

Factors of Writing Anxiety and the Overcoming Strategies among EFL Students in Afghanistan

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the level of writing anxiety, the factors of writing anxiety as well as the overcoming strategies among EFL students in Afghanistan. This small scale study was conducted quantitatively among 15 Afghanistan students from different universities. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents were experiencing low level of anxiety. In analyzing the factors of writing anxiety, it was found that external factors such as teacher's evaluation, examination, writing assignments, and time constraint have higher influence on students writing anxiety than internal factors. While, findings on the strategies used by the students showed that affective strategies are the most preferable strategy to overcome anxiety compared to metacognitive and cognitive strategy. This study has provided the insight on writing anxiety among EFL students in Afghanistan which would help educators to plan their writing lesson while taking students' writing anxiety into consideration.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan is a multilingual country with more than 40 languages being spoken as daily basis. The two official languages of Afghanistan are Dari and Pashto. In Afghanistan, English is perceived as the foreign language and is taught as a subject from elementary school until tertiary level education. In recent years, the importance of English language has been acknowledged and students' performance in English language has become one of the conditions for university admission for undergraduate studies in various department such as science, medical, dentistry, engineering, etc. Starting from 2001, English has been use as the medium of instruction for most Afghan universities. Besides, university students are also required to take English courses as part of university requirement for at least 4 credits regardless of their program and major, and writing is part of the assessment involved.

Writing is one of the important language skills for academic and occupational aim that most people use to accomplish their purposes. According to Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert (1999), writing is a sensitive and mental activity that requires our thought and feeling to work actively while composing. It requires certain sub-skills, techniques and strategies to produce a good writing. Numbers of studies have been done on writing performance and it was found that anxiety was among the factors that affect their writing performance. Sadiq (2017) reveals that anxiety in language has been known as a barrier for second or foreign language learning. In other words, language anxiety is a destructive feeling and it can have a negative influence on learning or acquiring the target language. Baez (2005) also believes that anxiety is an extensive phenomenon among university students.

Many researches has been done recently on writing anxiety (Ho, 2016; Kirmizi & Kirmizi, 2015; Qashoa, 2014; Salem & Al-Diyar, 2014; Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012; Gkonou, 2011), however, not much attention was given to the context of Afghanistan's students. There is one study that had been done to explore the writing anxiety in an Afghan English as Foreign Language (EFL) setting, nonetheless, it was done qualitatively from the perspective of 5 university students and thus, the result cannot be generalize. Thus, this quantitative study seeks to investigate the level of writing anxiety, the factors of writing anxiety and the overcoming strategies among EFL students in Afghanistan in a larger population. In order to achieve to objectives of the study, few research questions were formulated based on research objective, which are,

1. What are the levels of anxiety among EFL students in Afghanistan?
2. What are the factors that contribute to students' writing anxiety?
3. What are the strategies that have been used by the students to overcome their writing anxiety?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Writing in EFL

Language learning requires four skills name listening, speaking, reading and writing and each of the skills should be taught and studied profoundly in educating second language. Krashen (1984) stated among the four skills, writing was poorly supported by research (as cited in Krapels, 1990). Later, the lack of information on writing skill absorbed the attention of researchers to begin works in order to determine the significance of writing skill. In addition, writing as communication process, its importance and complexity attracted the attentions of many researchers to launch some research in this regard. Gere (1985) and Dyson (1995) highlighted that writing skill requires social communication rather than individual activity which is not helpful to enhance writing skill. This idea is supported by Mah and Khor (2015) who demonstrated that English foreign language learners face challenges in learning writing skills

even the skill has already been emphasized. Due to all these obstacles, foreign language learners should be facilitated with better suggestions and learners are required to use writing strategies determinedly and precisely (Cocuk, Yelken & Omer, 2016). For example, foreign language learners in Afghanistan also experience writing difficulties based of the research which was done by Miri and Joia (2018). Their findings indicated that learners suffer for making errors, organizing ideas, and feedback from the teacher which prevent them to gain good writing skill.

