

**REDUCING WRITING ANXIETY AMONG
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS THROUGH
SYSTEMATIC DESENSITIZATION: AN
EXPERIMENTAL STUDY**

BY

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Reducing Writing Anxiety Among English Language Learners Through Systematic Desensitization: An Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

Title: Reducing Writing Anxiety among English Language Learners through Systematic Desensitization: An Experimental Study

A common problem encountered by the learners of a second language is that of anxiety and nervousness regarding its correct usage. This was a predicament thought to be limited to speaking skills but quite recently the anxiety related to writing in second language also brought into focus. This research aims at gaining a deeper understanding of writing anxiety faced by ESL learners and suggests systematic desensitization as a viable solution. This research aims at examining the effectiveness of systematic desensitization in reducing the level of writing anxiety among the students of diploma at NUML. The research follows the self-administered procedure of systematic desensitization. It includes three steps, namely: relaxation training, construction of anxiety hierarchy, systematic desensitization procedure. In this research, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory was adopted to determine the level and types of ESL writing anxiety prevalent among the participants along with a correlating analysis between writing anxiety and writing performance to investigate its effects. The researcher explored the specific causes of ESL writing anxiety among students by keeping this reality in focus that the second language anxiety is caused by multiple factors. The views of the participants were collected by asking six open-ended questions prepared by Attay and Kurt (2006). The present research aims at uncovering the feasibility of making use of systematic desensitization for improving students' performance on English writing tasks. Systematic desensitization is a technique which is effectively recommended to people suffering from phobias or other academic fears. For this purpose, forty students were selected through purposive sampling from the sixty students of Diploma in English from National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad. The selected forty participants were randomly divided into two groups: experimental and control group. Only the experimental group was given therapy. After the comparison of pre-test and post-test results, it was recognized that systematic desensitization was effective in lowering the anxiety and improving the writing skills of English language learners. The results obtained led to two important findings: 1. There is a high level of ESL writing anxiety among English language learners 2. Systematic Desensitization is an effective therapy to curb this anxiety.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAT	Achievement Anxiety Test
AMTB	Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery
EUAS	English Use Anxiety Scale
ECAS	English Classroom Anxiety Scale
EWBQ	English Writing Block Questionnaire
ESL	English as a Second Language
EWMS	English Writing Motivation Scale
FLCAS	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
FCAS	French Class Anxiety Scale
FUAS	French Use Anxiety Scale
FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
FLCAS	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
L1	First language
L2	Second language
L3	Third language
NUML	National University of Modern Languages
SAS	State Anxiety Scale
SLA	Second Language Anxiety
SLWA	Second Language Writing Anxiety
SLWAI	Second language writing Anxiety Inventory
TAT	Test Anxiety Scale
WAQ	Writing Anxiety Questionnaire
WAT	Writing Apprehension Test
WBQ	Writers' Block Questionnaire

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In Him I trust, and unto Him I look”.

The Quran, 11:88

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DEDICATION

Dedicated To Allah, who is most benevolent, ever merciful and to all those people who help others without any reward from them.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Anxiety is one of the side effects of language learning around the globe, and Pakistani learners of English as second language are no exception to it. Students generally experience anxiety while working on productive skills, i.e., writing and speaking. This anxiety, if not controlled, tends to become a sort of psychological barrier in the process of acquisition of the target language, viz. English in the Pakistani context. As a result, the students tend to show a reluctant approach towards learning English language. Consideration of language learners' anxiety reactions is extremely important to assist them attaining the intended performance goals in the target language. To some extent, speaking anxiety in a second language has received some attention but writing anxiety has so far been ignored; whereas, writing anxiety has always had a strong bearing on English language learners as a critical behavior in learning English. In this regard, this research is an endeavor at carrying out an experimental study with ESL students. The study aims at comprehending the student's English language writing anxiety and formulating a solution for this problem.

1.2 Background of the Study

The term ESL (English as a Second Language) is traditionally applied to the usage or learning of English by someone whose innate language is not English. The term English as a second language also encompasses the use of specialized approaches to teach second language (English) to the learners of English, whose mother language is not English and who live in a country where English is one of the main languages. Earlier studies have already found that the problems encountered by English language learners are due to the extent to which their native tongue differs from English. For example, someone whose mother tongue is Chinese is likely to face more problems than someone whose native language is German because German is more similar to English than Chinese. This may also be true for people with other native languages and

can be true for anyone having any native language (termed as first language, normally abbreviated as L1), aspiring to learn a new language (termed as second language, normally abbreviated as L2).

Acquiring proficiency in a new language depends on a couple of varying factors, which are linked directly to the environment in which the person learns the new language. This is precisely why the newly learnt languages are categorized differently as, first language (L1), second language (L2), third language (L3) and so on. Naturally, the first language is learnt in the early part of childhood without much conscious effort. Later on, it becomes the most comfortable and preferred language of communication as it is integrated into the social and cultural identity of the speaker. L2 is considered as the secondary or learnt language which is not the speaker's innate language but is in practice in the local vicinity of the individual. Any language which is learnt after the second language is called the third language (L3). According to Cenoz (2013), a child may learn a third language which is different from the first two after learning L1 and L2.

Second language learning can be affected by a series of various aspects. These can be broadly classified into three different categories: internal, external and affective aspects. Moreover, there are still some other important elements which have a direct bearing on the learning process which are beyond the abilities of the learner to control. Their correlated intricacies directly influence the speed and facility with which the new language is absorbed by the learner. Internal factors can be defined as those factors which the individual learner brings with him/her to any of the learning platforms. The factors which are responsible for the provision of a particular learning platform are known as external factors; whereas, emotional factors are the affective aspects which influence learning. They can be both harmful and helpful. An effective learning experience is the result of a perfect blend of all the above mentioned internal, external and affective aspects. In the case of learning a second language, all these factors are equally important and the slightest lack of any factor can cause adverse effects. Perhaps, this is the reason that second language learning with all its intricacies is the most researched area in linguistics.

