The Effect of Cognitive Strategies on Iraqi EFL College Students' Writing Anxiety

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Abstract

Writing in English language demands both mental skills and a suitable level of language proficiency. Some studies showed that writing anxiety has an impact on the acquisition of language learning. This study; however, teaches the cognitive strategies (PLAY & WRITE) as a writing strategy, so as to decrease students' use of it when experiencing writing anxiety at the academic writing level. The sample has been (100) second-stage Department of English learners at the College of Education (Ibn –Rushd), in the University of Baghdad-Iraq. They have been randomly selected and divided into experimental and control groups; (50) students in each group. To achieve the objective of the study, SLWAI questionnaire has been distributed to the experimental group, who has been taught the writing strategies. Each student has to writte a minimum of 100-word essay topic once per week for 15 weeks. As for the control group, it has been taught using the conventional way. The hypothesis states that there is no effect of using the PLAN and WRITE Strategies on the Iraqi EFL College Students' Writing Anxiety. The instrument incorporated a SLWAI questionnaire that has been adopted from Cheng (2004). The pre-and post-questionnaire information has been analyzed using (SPSS). Essay writing strategies has found to have positive effects on decreasing the writing anxiety of the trial team. Furthermore, the composition strategies (PLAY & WRITE) facilitate the writing environments and decrease the tensions of students when writing a composition.

Keywords: Anxiety, Cognitive Strategies, EFL Writing, writing Anxiety

تأثير الاستراتيجيات المعرفية على القلق الكتابي لدى طلاب اللغة الانكليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية في الجامعة

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المستخلص

تتطلب الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية مهارة عقلية ومستوى مناسب من الكفاءة اللغوية. وقد أظهرت بعض الدراسات أن القلق الكتابي له تأثير في اكتساب تعلم اللغة. تبين هذه الدراسة ان تدريس الاستراتيجيات المعرفية (PLAY & WRITE) كاستراتيجية كتابة لتقليل استعمالها في القلق الكتابي عند الطلاب الأكاديميين. وتكونت العينة من (١٠٠) طالب من المرحلة الثانية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية التربية (ابن رشد) جامعة بغداد. تم اختيار العينات عشوائياً وقسمت على مجموعتين (تجريبية وضابطة)، وتم اختيار (٥٠) طالباً في كل مجموعة. لتحقيق هدف الدراسة، وزعت الاستبانة (SLWAI) والتي تم تبنيها من قبل (Cheng, 2004)، وقد وزعت على المجموعة التجريبية التي درست استراتيجيات الكتابة، حيث كتب كل طالب على الأقل ١٠٠ كلمة من عناوين مقالية مرة واحدة في الأسبوع لمدة ١٥ أسبوعًا، ودرست المجموعة الضابطة المادة بالطريقة التقليدية. نصت الفرضية أنه لا يوجد تأثير لاستعمال إستراتيجيات (PLAN وWRITE) على القلق عند الكتابة للطلاب العراقيين. وتم تحليل اجابات الطلبة قبل الاستبيان وبعده باستعمال (SPSS). وكان لاستراتيجيات كتابة المقالات تأثيرات إيجابية في تقليل القلق الكتابي لدى المجموعة التجريبية. نتائج هذا البحث بينت ان استراتيجيات (PLAY & WRITE) تسهل بيئة الكتابة وتقلل من التوتر لدى الطلاب عند الكتابة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستراتيجيات المعرفية، القلق، القلق الانشائي، الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية

1.Introuction

The structure of any language depends significantly upon composing; which is a beneficial ability integrated regularly till different abilities are presented. Second language writing needs a cognitive system notwithstanding an adequate degree of semantic capability. Thus, creating an efficient composed errand for EFL/ESL learner is viewed like striking accomplishment (Celce-Murcia, 1991). If the learners are nominated to write assignments, anxiety levels may increase.

Writing anxiety has been regarded an effective factor that obstructs the learning of language, as is the case with the experimental group in this research. Specifically, second language anxiety has been delineated as an explicit uneasiness circumstance in a target language that adversely impacts students (Horwitz, 2001). Basically, foreign language anxiety is an all-inclusive wonder that eventually obstructs students` achievement.

