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**Investigating Causes and Effects of Writing Anxiety on Students'
Writing Performance during Examination**

**The Case of First Year students in the Department of English at
MouloudMammeri University of TiziOuzou**

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DEDICATION

*To Our Families,
our beloved parents,
our sisters and brothers,
our adorable grandparents
and all relatives, friends, and classmates.*

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English Foreign Language

FLA: Foreign Language Anxiety

FLWA: Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

MMUTO: MouloudMammeri University ofTiziOuzou

Q : Question

QCA : Qualitative ContentAnalysis

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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Abstract

This dissertation is concerned with the study of foreign language writing anxiety during examination in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. It aims at accomplishing two main objectives. The first aim is to explain the fundamental causes and effects of foreign language writing anxiety among first year students in the department of English at MMUTO. The second aim is to explore effective solutions that can help both teachers and students to downgrade and diminish students' writing anxiety during the exams. To realize the mentioned objectives, the study relies on both Horwitz et al's (1986) and Cheng's (2004) theories. The research relies on two main data gathering tools, which are the questionnaire and the interview, that are based on the mixed method approach. The former is addressed to fifty first year students in the department of English at MMUTO. The latter is conducted with five teachers from the same department. The outcomes of the study show that the first year students in the department of English at MMUTO experience foreign language writing anxiety. The latter, which is caused by many factors like lack of preparation and practice affects first year students writing performance in a negative way. So, we suggest some recommendations to reduce the negative effects of this inhibiting phenomenon.

Key words: Writing anxiety, writing performance, symptoms, causes, effects.

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General Introduction

Statement of the problem

Many learners see learning a specific foreign language as a difficult task, given that they are influenced by many affective factors that affect their achievement in a way or in another, and among these influential factors: anxiety.

Anxiety is the major affective factor that influences foreign language classes in general and foreign English classes in particular. It impinges on the different skills of the foreign language learning (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Writing is one of the crucial language skills that the second language learners must master. However, most students meet many difficulties and experience some degree of anxiety when writing their exams in different modules. As a result, their achievement is affected by anxiety. This is why we have intended to do an investigation about the main causes and effects of foreign language writing anxiety, and we seek to find some strategies that can reduce this affective factor.

Many investigations in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou have been done for the sake of exploring anxiety. Nevertheless, the previous studies in this department have dissected anxiety in relation to the speaking skill such as enhancing English language students' speaking skill through overcoming anxiety (2016). Consequently, this present work attempts to explore the writing anxiety by exploring its fundamental causes and effects on students' writing performance that is not widely scrutinized by researchers. However, many researchers have done several studies about this issue

in many foreign universities in all over the world, like the University of Hawaii and the University of Essex.

Aims and Significance of the Study

Our dissertation endeavors to explore foreign language writing anxiety that is a very interesting area of research for us as future teachers. By reading this work, the main causes and effects of foreign language writing anxiety during the exam will be discussed, in addition to the strategies that are suggested as solutions to overcome the writing anxiety.

Our study tends to reach two main objectives. First, we focus on the exploration of the fundamental causes and effects of foreign language writing anxiety among the first year students in the department of English at MMUTO. Second, we aim to suggest some recommendations to help learners to decrease their writing anxiety during the exams.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This work attempts to answer the following questions:

1-Do first year students in the department of English at MMUTO experience anxiety during their written examinations?

2-Does writing anxiety affect the first year students in the department of English at MMUTO writing performance during their examinations?

3-What are the fundamental reasons that cause writing anxiety during examination?

4-How can first year students in the department of English at MMUTO cope with their writing anxiety during examination?

In order to answer our research questions we proceed the following hypotheses:

1-First year students in the department of English at MMUTO experience anxiety during their written examinations.

2-First year students in the department of English at MMUTO writing performance isnegatively affected by writing anxiety during their examinations.

3-First year students in the department of English at MMUTO writing anxiety is due to various factors.

4-First year students in the department of English at MMUTO will downgrade their writing anxiety by following appropriate strategies.

Research Techniques and Methodology

Our objective is to investigate the central factors that lie behind the students writing anxiety and its main effects in their writing productions.Hence, to reach this, we will plumb the descriptive and the explanatory research design. As concerns the method, we have adopted the mixed-method research. We have combined qualitative and quantitative methods for both data collection and data analysis.

In order to answer the research questions, check the hypotheses and get the information needed, we have relied on two important tools: the questionnaire and the interview. The questionnaireis administered to 50 first year students in the

department of English at MMUTO that are selected through random sampling process. Concerning the interview, it is directed to five teachers in the department of English at MMUTO.

Structure of the Dissertation

The overall structure of this dissertation follows the traditional-complex model. It contains a general introduction, four chapters and a general conclusion. The first chapter is the '**Review of the Literature**'. It reviews the previous studies about foreign language anxiety as a general issue and foreign language writing anxiety as a particular concern. It includes also the theoretical framework adopted in our study. The second chapter is labeled '**Research Design**'. It shows the methodology used in the work, in addition to the procedures of data collection and data analysis. The third chapter is called '**Presentation of the Findings**', which is the presentation of the results by using a set of figures and tables. The fourth chapter is entitled '**Discussion of the Findings**'. It is the discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions and the theoretical framework. Finally, this work ends with a general conclusion which sums up the whole study.

Chapter One: Review of the Literature

Introduction:

This chapter contains three main parts. The first part consists of a general overview about anxiety, the three main types of anxiety and the signs of anxiety, in addition to the foreign language anxiety definitions and its relation to the learning process. The second part contains the definition of the writing skill. It will also deal with a clear insight about the foreign language writing anxiety, its major causes and effects. The third part involves the theoretical framework based on two main theories that are Horwitz et al. (1986) and Cheng (2004).

1 / Anxiety and Foreign Language Anxiety:

1.1 Defining Anxiety:

Before tackling foreign language anxiety, it is important to have a look to what anxiety is in general. Etymologically speaking, the word anxiety is a noun derived from the adjective ‘anxious’.

Since anxiety is a psychological phenomenon, it is important to have some insight into what anxiety means in the psychological field. The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (1985) states that anxiety is “*a vague unpleasant emotional state with qualities of apprehension, dread, distress and uneasiness*”. (Cited in Crozier, 1997:124).

Freud sees anxiety as an unlikable emotional state, which is characterized by nervousness and worry (Cited in Erikson, 2016:51). Many other scholars have also defined the concept of anxiety. Spielberger (1983:1) claims that anxiety is “*a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated*

with an arousal of the automatic nervous system". From this perspective, we can say that anxiety is a personal emotion of pressure and stress that is related to the provocation of the nervous system.

1-2/Types of Anxiety:

The word anxiety has been conceptualized by many researchers. Therefore, three main types of anxiety have been distinguished.

1-2-1/State Anxiety Vs Trait Anxiety:

According to Spielberger, state anxiety refers to "*an immediate, transitory and emotional experience with immediate cognitive effects*". While trait anxiety is "*a stable predisposition to become anxious in a wide range of situations*" (Cited in MacInyre, 1983:93).

While state anxiety refers to physical and emotional reactions towards an apprehension stimulus as a danger in a specific situation, trait anxiety refers to the differences in the reactions towards an apparent danger in the environment in general. In other words, a particular response of anxiety is regarded as state anxiety, and a general reaction of anxiety is recognized as trait anxiety.

1-2-2/Situational (specific) Anxiety:

According to Toth(2010), situational specific anxiety is a type of anxiety experienced in specific situations such as taking a test and writing an examination. Spielberger et al. (2005) assert that this kind of anxiety emphasizes on the general orientation and certain situations of anxiety; for example, when EFL students take written examinations or produce writing compositions. In

otherwords, students experience anxiety during their written examinations or writing compositions rather than in other situations. Therefore, situational anxiety is caused by newsituations and changing events.

Ellis (1994:691) states that situational specific anxiety “*consists of the anxiety which is aroused by a specific type of situation or event, such as public speaking, examinations or class participation*”. In other terms, situational specific anxiety is related to particular situations in the individual’s life. In this context, a situation that can cause anxiety for some individuals may not affect other individuals at all. For instance, some people may become anxious when meeting strange people while others do not.