However, the learning of a second language is mostly accompanied by anxiety. The current research is an attempt to decipher a solution to minimize it. Analysis of

affective factors is a challenging task because of the complicated interaction of emotional aspects such as beliefs, attitudes, motivation, self-control, self-esteem, risk-taking and anxiety. Among influential aspects, anxiety has proven to be a massive obstacle in the attempt to acquire a new language. According to Zhang (2011), the students learning productive skills, viz. writing and speaking, are more probable to have higher anxiety during the process of learning. Anxiety may be explained as a particular feeling which can vary from individual to individual. It is the feeling of extreme stress, pressure, worry, uneasiness, and apprehension that leads to the triggering of the autonomic nervous system. It is the dread or fear regarding what could happen. It is known not to be based on any logic or reasoning and therefore, is taken as an irrational feeling. 'Language phobia' is another term substituted for language anxiety. Although it is common among students, most of the parents and teachers are unable to see it because of their ignorance or because of the intricate nature of the phenomenon. They simply start to raise questions against the abilities of the child. As the onset of this problem is not fixated to any age or period in life, it may occur at any time and to anyone.

Generally speaking, an optimum level of anxiety is necessary for everyone to perform at an efficient level. This optimal anxiety helps the brain to function up to its maximum capabilities where one can recall things immediately. On the contrary, if this anxiety exceeds a certain level, it can stimulate a paralysis of the brain causing the individual to lose the ability to think straight and therefore can have very adverse effects. Just as many individuals would list anxiety as a main cause hindering their success, similarly students suffering from anxiety find second language learning a more difficult task compared to other non-anxious students. Anxiety experienced during the process of a foreign language is labelled as "Second/foreign Language Anxiety". According to Horwitz (2001), it is linked to the students' unfavorable emotional reactions towards second language. This study highlights the issue of anxiety not only to ascertain whether it causes poor performance or not but also to find out if it can be eradicated through the application of a psycho-therapeutic technique, namely systematic desensitization.

In 1986, an American psychologist, Horwitz, became the first person to introduce the concept of language anxiety. He believed that anxiety had a considerable effect on learning in the classroom and that it continued during the entire duration of

learning the new language. When anxiety is limited to the language learning situation, it falls into the category of specific anxiety reactions. Psychologists use the term specific anxiety reaction to differentiate people who are generally anxious in a variety of situations from those who are anxious only in specific situations. There are several specific anxieties, some are associated with school tasks such as test-taking and some with academic subjects such as science or mathematics. Horwitz, with the coordinated efforts of some other people, prepared an anxiety scale for the learners of a foreign language known as (FLCAS) in 1986. Horwitz Elaine, Micheal & Cope (1986) investigated that the degree of students' learning was very much dependent on their anxiety. MacIntyre (1994) defined the fear of second language as an apprehensive emotion particularly associated with the context of second language, including the contexts of both types of language skills: productive and receptive. There was a time when anxiety of language was considered to be associated only with oral performance. Therefore, numerous researches were conducted on the anxiety of speaking a second language. Then, a time came, when it started to be taken as a multi-faceted phenomenon with various aspects. Quite recently, anxiety has started to be viewed as a skill-specific construct due to which various scales were developed to measure various skills such as: for measuring writing anxiety, Cheng (2004) developed a scale known as Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI).

Anxiety related to the skill of writing is as important as the anxiety of speaking. Since 1970s, much has been done on writing anxiety but that was with respect to first language, L1. One of the most noteworthy works among them was conducted by Daly and Miller (1975) who coined the term 'writing apprehension' to refer to a state of individual difference which is linked to an individual's inclination to face or avoid the objects supposed to possibly involve writing escorted by some quantity of apparent evaluation. Daly and Miller invented the writing apprehension test (WAT, 1975). According to Cheng (2004), it was one of the most repeatedly applied measurement gadgets in the research on anxiety of writing.

First language acquisition is almost an automatic process. If learners feel writing anxiety even in their first language, then how can it be ignored in the learning of a second language? It was not until the late 1990s that the linguists of language anxiety identified the importance of recognizing specific characteristics of second language use that provoked anxiety and demanded for instructional interventions. Second language

writing anxiety (SLWA) can be well defined as, a reluctant attitude towards writing. Zhang (2011) has referred to the works of (Hassan, 2001: 18-21; Horwitz, 2001: 115-117; Cheng, 2004: 329-331) to establish that all these researchers have verified the influence of the anxiety of writing in a second language on the performance of second language learners. Anxiety is a multidimensional phenomenon. Lang (1971) conceptualized it in a model including three independent components: cognitive, physiological (somatic) and behavioral. Being nervous, stressed or forming negative expectations of one's performance are typical cognitive symptoms of apprehension. Physiological consequences make students suffer from upset stomach, experience excessive perspiration or blushing and feel their heart pounding. Behavioral symptoms can be observed in one's tendency for withdrawal, procrastination and avoidance.

Although the importance of SLWA is realized by a large number of researchers, the studies focusing their attention on the issue of SLWA especially in relation to Pakistani ESL learners are hard to find. In the present study, the writing inventory prepared by Cheng is implemented to measure the varying levels and categories of ESL writing anxiety encountered by Pakistani students of Diploma in English at NUML, Islamabad to find out if there exists a relationship between their anxiety of writing and their performance in writing. The purpose is to inspect the effects of anxiety during English writing. The researcher has tried to find out a solution and remedy for reducing their anxiety. This study will investigate whether systematic desensitization, a psychotherapeutic technique, is suitable to abate the anxiety of writing among second language learners.

Systematic desensitization invented by Joseph Wolpe (1958) is applied in this study to reduce the anxiety of writing among English language learners. It is a type of behavior therapy to treat phobias based on the principle of behavior change through classical conditioning so rests on the principle that what has been learned (adapted) can be unlearned. Desensitization procedure usually begins with visualizing of anxiety-provoking situation by applying relaxation strategies that deal with apprehension caused by anxious situation. The basic idea is that once a person learns to deal and cope with anxiety in the imagination, he would also be able to cope with it in the real situation. The goal of this technique is to make the clients desensitize to the anxiety-provoking situations in a gradual way. That is why, this technique is also called a "graduated exposure therapy."

Wolpe (1958) developed a therapy for anxiety on the basis of counter-conditioning. Wolpe (1958) found that anxiety could be reduced by presenting the anxiety producing stimuli in a graded way and paired systematically with a relaxation response. Henceforth this procedure of reciprocal inhibition started to be known as systematic desensitization and proved to be profoundly successful. Since then many researchers have inferred that "exposure" to the feared stimulus is important in its treatment. According to him, the relaxation technique will not work if a client will face the anxiety provoking situation at once. Instead, he prepared his clients to face the anxious situation at first through the imagination. Desensitization is applied to enable the clients to adapt to fears through relaxation. In progressive relaxation, the muscles are tighten and then loosen up. During the repeated relaxation exercises, the learners concentrate on the difference between the underlying pressure and the subsequent feelings of relaxation by knowing once they will become soft, they will be relaxed. Repeated practices enable a person to recreate the relaxed condition in a variety of situation (Wolpe, 1958).

