asserted, “they lack necessary strategies like organizing ideas, gathering information, combining ideas” (p. 7). This may indicate that writing teachers may not be able to teach how to write a text, which makes the students anxious, as they cannot compose a text without knowing how to write in a second language. In the same study, students also complain about the course books and their teachers’ teaching styles. This also demonstrates the number of the factors involved in writing apprehension of learners and there is a great deal of work to do to be able to decrease the amount of anxiety the learners’ experience. Moreover, Cowden (2010) investigated anxiety in school settings and suggested that:

In the school setting, anxiety is experienced often by students when being evaluated, such as when taking a test or giving a public performance. When test anxiety is severe,

it can have significant negative effects on a student's ability to perform at an optimal level (p. 2).

Test anxiety is a big issue to be discussed, as it is a normal reaction against being evaluated; therefore, we can name test anxiety one of the biggest reasons of writing apprehension as well. The reason to that may be the time restriction as students tend to feel more anxious when put in an exam setting in a restricted time. Furthermore, Young (1991) discusses that test anxiety occurs when students are tested with question types they are not familiar with, they are expected to complete some tasks which they have not done before or they study on a subject but are tested on different subjects. According to Horwitz et. al. (1986), test anxiety is experienced by learners as they fear of failing the test.

Another cause of writing anxiety may be the attitudes of foreign language teachers. Young (1991) suggests that foreign language teachers and language environments might be the source of foreign language apprehension that learners experience. In his study on the relationship between teacher behaviours and student writing apprehension, Pappalardo (2010) points out that teachers' beliefs on how to teach writing classes demonstrates how they affect the learning environment. Pappalardo (2010) emphasises that teachers' beliefs on teaching writing, the way they try to put pressure on students, the reflections of their ideologies in the classroom environments are the sources of writing apprehension among students and he tries to estimate how students are affected by their teachers' behaviours in writing classes. The impact of teacher behaviour on students is inevitable and teachers need to use it in a positive way to diminish their students' writing apprehension by encouraging them to write more and more, giving feedback on time, teaching the strategies on how to write in a foreign language, etc.

Another issue regarding writing apprehension can be named as 'instructor-learner interactions' (Young, 1991). The research shows that learners learn by modelling their

instructors (Pappalardo, 2010). Therefore, error correction method and giving feedback should be in a level that it would not make students feel embarrassed and abstain from writing. Horwitz et. al. (1986) indicate that error correction techniques may need to be improved as students learn by their errors; however, they may also withdraw themselves from learning if their errors are corrected in a way that they feel embarrassed in front of their peers. Witiw (2014) discusses learner beliefs about language learning by giving an example of a student named Mark who talks about his views on writing classes. The student admits that he “had negative past experiences with writing” (p. 4). Witiw (2014) adds, “with these past experiences in mind, Mark identified the elements of writing that caused him the greatest anxiety as being teacher evaluation, and negative self-efficacy for the neatness of his handwriting” (p. 4). These factors play an important role on learners’ minds, which may affect their learning process negatively and hinder them from learning to write in a foreign language. In his study Choi (2013) concludes that vocabulary is also a source of apprehension in writing classes and he states that instructors do not give as much attention to vocabulary as much as it is required. He also points out the worries of students who try not to make grammatical mistakes, which also increase the apprehension levels of the students.

2.6. Effects of Writing Apprehension on Language Learning

Young (1991) reports that “language anxiety arises from: 1) personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) learner beliefs about language learning; 3) instructor beliefs about language teaching; 4) instructor-learner interactions; 5) classroom procedures; and 6) language testing” (p. 427). He highlights that ‘personal and interpersonal anxieties’ may be one of the most researched factors with regards to foreign language anxiety. This type of anxiety includes low self-esteem and fear of being judged by the peers (Young, 1991). We can clearly conclude that a foreign language learner may suffer from low self-esteem and may attach a lot of importance to the reviews of his/her peers, which may undermine the process of learning a

foreign language. These types of learners may have the same fears in the use of all skills of language and for this reason they try to stay away from language classrooms.

Horwitz et. al. (1986) discuss that foreign language learners nearly have similar feelings on foreign language learning. For instance, they perspire, forget what they already know or cannot concentrate properly when they are anxious. A great deal of research note that what students experience while learning a foreign language may result in negative perceptions and foreign language apprehension (MacIntyre, 1995). Provided that learners come across difficult tasks, get into an uncomfortable learning environment in which they are not tolerated by their peers or teachers or their self-perception on language learning becomes negative, they tend to get anxious in the foreign language learning process (MacIntyre, 1995). He also suggests that the anxiety that the learners suffer result from the way they perceive themselves in language learning and this leads to failure.

Many authors have defined anxiety and divided anxiety into categories such as trait anxiety, state anxiety, situation-specific anxiety, debilitating anxiety and facilitating anxiety (Wilson, 2006). For instance, according to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) measuring the trait anxiety in foreign language learning has been criticised since measuring trait anxiety is a long process and each person may react differently in different situations. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) state that state anxiety is not very different from trait anxiety; however, when you measure state anxiety, you ask questions regarding that moment of anxiety. Lastly, they point out that situation specific anxiety is felt in specific situations like feeling anxious while speaking in front of the public or test anxiety. They note that situation specific anxiety can be studied easier than the other types of anxiety as the sources are clearer and researchers can get more tangible data from the participants because the questions would be specific to the situation that is experienced (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

