



Analyzing Writing Anxiety Level of Turkish Cypriot Students

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the writing anxiety of Turkish Cypriot students at the secondary education level. The level of writing anxiety of students were analysed in three different dimensions. These are “the student’s own characteristics and behaviours”, “the influence of family” and “the influence of the overall educational process, teacher and school”. In this study, 721 secondary school (Class 6, 7, 8) students from Nicosia in Northern Cyprus completed the Writing Apprehension Test: 390 female and 330 male students within the age range of 11 to 16 (Mean= 12.84, sd= 1.05). According to the Rasch analysis, the new version of Daly and Miller’s (1975) WAT (3 point Likert scale) which has 20 items (10 positive and 10 negative items) and one factor was used in this study. The writing anxiety of students was examined in three basic headings (own characteristics and behaviours, family characteristics and the impact of school and teachers). Six variables were selected as baseline related to the characteristics and behaviours of students, and all of these determined variables (gender, reading frequency, keeping diary, poem writing, story writing and self-perception of own writing success) were found to be significant for writing anxiety levels. On the other hand, only one of the five variables among family impact (the frequency of newspaper purchase at home) and two of the six variables among school-teacher impact (receiving pre-school education and total working hours of Turkish language teacher) were found to be effective. Considering the results of the present study that anxiety levels of the students who read books, keep diaries or write stories, essays and poems are lower than that of the ones who do not, students should be motivated to perform these activities out of school hours.

Keywords

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Introduction

When teaching both a native language and a foreign language, there are several components to incorporate. These include language skills, grammar, vocabulary, and literature. The language skills include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among them, the oral language skills, namely listening and speaking, are acquired in the natural flow of life; development of listening and speaking

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starts taking place in the period that begins from birth and lasts before the preschool period over. These skills could be further improved during the elementary school years and beyond. However, written language skills, namely writing and reading, are learned later, after formal school life begins. In addition to the classifications of “oral” and “written”, language skills are also grouped based on receptive and productive classifications. Listening and reading are receptive skills whereas speaking and writing are productive skills.

The writing skill that is the main focus of this paper is a written language skill based on production. In its most general sense, it is the skill of an individual to represent himself or herself through writing. Writing is the action of transferring emotions, opinions, wishes, designs, dreams, and experiences, based on language rules and through symbols called letters (Calkins 1994; Graves 1983). According to some research (Keçik & Uzun, 2004; Pritchard and Honeycutt, 2007; Raimes, 1983), writing skills develop slower and with more difficulty than other skills. This emerged from the fact that production of a written text is more complex in its nature, and writing requires multiple skills (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills). The correct application of grammar, editing text, writing legibility, organizing thoughts in a coherent manner, making a concrete viewpoint, creating one’s own style, transferring emotions effectively, improved vocabulary, maintaining a sensitivity to semantics, and knowing the audience well are all necessary for developing excellent writing skills.

On the subject of the complexity of writing skills, there is much research to take into consideration. Several writing theories and models have been developed (Bishop and Ostrom 1994; Flower and Hayes, 1981; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996; McCutchen, 2000; Prior, 2006). The basic purpose of these theories and models of writing are to improve the quality of the teaching of writing. Much research concludes that most students at elementary, high school, university, and even post-graduate levels have difficulty expressing themselves with the written word and writing well (Bloom, 1981; Combs, 1996; Cunningham and Allington, 2003; Hooper et al, 2002; Traxler and Gernsbacher, 1995).

In terms of problems related to the teaching of writing in Turkey, Tağa and Ünlü’s study is remarkable and stands apart (2013). Tağa and Ünlü investigated the findings of 10 research studies conducted so far on the teaching of writing and displayed the problems experienced. According to the findings of their study, the main problems faced in the teaching of writing in Turkey are as follows: time dedicated to writing is insufficient; multiple-choice exams have a negative effect; teachers are far from adequate in their teaching and evaluation skills; students do not have good reading habits; media devices have a negative impact on student reading; Turkish language lessons are not considered as important as they should be; the vocabulary of students is not adequate; the readiness level of students is not taken into consideration; and writing objectives and activities are not given sufficient place in education programs. Karatay (2011), on the other hand, classified the problems related to the teaching of writing as student-related problems (the fear of making grammar mistakes), teacher-related problems (failure in monitoring and evaluating students as necessary), and external problems (over-crowded classrooms and overloading in the teaching program).

