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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-REPORTED FOREIGN
LANGUAGE WRITING ANXIETY AND TEXT QUALITY AMONGST
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TARTU

Master's thesis

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ABSTRACT

Foreign language anxiety has been a subject of extensive research; however, the majority of existing studies have primarily focused on speaking anxiety, with limited attention given to writing anxiety. Given that writing is a complex skill within foreign language acquisition, understanding and addressing how writing anxiety and achievement are related is of utmost importance. Anxiety experienced during the writing process can significantly impede students' progress and hinder their language learning endeavors. Therefore, there is a pressing need to delve deeper into the phenomenon of foreign language writing anxiety and its implications for language learners.

The primary objective of this study was to examine the potential relationship between self-reported foreign language writing anxiety and text quality. Additionally, the study aimed to explore the strategies employed by an English foreign language teacher to alliviate anxiety within the classroom setting. To address these aims, two questionnaires were developed: one administered to students before and another after the essay writing task, to assess their self-reported foreign language writing anxiety levels. The assessment of text quality was accomplished through the students' completion of a Cambridge essay, which was subsequently evaluated manually to determine the Cambridge essay score. Furthermore, the Grammarly program was utilized to calculate a quantitative measure of text quality.

The findings of the study revealed no significant relationship between self-reported foreign language writing anxiety and text quality. Despite expectations that higher levels of self-reported foreign language writing anxiety would negatively impact the quality of written texts, no substantial correlation was found between these variables. This suggests that self-reported foreign language writing anxiety may not directly impede students' ability to produce high-quality written texts in a foreign language context.

However, the literature review and this study did uncover an important factor that can contribute to alleviating self-reported foreign language anxiety in the classroom setting, namely the teacher-student relationship. The results indicated that a positive rapport between the teacher and students can create a supportive and comfortable learning environment, potentially reducing self-reported foreign language anxiety among students.

The thesis consists of an introduction where the justification for the study is stated and research questions stated. The two main chapters discuss foreign language anxiety more generally and foreign language writing anxiety more specifically. The two chapetrs give an overview of what those phenomena are, what are the causes and symptoms. In the methodology section the methodology and the study itself is explained. In the following sections the results are represented. In the discussion section the results of the study are explained, the limitation of the study are highlighted and suggestions for future research on this topic are given. The conclusion chapter gives a short summary of the study.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL - English as a foreign language

FLA - Foreign language anxiety

FLWA - Foreign language writing anxiety

JPG - Jaan Poska Gymnasium

SD - standard deviation

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960s, foreign language scholars have shown a keen interest in exploring the topic of anxiety and its impact on foreign language learning and achievement. Over the years, many studies have examined the complex nature of anxiety and its impact on language learners. While much attention has been devoted to speaking and listening anxiety, comparatively less research has focused on foreign language writing anxiety.

Writing is an important skill that is required from all students of foreign language at all levels in Estonia (Riigiteataja 2023). However, it has been found that writing in foreign language can evoke a unique set of challenges and anxieties for students (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope 1986; Fritzsche, Young, Hickson 2003). The process of writing texts requires linguistic proficiency, cognitive skills, and a deep understanding of cultural nuances. Moreover, the fear of making mistakes, being evaluated, or not meeting expectations can significantly affect students' confidence and writing performance. (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope 1986, Negari, Razaabadi 2012; Gkonou 2011; Klimova, 2014)

Understanding how foreign language anxiety and text quality are related can give teachers and educators ideas on how they can support their students and make the learning experience more effective and supportive for language learners, so that a necessary foreign language skill does not go underdeveloped because of anxiety. The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between self-reported foreign language writing anxiety (FLWA) and text quality among Estonian students who study English as a foreign language. In addition, this study also aims to provide further insights into the special strategies an English teacher uses to help students who are displaying signs of writing anxiety.

The study has two research questions to meet the aims raised in the last paragraph - (a) to see how students' self-reported foreign language writing anxiety is related to the quality of

their written text, and (b) to discuss what different strategies does an EFL teacher opt for to diminish the anxiety that comes with the writing process in her classes.

The findings of this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on foreign language writing anxiety and indicate that this type of anxiety is just as important as listening, reading and speaking anxiety. Also, this study will provide some insight into the strategies of a foreign language teacher on how to support students with foreign language writing anxiety in the classroom.

The thesis is divided into the following sections: 1. Foreign Languages: an overview; 2. Foreign Language Writing anxiety: an overview; 3. Methodology; 4. Data analysis and results; 5. Discussion; 6. Conclusion. The first two sections give an overview of foreign language writing anxiety and discuss relevant research done so far on the topic of FLWA and text quality. In the methodology section the methodology and the study itself is explained. In the following sections the results are represented. In the discussion section the results of the study are explained, the limitations of the study are highlighted and suggestions for future research on this topic are given. The conclusion chapter gives a short summary of the entire study carried out.

1. FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY: AN OVERVIEW

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) encompasses the apprehension and fear experienced by language learners when using or learning a second or foreign language. While FLA has been extensively studied in relation to speaking, its influence on writing remains relatively underexplored. Thus, the literature review starts by examining FLA within the educational context, exploring its implications for language learners and instructional practices more generally. This sets the stage for investigating foreign language writing anxiety (FLWA), a specific manifestation of anxiety in the writing domain.

1.1. Foreign language anxiety

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a distinct form of complex anxiety that manifests during the process of learning and utilizing a foreign language (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley 1999). Individuals affected by FLA commonly experience sensations of discomfort, apprehension, nervousness, and worry when confronted with the need to use the foreign language (MacIntyre and Gardner 1994:284). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986:125) defined FLA as a form of anxiety that is often specific to the language-learning context, indicating that individuals may encounter obstacles in foreign language learning and usage that are not present in other domains at school such as mathematics, first language acquisition, or science classes.

The presence of anxiety in foreign language classrooms could be attributed to the unique nature of the language learning process (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope 1986:127). It is hypothesized that this uniqueness primarily stems from the constant evaluation conducted by teachers and peers, whereby students are consistently assessed on their language proficiency (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope 1986:127). However, Felder and Henriques (1995) and

Foryš-Nogola, Krajeeski, and Haman (2022) propose an alternative perspective to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), suggesting that this distinctiveness is not solely attributed to ongoing evaluation but rather to the requirement of students to demonstrate their knowledge of the foreign language in the same language itself. For instance, when discussing the topic of articles, students are expected not only to correctly utilize articles but also to explain their usage in the foreign language.

1.2. Sources and impact of foreign language anxiety on students

Young (1991) and Cheng (2004) identify six distinct sources of FLA, namely personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner's beliefs about learning, instructor's beliefs about teaching, instructor-learner relationship, classroom procedures, and language testing. All of these six sources coincide with Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) early suggestions that FLA is directly related to negative evaluation, communication comprehension, and test anxiety.

Despite the diverse category of sources, there is a common theme: students often set exceedingly high expectations for themselves (Alpert and Haber 1960. Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope 1986, Young 1991, Cheng 2004). Horwitz (2001) further elaborates that these expectations are primarily aimed at achieving native-like proficiency. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994:287) emphasize an additional dimension in the formation of expectations in foreign language learning, highlighting that these projections can originate from external sources such as parents or teachers, rather than solely being self-imposed by the student. Alternatively, students may perceive that expectations have been imposed upon them, even when no external party has explicitly set them. This nuanced understanding suggests that

students' perceived unmet expectations can significantly impact their self-esteem, thus exacerbating the development of foreign language anxiety (Young, 1991).

Contrary to Alpert and Haber's (1960) proposition that moderate levels of anxiety in an educational setting can enhance academic performance, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), Young (1991), Aguila and Harjanto (2016) and Pizarro (2019) contend that this notion does not hold true for foreign language learning. The researchers concur that due to the distinctive nature of the language learning process, it is crucial to identify students who are experiencing FLA. Prolonged lack of recognition and support for these students can impede their language learning progress, leading to slow development and, in some cases, traumatic experiences that may cause individuals to actively avoid engaging with the foreign language (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope 1986; Young 1991; Aguila and Harjanto 2016; Pizarro 2019).

