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The Effects of Anxiety on Writing Accuracy: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students at Yazd University

Arefeh Pourakbari[*]

B.A. student, Resalat University Zahedan (Sistan & Baluchestan) Branch, Iran

Adeleh Pourakbari

B.A. Student, Yazd University (Yazd) Branch, Iran

Maryam Pourakbari

B.A. Student, Yazd University (Yazd) Branch, Iran

Mohsen Pourakbari

B.A. Student, Yazd University (Yazd) Branch, Iran

Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to examine the effects of anxiety on the students' writing performance in EFL context. The participants were chosen from among 80 Iranian EFL students who took part in TOFEL proficiency test. 40 students majoring in English literature and English translation (20 female & 20 male, aged 18 to 25) have been selected. The instruments to collect data were: a) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) and b) Writing performance test. Both quantitative and qualitative research method were employed in this study. The data were collected by distributing FLCAS questionnaire and a writing test, which were analyzed statistically through IBM SPSS software. The results of the study indicated that there is a significant negative relationship between students' anxiety and their writing performance. Accordingly, it could be concluded that (high) anxiety was effective (negatively) in the performance of students.

Keywords: Language Anxiety, Writing Anxiety, Accuracy

1. Introduction

The written language has a vital societal and educational function and its status has a high social prestige (Urbanova and Oakland, 2002). Writing is important because it is used widely in greater education and in the workplace. If the students do not know how to express themselves in writing, they will not be capable to communicate properly with professors, employers, peers, or just about anyone else through speaking skill. Much of specialized communication is done in

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writing such as proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, e-mails, and more are all part of the everyday life of a college student or prosperous graduation. Writing has an inimitable position in language teaching as, achieving it involves a practice and knowledge of other three language skills, which are listening, reading and speaking. Furthermore, it necessities mastering of other skills, such as met cognitive skills. Learners require setting a purpose for their writing, designing it carefully, thinking over its layout and logical structure, and so on. In the process of writing, they have to use their cognitive skills; they have to study their sources and then produce them in a compressed piece of writing. Writing is crucial because it causes a lot of advantages such as expressing one's personality, developing communication, improving thinking skills, making reasonable and convincing arguments, giving a person a chance to later reflect on his/her ideas and re-evaluate them, and providing and receiving feedback (cf. Chappell, 2011).

In recent years, language field scientists have considered the effect of anxiety on foreign language skills especially writing one. Late researches have established that foreign language anxiety is a general type of language anxiety, which the most part is concerned with writing. However, recent researches have verified anxiety intertwined with different language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Mousapour Negari, Talebi Rezaabadi, 2012). In fact, anxiety has been a concern for many years in language teaching and applied linguistics. In Advanced American English Longman(2005) anxiety is defined as a feeling of being very nervous about something that may happen or may have happened, so that you think about it all the time or is a feeling of wanting to do something very much, but being very anxious that you will not be successful. It is connected with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry (Scovels, 1978). According to different studies and researches in the realm of language teaching, anxiety has a relation with foreign language mastery. According to Field (2004), general anxiety is one of several effective factors, which can affect attention and therefore lead to deterioration in language performance. Cope and Horwitz (1986) provided an explanation, which defined anxiety concerning foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p.128). They recognized three types of anxieties as the components of foreign language anxiety, which are the fear of negative evaluation (the image which the others have about the speaker), a kind of test named test anxiety (the apprehension for tests, exams, pop quizzes), communication nervousness, which is the apprehension of speaking in a foreign language. Harwitz (2001) argued that FLA is a kind of anxiety, which is situation-specific irrespective of the other kinds of anxiety but with a strong relation with language-learning context.

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The current study is designed in order to analyze the effects of anxiety on Yazd University students' writing accuracy. The paper begins with a theoretical overview of foreign language anxiety (FLA) with specific attention to anxiety over writing, and accuracy. The remainder of the present paper deals with an empirical investigation of this issue.

