

A Thorough Investigation into Foreign Language Writing Anxiety in a Turkish EFL Context

Türkiye’de İngilizcenin Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğretimi Bağlamında Yabancı Dilde Yazma Kaygısı Üzerine Kapsamlı Bir Araştırma

Didem Erdel¹ ¹ Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Iğdır Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Iğdır, Türkiye

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*Sorumlu Yazar

Didem Erdel

Iğdır Üniversitesi Şehir

Bülent Yurtseven

Kampüsü, Fen

Edebiyat Fakültesi,

Batı Dilleri ve

Edebiyatları Bölümü,

76000, Merkez/Iğdır

didemerdel@gmail.com

Abstract: This study sought to investigate foreign language (L2) writing anxiety of Turkish students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) by focusing on the L2 writing anxiety levels; the prevailing types, perceived causes and effects of L2 writing anxiety; and the strategies that students employed to alleviate L2 writing anxiety. The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design consisting of a quantitative survey and qualitative open-ended interviews with the students studying at English Language and Literature undergraduate program at a state university in Türkiye. A total of 138 students responded to the questionnaire and eight volunteers among them were interviewed face to face. The survey data were analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics while interview records were analysed through thematic analysis. The findings converged on the point that the students displayed high levels of L2 writing anxiety and that time constraints and assessment orientation were the prominent factors leading to anxiety. The students’ L2 writing anxiety varied significantly across perceived L2 proficiency levels, demonstrating higher-level anxiety for the students reporting themselves as less proficient L2 users. Based on the interview reports, the student-perceived causes and effects of writing anxiety as well as the factors and relieving strategies were identified. Finally, recommendations for more effective strategies for alleviating English language learners’ L2 writing anxiety were discussed.

Keywords: Writing anxiety, foreign language anxiety, EFL learners, L2 writing, second/foreign language learning

Öz: Bu çalışma, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin yabancı dilde yazma kaygı düzeylerini, yaygın yazma kaygısı türlerini, algılanan kaygı nedenleri ve etkileri ile birlikte öğrencilerin bu kaygıyla baş etme stratejilerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Araştırmada, Türkiye’deki bir devlet üniversitesinin İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı lisans programında öğrenim gören öğrencilerle yapılan bir anket ve bir açık uçlu görüşmeye dayanan paralel karma yöntemler deseni benimsenmiştir. Ankete toplam 138 öğrenci katılmış, bu öğrenciler arasından gönüllü olan sekiz öğrenci ile yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Anket yoluyla elde edilen araştırma verileri betimleyici ve çıkarımsal istatistiklerle, görüşme kayıtları ise tematik analizle çözümlenmiştir. Bulgular, öğrencilerin yüksek düzeyde yabancı dilde yazma kaygısı sergiledikleri ve zaman kısıtlaması ile değerlendirme odaklı olmanın kaygıya neden olan faktörlerin başında geldiği noktasında birleşmiştir. Yazma kaygısı, algılanan İngilizce yeterlilik düzeylerine göre değişkenlik göstermiş, kendilerini daha az yetkin olarak değerlendiren öğrencilerde daha yüksek düzeyde kaygı olduğu bulunmuştur. Görüşme raporlarından hareketle öğrenciler açısından yazma kaygısının nedenleri, etkileri ve kaygıyı hafifleten faktörler ve stratejiler belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, İngilizce öğrenenlerin yabancı dilde yazma kaygısını hafifletmeye yönelik daha etkili stratejilere dair öneriler tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yazma kaygısı, yabancı dil kaygısı, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenenler, ikinci dilde yazma, ikinci/yabancı dil öğrenimi

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Introduction

With its complex and multifaceted nature (Hyland, 2016), writing requires cognitive and emotional engagement (Cheng, 2002; Li, 2022). Effective writing is possible not only with cognitive skills and linguistic and rhetorical knowledge, but also with effective coordination of all these resources, which ascribes an important role to affective factors (Kormos, 2012). Hence, an intricate interaction has been recognized between emotion, cognition and written communication, urging second/foreign language (L2) writing research to become a discipline of its own, linked to the area of cognitive psychology, since the 1970s (Cheng, 2004a). Recent years have witnessed increased scholarly interest in emotional factors affecting academic writing performances of students in particularly higher education (Li, 2022; Zhang & Zhang, 2022). One of these factors, anxiety, has been acknowledged to have an inhibitory effect on language learning and can be inherently observed in most language classrooms (Han & Hiver, 2018; Horwitz et al., 1986).

Researchers have reached a consensus on the unfavourable effects of anxiety on language skill performance (Heidarzadi et al., 2022; Pae, 2013). Acknowledged as L2 anxiety, the

anxiety among language learners was initially approached as task- or domain-specific, which encompassed all language skill areas. Later, even though all language skill-anxieties have been accepted as the facets of L2 anxiety, it has been commonly argued that anxiety operates differently for each skill area, and that the anxieties of discrete skills should be addressed independently (Pae, 2013).

Writing anxiety, which can be observed in the forms of negative and hypercritical self-evaluations and comparisons (Han & Hiver, 2018), is recognized as a skill-specific state anxiety which is independent of, yet related to L2 anxiety (Cheng, 2004b; Cheng et al., 1999; Pae, 2013). In one of the earliest studies related to writing anxiety, it was found to be negatively correlated with the students’ willingness to write and attend advance-level writing courses, resulting in worrying about being evaluated by others, being distracted, and even avoiding the writing task (Daly & Miller, 1975). Cheng (2004b) conceptualized writing anxiety into three constructs: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour. The mental conditions where writers are preoccupied with negative assumptions about the effectiveness of their performance and about the perceptions of others are

the results of cognitive anxiety. Somatic anxiety manifests in physiological facets of anxiety including faster heart beats, higher nervousness and/or an upset stomach. Lastly, avoidance behaviour is the behavioural reflection of anxiety referring to avoiding the act of writing.

In a relatively recent review on the causes and effects of L2 writing anxiety and the approaches to reduce it, it was reported that anxiety had both facilitating and debilitating effects on L2 learning; however, studies proving the debilitating effects were in the majority (İlhan & Tutkun, 2020). The aforementioned conceptualization of Cheng (2004b) and the potential negative outcomes of L2 writing anxiety led to a burgeoning interest in and accumulated research in the context of teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The present study aims to add to the relevant literature by elucidating this construct with a multifocal approach in a local context of EFL writing in Türkiye.