Two issues rise most prominently when the findings, above, are examined:

1) As emphasized by Tabak & Göçer (2013) and Aslan & Güneyli (2009), product-based approach, instead of process-based approach, as adopted in Turkey is an important reason for problems in the teaching of writing. Teachers cannot manage well the processes required by process-based approaches, such as familiarizing the students with a topic and helping them narrow it down; organizing the opinions of students; giving students feedback and correcting their mistakes; and monitoring and evaluating students. The conclusions of several studies in the literature (Ashman and Conway, 1993; McKensie and Tomkins, 2010; Rohman, 1965; Tompkins, 2004) indicate that process-based writing, which sees writing as a series of intertwined activities, is effective. However, in Turkey, writing activities are mostly conducted pursuant to a product-based approach; students are left on their own in the writing process, and the texts they produce are evaluated in terms of content and

grammar rules and punctuation marks, and the appearance of written expression is emphasized (readability, structure of the paper, etc.).

2) Baştuğ (2015), addressed another problem in the teaching of writing and displayed that the cognitive aspects of writing alone are emphasized both in education programs and in research. However, perceiving the writing process to be one that only consists of cognitive processes and disregards the affective features can be considered a mistake (Karakaya and Ülper, 2011). As a result, it was concluded that students have to do more than mature in cognitive and psychomotor aspects in order to express themselves in writing.

These two problems are a result of perception that writing is a special talent that only some people can have and this causes a negative attitude toward writing. Writing anxiety ranks high among these negative attitudes. Zamel (1982) states that writing anxiety is widespread among students of classes dominated by a product-based writing approach.

Writing anxiety is a reaction developed against writing. This reaction sometimes appears as motivating and sometimes as preventing. Writing anxiety manifests itself in emotional forms such as sadness, anger, and fear; it also manifests in physical forms, such as cramps and sweating (Petzel and Wenzel, 1993). Daly and Miller (1975) list the three factors that constitute writing anxiety: fear of negative critics toward the text (evaluation apprehension), fear of being evaluated personally (stress apprehension), and fear of failing writing classes (product apprehension). Any writing action, from a simple letter to a complicated report, can be a trigger for writing anxiety for a student. Writing anxiety can cause delays, fear and tension, and loss of self-confidence and motivation among students. Furthermore, it can cause an interruption of thinking processes (Brand and Leckie, 1988). Tighe (1987) claims that students with high writing anxiety are less successful compared to students who have confidence in writing. Anxiety inhibits the development of writing skills in students, and they avoid courses that could potentially help them with their writing issues. Tredinnick (2008) argues that some people do not know how to start writing, whereas some others do not know how to stop. If the anxiety has its way, some good writing attempts end before they begin. Writing under anxiety causes difficulty with going back to the beginning and reexamining the text frequently. It also leads the loss of neutrality in expression, causes the writer to get stuck in details and miss the integrity of the text. Anxiety prevents the opinions to be expressed completely and correctly. To sum up, as emphasized by Thomson (1971) and Sawkins (1971), writing anxiety has a negative impact on writing success.

However, writing anxiety is not totally bad; it does not always affect the writing process in a negative way. When reviewing the literature (Alpert and Haber, 1960; Scovel, 1978; Yaman, 2010), it can be found that anxiety can manifest itself in two different ways in the educational process. The first way is when anxiety prevents learning activities by negatively affecting the student, whereas the second way is when anxiety facilitates learning by motivating students to struggle with new concepts. Seven (2008) displayed that, according to Yerkes-Dodson law, low anxiety causes low performance; increasing anxiety causes an increase in performance; high anxiety causes low performance. Therefore, there is an acceptable, desirable anxiety level (optimal anxiety) that can actually benefit the performance of some people. Aşılıoğlu and Özkan (2013) concluded that optimal anxiety ensures that a person acts more carefully when he or she chooses among, ranks, organizes, and writes down his or her own opinions, and that he or she can express his or her purpose in writing in a better way. In addition, the action of writing comforts people after it is completed, when the product emerges. Kellogg (1999) showed that writing well requires a certain degree of anxiety in addition to cognitive effort. The text that is written carefully, which is an important factor for readability, becomes a source of pride for the writer.

The present research aims to understand the writing anxiety of Turkish Cypriot students at the secondary education level. In relation to writing anxiety, in Northern Cyprus, the only available study which researchers may address is the master thesis which was supervised by Koşot in 2010. Koşot's (2010) research was handled among 8th graders with 175 students. In this study, alongside the

8th graders, 6th and 7th graders were also included and their writing anxieties were also studied. Thus, the study has a wider sampling of 721 students. Besides that, in the aforementioned study, Zorbaz's (2010) Writing Apprehension Test which is adopted in Turkish was used in its original format. In the present study, however, Rasch analysis was adopted to the Zorbaz's scale. Therefore, certain changes were made in Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) and a research was handled accordingly. It is believed that a research agenda as such is invaluable in the sense that it may provide the necessary foundations for reaching out the hard to access research findings in the area of writing anxiety where there are only few studies in Northern Cyprus. In addition to that, it will become possible to compare the writing anxiety findings of Turkey and the rest of the world with the findings in Northern Cyprus. Besides that, the present study is significant in the way that it will provide the opportunity to compare the findings derived from a different version of Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) which is formed with the Rasch analysis with the findings of various researches in Turkey.