1.1. Language Anxiety

Researchers and practitioners describe anxiety in different ways. Foreign language anxiety is the different difficulties of understanding, opinion, feelings, and manner concerning classroom learning, which are coming from a definite language learning style (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). They also mentioned that the main reason of studying foreign language anxiety is assessing performance of students in an academic setting. On the other hand, Macintyre (1998) defined foreign language anxiety in his research as the concerns and negative feedbacks resulted from learning a non-native second language. Scovel (1986) quoted from Mc Croskey that anxiety is "an individual level of fear associated with either real or anticipated oral communication with another person." Foreign language anxiety is a type of anxiety, which merely appears specifically in language learning context (Horwitz et al., 1986). In a recent study by Woodrow (2014), there is evidence that the foreign language anxiety is a different type of anxiety, while Chen and Cheng (2004) proposed that language anxiety have the same signs and reactions as of any other type of anxieties. It is clear that due to the complexity of foreign language anxiety concept, studies in this field should be conducted in various approaches (Young, 1992). Anxiety can have not only positive but also negative influences on performance (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Lehrer, Goldman, & Strommen, 1990). It plays an important role in the writing and speaking ability of EFL learners and too much of it has been one of the main problems in language teaching, but sometimes a little anxiety is needed for more concentration and accuracy of the students on their writing and speaking performance. Some Laymen in EFL teaching thinks that anxiety should be stopped at any cost, but according to different studies such as Brown (2007), a little stress about a matter or task is going to be helpful. Consequently, being so soft on the students may have a debilitative influence on the students, because they may be carefree and have no anxiety or attention. Writing and speaking skills are exacting job, which need too much time to master skillfully. Some students who pass different courses about writing complain about some of their teachers who were not strict enough to make them write accurately or do something for them for increasing their concentration.Criteria such as course scores, proficiency, and production of language as output level is the main understandable result of foreign language anxiety tests (Macintyre & Gardner, 1991). Scovel (1978) proposed three ways to measure the anxiety, which are behavioral tests, the tests that the action or the activity of the subject is witnessed,

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subject's self-reports, a kind of report that the participant him/herself will report on his/her experience of anxiety, and physiological tests, the tests that measure heart rate, blood pressure, and amount of sweating. In order to study the foreign language anxiety, one can make a distinction between the anxious students and normal students. Many students at least in some aspects of language learning experience the foreign language anxiety and the reactions of anxious students can be different from one another (Horwitz et al., 1986). In their study, they suggested that anxious students often complain about the difficulties of recognizing the target language sounds and structures, and understanding the content of the lesson is problematic. In addition, these students are usually comfortable with written test but they often "freeze" as they are asked to take part in a role-play situation. Moreover, Horwitz et al. (1986) in their study suggested that anxious students avoid using complex and difficult messages and structures in their speech, which is the result of the effect of anxiety on communication strategies of the language learners. Liu (2006) noted that if a high anxious student is asked to present orally in classroom, his tense can be seen in his voice, and his legs will shake during the presentation. Liu concluded that this is one of the reasons that students with anxiety try to avoid participating in class activities and discussions. In her study, Liu found out that more than one-third of the students show the signs of anxiety while presenting orally in English classroom.

There are reports that show students, particularly when they are not ready for the course, show a higher level of anxiety and self-conscious when they are supposed to speak in foreign language in front of others (Sinnasamy & Abdul Karim, 2014). Another situation where students face foreign language anxiety is during the tests. Students reported that despite that they "know" something; they cannot remember it during their exam (Horwitz et al., 1986). There are dissimilar factors associated with foreign language anxiety. Chen and Cheng (2004) recommended that a student with poor background in English language will consider the language learning experience an unpleasant one because of his/her low grade and not being able to perform well in classroom. These students usually have difficult problems in the process of learning a foreign language that result in a higher level of anxiety. Macintyre and Gardner (1999) noted that an anxious student's language learning and language production ability could be influenced by foreign language anxiety, which is the result of thinking that the language learning is an unpleasant experience. In addition, students' beliefs about second language learning and its cultural factors can increase foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). In their research, they considered that communicating in a foreign language in front of other people is a risk-taking task for students. This is because students usually self-evaluate while there are not entirely certain about linguistic and cultural standards. Another reason that

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increases the level of anxiety in students is the teachers who talk fast or have an unusual teaching method (Chen & Cheng, 2004).