1-2-3/Facilitative vs Debilitative Anxiety:

Anxiety can be manifested into main kinds which are: facilitative and debilitative.

Facilitative anxiety maintains the learners’ motivation and helps them to combat the new information in order to reduce the negative effects of anxiety (Scovel, cited in Ellis, 1994:482). However, debilitative anxiety has a negative impact on anxious learners. It inhibits their preparation for tests and exams, and hinders their learning achievement. It is harmful to performance and presents an obstruction to the learning process.

Williams et al. (2008:181) states that the distinction between these kinds of anxiety may be equal to consistency of anxiety with “*low anxiety state having facilitative anxiety and high anxiety state having debilitative effect*”. In otherwords,

the distinction between these two kinds of anxiety is related to the degree of anxiety among the individuals.

1-3/ Anxiety Signs:

People who experience anxiety have apparent symptoms that reveal their apprehension. Peter Mayer and Diane (2008) categorize anxiety symptoms into three categories: physical, psychological and behavioral symptoms. Physical symptoms include fatigue, difficulty relaxing, muscle tension and muscle aches, trembling and feeling twitchy or being easily startled, sweating, nausea or diarrhea in addition to shortness of breath or rapid heartbeat. Psychological symptoms involve insomnia (sleeplessness), irritability or anger, inability to concentrate, feeling unreal and not in control of your actions (depersonalization). As for behavioral symptoms, it consists of avoidance of social situations, places and certain people, angry outbursts and tantrums, refusal to go to school or to do homework.

1-4/ Foreign Language Anxiety:

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986:128) state that foreign language anxiety is “*a phenomenon related to but distinguishable from other specific anxieties*”. In other terms, foreign language anxiety is a specific type of anxiety related to the learning process.

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986:128) state that FLA is “*a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process*”. In other words, foreign language anxiety is regarded as a

combination of various states of nervousness and uneasiness related to foreign language learning.

A recent definition of foreign language anxiety is provided by Irzeqat (2010:2) in which she states that “*foreign language anxiety is associated with sentiments of fear, uncertainty, disturbance and worry in accordance with situation where the language is learned such as English in foreign language classrooms*”. That is to say, FLA is mainly correlated with learners’ emotions in classrooms.

1-5/Foreign Language Anxiety in Relation to the Learning Process:

Foreign language anxiety affects negatively the learning process. Saito and Samimy (1996) affirm that anxiety has an important effect on language acquisition and success. According to MacIntyre (1995), language learning outcomes may negatively be influenced by anxiety and he suggests that decreasing anxiety may increase learners’ motivation and improve their foreign or second language acquisition. He adds that anxiety can be a barrier in the procedure of foreign language acquisition.

Spielberger et al. (2005) have clarified the negative effects of anxiety on second language learning by diverging concentration and cognitive resources that might otherwise be an effective way to enhance the second language performance. The cognitive development and the academic performance of EFL students’ language learning are negatively affected by FLA including the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing progression

(Krashen,1981,MacIntyre and Gardner,1991 , Aida,1994, Sellers,2000, Chen and Lin,2009,Bekleyen,2009). In addition,foreign language anxiety can be classified as classroom listening, speaking, reading and writing anxiety. Each of the four types of anxiety deals with a particular skill such as listening and writing.Every kind of anxiety has its own causes and effects on EFL students' language acquisition. For instance, if a student experience anxiety in writing he/she can form negative attitudes towards writing or may have negative writing experiences; as result, he/she may try to escape from anywriting state (Çinar, 2014).

2/Foreign Language Writing Anxiety:

2-1/The Writing Skill:

Writing is one of the vital language skills that the language learner needs for the sake of succeeding in both working and academic fields (Tuan, 2010).According to Brand (1987:442), writing is considered as an emotional and cognitive activity, he states that“*it is in cognition that ideas make sense, but it is in emotion that this sense finds value, without such priorities we could not think*”.

Erkan and Saban(2011:165) add that writing is “*a complex activity that requires a certain level of linguistics knowledge, writing conventions, vocabulary and grammar*”. In other words, writing is a compound process that needs a certain degree of grammar, vocabulary, linguistic level, in addition to the writing principles. However, ÖZ (2006:251) provides another definition in which he asserts that “*writing is the written expression of thoughts, desires, emotions and schemes, and this requires skill rather than knowledge*”. In other terms, writing is

a process that necessitates skill more willingly than knowledge. Therefore, the learner is expected to improve both skill and knowledge, since they are complementary, in order to achieve writing proficiency.

Foreign language learners face several challenges when writing, because writing is an active, productive skill (Erkan and Saban, 2011). Complication of writing skill in foreign language intensifies anxiety levels in foreign language learners when taking written examinations.

2-2/Writing Anxiety:

Daly and Miller (1975) are the first who have studied anxiety in relation to writing among the first language learners. Anxiety is emerged under the word 'writing apprehension'. The latter is introduced by Cheng (2002:647) to denote "*the dysfunctional anxiety that many individuals suffer when confronted with writing tasks*".

Daly and Miller (1975) have developed their famous writing apprehension test (WAT) that is an instrument of 29 items designated to test first language writing anxiety; then, it was the most used instrument in the subsequent studies to gauge second language writing anxiety (Cheng, 2004). Daly (1978:37) defines writing apprehension as "*the general avoidance of writing situations perceived by individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing*". This definition emphasizes three main constructs. **1/ Individual attitudes** that are related to positive and negative verdict. **2/ Emotions and feelings**; for instance, dread or anxiety. **3/ Avoidance behaviors**; for example: blocking and confrontation.

Also according to Daly (1978:10), writing apprehension is “*a situation and subject-specific individual difference*”. In this context, Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert (1999:41) state that writing anxiety is “*a language skill specific anxiety that is variant from a general classroom type of anxiety*”. Likewise, Bloom (1985:121) gives another definition to the writing anxiety that is “*a label for one or combination of feelings, beliefs or behaviors that interfere with a person’s ability to start, work on or finish a given writing task that he/she is intellectually capable of doing*”. Later, Cheng (2004) has formulated the writing anxiety scale labeled ‘Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory’ (SLWAI) that is directed to 421 EFL students from different colleges in Taiwan University. It is composed of 22 items that are directed to evaluate the three main effects of foreign language writing anxiety that are somatic, Cognitive and Avoidance behavior that will be highlighted in our theoretical framework.

Daud, Duad and Abu kassim (2003) have stated that writing anxiety is a result of poor achievement in second language learning. They indicate that students with low performance experience more anxiety in writing than high performing ones. FLWA affects negatively foreign learners’ performance (Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert, 1999; Atay and kurt, 2007). Al-Ahmed (2003) adds that writing anxiety is a challenging for both L1 and L2 learners, thus it affects their writing performances in a negative way.

2-3/Causes of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety:

Daly (1978) states that there are nine interconnected basic causes that lie behind the writing apprehension: a/ Lack of appropriate skills, b/ Teachers reactions to mechanical problems, c/ The nature of the writing assignment, d/ The

tendency to associate writing with aversive consequences, e/ Perceptions by the apprehension writers that teachers are the source of punishments, f/ Public comparison of students' work that lead to ridicule and cause the writer embarrassment, g/ Negative reaction by teachers to the content of compositions, h/ Poor self-perceptions on the part of the writers and inadequate role models. In other words, foreign language writing anxiety causes are mainly restricted to personal and contextual factors.

2-4/ Effects of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety:

Later studies have proved that L2 writing anxiety has two fundamental effects. The first effect is the pain that anxious learners have towards writing, and the second effect lies in the disliking of the writing process and all the situations related to writing. As it is stated by Madigan et al. (1996:295) and Cheng (2002:648), the effects of the foreign language writing anxiety are “*distress associated with writing and a profound distaste for the process*”.

Recent studies have proposed a negative relationship between foreign language writing anxiety and writing performance. Hassan(2001) ascertains that low anxious learners' compositions are better than the ones of high apprehensive students, and low anxious learners write more than high anxious students do. For example, students with high level of writing anxiety tend to write short and less complete messages, lack of information, no punctuation, and sometimes some grammatical structures are repeated.