In this study, the level of writing anxiety of students were analysed in three different dimensions. These are "the students' own characteristics and behaviours", "the influence of family" and "the influence of the overall educational process, teacher and school". While determining the independent variables in relation to those three dimensions, the personal information form was used which is available in Zorbaz's (2010) PhD dissertation who adopted WAT in Turkish. According to Karakoç Öztürk (2012), determination of the variables with which writing anxiety is related is essential in terms of taking measures that will mitigate writing anxiety, increasing writing appetite and developing written expression skills of students. "Are the variables (students' own characteristics, family impact and school-teachers impact) do affect Turkish Cypriot students writing anxiety levels?" would be given as the main research question of the present study. To address the main problem, three sub-problems were given as follows:

Does the writing anxiety level of Turkish Cypriot students at the secondary education level;

i. change in accordance to the student's own characteristics and behaviours (gender, age, frequency of reading, his/her own perception towards himself/herself in terms of writing successfully, keeping a diary, writing short stories or poems) ?

ii. change in accordance to the characteristics of his/her family (mother's level of education, father's level of education, amount of income, availability of internet connection at home, frequency of buying newspapers at home) ?

iii. change in accordance to the influence of educational process, school and Turkish teacher (whether Turkish teachers have class and pre-school education, the gender of Turkish teacher, the professional experience of Turkish teacher, private-public school distinction and the final grade taken from the subject area of Turkish) ?

Method

In this quantitative research, descriptive model is used. Writing anxiety level of secondary school students are analyzed through the variables that stated in the sub problems.

Study Group

In this study, 721 secondary school (Class 6, 7, 8) students from Nicosia in Northern Cyprus completed the Writing Apprehension Test: 390 female and 330 male students within the age range of 11 to16 (Mean= 12.84, sd= 1.05). 553 of these students were from public school (seven different public schools) and 168 students were from private school (three different private schools). Universe of the public school students (Turkish Cypriots) was 2854 in 2012 and by random sampling 553 of them were chosen. So, 19.38 % of the universe was chosen for sample. However, the total numbers of private school students wasn't given to the researchers.

Research Instrument

The Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) was originally developed by Daly and Miller in 1975. In this study, Zorbaz's Turkish adopted WAT model (2010) was used. In order to use the Turkish version of WAT, the researchers received permission from Zorbaz by e-mail. The Rasch Analysis was performed for construct validity and reliability of the scale. It was used to evaluate the original one factor (26 items), Turkish version one factor (21 items), and Turkish version with four-factor for Turkish Cypriot students.

520 secondary school (different from study group) students from Nicosia in Cyprus completed WAT. Students were chosen by random sampling. 280 female and 240 male students within the age range of 11 to 16 (Mean= 12.83, sd= 1.01). 398 of these students were from public school (seven different public schools) and 122 students were from private school (three different private schools). The Rasch analysis was performed using the Winsteps version 3.74.0. For the three proposed models, model data fit, appropriateness of 5-point rating scale for WAT items, WAT items' difficulties and person ability were analyzed. In Rasch analysis results showed that one factor Turkish model of WAT with 21 items (as a result of Rasch analysis 20 items) provide more robust information about the writing apprehension of Turkish Cypriot students in Northern Cyprus. So, the new version of WAT (3 point Likert scale) which has 20 items (10 positive and 10 negative items) and one factor was used in this study.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from the Ministry of Education for the usage of the scale at the secondary schools before data collection period. Schools are visited with the permission of the ministry and the application days and hours are determined by obtaining permission from the school directors. The scale was given out to the students and collected after 15-20 minutes at ten different schools at school hours by the researcher himself/herself between February and June in 2012. Students weren't forced to answer the questions. The students were informed that the obtained data would be used in a scientific research and their names wouldn't be revealed.

Data Analysis

When the students' responses at Writing Apprehension Test are typed into the computer, the evaluation is processed as: For positive items ((1, 4, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20), 1 point is given for "agree", 2 points are given for "uncertain" and 3 points are given for "disagree". For negative items (2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17), the direct contrary grading is done, so 3 points are given for "agree", 2 points are given for "uncertain" and 1 point is given for "disagree". As a result of this grading the lowest point is 20 whereas the highest point is 60. According to that, the student who gets the lowest point has got the highest writing anxiety and the one who gets the highest point has got the lowest writing anxiety. It could be proposed that as the points taken from the scale decreases, the writing anxiety increases and as they increase, the writing anxiety decreases.