Based on Alpert and Herber's anxiety scale (1960), there are two types of foreign language anxiety, which are Debilitative, and facilitative (Young, 1986). The fact that some of the students who show a high level of anxiety will not necessarily show low score in the tests is that there are some types of anxiety that helps the student to improve his/her skills and keeps him/her motivated (Marcos-Llinas & Garau, 2009). Scovel (1978) reported that at higher level of IQ, anxiety shows up as a positive factor while at lower IQ it is associated with poorer performance in students. Based on Young (1986) study, facilitating anxiety helps the student to improve his skills during the language learning process, while debilitating anxiety makes a barrier toward learning or improving ones' skills. Most common interoperation for anxiety encountered by researchers is debilitating anxiety (Macintyre & Gardner, 1989). Although most of the studies deals with the debilitative anxiety which shows negative relationship between performance and foreign language anxiety, but there are reports on facilitative anxiety as well (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). Woodrow (2014) noted in her study that anxiety might have negative or debilitative effect on one's language performance.

One of the effective measurement instruments for measuring anxiety is Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope in 1986. This scale depends on three factors, which are fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Communication apprehension is the shyness and fear about communication in target language. It could be oral communication anxiety, stage fright, or receiver anxiety. Communication apprehension plays avital role in foreign language anxiety. Test anxiety deals with fear of failure that comes to a student before or during a test. They often set their goal so high and feel failure if they cannot reach that specific goal in exams. It is reported that there is a potential that both communication apprehension and test anxiety can occur in an oral test. Fear of negative evaluation is the fear of students from other's negative critics and evaluation. It is similar to the test anxiety but fear of negative evaluation does not have to be in a test situation to happen. It may happen in everyday social life of a second language speaker. However, Horwitz et al. (1986) suggested that foreign language anxiety does not just come from these fears. It can be arising from the certain language learning process, which is based on a complex set of feelings, behavior, and self-perceptions.

1.2. Writing Anxiety

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Hassan (2010) states that writing is one of the language skills, which reveals how second language student's show their verbal competence. Writing performance of English students can reflect their knowledge in English patterns through the written converse they present. Writing takes a main role in language acquisition since it is the foundation for students to develop their language skill. Furthermore, for EFL learners, writing is quite crucial to be used because they can prove their ability to write their idea, knowledge, information and feeling. Therefore, writing ability in university level is something students need to master as it helps university students to survive in academic life besides giving important benefits for developing their quality as learners. In addition, according to Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan(2012), it is expected that undergraduate students should write a paper, which is published in academic journal in order to finish the study in a particular major. Bjork and Raisanen (1997) state, "we highlight the importance of writing in all university curricula not only because of its immediate practical application, i.e. as an isolated capability, but because we believe that, seen from a broader perspective, writing is a thinking tool. It is a tool for language development, for critical thinking and extension for learning in all disciplines" (p.8). Khoii (2011, p.494) states, "Learning to write is difficult especially for foreign language learners because their English teachers usually ask them to produce fluent, accurate and appropriate written English." The Students' difficulties in writing can affect their writing performance. Students' Writing performance can show that how excellent or poor the ability of learners in writing is. Hartono (2012) asserts writing performance of English learners can reflect their knowledge in English language patterns through the written discourse they present. According to Erkan and Saban (2011), students who find it difficult to learn writing, share the same problems in writing, i.e. afraid to make writing error. Being afraid to make mistakes in English writing, is one of the anxiety patterns because the students who feel afraid to make mistakes in writing, unconsciously will try to avoid writing because they feel afraid to make mistakes in English writing. This is also strengthened by Cheng (2004) who states there are 3 types of writing anxiety and one of them is Avoidance Anxiety, which refers to the actions or behavior to avoid something or someone who feels anxious toward something. According to Worde (2003), both of foreign language and second language learners experience anxiety. Moreover, the preliminary interview was also conducted in order to see whether the students feel anxious or not in English writing. The results showed that 18 from 20 (90%) students feel anxious in English writing. Kara (2013) states that anxiety is one of the factors that affects the process and the result of English learners' poor performance in English writing. This statement is also supported by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) who state researchers studying writing in a native language, have found that learners with higher levels of English writing anxiety write shorter compositions than the learners whose levels of writing anxiety are lower. Similarly,

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according to Liu and Ni (2015), writing anxiety has negative effect on students' action in writing a foreign language. The effects of writing anxiety can likely weaken the learners' ability and confidence about their writing achievement.