3/The Theoretical Framework:

The objective of our study is to explore the major factors and effects of FLWA on students and find some solutions to downgrade it. Therefore, to attain our purpose we rely on two main theories that are Horwitz et al. (1986) and Cheng (2004). They theorize five dimensional conceptualization of anxieties that are performed in foreign language writing anxiety which are test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety and avoidance behavior.

3-1/ Test Anxiety:

Horwitz et al. (1986:128) defines test anxiety as “*a type of performance anxiety stemming from fear of failure*”. In other words, test anxiety is a kind of performance anxiety in which the learners experience dread of failure and doing poorly in the exam. We can say that test anxiety is a psychological state where the student feels high level of worry, apprehension and uneasiness before or during examination. Test anxiety represents a barrier that hinders the learning performance; for instance, students may experience some level of anxiety when taking their writing examinations and this can result in poor writing compositions.

3-2/ Fear of Negative Evaluation:

Horwitz et al. (1986:128) define fear of negative evaluation as “*apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively*”. In other terms, fear of negative evaluation refers to students’ worry when they know that others will evaluate

them; for example, lack of writing performance can lead students to experience fear of negative evaluation when their teachers will evaluate their writing compositions. In addition, learners who experience fear of negative evaluation when writing may develop distaste towards the writing process.

3-3/ Somatic anxiety:

Cheng(2004:316) defines somatic anxiety as *“one’s perceptions of the physiological effects of the anxiety experience as reflected in increase state of unpleasant feelings, such as nervousness and tension”*. This definition means that somatic anxiety is the physical symptoms of anxiety which augment uneasy emotions like apprehension and worry; for instance, when anxious students take an exam and come to write, they may experience some physical signs like: sweating and trembling.

3-4/ Cognitive Anxiety:

According to Cheng (2004:316), cognitive anxiety refers to *“the cognitive aspect anxiety experience including negative expectations, preoccupation with performance and concern about others’ perceptions”*. We can say, cognitive anxiety is the mental aspect that anxiety has on the individual including pessimistic expectations, worry about performance and fear about others’ opinions. For example, a student may develop negative beliefs and nervousness about their writing performance during examination.

3-5/ Avoidance Behavior:

Cheng (2004:316) states that avoidance behavior refers to “*the behavioral aspect of the anxiety experience and avoidance of writing*”. In other terms, apprehensive learners tend to avoid any writing situation when it is possible; for instance, learners who suffer from writing anxiety escape from producing any writing production.

To sum up, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety and avoidance behavior are the vital writing anxiety manifestations that affect negatively the learners’ writing performance or success. Accordingly, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are considered as the main factors that cause writing anxiety during examination; whereas, somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety and avoidance behavior are regarded as the major effects of writing anxiety that appear on students.

Conclusion:

Foreign language writing anxiety has attracted the attention of many researchers for many years to shed light on its main causes and effects for the purpose of providing effective solutions to reduce it. This chapter has tackled the main researchers’ views about FLWA, in addition to the three types of anxiety and its signs, as well as, its main causes and effects. This chapter has also reviewed the fundamental frameworks of Horwitz et al. (1986) and Cheng (2004). The main research components that have been discussed in this chapter attempt to help us to investigate the causes, the effects and the strategies that can aid the first year students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou to cope with students’ foreign language writing anxiety.

Chapter Two :Research Design

Introduction:

This chapter aims to describe the research techniques and the procedures that are used in this research for both data collection and data analysis. It contains two main sections: the first section is called “**procedures of data collection**”. It includes the methods used in this study, the description of the context of the research and sample population. It presents also a clear description of the tools used for data collection (questionnaire and interview). The second section is entitled “**procedures of data analysis**”. It is related to the methods used for data analysis that are statistical analysis and qualitative content analysis.

1/- Procedures of Data Collection:

1-1/ Research Method:

In this work, we have adopted the explanatory and the descriptive methods. Travers (cited in Adauza, 1995:39) claims that “*the descriptive method aims to describe the nature of situation as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the causes of particular phenomena*”. Whereas, the explanatory method aims to explain why phenomena occur and to predict future occurrences. We have selected these two main methods because they serve our research more than other methods. While the descriptive method is chosen for the purpose of describing and explaining the issue of writing anxiety, the explanatory method is selected in order to explain why writing anxiety occurs and provides some solutions to overcome it.

To carry out with our investigation, we have followed both quantitative and qualitative approaches because we require both quantitative and qualitative results. Angouri (2010:46) states that quantitative and qualitative methodologies “*arguably contribute to a better understanding of the various phenomena under investigation*”. Kothari (2004) adds that quantitative data are concerned with numerical and statistical data, while qualitative data are concerned with explanation and interpretation of data.

1-2/ Context of the Study and Sample Population:

In order to gain information as well as to reach the objectives of our study, a case study approach has been used. Yin (2009:93) defines it as “*an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context*”. Therefore, this research has taken place in the department of English at MMUTO, after the second semester examination. Concerning the research sample, we find that it is necessary to select our sample from the whole population of the first year students. Horwitz et al. (1986) state that in foreign language classrooms students who experience anxiety are found at least at the first level of the university. For this reason, we have selected and have chosen the first year students to be our sample; as result, our questionnaire is handed to fifty students who are selected randomly. Besides to five teachers who have participated in the interview. We have decided to conduct an interview with these teachers for the sake of making our study more reliable and to see our issue from the teachers’ point of view.

1-3/ Data Collection Tools:

In order to check our hypotheses and to gather data for our investigation, we have relied on two main research instruments that are the questionnaire and the interview. While the questionnaire is submitted to the first year students in the department of English at MMUTO, the interview is conducted with five teachers from the same department.

1-3-1/ Description of Students' Questionnaire:

The first procedure that we have selected to gather data is the questionnaire that is a group of systematically structured items directed and asked to respondents for gaining a great number of information about a particular problem. Wilson and Mc Lean (cited in Cohen, 2007:317) argue, "*The questionnaire is widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher*". We have selected this instrument since it is the only one which can offer us a large amount of data in a short period of time. In this context, Brown (1988:3) states that "*the advantage of a questionnaire is that substantial amounts of information can be collected in a relatively short time*".

Since our research is about 'the investigation of the foreign language writing anxiety causes and effects on first year students' writing performance in the department of English at MMUTO', a questionnaire is directed to 50 students of the first year classes. This questionnaire contains eighteen items; it is divided into four main sections. The first section is named '**Anxiety and Foreign**

Language Learning'. It aims to discover if anxiety exists among the first year learners. The second is entitled '**Foreign Language Writing Anxiety during Examination**'. Its aim lies in discovering the extent to which the first year students suffer from writing anxiety during their examination. The third is labeled '**Reasons of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety during Examination**'. Its objective is to comprehend the main causes that lie behind students' foreign language writing anxiety. Concerning the last one, it is called '**Strategies for Reducing Foreign Language Writing Anxiety**'. Its purpose is to find strategies and solutions in order to reduce and overcome foreign language writing anxiety.

1-3-2/ Teachers' Interview:

In addition to the questionnaire, we have used another instrument that is the interview. In our study, we have selected the semi-structured interview that is defined by Catherine Dawson (2007:29-30) as the one in which '*the researchers want to know specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews*'. The interview has been carried out with five teachers from the department of English at MMUTO. We have chosen two teachers who are specialized in teaching the writing module and three other teachers who teach other modules like literature, ESP and functional grammar .

This interview includes twelve (12) questions. Our objective is to discover the existence of foreign language writing anxiety, its causes in addition to the appearance of its effects on students' writing compositions. Besides, we aim to know the teachers' awareness about this issue and to obtain their propositions to downgrade students' foreign language writing anxiety.

2/ Procedures of Data Analysis:

After collecting data, the next step is called data analysis in which the raw data collected will be transformed into handy information that help us to achieve our objectives. Therefore, we have selected two main techniques in order to analyze our results that are statistical and descriptive content analysis. The reason behind our choice is that our research findings are both quantitative and qualitative.

2-1/ Statistical Analysis:

In order to analyze the questionnaire's close-ended questions that include numerical data, we have relied on a computer program (**Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21**). This computer program (SPSS), which is largely utilized in social sciences, facilitates the description of statistical analysis and the presentation of quantitative data (Landau and Everitt, 2004). Our findings will be presented in figures and tables.