Writing strategies include intellectual procedures associated with the instructional teaching. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) showed (PLAY & WRITE) strategy as a cognitive strategy: **PLAN** strategy, where P stands for: **P**ay attention to the prompt/or repetition (e.g., utterance in a language task), L stands for: **L**ist the main meaning (with consideration regarding significance, for a composed task), A stands for: **A**dd supporting thoughts, N stands for: **N**umber the presented thoughts. On the other hand, **WRITE** strategy included: W, which stands for: **W**ork from the arrangement to create sentences, R, which stands for: **R**emember composing objectives, I, which stand for: **I**nclude interpretation (using primary language to understand second language), T, which stands for: **T**ransfer (utilizing recently procured semantic information to encourage a language assignment), and E, which stands for: **E**xciting. It is important to lessen the level of anxiety resulted from practicing a foreign language. The practice of such a strategy is the first and most vital arrangement of psychological strategies.

Instructors can assist learners to deliver different instances of second language to reflect their essays. Instructors likewise can support students by holding successful input to them to increase students' abilities. Research papers showed the way essayists lean toward learners' input, criticism or substance, and explicit remarks with explicit methodologies for reexamining (Zamel, 1985; Hyland, 2003).

Negari and Rezabaadi (2012) clarified, tension could have two sides: merit and demerit that impact students' achievements. This shows the significant function of an essay capacity at the students' level. It further reflects how issues of instructing anxiety require fixing and precising learner's production. Accordingly, Brown (2007) asserted a positive issue, saying that positive and negative anxiety can coexist as effectively as needed. The positive anxiety is utilized in a good way for adapting assignment and making the students emotionally ready for that. Krashen (1982) concluded that having less anxiety is useful with a piece of writing in classroom.

Writing anxiety occurs when there are students who are hard or sufficiently equipped mentally to complete their homework to produce a composition (Zheng, 2008). Anxiety, in particular, already appears to effectively affect the limit of the working memory. Forcing an immediate danger to execute an uneasiness in a target language was related to the three nerves, including: correspondence worry, test nervousness, and dread of negative assessment. In this vein, Young (1991) indicated that writing nervousness is incited to various interrelated elements that connect three unmistakable angles: students, instructor, and materials. Specifically, exact research has approved that uneasiness impedes execution. It further: **(a)** educationally refers to the connection with less scholastic accomplishment, **(b)**mentally refers to uneasiness that might go about a full of feeling channel, obstructing data from entering the subjective preparing framework. Therefore, it is inclined to impact both the quick of writing an exactness, and the personal status of the student, as

language learning may turn into a disagreeable or even an awful involvement (Zheng, 2008).

The present study plans to answer the question of exploration inquiries regarding the impact of composing systems on composing nervousness among Iraqi students: "**Is there any anxiety in writing second language essays among Iraqi students?**".

Accordingly, this paper aims to find out the effect of adopting the teaching instruction (PLAY & WRITE) as writing strategies on the Iraqi EFL students` writing anxiety. Consequently, the research is to tackle the following question: "**Are there any differences between the means in the control and experimental groups when adopting the teaching instruction (PLAY and WRITE) as composition strategies on the academic students` writing anxiety**? Specifically, the hypothesis of this study is that there is no statistically significant distinction in the mean values between the treatment group, that is given cognitive writing strategies, and the comparison group, that is instructed to use the traditional method of teaching writing anxiety post questionnaire.

The reason and significance of this investigation is to offer direction for cognitive strategies (PLAY and WRITE) intended to diminish composing nervousness in the second/unknown dialect securing. To fill the gaps, the reason for this examination is to actualize a writing strategy (PLAY and WRITE) to lessen the composition tension dimensions within unknown dialect students. The underlying speculation is that by applying an adequately planned learning condition, unknown dialect nervousness would reduce.

2. Theoretical Background
2.1 Writing Strategies

In English, the implementation of L2 writing is perplexing. This begins with a strategy that is more process-focused than product-focused. The main outcome of the product-focused strategy in composition reflects quality tactics. The latter demonstrates if the learners are familiar and competent participants with the target data. The later

approach, on the other hand, includes a variety of tasks, i.e., strategies, to promoting a proficient use of expression. Written communication techniques tend to improve those of effective learners in a good way of writing (Mu, 2005).