Negari & Rezaabadi (2012) refers to debilitating anxiety as a type of anxiety which has a negative effect on learners' performance and we can infer that debilitating anxiety causes students to become worried and have poor performances. Moreover, Wilson (2006) defines facilitating anxiety in his study and refers to it as a feeling which stimulates students to learn more and improve themselves. These definitions on anxiety types enlighten the issue that we as writing instructors encounter in writing classes. To be more precise, students who feel very uncomfortable and express that they forget everything when they start to write may experience debilitating anxiety which blocks them from writing and prevents them from improving in writing skill. However, students who experience facilitating anxiety are the ones who feel anxious, but get good grades in their writing tests or compose successful written works as their anxiety scaffolds their success. In other words, this type of anxiety enables learners to take the writing activity seriously and pay more attention to the writing tasks, thus, they become successful in writing and their performance improves due to facilitating anxiety that they experience. In the same sense, Negari & Rezaabadi (2012) conducted a research on university students to find out how their writing performance is affected by low writing anxiety and test writing anxiety. The results of the study showed that students need to feel anxious to be able to perform well in writing classes, otherwise, they may not take it seriously and they may fail in writing classes. In other words, they suggest that facilitative anxiety supports the learning process of the students in writing classes (Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012).

Due to the hard work that writing requires as it involves organising ideas, motivation and vocabulary knowledge, learners are expected to cope with all these elements and this makes them frustrated. Similarly, Madigan, Linton & Johnson (1996) assert that students feel like they are pressured and they panic, so writing process does not appeal to them anymore. A solution to this problem may be portfolio keeping which a number of universities or institutions apply on their students. By keeping portfolios, students learn how to improve their

writing with the help of their peers and instructors as in the process students compose a text, which is edited by their peers and corrected with the help of their instructors. Therefore, students become more motivated and encouraged by their instructors when portfolio keeping is implemented accurately. Moreover, this type of writing is a process writing, which eases the stress of time restriction and provides students a great amount of time to complete their text. Finally, their writing improves and they learn a lot (Erkan & Saban, 2011).

MacIntyre & Gardner (1991) raise a question on the reasons and effects of anxiety on language learning. They ask two questions: “Does anxiety interfere with pre-existing ability and therefore impair performance? Or does poor performance, based solely on ability, lead to anxiety as merely an effect?” (p. 109). These two questions simply summarize the research that has been done on the causes and effects of anxiety on language learning. Either it is the reason for poor performance or a result of it, anxiety in foreign language learning is a big issue to be discussed and should be decreased so that learners can easily perform their tasks without the feel of nervousness.

In his study, Wörde (2003) points out some questions to be answered such as whether students think that anxiety hinders language acquisition, which elements leads to anxiety, etc. and then he presents a number of answers received from the students on these issues. Wörde (2003) shares the comments of the students on a question which asks about the relationship between anxiety and language acquisition and he comments that:

Some students were unaware of foreign language anxiety; others were unsure, but still conscious of a generalized feeling of uneasiness. Other students appeared to use the terms frustration, nervous, and anxious interchangeably. One student seemed to equate getting angry with being anxious. He mentioned that he got so frustrated that he wanted to break the desk (p. 4).

These reactions of the students demonstrate a huge impact of the anxiety on language learning because students' reactions show how the feeling of anxiety may lead them to stop learning a foreign language.

While giving examples from the research that has been done on the effects of anxiety on language learning, MacIntyre (1995) puts an emphasis on the fact that students may not show what they know as they feel anxious and this feeling prevents them from demonstrating their skills in writing. Additionally, he gives the example that almost every anxious student experience 'freezing up'. Even though students may know about the topic, they may not compose anything because they feel so anxious that they freeze up and forget what they already know. MacIntyre (1995) also concludes that the more students fail to perform their tasks, the more anxious they become and this leads to more failures.

2.7. Measuring Writing Apprehension in L2

Examining foreign language anxiety has been an important issue among researchers for many years and there have been several researchers who created a measurement to examine the foreign language anxiety (Cheng, 2004). Firstly, Gardner (1985) designed a scale called 'French Class Anxiety Scale and French Use Anxiety Scale' to research foreign language learners' motivation and attitudes towards language learning. This scale consisted of 33 attitudinal-motivational measures and it was applied on students living in Canada to assess their attitudes towards learning French (Gardner, 1985).

Furthermore, Horwitz et al. (1986) composed a foreign language anxiety scale called 'The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)' as he saw the scales done until that time were not adequate enough to be able to measure learners' direct responses regarding foreign language anxiety. The scale consisted of 33 questions with a 5 point Likert Scale and FLCAS measures fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, etc. in the foreign language classrooms (Horwitz, 1986).

After these tests on anxiety in foreign language learning, researchers focused on specific skills and decided to analyse anxiety on separate skills in foreign languages (Cheng, 2004). A great amount of research has been done to measure foreign language anxiety in speaking. Young (1986) measured the relationship between anxiety and oral performance of foreign language teachers and created a measurement called The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). MacIntyre, Noels & Clement (1992) conducted a study regarding perceived competence, actual competence and language anxiety. Moreover, Ely (1986) worked on speaking anxiety and created a scale called Language Class Discomfort Scale.

Although a lot of research was done on speaking anxiety, writing anxiety did not take much interest until Daly & Miller (1975) composed a writing apprehension test named Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (WAT). The test was prepared to measure the second language writing anxiety and has been commonly used by many studies as it gives valid results of writing apprehension levels of the students (Cheng, 2004). However, this test is seen as an inadequate measurement since it focuses more on L1 writing apprehension of the native students of English. Therefore, a test, which solely focuses on and measures L2 writing anxiety can analyse the anxiety levels of the learners of English in more detail (Cheng, 2004). For this reason, Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory SLWAI (Cheng, 2004) was composed by Cheng (2004) as this type of instrument could measure the writing apprehension levels of the learners of English more effectively.

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the study in detail. The research design is explained in detail. The participants and the data collection tools are also presented.