1.3. Language skills and types of foreign language anxiety

Language competence encompasses the proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills (Council of Europe 2001: 36-37). These skills reflect an individual's ability to use a language effectively in everyday situations, and language examinations are designed to assess these four aspects (Riigiteataja, 2023). Language textbooks, such as Ülle Kurm's "I Love English," Mari Kalaja, Niina Korpela, Raija Kuja-Kyyny-Pajula, Jamie Mäkinen and Päivi Pelli-Kouvo's "High Five!," and Virginia Evan and Jenny Dooley's "Upstream B2," and "Upstream C1," are specifically designed to develop and enhance proficiency in these four modalities, enabling learners to confidently navigate various real-life contexts.

In terms of FLA, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) outline a correspondence between the four main components of language competence and the four main types of FLA.

These include speaking anxiety (apprehension related to public speaking, small group conversations, or one-on-one interactions), writing anxiety (anxiety surrounding written communication), reading anxiety (fear of comprehending written texts), and listening anxiety (concerns about understanding spoken language). Although speaking anxiety is often regarded as the most prevalent type of FLA, recent research challenges this assumption, suggesting that the emphasis on speaking anxiety stems from its greater prominence in studies rather than its actual prevalence (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986; Aida 1994; Horwitz, 2001; Cheng, 2002; Fritzsche, Young, and Hickson 2003). Aida (1994) proposes that speaking anxiety receives more research attention due to its universality and the ease of studying observable aspects such as body language and vocal expression.

Bekleyen (2009: 665-666) and Khattak et al. (2011: 1603-1604) emphasize the importance of not considering FLA as a unified entity. The notion that experiencing one aspect of FLA, such as speaking anxiety, implies the presence of the other three aspects is unfounded. Khattak et al. (2011: 1602) suggest that this misconception may come from limited research conducted on writing, listening, and reading foreign language anxiety. Bekleyen (2009: 665) proposes an additional explanation, stating that individuals prone to anxiety in general are more likely to experience FLA across all aspects and that is why it is often assumed that if a student suffers from one component of FLA they most probably suffer from the rest of the three components as well.

2. FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING ANXIETY: AN OVERVIEW

Within the realm of FLWA, the literature review gives an overview of the the unique challenges and experiences associated with writing in a foreign language. Furthermore the literature review explore the causes and symptoms of FLWA, providing insights into the factors that contribute to anxiety during the writing process on the basis of research done so far. The last section will give an insight onto FLWA and text quality, aiming to understand how anxiety influences written expression.

The selection of these specific topics was motivated by the limited existing research on foreign language writing anxiety and its relationship with text quality. As a result, the present study aims to address this research gap by synthesizing the available literature and drawing upon the existing body of knowledge.

2.1. Foreign language writing anxiety

Foreign language writing anxiety (FLWA) pertains to instances where individuals experience anxiety-related symptoms and thoughts when required to write in a foreign language (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope 1986; Cheng, Horwitz, Schallert 1999). Horwitz (2001) further emphasizes that writing might not induce anxiety in other contexts, such as writing in one's first language or in different disciplines.

Writing is an important skill within a student's foreign language competence. The Estonian Ministry of Education mandates some form of writing at all levels of foreign language studies, ranging from a few sentences to various types of reviews and essays (Riigiteataja 2011: 23-26; Riigiteataja 2011: 1-13). Fritzsche, Young, and Hickson (2003) assert that writing cannot be effectively mastered if accompanied by high levels of anxiety. They further note that writing is often dreaded by English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

students, despite being one of the essential skills to acquire. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), Young (1991), and Fritzsche, Young, and Hickson (2003) contend that foreign language writing remains challenging for EFL students at all academic levels. Klimova (2014) proposes that one underlying difficulty in acquiring foreign language writing skills stems from cultural differences in academic writing, often overlooked in foreign language classrooms.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and Horwitz (2001) suggest that if anxiety levels are high before and during the writing process, students may perform below their actual abilities, subsequently perpetuating and intensifying the anxiety in future writing tasks. However, researchers since the 1980s have underscored this anxiety as a potential impediment to students' progress in foreign language acquisition, which is oftentimes disregarded by their foreign language instructors (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope 1986; Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert 1999; Horwitz 2001).

2.2. Foreign language writing anxiety possible causes

Numerous scholars have concurred that FLWA is a prevalent concern among students, with anxiety being a primary cause. Students who experience higher levels of overall anxiety are more likely to develop various niche anxieties, particularly in school environments where evaluation is ever-present (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley 1999; Daud, Daud, and Kassim 2016). Nevertheless, certain factors have been identified that may exacerbate and amplify FLWA - high expectations, not understanding the teachers way of correcting mistakes, the fear of evaluation and a bad mark. (Horwitz 2001; Alpert and Haber 1960; Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986; Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert 1999; Cheng 2004). However, since the

research done on the topic of FLWA is so scarce the researches cannot say definitely that those are the only factors that might amplify FLWA.

According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999), and Horwitz (2001), high expectations that students set for themselves, or feel have been imposed upon them by parents, peers, or teachers, are the main causes of FLWA. Students may believe that their writing must be indistinguishable from that of native speakers, but this goal is often unattainable, and even if achieved, students may not sense it, putting even more pressure on themselves. Gkonou (2011) notes that the thought of not achieving the native-like end goal causes students to avoid the writing process as frequently as possible

Gkonou's (2011) research discovered that FLWA may arise because students do not comprehend why something was corrected in their text. In a study conducted among Greek students, Gkonou (2011) found that many students do not entirely comprehend what their teacher is correcting in their written works. She hypothesized that if a student does not understand why mistakes are being corrected, this pattern may cause them to feel anxious thoughts more frequently while writing, leading them to find ways to avoid writing. Swartz (1976) hypothesized that not every mistake should be explained by the teacher in students' writing, and allowing students to identify their mistakes and correct them is a way to improve their writing skills. However, Gkonou (2011) adds to Swartz's (1976) clarification that if mistakes are not well-explained at the beginning of new writing processes, such as when students write their first argumentative essay, it will hinder their self-confidence and increase the probability of FLWA.

Another cause of FLWA is connected to the previous aspect, as it might be that teachers correct mistakes in a manner that students do not understand. Gkonou (2011) studied university students who answered her questionnaires, suggesting that the lack of a universal

correction system coordinated between teachers may also contribute to FLWA. According to Gkonou (2011), students often have different teachers teaching various courses in a foreign language, such as discourse courses, grammar courses, literature courses, and so on. The reality of each teacher having a distinct correction system that frequently does not overlap with their colleagues' may intensify students' writing anxiety, as they become confused about what and why is being corrected and what is expected of them.

Researchers have discovered that the fact that students know their text will be evaluated by their teacher is another cause of FLWA. According to Negari and Rezaabadi (2012), this aspect is related to the idea that students believe their text is automatically unworthy if it does not read like it was written by a native speaker. In their research, Negari and Rezaabadi (2012) investigated FLWA among Iran's English majors using the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory questionnaire, open-ended questions about FLWA, and related these questions to students' writing performance tests. Negari and Rezaabadi (2012: 2584-2585) found that FLWA was lower when teachers assured students that their texts would not be evaluated and scored. Conversely, FLWA was higher in students who knew that their texts would be graded. The same difference was hypothesized by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), however they did not conduct a study to confirm their ideas.

2.3. Foreign language writing anxiety symptoms

The symptoms of FLWA have received limited research attention, and there is a lack of consensus among researchers regarding its manifestations. Existing studies primarily rely on questionnaires to investigate students' thoughts and perceptions of FLWA (Cheng 2004: 314). Unlike more extensively studied subcategories of foreign language anxiety, such as speaking anxiety, FLWA lacks clearly defined symptom dimensions (Rui 2022). Somatic

symptoms (e.g., upset stomach, pounding heart), cognitive symptoms (e.g., worry, preoccupation), and behavioral symptoms (e.g., procrastination, avoidance) commonly associated with FLA have not been specifically identified for FLWA due to the scarcity of research in this area (Cheng 2004: 314).

Procrastination is identified by Horwitz (2001) as a significant indicator of FLWA. Students with higher levels of FLWA tend to delay starting their writing assignments until the last minute. However, Cheng (2002: 316) notes that this symptom does not apply to in-class or exam writing, as time constraints and the knowledge that the text will be evaluated leave no room for procrastination. Under procrastination Negari and Razaabadi (2012) suggest that consistent lateness in submitting written assignments may indicate a considerable likelihood of FLWA.