Literature Review

It is observed that the L2 writing anxiety construct has been commonly researched descriptively either regarding its intensity, types and/or causes, or in terms of its correlation with some other constructs.

The Association of L2 Writing Anxiety with Various Constructs

Self-efficacy has been one of the constructs tested for its possible correlation with writing anxiety in many studies. Woodrow (2011), for instance, determined writing anxiety as a strongly negative predictor of self-efficacy, and a relationship was observed between anxiety and writing performance mediated by self-efficacy beliefs. In a similar vein, Kırmızı and Kırmızı (2015) provided results displaying a strong negative correlation of writing self-efficacy with writing anxiety. In two recent studies, Li (2022) and Heidarzadi et al. (2022) reported that students' writing self-efficacy was in a negative correlation with their writing anxiety. It is well-documented with the results of these studies that self-efficacy and L2 writing anxiety are strongly correlated.

Other correlational studies have focused on the association between L2 writing anxiety and various other constructs and factors associated with L2 writing. For example, Zabihi et al. (2018) explored the differential role of writing anxiety in EFL learners' narrative and argumentative writing performances with regard to the measures of accuracy, fluency and complexity. The results revealed a significant negative association between the sub-constructs of writing anxiety and all three measures in both types of writing. Sabti et al. (2019) conducted research on the relationships between two dimensions of L2 writing anxiety, namely facilitating and debilitating anxiety, and the constructs of writing goal orientation. Their results demonstrated positive relationships between mastery- and performance-approach goals and facilitating writing anxiety, and a negative relationship between a combination of debilitating writing anxiety and performance-avoidance goal, and the factors of mastery- and performance-approach goal and facilitating writing anxiety. Also, Tahmoureshi and Papi (2021) studied another motivation-related learner characteristic, namely L2 writing future-self, and the results indicated that *the ought-to L2 writing self*, which refers to a self-perception of writing performance which matches the expectations of significant others (Jang & Lee, 2019), was a positive predictor of writing

anxiety and that L2 writing anxiety was a negative predictor of L2 writing achievement. Lastly, Zhang and Zhang (2022) attempted to determine the mediating role of anxiety in the relationship between academic procrastination and L2 writing performance and found that writing anxiety escalated the negative effect of procrastination on L2 writing performance. These studies demonstrate that writing anxiety is a construct with intricate relations with a wide range of other factors in effective L2 writing.

L2 Writing Anxiety and Writing Strategy Use

There has also been a recent interest in the association between L2 writing anxiety and writing strategy use. To illustrate, Abolhasani et al. (2022) investigated the effects of L2 writing anxiety on graph writing (a type of writing activity in which students are required to interpret the visual information from a graph) performance of university students and their writing strategies, and their results showed that writing anxiety was a negative predictor of L2 writing performance and strategy use. Bailey and Almusharraf (2022) also addressed L2 writing anxiety in terms of its relation to L2 writing strategies. Among the four writing strategies of planning, monitoring, reviewing and translating, a significantly positive correlation was identified between translation strategies and L2 writing anxiety.

Descriptive Studies on L2 Writing Anxiety

Previous studies also involves descriptive approaches to L2 writing anxiety in different cultural contexts. To exemplify, Zerey (2013) marked average-to-high levels of writing anxiety among Turkish pre-service EFL teachers, and determined language difficulties, concerns over negative evaluation, limited self-confidence and unfavourable past experiences as the perceived causes of L2 writing anxiety. In another study from Türkiye, Genç and Yaylı (2019) reported average-to-high levels of L2 writing anxiety, higher anxiety during exams; and topic selection, time constraints, generating supporting ideas and a lack of effective feedback as factors related to increased anxiety. In a recently-published work, Keyvanoğlu and Atmaca (2023) noted high levels of L2 writing anxiety predicted by student gender and L2 proficiency. In a different cultural context, Mulyono et al. (2020) examined Indonesian EFL students' writing anxiety and demonstrated that all the participant students displayed writing anxiety, most commonly avoidance behaviour at a moderate level, and the variables of gender and education level did not affect the students' writing anxiety. With a similar focus, Rabadi and Rabadi (2020) indicated a high level of anxiety among Jordanian EFL students, with cognitive anxiety being the dominant type, and the causes of writing anxiety involved linguistic challenges, inadequate writing practice, low writing self-confidence and test anxiety. As the final and a rather current example, Quvanch and Na (2022) revealed a moderate level of writing anxiety for Afghan EFL students, no significant differences in the anxiety levels across genders and years of study, and significant differences across L2 proficiency. They also identified leading anxiety causes as linguistics incompetence, followed by time constraints, a perfectionist approach, and the fear of negative teacher evaluation. To summarize, these descriptive research results illustrate that there is a tendency of medium-to-high L2 writing anxiety for EFL learners in different contexts; the effect of student characteristics such as gender or education level on the L2 writing anxiety varies across studies; and that some

linguistic, social and individual factors emerge as the causes of anxiety.

The above-mentioned literature providing valuable data on mostly the adverse and debilitating influence of anxiety on L2 students' writing ability appears to involve abundant research, yet further studies are still needed for several reasons. First, the relevant research demonstrates a prevailing tendency towards quantitative methodology, drawing predominantly on descriptive or correlational data (Heiderzadi et al., 2022; Keyvanoğlu & Atmaca, 2023; Kırmızı & Kırmızı, 2015; Li, 2022; Mulyono et al., 2020; Quvanch & Na, 2022; Sabti et al., 2019; Woodrow, 2011). Qualitative and mixed-method studies, which may contribute to a more profound understanding of this skill-specific and highly personalized type of anxiety, are relatively few (Genç & Yaylı, 2019; Rabadi & Rabadi, 2020). Second, the contextual factors and individual differences among the experiencers of anxiety necessitate replicating research in different settings to reach a full-range framework to describe L2 writing anxiety. In Türkiye, the students at the English-major departments in state universities established in the past two decades suffer from low levels of L2 skill proficiencies (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019; Kamaşak et al., 2021). Writing is usually the most challenging and complex area for these students since it is the most-ignored skill in prior levels of education (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019), whereas it is one of the most necessarily demanded academic skills in their university departments (Altay, 2010). The emotional reactions of these students to this incompatibility remain unresolved and attract critical attention. To this end, the present study aimed to understand the L2 writing anxiety of a group of Turkish university students majoring in English Language and Literature in multiple aspects. The research sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the L2 writing anxiety levels and anxiety types of the participating Turkish EFL students?
2. To what extent do the differences across genders, years of study, and perceived L2 proficiencies affect the participating students' L2 writing anxiety?
3. What are the participating students' perceptions regarding the causes and effects of their L2 writing anxiety?
4. What are the strategies employed by the participants to cope with L2 writing anxiety?