3.2. Research Design

The present study aimed to find out EFL students' conceptions of three dimensions of anxiety. The study was conducted at Toros University, Mersin, Turkey in 2015-2016 academic year. We employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect and to analyse the data of the study. According to Creswell (2013), quantitative research is a measurement type that deals with variables in a data to conclude statistical results. Among the quantitative research tools, we used an inventory scale to identify the students' conceptions of three dimensions of anxiety. We collected the qualitative data of the study through three open-ended questions. The answers given to these questions helped us to triangulate the quantitative data elicited through the inventory scale. Bryman (2012) discusses the importance of triangulation in his study and asserts that:

Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. Since much social research is founded on the use of a single research method and as such may suffer from limitations associated with that method or from the specific application of it, triangulation offers the prospect of enhanced confidence (p.633).

This way of collecting data is also claimed to provide valid results (Atay & Kurt, 2006). Therefore, the aim of applying both a qualitative and a quantitative method of measure in this study was to be able to demonstrate the results in detail not only by giving statistically analysed results of the data, but also by demonstrating the comments of the students, their

emotions and their fears. Furthermore, using qualitative research provides a better understanding of the findings, especially if a study deals with emotions. Moreover, there is a tendency in social sciences to conduct qualitative research since this type of research deals with experiences, thoughts, emotions and beliefs, etc. (Atay & Kurt, 2006).

3.3. Participants

The participants of the study were a total of 48 preparatory school students of Toros University, Mersin, Turkey. When choosing the participants, the purposive sampling strategy was used, as the aim was to identify the preparatory school students' conceptions of three dimensions of anxiety. Jupp (2006) defines purposive sampling strategy as:

A form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria, which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research (p. 244).

The ages of the participants varied from 18 to 23 and these students have been learning English for more than 10 years. The participants' English language proficiency level was A2 according to European Framework of References for Languages. They have had writing courses for 4 months since they started studying English at Mersin University.

3.4. Data Collection Instrument

The data of this study was collected through an adapted version of The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) originally developed by Cheng (2004). In the present study, we adapted it by adding a new section with three open-ended questions to get broader information from the students regarding their emotions, physical changes and their experiences in the process of writing (see Appendix 1).

The aim of SLWAI is to identify the participants' levels of writing apprehension. SLWAI includes 22 items based on a 5- point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 'strongly

disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5) (see Appendix 1). The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory has three subcategories and each category is designed to assess one type of anxiety. The first category measures participants' cognitive anxiety through items 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20 and 21. The second category measures participants' somatic anxiety through items 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, and 19. The third category is about avoidance behaviour consisting of items 4, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18 and 22.

The second section included three open-ended questions, each of the questions aimed to measure one independent dimension of anxiety. The first question: *How do you feel if your writing task is evaluated poorly?* aimed to measure the cognitive anxiety which is related to feelings that students experience such as worries and fear on negative evaluation by the teachers and peers (Cheng, 2004). In other words, this question aimed to reveal students' worries and fears on writing tasks. The second question: *Describe the physical changes in your body while you are writing in English* aimed to elicit somatic anxiety that the students experience by referring to physical changes in their bodies. Somatic anxiety is a type of anxiety which is a manifestation of the tension such as perspiring or increase in the heartbeats (Morris, Davis & Hutchings, 1981). The last question was: *Do you abstain from writing in English when you experience difficulties? If yes, why?* and it was about avoidance behaviour which is a type of behaviour that people demonstrate like withdrawing themselves from the work or ignoring it (Cheng, 2004). These feelings occur when students have difficulties in composing sentences in English and they tend to withdraw themselves from completing the task (Kleinmann, 1978).

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

The qualitative data collection instrument was administered to the students in their writing classes and it was translated into Turkish to be able to get clearer results in the participants' mother tongue (see Appendix 2). Then, a back translation was used and the Turkish

translation was translated back to the original language to be able to assess the accuracy of the translation. According to Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg (1998), back translation is a type of translation which requires the text to be translated again into the original language so that any misunderstandings or cultural differences can be taken into account. In addition, two other writing teachers at Toros University worked on the translation of the questionnaire and tried to analyse whether each question was translated suitable enough to reach the same goal as in the original.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data gathered from the first part of the instrument were analysed by the means of descriptive statistics. The results of the inventory were calculated by IBM SPSS statistics version 20. Items 1, 4, 7, 17, 18, 21 and 22 are constructed negatively in the scale; therefore, reverse scoring method was used while analysing these items. The aim of using reverse scoring for the negatively worded items was to be able to prevent a possible confusion, which might occur while analysing the results. In other words, high scores indicated high apprehension levels; low scores indicated low apprehension levels (Atay & Kurt, 2006). As Cheng (2004) reports that SLWAI is proved to be consistent in itself, it is a reliable test and a valid measurement as it was compared with other writing apprehension measurements and proven valid and reliable. For this reason, the SLWAI is regarded as a credible instrument as it has test reliability and consistency.

The data collected from the second part of the instrument were subjected to content analysis. Content analysis was defined by Bhattacharjee (2012) as a type of analysis which deals with what is inside a text and this analysis consists of the names of the participants, their statements, the reasons behind those statements effects of them. Therefore, it is preferred in studies so that the oral, typed or videotaped work can easily be analysed in detail. By using content analysis, researchers can give the reasons and effects of their data results in detail.

This method was used for measuring qualitative data that include the responses given to the three open-ended questions.

CHAPTER IV

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

The aim of the present study was to find out EFL students' conceptions of three dimensions of writing anxiety. This chapter presents the analysis of the data obtained from the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and three open-ended questions. The first section reflects the overall analysis of students' conceptions of three dimensions of writing anxiety (Section 4.2.). The second section presents the analysis of students' conceptions of Cognitive Anxiety when they are involved in the writing tasks (Section 4.3.). The third section discusses the analysis of the data on Somatic Anxiety that the students experience in writing (Section 4.4.). The fourth section reveals the Avoidance Behaviour that students demonstrate towards writing tasks (Section 4.5.).