Sasaki (2000) divided writing strategies upon many key types: preparing, recalling, producing ideas, verbalizing, interpreting, rereading, assessing. Mu (2005) described five wider types of composition techniques: **(1)** argumentative methods that are used by authors to coordinate, or introduce thinking recorded as a hard copy. Such a strategy is satisfactory from the writer's point of view; **(2)** thinking skills, which allude in methodologies, journalists a creative cycle formal tone; **(3)** intellectual approaches that indicate the techniques used by the students who apply authentic composing activities; **(4)** communicating approaches that show methodologies of scholars communica**ting** thoughts in a powerful manner; and **(5)** interpersonal approaches that express methodologies leaners connect to explain a few inquiries and to manage feelings, inspiration, and mentalities in their composition.

Self-Reflective Strategy Development (SRSD) is a strategy that assists learners to know explicit procedures like: arranging, formulating, and changing content. Students are likewise shown various self-reflection aptitudes: (counting objective setting, self-observing, self-guidance, and self-support) that help enable them to oversee composing techniques, the composition procedure, and their conduct. Memory helpers are acquainted with assistance learners' recollect procedures to build composing execution. The two strategies, PLAN and WRITE are two cognitive strategies in SRSD approach:

- PLAN is an abbreviation of (Pay regard for the brief, List the important thought, Add supporting thoughts, Number your thoughts).
- WRITE is an abbreviation of (W: Work from your arrangement to build up your proposition articulation, R: remind objectives, I: indicate

progress word in each section, T: try to utilize various types of structures, and E: Exciting, fascinating) (De La Paz & Graham, 2000, p. 90).

Subjective systems imply that learners will use the "PLAN and WRITE" strategies to improve their comprehension of the educational issues. There individual differences among students in terms of being gifted, average, disabled, struggling with assignments. Such students will benefit from the use of such strategies (Pressley, 2002).

Composing teaching strategies is a standout amongst the popular explored composition projects (Khalil, 2018), showing composing upgrades for learners of different ages and capacities (Schnee, 2010). The "PLAN and WRITE" strategies were actualized in an unknown dialect setting with the end goal of this investigation. The "PLAN and WRITE" strategies (Graham & Harris, 2005) help students in creating key composition generation techniques, as in: (arranging, sorting out, reexamining, self-direction methods.

The Graham and Harris' (2005) "PLAN and WRITE" strategies show a multi-segment composing execution methodology that has approved its adequacy through the exact proof. It has also a dynamic observational reason for its viability. The "PLAN and WRITE" educational strategies have appeared recorded as a hard copy that has been kept up after some time and summed up crosswise over setting, classifications, and individuals. This advances the accompanying educational key-components on:

(i) Higher request intellectual and metacognitive procedures instructed through unequivocal educational systems.

(ii) Explicit self-administrative techniques, for example, objective setting, self-checking, self-assessment, and self-support.

(iii) An adaptable and versatile composition procedure addressing educators who require such a standard class environment, including recent techniques like redesigning from recently shown methodologies (Graham & Harris, 2003).

Fundamentally, the "PLAN and WRITE" strategies help students in encouraging positive situations that animate learners' dynamic learning. They, at the same time, fortify scholastic accomplishment that cultivates a positive conduct and supports learning. That is, the SRSD appears to have a solid and beneficial outcome on the nature of learners' composition and demonstrates through this examination to decrease the writing anxiety on the part of the students.

2.2 The Cognitive Anxiety in Writing

The mental ability category of stress forms recognizes the apprehension in learners who are typically nervous inside a different situation (communication apprehension) and those who are worried only in explicit circumstances (state anxiety). Communication apprehension seems to be a slowly improving physical attribute, whereas psychological distress is a transient reaction to that same event (Horwitz, 2001). Anxiety as a concept is referred to as "foreign language anxiety FLA", whereas handwriting anxiety is an ability trait. However, both represent a constant feature as well as a temporary state brought by different variables.