Method

Research Design

The present research was designed as a convergent parallel mixed-methods study drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data sources with the aim of obtaining a thorough perspective on the subject. In this approach, the qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analysed separately, and the results are compared or related in the interpretation phase (Creswell, 2014). Using multiple datasets enabled methodological triangulation in the study, contributing to its overall credibility.

Research Sample

The participants of the study were a group of students studying at English Language and Literature Department at a state university in Türkiye in the 2021–2022 academic year. The preparatory-year students, the freshmen and the sophomores took part in the study as they actively practiced essay writing

in their courses. Total population sampling, which is a sampling method where all members of a target group are involved in a study (Etikan et al., 2016), was followed, and 138 students took part in the quantitative survey phase of the study, and eight students who volunteered by providing their contact information on the questionnaire sheets attended the interviews. Of these eight interviewees, seven were female students while one was a male student, and regarding their year of study, four of them were sophomores, two freshmen and two preparatory-year students. The students' gender, study year at the department and perceptions on their L2 proficiency were determined as the independent factors to be tested in terms of their effects on the students' responses to the questionnaire survey. Demographic information about the students responding to the questionnaire is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Information about the survey participants

Variable	n	%
Gender		
Male	33	23.9
Female	105	76.1
Year of Study		
Prep.	56	40.6
Freshmen	52	37.7
Sophomores	30	21.7
Perceived Proficiency		
Low	20	14.5
Intermediate	102	73.9
High	15	10.9
No response	1	0.7
Total	138	100

As Table 1 displays, the female students were in the majority (76.1 %) among the participants. As for the year of study, the group with the highest frequency was preparatory-year students (40.6 %), followed by the freshmen (37.7 %) and sophomores (21.7 %), respectively. Regarding the perceived L2 proficiency, 14.5 % of the students perceived themselves as low-proficiency learners, while 73.9 % and 10.9 % perceived themselves as medium-, intermediate- and high-proficiency L2 learners, respectively.

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

The quantitative research data were collected via a questionnaire survey form consisting of two parts: The personal information part inquiring about participant characteristics was determined to provide the learner variables of the study, and the Turkish version of the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) of Cheng (2004b) adapted by Ateş (2013) was used. The original scale was utilized in the majority of studies investigating L2 writing anxiety. The Likert-type scale is composed of 22 5-point response items. Cheng determined three subscales in the SCWAI: cognitive anxiety (8 items), somatic anxiety (7 items) and avoidance behaviour (7 items). Seven items on the scale (items 1, 4, 7, 17, 18, 21, and 22) are negatively worded, and therefore, reverse scoring is required before statistical analyses. The reliability and validity of both the original and translated versions were tested (Ateş, 2013; Cheng, 2004b). The Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.82 for the present study.

The qualitative data collection was fulfilled via an open-ended interview form comprising six questions. The researcher

designed the interview questions based on a review of relevant literature (Atay & Kurt, 2006; Genç & Yaylı, 2019). The interview questions basically interrogated the students' perceptions about the sources of L2 writing anxiety. More specifically the questions inquired personal, interpersonal and physical factors; the effects of anxiety on writing performance; the circumstances in which anxiety increased or decreased; personal strategies for coping with anxiety; and finally, suggested teacher and peer behaviours to alleviate anxiety.

The ethical approval for the present study was granted by İğdir University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on 11.05.2022 with the document number E-37077861-900-67266. Once the ethical committee approval was granted, the questionnaires and interviews were administered face-to-face within one week at the end of the 2021–2022 spring semester. The students volunteering to participate in the interviews were contacted via phone, and the interview dates were scheduled based on the availability of both the researcher and the students. The interviews, which took approximately 15 minutes, were carried out face-to-face and voice-recorded in the office of the researcher. The interview sessions were held in Turkish language for better self-expression. The researcher identified the category and theme titles directly in English and only translated the sample extracts.

Data Analysis

The student responses to the questionnaire were transferred into IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27). Descriptive statistics were used to obtain the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values for the variables of the study. Furthermore, in order to find out whether the student responses to each item varied across independent variables, inferential statistics of Independent Samples t-test and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were applied. As for qualitative data analysis, the interview voice-records were transcribed by the researcher and the student responses were subjected to thematic analysis, where codes, categories and themes were determined after the researcher read and reread the transcriptions to achieve a deeper understanding of the meanings in the utterances (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher went through the manual coding process twice and compared the extracted codes. A deductive approach was

adopted during the thematic analysis. In deductive thematic analysis, the researchers identify the themes based on their theoretical or analytical scholarly interests, and explicitly focus on certain aspects of the data rather than allowing themes with little relation to the research questions to emerge (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the present study, the third research question constituted the basic frameworks for the determination of the categories and themes.

Findings

Quantitative Findings

The students' L2 writing anxiety was measured by their responses to a total of 22 items in the SLWAI, and the mean values were interpreted according to the following categorization (Zheng, 2011):

Total score < 50 = low anxiety

50 < Total score < 60 = moderate anxiety

60 < total score = high anxiety

The mean value (M), standard deviation (SD), minimum (Min.), and maximum (Max.) values for the overall SLWAI are provided in Table 2 below. The mean value was found to be 67.55, indicating that the students in the study felt a high level of L2 writing anxiety.

Table 2. Descriptive values of the SLWAI

Scale	N	M	SD	Min.	Max.
SLWAI	138	67.55	13.74	29	106

The values for items subsumed under each L2 writing category in the SLWAI were also calculated. Table 3 presents the results for the cognitive anxiety items on the scale.