There had been lots of researchers who were fascinated in second language writing anxiety in this decade (Hasan, 2001; Cheng, 2002; Atay & Kurt, 2007). Cheng (2002) ascertained two purposes for language anxiety and the skill of writing: to discover links between L2 writing anxiety and assorted individual differences and to determine whether L2 anxiety was associated with other types of anxiety, especially mother tongue writing anxiety. With reference to WA about English, Leki (1999) claimed that writing, albeit the most private and self-controlling of the four skills causes EFL learners to experience a kind of "writer's block" (p. 65). Additionally, through factor analytic procedures, Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) found a significant moderate correlation (r = .65) between second language classroom anxiety and second language WA proving that these two anxiety constructs are related but are not identical. Cheng et al. (1999) concluded that "some anxious second language student writers may suffer chiefly from low writing-related self-esteem, some from negative affect toward the writing activity and some from fear of evaluation" (p. 436). The WA experience among L2 learners should, therefore, be studied by seeking sociolinguistic dimensions when tackling EFL writing tasks, such as students' relying heavily on others' criticism of their work. It would be fair enough then to assume that, apart from speaking, EFL writing also exhibits a considerable degree of learner self-exposure. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) have posited that "anxious individuals think about their own reaction to a task in addition to the demands of the task itself" (p. 297). Negative self-related cognition intrudes on their task performance in class and, consequently, anxiety rises. This is what ultimately differentiates language anxiety from other forms of anxiety, suggesting therefore that second language contexts should be studied in isolation. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) further argued that "if anxious students could focus on positive experiences in the second language, rather than on negative ones, the debilitating effects of language anxiety could be reduced" (p. 297). Thus, foreign language anxiety is a distinct variable in the language learning process and has detrimental effects on learning.

1.3. Accuracy

 Skehan and Foster (1999) stated that the term accuracy involves the ability to avoid errors in the performance that reflects higher levels of control in the language as well as a conservative orientation. This could be considered as the avoidance of challenging structures that can probably incite a kind of error. Skehan (1996) argues that learners need to have a compacted belief in norms in a way their performance would be native-like through its rule-governed nature. Based on this assumption, accuracy can be defined as "the extent to which the language

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produced in performing a task conforms with target language norms" (Ellis, 2003, p. 339). As a final point, Skehan (1998) believes that production is commonly in need of consideration to form, and thus defines accuracy as one of the sides of production needing learners to use an inter language system of a specific level to produce accurate, but possibly restricted language.

2. Research Hypothesis

Anxiety has significant effects on writing accuracy.

3. Research Question

To what extent anxiety affects writing accuracy.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopted a correlation method in order to calculate and find the relationship between the two variables. In this study, foreign language anxiety is the independent variable and writing is the dependent one. For the purpose of this research, 40 undergraduate students were drawn out of 80 by TOEFL proficiency test to be the participant in this study. This research was conducted at Yazd University in Iran. The participants were English students majoring in English literature and English translation; the majority of them were juniors and seniors. It should be noted that this heterogeneity was believed to work better because of giving a clearer picture of the relation between the students' writing performance and their levels of anxiety. The total aim of this study was to find the effects of language anxiety on writing performance.

4.1. Participants

For this study, a sum of40 undergraduate students majoring in English literature and English translation (20 male and20female) aged 18 to 25, participated. The majority of them were juniors and seniors. They were upper-intermediate level students who were selected through TOEFL proficiency test and Generalized Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire (Spitzer RL, Kroenke K, Williams JBW, Lowe B. (2006).