During the 1990s, studies on FLA formed the starting informative researchers, as scientists tested the reasons and effects in the scientific investigations. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) defined second language anxiety as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specially connected with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, reading and writing". (p.71)

Bloom's (1985) concept of composing apprehension appears to include l2 learning apprehension in both cognitive and functional contexts. He proposed that the word composing anxiety is seen to identify individuals who show one or a combination of emotions, beliefs or behaviors that interact with ability of a person to begin or perform on or complete an assigned assignment of composition. That is, he or she is mentally competent of writing.

Anxiety can be formulated as having three-dimensions, as Cheng (2004) stated. A unidimensional perception of anxiety, as she described, considers anxiety as a unifying,

transactional process. That is, it includes no subscales, and creates only one summary number. A multifaceted construct of anxiety, on the other hand, recognizes anxiety as consisting of many interdependent factors or components. However, these characteristics or dimensions are all crucial components of the notion of planetary stress on a more abstract level. A comprehensive scale of stress is created from this point of view and consists of multiple subscales that are designed to assess the different aspects of stress. Cheng (2004) made a distinction between three types of anxiety: somatic, cognitive, and avoidance behavior. A person's sense of the physiological consequences of experiencing worry is referred to as somatic anxiety. This perception is manifested in an escalation of unpleasant feelings like tension and anxiousness. The term "cognitive anxiety" describes the cognitive component of anxiety experiences, such as unfavorable expectations, obsession with performance, and worrying about how others will see you. Writing avoidance is an example of avoidance behavior, which is a behavioral manifestation of anxiety.

The second language writing anxiety inventory was created by Cheng (2004) based on the three-dimensional conceptualization (SLWAI). Items on the first somatic anxiety subscale are related to a person's "increased physiological arousal" (ex., feeling stressed or anxious). On the other hand, items on the second cognitive anxiety and third avoidance behavior subscales are connected to a person's fear of being given a bad grade. This reflects their propensity to avoid L2 writing tasks. A score measuring the level of response in each anxiety dimension can be obtained by adding the items on each subscale.

2.3 Related Previous Studies

More empirical research is needed because foreign language writing anxiety appears to be a problem for many students (Gnokou, 2011). Thus, Gnokou (2011) conducted a study on 218 EFL graduate students studying engineering-related areas to examine their writing anxiety and self-efficacy attitudes. Students who scored higher on the writing self-efficacy scale reported

less anxiety. More significantly, this research supported Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert's (1999) results in that writing anxiety in English and classroom anxiety in foreign languages are related but distinct variables. Writing anxiety was found to be caused by attitudes toward writing classes, self-deprecation when writing in English, and worrying about receiving a bad grade in Gnokou's (2011) study.

Based on many studies, cognitive anxiety appears to be the most common type. Using Cheng's (2004) SLWAI, Jebreil, Azizifar, Gowhary, and Jamalinesari (2015) assessed the writing anxiety of 45 Iranian EFL students majoring in English language instruction at various competence levels, including elementary, intermediate, and 21 advanced. The findings showed that there was a lot of anxiousness among the kids. Aside from that, avoidance behavior and bodily anxiety were the most prevalent forms of anxiety.

Similarly, studies indicated that students with the highest levels of writing anxiety produced essays that were shorter and less competent than those of their peers who experienced the lowest levels of writing anxiety. Furthermore, research demonstrated that writing anxiety in English as a Second Language (ESL) can have significant negative consequences on both ESL writing accomplishment and writing quality (Cheng, 2004). However, studies also demonstrated that there are approaches to dealing with foreign language writing anxiety, as there were established instructional practices related to students' levels of anxiety in foreign language classrooms. Since writing anxiety is a common problem for ESL writers, several research focused on finding instructional strategies that could reduce it (Veit, 1980).

The impact of prewriting exercises on the writing performance and anxiety levels of at-risk fifth-grade pupils were the main focus of Schweiker-Marra and Marra's (2000) study. The individuals were assisted by a writing program that made use of pre-writing exercises in order to test if subjects' anxiety levels would decrease and their ability to express themselves in writing would increase (Al-Asadi & Al-Issa, 2022).