4.2. Overall Analysis of Students' Conceptions of Three Dimensions of Writing Anxiety

As Lang (1971) argued students' writing anxiety experiences can be conceptualized considering "three different and relatively independent components: cognitive, physiological, and behavioral" (cited in Cheng 2004, p. 318). This section presents the overall findings on students' conceptions of three dimensions of writing anxiety. Table 1 demonstrates the results obtained from the descriptive analysis of three dimensions of writing anxiety as collected through the students' responses given to the 22 items in the SLWAI (see Appendix 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Students' Conceptions of Three Dimensions of Writing Anxiety

ANXIETY CATEGORIES	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Avoidance Behaviour	48	1	5	3.071417	0.9778623
Cognitive Anxiety	48	1	5	2.937500	0.8767081
Somatic Anxiety	48	1	5	2.835292	0.9778623

As can be seen from Table 1, the highest anxiety scores were obtained from the questions related to Avoidance Behaviour (M= 3.071417), which include the act of avoiding the writing tasks and withdrawing oneself from doing any written tasks in the foreign language (Cheng, 2004). This might indicate that students tend to avoid the situations in which they need to write something in English and they tend to withdraw themselves from the writing situations. Secondly, Cognitive Anxiety has a higher mean score (M= 2.937500) than the Somatic Anxiety (M= 2.835292), which may mean that students have worries about negative evaluation of their compositions. Lastly, the mean score of the Somatic Anxiety may show that these students may not experience physical changes in their bodies in the process of writing.

4.3. Analysis of Students' Conceptions of Cognitive Anxiety

This section presents the analysis of the students' conceptions of cognitive anxiety as gathered through the responses given to 8 items in the SLWAI and the first open-ended question “*How do you feel if your writing task is evaluated poorly?*” Table 2 below demonstrates the results derived from the descriptive analysis of 8 items in the SLWAI for Cognitive Anxiety.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of the Students' Conceptions of Cognitive Anxiety

ITEM	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.	1	5	2.8958	1.18931
3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.	1	5	3.3542	1.50869
7. I don't worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others	1	5	2.8125	1.3785
9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.	1	5	3.5	1.45865
14. I am afraid that the other students would deride my English composition if they read it.	1	5	1.8958	1.30856
17. I don't worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.	1	5	2.4375	1.30313
20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class	1	5	2.75	1.53678
21. I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.	1	5	3.8542	1.36817

Descriptive Analysis of Students' Conceptions of Cognitive Anxiety: Table 2 above shows the statistical results of the SLWAI including the items 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20 and 21. These items are designed to measure the students' conceptions of cognitive anxiety. More specifically, this subcategory aims to elicit the negative evaluation, negative expectations, and others' perceptions and worry (Cheng, 2006) that students experience in writing. Table 2

shows the minimum and maximum scores on items and the mean and standard deviation scores for each statement in this subcategory. The mean scores below 3 were interpreted as low anxious and scores above 3 were interpreted as high anxious. On looking at Table 2, one can clearly observe that items 3 *While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated* (M = 3.3542), 9 *If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade* (M = 3.5000), and 21 *I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor* (M = 3.8542) present a relatively higher level of anxiety among students when the issue is about evaluation. That is, the mean scores of these statements indicate that students are worried about the fact that their compositions would be evaluated negatively or worried about getting poor grades on their compositions. The mean score of Item 1 *While writing in English, I am not nervous at all* is 2.8958. This result indicates that the students are generally not anxious about writing compositions if their writing products are not evaluated. Item 7 *I don't worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others* with a mean score of 2.8125 demonstrates that students do not feel worried about the fact that their compositions might be worse than their peers. This is a surprising result as it has always been thought that students are worried about falling behind their peers regarding their test results or any other evaluation types. Item 14 *I am afraid that the other students would deride my English composition if they read it* with a mean score of 1.8958 is also about the negative evaluation of the students' peers. This score indicates that the participants of this study believe that they would experience a very low level of anxiety about their writing papers read by their peers. The mean score (2.4375) of the responses given to Item 17 *I don't worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions* was different than those given to Item 14. That is, the participants believe they might feel a moderate level of anxiety if their written products are read. The reason behind this difference may be related to the use of *at all* in Item 17. Finally, Item 20 *I*

am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class (M = 2.7500) shows a moderate level of anxiety regarding the fear of getting comments on the compositions. In sum, the category of cognitive anxiety presents us a moderate level of anxiety felt among the participants of the study.

Content Analysis of the first open-ended Question: The first open-ended question: *How do you feel if your writing task is evaluated poorly?* aimed to measure the students' conceptions of cognitive anxiety which includes fear of other people's evaluation, concerns and apprehension (Cheng, 2004). On analysing the responses given to this question, we found out that half of the participants (24) believe being evaluated negatively would have a destructing effect on their desire to practice writing. The reasons behind their belief are reflected in the following extracts taken from the responses given to this open-ended question:

Student 1:

I get angry at myself and don't want to learn English any more.

Student 2:

I feel disappointed and lose my self-confidence.

Student 3:

I feel like I'm failing in English and start to hate writing in English.

Student 7:

Getting poor grades demotivates me and kills my desire to learn English.

Student 9:

I lose respect on myself and do not trust myself anymore.

Student 13:

I feel sad and think that I lack at some points.

Student 25:

I feel bad and become demoralised.

These statements make it clear that the students believe being evaluated poorly would make them feel anxious and unhappy. In addition, they point out that this would withdraw them from writing anything in English. On the other hand, there were 14 students who think that this would stimulate them to learn more and to correct their mistakes. As some researchers like Negari & Rezaabadi (2012) and Wilson (2006) suggested, anxiety may stimulate some students and it may improve their performance. The students' comments regarding this issue are as follows:

Student 6:

It makes me realise that I lack at some points, so I study harder.