Kolmogrov Smirnov and Levene tests were applied primarily in order to test the normality of the data distribution and the homogeneity of variances in the statistical analysis of the data obtained from the research. Due to the findings obtained from Kolmogrov Smirnov test, it has been observed that the data was distributed normally ($p > .05$). Due to the results of Levene test, it has been seen that variances were homogeneous ($p > .05$). Data were analyzed by one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent samples t-test. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare writing apprehension of students in gender, pre-school education, keeping a diary, poem writing, school type (state or private), internet connection at home, gender of Turkish teacher and story writing conditions. For the significant t-test results, effect size statistics were calculated by using the formula that given below:

$$\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + (n_1 + n_2 - 2)}$$

ANOVA and Scheffe tests were used to compare writing apprehension levels of students in class level, frequency of purchasing newspaper, frequency of reading book, students' self perceptions for writing essay, education level of mother, education level of father, salary of family and teachers' working years conditions. Pearson correlation analysis was applied to explain the relationship between students' grades and writing apprehension scores.

Results

Results of the writing anxiety levels of Turkish Cypriot students are explained in three sections in this study: characteristics and attitudes of students, the effects of family and education process, effects of schools and teachers.

i. The effects of the characteristics and attitudes of students in their writing anxiety level

In this section the independent variables like gender, frequency of reading book, self perceptions for writing essay, keep a diary, poem writing and story writing conditions are tested for the writing anxiety levels of secondary school students in Northern Cyprus.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean differences of writing apprehension for gender variable. The results of analyses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Writing Anxiety Level for Gender Variable

Gender	n	Mean	Sd	df	t	p
Female	390	49.81	6.34	718	6.174	.000
Male	330	46.89	6.26			

According to Table 1, the t-test was significant, $t_{(718)} = 6.174$, $p = .000$. Thus, female students' writing apprehension levels ($\bar{X} = 46.89$) are lower than male students' writing apprehension levels ($\bar{X} = 49.81$). Effect size was found 0.05 for gender variable. According to this, 5% of total variance in writing apprehension was explained by gender.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean differences of writing apprehension for "diary keeping" variable. The results of analyses are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Writing Anxiety Level for Gender Variable

Keep a Diary	n	Mean	Sd	df	t	p
Yes	204	50.64	5.62	715	5.727	.000
No	513	47.63	6.59			

Table 2 shows that the t-test was significant, $t_{(715)} = 5.727$, $p = .000$. Thus, students who keep a diary have lower levels of writing apprehension ($\bar{X} = 50.64$) than students' who do not keep a diary ($\bar{X} = 47.63$). Effect size was found 0.04 for keeping a diary variable. According to this, 4% of total variance in writing apprehension was explained by keeping a diary conditions.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean differences of writing apprehension for “poem writing” variable. The results of analyses are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Writing Anxiety Level for Writing Poem Variable

Writing Poem	n	Mean	Sd	df	t	p
Yes	226	50.53	5.81	717	5.866	.000
No	493	47.54	6.55			

Table 3 shows that the t-test was significant, $t_{(717)} = 5.866$, $p=.000$. Thus, students who are writing poem have lower levels of writing apprehension levels ($\bar{X}=50.53$) than students' who do not write poem ($\bar{X}=47.54$). Effect size was found 0.05 for writing poem variable. According to this, 5% of total variance in writing apprehension was explained by writing poem variable.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean differences of writing apprehension for “story writing” variable. The results of analyses are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Writing Anxiety Level for Writing Story Variable

Writing Story	n	Mean	Sd	df	t	p
Yes	153	51.73	5.85	707	7.250	.000
No	556	47.59	6.36			

Table 4 shows that the t-test was significant, $t_{(707)} = 7.250$, $p=.000$. Thus, students who are writing story have lower levels of writing apprehension levels ($\bar{X}=51.73$) than students' who do not write story ($\bar{X}=47.59$). Effect size was found 0.07 for writing story variable. According to this, 7% of total variance in writing apprehension was explained by writing story variable.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the writing apprehension levels of students in “book reading” conditions. The results of analyses are reported in Table 5.

Table 5. Writing Anxiety Level for Book Reading Frequency Variable

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Group	4194.94	4	1048.74	28.917	.000	.139
Error	25894.80	714	36.27			
Total	30089.74	718				

According to Table 5, the ANOVA was significant $F_{(4,718)} = 28.917$; $p=.000$, $\eta^2=.139$. Post-hoc test was conducted to evaluate the pairwise differences among the means. Scheffe test was selected. There were significant differences in the means between the group that “never read a book” ($\bar{X} = 42.72$) and all other groups. These groups were “very loose read a book” group ($\bar{X} =46.40$); “sometimes read a book” group ($\bar{X}=47.62$); “often read a book” group ($\bar{X}=50.48$) and “very often read a book” group ($\bar{X}=52.48$). Thus, increase in book reading frequency results decline in writing apprehension.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the writing apprehension levels of students in “self-perceptions for writing essay” conditions. The results of analyses are reported in Table 6.