According to Wolpe (1958), systematic desensitization is an intervention that weakens the established connection between anxiety and items/circumstances that are anxiety-provoking. The aim of systematic desensitization is to reduce fears. Phobias and fears are removed by substituting another reaction to an anxious situation, a prepared contradicting response of relaxation which is beyond reconciliation with an anxious response. The procedure of systematic desensitization moves through three stages of the treatment: Relaxation, Constructing a hierarchy of anxiety and matching relaxation with the events portrayed in the list of anxious situations. Wolpe (1958) trained his clients to feel relaxation because it is not possible to be anxious and relaxed at the same time. So in this technique, clients are given the training of different relaxation strategies to stretch and relax different muscles until the client reaches a condition of relaxation.

The goal of this procedure is to learn to cope the fear of each step mentioned in anxiety hierarchy. This progression is very important because of reciprocal inhibition, since it gives the client a way of controlling their fears, instead of bringing them to an uncontrollable level. Just a couple of sessions are required to learn proper ways of dealing with anxiety. The therapist's duty is to encourage the client to take the observation of their imagination on presenting the anxious situation and then to replace

the imagined anxious situation with any of the positive stimulus. Specific fears are mental issues frequently treated by means of systematic desensitization. At the point when people experience such fears, they will in general stay away from the feared stimuli; but this is not the solution. It may provide a temporary relief but in the long run such avoidances may strengthen the fears. In this way, the goal of desensitization is to overcome avoidance by presenting the phobic stimuli in a gradual way, so that it can be endured (Wolpe, 1958).

Initially, Systematic desensitization was developed to be applied by a psychotherapist or instructor with special training but presently it has also been shown to be effective when it is administered by self, however the regular practice is very necessary for maximum benefits. The relaxation strategies in desensitization systems could be Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Autogenic, or some other technique for initiating a profoundly relaxed state of mind. The important factor is that one must pick a strategy which he thinks most agreeable for him. The general objective of systematic desensitization is to reduce the capacity of specific circumstances to cause anxiety by challenging each item of anxiety hierarchy while staying in a state of relaxation.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

A common problem experienced by English as a second language learners is the anxiety of writing correct English. In most of the cases, this anxiety gets further aggravated when students have to write in classroom or appear in assessments, which at times results in a worsening of their performance and certain other psychological problems as well. To some extent, speech anxiety has been treated by using different psychological and educational therapeutic techniques; whereas, rare consideration has been given to the treatment of writing anxiety or writing phobia, which affects not only the students' performance during their school years but continues to affect them in their professional lives as well. Systematic desensitization is a therapeutic technique which is administered to people suffering from academic phobias or other fears. With the view to relieving the Pakistani ESL learners of their anxiety of writing in English, the present research aims at making use of systematic desensitization technique for improving the students' performance on English writing tasks. The study also aims at determining the efficacy of systematic desensitization in reducing the writing anxiety of Pakistani ESL learners.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The research objectives are as under:

1. To examine the effect of second language anxiety on the writing skills of selected English language learners.
2. To apply systematic desensitization, a psychotherapeutic technique, for the reduction of the anxiety of writing amongst ESL learners.
3. To determine whether systematic desensitization technique can enhance the learners' performance on writing tasks by reducing their anxiety.

1.5 Hypothesis

Reducing writing anxiety through systematic desensitization improves the writing skills of ESL learners.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is two-fold as it hopes to benefit the learners as well as the teachers at the same time. When a learner shows poor performance in English writing, s/he is generally stigmatized for being mentally inefficient or perhaps cognitively deficient; this stigma gradually turns into a fear or phobia and becomes an obstacle in the way of effective learning which can be tackled by applying systematic desensitization technique, which is the linchpin of the subject research. In this way, this study hopes to help the students in restoring their confidence and self-esteem, which are the basic motivational factors in learning a new language. Systematic desensitization is hoped to enable the ESL learners to face the problems and obstacles that hinder their learning process. Additionally, this approach is hoped to help the learners in achieving a higher level of performance. This will be a hallmark contribution not only to Pakistani ESL learners but also to ESL learners at a global level. From the teachers' perspective, the study will help them identify those learners who are unsuccessful because of language anxiety and guide them towards effective learning.

It is quite unfortunate that writing anxiety has been given negligible attention in Pakistan. Therefore, the need to fill this gap in the area noticeably stands out. The present study hinges upon the technique of Systematic Desensitization and intends to come up with a solution which will not be confined to the boundaries of educational institutions alone. Based on this concept, the students will practice relaxation training

at home but enjoy its effects in their academic and professional lives. The study is also significant in the sense that it contributes to two different disciplines simultaneously, i.e., psychology and linguistics. It is therefore, anticipated to lead to a profound understanding of the cognitive processes of language learning as it attempts to bring a psychology-based technique into the field of linguistics. The findings of this study are expected to be of considerable significance to the field of experimental psycholinguistics as it aims at suggesting a practical solution for decreasing the anxiety of second language learners, particularly on written tasks. Thus, the research is likely to be valuable not only to teachers, educationalists and psychologists but to psycholinguists as well.

1.7 Delimitation

This research has been delimited to the students of Diploma in English at National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad. Only forty students were selected for the experiment. Their writing skill was evaluated through the administration of pre-test and post-test. After the intervention of systematic desensitization, which is a therapeutic technique of relaxation to lessen their anxiety, the performance of the selected students was assessed through a written test. The written test of the selected ESL learners was assessed on four levels: linguistic accuracy, organization and content, completion of the writing task on time and presentation.

1.8 Organization of the Study

In order to continue with the study in a step-by-step manner, a tentative strategy is presented here:

The study is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 is 'Introduction' that launches a trail for this research specifically through framing a practical hypothesis. It includes background of the study, problem statement and objectives of the study, significance of the research and delimitation of the research.

Literature Review is discussed in Chapter 2. An overview of major works and other sources on the selected topic of writing anxiety with a description, summary and evaluation of each source is given in this chapter. This overview leads to the identification of a gap in the previously conducted researches which is stated towards the end of the chapter.

Research methodology is the part of Chapter 3. In this chapter, the research design, the detailed selection procedure of participants, methods of data collection, techniques and instruments have been described which are applied to collect and analyze data. The research design consists of three steps: pre-test, intervention and post-test, which are also the part of this chapter.