2-2/ Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA):

QCA is a data analysis technique that is used to interpret and analyze the qualitative data attained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the interview. Hsieh and Shannon (2005:2) define QCA as "*A research method for the subjective interpretation process of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns*". That is QCA is related to the analysis and interpretation of texts. Besides, Down-

Wamboldt(quoted in Hsieh and Shauon, 2005:1278) declares that the main objective of this instrument is “*to provide the knowledge and the understanding of the phenomenon under study*”. It means that it is useful for an improved comprehension of the problem.

Conclusion:

In this chapter, we have explained the manner in which our data have been collected and analyzed. We have chosen a questionnaire as a major research tool for the English language students and a semi-structured interview as another instrument for the English language teachers in the department of English at MMUTO. We have also selected two techniques for data analysis that are statistical analysis and qualitative content analysis.

Chapter Three: Presentation of Findings

Introduction:

This chapter is about the presentation of the findings that are gained from the questionnaire addressed to first year students in the department of English at MMUTO and the interview conducted with teachers in the same department.

This chapter includes two sections. The first section is devoted to the presentation of the results of the questionnaire, which are displayed in percentages and shown in tables and figures, while the second intends to present the results obtained from the interview.

1- Results of the Students' Questionnaire:

1-1-Section One: Anxiety and Foreign Language Learning.

Q1: Do you find that learning English as foreign language is a difficult task?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	17	33	50
Percentage	34%	66%	100%

Table1: Students' Views about Learning English as a Foreign Language.

We can depict from this table that the majority of the students (66%) think that learning English as a foreign language does not represent a difficult task, while 34% of the students find it difficult.

Q 2: Does anxiety affect your English learning?

The number of students who think that anxiety affects their English learning is 36 (72%); whereas, 14(28%) students affirm that anxiety does not affect their English learning.

Q3: If yes, to what extent does Anxiety affect your English Language Learning?

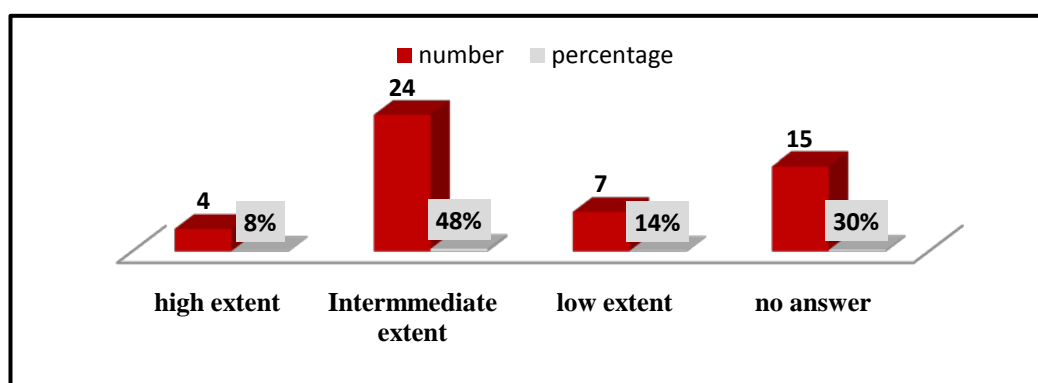


Figure1: the Extent to which Anxiety Affects Students' English Learning.

The results show that the majority of the first year students (48%) have reported that anxiety affects their English learning in an intermediate extent.

1-2-Section Two: Foreign Language Writing Anxiety during Examination.

Q4: How do you feel when you write your composition in the examination?

	Comfortable	Anxious	Total
Number	24	26	50
Percentage	48%	52%	100%

Table 2: The Presence of Students' Writing Anxiety during Examination.

The above table demonstrates that 52% of the first year students in the department of English at MMUTO feel anxious when they take their written examinations; however, 48% of them feel more relaxed and comfortable.

Q5: Do you feel worried and uneasy when you know that your writing of English composition will be evaluated?

The majority of the first year students (72%) feel worried when they know that their writing compositions will be evaluated.

Q6: Do you feel your heart pounding when you write your English composition under time constraint?

A: Strongly agree B: Agree C: Uncertain D: Disagree

E: Strongly disagree.

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Number	9	22	11	7	1	50
Percentage	18%	44%	22%	14%	2%	100%

Table 3: The Presence of Physical Symptoms of Anxiety among Students when Writing an English Composition.

The table indicates that 22 (44%) students agree about their experience of the heart pounding when writing their English compositions in a limited period of

time. However; 22% of them are uncertain of experiencing this physical symptom of anxiety.

Q7: Do you feel your whole body rigid and nervous when you have to write an English composition?

Half of the students (50%) become nervous and rigid when they have to write an English composition, while the other half do not experience that.

Q8: You do your best to avoid situations in which you have to write an English composition.

The majority of the students (60%) avoid situations in which they have to write an English production, while 20 (40%) students do not.

1-3-Section three: Reasons of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety during Examination.

Q9: While Writing an English composition you often encounter some linguistic difficulties such as inadequate mastery of vocabulary, simple sentence structures and grammar errors.

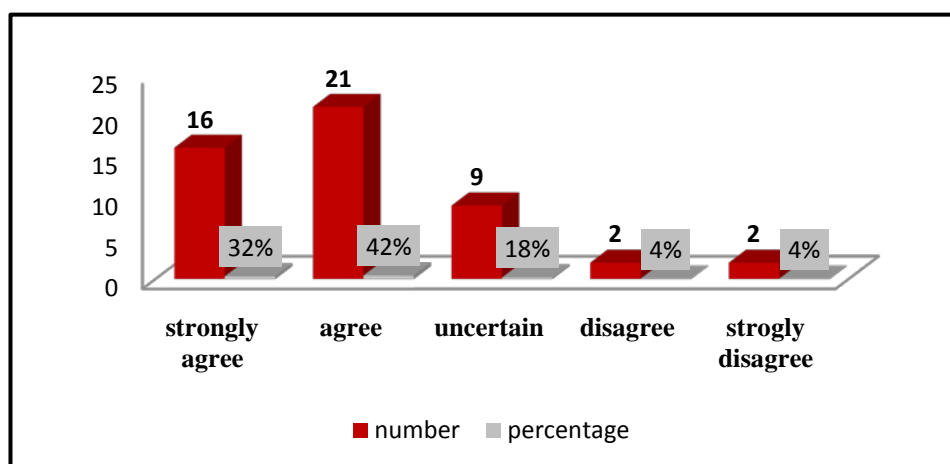


Figure2: Students' Linguistic Difficulties.

We notice from this figure that the large number of the students (42%) agree that they encounter some linguistic difficulties while writing an English composition. In addition to 32% who strongly agree about that; whereas, 9(18%) students are uncertain and only 2(4%) students disagree or strongly disagree.

Q10: You are Afraid of your Teachers' Negative Evaluation on your English Writing Compositions.

A: Strongly Agree B: Agree C: Uncertain D: Disagree
E: Strongly Disagree.

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Number	16	23	5	5	2	50
Percentage	32%	46%	10%	10%	4%	100%

Table4:Students'Fear of their Teachers' Negative Evaluation.

A high proportion of students (46%) agree that they feel afraid about their teachers' negative evaluation. The percentage of the students who strongly agree is 32%, and the percentage of those who are uncertain is 10%; however, the number of 5 (10%) students disagrees, and only 4% of them chose the answer E 'Strongly Disagree'.

Q11: You cannot organize your ideas while writing in the exam.