As clear from Table 3, the two items with the highest mean scores in the category of cognitive anxiety were item 9 (M = 3.90) and item 3 (M = 3.56), both of which indicated that the students had worries when their performances were assessed. The item with the lowest mean score was item number 14 (M = 2.79), which showed that the students were not as worried about being humiliated by peers due to their writing performance.

Somatic anxiety was another anxiety type found in the SLWAI. The values for the items related to this sub-construct are displayed in Table 4 below.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of cognitive anxiety items

Item	N	M	SD	Min.	Max.
1.While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.	138	3.15	1.26		
3.While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.	138	3.56	1.36		
7.I do not worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others.	138	3.15	1.53		
9.If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.	138	3.90	1.34		
14.I am afraid that the other students would deride my English composition if they read it.	138	2.79	1.48	1	5
17.I do not worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.	138	3.05	1.41		
20.I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.	138	3.12	1.40		
21.I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.	138	3.12	1.37		

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of somatic anxiety items

Item	N	M	SD	Min.	Max.
2.I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.	138	3.44	1.47		
6.My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.	138	3.36	1.47		
8.I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure.	138	3.15	1.45		
11.My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.	138	3.64	1.35	1	5
13.I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.	138	3.47	1.38		
15.I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.	138	3.31	1.30		
19.I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.	138	2.88	1.42		

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of avoidance behaviour items

Item	N	M	SD	Min.	Max.
4.I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.	138	3.18	1.11		
5.I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.	138	2.45	1.33		
10.I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.	138	2.49	1.28		
12.Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions.	138	2.40	1.34		
16.I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.	138	2.47	1.15	1	5
18.I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.	138	2.86	1.31		
22.Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.	138	2.61	1.24		

As depicted in Table 4, the highest mean values in this category were observed for item 11 ($M = 3.64$) and item 13 ($M = 3.47$), both indicating the anxiety caused by time constraints, while the lowest score was observed for item 19 ($M = 2.88$), which implied that strong psychosomatic disorders due to writing anxiety were not common among the students.

The final sub-construct of L2 writing anxiety, according to the SLWAI, was avoidance behaviour. Table 5 illustrates the statistical values for each item in this category.

It could be inferred from Table 5 that the category of avoidance behaviour had the lowest mean scores when compared to the other two constructs of writing anxiety. The items with the highest mean values in this part were item 4 ($M = 3.18$) and item 18 ($M = 2.86$), two reverse-coded items, which implied that the students avoided extracurricular writing activities. The items with the lowest mean values were item 12 ($M = 2.40$) and item 5 ($M = 2.45$), both of which were related to the avoidance of composition writing. The students reportedly did not avoid writing when required as a curricular task.

Table 6. T-test results for the SLWAI and gender relationship

	Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
SLWAI Perceptions	Female	105	3.10	0.61	1.149	0.253
	Male	33	2.96	0.64		
Cognitive anxiety	Female	105	3.25	0.67	0.625	0.533
	Male	33	3.17	0.77		
Somatic anxiety	Female	105	3.36	0.98	0.856	0.394
	Male	33	3.18	1.14		
Avoidance behaviour	Female	105	2.62	0.75	-.240	0.811
	Male	33	2.66	0.74		

Three learner variables (gender, study year at the department, and perceived L2 proficiency level) were determined as factors to be tested for their relation to L2 writing anxiety and its sub-constructs. The independent samples t-test analysis results for gender are provided in Table 6 below.

According to Levene's test for equality of variances, no significant differences existed between the variances of each gender group ($F = 0.042$; $p > 0.05$), enabling a statistical comparison despite the unequal group numbers. As demonstrated in Table 6, student responses did not significantly differ across the gender variable for either the overall L2 writing anxiety construct or its sub-constructs. ($p > 0.05$).

The second independent variable in the research was the students' year of study. Preparatory-year students, freshmen and sophomores were the participant groups. Their scores were compared via one-way ANOVA test, and the results are given in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Results for the SLWAI and year of study relationship

	Year	n	M	SD	F	p
SLWAI Perceptions	Prep.	56	3.04	0.61	0.372	0.690
	Freshmen	52	3.04	0.66		
	Sophomores	30	3.15	0.57		
Cognitive anxiety	Prep.	56	3.21	0.69	0.361	0.698
	Freshmen	52	3.20	0.75		
	Sophomores	30	3.33	0.60		
Somatic anxiety	Prep.	56	3.46	1.09	0.962	0.385
	Freshmen	52	3.19	1.02		
	Sophomores	30	3.26	0.89		
Avoidance behaviour	Prep.	56	2.45	0.59	3.322	0.039*
	Freshmen	52	2.71	0.85		
	Sophomores	30	2.85	0.76		

*p < 0.05

Table 8. Results for the SLWAI and perceived L2 proficiency relationship

	Level	n	M	SD	F	p
SLWAI Perceptions	Low	20	3.41	0.58	5.276	0.006**
	Intermediate	102	3.05	0.60		
	High	15	2.75	0.64		
Cognitive anxiety	Low	20	3.57	0.56	4.279	0.016*
	Intermediate	102	3.22	0.69		
	High	15	2.90	0.75		
Somatic anxiety	Low	20	3.77	0.92	3.808	0.025*
	Intermediate	102	3.31	1.01		
	High	15	3.84	0.97		
Avoidance behaviour	Low	20	2.87	0.69	1.260	0.287
	Intermediate	102	2.60	0.76		
	High	15	2.51	0.73		

** p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

The findings depicted in Table 7 showed that the year of study did not significantly influence student responses to the SLWAI ($p > .05$). As for the sub-dimensions, avoidance behaviour was the only factor in a statistically meaningful relationship with the variable of the year of study ($p < 0.05$). The sophomores had the highest mean value in this sub-scale, followed by the freshmen and preparatory year students, respectively.

Lastly, the students' perceptions about their L2 writing anxiety were tested across L2 proficiency groups. The one-way ANOVA test results are presented in Table 8.

According to the results given in Table 8, student responses to the SLWAI and the sub-constructs of cognitive anxiety and somatic anxiety differed significantly across their perceived levels of L2 proficiency ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$, respectively). The students perceiving themselves as higher-level L2 learners had lower anxiety, and those with the perception of lower proficiency had higher writing anxiety. In other words, the students' reported L2 writing anxiety reduced with increasing L2 proficiency perceptions.