The Chapter 4 of 'Data Analysis and Interpretation' provides a detailed analysis of all the collected data. Furthermore, application of systematic desensitization and analysis of the observed effects of this technique are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to 'Findings and Discussion'. The chapter presents the findings of the study and also endeavors to discuss them. The motive of discussion is to deduce and describe the significance of results in the light of what was known previously about the research problem being inspected. New understanding that emerges as a result of the study is a part of this chapter.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by referring back to the research hypothesis and assessing the hypothesis in the light of the results of the study. This chapter also proposes some avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is based on the introduction and historical perspective of language anxiety, particularly the anxiety of writing in a second language with differential description between general and academic anxieties. It is about how researchers differentiated different kinds of anxiety whether it is destructive or supportive to language performance and the factors which are associated with language anxiety in general. Measurement of anxiety and discussion of different scales is a part of second section; whereas, the last part discusses how second language anxiety has been treated, pedagogical suggestions for its alleviation recommended by various researchers and systematic desensitization as a psychotherapeutic technique to reduce the anxiety of writing in a second language.

2.1 Second Language Writing Anxiety (SLWA)

To comprehend the particular form of anxiety that the learners feel while learning a second language, first of all, it is essential to recognize anxiety in general terms. According to Horwitz (2001), the word 'anxiety' represents 'feelings of apprehension, fear or uneasiness generally practiced by persons when encountered with a challenging situation such as difficult task, interaction with public, speaking publically, an interview, dismissal, or any other anxiety provoking event'. Sometimes, anxiety refers to indefinite, disturbing feelings of apprehension and tension while dealing with a person having no idea about. Horwitz & Cope (1986) stated that general anxiety refers to those persons who usually remain anxious in various conditions. However, academic anxiety refers to a specific anxiety associated with an academic task. There can be different reasons of having anxiety with academic activities; for example because of school pressure, parents or any other personal reason. The literature on academic anxiety has revealed several kinds of anxiety, language anxiety is one of among those types. Horwitz & Young (1991) stated that language anxiety practiced during the process of language learning, can be observed in both ways: as a separate form of anxiety or as a subtypes of general type of anxiety.

Second/Foreign language anxiety or Xenoglossophobia is the feeling of apprehension and nervousness connected with processing of second/foreign language. Horwitz et al. (1986) were the pioneers in dealing with the anxiety of foreign language as a distinct phenomenon specific to language learning. According to Horwitz (2001), second/foreign language anxiety refers to the learners' undesirable affective reactions to language acquisition and is usually observed as a multidimensional and complex phenomenon. Some people are more anxious than others; similarly, some are anxious in extensive variety of situations whereas some feel anxiety only in specific situations. As far as the anxiety of second language with respect of writing is concerned, it is perceived as situation-specific so it may affect those individuals not characteristically anxious in other conditions. Horwitz & Young (1991) have indicated that the anxiety of foreign language can be recognized in two different ways: one is 'Transfer approach' in which FLA is observed as expression of other forms of anxiety whereas, 'Unique approach' dictates foreign language achievement as associated with FLA but not with other kinds of anxiety. However, the second language anxiety has been discussed mostly with reference to speaking situations but after long discussion researchers such as Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, (1991) started to analyze anxiety of second language as a skill-specific construct. After new approaches to language anxiety with respect to writing as a specific skill, writing anxiety is considered an important aspect of second language anxiety (SLA).

This area quickly reviews the distinctive investigations that have been directed to clarify the particular form of anxiety i.e. writing in a second language. In literature, Second language writing anxiety has been discussed under various terms, for example, Rose (2009) called it, 'writers' block', Cheng (2002) referred to it as 'writing anxiety' and the term 'writing apprehension' was used by Daly and Wilson (1983); the term 'anxiety and blocking' was used by Al-Ahmad (2003). He considered writing anxiety as a mind-boggling term due to the multifaceted design of writing. Stengal (1939, as cited in Newman, 2004) utilized the expression 'language shock' to portray the uneasiness felt by students. Each one of these researchers accepted that second language learning can be a demanding task for the learners. They also admitted that the words and expressions used by the students in a new language were not up to the mark. They stated that the failure to use another language appropriately may cause a feeling of disgrace and tension among students.

The term 'writing apprehension' has been presented and explored by Daly and Miller (1975). A series of inquiries on writing apprehension were carried out particularly after Daly-Miller's Writing Apprehension Test (WAT). Daly & Wilson (1983) characterized writing apprehension as an abstract complex of emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral dealings which strengthens one another and it alludes to a condition or subject specific individual difference related to an individual's inclinations to approach or stay away from situations perceived to potentially require writing accompanied by some amount of perceived assessment. Actually, the research towards anxiety of writing began with the advancement of the idea of writing anxiety and Daly-Miller's Writing Apprehension Test (WAT). According to Daly (1978), anxiety of writing is a condition that is subject-specific individual difference. So with the advancement of this idea, two elements became prominent, one was 'individual difference' and second was the 'presentation to a specific situation'.

According to Hassan (2001), SLWA can be characterized as an overall avoidance of writing and of situations perceived by the learners to possibly require some amount of writing linked by the potential for assessment of that writing. Zhang (2011) distinguished that the anxiety of writing is a language-skill specific anxiety which is not quite the same as a common anxiety of classroom. He investigated that anxiety of second language associated with specific situation of classroom and second language writing anxiety are two related concepts yet both are distinct concept as the first one is increasingly general while the second is specific to a skill. Any way one thing is obvious from the previously mentioned definitions that the 'presence of a specific circumstance or a condition' stimulates the negative sentiments of uneasiness and strain. According to Cheng (2002), there have been only a couple of inquiries which dealt with the anxiety of second language writing directly and if some exist, those dealt with ESL students from diverse backgrounds with respect of first language. In this manner, there is even less research on anxiety among students of second language who are from the same linguistic backgrounds.