A negative perception of one's writing ability could be another symptom associated with FLWA, according to Horwitz (2001), Cheng (2004), and Negari and Rezaabadi (2012). Thoughts such as *"I am not good at this"* or *"others will write better texts than me"* that arise before or during the writing process can reinforce FLWA. In relation to negative perception Choi (2013: 16-17) identified avoidance as a symptom in their study. Avoidance could be closely related to procrastination and self-confidence. It is thought that students who go to great lengths to find alternative assignments instead of writing tasks may indicate the presence of FLWA. (Horwitz 2001)

However, there have not been a lot of studies researching the symptoms of FLWA it is oftentimes difficult to state that these specific symptoms mentioned in this subsection are indicators that a student might be suffering from FLWA.

2.4. Foreign language writing anxiety and writing performance

The existing literature suggests a relationship between FLWA and writing performance in EFL classes, as evidenced by studies conducted by Cheng (2002, 2004), Choi (2013) and Rui (2022). However, the majority of research in this area has predominantly focused on oral performances, with limited emphasis on writing performance (Horwitz 2001: 123). Nevertheless, Gungle and Taylor (1898: 237) and Young (1991) propose that if other anxieties exhibit a negative correlation with performance in a foreign language, it is reasonable to assume that a similar relationship exists within the realm of FLWA.

On the contrary, other authors argue that anxiety can have a positive effect. Alpert and Haber (1960) suggest that certain levels of anxiety in a school environment can motivate students to exert greater effort, ultimately enhancing their academic performance. Furthermore, Eysenck (1979) hypothesizes that anxious students experiencing FLWA are aware of their anxiety and attempt to compensate for its effects by intensifying their efforts. Additionally, Pajares and Johnson (1994:164) propose that anxiety is a ubiquitous human experience influenced by self-beliefs, and they do not perceive a direct connection between FLWA and writing performance. However, there is a lack of sufficient research exploring the influence of students' self-perceptions on their competence in this context (Choi 2013: 4).

In an empirical study conducted by Choi (2013) involving ninth-grade students enrolled in advanced English classes, the correlation between FLWA and writing performance was examined. The students completed questionnaires to assess their anxiety levels and participated in a portfolio assignment that involved collecting written texts. Choi (2013) did not find a statistically significant correlation between FLWA and writing performance. Three potential reasons for this outcome were identified. Firstly, eight students who reported high FLWA had to be excluded from the study due to various reasons such as low competence leading to downgrading to a lower class, changing schools, or failing to complete their

portfolio. Secondly, it is possible that the portfolio mainly consisted of free writing assignments that were not going to be graded, which, as evidenced by research conducted by Negari and Rezaabadi (2012: 2584-2585), may reduce FLWA. Finally, Choi (2013) suggests that the evaluation system used for the papers may not have been sufficiently competent to capture the variations in the students' writing abilities.

3. METHODOLOGY

The primary objectives of this research paper: (a) to examine the relationship between students' self-reported FLWA and the quality of their written text, and (b) to explore the strategies employed by an EFL teacher to mitigate anxiety during the writing process in her classes.

In order to assess students' self-reported FLWA levels, a questionnaire was selected as the data collection instrument. The first questionnaire was based on the Second Language Writing Anxiety (SLWA) and the second questionnaire used SLWA questions that were turned around to reflect on the specific essay writing experience. The usage of questionnaires aligns with previous research on FLWA, where this method has been commonly employed to gather participants' perspectives and experiences regarding anxiety (Daly and Miller, 1975; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994; Cheng, Horwitz, and Shallert 1999; Cheng 2004; Khattak et al 2011; Negari and Razaabadi 2012; Choi 2013; Li 2022).

To evaluate the quality of students' writing, a Cambridge essay was used. This essay format was chosen to assess students' proficiency in English and to ascertain the overall quality of the texts they produced. It was also chosen, because students may take the Cambridge Exam, of which the essay is a part of, as a substitute to the national foreign language exam in Estonia and this exam is widely recognized as a reputable and standardized assessment of language proficiency. (Haridus - ja Noorteamet 2023) In addition, the Cambridge essay was picked to investigate whether the students, who had never had any contact with the essay type, would report higher self-reported FLWA than those, who had had experience with the essay type.

It must be noted that most studies conducted on FLWA and achievement have been done with long term assignments that students do over time, like Choi's (2013) study. However for this study a 45 minute time limit was set, to give a comparable test environment

for all and to develop a task which has a premise to cause anxiety - it is scored and graded and must be completed in a certain timeframe.

To address the second objective, a questionnaire was administered to the EFL teacher responsible for the participating groups. This questionnaire sought the teacher's insights and perspectives on the self-reported FLWA results obtained from the students. By incorporating the teacher's viewpoint, this study aims to gain an understanding of the strategies employed by an educator to address FLWA in the classroom.

By adopting these data collection methods and incorporating insights from previous studies, this research endeavors to contribute to the academic discourse surrounding FLWA and shed light on effective strategies for managing writing anxiety in foreign language learning contexts.

3.1. Participants of the study

The participants for this study were selected from Tartu Jaan Poska Gymnasium (JPG), and all of them were enrolled in classes taught by a single teacher. In compliance with ethical considerations, parental or guardian approval was obtained for participants who were minors (Appendix 1). Following the collection of approvals, all students who expressed their willingness, and were granted permission to participate, were instructed to attend a designated lesson.

The total sample size for this study consisted of 51 participants. The students were divided into four groups based on their grade level and prior experience with this type of essay writing. The composition of the groups was as follows:

- 1) A group - 10th grade group, who has never written the Cambridge type of essay (12 students);

- 2) B group - 11th grade group, who has never written the Cambridge type of essay (10 students);
- 3) C group - 11th grade group, who has written the Cambridge type of essay before (14 students);
- 4) D group - 12th grade group, who has written the Cambridge type of essay before (15 students).

All participants in this study were required to complete an essay task and respond to two questionnaires — one administered before the essay writing session and another administered after. It is important to note that one student was excluded from the data analysis due to incomplete essay submission, which downsized the sample size from 51 to 50. This exclusion was deemed necessary to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the data, as including this participant's incomplete data would have introduced significant distortions in the analysis.

3.1.1. The teacher of the four groups

Each of the four groups has been taught by the same teacher, who has been responsible to their English classes since the students enrolled at JPG. The teacher has a teaching experience of 29 years in the field of English language instruction and has been a part of the JPG institution since its establishment in 2011. To capture her valuable insights on FLWA and text quality, a concise questionnaire containing open-ended questions was administered (Appendix 5). Initially, an interview format was considered; however, due to time constraints, the decision was made to employ a questionnaire as a more feasible means of data collection.

3.2. The three questionnaires used in the study

Two questionnaires were developed specifically for this study (Appendices 3 and 4). The first questionnaire was based on the Writing Apprehension Test by Daly and Miller (1975), with modifications made to adapt it to the context of second language writing anxiety (SLWA). The original test was originally designed to assess writing anxiety in the first language, but Cheng, Horwitz, and Shallert (1999) transformed it into the Second Language Writing Apprehension Test (SLWA) to measure anxiety related to writing in a foreign language (English). The SLWA questionnaire consisted of self-reported statements (I statements) aimed at capturing students' thoughts and feelings regarding written assignments in their English class. It included statements such as *"I enjoy writing in English," "I am afraid of the feedback I will receive," "When I write texts in English, I find it hard to focus,"* and *"It is easy for me to write good texts in English."* The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather students' perceptions of their writing experiences in English classes and their thoughts on FLWA.

The second questionnaire, administered after the completion of the essay task, focused on students' emotions and perceptions specifically related to the essay writing process and the essay they had just completed. It included modified items from the first questionnaire to elicit responses regarding their feelings during the specific writing procedure. For instance, items such as *"When I was writing this essay, I found it hard to focus," "When I was writing this essay, I had negative thoughts about my writing ability,"* and *"When I was writing my essay, I was afraid to proofread it"* were included. The Likert scale used in the original questionnaire was adjusted in this study to a 10-point scale to allow for more nuanced responses to the I statements and enhance data sensitivity.

Both questionnaires were kept relatively concise, with a focus on capturing participants' consistent and focused responses. Following recommendations by Galesic and

Bosnjak (2009), the inclusion of only one open-ended question was deemed appropriate to ensure greater response consistency and focus. The questionnaires were administered using Google Forms for ease of data collection and analysis. Each group received their respective set of individual questionnaires, with QR codes created to facilitate convenient access for the students.