TABLE 1. The Participants' Characteristics

Year	Participants	Male	Female
Juniors	25	16	12
Seniors	15	4	8

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4.2. Instruments

The materials used to conduct this study were Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which is a 33-item five-point Likert scale questionnaire developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) used to measure the level of anxiety of individuals. Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale(GADS) which is a 7-item scale ranging from 0 (Not at all sure) and 3 (Nearly every day) developed by Spitzer RL et al., (2006) was also used in this study to make sure that the students do not suffer from anxiety disorder. The last material used was a set of 70 minutes writing questions adopted from IELTS writing test samples. Writing test was scored from 1 to 10. Table 2 shows the list of IELTS questions used in this study.

Table 2. The list of IELTS Questions for Writing

Topics
1. Some students work while studying. This often results in lacking time for education and constantly feeling under pressure. What do you think are the causes of this? What solutions can you suggest?
2. Online education is becoming more and more popular. Some people claim that e learning has so many benefits that it will replace face-to-face education soon. Others say that traditional education is irreplaceable. Discuss both views and give your opinion.
3. Nowadays families are not as close as they used to be. What do you think are the causes of this? What can be done to make families closer?
4. It is more important to have a good family than to have friends. Family can always compensate for absence of friendship. To what extent do you agree or disagree?
5. It is commonly believed that nowadays-main factors that affect a child's development are media, pop culture and friends. A different point of view is that family plays the most significant role. Discuss both views and give your opinion.
6. Children are generally more successful in foreign language studies than adults are. Thus, it is better to learn languages in childhood. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

4.3. Procedure

In a period of 10 days at the middle of semester at Yazd University, the participants were asked to come to university (each day 4 participants). For this study, each of the students were given 4 minutes to introduce themselves in front of the other students and talk about their job. Then they could choose randomly among 12 envelopes each of which contained an IELTS

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topic for writing. Afterward, they were given 70 minutes to prepare to write about the topic. They were all supplied with paper and pen. During this stage the physical conditions of the participants were observed by the teacher and she noted her observations in great detail. At the end of the class, all of the present participants were asked to answer to FLCAS questionnaire. A 33-item five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) which was developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Finally, two raters scored participants' performance on writing with the emphasis on writing accuracy. Students' writing accuracy, word choice, use of collocation, and writing comprehensible sentences were all considered carefully.

5. Data Analysis

The data collected from teacher's notes, physical condition notes and questionnaires were entered into IBM SPSS software. The writing performance was also scored based on the two scorers' evaluation. Afterward, the correlations between the questionnaire data andwriting test scores were calculated via vicariate Pearson r correlation. The writing test score was correlated by all 33 questionnaire items. Table 3 shows the means of writing test scores, minimum and maximum scores, and standard deviation. Table 4 shows the frequency of questionnaire answers.

Table 3. The means, minimum and maximum scores, and standard deviation of writing test scores

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Test scores 40	3.00	10.00	6.5000	2.36426

Table 4. Frequency of questionnaire answers

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Item 1	3	8	11	11	7
Item 2	7	11	11	10	1
Item 3	3	7	13	12	5
Item 4	5	7	10	10	8

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Item 5	6	16	13	4	1
Item 6	2	10	15	7	6
Item 7	1	15	13	8	3
Item 8	6	11	14	7	2
Item 9	6	9	9	9	7
Item 10	4	10	13	10	3
Item 11	3	12	10	8	7
Item 125		11	9	10	5
Item 13	4	11	10	8	7
Item 14	4	11	16	7	2
Item 15	3	11	11	10	5
Item 16	4	9	12	8	7
Item 17	3	10	13	8	6
Item 18	3	12	15	8	2
Item 19	1	6	15	15	3
Item 20	4	12	14	6	4
Item 21	4	8	10	13	5
Item 22	4	12	16	6	2
Item 23	3	9	14	11	3
Item 24	4	14	10	10	2
Item 25	2	8	12	10	8
Item 26	1	5	18	12	4
Item 27	2	8	12	10	8

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Item 28	4	10	17	7	2
Item 29	1	11	12	10	6
Item 30	1	7	16	11	5
Item 31	3	8	12	11	6
Item 32	3	10	15	8	4
Item 33	3	8	12	11	6