According to the findings of the study, the experimental group's written expressiveness and anxiety levels were both improved. Because of the training given and the emphasis placed on prewriting activities, the experimental group, more than the control group, felt less anxiety about writing and thought that less effort was required from them during the writing process.

In a related study, Ozturk and Cecen (2007) looked at how portfolios affected students' levels of writing anxiety. The latter's theory was supported by an empirical study demonstrating the value of portfolio maintenance in the teaching of foreign languages. Data was gathered using the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004), a background questionnaire, and two reflective sessions. The study revealed the value of portfolio as a teaching strategy that would be readily embraced by all prospective (100%) language teachers, and its benefits in helping L2 learners overcome writing anxiety.

Fundamentally, the current body of research is not just interested in determining why language learners experience such high levels of anxiety when writing in a foreign language. However, they are also worried about how they will handle it. The effects of cognitive anxiety writing skill improvement on the anxiety levels of foreign language learners are a significant issue that has not yet been researched.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The population involved second stage college students in the University of Baghdad/ College of Education/ English Department. The population is (179), divided into four groups. The sample of the study consists of (100) learners from two groups: Group (A), which consists of (50) randomly chosen students to represent the control group. The latter is exposed to conventional teaching. As for group (B), which consists of (50) students to represent the experimental group. This group is exposed to the teaching (PLAY & WRITE) Strategies. The SLWAI questionnaire has been distributed before and after teaching the two groups.

3.2 Equalization

The academic levels of the mother, the father, the students' ages are the variables that should be equalized in the two groups. The pre-test results have indicated that the variables in question are non-significant. Besides, the pre-questionnaire T-Test statistical analysis of equalization between the two groups has shown to be non-significant at level of (0.05).

3.3 Instruments of the Study

The second language writing anxiety inventor (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) was adopted in the study. The scoring scheme is 5-point Likert response format (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = no strong feelings either way; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree). The pilot part of study consisted of (15) second stage students taken from section C. To measure EFL college students' writing performance, an essay writing test has been used to test the students following the instructions of the PLAY AND WRITE strategy in the experiment group. The same test has been applied on the control group, who adopted the conventional teaching strategy. The test consists of two questions; the students should choose one of the topics to write about. There are also five criteria that constitute the writing test score formula. These include the following: organization, contents, structure, punctuation and spelling, and form and clarity of interpretation (Brown, 2007) These elements range in level from five to one. Consequently, a student can receive a maximum score of 25 and a minimum score of 5.

The SLWAI comprises of **(a)** somatic anxiety, **(b)** avoidance behavior, and **(c)** cognitive anxiety, three characteristics that characterize the SLWAI subscales. The Somatic Anxiety Subscale include the following items: (2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, & 19). The Avoidance Behavior Subscale include the following items: (4, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18, & 22), and the Cognitive Anxiety Subscale include the following items: (1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20, & 12). That is; each subscale consists of seven items on the SLWAI (consider Table 1).

Somatic anxiety is the awareness of the physical consequences of stress as manifested in

the elevated "physiological stress" and unpleasant emotional states, such as tightness and anxiousness. Avoidance behavior is the practice of avoiding writing. Cognitive anxiety is the concern with low emotions, fear of failure, and exam anxiety (Morris, Davis, Hutchings, 1981). In order to better understand the concept of anxiety from a comprehensive standpoint, a global score has also been included in the research (Cheng, 2004). The higher scores on the subscales and overall SLWAI score indicate a higher level of physiological writing anxiety, arousal, avoidance tendency, or fear/worry related to L2 writing. In the SLWAI, some sentences are generated as negations, and their values have then been inverted and recorded, so that in every instance, a high score denotes a high level of worry.

Judging from the perspective of face validity, which entails the degree to which a tool seems to assess what it promises to measure (Mills & Gay, 2019), the SLWAI survey has been given to five ELT jury members to examine it.

All coefficients for the SLWAI variables, as measured by the Cronbach Alpha (somatic anxiety = 0.77, avoidance behavior = 0.80, and cognitive anxiety = 0.82), have been shown to be internally consistent. The element correlations and inter-factor correlation offered additional evidence for the validity of the SWAI subscales. These results have shown that the three SLWAI subscales exhibited strong internal consistency, according to DeVellis (1991). The test-retest reliability estimates for the three subscales—0.82 for the somatic anxiety subscale, 0.83 for the avoidance behavior subscale, and 0.81 for the cognitive anxiety subscale—have likewise found to be satisfactory.