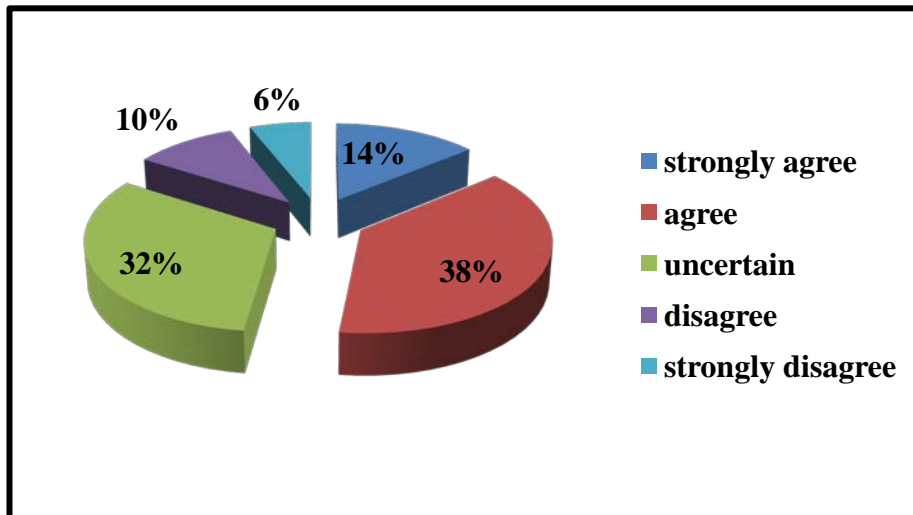


Figure3:Students' Difficulties in their Organization of Ideas during the Exam.

The results concretely reveal that the majority of the first year students (38%) find some difficulties to organize their ideas when writing in the exam.

Q12: While writing in English, I have anxiety due to insufficient writing practice in classrooms.

A: Strongly Agree B: Agree C: Uncertain D: Disagree E: Strongly Disagree.

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Number	34	7	4	3	2	50
Percentage	68%	14%	8%	6%	4%	100%

Table5: Students' Views about their Insufficient Writing Practice in Classrooms.

The results clearly demonstrate that 68% of the first year students are 'strongly agree' that their insufficient writing practice in classroom can be the

reason behind their writing anxiety in the exam.14%of them‘agree’ with this item as well. 8% have opted for (C) ‘neutral’.Only 6% have chosen (D) ‘disagree’. Finally, just 4% have selected the choice (E) ‘strongly disagree’.

Q13: The teacher does not direct students to write well.

A: Strongly Agree B: Agree C: Uncertain D: disagree
E: Strongly Disagree.

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Number	4	16	15	13	2	50
Percentage	8%	32%	30%	26%	4%	100%

Table 6: Students’ Opinions about their Teachers’ Guidance to Write Well.

The table above reveals that the majority of students (32%) agree that their teachers do not direct them to write well, while 30% of them are uncertain about that.

Q14:According to you,whatcan be the main factor that may cause your writinganxiety in theexam?

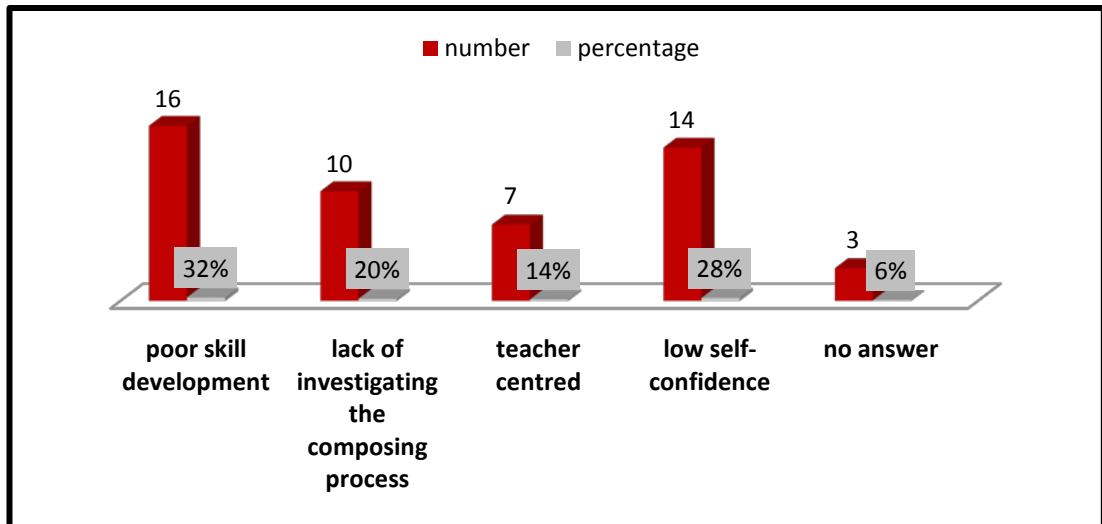


Figure 4: Students' Opinions about the Main Factor that Causes their Writing Anxiety in the Exam.

As it is demonstrated in the figure above, 32% of the first year students strongly agree that poor skill development can be the main cause that can lead to the writing anxiety in the exam. 20% of the students agree that lack of investigating the composing process can be the reason behind their writing anxiety in the exam. 14% of them have opted for the choice of 'teacher centered'. 28% of them assume that their writing anxiety is resulted from their low self-confidence. Lastly, 6% of them have not provided any answer.

-If there are other causes please state them?

Some students have provided us with other causes that are stress, lack of vocabulary and ideas, being tired, nervousness, disturbance and noise during the exam, the standing of the teacher near the students' table and watching to his/her examination paper. Finally, some students are not ready to pass the exam.

1-4-Section Four: Strategies for Reducing Foreign Language Writing Anxiety.

Q15: Do you think it is important to reduce your English writing Anxiety?

As it is indicated, nearly 100% of the first year students in the department of English see that it is important to reduce their English writing anxiety.

Q16: According to you, what can be the most effective solution for reducing writing anxiety?

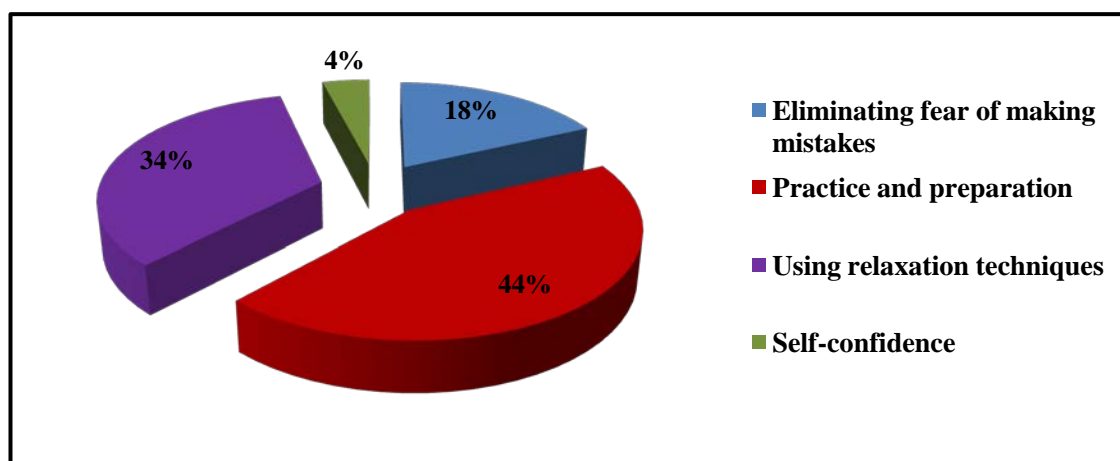


Figure5: Students' Suggestions for Downgrading their Writing Anxiety.

As it is demonstrated in the figure above, the majority of the students (44%) see that the most effective solution to reduce their writing anxiety is **'practice and preparation'**. While, 17(34%) students assume that **'self-confidence'** can be the best solution for downgrading their writing anxiety.

Q 17: What do you expect from your teacher to do in order to reduce your writing anxiety?

The majority of the students (58%) have answered this question; whereas, 42% of them have not answered this question. Those who have responded to this question have suggested some solutions that teachers can practice to reduce students' writing anxiety. These solutions can be recapitulated as follows:

bringing new teaching techniques in addition to new words and terms, practicing and writing paragraphs in the classroom, reinforcing self-confidence on students, correcting students' mistakes without blaming them, directing students and providing them with a set of advice and understanding their needs.

Q 18: What do you propose to overcome your writing anxiety?

The majority of the students (68%) have responded to this question; however, only 32% of them have not responded to this question. The participants who have answered this question have provided a set of strategies to reduce writing anxiety. These strategies are summarized as follows: reinforcing self-confidence, avoiding stress, reinforcing practice and preparation, eliminating fear of making mistakes, and using relaxation techniques.