Table 6. Writing Anxiety Level for Self-Perceptions for Writing Essay Variable

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Group	6368.41	2	3184.21	96.099	.000	.229
Error	23757.49	717	33.14			
Total	30125.91	719				

According to Table 6, the ANOVA was significant $F_{(2,719)} = 96.099$; $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .229$. Post-hoc test was conducted to evaluate the pairwise differences among the means. Scheffe test was selected. There was a significant difference in the means between the all groups. A group of students who perceive themselves as an “unsuccessful” have a higher level of writing apprehension ($\bar{X} = 42.47$) than students who perceive themselves as a “moderate” ($\bar{X} = 46.53$) and “successful” ($\bar{X} = 51.47$). Thus, students who perceive themselves positively have lower level of writing apprehension.

ii. The effects of family in the writing anxiety levels of students

In this section the independent variables like frequency of purchasing newspaper, education level of mother, education level of father, income of family and internet connection at home are tested for the writing anxiety levels of secondary school students in North Cyprus.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the writing apprehension levels of students in purchasing newspaper conditions. The results of analyses are reported in Table 7.

Table 7. Writing Anxiety Level for Purchasing Newspaper Variable

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Group	906.13	3	302.04	7.418	.000	.030
Error	28992.46	712	40.72			
Total	29898.59	715				

According to Table 7, the ANOVA was significant $F_{(3,715)} = 7.418$; $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .030$. Post-hoc test was conducted to evaluate the pairwise differences among the means. Scheffe test was selected. There was a significant differences in the means between the group that “never purchased newspaper” ($\bar{X} = 46.11$) and the “mostly purchase newspaper” group ($\bar{X} = 49.66$). Also, there was significant differences in the means between the group that “never purchased newspaper” ($\bar{X} = 46.11$) and the “everyday purchase newspaper” group ($\bar{X} = 49.28$).

In addition to these findings, students’ writing apprehension levels were investigated in education level of mother, education level of father, income of family and internet connection at home conditions. According to results, no significant differences were reported under these conditions ($p > .05$).

iii. The effects of education process, schools and teachers in the writing anxiety levels of students

In this section the independent variables like pre-school education, class level, Turkish teachers' working years, school type (state or private), and gender of Turkish teachers and students' grades are tested for the writing anxiety levels of secondary school students in Northern Cyprus.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean differences of writing apprehension for "pre-school education" variable. The results of analyses are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Writing Anxiety Level for Pre-school Education Variable

Pre-school Education	n	Mean	Sd	df	t	p
Attended	582	48.73	6.48	718	2.207	.028
Not attended	138	46.38	6.33			

According to Table 8, the t-test was significant, $t_{(718)} = 2.207$, $p = .028$. Thus, students who attended pre-school education have lower levels of writing apprehension ($\bar{X} = 48.73$) than students who did not attend preschool education ($\bar{X} = 46.38$). Effect size was found 0.01 for pre-school education variable. According to this, 1% of total variance in writing apprehension was explained by pre-school education variable.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the writing apprehension levels of students in "teachers' working years" conditions. The results of analyses are reported in Table 9.

Table 9. Writing Anxiety Level for Turkish Teachers' Working Years Variable

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Group	495.99	4	123.99	2.961	.019	.017
Error	28563.44	682	41.88			
Total	29059.43	686				

According to Table 9, the ANOVA was significant $F_{(4,686)} = 2.961$; $p = .019$; $\eta^2 = .017$. Post-hoc test was conducted to evaluate the pairwise differences among the means. Scheffe test was selected. There was a significant difference in the means of two groups. A group of students whose teachers have been working for 16-20 years have a lower level of writing apprehension ($\bar{X} = 50.294$) than students whose teachers have been working for 21 years or more ($\bar{X} = 46.82$).

In addition to these findings, students' writing apprehension levels were investigated in class level, school type (state or private) and gender of Turkish teachers. According to results, no significant differences were reported under these conditions ($p > .05$). Pearson correlation was applied to explore the relationship between grades and writing apprehension. Significant relationship was found ($r = .210$, $p = .000$). Thus, there is a low, positive and statistically significant relationship between grades and writing apprehension. Determination coefficient (r^2) was .04. This means, 4% of total variance in writing apprehension was explained by grades.