2.2 Anxiety in EFL Writing

Language learners' writing skill is not free of challenges, but it is deeply affected by a phenomenon called 'writing anxiety'. In other words, numerous researches have been done to discover the impact of anxiety particularly in students' performance. Baez (2005) believes that anxiety is an extensive phenomenon among university students. Moreover, a large number of researches on English as foreign language indicated that majority of language learners experience language anxiety chiefly in writing skill. Onwuegbuzie (1997) is certain that composition anxiety harms learners' capability to concentrate well logically and to write effectively. Additionally, writing anxiety prohibits students' academic activities, demotivate them to join in productive writing classes and encourage them to follow the courses that require minimal writing skill. Foreign language learners experiences various anxieties namely avoidance behavior and situation-specific anxiety. For instance, language learners who suffer from low self-confidence represents avoidance behavior clearly and they distance from uncomfortable situation and are not interested to manage in it. Further, another type of anxiety is arisen when foreign language learners are exposed to a specific situation like exam, evaluation by teacher and observation by another senior. Lin and Ho (2009) narrate experiences of four students who had similar story about themselves. All four students confessed that their nervousness arises while the teacher evaluates their paper or asks for writing a piece of paper. On the other hand, language learners' perspective to writing classes, low self-assurance, and fear from destructive feedback also support students' anxiety (Gkonou, 2011).

2.3 Factors of Writing Anxiety

Previous researches have verified the existence of anxiety in writing skill in different contexts. Since writing is a cognitive process, it needs creating and ordering ideas before interpreting them on a piece of paper. However, this cognitive process is strongly impacted by some internal and external factors and as a result the factors produce anxiety in foreign language learners (Miri & Joia, 2018; Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012; Cheng, 2002). In other words, previous researches on writing anxiety conclude that low self-confidence, linguistics knowledge, motivation and learners' inclination are internal factors while teacher, examination and time constraint are external factors. This idea is also advocated by Kirmizi and Kirmızı (2015) whose findings revealed that time pressure and negative evaluation from the teachers are the major factors that causes anxiety in EFL/ESL learners. On the contrary, lack of linguistics knowledge

namely syntax, vocabulary, grammar and semantic surge anxiety in students and affect their performance.

2.4 Strategies to Overcome Writing Anxiety

So far we have experienced the existence of anxiety in writing as well as it has been proven by a large number of researchers in their studies in this regard. In order to overcome the writing anxiety, we would like to discuss some the strategies such as affective strategy, metacognitive strategy and cognitive strategy. For example, the affective strategy facilitates students to comprehend new knowledge by having a full control on their own sentiment, perception and inspiration. Besides, the affective strategy encourages learners to cope with writing anxiety with a positive manner. Nevertheless, teacher role is significant because she is required to provide productive feedback, reduced anxiety environment and achievable objectives. Furthermore, metacognitive strategy permits students to utilize their own learning style as they are auditory, visual and kinesthetic. For instance, visual learners prefer an input which is supported by images, graphs or any other drawings. Such learners transform and interpret information on piece of paper with help of pictures, charts and some other drawings. Last but not least is the cognitive strategy through which learners can interact, arrange and order the material by their own (White, 1993). And also metacognitive is a mental process that requires students to use some particular techniques during to overcome the writing anxiety. In other words, students need to use rehearsal, transformation, elaboration and mnemonics as useful means to reduce writing anxiety and pave the way for effective writing.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative approach was used in this study which mainly focusing on the usage of questionnaire where the questions are based on the research objectives and research questions. The implementation of the questionnaire is using survey design. Creswell (2012) stated that a method that is used in quantitative research in which a survey is distributed to a sample or a population is called a survey design where it is to describe the attitudes, behaviour or characteristic of the respondents. Hence, questionnaire was used to identify the factors of writing anxiety in EFL learners and the strategies that can be used to overcome anxiety in writing.

3.2 Population and Sample

The respondents' population for this study was EFL learners in tertiary education in Afghanistan. The respondents were 15 undergraduates from various universities in Afghanistan. The respondents were required to take English courses throughout their studies in which they have been exposed and experienced academic writing. Many of the EFL learners know how to write an essay in their language, but they are unaware of weaknesses and mistakes made in

which does not qualify them to actually write in English (Kern, 2000). The reason universities in Afghanistan was chosen as the research location of this study is because there is only few research on writing anxiety in which English as the target language. Furthermore, as the language is considered as foreign language, anxiety would become a factor that contributes to problems in writing. For this study, a random sampling was used in this research. The respondents were selected randomly by the researchers as representation of the target population and to eliminate sampling bias.

3.3 Instruments

The instrument used in the research is a set of questionnaires that consist of a few parts which are the demographic background of the respondents, Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), factors of writing anxiety, and strategies to overcome writing anxiety.