2.2 Types of Foreign Language Anxiety and Second Language Writing Anxiety

Writing anxiety is a particular aspect of second language anxiety. Horwitz (2001) stated that the researchers divide anxiety into these classes; state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. State anxiety shows up when an individual makes a guess of some kind of danger. At the point when the danger vanishes, and the particular condition evaporates, the individual no longer remains anxious. Trait anxiety is a person's prospect of getting to be on the edge in any circumstance or condition. Trait anxiety is a comparatively stable characteristic of personality, and individual who suffers from trait anxiety would most likely be anxious in many situations. The expression "situation-specific apprehension" was coined by MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) and alludes to the consistent and differing nature of certain anxieties. Horwitz et al. (1986) first contended that language anxiety ought to be perceived as anxiety evoked by a specific situation which could give linguists an idea about how anxiety stimulated by specific learning conditions influenced learning of language. Anxiety in its debilitating and facilitating forms performs double action, it motivates the learners and side by side warns the learners. For example, anxiety of assessment is a type of performance anxiety that arises in response to a conflict between performance and high expectations.

According to Kralova (2016), studies have analyzed SLA in connection with two specific language viewpoints: one is skills-based second language anxiety and other is system-based anxiety of language. The skill-based second language anxiety depends on two sort of language aptitudes; productive language skill, such as; writing e.g. Cheng (2002) and speaking for example, Steinberg & Horwitz (1986) and receptive skill such as: reading, for example, Argaman, & Abu-Rabia (2002), and listening for example, Elkhafaifi (2005) and Zhai (2015). Second point of view of language anxiety is the system-based second language anxiety. According to Kralova (2016), a negative relationship was found among FLA and new language vocabulary and syntax over investigations (Van Patten & Glass, 1999; Sheen, 2007). For instance, the students were stressed over their lack of vocabulary and were less worried about grammar and constrained information of a new language's culture. Cheng (2004) outlined a three-dimensional conceptualization of second language writing anxiety, for example,

cognitive anxiety, physical anxiety and avoidance behavior. This three-dimensional concept was the most appropriate one which qualified the concept of anxiety as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, where one dimension is of cognitive anxiety, the second is of physical anxiety and the third dimension encompasses avoidance behavior.

2.3 Components of Second Language Writing Anxiety

In 2002, Cheng classified the components of anxiety into four categories. She has given these categories with reference to writing in second language. Among these, the first component is 'Confidence in English writing' which includes two elements: one is the awareness of the difficulties faced by the students during writing and second is the self-assessment of their performance in English writing. Motivation and attitude of English language learners towards learning a second language is considered the second component. Enthusiastic students who believe in the importance of English writing tend to show lower degree of anxiety during writing whereas the less motivated students are more anxious. 'Additional effort' is named as the third component of anxiety particularly for second language writing. The students who keep themselves engaged with supplementary efforts to learn and write English will show comparatively a low degree of writing apprehension. Fourth component is the 'accomplishment ratings' in writing of second language. In order to reduce the writing anxiety and to tackle the situation, firstly it is very important to identify the components of writing anxiety of second language because they can provide the certain dimensions to anxious learners to reduce the anxiety while keeping themselves under definite extents.

2.4 The Symptoms of Second Language Anxiety and Second Language Writing Anxiety

Every individual is different from the other so the manifestations, duration and the intensity of the symptoms of anxiety also varies from person to person. The fact behind this variation is just because of the individual differences. These individual differences effect on the speed of learning even though sometimes the conditions of learning are the same but the individuals come with different learning results. Some learners are more successful than the others. Some learners use to forget things learnt earlier and cannot perform in any way whether they have to perform orally or in writing, whereas for some learners, only a small push proves to be enough for performing well.

According to research anxiety of writing is different from general anxiety. Cheng et al. (1999) presented the same view by saying that writing anxiety is skill-specific whereas class room anxiety is general anxiety which needs to be kept separated. No doubt both anxieties have similarities but both must be treated individually. According to Horwitz (1986), the symptoms of FLA and the symptoms of writing apprehension are not different but same for example palpitation, shaking, nervousness, tension, low/high blood pressure etc. Hashemi & Abbasi (2013) conducted a study in which, the participants labeled their own symptoms of anxiety during learning of second language. They recorded such symptoms as: blank face, absent mind, red face and stiffness etc. Anyhow the symptoms of writing anxiety cannot be fixed because of its multidimensional nature. Common anxiety signs and symptoms include: tension, nervousness, restlessness, agitation, fatigue, tensed muscles, irritation, increased heart rate, panic attacks, hyperventilation, sweating, trembling, feeling weak or tired, trouble sleeping, having the urge to avoid things that trigger anxiety, having difficulty controlling worry etc.

2.5 The Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety and Second Language Writing Anxiety

It is not easy to define the exact causes of second language anxiety because of its multiple and complexities of factors. Learning of a second language is a result of combined factors such as psychological, social, educational etc. According to Staff (2004), causes and factors are two different aspects. Cause is something that yields an effect whereas factors add to already perceived effects. This is the reason that factors and causes should be analyzed separately to have a detailed analysis. Sometimes, language anxiety is considered a cause and sometimes effect but nothing can be said with surety as it may be the result of poor proficiency or it may become the cause of poor proficiency. However, the important point is that language anxiety is a crucial factor so must be overcome.

Writing is not merely a skill or activity. It is a combination of a number of abilities, such as emotional, cognitive and behavioral abilities. No one can write without thinking, similarly without feeling, the process of writing cannot be carried out. The skill of writing is the result of multifaceted interaction of social, cultural and contextual factors. When skill is related to second language then along with the above mentioned

factors, learner's individual characteristics also become the part of this process, such as recognized necessities, parental or social viewpoints, teaching methodology, assessment measures, inspiration, character, self-assurance, L2 aptitude, and even gender and schooling time (Cheng, 2002). Therefore, there are countless causes and factors behind second language anxiety, in the same way, the factors and causes of writing anxiety cannot be counted.

2.5.1 The Factors affecting Second Language Anxiety

The factors of Second Language Anxiety perform different functions. Some serve as inhibitors and some as activators. According to Kralova (2009), the researchers have investigated the relationship between language learning and different lingual and extra lingual elements to comprehend the process of second language learning. The lingual variables are related to the system of language while the extra lingual components are associated with the process of language learning. The extra lingual variables influence FLA more seriously than the lingual components. For instance, according to Alrabai (2015, as cited in Kralova 2016), second language anxiety is neither a linguistic construct; nor is a competence-based construct rather it is an identity-based construct. Besides, the learning-related factors of FLA are also important. Among them, the personal and impersonal both variables are significant. Intra-personal and inter-personal variables come under the category of personal factors. The intra-personal factors are those which are related to the learners' personal characteristics, for example, the learners' views within second language learning or their attitudes toward learning. While the inter-personal factors are those which stem from the interactions during the process of learning, for example, interaction of student and teacher or interaction of students with other students. The impersonal factors are those variables of language learning which are non-personal.