Table 1
The Second Language writing Anxiety (SLWAI)Items with Three Factors

Items of the Factors	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 no strong feelings either way	4 agree	5 strongly agree
1. I am not at all anxious while I am writing in English. **(Cognitive anxiety)**					
2. When I write English compositions under time constraint. I feel my heart pounding. **(Somatic anxiety)**					
3. If I know my English compositions will be graded, I will become anxious and restless while composing them. **(Cognitive anxiety)**					
4. I often decide to put my ideas when writing in English **(Avoidance behaviour)**					
5. I usually try to stay away of writing English essays. **(Avoidance behaviour)**					
6. When I begin to work on an English composition, my mind frequently goes blank. **(Somatic anxiety)**					

7 I have no concerns about the quality of my English compositions compared to others'. **(Cognitive anxiety)**

8. When I compose English essays under time constraints, I shiver or perspire. **(Somatic anxiety)**

9 I would be concerned about receiving a very low score if my English essay was to be examined. **(Cognitive anxiety)**

10. I try to stay away from circumstances when I must write in English. **(Avoidance behaviour)**

11. When I am writing English essays in a hurry, my thoughts get confused. **(Somatic anxiety)**

12. I would not utilize English to produce compositions unless I had no other option. **(Avoidance behaviour)**

13. When I have a deadline for an English composition, I frequently feel nervous. **(Somatic anxiety)**

14. If the other students reads my English composition, I will feel worried a they might criticize it. **(Cognitive anxiety)**

15. When I am unexpectedly asked to write an essay in English, I get nervous. **(Somatic anxiety)**

16.If required to produce an English composition, I will try my best to explain why. **.(Avoidance behaviour)**

17. I am not at all concerned with what other people think of my English compositions. **(Cognitive anxiety)**

18. I often look for every opportunity to compose English compositions outside of class. **(Avoidance behaviour)**

19. When I write English compositions, I typically feel tense and rigid throughout my entire body. **(Somatic anxiety)**

20. I worry that my English essay will be used as a sample for a class discussion. **(Cognitive anxiety)**

21. I have no concern that my English writings will be given a very low grade **(Cognitive anxiety)**

22. I would write compositions in English whenever possible. **(Avoidance behaviour)**

3.4 Procedure

Two groups—experimental and control—have been created from the sample of the study. In the first week, the two groups were examined a SLWAI questionnaire (Table 1) within (45) minutes to identify whether or not the students' writing reflects any writing anxiety. Then, the analyst has taught the writing course to the two classes. The control group has been taught using the conventional teaching strategy, while the experimental group has been taught using the PLAN and WRITE strategies in order to decrease the tension when the students write their essays. After fifteen weeks, the test has been distributed to the control group. The test consists of two questions, the students should choose one of the topics to write about, and the devoted time is (45).

The implementation of the framework PLAN and WRITE strategies consists of several adoptable stages of PLAN (where P stands for: **P**ay attention to the request, L represents a **L**ist of the basic principle, A entails **A**dd support thoughts, and N indicates the **N**umber to each thought). As for WRITE (**W** stands for **W**ork the outline like a guide to create the topic sentences, R stands for **R**emember the objectives, I stands for: **I**nclude transition words for each paragraph, T stands for: **T**ry to use variety of sentence types, and E stands for **E**nthusiastic and informative.) (De La Paz & Graham, 2000). In other words, students enhanced their writing, syntax, and lexicon abilities, and the communicative

approach was emphasized in combination with each other in order to engage students in meaningful activities and sufficient power. To build the writing format explanatory essay, specific, focused, and structured teaching on creative thinking and an inclusion of fundamental genre-specific components was used. The phases of selecting a topic, analyzing the objective, determining the target, collecting, and arranging thoughts were the main focus of education.

Using SPSS, the gathered data was examined. The employment of the writing techniques by the students and the ratings of writing anxiety were described using statistical analysis. Then, Pearson's correlation coefficient was carried out to calculate the reliability of the pre-post-questionnaire, identify how the writing strategies affect the writing stress by using one sample T-Test, and to check if there are any changes between the two classes in terms of the effect of the writing strategies on writing anxiety levels.