2- Results of Teachers' Interview:

Q1: Have you noticed that some of your students experience writing anxiety during the examination? If yes, how can you describe it?

All teachers have responded to this question by 'yes'. Some of them have claimed that this appears in their students' writing compositions; for instance, they write sentences without verbs and, in some cases, they repeat the same sentences or ideas several times in one dissertation. Others have added that some students become blocked and turn red and pale.

Q2: Some researchers argue that writing anxiety is the most affective factor affecting English foreign language learning. Do you agree with them or do you think that there are other factors?

Teachers have different views about this question. Some of them agree that writing anxiety is the most affective factor affecting English foreign language learning. Besides, they have added some other factors that influence the learning process. They have used utterances like *'yes, but there are other factors such as lack of preparation'*. Some other teachers disagree and have provided other factors that affect more the English foreign language learning. They have expressed their opinions by using some utterances like *'in my opinion, there are other factors that are more affective than writing anxiety like lack of vocabulary, poor performance and lack of reading and writing'*.

Q3: To what extent writing anxiety affects students' writing performance during the examination?

The majority of the teachers have answered that writing anxiety affects students' writing performance in the exam in a high extent (degree). They have supported their answers by using expressions and sentences like *'many students do not answer the exam's questions even they are good students'* and *'because of the lack of comfortable environment'*; whereas, one teacher has claimed that writing anxiety does not influence students' writing performance at all. He/she has used expressions like *'according to me, students have no writing anxiety'*.

Q4: According to you, what causes can be behind the students' writing anxiety?

Teachers have provided different answers and have stated that there are different causes that can lead to the students' writing anxiety. Among them, they have selected poor performance, lack of preparation, lack of reading, low level in vocabulary and grammar, lack of self-confidence, students do not assimilate their courses and teachers do not present sometimes courses in a clear way.

Q5: Do you think that ‘fear of negative evaluation’ can be one of the main factors that lead to the writing anxiety?

Some teachers have answered this question by ‘yes’. They have expressed their views by some utterances like ‘yes, since the students think about the marks at the moment of taking the examination’ and ‘yes, in my opinion, fear of negative evaluation can be the major factor that can lead to the writing anxiety’. While other teachers have responded to this question by ‘no’, and have expressed their opinions as follows by saying: ‘no, I don’t think so, because this fear of negative evaluation is a result of some other factors like poor performance’.

Q6: In your opinion, does test anxiety (fear of taking examination) hinders students’ writing capacities?

The plurality of the teachers have responded to this question by ‘yes’. They confirm that test anxiety hinders students’ writing capacities during the exams and this can be resulted from many other factors like lack of preparation and time constraint.

Q7: Have you noticed some physiological symptoms (sweating, trembling) and behavioral ones like anger on your students when they write their exams?

The majority of the teachers agree that some students have some physiological symptoms (sweating, trembling) and behavioral ones (anger) when writing their exams.

Q8: When correcting students’ exams papers, are there any signs that lead to depict the students who experience writing anxiety?

All teachers answered this question by ‘yes’. They state that there are some signs that depict the students who experience writing anxiety. They have expressed their opinions as follows: *‘I meet some mistakes like putting a word at the place of another word, sentences without verbs, longer compositions with lack of meaning and knowledge’* and *‘yes, there are some signs which depict the students’ writing anxiety like lack of coherence and cohesion’*.

Q9: Do you think that students’ self-confidence may help to reduce writing anxiety?

All teachers have responded to this question by ‘yes’, and all of them confirm that reinforcing self-confidence among students is a very important solution to reduce writing anxiety.

Q10: According to you, what can be the effects of writing anxiety on students’ writing performance during the exam?

All teachers agree that writing anxiety influences students’ writing performance during the exam and, according to them, the dissertations of anxious students are out of topic and others are unstructured. Moreover, they state that writing anxiety is classified among the major causes that hinder the students’ writing performance.

Q11: Do you think that downgrading writing anxiety can improve students’ writing performance?

All teachers have responded to this question by ‘yes’. They confirm that reducing writing anxiety can really improve students’ writing performance. They have expressed their views by utterances like *‘yes, if the students read and write in*

order to improve their writing performance’ and ‘yes, since it is the major cause that hinders the students’ writing performance’.

Q12: In your opinion, what are the appropriate strategies or solutions that can help students to overcome their writing anxiety?

The teachers have proposed different solutions that can help students to overcome their writing anxiety, and among these solutions: students’ well preparation for the exam, students must ignore the writing anxiety, anxious students should do relaxation techniques during the exam, students should reinforce their self-confidence and their optimism.

Conclusion:

The results gained from the two research tools, which are the questionnaire and the interview, are presented in this chapter. Basing on the results obtained, it is concretely shown that the majority of the first year students in the department of English at MMUTO suffer from writing anxiety that affects negatively their writing performance during examination. Besides, all teachers said that there are many causes which lie behind the students’ writing anxiety, so knowing these causes may help to downgrade it.

Chapter Four: Discussion of the Findings

Introduction:

This chapter aims at discussing and interpreting the outcomes obtained from the questionnaire administered to first year students in the department of English at MouloudMammeri University of TiziOuzou, and the semi-structured interview conducted with teachers from the same department. The results are, in fact, discussed and interpreted with respect to the two frameworks proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and Cheng (2004); in addition to the presented literature in chapter one in order to answer the research questions and check the hypotheses set in the general introduction. To discuss our results, we have categorized them according to our research questions, hypotheses and objectives.

1/Discussion of the Students' Questionnaire and the Teachers'

Interview:

1-1- Anxiety and English Foreign Language Learning:

First year students' English learning process is affected by anxiety. Basing on the results of 'students' view about learning English as a foreign language', it is shown that 66% of the participants (see table 1) find that learning English is a difficult task. This denotes that the majority of first year students meet barriers in learning the English language which is due to the presence of various reasons and affective factors such as lack of preparation and the existence of anxiety.

Moreover, the results of 'students' perceptions about the influence of anxiety on their English learning' reveal that 72% of the respondents confirm that their English learning is affected by anxiety. This demonstrates that a high

proportion of them are influenced by this phenomenon, and this is stated by Horwitz et al's (1986:128) claim that a foreign language anxiety is '*a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language process*'. And this is also asserted by Irzeqat's (2010:2) assertion that '*foreign language anxiety is associated with sentiments of fear, uncertainty, disturbance and worry in accordance with situation where the language is learned such as English in foreign language classrooms*'. Thus, we can say that anxiety interferes students' English learning and makes it difficult for them. Besides, it is believed to be the major reason that hinders their English learning capacities.

Furthermore, the outcomes of 'the students' views about the extent to which anxiety affects their English learning' reveal that nearly half of the students (48%) (see figure 1) confirm that their English learning is affected by anxiety in an intermediate extent. From these results, we deduce that anxiety affects most of the English foreign language learners, but with different levels, which means that the extent of the effects of anxiety differ from one student to another.

1-2- Students' Experience of Writing Anxiety during Examination:

First year students in the department of English at MMUTO experience writing anxiety during examination. The outcomes gained from the study show that the majority of the participants (52%) (see table 2) feel anxious and uneasy when they write their compositions during the exams. This is interpreted in different manifestations that consists of physiological, cognitive and avoidance behavior (see chapter one). For instance, the results of 'the presence of physical symptoms of anxiety among first year students when writing an English

production during the examination' reveal that the plurality of the students (see table 3) experience some physical signs such as heart pounding, rigid body and nervousness. These results come as support evidence to Cheng's (2004:316) assertion that somatic anxiety (which is the physical appearance of writing anxiety) is '*one's perceptions of the physiological effects of the anxiety experience as reflected in increase state of unpleasant feelings such as nervousness and tension*'; for instance, students who experience writing anxiety during examination may feel nervous and uneasy, and they can also suffer from rigid body, sweating and trembling.