To gather the teacher's ideas on the strategies that she employs to mitigate anxiety during the writing process in her classes a questionnaire (Appendix 5) was created. There she was asked about if FLWA is a phenomenon a foreign language teacher should be familiar with and what strategies does she use to combat FLWA in her classes and if other teachers use the same strategies.

3.2. The description of the study

All the data was gathered in early spring of 2023 on two days - 15th and 16th March. On the first day the 10th grade group wrote their essays and on the following day the rest of the groups did the same. The times of writing were the following: 1) the 10th grade group wrote their essay at 09:45; 2) the 11th grade group, who had written this type of essay before, wrote their essay at 09:45; 3) the 11th group who had not written this type of essay before, wrote their essay at 11:10; 3) the 12th grade group wrote their essay at 13:15. Their teacher had warned them the week before that they would be spending some time writing an essay, but this is all the information that they had beforehand.

On the day of the study the students were first briefly introduced to the study they agreed to participate in - first a questionnaire, then an essay and then another questionnaire. Then the students were each given a QR code of the first questionnaire that they were instructed to fill in. While they were answering, for about four minutes, a piece of A4 paper

and the essay instructions were distributed to each student (*Appendix 2*). Then they were encouraged to read through the essay instructions and ask questions if they had any. All the questions that arose were answered in front of the class, so others could also hear them.

If everyone was settled and the questions were answered the students were told that they had 45 minutes to write an essay. The length of the essay, 200-260 words and the time when the students were supposed to give in their essays, for example *14:05*, were written on the board. When the time was up, or if the students had finished earlier, the “after writing” questionnaire’s QR code was given to them and they answered it. No questions about the essay - *Are you sure? Maybe take another look? You have more time to look over your mistakes* - were asked while it was being handed over. Just a *Thank you!* was said to each participant. After the students had finished with the final questionnaire they proceeded with the lesson’s activities.

Three out of the four groups wrote essays on one day and to avoid any mixups the essays were first divided into groups that corresponded to A-D (participant groups). Because the essays were all handwritten the next thing that was done with the essays was converting them into digital texts that could be further analyzed. For this, an app called *HRReader* was used. This was chosen because it was free and the app was able to convert messier handwritings into digital texts. All of the conversions were checked by hand, to make sure that no mistakes from the converting process that could affect the quality score were left in. Because the groups’ teacher wanted them to have feedback, the essays were simultaneously evaluated by hand using the Cambridge essay evaluation guide (Cambridge English 2022:12).

When the essays were converted into digital texts they were analyzed using the Grammarly program in order to find the overall quality of the text. One reason why this program was chosen was because the University of Tartu provides a free pro version for its students. The second reason why Grammarly’s pro program was chosen was that it allows to

fill in goals for the text - to whom the text is written to, what register it must use *etc.* that all contributes to an overall quality score calculated by the program.

In Grammarly the set goals were based on the Cambridge essay instruction - audience was set to *knowledgable*, formality was set to *formal*, domain was set to *academic* and intent was set to *inform*. Those goals were chosen because the intent of the essay was to write an essay to a teacher to discuss the topic given to them.

The data from all of the questionnaires was gathered and moved into a Google Sheet table that made it easier to analyze the data. The names of the students were kept in order to match their thoughts to their essays, however a code was produced for each student that would allow to use their data in other platforms, for example Grammarly. The Grammarly quality markers went into the same table and the evaluation from the Cambridge English (2020:12). In Grammarly the following aspects were recorded for each essay - word count (characters, words, sentences), readability (word length, sentence length, readability score) and vocabulary (unique words, rare words). In addition to this data, the score that Grammarly calculated on the basis of these aspects and mistakes was also included in the data table. The final variable included in the table was the evaluation that all essays got on the basis of the Cambridge evaluation.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1. Data analysis

The data collected for this thesis concerned the essay quality and students' attitudes towards FLWA in general and the specific writing process done for this study.

The mean score presents the average value of data and provides a common reference point. It was found by calculating the total of a question's scores for each group and dividing that sum by the number of people in the group. The standard deviation refers to how much the data differs from the mean value. A smaller SD means the data points are close to the mean, while a larger SD indicates greater variability among the data points. It is calculated by finding the average of the squared differences between each data point and the mean, and then taking the square root of that average. Median presents the middle value in a set of ordered data. It divides the data into two equal halves, with 50% of the values lying below the median and 50% lying above it. Correlation indicates if there is a relation between variables.

To better understand the relationship between text quality (independent) and FLWA (dependent) regression analysis was done using *XLminer Analysis ToolPak*. Regression analysis indicates if the relationship is negative or positive. In addition to that, regression analysis also makes it possible to see the strength of the relations. The coefficient is automatically calculated and the magnitude of the coefficient reflects how much change in text quality can be expected for a one-unit change in FLWA. A larger coefficient indicates a stronger relationship.

Regression analysis highlights the statistical significance by calculating p -value. The p -value associated with the coefficient shows whether the relationship between FLWA and text quality is statistically significant. If the p -value is below a certain significance level (usually 0.05), it suggests that the relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance. In

other words, there is evidence to support that the relationship between FLWA and text quality is real and not due to random fluctuations.

The last aspect that regression analysis was picked was because R-squared is calculated during the analysis and that represents the proportion of the variation in text quality that can be explained by FLWA. A higher R-squared value indicates that FLWA accounts for a larger percentage of the variation in text quality. This provides a measure of how well FLWA predicts or explains differences in text quality among students.

4.2. Descriptive statistics

On Table 1 and Figure 1 the Cambridge and Grammarly scores are presented. The Cambridge essay score means were for group A 14.3 ($SD = 2.9$), for group B 14.9 ($SD = 2.5$), for group C 18.3 ($SD = 2$) and for group D 18.7 ($SD = 1.1$). The Grammarly score means were for group A 42.27 ($SD = 17.8$), for group B 37.8 ($SD = 11.3$), for group C 48 ($SD = 10.3$), and for group D 48.6 ($SD = 8.5$). The reason why the standard deviation is so high in Grammarly scores is because all essays had different number of words, characters, rare and common words, words per sentence, how long the word was *etc*; and on the basis of those the text quality score was calculated .

Group	Cambridge essay score (out of 20 points)	Cambridge essay standard deviation	Grammarly text quality score (out of 100 points)	Grammarly text score standard deviation
A	14.3	2.9	42.27	17.8
B	14.9	2.5	37.8	11.3
C	18.3	2	48	10.4
D	18.7	1.1	88.6	8.5

Table 1. Cambridge and Grammarly scores and standard deviations

The mean scores of the Cambridge essay grades and the Grammarly text quality scores.

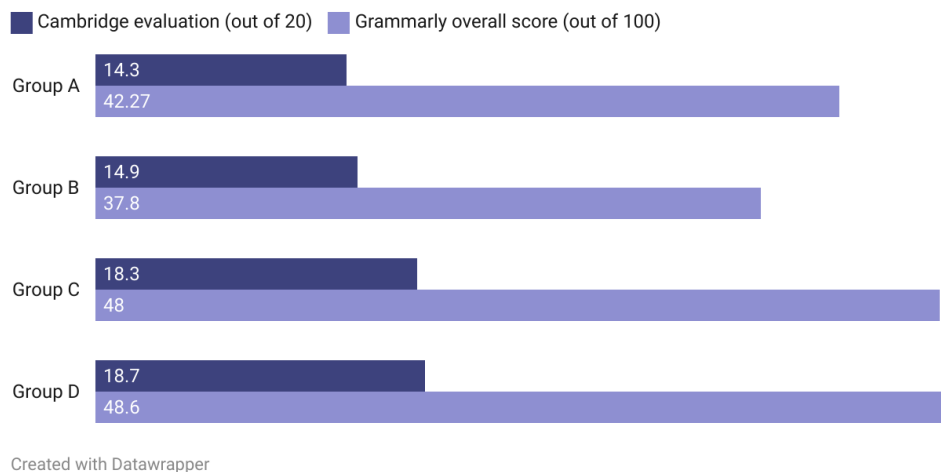


Figure 1. The mean scores of the Cambridge essay grades and the Grammarly text quality scores.

In Figure 2 all of the groups' Grammarly score means are highlighted. In addition, the average self-reported FLWA is also shown in contrast to the essay quality means. The self-reported FLWA score was taken from the after questionnaire, because that reported students' feelings about the specific writing process.