6. Results and Discussion

The summary of the result can be found in table 5. It is clear that there is a significance correlation between test score and 31 out of 33 items of the questionnaire. For example there is a strong correlation between test score of the students and item 7 of the questionnaire ($r=741$ and $\alpha<0.01$). This indicates that the correlation between the two variables is strong and negative, which matches the results of the previous studies and therefore our hypothesis is accepted. The results in table 5 show that the students' writing performance, which was evaluated via a writing test, is negatively related with the answers in their questionnaire. That is the more anxious a student, the poorer communication performance and therefor lower tests score. It can be explained based on the result of the table 5 that the debilitative anxiety has the most effect on students' writing performance.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation of items

Item 1	Pearson correlation	-.729 **		Item 18	Pearson correlation	-.639**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000			Sig.(2-tailed)	.000
N		40		N		40
Item 2	Pearson correlation	-.626**	Item 19	Pearson correlation	-.373**	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	Sig.(2-tailed)		.018	
	N	40	N	40		
Item 3	Pearson correlation	-.556**	Item 20	Pearson correlation	-.474**	

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	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	N	40	
Item 4	Pearson correlation	-.741**	Item 21	Pearson correlation	-.676**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	N	40	
Item 5	Pearson correlation	-.328**	Item 22	Pearson correlation	-.657**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.039	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	N	40	
Item 6	Pearson correlation	-.648**	Item 23	Pearson correlation	-.583**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	N	40	
Item 7	Pearson correlation	-.549**	Item 24	Pearson correlation	-.239
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	Sig.(2-tailed)	.138	
	N	40	N	40	
Item 8	Pearson correlation	-.378**	Item 25	Pearson correlation	-.604**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.016	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	N	40	
Item 9	Pearson correlation	-.729**	Item 26	Pearson correlation	-.729
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	Sig.(2-tailed)	.200	
	N	40	N	40	
Item 10	Pearson correlation	-.770**	Item 27	Pearson correlation	-.207**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	N	40	

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Item 11 Pearson correlation -.316**	Item 28	Pearson correlation -.639**		
Sig.(2-tailed) .047	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000		
N 40	N	40		

Item 12 Pearson correlation -.690**	Item 29	Pearson correlation -.627**	
Sig.(2-tailed) .000	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
N 40	N	40	

Item 13 Pearson correlation -.654**	Item 30	Pearson correlation -.546**	
Sig.(2-tailed).000	Sig.(2-tailed) .000		
N 40	N	40	

Item 14 Pearson correlation -.490**	Item 31	Pearson correlation -.498**	
Sig.(2-tailed) .001	Sig.(2-tailed) .001		
N 40	N 40		

Item 15 Pearson correlation -.710**	Item 32	Pearson correlation -.647**	
Sig.(2-tailed) .000	Sig.(2-tailed) .000		
N 40	N 40		

Item 16 Pearson correlation -.546**	Item 33	Pearson correlation -.647**	
Sig.(2-tailed) .000	Sig.(2-tailed) .000		
N 40	N 40		

Item 17 Pearson correlation -.546	** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)	
Sig.(2-tailed) .000		
N 40		

Of all the correlation that was found in the results of the present study, all but two (item 24 and item 26) were negatively correlated in a significance level. Item 24 and 26 however were

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correlated positively and not at a significance level. Table 5 shows the frequency of the questionnaire item 24 and 26 answers across the test score (minimum score = 3 and maximum score = 10). Based on the data in the table 5, we can suggest that even the students with higher scores had, in some degree, an anxiety, which was facilitative, meaning that the anxiety itself helps them to focus more on the matter and improve their communicative performance.

Table 6. Frequency of the questionnaire item 24 and 26 answers across the test scores

	Test score							
	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00
	Frequency							
Item 24								
Strongly agree	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Agree	2	1	2	1	1	1	4	2
Neither agree Nor disagree	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Disagree	2	1	2	0	1	2	2	0
Strongly disagree	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Item 26								
Strongly agree	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0
Neither agree Nor disagree	3	2	2	1	1	2	4	3
Disagree	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
Strongly disagree	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

For answering the research question, the results show that there is a significance correlation between the writing test score and the students' anxiety in classroom. The writing performance is highly correlated with test score. The correlation we found in the result was negative between

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test scores and questionnaires in 31 out of 33 items. This indicates that anxious students tend to have lower scores and poorer writingperformance ability.