Student 12:

I try to write better.

Student 14:

It stimulates me to work harder on my writing, so I start to study harder, and correct my mistakes.

Student 16:

I work harder to make it better.

Student 20:

We write to be able to learn English, it is normal to be evaluated poorly. I learn from my mistakes.

Student 30:

I learn from my mistakes and try to do better next time.

Student 42:

It does not have a negative effect on me, I feel positive and think that I should improve myself.

In addition, 5 of the participants reported that poor evaluation would have no effect on them; and that they would neither feel bad nor good about it. Some of their comments are as follows:

Student 4:

It does not have any effect on me.

Student 11:

I do not feel anything about it.

4.4. Analysis of Students' Conceptions of Somatic Anxiety

This section presents the analysis of the students' conceptions of somatic anxiety using the responses given to the 7 items in the SLWAI and the second open-ended question: *Describe the physical changes in your body while you are writing in English.* Table 3 below shows the descriptive analysis results of the 7 items in the SLWAI for Somatic Anxiety.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of the Students' Conceptions of Somatic Anxiety

ITEMS	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
2. I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.	1	5	3.3958	1.37979
6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.	1	5	2.7021	1.23209
8. I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure.	1	5	2.1702	1.25662
11. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.	1	5	3.4167	1.30194
13. I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.	1	5	2.9792	1.29631
15. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.	1	5	3.1042	1.44752
19. I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when write English compositions.	1	5	2.0208	1.08156

Descriptive Analysis of Students' Conceptions of Somatic Anxiety: Table 3 above depicts the statistical results of the SLWAI of the items including 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, and 19 on somatic anxiety. These items are designed to measure the participants' conceptions of somatic anxiety, which is related to the physiological and emotional implications of the anxiety experience (Morris, Davis & Hutchings, 1981). Table 3 presents the minimum and maximum mean scores and the standard deviation scores for each item in this subcategory. The mean of Item 8 *I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure* is 2.1702 and Item 19 *I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when write English compositions* is 2.0208. This result may prove that the students' perceived anxiety levels are moderate and they mostly do not experience physical arousals like tension, perspiration and trembling while

writing English compositions. The responses given to Item 2 *I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint* (M = 3.3958), Item 11 *My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint* (M = 3.4167) and Item 13 *I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint* (M = 2.9792) demonstrate high levels of perceived anxiety, which proves that the students have high levels of perceived anxiety when they are forced to write something in English in a limited time. The reason to that may be the fact that they panic in order to finish their compositions and cannot focus on writing, hence the more they panic, the more anxious they become. This type of anxiety may be similar to test anxiety which is also a type of anxiety that show physiological arousals, tension or stress among students in a restricted time (Zeidner, 1998). Item 6 *My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition* which has a mean score of 2.7021 and Item 13 *I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions* with a mean score of 3.1042 indicate different results although they have similar meanings. The fact that the first statement got a score below 3 means that there is a slight level of perceived anxiety; however, the latter got a score above 3, which shows a moderate perceived anxiety level. The explanation to that might be related to the use of the phrase *unexpectedly asked* because students feel very anxious if they are not informed that they will write a composition beforehand. Therefore, we can conclude that students experience higher levels of anxiety when they do not know the time when they are going to write a composition in English.

Content Analysis of the second open-ended Question: The second open-ended question *Describe the physical changes in your body while you are writing in English* intended to uncover students' physical experiences when exposed to somatic anxiety. After analysing the responses to this question, we found that 18 of the students experience no physical changes in their bodies while writing in English, 9 of them experience perspiring, 5 of them experience

pounding heart, 4 of them experience headache, 2 of them experience foot tapping, 1 of them experience stomach ache. We also observed that 9 of the students did not make any comments to this question. It can easily be inferred from the responses that nearly half of the students (21) experience physical changes in their bodies while writing in English. Although they do not score high levels of somatic anxiety in the inventory, the number of the ones who experience physical symptoms cannot be ignored. In sum, the responses of the participants show a slightly higher level of somatic anxiety compared to the descriptive results of the inventory.

4.5. Analysis of Students' Conceptions of Avoidance Behaviour

This section presents the descriptive analysis results on students' avoidance behaviour as identified through the responses given to 7 items in SLWAI and the third open-ended question: *Do you abstain from writing in English when you experience difficulties? If yes, why?* Table 4 below reveals the descriptive analysis results of the responses given to 7 items in the SLWAI for the Avoidance Behaviour.

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of the Students' Conceptions of Avoidance Behaviour

ITEMS	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.	1	5	3.7917	1.32019
5. I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.	1	5	2.1042	1.37206
10. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English	1	5	2.3542	1.55042
12. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions.	1	5	3.2917	1.50118
16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.	1	5	2.1042	1.07663
18. I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.	1	5	3.9375	1.17430
22. Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.	1	5	3.9167	1.16388

Descriptive Analysis of Students' Conceptions of Avoidance Behaviour: Table 2 above demonstrates the mean scores of the students' avoidance behaviour, which is defined as a withdrawal or avoidance from writing in English (Cheng, 2004). The mean scores of the items generally indicate that there is a tendency among students to avoid writing in English. In addition, the overall findings related to avoidance behaviour indicate higher levels of anxiety as compared to the students' conceptions of cognitive and somatic anxiety. Three items in this subcategory were subjected to reversed scoring because their sentence structure and meaning are affirmative and this is not consistent with the rest of the items, which carry negative meanings. These three items were Item 4 *I often choose to write down my thoughts in English* (M= 3.7917), Item 18 *I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions*

outside of class (M= 3.9375) and Item 22 *Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions* (M= 3.9167).