Among the extra-lingual components, there are static and dynamic elements. The static components involve constant characteristics, for example, native language, gender, nationality, and so forth and the dynamic elements can change after some time, for example, language capability, motivation, learning environment, teaching strategies and comprehensible input. In this matter, the role of individual characteristics cannot be ignored. For example, Kralova (2016) mentioned two individual attributes, such as extraversion and intelligence. Gregersen & Horwitz (2002) stated that perfectionism

and emotional intelligence are two individual attributes. Regardless of these above-mentioned variables, there are some other factors involved in the process of learning such as: support at home, prior linguistic knowledge, students' personality, experience of new language, academic achievement etc. According to Kralova (2016), this list of influencing factors can be further extended as it is based on variations in learners' proficiency.

2.5.2 Relationship between Second Language Writing Anxiety (SLWA) and Language Performance

According to Scovel (1978), it is very difficult to investigate the effects of language anxiety on the performance for two reasons: First reason is that the evaluation scales are conflicting and inconsistent, and secondly because of the involvement of a large number of factors that can increase or decrease the process of learning a second language. He was the first who recognized the inconsistency of results. Since then, the researchers are investigating the same phenomena in different contexts. Majority of the researches are of the view that anxiety performs a significant role in learning of a new language. For instance, one most recent investigation was conducted by Ekmekci (2018) who attempted to investigate the connection between anxiety of second language and performance. He found that the anxiety of writing negatively affects writing abilities. He examined the impact of anxiety on writing and found that highly anxious writers performed more awfully.

During the past years, research has demonstrated that language anxiety is the specific type of nervousness that is generally connected with second language performance. The relationship between second language writing anxiety and performance was investigated through various dimensions like effect of second language writing anxiety on translation, effect on the use of subordinate clauses into the written compositions, the impact of writing anxiety on students' self-evaluative judgments of corrective input and so forth. Moreover, it was not only the investigation of relationship between second language writing anxiety and performance rather the relationship was tested through both perspectives, for example firstly, the effects of anxiety were observed and tested on the performance of the learners and then various attempts were made to improve the performance and then again the anxiety level was tested to observe the effects. For instance, Tsiriotakis, et al; (2017) applied a model of

writing instruction to lessen the writing anxiety level of English learners. The investigation expressed that the students' writing anxiety level was decreased by following the instructions.

Regardless of whether the attempts are made to see the impacts of writing anxiety on language performance or the performance is observed by utilizing various performance improving strategies, in each case, one thing is clear that there is a tangible connection between writing anxiety and writing performance. The negative connection between anxiety of language and performance of language has been demonstrated by number of researches such as (Cheng, 2004; Hassan, 2001; Horwitz et al; 1986; Horwitz 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). A survey of prior investigations exhibits conflicting outcomes with respect to how anxiety is related with second language learning. However this relationship can also be observed through the literature on foreign language anxiety and foreign language achievement by Horwitz (2001). His findings are very helpful to understand and to report the relationship of anxiety and performance. He was the person who argued that foreign language anxiety is the most analyzed variable and that it can also be called the second language anxiety. As the main concern of this study is not the discussion on the relationship between anxiety and performance but by doing so the purpose is to find out the ways which can be helpful in reducing the anxiety so that this strong bond between second language writing anxiety and performance of the students can be made weaker for improving performance of students.

2.6 Scales and Measurement of Anxiety in Second Language Learning

This section of literature review deals with the specific ways of measuring second language writing anxiety. There are two ways of measuring anxiety. One is quantitative through the use of scales and the other is qualitative through interviews and observations. In this study, both ways have been used to collect data. Generally, there are three major techniques of measuring anxiety viz. behavioral observation or ratings, physiological assessment and third one is self-reports. Behavioral observation means observable clues of fear or anxiety such as inattentive behavior, absent-mindedness, poor observation etc. while physiological assessment are comparatively temporary and less detectible responses, for example, temperature, pulse, galvanic skin reaction and blood pressure. Thirdly, self-reports of the emotional states are the most widely

recognized methods used in measuring anxiety of productive skills of writing and speaking (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2001; Daly, 1991 as cited in Zheng, 2011). According to Zheng (2011), the most widely recognized method for analyzing anxiety is simply the 'self-reports' of the participants.

Researchers have utilized various approaches to quantify this 'complex multidimensional aspect' (young, 1991) of language anxiety inside the multifaceted setting of the language learning. A few linguists have applied quantitative scales, for example, (Horwitz, et al. 1986; Cheng et al. 1999; Cheng 2002), while some have used subjective systems of qualitative techniques, for example, diary observation, journal investigations or interviews. While some studies have preferred to use an amalgam of both techniques: qualitative as well as quantitative. For instance, Gregerson & Horwitz (2002) put together their examination with respect to the appropriate responses of their high-anxious and low-stressed students of English to their oral interviews. The literature review reveals that the use of quantitative strategies, for example, tests and scales supplemented by discussions and interviews is undoubtedly the best strategy to ascertain students' anxiety while learning a language. The current study is also a synergy of both techniques as in it the researcher intends to use Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory as well as six open-ended questions and an English writing activity.

Researchers have utilized various scales, for example, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), for the most part utilized a measure of attributes and state anxiety (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983). Alpert & Haber (1960) came up with the Achievement Anxiety Test (AAT) which comprised of two scales: a nine-item Facilitating scale and a Debilitating anxiety scale of 10 statements. Gardner (1985) put forward the Attitude/Motivation test Battery (AMTB) to quantify the affective factors significant in second language, for example, anxiety, motivation and attitude. The French Class Anxiety Scale (FCAS) has ten items which were taken from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Clement & Smythe, 1979). It utilizes a 7-point Likert scale. The French use Anxiety Scale (FUAS) likewise utilizes a 7-point Likert scale. It has 10 statements, 5 are positive statements and other 5 statements are negative statements.

2.6.1 The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

According to Horwitz (1986), there are two options to deal with anxious students: the teachers can help them to cope with the existing anxiety provoking situation and moreover they can make the learning context less stressful. Anyhow, in both situations, the teachers must acknowledge the existence of foreign language anxiety. For this reason, the investigators soon realized that if they want to investigate the effect of high level of anxiety on the learning of language, they should use objective tools to measure anxiety. With this growing demand for using objective tools, Horwitz et al. (1986) presented the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and contributed greatly not only to the theory yet in addition to the assessment of FLA. From that point forward it is the most often applied and adopted instrument to measure second/foreign language anxiety.