3.5 Results and Discussions

The purpose of this study is to "investigate the impact of the teaching writing strategies, (PLAY and WRITE) on writing anxiety among Iraqi EFL college students," and the hypothesis of the study is that "There are no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the control group and the mean score of the experimental one' in terms of students' writing anxiety in writing strategies."

To find the effect of these writing strategies on the students' levels of writing anxiety, the researcher has distributed the pre- post questionnaire to the students. Table 2 illustrates the calculations of the T-Test results obtained from the students' responses to the post-questionnaire in the experimental and control groups regarding the three domains (somatic anxiety, avoidance behavior, and cognitive anxiety). On the SLWAI scales, there really are substantial differences between the students in the experimental and control groups, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

The Results Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD) of One Sample T-Test (Control/Experimental Groups) in each of the SLWAI Subscales Post Questionnaire

SLWAI subscales	Groups	N	Mean	SD	Df	T-Test	Level of significant
Somatic Anxiety	Experimental	50	2.02	0.45	98	2.638	0.001
	Control	50	3.78	0.62	98	1.456	0.001
Avoidance Behaviour	Experimental	50	2.41	0.37	98	2.532	0.001
	Control	50	3.45	0.64	98	1.81	0.001
Cognitive Anxiety	Experimental	50	1.67	0.32	98	2.71	0.001
	Control	50	2.42	0.54	98	1.51	0.001

Examining somatic anxiety, the first subscale (post questionnaire) in each experimental and control group has been T=2.638,1.456 sig < 0.001, a significant decrease, which has revealed in the experimental group means (2.02) sig < 0.001. However, the control group mean in the questionnaire is (3.78). In the post-measure, students participating in the experimental condition are shown to reveal

significantly lower somatic anxiety compared to those in the control group, (2.02,3.78), sig. < 0.001.

The t-test value of the second variation, (avoidance behaviour) in each experimental and control group is T=2.532 ,1.81 sig < 0.001. In the post questionnaire, a significant decrease appears in the mean of the experimental group (2.41 -3.45), which is sig < 0.001 in the post-

measure. The experimental condition of the students reveals a significant lower avoidance behavior compared to those in the control group at the level of significance (0.001).

For the cognitive anxiety, the t-test values are (2.71, 2,51) sig < 0.001. The mean experimental group score (1.67) shows a decrease of cognitive anxiety. However, in the control group, significant changes are shown in the post measures (2.42). In the post-questionnaire, the students in the experimental condition reveal a significant lower cognitive anxiety compared to those in the control group (1.67,2.42), sig < 0.001. In the post-questionnaire of experimental group, there is a significant effect of the writing strategies on having less cognitive anxiety (0.32), and less avoidance anxiety (0.37), and also less somatic anxiety (0.45). Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is accepted. The mean scores of the two groups differ significantly in favor of the experimental group using the cognitive strategies due to having less writing anxiety on the part of the students.

3.6 Discussion

According to the findings of this study, anxiety that appears when writing in the second language also poses a barrier to language learners' ability to write. Horwitz (2001) The major findings have shown that when learners employ the PLAN and WRITE techniques, they are able to write more easily and with a lesser stress. Learners who use the PLAN and WRITE techniques are more confident in their work, use correct punctuation, and have a better time understanding mental information. PLAN and WRITE techniques help learners write with less mental stress. In a related study, like that of Ozturk and Cecen (2007), how inventories influenced students' perceptions of academic stress were examined. They discovered a factor that lessens students' anxiousness. The experimental group's low levels of writing cognitive apprehension significantly outperformed the control group's mean scores on the writing anxiety scale, as shown in Table 2.