Grammarly overall score and self-reported FLWA

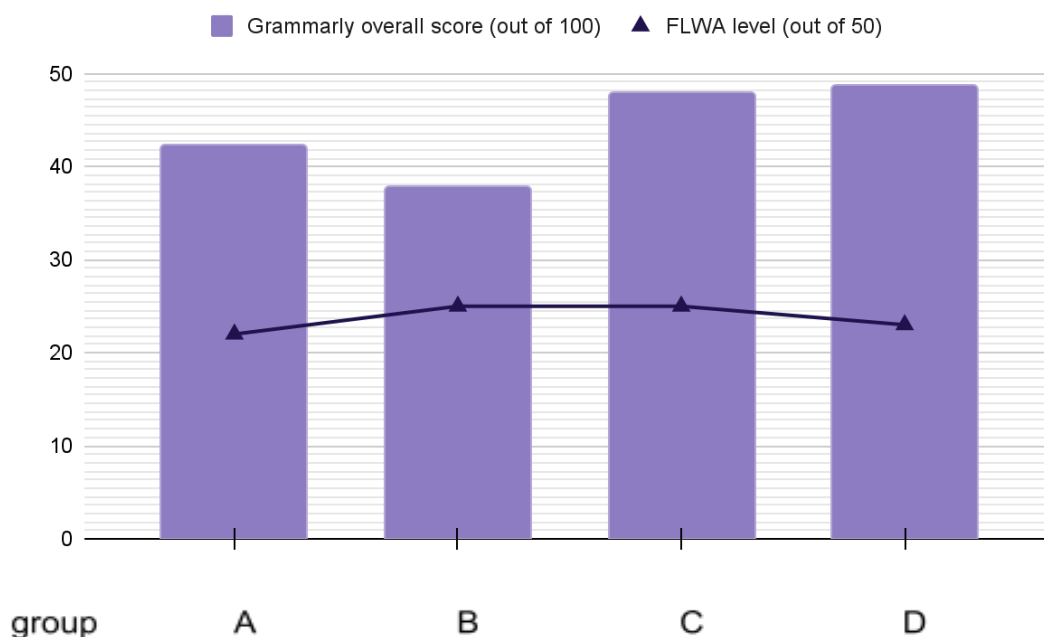


Figure 2. The four groups' text quality mean and their self reported FLWA mean

The next aspect that was calculated was the self reported anxiety levels. The first questionnaire that determined the levels of self reported anxiety generally had a complete score of 143 points. Low FLWA is registered from 72-108; moderat FLWA is registered between 108-127; high FLWA is registered between 127-143. Any number below 72 is not considered FLWA. (Cheng, Horwitz and Shallert 1999)

The average anxiety level for each group is highlighted in Table 2. The 10th grade group scored their FLWA to be 79.9 points out of 143. Students in group B reported their FLWA to be at 78.3 points out of 143. Group C scored 85.5 out of 143 and group D got 73.5 points out of 143. All groups would be categorized as low FLWA, because they are all <72-108>. It must be noted that all the scores are at the lower end of the *low* FLWA category.

Self reported FLWA

Group	Before questionnaire average (out of 143)	After questionnaire average (out of 50)
Group A (have not written a Cambridge essay before)	80	22
Group B (have not written a Cambridge essay before)	78	25
Group C (have written a Cambridge essay before)	86	25
Group D (have written a Cambridge essay before)	74	23

Created with Datawrapper

Table 2. Students' self reported FLWA measured by the mean scores of the questionnaires

In Table 2 the scores taken from the questionnaire that the students answered after the essay writing were also included. The results from that questionnaire will be referred to as the self-reported FLWA, because that indicated their emotions about a certain writing process. This questionnaire had a total score of 50. Low FLWA is registered from 25-30; moderate FLWA is registered between 30-40 and high FLWA is registered between 40-50. Any number below 25 is not considered FLWA. (Cheng, Horwitz and Shallert 1999)

The 10th grade group scored their FLWA to be 22.27 out of 50 and Group B reported their FLWA to be at 25.4. Group C scored 24.8 and group D got 23.3 points out of 50. Only group B would be categorized as low FLWA, however the score is only 0.4 points higher than the starting score of the *low* FLWA category.

4.3. Results

4.3.1. How students' self-reported foreign language writing anxiety is related to the quality of their written text on the basis of Grammarly's text scores

To find the answer to this research question the after questionnaire and the quality of the text were compared. The reason why the second questionnaire was used is because, it focused on the emotions the students felt during the writing process and how much anxiety they reported while writing the essay. The grammarly score was used to take into consideration over the Cambridge essay grade because it evaluated all the texts on the same premises and there was no human effect, which was included in the Cambridge evaluation.

The self-reported level of anxiety was taken from the questionnaire that students answered after the writing process, because this looked at the students feelings about the specific writing process. The after writing questionnaire reported FLWA levels were for group A 22.27 out of 50 and for group B 25.4. Group C scored 24.8 and group D got 23.3 points out of 50. According to Grammarly the quality of the text for each group was group A 42.27 points, for group B 37.8 points, for group C 48 points, and for group D 48.6 points. (Figure 2).

There is no noticeable relationship between self-reported FLWA and text quality. The correlation between the two is 0,24, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between self reported FLWA and text quality. However, the correlation is weak, which indicates that self-reported FLWA alone explains only a minimum portion of the variation in essay quality. Other factors that were not considered in this study may have a stronger influence on essay quality.

Scatterplot of essay quality score and FLWA total score

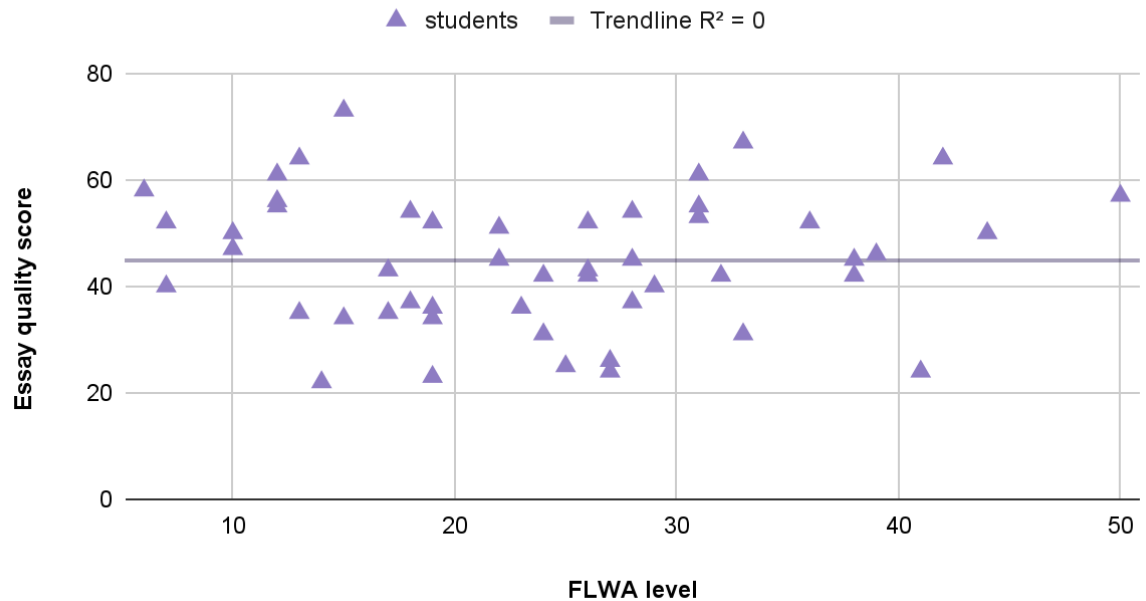


Figure 3. Scatterplot of essay quality and FLWA total score.

To predict how self-reported FLWA predicts essay quality a regression analysis was conducted. Essay quality score was the dependent variable and self-reported FLWA was marked as independent variable as shown in Figure 3. As the dots (students) are scattered all over the figure and there is no apparent clusters it indicates that there is no apparent relationship between FLWA and essay quality. There is one anomalia, one students scoring the highest FLWA level (50 points out of 50) and above average quality essay (59 out of 100) compared to other students.

The regression analysis was done using the independent variable (self reported FLWA) and dependent variable (Grammarly text quality score) and the program XLMiner Analysis ToolPak automatically did the regression analysis (Table 3 and Figure 3).