7.Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of anxiety on writing accuracy and was determined to what extent, foreign language anxiety affects the writing accuracy among undergraduate students at Yazd University. We tried to answer the following question by correlating the test scores on as ample IELTS writing test and the FLCAS questionnaire, which is dedicated to measure students' anxiety. The finding of this research indicated that there is a strong negative correlation between the two variables. The findings of this research can help the teachers to identify the reason why some students cannot get higher score in their writing test and why their writing performances are not improving. They also can try to turn the debilitative anxiety, which is a barrier to students' improvement into facilitative anxiety, which helps students improve their writing performance. There are some limitations with this study that should be addressed. First, the number of participants in this study was few. A replication of this study in a larger community can improve the reliability of the results and the generalization of the results would be easier and more reliable. Second, the setting of this study was in Iran, where the students have little or no exposure to the foreign language they are learning. This can be the result of lower self-esteem when they are trying to write in a foreign language. The result in a setting where the exposure to second/foreign language is easier and more common could be different. And, third, this study just investigated the relationship between writing performance and anxiety, there was no treatment performed in the classroom in order to reduce the students' anxiety. A study where there is a teaching method used for reducing the anxiety can help the teacher during writing courses either to reduce the overall students' anxiety or turn that anxiety from debilitative to facilitative anxiety.

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APPENDIX A

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (English Version)

Howritz, E. K., Howritz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986)

Directions: This section contains items that may reflect your feelings about your English class.

Please read each item and indicate whether you:

(1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neutral, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.   1 2 3 4 5

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.   1 2 3 4 5

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.   1 2 3 4 5

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English class.   1 2 3 4 5

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English class.   1 2 3 4 5

6. During English classes, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do 1 2 3 4 5   with the course.

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than me.   1 2 3 4 5

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8. I am usually at ease during tests in my classes.   1 2 3 4 5

9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.   1 2 3 4 5

10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English classes.   1 2 3 4 5

11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English classes.   1 2 3 4 5

12. In English classes, I can get so nervous that I forget things I know.   1 2 3 4 5

13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English classes. 1 2 3 4 5

14. I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers. 1 2 3 4 5

15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting. 1 2 3 4 5

16. Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it. 1 2 3 4 5

17. I often feel like not going to my English class.   1 2 3 4 5

18. I feel confident when I speak in English classes. 1 2 3 4 5

19. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. 1 2 3 4 5

20. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.1 2 3 4 5

21. The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.1 2 3 4 5

22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English classes.   1 2 3 4 5

23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do. 1 2 3 4 5

24. I feel very self- conscious about speaking English in front of other students.1 2 3 4 5

25. English classes moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.   1 2 3 4 5

26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English classes than in my other classes.1 2 3 4 5

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English classes.1 2 3 4 5

28. When I am on my way to English classes, I feel very sure and relaxed. 1 2 3 4 5

29. I get nervous when I do not understand every word the English teacher says.1 2 3 4 5

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English. 1 2 3 4 5

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.1 2 3 4 5

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.1 2 3 4 5

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33. I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't   1 2 3 4 5
prepared in advance.

APENDIX B

Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item (GAD) scale

Spitzer RL, Kroenke K, Williams JBW, Lowe B. (2006)

1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge   0 1 2 3

2. Not being able to stop or control worrying   0 1 2 3

3. Worrying too much about different things   0 1 2 3

4. Trouble relaxing   0 1 2 3

5. Being so restless that it's hard to sit still   0 1 2 3

6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable   0 1 2 3

7. Feeling afraid as id something awful might happen   0 1 2 3

Scoring

 (0) not at all sure, (1) several days, (2) over half the days, (3) nearly every day. Scores of 5, 10, and 15 are taken as the cut-off points for mind, moderate and severe anxiety, respectively, when used as a screening tool; further evaluation is recommended when the score is 10 or greater.