2.7 Measurement of Second Language Writing Anxiety

Various scales have been adopted to investigate the multidimensional effect of anxiety felt in second language learning. No doubt, these scales gave mixed findings even then have contributed a lot to understand the phenomenon of anxiety. According to these researchers, the reason behind these discrepant findings is a result of the application of inadequate scales to measure anxiety. For example, according to Horwitz (1986), scales of test anxiety and general trait anxiety do not investigate a student's responses to the particular stimulus of second language learning. Moreover, these researchers began conceptualizing the anxiety of second/foreign language as a type of anxiety particular to the context of L2 learning. From that point forward, several measures have been developed and widely implemented to measure this anxiety, such as Gardner (1985) French Class Anxiety Scale and French Use Anxiety Scale and Horwitz et al. (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale but these scales were criticized on the ground of not measuring anxiety aroused in performing skills other than speaking because they had dominance of speaking-related items then researchers such as: Horwitz (1999), Voyely (1998) and Cheng (1999) increasingly focused their attention on identifying and examining anxiety associated with specific language skills such as reading, listening and writing. The trends of investigation suggested a pressing need to develop standardized scales for researchers who were interested in the quantitative assessment and investigation of various kinds of skills-specific second

language anxiety because adequate measures are a necessary condition for valid research. To accomplish all these goals, the scale ‘second language writing anxiety inventory’ was devised. Second language writing Anxiety Inventory developed by Cheng (2004) is an important and influential addition in this regard.

Though a few linguists like Aida (1994), Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999); Phillips (1992) began to criticize the competence of using these scales to measure anxiety of skills other than speaking. They stated that these instruments can't measure the writing anxiety because in these scales, there is the dominance of items which measure specifically the anxiety of speaking. Even some researchers of language anxiety began to differentiate between language anxiety of specific skill and general second language classroom anxiety. According to Cheng et al. (1999), and Horwitz (2001), these are two distinct ideas and classroom anxiety maybe is connected more to the speaking aspect of the use of second language. Then linguists such as: Horwitz (1999), Voyely (1998) and Cheng (1999) kept concentrating on distinguishing and investigating anxiety associated with specific language skills, such as reading, listening and writing (Cheng et al. 1999 & Leki, 1999). This new development of investigation stressed on a constant need to develop appropriate and standardized measuring scales for those who were truly interested in the quantitative evaluation of different forms of anxiety related to specific skill of language. To accomplish all these goals, the scale ‘second language writing anxiety inventory’ was devised. Second language writing Anxiety Inventory developed by Cheng (2004) is an important and influential addition in this regard. According to DeVellis (1991), the adequate scales are the fundamental condition for valid research.

So far different scales of anxiety have been developed to measure anxiety, for example, test anxiety and speech anxiety. In these scales, signs of anxiety are presented according to comparatively independent dimensions. Anyway, there was still a dire need of a scale to measure anxiety of writing in second language which could deal with the anxiety as a multidimensional factor. Among the investigations of second language writing anxiety, the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (WAT), Daly & Miller (1975) was the most frequently applied scale of second language writing anxiety, but according to Cheng et al. (1999) even then this scale tolerated criticism on these grounds: first reason was that WAT was formed with reference to first language students so was viewed as inadequate for the measurement of second language writing

anxiety and second criticism was raised against its construct validity that it could be the measure of writing self-esteem but not the pure measure of second language writing apprehension. So, further improvement was still required before applying it to future studies of second language writing.

Contrary to uni-dimensional construct of (WAT), Daly & Miller (1975) and Shaver (1990) presented the WAT representing the multidimensional construct of anxiety. But again, it was designed to measure the anxiety with reference to first language so it was concluded that still there was a need of another valid scale because the use of WAT as a scale of writing apprehension could be problematic. One probable solution of this issue was to make a scale of anxiety for the measurement of writing apprehension that could not restrict anxiety of writing with a couple of aspects of behavior rather it must measure anxiety from various dimensions. To accomplish such an objective, McKain (1992) formulated an L1 writing anxiety scale. McKain's writing anxiety measure (WAQ) appeared as an improvement over the WAT but again the researchers confronted a similar issue as they were facing with WAT. The scale of WAQ was not developed particularly for learners' of second language. So the use of WAQ in second Language setting was as yet objectionable. There was still a desperate need of a scale to measure second language writing anxiety (Horwitz, 2001).

2.7.1 Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)

Cheng (2004) conducted a study to build up a self-reporting scale of second language writing anxiety to solve the above mentioned problem. Regardless of any specific context, it is a well-known fact that anxiety is a multi-dimensional concept. Second language anxiety is generally viewed as a complex phenomenon of self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to foreign language learning. SLWAI developed by Cheng is reliable and valid instrument in this context as it supports a 3-dimensional conceptualization of anxiety being composed of three subscales: cognitive, somatic and avoidance behavior. Furthermore, writing is not just a skill or activity, it is a combination of a number of abilities, such as: emotional, cognitive and behavioral. Keeping this in view, SLWAI, which consists of three subscales, was considered the best option according to the need of current study.

As the researcher wanted to test the efficacy of the therapy, systematic desensitization, there was a need to include self-reports of the participants regarding

their feelings and SLWAI includes learners' reports of anxiety experiences. Scales items of SLWAI were developed on the basis of learners' reports of L2 writing anxiety experiences and with reference to relevant anxiety scales. Moreover correlational and factor analytic procedures were executed to examine the psychometric properties of the SLWAI as well as its three subscales. Above all, since its development, this scale has been in continuous use for the investigation of second language writing anxiety. As one of the objectives of this research was also to investigate the second language writing anxiety, the SLWAI fulfilled the requirement of the study.