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>R-squared</i>
Intercept	44.85806376	4.430522741	10.12477903	0	x
X Variable	0.00008094663409	0.1697929607	0.000476737279	0.9996215848	0.0000000 0473

Table 3. Regression test results

The coefficient that came from this test was 0.0001, indicating a small effect size. However, the coefficient was not statistically significant, as indicated by the t-Stat score of 0.00047. This suggests that the observed coefficient is not significantly different from zero, implying no reliable relationship between FLWA and text quality. The high p-value of 0.9996215848 further supports the conclusion that the relationship between FLWA and text quality is statistically weak and insignificant. Therefore, based on these results, a significant change in text quality cannot be expected for a one-unit change in FLWA

The last aspect that was calculated in the regression analysis was the R-squared. The result was 0.000, which indicates that FLWA explains an extremely small proportion of text quality. It is important to note here that a small R-squared does not mean that there is no relationship between the variables, it just indicates that FLWA does not account for much variation in the text quality.

On Figure 3 the trendline is shown to be linear and has no apparent direction. This suggests that there is no significant linear relationship between FLWA and essay quality. This indicates that FLWA alone does not predict the quality of students' written work. Therefore, based on the analysis, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between self-reported FLWA and essay quality. However, it's important to note that the absence of a significant linear relationship does not necessarily imply the absence of any relationship at all. There may still be other factors or nonlinear relationships that could be influencing the relationship between FLWA and essay quality.

4.3.2. How students' self-reported foreign language writing anxiety is related to the quality of their written text based on Cambridge essay scores

The same tests was done on the Cambridge essay scores to cover the possibility that FLWA could predict the grading score of the essay. To predict how self-reported FLWA predicts essay score a regression analysis was conducted. Cambridge essay score was the dependent variable and self-reported FLWA was marked as independent variable as shown in Figure 4. As the dots (essays written) are scattered all over the figure and there is no apparent clusters it indicates that there is also no apparent relationship between FLWA and Cambridge essay score. With one anomalia with one students scoring the highest FLWA level and a 100% in their essay.

Scatterplot of Cambridge score and FLWA total score

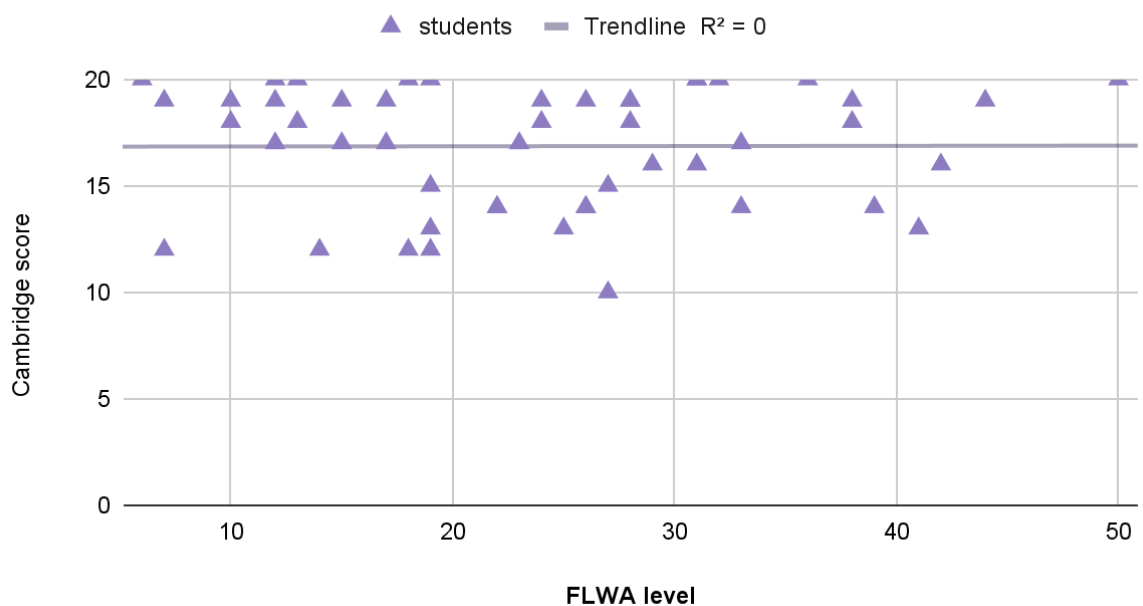


Figure 4. Scatterplot of Cambridge essay grade and FLWA total score.

The aggression analysis was done using the independent variable (self reported FLWA) and dependent variable (Cambridge essay score) and the program XLMiner Analysis ToolPak automatically did the regression analysis (Table 4 and Figure 4).

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>R-squared</i>
Intercept	16.83606099	1.02170525	16.47839329	0	x
X Variable 1	0.001000794	0.03915528	0.02555964	0.97971454	0.00001

Table 4. Regression test results

The coefficient that came from this test was 0.001. However, the analysis indicates that the change in text quality associated with a one-unit change in FLWA is not statistically significant. The p-value obtained was 0.9797145402, which suggests that the observed coefficient is not significantly different from zero. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results do not provide strong evidence for a significant relationship between FLWA and text quality. A meaningful change in text quality cannot be expected for a one-unit change in FLWA based on the results of this analysis

The last aspect that was calculated in the regression analysis was the R-squared. The result was 0.00001, which indicates that FLWA explains an extremely small proportion of the variation in text quality. It is important to note here that a small R-squared does not necessarily mean that there is no relationship between the variables. It simply suggests that FLWA has very limited explanatory power in predicting text quality. Other factors or variables not included in the analysis may have a stronger influence on the variation observed in text quality.

On Figure 4 the trendline is shown to be linear and has no apparent direction. This suggests that there is no significant linear relationship between FLWA and essay quality. This indicates that FLWA alone does not predict the quality of students' written work. Therefore, based on the analysis, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between self-reported FLWA and essay quality. However, it's important to note that the absence of a

significant linear relationship does not necessarily imply the absence of any relationship at all. There may still be other factors or nonlinear relationships that could be influencing the relationship between FLWA and essay quality.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Text quality and foreign language writing anxiety relationship

The first research question of this thesis was if there is a connection between self-reported FLWA and text quality. For this two regression analysis were carried out, one with the Grammarly calculated text quality score, and the other with the Cambridge essay score. The first test was carried out with Grammarly score and to eliminate the possibility that the Cambridge score, which on the basis the students will be scored at, would have a relationship with FLWA, a second regression analysis was conducted.

Both regression analysis showed that there is no apparent and significant relationship between the two variables. However, the calculated R squared (Grammarly text quality score = 0.00000000473 and Cambridge essay score = 0.00001) are low, but that does not mean that there is no relationship between FLWA and text quality. In addition, the trendline calculated during the regression test show no clusters and that just makes the fact that FLWA and text quality are not apparently related, stronger.

The same was concluded by Choi in 2013 who studied the connection between FLWA and writing performance. In the study students completed questionnaires to assess their level of anxiety and had to complete a creative writing portfolio. Choi (2013) did not find a statistically significant correlation between FLWA and writing performance. Three potential reasons for this outcome were identified. In his study he identified some reason why the relationship may not be there - a number of students had to be excluded, the students knew that they were not being graded, the evaluation Choi chose were not competent enough to capture the variation in the students' writing abilities.

The present study also looked at the potential relationship between writing a new type of essay and levels of anxiety, as suggested by Burnell et al (2019). However, contrary to their suggestion, the results of this study did not indicate a significant increase in

self-reported foreign language writing anxiety (FLWA) among the two groups of participants who had not previously written the assigned Cambridge essay. Analysis of the data presented in Table 2 reveals comparable FLWA scores for these groups: Group A reported an anxiety score of 22, while Group B reported a score of 25 following the writing process. Likewise, the groups who had prior experience with the essay type (Groups C and D) displayed similar levels of FLWA, with Group C reporting a score of 25 and Group D reporting a score of 23.

The lack of support for Burnell et al's (2019) hypothesis in this study can be attributed to two main factors: the limited sample size and the positive student-teacher relationship observed in the context of the study. The sample size in the present study may have restricted the statistical power to detect significant differences in FLWA between the groups. Additionally, the strong rapport between the students and their teacher may have played a mitigating role in reducing anxiety levels. It is important to note that Burnell et al. (2019) formulated their hypothesis based on university students, where interactions between students and professors are typically infrequent. In contrast, the secondary school setting involved in this study fosters more regular and substantial student-teacher interactions, which could contribute to a more supportive and less anxiety-inducing learning environment.