Qualitative Findings

The study sought to make an in-depth exploration of L2 writing anxiety and with multiple aspects, therefore relied on student interviews inquiring about the underlying causes of EFL students' L2 writing anxiety, the effects of the anxiety on their performance, the personal strategies the students practiced to cope with the L2 writing anxiety in addition to their suggestions for appropriate teacher and peer behaviours to reduce anxiety. As a result of the aforementioned thematic

analysis procedure, three major themes were determined: causes of anxiety, effects of anxiety and ways of coping with anxiety.

Causes of L2 Writing Anxiety

The categories and subsumed codes for the causes of anxiety theme are displayed in Table 9 below. The causes of anxiety were divided into the categories of L2- and domain-related concerns, personal factors, interpersonal factors and external factors.

As shown in Table 9, the difficulties the students confronted during writing practices due to the inadequacy of their L2 competence and their domain-specific concerns were listed in the first category. Insufficient knowledge of content, language (particularly vocabulary, grammar, and syntax), essay organization, style, genre, and finally, writing about unfamiliar topics were among the major causes of L2 writing anxiety. Some students also reported fear of writing (S3), and anxiety due to the lack of prior writing experience while one student (S4) stated she had anxiety about losing cohesion while writing.

S1 felt concerned about both content and language as she wrote. She said:

"I cannot write when I have insufficient knowledge, both about content and topic. Let's say I would like to write about climate change. I can only write 50–70 words, no more. (...) I always write grammatically incorrect and incomplete sentences. I feel unhappy when my sentences do not make sense. And then I feel anxiety about whether I will make it or not."

Table 9. Codes and categories of the theme “causes of L2 writing anxiety”

Emerging theme	Emerging categories	Codes/keywords
Causes of anxiety	L2- and domain-related concerns	Insufficient content knowledge
		Insufficient L2 proficiency
		Essay components and organization
		Lack of prior writing experience
Personal factors	Personal factors	Poor cohesion
		Writing style and unfamiliarity with genre
		Fear of writing
		Writing about unfamiliar/disliked topics
Interpersonal factors	Interpersonal factors	Sense of inefficacy/inadequacy
		Thinking too much and too deeply
		Age and responsibilities
		Perfectionist approach
External factors	External factors	Grade-focused approach
		Comparison with peers
		Classmates' reluctance to participate and collaborate
		Peer pressure and competition
External factors	External factors	Peer derision
		Classmates' anxiety
		Working with others
		Strict grading and hypercritical teachers
External factors	External factors	Feedback in exam weeks
		Crowded, noisy and uncomfortable environments
		In-class feedback sessions
		Time constraints
External factors	External factors	In-class writing

S2 also had worries about her content knowledge, besides effective essay organization and correct use of essay components. She reported:

“I feel anxiety when I do not have enough knowledge about the topic I am supposed to write about. When I have satisfactory knowledge, I can write about that topic. But this time, I ask, ‘Is this what my instructor expects? Does it have an introduction? Does it include a thesis statement? Is it the heart of the matter?’ All these thoughts give me anxiety.”

Insufficient L2 proficiency lead students to worry about meaning as well as form. In this vein, S6 said,

“The biggest source of my anxiety is about conveying my thoughts appropriately in that language. We express our emotions effectively in our language, but in another language, can we do this correctly? (...)”

S3 found writing about a disliked topic as an anxiety-provoking factor. She reported:

“I never want to write about a topic I dislike. I would be very bored. If I force myself, I can do it, but I do not want to do that.”

In the “personal factors” category, the sense of inefficacy was the most commonly shared source of anxiety. In addition, as clearly shown in Table 9, thinking too long and too deeply while writing, having a perfectionist or grade-focused approach, and age and real-life responsibilities were the reported individual factors resulting in L2 writing anxiety. In this sense, S1 emphasized that she felt inadequate despite her over-studying. She said,

“When I cannot write, the thought that I will not make it again hits me. That feeling never ends. (...) I start writing very happily, but suddenly I say, ‘Will I fail again?’ and that feeling does not go away.”

The interpersonal factors in relation to L2 writing anxiety, as shown in Table 9, were related to the relations of the students with their instructor and peers, besides the behaviours of these actors. Self-comparison with peers, peer pressure and competitive atmosphere, peer derision, the peers' unwillingness to collaborate and participate in classroom activities, the anxiety of the peers and group work were the L2 writing anxiety factors pertaining to relations with peers, whereas strict, discouraging and hypercritical approaches were reported by students as instructor-led interpersonal sources of anxiety. Some sample quotes mentioning peer-led anxiety sources are as follows:

“When I feel that I cannot write, but everyone else can, I say, ‘Am I incompetent? Is there a problem with me? (...) Am I inadequate?’ (...) The cause of the anxiety I feel in class is seeing others write as I could not.” (S1)

“My classmates' reluctance demotivates me to write because I cannot feel that energy. When we do group work, only two or three students join. That demoralizes me, so I cannot write. I would like to get peer feedback to see my mistakes, but I cannot. (...) Writing without knowing whether I do it correctly or not, gives me anxiety.” (S4)

“I believe social factors definitely influence anxiety. For instance, we get anxious when we spend time with anxious people.” (S7)

“The biggest reason for my friends' pressure on me is that I am the most active student in classes. I get to be perfect, which can be emotionally exhausting. I feel overwhelmed and bored because I feel a lot of pressure.” (S8)

The students' comments about teacher-led sources of writing anxiety are exemplified below:

“I believe the instructor has a big effect. When that instructor makes eye contact with you during class or

accepts you as an individual, you feel happy and have enthusiasm to do something. (...) But some instructors do not even turn a hair when you try to contact them. That really pushes me away." (S3)

"I hate receiving feedback in exam weeks. We are already stressed due to exams, and entering an exam after a criticized performance creates higher anxiety." (S4)

"Some instructors are too strict. I failed a course with a score of 59. I could have passed if he had added one point, but he did not. As he is so grade-focused, I felt overstressed in the exam, and I failed. I could have passed if I had been more relaxed." (S7)

Referring back to Table 9, it can be seen that "external factors" is the third category in the theme of Causes of Anxiety. Time constraints was the most commonly mentioned item in this category. Crowded, noisy and uncomfortable studying environments, graded assignments, in-class writing and feedback sessions and exam atmosphere were also stated as physical factors in relation to L2 writing anxiety. The following are the sample quotes for this category:

"As I write at home, I feel relaxed because there is no time limitation and a chance of doing research, but during classes, I do not feel that relaxation. (...) The time constraint really affects me." (S1)

"Our lecture hall is noisy. Also, the light is not sufficient, and I cannot say that the seats are comfortable." (S4)

One of the students (S3), however, believed that the in-class writing tasks and the anxiety they created had a positive effect on her writing performance. She disclosed this situation as follows:

"I think even though the classroom environment gives me anxiety, I write better then. At dorm, I write with some help, and that paper is not my product at all. In class, when I cannot think of a sentence, I find another alternative, another word or sentence. (...) It increases my anxiety, but the effect is positive." (S3)

Effects of L2 Writing Anxiety

The students were explicitly asked to reflect on how their anxiety influenced their writing performance, and the majority acknowledged adverse effects, whereas there were also a few students who found the effect of anxiety positive and who did not perceive any negative or positive effects. Therefore, the theme was categorized into three groups: negative, positive and neutral effects of L2 writing anxiety.

As Table 10 presents, forgetting the already known information, feeling upset or angry, having a nervous breakdown, being unable to continue writing and being slowed down were the reported adverse effects of writing anxiety. Some sample quotes from interviews can be found below.

Table 10. Codes and categories of the theme "effects of L2 writing anxiety"

Emerging theme	Emerging categories	Codes/keywords
Effects of anxiety	Negative	Forgetting already known information Anger and nervous breakdown Anxiety as a barrier to writing Anxiety slows down writing
	Positive	Motivation to write better
	Neutral	Performance not affected Anxiety under control with planning/planned work

Table 11. Codes and categories of the theme "coping with anxiety"

Emerging theme	Emerging categories	Codes/keywords
Coping with anxiety	Anxiety-reducing factors and circumstances	Writing about favorite topics Peer and teacher – positive – feedback Teacher approval/motivation/support/attention Ungraded writing practices No time limitation Take-home assignments Being alone and focused
	Practices	Listening to music while writing Self-motivating words Giving a break to writing Learning new vocabulary Following process writing steps Retaining cohesion Improving L2 proficiency Doing practice and pre-study
	Suggestions	Clear and more explicit example essays Teacher motivation/support and feedback Peer support and more collective engagement in class Elimination of competition /peer pressure Less strict grading More interesting course books/materials

“When I start writing sentences, that anxiety all of a sudden, that perspiration. (...) It even changes the meaning of the sentence I write. I keep telling myself, ‘You can do it,’ but that anxiety... It stops me like a barrier. No matter how well I learn, all information I have learned so far suddenly disappears. (...) Then I feel sorry, and sometimes have a nervous breakdown after the anxiety.” (S1)

“Anxiety leads to thinking too much and that slows me down. (...) I sometimes think over a sentence for about half an hour.” (S8)

The student (S3) who reported the positive effect of anxiety on her writing performance explained:

“I think I can write better, as I feel anxious. That anxiety makes me write because I would procrastinate if I casually wanted to write something, or I would get some help. But what I write here reflects me.”

Ways of Coping with L2 Writing Anxiety

The final theme of the study was ways of coping with L2 writing anxiety, which consisted of three categories: L2 writing anxiety-reducing factors and circumstances, practices and suggestions. The theme, its categories and relevant codes are demonstrated in Table 11 below.

The students were asked to disclose factors and situations reducing their writing anxiety, and, as provided in Table 11 above, they reported lower anxiety in cases of writing about their favourite topics, receiving feedback from their peers and instructors, receiving supportive, motivating and approving words, and individual attention from their instructors, writing without temporal limitations, writing ungraded take-home assignments and studying alone. The following are some sample quotes extracted from student responses:

“I write very comfortably when there is no time limitation.” (S1)

“I feel less anxiety when I write take-home assignments as I have a chance of doing research. If I have background information, I feel less anxious.” (S2)

“My anxiety is lower when I write about a topic that is just my cup of tea.” (S3)

“I feel really good when I get feedback. I can correct the mistakes. I also feel better when I personally ask my friends and get some feedback.” (S4)

The students were requested to share their specific practices or strategies to avoid or lessen their L2 writing anxiety. As seen in Table 11, listening to music, using self-motivating words, giving a break when overwhelmed, learning new vocabulary to improve L2 competence, following the steps of process writing as instructed by the instructor, focusing on persevering cohesion, and improving general L2 proficiency were mentioned by the students as their personal ways of reacting to anxiety. Below are some sample extracts:

“I always keep learning new vocabulary. I search for the multiple meanings and uses of words. That reduces my writing anxiety.” (S1)

“I try the tactics you (the instructor) have taught us. I do the brainstorming first. I divide the topic into categories, like if I am supposed to write three (body) paragraphs, I divide the topic into three, and then I fill in the paragraphs.” (S2)

“I do this in the exam: I say, ‘You have done it before, and you can do it again.’ That is what I keep telling myself.” (S3)

“I do some practice. As I know that I will be asked to write essays in exams, I try to do some practice of exam-format

writing at home, like a rehearsal, so that I will not have anxiety in exams.” (S7)

“I listen to music at full blast before essay-writing exams.” (S8)

The final category of the third theme was based on the students’ suggestions about the ideal instructor and peer behaviours to help reduce writing anxiety. As listed in Table 11 above, their demands included clear and more explicit example essays (from the instructors), motivating and supportive instructor attitudes and more frequent feedback, peer support and more collective engagement during classes, less competition and peer pressure, less strict grading and more interesting course books and materials. Sample quoted words of the students are as follows:

“Not all instructors give the same reaction as we write essays. While one supports us, another might say, ‘How can you make this mistake?’ That triggers our anxiety. They could say, ‘You might not have the knowledge about a topic, but keep writing, keep producing’.” (S2)

“(…) I do not expect them (the instructors) to totally overlook our mistakes but they can be more tolerant about grading or evaluating us based on in-class performance.” (S8)