The findings of assessing SLWAI (Cheng, 2004) have been found to describe both groups of individuals in all the three anxiety subscales measured: physiological anxiety, cognitive anxiety, and behavioral anxiety (control and experimental). These results support Cheng's (2004) assertion that cognitive distress is strongly correlated with test anxiety or disapproval and may have a substantial impact on the quality of L2 writing. Students who struggle with exam anxiety or a fear of failing exhibit cognitive anxiety interference and have trouble concentrating on the current writing assignment (Jaafar, 2020). Both groups of students in the post test of behavioral anxiety among learners have avoided writing in English when it is necessary. Thus, the avoidance behavior that comes as a result of ESL writing anxiety would prevent the growth of L2 writing, as is the case with the identical experiment study (Jebreil et al., 2015).

In particular, following the process of PLAN and WRITE strategy application, the anxiety levels of the experimental group decreased, particularly with relation to cognitive anxiety. The results confirm earlier findings that worry affects students' writing abilities negatively and poses a direct danger to writing activities. The results of this study also corroborate earlier studies that demonstrated how learners' academic success was hindered by their fear when writing in a foreign language. The results of this study confirm Horwitz's (2001) portrayal of foreign language anxiety as a negative emotional response to language learning, which highlights the crippling consequences of worrying on language learning (Horwitz, 2000). The results also support an earlier study that found stress to be an emotional factor that hinders learning and/or producing a second language (Horwitz, 2001).

Cognitive strategies (PLAY/WRITE) have been demonstrated to have significant benefits on L1 writing anxiety in pupils. However, the lack of sufficient empirical research has drawn attention to the need for training frameworks that

prioritize the cognitive strategy instruction (Horwitz, 2001) to reduce the cognitive load on young learners of foreign languages and, as a result, reduce anxiety. Few studies examined young college students' writing processes in the second or foreign languages and the way such processes are related to anxiety levels. This gap in the literature has been filled by the current investigation. The significance of this study lies in the fact that the findings support the effectiveness of the strategies of the PLAY/WRITE strategies in writing. Such findings demonstrate that anxiety associated with writing in a foreign language is decreased when language skill development is improved.

4. Conclusions

To answer the research question, which reads, **how writing strategies impact EFL students' writing anxiety?**, the researcher has focused on the quantity and variety of the writing techniques utilized by students as well as the quantity and variety of the writing anxiety they encounter. It has been revealed that the students used writing strategies and that their stress over writing decreased, with the cognitive subscale being the most significant. This suggests that students were particularly anxious and frightened when a creative paper was being assessed.

Additionally, the correlation between anxiety and the strategies suggests that although the educators are intimately aware of implementing a good range of approaches, they lack the skills or time to identify the set of strategies that will work best for them and to put more emphasis on the process than the final product. Thus, teachers are recommended to concentrate on teaching the writing process and to look into how their students' use of writing techniques relates to the writing ability and written stress. They can then assist their students in determining which writing technique performs perfectly on them, and in comprehending how these techniques can both improve their EFL writing performance and reduce anxiety. Teachers can then include writing into their lessons in this manner.

The present study is proposed to find out the impact of students` use of composition strategies on their writing anxiety. Such information demonstrates that students who utilize powerful composition strategies perform best in writing essay. Likewise, EFL educators additionally need to apply endeavors to enable learners to see how their composition methodologies can impact their EFL composing nervousness. This study demonstrates that their composition worry could be decreased when using the strategies of fitting composition procedures. The questionnaire has accordingly been used to quantify the way the learners' composition uneasiness levels may give valuable data about the effect of an unknown composing tension dialect.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- future research places greater attention on other writing techniques.
- It might also be advantageous to investigate the causes of writing anxiety more extensively rather than only concentrating on its degrees.
- It is advised to conduct more research in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject of teaching, the growing SL writing talent, and of the variables that affect it.
- Examining the different writing classes with different writing strategies to improve students' types of writing and to write better and feel less anxious about it.
- The PLAY/WRITE strategy should be drilled by EFL instructors at the college level ahead of schedule. Sufficient practice can adequately influence ESL to make improvement and reduce the learners' English organization anxiety. For example, through remembering and imitating, learners can be comfortable with various points and sorts of English writings. Adopting this procedure, the instructor ought to outfit learners with adequate data and materials as satisfactory chances of guided practice.
- In any case, it ought to be called attention to the objective of ESL in that composing, learning and instructing should not only

remain at the dimension of stages of EFL training. Besides, one should also use modern strategies in the professional development.

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