3.3.1 Demographic Background

The first section of this questionnaire focuses on respondent's background and the purpose of this section is to collect the data about the demographic background of the respondents. This section provides further details of the respondents such as respondent's age, gender, and faculty.

3.3.2 Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)

Another section of the questionnaires is adopted from Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) developed by Cheng (2004) where it is used to measure the anxiety in writing and proven that the items in the questionnaires are proven to be highly reliable and valid by means of correlation and factor analysis. The SLWAI consist of 20 items which followed a Likert-type 5-choice response format: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). This instrumentation was used to identify the types of writing anxiety in of the EFL learners.

3.3.3 Factors of Writing Anxiety

The third section consists of factors of writing anxiety which was adopted from The Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) was develop by Cheng (2002). CWAI is a necessity to determine the factors contributing to anxiety in writing for EFL learners. The questionnaire consists of 10-item questionnaire that centre on causes for writing anxiety in EFL classroom. The questionnaire followed a Likert-type 5-choice response format: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree).

3.3.4 Strategies to Overcome the Writing Anxiety

The strategies to overcome the writing anxiety were developed on the basis of strategies proposed by Oxford (2001). The learning strategies are known as metacognitive strategy, cognitive strategy and affective strategy. Thus, there are 10 questions that formulated in this research which focus on to those three types of learning strategies to overcome the writing anxiety in ESL learning. The questionnaire followed a Likert-type 5-choice response format: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree).

3.4 Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed using an online survey application at cognitoforms.com. The respondents were informed about the questionnaire through messaging application in mobile phone which are *Whatsapp* and *Facebook Messenger*. Any problems, doubts or questions from the respondents were answered through the messaging application. The questionnaire was automatically received after the respondents have completed answering it.

3.5 Data Analysis

All the data obtained from the questionnaires were then collected and analysed to assist on providing answer for the three research questions of this study. The method for analysing level of anxiety data was adopted from Sabariah and Hayas (2014). To determine anxiety score of individual respondent, the score to their response for each item were added. The score for each item were determined according positive and negative statement, which demonstrated as follow:

	Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Un-decided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Positive Statement	1,4,17,18,19,20	Given score	5	4	3	2	1
Negative Statement	2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16		1	2	3	4	5

To determine the level of anxiety, minimum cumulative score (1 X 20) was subtracted from maximum cumulative score (5 X 20) to get the range score which is 80. The range score (80) would be divided into two to categorize it into low and high anxiety. Thus, respondent who scores between 20.0 to 40.00 is considered to have low level of anxiety while respondent who scores between 41.0 to 80.0 is considered to have high level of anxiety. As for the data from the SLWAI, factors of writing anxiety and strategies to overcome writing anxiety were analysed by descriptive analysis for their percentage using statistical application which is IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25 for windows. In addition, the data were presented in the table for better understanding.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Level of Anxiety among EFL Students

*Table 1:
Students Writing Anxiety*

	Item	Statement	Frequency (%)				
			1	2	3	4	5
Avoidance Anxiety	1	While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.	13.3	13.3	6.7	60.0	6.7
	4	I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.	13.3	0.0	13.3	46.7	26.7
	5	I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions	60.0	26.7	0.0	0.0	13.3
	6	My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition	6.7	33.3	26.7	20.0	13.3
	7	I worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others'	26.7	26.7	13.3	13.3	20.0
	9	I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.	26.7	26.7	6.7	20.0	20.0
	11	Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write composition.	33.3	26.7	6.7	26.7	6.7
	14	I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.	13.3	20.0	20.0	40.0	6.7
	15	I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions	53.3	13.3	0.0	13.3	20.0
	16	I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.	20.0	40.0	6.7	26.7	6.7
	17	I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.	6.7	20.0	13.3	40.0	20.0
20	Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.	13.3	6.7	6.7	20.0	53.3	
Situation-Specific Anxiety	2	I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time limitation	6.7	6.7	33.3	40.0	13.3
	3	I feel worried and uneasy if I know my compositions will be evaluated.	13.3	26.7	26.7	26.7	6.7
	8	If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting very poor grade.	13.3	33.3	13.3	33.3	6.7
	10	My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraints.	20.0	6.7	33.3	33.3	20.0

12	I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.	13.3	40.0	0.0	46.7	0.0
13	I am afraid that other students would ridicule my English composition if they read it.	46.7	33.3	0.0	13.3	6.7
18	I am not afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.	20.0	0.0	6.7	33.3	40.0
19	I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.	6.7	13.3	13.3	53.3	13.3