In a nutshell, the qualitative and quantitative findings demonstrated that the sample group in the present study had high L2 writing anxiety. The students’ gender and year of study did not significantly influence their anxiety, while their perceived L2 proficiency had a significant correlation with the reported anxiety. The qualitative findings enabled the researcher to make deeper observations on the causes and effects of anxiety and on the approaches to dealing with L2 writing anxiety from the perspectives of the students.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study primarily aimed to determine the L2 writing anxiety levels of a group of Turkish EFL learners, and the findings demonstrated a high level of L2 writing anxiety, which was anticipated, considering the productive, demanding and miscellaneous nature of writing (Hyland, 2016). Furthermore, writing has always been one of the most challenging and yet, least time-devoted areas in language classrooms in Türkiye (Karaca & Inan, 2020; Kulusaklı, 2021). It is not assessed in any of the national exams (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019), and contemporary and effective approaches to writing have been poorly applied in classroom practices (Graham et al., 2022). In the relevant literature, some studies have found moderate (Kırmızı et al., 2013; Li, 2022; Mulyono et al., 2020; Quvanç & Na, 2022), moderate to high (Genç & Yaylı, 2019; Zerey, 2013) and high (Keyvanoğlu & Atmaca, 2023; Rabadi & Rabadi, 2020; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014) levels of writing anxiety, indicating a definite presence of at least moderate levels of learner anxiety in the L2 writing context.

The cognitive anxiety items of the SLWAI with the highest mean scores were those indicating increased anxiety when the writing performance was to be evaluated. This finding was supported by the qualitative findings of the study. The students alleged that their anxiety was higher during exams and graded assignments. These findings receive support from earlier research in Turkish EFL contexts (Genç & Yaylı, 2019). The assessment-induced anxiety could be related to test-anxiety, which is a performance anxiety type resulting from the fear of failure (Horwitz et al., 1986). Besides, the students might feel higher anxiety during exams due to accuracy concerns, as they

had no chance to check their mistakes using an external source. The students stated that they felt less anxiety when they wrote at home, mostly owing to the opportunity to do research before or during the writing task. Cheng (2004a) similarly found that as the students were overly concerned about accuracy, they quite frequently resorted to resources, such as dictionaries while writing, and their anxiety accordingly increased when they had to write without any reference in exams.

The highest-scored somatic anxiety items in the SLWAI commonly indicated that time constraints in writing tasks led to restrictive body reactions such as losing concentration, perspiring or freezing up. This result was also supported by the findings from the interview responses. Several students emphasized that their anxiety increased with limited time and, on the contrary, reduced with no time limitations. Relevant literature also provides quite a few similar results regarding the relation of timed writing to anxiety (Cheng, 2004a; Genç & Yaylı, 2019; Kırmızı et al., 2015; Quvanch & Na, 2022). The students might be experiencing anxiety due to the fear of not finishing the writing task on time, and that anxiety may prevent them from writing fluently. Two of the students already stated that their anxiety slowed down their writing. Therefore, it might be suggested that the relationship between timed writing and anxiety was bidirectional.

The inferential statistics of the study demonstrated no statistically significant difference in student responses across gender and year of study variables. Avoidance behaviour was the only sub-dimension which was affected by the year factor. The students might have developed avoidance as an anxiety-coping strategy over time as the study results indicated an increasing trend of avoidance behaviour as the year of study advanced. The gender effect has been a controversial issue in writing anxiety research as there are studies asserting no significant effects of gender (Mulyono et al., 2020; Quvanch & Na, 2022; Zerey, 2013), whereas there are also some studies suggesting higher levels of L2 writing anxiety for female learners (Bailey & Almusharraf, 2022; Cheng, 2002; Kırmızı et al., 2015; Keyvanoğlu & Atmaca, 2023). Regarding the year of study, similar results have been yielded in previous research (Cheng, 2002; Quvanch & Na, 2022; Mulyono et al., 2020), while few contradicting findings are also available (Ekmekçi, 2018). Lastly, perceived L2 proficiency was the only student feature to be in a significantly negative relationship with L2 writing anxiety. The students who presumed themselves less proficient users of English reported higher level of anxiety. Lending support to these findings, Cheng (2002) found that students' perceived L2 competence was a stronger predictive factor of writing anxiety than their actual writing performance.

In addition to the aforementioned assessment concerns and time constraints, linguistic and skill-specific incompetence, a sense of inefficacy or inadequacy, interpersonal threats, such as peer pressure and competition or a hypercritical and strict approach by instructors, and physical factors, such as noisy environments or in-class feedback sessions were claimed by the students to be among the prominent causes of writing anxiety. Many other studies elucidating the causes of L2 writing anxiety lend support to the present findings (Genç & Yaylı, 2019; İlhan & Tutkun, 2020; Quvanch & Na, 2022; Rabadi & Rabadi, 2020; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014; Zerey, 2013). Similarly, Cheng (2004a, p. 41) investigated the L2 writing anxiety sources from the EFL students' standpoints and conceptualized a similar thematising, reporting that the students' writing anxiety was closely related with instructors' teaching practices, threats in interpersonal relations, students'

presumptions about writing and about their own capabilities of writing.

Students' inefficacy in using L2 effectively influenced their ability to express themselves, which, according to their allegations, led to anxiety. A common problem with the language learning practices of Turkish EFL learners is that they rely heavily on translation while writing (Çiftçi & Koçoğlu, 2012; Mutlu et al., 2015). It might, therefore, be interpreted that the students plan the content of their writing in Turkish and become demotivated and even panicked when they fail to find the exact English equivalent of the statement they create in Turkish. In a study which lends support to this interpretation, Bailey and Almusharraf (2022) found that the students using translation strategies, either using online translation tools or translating word-for-word by themselves, were those suffering the most from L2 writing anxiety. In a vicious circle, the more anxious the students felt, the more they resorted to translation tools.

The obligation to write about unfamiliar or disliked topics or in a certain genre was identified as another source of writing anxiety. In this sense, Cheng (2004a) suggested that students felt more anxiety when their instructors assigned topics with which they had limited familiarity. Genç and Yaylı (2019) also identified unfamiliarity with the genre and essay type as one difficulty students faced in writing. One possible way to overcome that challenge could be classroom instruction and relevant activities extending the students' content-based and text-based schematic knowledge (Hamed et al., 2014).