Discussion

When the findings of this study are being discussed, the writing anxiety levels of students according to their personal characteristics and behaviours were evaluated at first. Accordingly, it must be stated that the writing anxiety of male students is higher compared to female students. This finding is similar to the findings of Pajares & Valiante (1997), Zorbaz (2010), Uçgun (2011) and Aşlıoğlu & Özkan (2013). According to the findings of several studies in the literature, interest of female students in writing is higher compared to the interest of male students and generally (Clark & Dugdale, 2011; Graham, Berninger & Fan, 2007) it is argued that the writing attitude of female students is more positive compared to that of male students. Departing from this point, the meaning of the fact that writing anxiety of female students is lower compared to male students can be explained. Afterwards the reasons for which the writing anxiety of male students is higher compared to female students must be examined. Behaviours of teachers and personal characteristics of male students and their behaviours must be assessed as the foundations for detailed evaluation of writing anxiety. On the other hand, it must be taken into consideration that in some studies there found no significant difference in terms of writing anxieties of female and male students depending on gender variable (Nur Tiryaki, 2011; Yaman, 2010) whereas some studies concluded that the writing anxiety of female students was higher (Teksan, 2012).

In the current study that investigates the relation between reading frequency and writing anxiety, it has been seen that the writing anxiety of students decreases as reading frequency increases. This finding is in line with the findings of the studies of Yaman (2010), Uçgun (2011), Teksan (2012) and Karakoç Öztürk (2012). According to Karakaya and Ülper (2011), reading and writing skills develop parallel to each other and could affect each other positively or negatively. Karakaya and Ülper (2011) argue that the ability to produce a good written text develops after developing reading skills. According to Bank (2006), if students develop their reading abilities effectively, they can have good writing abilities as well. In this study, one of the variables related to the impact of family was newspaper purchase of the household. The writing anxiety of students was examined as a function of newspaper purchase frequency. Accordingly, it has been found out that the writing anxiety of the children raised in daily and mostly newspaper buyer families is lower compared to the children of newspaper never-buyer families. This finding shows that families which set an example to their children by newspaper reading can make significant contribution to the education process of their children.

According to the findings of this study, writing anxiety levels of the students who write poems and stories are significantly lower compared to those who do not write. Zorbaz (2010) and Uçgun (2011) determined that the writing anxiety of students who keep diary is low. Based on this perspective, it can be concluded that students who are interested in writing do not feel anxious in writing process. Some studies (DeSalvo, 1999; Johnson, 2000; Nye, 1997; Sloan, Feinstein & Marx, 2009) deliberate on the fact that writing causes relaxation instead of anxiety on people. This paper argues that students who keep diaries and write poems and stories have lower levels of writing anxiety; it also asserts that these students incline towards writing for emotional relaxation. According to Conhaim and Page (2003), a diary is not just narrating the events related to daily life; it is an essential psychological tool for an individual to understand and observe him/herself. Mazza (2003) states that poem-writing is not only based on literary concerns but is mostly performed for emotional relaxation. To sum up, as emphasised by Gladding (1998), writing is an essential skill in education process in terms of realizing such objectives as emotional relaxation, knowing oneself and helping oneself. In this context, language teachers must carefully design the activities before, during and after writing and determine writing topics (that will include different kinds of texts such as dairy, story, poem etc.). In writing education process, writing anxiety of students during writing education must neither be at very high levels nor very low levels. Sogurno (1998) emphasises that an average level of anxiety is necessary for students in education process and states that very high and low level of anxiety has negative impact on learning. In addition, attention must be paid to create an environment where

students can relax emotionally; thus, contribution can be made to the academic and individual developments of students.

According to the findings of this study, the writing anxiety levels of students whose perception towards composition writing is positive, is lower compared to the students with negative perception. According to Pajares (2007) and Matoti & Shumba (2011) the writing anxiety level of students with high self-sufficiency perception as regards writing is low. In other words, students with low writing anxiety level have higher self-perception about writing compared to students with high writing anxiety level. The research findings of Rechten & Dizinno (1998) and Klassen (2002) found negative correlation between writing anxiety and writing self-efficacy. However, as stated by Martinez, Kock and Cass (2011), the topic of whether high level of self-sufficiency decreases writing anxiety or low level of writing anxiety increases self-sufficiency must be considered for further studies.

The second sub-problem of the study was used as the basis of the impact of families on writing anxiety of students. Writing anxiety of the children of families who regularly buy newspaper is low compared to the children of families who do not. This finding was mentioned above when reading frequency was being discussed. The writing anxiety level of students did not change depending on other variables related to family (income, education level of parents and internet connection at home). The studies of Koşot (2010), Zorbaz (2010) and Karakaya and Ülper (2011) found no significant difference in writing anxiety levels of students depending on the education level of parent. The writing anxiety of students did not show difference students regards income and internet connection, either (Koşot, 2010; Zorbaz, 2010). In terms of writing anxiety, it was seen that writing anxiety is mostly related to the personality of the individual when the data related to family impact and personal characteristics of the individual are compared.