Table 2:

Number of Students based on their level of anxiety

Categories	n (%)
High Anxiety	5 (33.3)
Low Anxiety	10 (66.7)

The first research question is about the level of writing anxiety among tertiary level EFL students in Afghanistan. In order to answer research question 1, respondents were required to answer 20-items-questionnaire about their feeling and conditions when they need to write in English. The result showed that majority of the respondents (66.7%) has low level of anxiety. Only 33.3% suffered from high anxiety. This finding showed contradicting result as compared to previous studies that revealed students high level of writing anxiety (Miri & Joia, 2018)

Previous researchers have identified various types of anxiety for foreign language learning, including avoidance anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. In the case of avoidance anxiety, it was found that most of the respondents have low level of anxiety. For example, majority of the respondents (66.7%) do not feel nervous when they write in English (item 1). The respondents also choose to write their thought in English (item 4) and use English to write whenever possible (item 20) as majority of them (73.4% and 73.4% respectively) agree with the statements. Apart from that, when asked about their avoidance tendency towards writing in English (item 5, 9 and 15), majority of the respondents (86.7%, 53.4% and 66.6% respectively) disagree with the statements, which means they are fine to write in English without the need to avoid the situation. Previous studies have revealed that low self-confidence is one of the contributing factors for foreign language learning anxiety (Cheng, 1999; Cheng, 2002). Thus, it could be concluded that the respondents' low level of writing anxiety was due to their high confidence in writing English.

As for situation-specific anxiety, when it comes to time constraint, the responses were quite varied. Half of the respondents (53.3%) feel that their heart was pounding and their

thoughts were jumbled up when writing under time constraint. However, they disagree about being panic when they write English under time limitation. In term of evaluation, the respondents whose agree and disagree were almost the same which is about 40%. The respondents were either worry or not worry about getting their writing evaluated as poor. Negari and Rezaabadi (2012) stated that students are frequently under pressure to produce good writing. Which is why the condition where they have to write under time limitation or the condition where their writing have to be evaluated put pressure on the students to produce a good piece of writing.

4.2 Factors of Writing Anxiety among EFL students

Table 3:

Factors of Writing Anxiety

Factor	Item	Statement	Frequency (%)				
			1	2	3	4	5
Internal Factor	4	I don't have a good command of English writing technique.	33.3	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0
	5	I don't know what to write on the topic given so I feel upset.	40.0	33.3	0.0	13.3	13.3
	6	I encounter some linguistic problems (Vocabulary, grammar, etc.).	6.7	20.0	20.0	33.3	20.0
	7	I am under pressure to offer a perfect work which makes me upset.	20.0	36.7	6.7	40.0	6.7
	10	I have a low confidence in English writing.	26.7	60.0	0.0	6.7	6.7
		Total	25.3	34.7	5.3	25.3	9.4

External Factor	1	I worry about the negative comments and evaluation of the teacher.	26.7	40.0	13.3	13.3	6.7
	2	I am afraid of writing tests.	20.0	33.3	6.7	26.7	13.3
	3	I lack of sufficient English writing practice which makes me feel anxious.	26.7	26.7	20.0	26.7	0.0
	8	I feel anxious due to the high frequency of writing assignments.	20.0	26.7	20.0	33.3	0.0
	9	I feel worried when I have to write under time constraints.	13.3	20.0	26.7	26.7	13.3
		Total	21.4	29.3	17.3	25.3	6.7

For the purpose of answering research question 2, respondents were asked about the factors that contribute to students writing anxiety. Looking at both factors, it can be seen that

external factors has greater effect on respondents' anxiety compared to internal factors. Internal factor (32 %) is only 2.7% behind the external factor (34.7). therefore, according this percentage, the difference is not significant.

The findings reveal that internal factors have lower effect than external factor on students writing anxiety. Internal factors include level of confidence, learners' lack knowledge on linguistics elements and writing techniques, inability to generate ideas as well as their inclination to making mistakes. Learners viewpoint play important role that cause anxiety which refers to Trait anxiety. According Sadiq (2017) students' negative perspective against foreign language writing skill and its negative influence is clear on students' performance. Likewise, internal situation and feeling negative that avoid learner to engage with writing situation which referred as 'Avoidance Behavior Anxiety'. Avoidance behavior is a kind of emotional illness which accelerates when an individual consciously or unconsciously discharges from a scratchy situation instead of adopting in it. For instance, self-confidence represents such sensitive chaos in any given situation namely in writing (Cheng, 1999). Also, Somantic anxiety which is dealing with the negative feelings do not affect too much on them because they are already living in the English-speaking environment. So, they tend to feel these negative feelings in writing and thus lead to the second level of anxiety for them. As a result, findings show that 60% of the respondents disagree with the statement while 34.7% agree, with 5.3% remain undecided. Since the statement was written in negative form, it can be concluded that internal factors did not affect majority of the respondents (60%). Therefore, Majority of the respondents disagreed that they do not feel worry if their compositions are worse than others and they have high self-confidence.