The students with higher anxiety tendencies commonly reported the fear of making mistakes or simply the fear of writing due to the belief that they could not achieve effective writing, signalling a sense of inefficacy or weak self-confidence. Self-efficacy beliefs are among the critical motivational variables in L2 learning (Woodrow, 2011). Bandura (1993) argues that students with low self-efficacy in academic terms are more liable to achievement anxiety. Han and Hiver (2018) also assert that anxiety maintains a negative association with positive self-efficacy beliefs. Similarly, students with a robust sense of self-confidence can write better essays as their confidence enhances their engagement in writing, making them more diligent, resilient and less apprehensive (Pajares, 2003). In this vein, the studies determining a negative association between self-efficacy or self-confidence and writing anxiety are manifold (Heidarzadi et al., 2022; Kırmızı et al., 2015; Li, 2022; Pajares, 2003; Woodrow, 2011).

As an interesting finding of the study, one of the students complained that she studied excessively, literally day and night, but still could not overcome the fear of failure, resulting in increased anxiety, which, in turn, negatively affected her writing performance. Overstudying is a phenomenon related to anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). Those students who have excessive concerns about their performances are inclined to display compulsive effort and study more to compensate for their errors, which may lead to frustration and anxiety when the grades do not improve.

Interpersonal factors were also identified as causes of writing anxiety. Although some students agreed on the negative effects of self-comparison, peer pressure and comparison, some responses diverged on the point of working preferences in that some students asked for more collaboration and support among peers, whereas studying alone was also preferred to working in groups. This result might be due to the

differences between the students' studying habits and learning styles.

Grade-focused and hypercritical instructor behaviours were also perceived as interpersonal factors augmenting anxiety. Overly strict and critical teacher approaches may evoke various negative emotions, one of which is apparently anxiety, whereas supportive teacher attitudes and actions might alleviate, or at least to some extent reduce, L2 anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). The present results received support from relevant literature (Kırmızı & Kırmızı, 2015; Quvanch & Na, 2022). Cheng (2004a) reported that the instructors' strict focus on linguistic accuracy made students more frustrated and stressed, and less motivated to write. The students' fear of making mistakes was one of the main sources of writing anxiety stemming from the belief that good writing equalled to making no mistakes, which was basically a result of the hypercritical approach of the instructors, especially in grading. Rezaei and Jafari (2014) studied the L2 writing anxiety of Iranian EFL learners and reported high levels of anxiety primarily due to the fear of negative teacher comments, besides other factors. Abolhasani et al. (2022) similarly found that apprehension about teacher and peer evaluation negatively predicted the students' writing performance.

Regarding the effects of anxiety, the results primarily pinpointed negative impacts, such as blocking or slowing down thinking and writing, and feeling anger and nervous breakdowns as a result of anxiety. Likewise, recent studies assert that anxiety during writing negatively influences performance (Abolhasani et al., 2022; Tahmoureshi & Papi, 2021; Wang, 2021; Zabihi et al., 2018; Zhang & Zhang, 2022). Still, there were few students who either found anxiety as a factor motivating them to write better or did not experience any negative or positive change in their writing performance due to anxiety. Genç and Yaylı (2019) similarly reported a negative effect of writing anxiety on student performance, excluding one student who believed that anxiety boosted his performance. Cheng (2002) purports that the interplay between writing anxiety and writing performance is complex and rests on numerous variables. The student experiencing writing anxiety may be feeling it in different types, levels or intensities, which might accordingly influence the extent of its impact on each student's writing performance.

The students responding to the interview had different coping strategies to relieve writing anxiety. Some sought to mitigate its effects by listening to music, using motivating self-talk, or taking breaks, while others focused on the causes of anxiety and tried to alleviate them. For instance, some sought ways to overcome the linguistic and rhetorical difficulties by improving L2 proficiency, doing practice and pre-study or abiding by the procedural steps, such as brainstorming, outlining and drafting as described by the instructor. Focusing on the anxiety-alleviating strategies of Emirati EFL students, Qashoa (2014) similarly found that the students attempted to promote their self-confidence and have a positive attitude toward writing, enhance their background L2 knowledge, practice and exercise essay writing. Jawas (2019) also identified the coping strategies of Indonesian EFL learners' strategies for reducing anxiety as developing an essay outline, enhancing background knowledge, taking breaks during writing, discussing the problems with peers or teachers, and finally striving to stay calm and focused. Although the students participating in the present study did not actively use teacher support as a coping strategy, they actually demanded it, suggesting that it would contribute to striving against anxiety.

Recommendations, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research

Reflecting on the present findings, a number of recommendations could be offered to EFL writing teachers who play a key role in monitoring and managing the process of learning even in the most student-centred approaches. It is first and foremost recommended that the L2 writing teachers/instructors focus primarily on the process of writing rather than the product, as the related literature already highlights observing the challenges students encounter and being more supportive and constructive, avoiding overcritical, merely accuracy-focused comments and discouraging feedback. Relevant research has shown that teacher feedback has facilitative effects on EFL students' writing self-efficacy (Ruegg, 2018), which was found to be acquainted with writing anxiety as reported above. Peer feedback activities in pairs or small heterogeneous groups should also be encouraged by the instructors. Furthermore, topic selection and time constraints should be minimized in order to encourage students to personalize and further internalize the task of writing. The students may be asked to practice more reflective writing in order to ponder their strengths and weaknesses, which may indirectly contribute to the enhancement of their self-efficacy beliefs and self-confidence.

This study was subject to some limitations. First, the participants in the study could only be institutionally representative, limiting the generalizability of the results to larger populations. Second, the study was cross-sectional, and therefore, the students' reactions to changing factors and conditions could not be observed. Despite these limitations, the study contributed to the relevant literature by illustrating high L2 writing anxiety experienced by students majoring in L2 fields with limited linguistic proficiency. The strength of the study was providing an exhaustive account of the writing anxiety construct by describing its levels, types, causes and effects as well as the effective coping strategies reported by the students. Further studies are recommended to evaluate the practical efficacy of the research suggestions discussed above. Furthermore, intervention studies are recommended for forthcoming research as they offer the potential to provide further practical and solid implications for teachers and students in reducing skill-specific anxieties.

Author Contributions

The author declares that no other author contributed to the study and that she has read and approved the final version of the study.

Ethical Declaration

Iğdır University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee granted approval for the present research on 11.05.2022 (Session no: 2022/7) with the document no. E-37077861-900-67266. The author confirms that research and publication ethics were followed in the study.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest with any person or institution.

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