One reason why there was no strong data to state that FLWA and text quality are related is because of the sample size. Barlow (2000) highlight that anxiety is a very complex phenomenon that manifests differently for every person. So it could be that 50 students is simply not enough to find any strong relationships between FLWA and text quality. In Choi's (2013) study only 26 students participated and the results are the same as this study - no apparent relation between the two is present. However, in 2004 Cheng studied 421 students and he noticed a correlation between the two, so it is plausible that if the sample size was bigger a stronger connection between FLWA and text quality could have been noted.

If it was hypothesized by Gkonou (2011) that one factor that may cause students to experience FLWA is that they have multiple teachers and they do not understand what is expected from them and how mistakes are corrected. All four groups in this study were taught by the same person from the beginning of their education in JPG and their response to the question *I don't often understand the mistakes that my teacher corrects in my texts and that makes me anxious about my writing in English* was on average 3.6 points out of 10. So, it could be that the students have a strong rapport with their EFL teacher and they understand what is expected from them and how something is graded in their written assignments. This indicates that it is very important to have a good rapport with one's students. Maybe if multiple teachers and multiple groups had been involved in the study the connection between FLWA and text quality would have been clearer and stronger.

If Cheng (2002) and Gkonou (2011) hypothesized that a teacher could have a negative effect on FLWA and text quality this study indicates that the influencing factor of a teacher should not be underrated when it comes to the relationship between self-reported FLWA and text quality. This study indicates that, if the teacher is flexible and allows room for students to correct their mistakes, it helps reduce the anxiety, that other studies have reported. This may indicate that a relationship with a teacher could be a positive factor rather than a negative one. The same was thought by Ma, Guo and Wang (2018) and Felder and Henrifués (1995) who found in their study that a good and trust based relationship between students and their EFL teachers diminishes language anxiety and increase text quality.

If Daud, Daud, and Kassim (2016) suggest that students who produce stronger text quality do not report high FLWA then Spielberger (2010) suggest that individuals who have higher anxiety levels have high anxiety constantly and they have learned to cope with this phenomenon and it should not negatively or positively effect their work. The idea that Daud, Daud and Kassim (2016) proposed cannot be stated in this study because there was no pattern

that could suggest this connection. There were students who scored high text quality scores and no anxiety, students who scored low text quality scores and no anxiety, students who scored okay text quality and reported no anxiety *etc.* The research done by Maybe if the size of the students were bigger this pattern could have emerged, but with a sample size of 50 students this cannot be stated.

5.2. Foreign teacher's perspective of foreign language writing anxiety

The teacher conveys the idea that FLWA is definitely a problem in the EFL classroom that an EFL teacher must think about “*Yes, of course. If students are worried and anxious, they will not be able to concentrate on the writing task and they won't be able to show their real writing skills. Their brain has to deal with other problems.*” And she wrote that she has sensed FLWA in her classrooms “*sometimes, but not often*”.

To help students feel more comfortable while writing and experience as little anxiety as possible she does not require perfection from her students. She allows students from 10th grade to use their notes while writing essays. However, the 11th grade groups and 12th grade group are no longer allowed to use any help and they have to rely on their own skills and knowledge. For each group she first tells them that they will be writing a certain essay a few days beforehand, and they always go over the structure of the essay before the writing process begins, so that students can think through their writing process and ask questions.

Another aspect that the teacher points out that when students have graded writing assignments in class the paper has never been ripped from their hand. If the time limit, that a normal essay has, which is 45 minutes, is over, she gives students who have finished another exercise or guides them to start doing their homework, and she lets the students who need extra time finish. In addition she always lets students rewrite their essay, in order to learn from their mistakes, and if they present a essay, where they fixed the mistakes, they will get a

10% higher score. Knowing that one can better one's score could lower the anxiety that comes with writing in English classes.

The fact that their teacher is so flexible with the writing assignments and has diminished the need to be perfect can be one reason why the self-reported FLWA scores were low and there was no apparent relationship between self-reported FLWA and text quality. The same was noted by Felder and Henriques (1995) and Ma and Wang (2018) in their research - a good relationship between EFL teachers and students diminishes the problems students might face in EFL classes.

5.3. Limitations of the study and suggestions for the future

One limitation that every study has when it is related to anxiety is the fact that anxiety is an extremely complex phenomenon that manifests differently for every person and it is difficult to make generalizations (Barlow 2000). Maybe students do feel anxious while writing but it manifests in other ways and they cannot relate to the questionnaire. Limitation could have also been that FLWA was calculated on the basis of self-reported feelings through questionnaires. The use of self-report measures, such as questionnaires, introduces the possibility of response biases or inaccuracies due to social desirability or participant subjectivity. Participants' responses may not fully capture the complexity of FLWA and the strategies employed by the EFL teacher.

Limiting the study to one EFL teacher and her groups may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Different teachers may employ diverse strategies and approaches to address FLWA, and classroom dynamics can vary significantly. Including multiple teachers and classrooms would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the range of strategies used.

Time constraint could have also been a limitation for the study. The studies discussed in the Literature Review section were all related to longer writing assignments (portfolio, assignments that took longer than 90 minutes to complete *etc.*) however in this study the students only had 45 minutes to complete the essay and this time window eliminated the aspect of procrastinating, difficulty in starting, hard to focus on the task at hand, which all, according to the literature could have been signs of FLWA.

External factors limited the study as well. The research did not account for certain external factors that could influence FLWA and text quality. Variables such as students' prior educational experiences, socio-cultural backgrounds, or individual learning differences could have impacted the results but were not fully considered.

Suggestions for further research would be to include multiple teachers in the study and their groups, so it would give a better ground for generalisations. In addition, a larger scale study would give a broader look into different strategies EFL teachers use and if they even consider FLWA to be a problem in their classrooms. It would be interesting to investigate the role of teacher beliefs, attitudes, and pedagogical practices in addressing FLWA. And see how different teaching approaches, feedback techniques, or classroom environments contribute to reducing FLWA and promoting positive writing experiences.

Perhaps an investigation into the role of individual differences could give an interesting insight into FLWA. The individual differences that can be looked at are language proficiency, motivation, self-efficacy, or cultural background; and further how they interact with FLWA and its impact on text quality. This could provide insights into specific subgroups of learners who may be more susceptible to FLWA and require targeted instructional interventions.

In the rise of the AI, and how it can be an assistant for writing one could also examine the role of technology in addressing FLWA. Does the presence of AI, writing assistants, like

Grammarly, SentenceCheckup, Quillbot, ChatGPT, diminish FLWA or the levels of anxiety are not changed.

6. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to explore the relationship between FLWA and text quality. In addition get some insight to what an EFL teacher thinks of FLWA in her groups and what strategies she takes to diminish the FLWA effects by using questionnaires and a Cambridge essay assessments. Firstly, there was a positive correlation between the four groups' FLWA and essay quality, however, further analysis through regression revealed that this relationship was not statistically significant, suggesting that FLWA alone is not a reliable predictor of essay quality.

Additionally, the second aim for the study was to discover the strategies that an EFL teacher takes to study decrease the FLWA in her classroom. Through the questionnaire it came out that there are some specific strategies that the teacher opts for to diminish anxious feelings amongst her students. She does let students, in her 10th grade group, use a lot of materials while writing in the first year and with every group she goes over the most critical points before starting the essay. In addition, all of the students know that they can always rewrite the essay to get a 10% higher mark. As the research and literature shows the most efficient way an EFL teacher can diminish student's anxieties in class is to have good relationship with them and then students feel more comfortable to make mistakes and not have a compulsive need to produce native like *perfect* work.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The sample size was relatively small, and the research was conducted within a specific context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could benefit from larger sample sizes and a more diverse range of participants to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between FLWA and essay quality. In addition, including more EFL teachers to obtain a larger knowledge of strategies they use to diminish FLWA in their classrooms.

Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature on FLWA and its impact on written text quality. It highlights the need for further investigation to explore additional factors that may influence essay quality and to develop comprehensive approaches to address and alleviate FLWA in language learning contexts. By gaining a better understanding of the complex interplay between FLWA, self-perception, and essay quality, educators and researchers can design more effective interventions and support strategies to enhance students' writing abilities and reduce writing anxiety.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 . Parental or guardian's permission form in Estonian.