Findings reveal that external factors like teachers' evaluation, writing test, writing practice, writing assignments and time constraint have greater effect on learners and play significant role to reduce learners' anxiety towards writing. Fearing from negative feedback and evaluation is a kind of cognitive anxiety. Cognitive Anxiety deals with negative influence such as worry, or fear of negative evaluation and tests. This indicates that the cognitive anxiety deals with external factors such as peers' and instructors' evaluation as well. According to Kirmizi and Kirmızı (2015) say that negative evaluation from the teachers are the major factors that causes anxiety. Also feeling depression under time-limitation is another type of anxiety that refers situation-specific anxiety. In this regard Kirmizi and Kirmızı (2015) also claims that time pressure in the factor that cause to increase learners' anxiety. Learner viewpoint and feeling about test is another factor that cause anxiety which refers to stat anxiety. Accordingly, Negari and Rezaabadi, (2012) told that writing test is one of the factors for writing anxiety as students are put under pressure to deliver a good writing piece, which increase their anxiety. Therefore, finding reveals that 50.7% of the respondents disagree with the statement while 32% agree, with 17.3% remain undecided. Since the statement was written in negative form, it can be concluded that external factors affect majority of the respondents (50.7%), though it was slightly higher

than internal factors. Thus, the result revealed that EFL in Afghanistan feel pressured when have to sit for the test or their works need to be evaluated.

4.3 Strategies in Overcoming Writing Anxiety

Table 4:
Overcoming Strategies of Writing Anxiety

Strategy	Item	Statement	Frequency (%)				
			1	2	3	4	5
Cognitive Strategy	1	I usually refer to another person's essay and read it before writing the essay.	20.0	20.0	6.7	46.7	6.7
	2	I usually draft the points and organize them logically before I write the essay.	13.3	0.0	0.0	46.7	40.0
	5	I will translate my writing from native language to English.	40.0	13.3	13.3	13.3	20.0
	Total		24.4	11.1	6.7	35.6	22.2
Metacognitive Strategy	3	I usually research the topic to get the ideas before writing the essay.	6.7	0.0	0.0	40.0	53.3
	4	I prefer to use simple language in writing essay.	20.0	20.0	6.7	40.0	13.3
	6	I prefer to ask a few questions about the topic before I start to write.	6.7	20.0	13.3	40.0	20.0
	7	I prefer to ask a few questions to clarify my doubts before I start to write.	6.7	13.3	6.7	60.0	13.3
	Total		10.0	13.3	6.7	45.0	25.0
Affective Strategy	8	I prefer to get the feedback on my writing performance once I finish my writing.	13.3	6.7	6.7	20.0	53.3
	9	I prefer to self-talk to myself to brainstorm the ideas before I start to write the essay.	13.3	0.0	20.0	26.7	40.0
	10	I prefer to relax first, take a deep breath and calm down before I start to write the essay	13.3	6.7	0.0	33.3	46.7
	Total		13.3	4.4	8.9	26.7	46.7

The third research question asked about the strategies used by tertiary level EFL students in Afghanistan to overcome writing anxiety. The findings also revealed that affective strategies are the most preferable strategy to overcome anxiety compares to metacognitive and cognitive strategy. However, metacognitive strategies is only 3.4% behind affective strategy (70%) while cognitive strategy has a fairly low representation at 57.8%. All of these percentage does,

however, shows a representation of more than half of the respondents which indicates that the EFL students in Afghanistan does use the strategies to overcome their writing anxiety.