The mean scores of these three items were higher than 3, so we can conclude that students do not agree with the idea of writing English compositions whenever possible or seeking possible chances to write English compositions anytime. These students tend to withdraw themselves from writing compositions in English. Similarly, the result of Item 12 *Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions* with the mean score of 3.2917 proves that students do not have the desire to write in English unless they have to. The scores of 3 items show low avoidance behaviour regarding the issue of writing in English. These 3 items are: Item 5 *I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions* (M=2.1042), Item 10 *I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English* (M=2.3542) and Item 16 *I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions* (M=2.1042). However, these results are not surprising as the use of *I do my best* may have had an effect on the responses of the participants. The overall findings of the descriptive analysis on avoidance behaviour indicate moderate levels of avoidance behaviour among the participants; however, the highest results have been obtained from this sub-category as compared to other categories. Therefore, these results may imply that although the students do not experience high levels of cognitive and somatic anxiety, their avoidance behaviour is high with regards to writing in English.

Content Analysis of the third open-ended Question: The third open-ended question: *Do you abstain from writing in English when you experience difficulties? If yes, why?* aimed to analyse the avoidance behaviour of the participants through their comments. The analysis indicated that 34 out of 48 students articulated that they would not abstain from writing in English when they experience difficulties, which was inconsistent with the results of the items 4 *I often choose to write down my thoughts in English* (M= 3.7917), 12 *Unless I have no*

choice, I would not use English to write compositions (M= 3.2917), 18 I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class (M= 3.9375) and 22 Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions (M= 3.9167) in the inventory. That is, the students mostly scored high levels of avoidance behaviour regarding the issue of writing in English voluntarily and these mean scores indicate that although students commented that they do not feel they would abstain from writing when they experience some difficulties, their general attitude towards writing in English demonstrate just the opposite in the inventory. The reason behind this may be their way of protecting themselves from making mistakes. In other words, if they don't write in English, they won't have difficulties and they won't feel bad about it.

9 of them agreed on the idea that they would abstain from writing in English when they experience difficulties and 5 of them did not make any comments to this question. The comments of the students who agreed on the idea are as follows:

Student 5:

Yes, I always abstain from writing when I experience difficulties because it makes me feel bad.

Student 8:

Yes, I do because I do not want to continue writing in English when I make mistakes.

Student 11:

Yes, definitely. It makes me feel like I'm failing.

Student 13:

Yes, if I have difficulties all the time and can't fix them, I abstain from writing and stop writing.

Student 15:

Yes, I generally do. I am an ambitious person; however, my bad experiences discourage me.

Student 16:

Yes I do because I can't carry on writing in English.

Student 33:

Yes, the fact that I can't write in English draws me away from writing.

Student 36:

Yes, definitely because having difficulties in writing makes me feel uncomfortable.

Student 37:

Yes, I think that I can't learn English.

Although the majority of the students do not think they abstain from writing when they face difficulties, the number of the students who said yes (9) cannot be ignored because they shed light on the reasons why students generally abstain from writing. The issue of failing to complete a task that one already has difficulties with may hinder the desire to learn more and the situation with these students is the same. They already have difficulties in learning a foreign language and when they experience problems, they are discouraged and most of them end up hating to write anything in English. The writing teachers have a key role here as they

need to focus on this type of students, teach them how to learn from their mistakes and teach them that having difficulties is a part of the learning process. This type of attitude may change the behaviours of these students regarding writing in English. Foss & Reitzel (1988) present some suggestions on how instructors can guide their students regarding the issue of foreign language anxiety and one of the suggestions is that “instructor ask students to verbalize any fears and then to write them on the board” (cited in Young, 1991, p. 6). By using this strategy, students can see they are not alone and their peers also experience the same fears. In summary, suggestions are countless and the writing teachers need to apply such kinds of techniques so as not to lose their students’ desire to learn how to write in English.

CHAPTER V

5. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter first presents the summary of the study. Then the findings are discussed with reference to the research questions. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study and suggestions for further studies.

5.2. Summary of the Study

The aim of the study was to find out EFL students' conceptions of three "... different and relatively independent" dimensions of writing anxiety: cognitive, physiological, and behavioural (Lang, 1971 as cited in Cheng 2004, p. 318). The study was conducted with 48 preparatory school students of Toros University, Mersin, Turkey in 2015-2016 academic year. The data of the study were gathered through an adapted version of The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and three open-ended questions (see Appendix 1). The data elicited from SLWAI were analyzed by the means of descriptive statistics while the responses given to three open-ended questions were subjected to content analysis.

5.3. Discussion and Conclusion on Participants' Conceptions of Writing Anxiety

The overall analysis showed a moderate level of anxiety among Turkish preparatory school students and these results are in line with other studies which also conducted research on students' conceptions of writing apprehension (Kırmızı & Kırmızı, 2015; Öztürk & Saydam, 2014). The studies conducted on Turkish students regarding their conceptions of writing apprehension such as Atay & Kurt (2006), Öztürk & Çeçen (2007), Öztürk & Saydam (2014) and Kırmızı & Kırmızı (2015) indicated similar results on writing anxiety levels of Turkish students. Therefore, it can be seen that Turkish students experience writing apprehension while learning how to write in English.