Moreover, our findings demonstrate that the majority of the first year students (60%) avoid any situation in which they have to write an English Composition when it is possible. These results are supported by Cheng's (2004) claim that avoidance behavior means that apprehensive learners behave in such a way that they escape from writing situations. In the same context, Daly and Miller (1975) state that writing anxiety is related to the tendency of people to approach or avoid writing. All these results are confirmed by teachers' answers in the interview where all of them have asserted that they have observed some physiological, cognitive and behavioral signs on their students which confirm that these students experience writing anxiety during examination. They have expressed their opinions by using expressions like '*yes, of course*' and '*yes this really happens*'. Concerning their description of their students' writing anxiety, they have used utterances like '*Some students become blocked and stop writing*' and '*students' faces turn red and pale*' (see chapter three).

Basing on both students' and teachers' views about 'students' experience of writing anxiety during examination', we deduce that the first year students in the

department of English at MMUTO experience writing anxiety during examination. This answers the first research question which is **‘Do first year students in the department of English at MMUTO experience anxiety during their written examinations?’** and confirms the first hypothesis which states that **first year students in the department of English at MMUTO experience writing anxiety during their written examinations.**

1-3- Foreign Language Writing Anxiety Causes:

Writing anxiety is caused by various factors. The results of the study demonstrate that the plurality of the respondents (see figure 2) encounter some linguistic difficulties while writing an English production. Based on these results, we can say that linguistic difficulties (inadequate mastery of vocabulary, grammar errors...etc) can be one reason behind students’ writing anxiety during examination. This outcome is confirmed by Latif’s (2007) assertion that the lack of linguistic knowledge is considered among the main factors that lead to the writing anxiety.

Indeed, students’ fear of their teachers’ negative evaluation is considered as another affective factor that causes foreign language writing anxiety. The findings of the study reveal that a high proportion of the participants (see table 4) state that fear of teachers’ negative evaluation is a major reason behind their writing anxiety during examination. Teachers’ answers come as support evidence to this result in which they confirm that this factor can really create and develop first year students’ writing anxiety. For instance, they have said *‘yes, in my opinion, fear of negative evaluation can be the major factor that lead to the writing anxiety’* and *‘yes, since students think about the marks at the moment of*

taking the examination'. To strengthen this view, we rely on Shangkheny (cited in Walsh, 1986:5) who asserts that *'teachers and reviewers may see the process of evaluation as constructive and beneficial, but many writers react negatively to anything but the most favorable of responses-seeing the process of writing as a trap in which they are required to demonstrate their shortcomings'*.

Furthermore, the outcomes show that the plurality of the first year students (see table 5) affirm that their writing anxiety is due to the lack of writing practice in classrooms. We deduce that the majority of the students confirm that insufficient writing practice in classrooms is a vital factor that leads them to be anxious in their written examinations. So, if students practice writing in classrooms, they will perform well in their written examinations and avoid writing anxiety.

Accordingly, the plurality of the participants (see table 6) state that their teachers do not really direct them to write well and this can be due to limited time in presenting their courses and many other limitations which face them. We conclude that inadequate teachers' guidance to write well results in students' writing anxiety during examination; for instance, when students face writing difficulties during examination that are resulted from the lack of their teachers' direction to write in a good way, they experience writing anxiety.

Poor skill development and low self-confidence can be considered as other major factors that cause students' writing anxiety. A high proportion of the first year students (see figure 4) assume that their writing anxiety is aroused by poor skill development and low self-confidence. Based on these results, we can say that insufficient skill development and students' low self-esteem create students'

writing anxiety during examination. For instance, if students don't develop their writing skill and don't reinforce their self-confidence they will surely experience writing anxiety when taking their written examinations, thus they become blocked and feel nervous and lose the ability to perform well.

Besides, they have added additional reasons such as stress, being tired, nervousness, disturbance and noise during the exam, and the standing of the teacher near the student's table and watching his/her examination paper. Based on these results, we deduce that there are many causes behind students' writing anxiety and these reasons differ from one participant to another. This is affirmed by teachers' answers in the interview where we have nearly got the same responses, and this can be interpreted that teachers of English are aware about the main causes that lie behind their students' writing anxiety. This goes hand in hand with Hilleson's (1996) assertion that students' writing strategy, utilized feedback of their writing performance and fear of teachers' negative evaluation, negative attitudes, low level of self-confidence and poor practice of writing are claimed to be as vital reasons of English foreign language students' writing anxiety. All these results answer the third research question which is **'what are the fundamental reasons that cause writing anxiety during examination?'** and confirms the third hypothesis which states that **first year students in the department of English at MMUTO writing anxiety is due to various factors.**

1-3- Writing Anxiety Effects on Students' Writing Performance:

The writing performance of the first year students in the department of English at MMUTO is negatively affected by writing anxiety. The majority of teachers of English assert that their first year students' writing performance is

highly influenced by writing anxiety in a negative way. They have expressed their opinions by expressions like *'the effects of writing anxiety appear in students' dissertations and compositions in the way that they are characterized by being out of topic and unstructured'* and *'the students may not get good marks because of the quality of their writing performance which is negatively affected by writing anxiety'* and *'sometimes students writings are signals of lack of concentration, hesitation and hence of writing anxiety'*. In other words, anxious students' dissertations and compositions indicate their experience of writing anxiety that negatively affects their writing performances. In this context, Hassan (2011) ascertains that low anxious learners' compositions are better than the ones of high apprehensive students, and low anxious learners write more than high anxious students do. For example, students with high degree of writing anxiety write unstructured compositions with lack of meaning and useful information. We conclude that teachers are conscious about the significant negative correlation which exists between writing anxiety and students' writing performance. This answers the second research question which is **'Does writing anxiety effect the first year students in the department of English at MMUTO writing performance during their examinations?'** and confirms the second hypothesis which states that **first year students' writing performance is negatively affected by writing anxiety during examination.**

1-4- Coping with Writing Anxiety:

First year students' writing performance can be improved by downgrading writing anxiety. 98% of the first year students in the department of English at

MMUTOstate that reducing their writing anxiety is very important for improving their writing performance. This result is supported by teachers' claim that reducing writing anxiety can really help students to improve their writing performance. They have expressed their views by utterances like '*yes, I do*' and '*yes, since it is the major cause that hinders students' writing performance*'. From these results, we deduce that the first year students suffer from writing anxiety; thus, they are aware about the importance of its downgrading since it impedes their writing capacities.

Accordingly, the plurality of the first year students (see figure 5) think that the best solution for overcoming their writing anxiety is 'practice and preparation', given that the writing process is a difficult task which results in students' writing apprehension that can be reduced by reinforcing practice, and this is asserted by Reeves' (1997:39) claim that '*writing is a process which requires practice...*'. So, first year students should instill their practice of the writing skill inside and outside the classroom, and reinforce their preparation for the exams in order to cope with their writing anxiety. For instance, students can improve their practice of the writing skill by reading books, producing many compositions and preparing themselves well for the examination.

Indeed, the majority of the first year students (see figure 5) see that 'self-confidence' is another crucial solution to downgrade their writing anxiety. This is confirmed by teachers' views that reinforcing self-esteem on students can really help them to cope with this important phenomenon. They have expressed their opinions by expressions like '*yes, of course*' and '*yes, this can really help them*'. To strengthen this point, Hassan (2001:19) claims that '*students with high apprehension about writing may, to some degree, also suffer from lower self-*

esteem than their counterparts with low apprehension'. Based on these outcomes, we conclude that first year students in the department of English at MMUTO should highlight their self-confidence and self-esteem for the sake of overcoming their writing anxiety.

Furthermore, complementary solutions have been suggested by both teachers and students such as: teachers should inform their students that examinations are normal and habitual events, students should revise their lessons in order to be psychologically ready to take the examination, students should ignore their writing anxiety, students should avoid stress and eliminate fear of making mistakes, students should stop thinking about the marks and their teachers' negative evaluation during the examination. Finally, the examination should be taken in a good atmosphere far from the influence of heat, noise, cold and any other external factor. To support this point, we rely on Suleiman (2013) who proposes a set of strategies that can alleviate the mitigation of the students' writing anxiety during their exams. These alleviating solutions are practicing some relaxation techniques, instilling self-confidence and improving a good atmosphere when taking the examination.