As regards the final sub-problem of the study, the writing anxiety levels of students as regards the impact of school, teacher and education process were examined. The writing anxiety of students who received pre-school education is lower compared to the students who did not. This finding showed the importance of pre-school education. Namely, the preparation for writing activities performed during pre-school period has a vital importance and constitute all kinds of schooling learning activities (Tafa, 2008; Üstün, 2007). In this context, the opinion of Wiltse (2001) is also important to writing anxiety. According to him, writing anxiety begins at early ages and displays its negative consequences throughout life. For this reason, necessary measures must be taken by education professionals so that writing anxiety does not affect students negatively starting from pre-school period. Significant difference was measured in the writing anxiety of students as a function of the seniority of Turkish language teachers. The students of the teachers with highest working hours are more anxious about writing. This result has made us think that teachers' burnout can increase as time passes and correspondingly they become unwilling to teach and solve the problems.

In this paper writing anxiety levels of students did not show any difference with grade variable. The findings of another study conducted in Turkey (Aşılıoğlu and Özkan, 2013) coincide with the findings of this study. These findings are significant considering that the age difference of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students is negligible. Nevertheless, several studies showed that the grade variable is significant in terms of writing anxiety of students (Karakoç Öztürk, 2012; Teksan, 2012; Yaman, 2010; Zorbaz, 2010). The status of schools in terms of state or private did not make any difference in the anxiety level of participant students, which was supported by Koşot's study (2010). Likewise the gender of Turkish language teacher did not affect the writing anxiety of the students, either. Several studies (Claypool, 1980; Daly, Vangelisti & Witte, 1988; Palmquist & Young, 1992) concluded that teachers have an impact on the writing attitude of students. Similarly, the gender of Turkish language teacher did not affect writing anxiety, either. Several studies (Claypool, 1980; Daly, Vangelisti & Witte, 1988; Palmquist & Young, 1992) concluded that teachers had an impact on the writing attitude of student. For example, such factors as the frequency of writing assignments given by teachers as well as their own writing anxieties can affect the writing attitude of students. However, in this study the

impact of personal characteristics of teachers (such as gender and seniority) on the writing anxiety of students was used as the basis.

The relation between Turkish language course success and writing anxiety level of the participant students was examined and the research findings indicated a low level of relation. This is the result of the fact that Turkish language teaching course does not include writing skill and other skills (listening, speaking and reading) and grammar affect general success level. In Turkey and Cyprus, some studies which are based on writing success only and which correlate writing success with writing anxiety (Koşot, 2010; Zorbaz, 2010) it has been observed that there is a significant relation between the two variables (writing success and writing anxiety). It has been found out that students with high writing success showed low writing anxiety whereas those students who had low writing success suffered from high levels of writing anxiety. Other studies conducted outside Turkey and Cyprus (Cheshire, 1984; Daly & Miller, 1975; Hassan, 2001; Reeves, 1997) showed high levels of writing success for students with low writing anxiety or, on the contrary, low levels of writing success with high writing anxiety levels. In Pajares and Johnson's study (1993), the relation between writing anxiety, writing self-efficacy and writing success was evaluated. According to the findings of this study, a negative relation was found between writing anxiety and writing self-efficacy; however, no relation was detected between writing anxiety and writing success. The findings of this study coincide with those of Pajares and Johnson (1993). In this paper the success in general Turkish course was taken as the basis instead of writing success and the relation between Turkish language teaching course of students and their writing anxiety level was evaluated; as a result, only a small correlation was found. In addition, similar to the research findings of Pajares and Johnson (1993), a negative relation was found in this study between writing self-efficacy and writing anxiety. As emphasised in the introduction of this paper, considering the relation between writing success and writing anxiety, different views and diverging research findings can be encountered (such as writing anxiety can affect writing success both negatively and positively).

The texts that are used in language and literature teaching, should be proper for the levels of students and students should have the chance to choose the topic of the writing. Moreover, teachers should guide their students to write their ideas on a frequent basis. Its vital to give place to written expression studies which is improved at the last stage and seen as the most difficult language skill (Aslan, 2010). One of the studies conducted abroad is Bartscher et al. (2001) which studied students with low level of writing success but high level of writing anxiety and asked them to determine writing topic themselves so that the problem could be fixed. At the end of the research activity, it was observed that the quality of the written texts produced by students increased and their writing anxiety decreased. In addition, Bridge, Compton-Hall and Cantrell (1997) and Fink-Chorzempa, Graham and Harris (2005) argue that the time given to students for writing directly affects the level for writing anxiety and writing success. Karakoç Öztürk (2012) and Aslan & Güneyli (2009) found out that giving less than necessary time to students in writing process hinders detailed elaboration on the topic which leads them to fill in the paper at once, in which case writing anxiety occurs and writing success decreases. To sum up, research findings show that in writing process the time spared for topic selection and writing can affect both writing anxiety and writing success. Based on these findings, it is believed that language teachers can overcome the difficulties in writing success caused by writing anxiety enabling the student to select writing topic and paying attention to writing time limits. In addition, there are some research findings which indicate that sketching activities (Schweiker-Marra & Marra, 2000) and positive feed backing to writing (Yaman, 2010; Zorbaz, 2010) can decrease writing anxiety and thus increase writing success.