Hea lapsevanem või eestkostja,

Mina olen Anna Vaher ja õpin Tartu Ülikoolis võõrkeeõpetaja magistriõppes. Kirjutan Teile, et küsida Teie luba kaasta Teie laps või hoolealune minu magistr töö uuringusse. Minu uurimistöo teemaks on inglise keeles kirjutamisärevus. Lõputöö eesmärgiks on leida, milline on seos kirjutamisärevuse ja kirjutatud teksti kvaliteedi vahel ning milliseid võtteid nii õpetajad kui ka õpilased kasutavad, et ärevust, mis tekib võõrkeeles kirjutamisel, vähendada.

Oma töös otsin seoseid õpilaste hoiakute, kirjutamisärevuse ja kirjaliku teksti kvaliteedi vahel. Selleks peavad uuringus osalevad õppijad täitma küsimustik kirjutamisega seotud emotsioonide kohta ja kirjutama etteantud teemal ingliskeelse teksti. Samuti on plaanis valitud õpilastega teha fookusgrupi intervjuu, et teemat rohkem avada. Magistr töös õpilaste vastused ja tekstid analüüsitakse anonüümselt ning lõputöös kedagi nimeliselt välja ei tooda.

Kuna tegemist on alaealistega siis soovin küsida Teie nõusolekut.

Kas te olete nõus,

- 1) et Teie laps/hoolealune osaleb uuringus (küsimustik ja teksti kirjutamine)?
- 2) et kui Teie laps/hoolealune osutub valituks fookusgrupi intervjuus osalema, ja ta soovib seda teha, siis võib ta selles osaleda?

Palun lisada lehele enda ja lapse/hoolealuse nimi, märkida ära osalemise otsus ning kinnitada see allkirjaga.

Lugupidamisega

Anna Vaher

(Vanema/eestkostja nimi)

(Lapse/hoolealuse nimi)

Kas teie laps/hoolealune võib osaleda eelnevalt kirjeldatud uuringus?

- Jah
 Ei

..... (Vanema /eestkostja allkiri)

Appendix 2. Cambridge exam essay instruction.

You have listened to a radio discussion program about how to motivate children to do regular exercise. You have made the notes below.

Ways to motivate children to do regular exercise:

- Parental example
- Government funding
- School

Some opinions expressed in the discussion:

- “If children don’t see their parents do exercise, they don’t think it’s important.”
- “If sports facilities were cheaper, more people would use them.”
- “Sport in school is too competitive. It should be fun for everyone.”

Write an essay for your teacher discussing two of the ways in your notes. You should explain which way is more effective in motivating children to do regular exercise and provide reasons to support your opinion.

Appendix 3. Questionnaire before the writing process.

Before the essay.

Here is a short questionnaire that will help me better understand your experiences of writing anxiety in your English classes.

Your name and class

*your name will not be mentioned anywhere. I need it to match your answers and your essay.

I enjoy writing in English

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

I'm not good at writing in English.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

I don't think I write as well as my classmates in English.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

It's easy for me to write good texts in English.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas in English.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

I find it hard to start with my writing assignments in English when I have to.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

I find it difficult to organize my thoughts when I'm writing a text in English.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

I don't often understand the mistakes that my teacher corrects in my texts and that makes me anxious about my writing in English.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

I usually put off English writing assignments as long as I can.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

Writing in English is fun for me.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

I think only students who are better at writing are able to write good texts in English.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

When I write texts in English I find it hard to focus.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

When I write texts in English I have negative thoughts about my writing ability.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

When I write texts in English I am just trying to get over with it (not proofreading and not putting much effort into my work).

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

When I write texts in English I am extremely focused on the small details rather than the whole text itself.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

When I write texts in English I am afraid of my teacher's evaluation.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

When I write texts in English I am afraid to let anyone proofread my text.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

How do you expect to do in your English classes that are mostly focused on writing (letter, essays *etc.*)

Atrocious / hideous/ abysmal/ acceptable/ all right/ adequate/ excellent/ superb/ fantastic

Appendix 4. Questionnaire after the writing process.

After the essay.

Here is a short questionnaire that will help me better understand your experiences of writing anxiety in your English classes.

Your name and class

*your name will not be mentioned anywhere. I need it to match your answers and your essay.

How do you feel after the writing process?

Splendid / astonishing/ fantastic/ fair/ agreeable/ adequate/ hideous/ atrocious/ dreadful

*Only for the groups (10th and 11th) who have not written this type of essay before.

I would have felt better within my writing process if I would have written an essay like that before.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

How would you describe your essay?

Fascinating/ astonishing/ fantastic/ indifferent/ agreeable/ adequate/ awful/ atrocious/ dreadful.

When I was writing this essay I found it hard to focus.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

When I was writing this essay I had negative thoughts about my writing ability.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

When I was writing this essay I was just trying to get it over with (not proofreading and not putting much thought into the process).

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

When I was writing this essay I was afraid to proofread it.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

I am afraid of the feedback I might receive.

I absolutely do not agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I absolutely do agree

Is there anything you'd like to add?

Appendix 5. Questionnaire for the EFL teacher

Hello!

These following questions will give me some insight into what does an EFL teacher think of foreign language foreign anxiety in her classroom and what strategies does she use to diminish the anxiety that writing in English can cause for students.

Thank you for answering!

1. How many years have you been teaching English as a foreign language?

2. Do you consider foreign language writing anxiety to be something that a foreign language teacher should think about? Why?

3. Have you noticed foreign language writing anxiety within your groups?

4. What different strategies do you opt for to diminish the anxiety that comes with the foreign language writing process? (if you use none put a '-' here)

5. Do you know if the strategies you mentioned before are used by all of the English teachers at your school or just you. (If you use no strategies then just put a '-' here.

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Anna Vaher

The relationship between self-reported foreign language writing anxiety and text quality amongst secondary school students in Tartu.

Seos ise teatatud võõrkeele kirjutamisärevuse ja teksti kvaliteedi vahel Tartu keskkooli õpilaste seas.

magistritöö

2023

Lehekülgede arv: 57

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärk oli uurida, milline seos on võõrkeele kirjutamisärevuse ja teksti kvaliteedi vahel keskkooli õpilaste seas. Lisaks oli eesmärk välja selgitada erinevaid strateegiaid, mida üks võõrkeele õpetaja kasutab, et vähendada oma inglise keele tunnide kirjutamisärevust.

Magistritöö koosneb kuuest osast. Sissejuhatuses antakse ülevaade uurimistöö vajalikkusest ja uurimisküsimustest. Esimene kirjanduse ülevaade annab ülevaate võõrkeeleärevusest üldisemalt ja teine kirjanduse ülevaade arutleb võõrkeele kirjutamisärevuse üle. Meetodie peatükis seletatakse lahti töö meetodid, protsess. Sellele järgnevas peatükis tuuakse välja regresiooni testi tulemused. Viiendas peatükis analüüsitakse uurimuse tulemusi, seostatakse neid kirjandusega, antakse ülevaade uuringut mõjutanud piirangutest ja tehakse soovitusi järgnevate uuringute jaoks.

Võõrkeeles kirjutamine on oskus, mis pakub paljudele õppijatele raskusi ja see võib tekitada kirjutamisärevuse. Kuigi võõrkeeleärevus on saanud palju tähelepanu, on kirjutamisärevus jäänud pikka aega tahaplaanile ja rohkem on keskendatud ärevusele, mis tekib siis kui on vaja võõrkeeles rääkida.

Uuringus kasutati võõrkeele kirjutamisärevuse uurimise jaoks kahte küsitlust ja et mõtte teksti kvaliteeti kirjutasiid kõik õpilased Cambridge'i essee. Kaks gruppi olid varem kirjutanud selle eessee ja kaks gruppi mitte. Uuringu tulemused ei tõestanud, et võõrkeele kirjutamisärevuse ja õpilaste teksti vahel on märgatav seos. Uuringust tuli aga välja see, et väga oluline on õpetaja ja õpilaste suhe - kui õpetaja on toetav, mõistev ja julgustav, siis on võimalus, et õpilased tunnevad ennast mugavamalt ja kirjutamisärevus on madal.

Märksõnad: inglise keel võõrkeelena, võõrkeeleärevus, kirjutamisärevus, teksti kvaliteet, võõrkeele õpetamine

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Anna Vaher

16.05.2023

Lõputöö on lubatud kaitsmisele.

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