Basing on these findings, we can say that first year students in the department of English at MMUTO can cope with their writing anxiety during the exams by following some effective strategies. This answers the last research question which is **'How can first year students in the department of English at MMUTO cope with their writing anxiety during examination?'**and confirms the last hypothesis which states that **first year students in the department of English at MMUTO will downgrade their writing anxiety by following appropriate strategies.**

Recommendations:

In order to overcome first year students' writing anxiety and improve their writing performance during examination, we suggest some helpful strategies for both teachers and students. These strategies are:

1. Students should receive an excellent guidance about the writing process.
2. Students' needs and weaknesses should be known by their teachers in order to help them to instill their writing performance.
3. Students should be aware about the main causes of their writing anxiety and try to cope with by following appropriate strategies.
4. Students should reinforce their self-confidence, eliminate their fear of making mistakes, and take the examinations as normal and habitual events.
5. Students should assimilate all their courses and prepare themselves well before the examination.

Conclusion:

To sum up, this chapter discusses the results gained from the two main research tools that are the questionnaire and the interview. This chapter answers the research questions and confirms the hypotheses set in the general introduction. Based on the results, we deduce that the plurality of first year students of the department on English at MouloudMammeri university of TiziOuzou experience writing anxiety during their examinations. The outcomes of the teachers'

interview and students' questionnaire show that teachers and first year students in the department of English at MMUTO are conscious about the main factors and the negative effects of writing anxiety. Moreover, the teachers and the students in the department of English at MMUTO provide alleviating strategies to cope with this inhibiting problem.

General Conclusion

This present work has investigated first year students' foreign language writing anxiety, its major factors and its negative effects on students' writing performance during examination in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri university of Tizi Ouzou. Foreign language writing anxiety has occupied an important state in the research area; thus, many researchers have explored it from different perspectives (its symptoms, causes and its relationship with learners' performance...); as result, a plenty of articles and research works have been published in relation to this issue. These works and articles have been served us as support to our investigation in the way that they have provided us with clear insights about FLWA and its main related angles.

To strengthen and make our work more reliable we have adopted Horwitz et al's (1986) and Cheng's (2004) theories. These two frameworks endow us with important data about writing anxiety causes and effects.

To answer the stated research questions and confirm or refute the hypotheses set in the general introduction, the mixed methods approach is adopted. It consists of quantitative and qualitative research methods that have been used for both data gathering and data analysis. The data were gained through two main instruments: the questionnaire and the interview. The former is addressed to fifty(50) first year students in the department of English at MMUTO, while the latter is conducted with five teachers from the same department. For the quantitative data analysis, SPSS is utilized for the sake of gaining statistical data;

whereas, QCA is used to interpret the data gathered from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and data obtained from the teachers' interview.

The present study demonstrates different results about the correlation which exists between foreign language writing anxiety and students' writing performance during the examination as well as its symptoms, causes, effects on students' writing performance, and alleviating strategies to cope with this phenomenon. FLWA influences negatively the achievement of the plurality of the first year students in the department of English at MMUTO. Both teachers and students are aware about this issue, and they assert that FLWA is considered as the foremost factor that interferes the students' writing capabilities during examination.

Students' foreign language writing anxiety is produced by many factors like lack of preparation and practice, fear of teachers' negative evaluation, lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary, inappropriate atmosphere and fear of making mistakes. Foreign language writing anxiety appears on students through several signs such as: being worried and uneasy, sweating and trembling, becoming blocked, red and pale, and being disturbed.

As for the effects of this inhibiting phenomenon, writing anxiety results in students' poor writing performance, unpleasant feelings of tension and nervousness, cognitive difficulties in the writing process, and students' avoidance of writing. These writing anxiety negative effects lead to the students' poor writing performance during examination. And for downgrading this affective factor, both teachers and students can follow some facilitating strategies such as: reinforcing students' self-confidence, emphasizing students' practice and

preparation for the examination, taking the examination as normal and habitual experience, eliminating fear of making mistakes and fear of teachers' negative evaluation, stop thinking about marks during the examination, ignoring writing anxiety and following appropriate strategies to overcome it.

Based on the outcomes of the study, we can say that the current work provides answers to the research questions. The results of the study reveal that foreign language writing anxiety highly affects foreign language learners' writing performances in a negative way. They also show different solutions that can help both teachers and learners to cope with this phenomenon.

Any research study surely faces some limitations that can inhibit the reaching of the goals. In our case, the main obstacles are: limited time in distributing the students' questionnaire and conducting the teachers' interview.

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Appendix I

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student

This questionnaire is part of our study which aims to explore foreign language writing anxiety causes and effects, we aim also to find some solutions to reduce it among students of the department of English at MMUTO. Consequently, you are nicely asked to complete this questionnaire by ticking [√] the right answers.

Please take it seriously to guarantee the success of this investigation. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Section One: Anxiety and Foreign Language Learning

1-Do you find that learning English as a foreign language is a difficult task?

Yes

No

2-Does anxiety affect your English learning?

Yes

No

3-If yes, to what extent does anxiety affect your English language learning?

a. High extent

b. Intermediate extent

c. Low extent

Section Two: Foreign Language Writing Anxiety during Examination

3-How do you feel when you write your composition in the examination?

Comfortable

Anxious

5-Do you feel worried and uneasy when you know that your writing of English composition will be evaluated?

Yes

No

6-Do you feel your heart pounding when you write your English composition under time constraint?

• Strongly Agree

• Agree

• Uncertain

• Disagree

• Strongly Disagree

7- Do you feel your whole body rigid and nervous when you have to write an English composition in the exam?

Yes

No

8-You do your best to avoid situations in which you have to write an English composition?

Yes

No

Section Three: Reasons of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety during

Examination

9-While writing English composition, you often encounter some linguistic difficulties such as inadequate mastery of vocabulary, simple sentence structures, and grammar errors.

• Strongly Agree

• Agree

• Uncertain

- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10-You are afraid of your teachers' negative evaluation on your English writing compositions?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11-You cannot organize your ideas while writing in the exam?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12-While writing in English, I have anxiety due to insufficient writing practice in classrooms?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13-The teacher does not direct students to write well.

- Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14-Which of the following factors may cause your writing anxiety in the exam?

- Poor skill development
- Lack of investigating the composing process
- Teacher centered
- Low self-confidence

If there are others causes, please state them.

.....

Section Four: Strategies for Reducing Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

15-Do you think it is important to reduce your English writing anxiety?

Yes

No

16-According to you, what can be the most effective solution for reducing writing anxiety?

- Eliminating fear of making mistake
- Practice and preparation
- Use relaxation techniques
- Self confidence

17-What do you expect from your teacher to do in order to reduce your writing anxiety?

.....
.....

18-What do you propose to overcome your writing anxiety?

.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU

Appendix II

Teachers' Interview:

This interview is a part of our study that is 'investigating causes and effects of writing anxiety on students' writing performance'. This interview aims to investigate the causes and the effects of foreign language writing anxiety among first year students in the department of English, and tends to find some solutions and strategies to downgrade it.

The results that we obtain from this interview will be utilized for an academic purpose. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Q1: Have you observed that some of your students experience writing anxiety during examination? If yes, how can you describe it?

Q2: Some researchers argue that writing anxiety is the most affective factor affecting English foreign language learning. Do you agree with them or do you think that there are other factors?

Q3: To what extent writing anxiety affects students writing performance during examination? Why?

Q4: According to you, what causes can be behind the students' writing anxiety?

Q5: Do you think that 'fear of negative evaluation' can be one of the main factors that lead to the writing anxiety?

Q6: In your opinion, does test anxiety (fear of taking examination) hinder students' writing capacities?

Q7: Have you noticed some physiological symptoms (sweating, trembling) and behavioral ones (anger) on your students when they write their exams?

Q8: When correcting students' exams papers, are there any signs that lead you to depict students who experience writing anxiety?

Q9: Do you think that students' self-confidence may help in reducing writing anxiety?

Q10: According to you, what can be the effects of writing anxiety on students' writing performance during the exam?

Q11: Do you think that downgrading writing anxiety can improve students' writing performance?

Q12: In your opinion, what are the appropriate strategies or solutions that can help students to overcome their writing anxiety?