After analysing the descriptive statistics, it was concluded that the students had the highest apprehension levels regarding the avoidance behaviour although the research generally shows high levels of cognitive anxiety and many researchers focus on this type of anxiety (MacIntyre, 1995; Schwarzer, 1986; Wine, 1980; Sarason, 1986). On the other hand, even though the descriptive statistics indicated high levels of avoidance behaviour, the content analysis did not present high levels of anxiety on avoidance behaviour, which was a surprising result, as well. Considering the negative effects of writing anxiety on language learning, we can say that high levels of avoidance behaviour acquired from the descriptive statistics gives us clues on how students are affected by writing anxiety as they try to avoid the situations requiring writing in English (Zhang, 2011). Furthermore, avoidance behaviour may be identified as a last step in the process of writing anxiety as students feel worries that are related to cognitive anxiety, experience physical symptoms like pounding heart related to somatic anxiety and finally they start avoiding the writing process as a whole that is avoidance behaviour. Therefore, the fact that these students experience higher levels of avoidance behaviour may have an effect on their writing practices in the future and it may also result in refusing to learn how to write in English. Minimising avoidance behaviour and all other types of anxiety in foreign language learning is a duty of writing teachers and suggestions of decreasing writing anxiety are countless. Zhang (2011) presents some strategies on minimizing writing anxiety as stated in the following:

Through memorizing and imitating, students can be familiar with different topics and genres of English writing, especially the genre of TEM writing, which could also be helpful for them to overcome writing anxiety caused by tests. In this process, the teacher should provide students with sufficient information and materials as well as adequate opportunities of guided practice (p. 34).

Students should be presented with familiar and interesting types of writing topics, they should be given the opportunity for free-writing, they should practice the strategies on how to compose a written work in English such as how to brainstorm ideas, how to form supporting sentences related to the main idea of the topic, how to present examples to enrich the text and finally how to finalise a composition.

Additionally, students' conceptions of cognitive anxiety were moderate; however, students scored high levels of cognitive anxiety on the items related to being evaluated poorly by their writing teachers and the first open-ended question showed that the poor evaluation affects students in a negative way. Their comments indicate that it results in losing self-confidence, demotivation and losing their desire to learn English. This issue was also discussed by Eysenck (1979), he suggested that cognitive effects of anxiety such as being evaluated by others, apprehension of failing result in bad performance. Moreover, the fear of failure has a great impact on students' performance and results in cognitive anxiety among students (Horwitz et al., 1986, MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Zhang, 2011). Therefore, teachers should decrease the fear of evaluation by focusing on the process of writing tasks rather than the final products that students submit. This approach may direct the students' attention to the process of writing itself and they may also try to learn writing strategies rather than thinking of teacher evaluation. Especially, if the teacher draws students' attention to the importance of the process of completing a written work in English and the importance of practising writing strategies, students may decrease their level of anxiety regarding teacher evaluation in writing classes. Following this line of thought, Horwitz et al. (1986) suggest that teachers should make the foreign language classes more relaxed and prevent any possible anxiety provoking situations in the classrooms. Creating anxious-free writing classes should be the main purpose of the writing teachers because the only way of observing students' real performance in writing can be achieved by making them anxious free.

Furthermore, many students in the present study stated that they experience physical changes (somatic anxiety) in their bodies such as perspiring and pounding heart and these reported physical symptoms are similar to the ones experienced by the participants in the study of Atay & Kurt (2006). Also, in the study of Wörde (2003), the participants manifested similar physical symptoms when they were anxious such as pounding heart, foot tapping, perspiring, etc. As a solution to coping with physical symptoms of writing anxiety, Atay & Kurt (2006) suggest writing instructors to focus on warm-up activities, pre-writing activities, brainstorming, etc. This way of teaching writing skills may decrease the amount of anxiety that students experience. Moreover, Wörde (2003) presented students' utterances on how to deal with writing anxiety and some of the students in the study stated that they desired teachers to be like a friend to them so that they could be more relaxed in the learning process. Drawing on this suggestion, we may infer that teachers need to establish close relationships with their students in the writing process. When the students are relaxed in writing classes, they can share their worries with their teachers and find some solutions for coping with anxiety. For this reason, showing the students that they are valued and acting like a guide to them instead of being a traditional teacher may be a good solution for decreasing the level of anxiety that the students experience. Wörde (2003) also supports the idea that "teachers who provide a supportive and understanding environment, who employ nonthreatening teaching methods, and who use appealing and relevant topics seem to enhance the foreign language experience" (p. 7). Also, motivation has a key role in writing classes, as students need it to be able to continue the learning process. Giving feedback is an important part of motivation, as students need a lot of feedback to improve their writing (Zhang, 2011).

In the light of the data obtained both from the inventory and the three open-ended questions, it can be concluded that the students in this study experience moderate levels of

writing anxiety in the writing process. According to the findings gathered from the inventory, the problem, which the participants experience the most, is the fact that they avoid writing compositions in English. Therefore, we can say that students tend to withdraw themselves from writing in English if they are exposed to negative learning experiences. The reasons might be their classroom environments, the poor writing grades or their negative past experiences with English in writing classes. Therefore, writing teachers should teach their students as many writing strategies as possible to be able to make the process less difficult because writing is a difficult activity even when it is practised in the mother tongue. In Turkey, students are not expected to write or read much during their school years as they are more exposed to multiple-choice tests and this also prevents them from improving their writing skills. The fact that they are asked to write something in English makes them anxious due to lack of writing practice. Moreover, the approaches that are used by the writing teachers also need to be reconsidered. Writing teachers need to use different types of assessment in writing classes. Portfolio assessment may be used as an assessment type as it is defined as "a purposeful collection of student work that shows student's efforts, progress and achievements" (Paulson, Paulson and Meyer 1991, p. 61). This type of assessment also supports the idea of evaluating the whole process of completing a task rather than a final product. Another alternative assessment method might be the use of writing rubric which can be defined as a guideline for students to follow and which includes the criteria for the assessment such as the scores of the skills or the stages in the process completing a task (Jeong, 2015). This type of assessment can be useful in some ways. For instance, students can have an idea of what they are supposed to accomplish and they can prepare themselves accordingly. However, these rubrics should be supported by peer-reviews as they help students see their mistakes and learn which aspects of the writing tasks they need to focus on.