Affective strategies have the highest representation could highly indicate that internal factors such as motivation and the learners perspective plays a very important role in overcoming writing anxiety. Galti (2016) reported that learner's attitude, perception and feeling will have either a negative or positive impact on their performances. Fifty-three percent of the respondents stated that they would prefer to get feedback on their writing performance once they have finished their writing. This is in line with what Pajares and Johnson (1994) stated about how effective feedback from the teachers is an important factor in student's self-confidence (as cited in Qashoa, 2014). In addition, 46.7% of them also agreed to relax and take a deep breath first before they start writing. While, 66.7% of the respondents prefer to self-talk to themselves and brainstorm ideas before writing their essay. Affective filters strategy allows the learners to face their language learning through means of motivation, positive attitude and high emotional intelligence. Affective filter strategies can help to reduce writing anxiety by allowing the students to relax and help creating a clear image and idea of what they wanted to convey, thus allowing the students to produce a better writing.

Next, 70% of the respondents agrees to the use of metacognitive strategies in overcoming their writing anxiety. These group of respondents (53.3% on scale 5) prefer to do their research on the topics for a better understanding and a much smoother writing process, where they can transfer the information they wanted to convey into writing much more easily. Iftikhar (2014) stated that learners use metacognitive strategies by organizing their skill so that they could benefit the most out of their metacognitive strategy. They also prefer using much simple language in their writing to prevent any confusion in conveying their ideas in meaning. Learners who uses metacognitive strategy tends to asking questions on the topic and asking questions to clarify their doubt (40% and 60% on scale 4 respectively). Wenden (1976, p.232) as cited in Hauck (2005) stated that metacognitive strategy is the part of long-term memory which is related to the learning knowledge of the learner. We can see from the analysis that these groups of respondents prefer writing that is much more closely related to their own learning styles.

The number of respondents who prefer to use cognitive strategy is at 57.8% which is already the majority of the total respondents. This group of respondents prefers a much more guided and systematic style of learning in which they would prefer to refer to another person's essay and read it before writing the essay (46.7% on scale 4). Some of the respondents (46.7% on scale 4 and 40% on scale 5) will usually draft the points and organize them logically before writing their essay. This group of respondents needed to structure their thought into points before they can effectively transfer their idea into written form. This is also in line with Cohen (2001) who stated that this is the learner's preferences for approaching learning (as cited in Grossman, 2011). Last but not least, (35.6% on scale 4 and 22.2% on scale 5) would prefer to translate their writing from English to their native language. It is also worth noting that 40% of the respondents

actually strongly disagree to this point. We can see from here not all of the respondents will want to translate their writing to their native language. This is mostly due to the reason that it is much easier to just write the essay in English, which has a different sentence structure to other language, and translating from their native language will actually takes a lot of time.

5.0 CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, we found out that most tertiary EFL level students in Afghanistan has low level of writing anxiety. This is due to their effective usage of strategies to overcome their writing anxiety. English is also a compulsory subject that has to be taken by the tertiary students in Afghanistan and thus contributing to their higher proficiency in the English language. Affective strategies and metacognitive strategies are two of the most commonly used strategy in overcoming their writing anxiety. However, the percentage of representation of both the strategies has a very low significance value and cannot be said that one strategy is better than the other strategy.

From the analysis, it can be said that external factors have the highest representation of anxiety in writing. However, there is no significant difference in both internal and external factors that contribute to student's writing anxiety. This indicates that both internal and external factors are important factors that influence writing anxiety. In addition, factors influencing writing anxiety can be countered or dealt with by providing feedback and providing a lesson that caters to individual's learning style. Besides, the appropriate strategies are important in dealing with anxiety.

As an educator, a teacher or a lecturer, it is important for us to take in accounts the factors and strategies mentioned above in order to help our students in overcoming their writing anxiety. The two most common factors that cause writing anxiety in the students are time limitation and linguistic limitations. The lesson can be design in a way that caters towards overcoming these factors. For example, simplified and providing a task that actually allows the students to finish their task on time.

In a nutshell, this small-scale research has provided us with a lot of valuable and informative insight into writing anxiety among tertiary level students in Afghanistan. We hope that this kind of research can expand in the future in primary and secondary level of education.

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4 **FACTORS OF WRITING ANXIETY AND THE OVERCOMING STRATEGIES AMONG EFL STUDENTS IN AFGHANISTAN**

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Abstract

4 The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors of writing anxiety and the overcoming strategies among EFL students in Afghanistan. This small scale study was conducted quantitatively among 15 Afghanistan students from different universities. The research revealed that majority of the respondents did not suffer high writing anxiety with most of them only experience low anxiety. In analyzing the factors of writing anxiety, it was found that external factors such as teacher's evaluation, examination, writing assignments and time