In the end of the discussion part, as we want to indicate the weak sides of this research, it has been realized that not asking some questions in the personal information form was an important imperfection. For instance, it is more important to evaluate the time that teacher uses for the writing education, his/her feedback frequency, pre-writing studies and his/her methods instead of asking the Turkish teacher's gender. In addition to that, it has been realized that it is also necessary to handle and

evaluate the students's composition marks instead of selecting Turkish lesson report mark that is a general variant. Furthermore, not supporting quantitative findings related to the writing preoccupation with qualitative data is one of the weak sides of the research, too. Namely it could be stated that in the research, more detailed interpretations at the base of qualitative findings could be done and the impact of the person himself/herself, family and training process could be understood better.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Sevim and Varışoğlu (2012) evaluated writing issues in Turkey in their study which aimed at determining the opinions related to the problems faced in basic language skills. Candidate teachers who participated in this study described writing-related issues and sixteen issues in total were determined. Writing anxiety ranked the last with 1 per cent frequency. However, the findings of this paper shows that writing anxiety is an important issue which affects and is affected by several variables (writing self-efficacy, reading frequency, pre-school education etc.). The findings of this paper also displayed that emotional dimension should be assessed as important as cognitive dimension in writing and other language skills. As a result, it is thought that the findings of this study will create awareness as regards the importance of emotional dimension (specific to writing anxiety). If the teachers observe that writing success has negative impact on students, they must firstly give importance to planning and sustainability in writing education (Kavcar, 1983). Then they must take some measures in order to decrease writing anxiety (Coşkun, 2009). For example, the writing anxiety of students increase with the fear of making language mistakes and being criticized; such situations must be prevented (Routman, 1996). Finally, as stated in Sevim and Özdemir Erem's (2013) study, effort should be paid to decrease the writing anxiety of students by using such student-oriented methods as creative drama etc.

When the study findings are reviewed, it is seen that writing anxiety is a considerable variable in the development of writing skills in Turkish and all the other courses. It should be underlined that the participating student's own characteristics and behaviors play a role in the development of writing anxiety; however, the effect of the teacher should not be ignored. When conducting writing activities, teachers should take precautions to reduce the anxiety levels of the students throughout the teaching process (choice of subject, pre-writing, writing order, evaluation) in accordance with the process writing education. Individual differences should be taken into consideration and it should be known that the level of writing anxiety may vary from one student to another. Being able to conduct individual education activities and works with each student for writing anxiety in particular and for all the other skills in general is becoming more and more important. Teachers should undertake a guiding role particularly for students to be able to cope with their own writing anxiety. Considering the results of the present study that anxiety levels of the students who read books, keep diaries or write stories, essays and poems are lower than that of the ones who do not, students should be motivated to perform these activities out of school hours. Based on the finding that the variable of gender affects the writing anxiety, taking some specific precautions (e.g. designating the subject matters accordingly) to increase the interest in and motivation for writing and decrease the level of anxiety of male students may be effective.

The recommendations for future studies based on the results of the present study are as follows:

1. Writing anxiety should be studied in and the respective results should be compared for the education levels other than secondary education as well (e.g. primary, higher and tertiary education). In addition, qualitative case studies can help to evaluate the cause of this difference in writing anxiety level based on grade variable. Furthermore, students' levels of writing anxiety may be classified as 'low', 'medium' and 'high' and comparisons may be made accordingly.

2. When studying the levels of writing anxiety of the students, the teachers' in-class teaching practices (frequency of in-class writing assignments, methods and techniques of teaching writing, time allocated to writing activities, types of feedback, and assessment approaches) should be investigated

in more detail. Thusly, it can be revealed more precisely that which practices increase or reduce the level of writing anxiety in students. Further studies can examine the attitudes of teachers towards writing (writing self-efficacy, writing malfunction, writing anxiety etc.) can be used as the basis for investigating the writing anxiety of students.

3. Apart from descriptive studies, experimental studies aiming to reduce the adverse effects of the writing anxiety may be conducted. Additionally, qualitative studies to analyze in depth the views of the students, teachers and parents and the attainments in teaching and education programs in relation to writing anxiety.

4. As stated in the Discussion section, results of the studies in the body of literature investigating the correlation between self-efficiency in writing, writing success and writing anxiety are varied. Basing on the said studies, a meta-analysis study may be conducted and a study aiming to synthesize the study results and explain and clarify the abovementioned correlation may be carried out. Especially, it is essential that different kinds of studies are conducted as to how writing anxiety affects writing success (surveying, experimental, qualitative case study etc.) and that this correlation is evaluated.

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