As Horwitz et al. (1986) suggest, we need to emphasize peer-review and decrease the amount of teacher evaluation.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

The present study was conducted with only a limited number of students, which prevents the generalisation of the results. Another limitation may be the limited number of the statements of the participants, which made it hard for the study to be analysed in detail. The other limitation might be the fact that there are not many studies which aim to analyse the preparatory school students' conceptions of writing apprehension in Turkey. The last limitation of the study is the fact that the genders or the age of the students were not taken into account in this study and this may have limited the study as a whole.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Study

Writing teachers may be included in the studies in this field to get ideas on how to overcome the writing anxiety that students experience. Interviews also might be included in these types of studies so that more comments can be gathered to help the researchers analyse the writing anxiety levels more effectively. The fact that the avoidance behaviour got the highest anxiety levels should not be ignored and further studies that focus on this specific anxiety type might be conducted to be able to get clearer understanding on the reasons of it. The results and the data obtained in the study may be used for improving the research on anxiety types regarding writing in English. Finally, the findings of the study may help writing teachers observe different types of anxiety that students experience and try to find ways on how to cope with them.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. APPENDIX 1: SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING ANXIETY INVENTORY

(DEVELOPED BY CHENG, 2004) (CHAPTER I)

Read the statements below very carefully. For each statement, among the choices 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 circle the most suitable one for you. As the findings of this test are going to be used in for research, we kindly request you be honest while answering the questions.

1. I strongly disagree

2. I disagree

3. I have no strong feelings either way

4. I agree

5. I strongly agree

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

5. I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

7. I don't worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others.

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

14. I am afraid that the other students would deride my English composition if they read it. Asian EFL Journal, Volume 8, Number 4 118

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

17. I don't worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

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

1 2 3 4 5

CHAPTER II

1. How do you feel if your writing task is evaluated poorly?
2. Describe the physical changes in your body while you are writing in English.
3. Do you abstain from writing in English when you experience difficulties? If yes, why?

7.2. APPENDIX 2: İKİNCİ DİLDE YAZMA KAYGISINI ÖLÇME ENVANTERİ

(CHENG, 2004 UYARLAMASI) (1. BÖLÜM)

Aşağıdaki ifadeleri dikkatlice okuyunuz. Her bir ifade için 1, 2, 3, 4 ve 5. seçenekler arasından size en uygun olanı seçiniz. Bu testin sonuçları bir çalışmada kullanılacağı için sorulara dürüst cevaplar vermenizi rica ederiz.

1. Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
2. Katılmıyorum
3. Kararsızım
4. Katılıyorum
5. Tamamen katılıyorum

1. İngilizce yazı yazarken hiç gergin hissetmem.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Sınırlı zamanda İngilizce yazı yazarken çok heyecanlanırım.

1 2 3 4 5

3. İngilizce yazı yazarken, yazılarımla değerlendirilmeye alınacağını biliyorsam, endişeli ve rahatsız hissederim.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Düşüncelerimi İngilizce olarak sık sık yazıya dökerim.

1 2 3 4 5

5. İngilizce yazı yazmamak için elimden gelen her şeyi yaparım.

1 2 3 4 5

6. İngilizce yazı yazmaya başladığımda bir anda her şeyi unuturum.

1 2 3 4 5

7. İngilizce yazdığım metinlerin arkadaşlarımla yazdıklarından daha kötü olması benim için sorun teşkil etmez.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Zaman baskısı altında İngilizce yazı yazarken titrerim veya terlemeye başlarım.

1 2 3 4 5

9. İngilizce yazdığım metin değerlendirilmeye alınacaksa, çok düşük puan almaktan endişe duyarım.

1 2 3 4 5

10. İngilizce yazı yazacağım durumlardan kaçınmak için her şeyi yaparım.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Sınırlı zamanda İngilizce yazı yazarken düşüncelerim birbirine girer.

1 2 3 4 5

12. Başka seçeneğim kalmadığı sürece, bir metin yazarken İngilizceyi kullanmam.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Sınırlı zamanda İngilizce yazı yazarken sık sık paniklerim.

1 2 3 4 5

14. Diğer öğrencilerin, yazdığım İngilizce yazıyla dalga geçebilecekleri düşüncesi beni korkutur.

1 2 3 4 5

15. Bir anda benden İngilizce yazı yazmam istendiğinde donakalırım.

1 2 3 4 5

16. Benden İngilizce yazı yazmam istendiğinde, yazmamak için kesinlikle bir bahane bulurum.

1 2 3 4 5

17. İnsanların İngilizce yazdığım yazıyla ilgili düşünceleri beni hiç endişelendirmez.

1 2 3 4 5

18. Ders dışında İngilizce yazı yazmak için genellikle her anı değerlendiririm.

1 2 3 4 5

19. Genellikle İngilizce yazı yazarken, tüm vücudumun kaskatı ve gergin olduğunu hissedirim.

1 2 3 4 5

20. İngilizce yazdığım yazının sınıfta tartışılmak üzere seçilebilme ihtimalinden korkarım.

1 2 3 4 5

21. İngilizce yazılarımın çok düşük puanlandırılması beni hiç korkutmaz.

1 2 3 4 5

22. Her fırsatta İngilizce yazı yazmaya çalışırım.

1 2 3 4 5

II. BÖLÜM

- 1) İngilizce yazdığımız bir metnin düşük puanlandırılması sizde ne gibi hisler uyandırır?
- 2) İngilizce yazı yazarken vücudunuzda gerçekleşen fiziksel değişiklikleri anlatınız.
(kalp atışının hızlanması, terleme, karın ağrısı, vb.)
- 3) İngilizce yazı yazarken yaşadığımız olumsuz deneyimler sizi yazı yazmaktan uzaklaştırıyor mu? Cevabınız evet ise, nedenini açıklar mısınız?