This scale was based on second language learners' reports of their experienced anxiety and the multidimensional conceptualization of anxiety. For this purpose, Cheng used 10 other measuring scales for the development of SLWAI to fulfill the criterion of validity. These instruments are: 1. English Use Anxiety Scale (EUAS). This scale was adapted from Gardner's (1985) French Use Anxiety Scale. 2. English Classroom Anxiety Scale (ECAS) which was adapted from Gardner's (1985) French Classroom Anxiety Scale. 3. English Writing Apprehension/Attitude Test (EWAT). An EFL adaptation of the Daly and Miller's (1975) was adapted to assess a combination of student's beliefs, attitudes and feelings of anxiety toward EFL writing. 4. English Writing Block Questionnaire (EWBQ). It was adapted from Rose's Writer's block Questionnaire (WBQ). 5. English Writing Self-viability Scale (EWSS). 6. Personal Report of Communication Apprehension-College (PRCA-C). It was prepared by McCrosky (1970). 7. Test Anxiety Scale (TAS). It is an adapted version of scale of test anxiety created by Sarason and Ganzer (1962). 8. Math Anxiety Scale (MAS) which was made by Betz (1978). 9. English Writing Motivation Scale (EWMS). Demonstrated after Gardner's (1985) Motivational Intensity Questionnaire. 10. State Anxiety Scale (SAS) that was adjusted from Zuckerman's (1960).

Cheng (2004) led an investigation to develop a scale for the measurement of second language writing anxiety. The items of this scale were based on students' reports of experiences regarding second language writing anxiety and with reference to related scales of anxiety. The findings of the exploration revealed that the total scale and the subscales of SLWAI seem to grasp the potential of research and analytical value. This scale was also found to be reliable for the fact that it was qualifying the concept of writing anxiety as a phenomena of multi-dimensions as the three sub scales of this inventory were intended to measure anxiety from three angles: as cognitive/intellectual,

somatic/physical and behavioral which are generally accepted dimensions of anxiety so conforms the idea of anxiety as multidimensional construct. Besides, the multidimensional idea of SLWAI made it possible to examine the connection between various aspects of second language writing anxiety and writing performance.

Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. The autonomic nervous system is a control system that acts largely unconsciously and regulates bodily functions. The autonomic nervous system is divided into three parts: the sympathetic nervous system, the para sympathetic nervous system and enteric nervous system. The sympathetic nervous system directs the body's rapid involuntary response to dangerous/stressful situations. The sympathetic system prepares the body for intense physical activity and is often referred to as the fight-or-flight response. It involves cognitive, somatic and behavioral factors. Cheng's second language writing anxiety inventory has twenty two statements. These statements reflect three types of language writing anxiety. For example, item nos. (1,3,7,9,14,17,20,21) reflect cognitive anxiety, items nos. (2,6,8,11,13,15,19) reflect somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior is shown by (4,5,10,12,16,18,22) statements of the inventory.

2.8 Strategies to deal with Second Language Writing Anxiety

The third section of the literature review consists of an overview of what steps have been taken so far to deal with anxiety of writing in second language. Review of literature has made one thing clear that anxiety is one of the most vexing issues for second language learners. This issue is not only there in oral communication but equally exists in writing as well. So, with the emerging need of developing the strategies which could assist the anxious students to overcome their problems outside of the basic course classroom, extensive academic consideration has been paid to strategies to cope with the language anxiety in different circumstances and settings. According to Kralova (2016), various anxiety workshops, projects and facilities are effectively working in different educational fields.

In a study, Qashoa (2014) commented on the strategies to alleviate writing anxiety. These strategies have been given with the perspective of teachers and students as well. Tsiriatakis, Vassilaki, Spantidakis, & Stavrou (2017) implemented a writing

instructional model to investigate its effects on writing anxiety. Similarly Zhang (2011) also highlighted some strategies to reduce the writing anxiety of learners of second language. Leki (1999) suggested some techniques to reduce the anxiety of writing in a second language.

In short, numerous coping strategies have been discussed to reduce and manage the writing anxiety within the area of second language learning. In 1990, Horwitz recommended a three technique strategy as the best treatment including: cognitive modification, systematic desensitization, and skill exercises. Prior investigations concentrated on two essential systems: training of skills and therapy of behavior. According to Daly (1991), the best helpful methodology is one that combines these two segments. Numerous language students accepted that the best "cures" are those that have both perspectives, emotional as well as intellectual. The intellectual aspect includes language practice and the emotional aspect deals with the psychological inhibitions. Linguists such as Hembree, 1988; Kondo, & Ying-Ling (2004) have demonstrated procedures of different sorts where the remedies of FLA have concentrated chiefly on three methodologies – affective, cognitive and behavioral. Cognitive approach revolves around cognitive modification by changing students' personal intellectual cognitions. The affective approach focus on decreasing the cynicism of the second language experience and incorporates treatments, for example, systematic desensitization and the behavior approach hypothesizes that language anxiety happens because of poor language abilities so there is a need to enhance the students' learning skills. Likewise, language anxiety reducing methodologies can be classified on the basis of whether they refer to either internal or external factors of educational process. Within the internal elements of the educational procedure – two kinds of FLA reducing methodologies can be recognized, one from teachers' perspective and the other from students' side. According to Horvathova (2013), teaching methodologies are connected by second language instructors to enable their students to get familiar with a second language adequately whereas learning techniques are connected by second language students intentionally or intuitively and they commonly develop from their learning styles (Oxford, 1990). Today, techniques outside to the instruction procedure are seriously connected in accordance with the post-communicative methodology in second language teaching method incorporating affective, intellectual and behavioral modalities of learning. Such interventional

practices are regularly driven by clinicians in close participation with teachers of second language.

With the growing need of importance of individual differences the modern system of teaching second language stress on affective part of learning by applying psychological therapies and strategies to make it progressively viable and agreeable. According to McCroskey, Ralph & Berrick (1970), in the field of psychotherapy there has been a lot of premium and investigation in the application of learning theories through behavior treatments to human mental issues and anxiety. Reports of brief and complete mitigation of the effects have been showing up at when the dire issues of emotional well-being necessitate that the expert psychological assets be extended, either by the extension of training facilities, or by applying the trained lay staff. So far the most profitable of these behavioral techniques seems to be systematic desensitization. The outcomes obtained by systematic desensitization have been generally reliable and usually producing positive outcomes. But so far it has been implemented to reduce the anxiety of speaking in second language but now the motive of the present study is that it can be applied on writing anxiety to reduce its effects.

2.9 Systematic Desensitization

Systematic Desensitization, devised by Joseph Wolpe (1958) is applied as a theoretical framework and remedy in this study to reduce the anxiety of writing among English language learners. Since 1961, it is frequently in use with multiple changes which show the viability of this technique. It is a type of behavior therapy to treat phobias based on the principle of behavior change through classical conditioning so rests on the principle that what has been learned (adapted) can be unlearned. Desensitization procedure usually begins with visualizing of anxiety-provoking situation by applying relaxation strategies that deal with apprehension caused by anxious situation. The basic idea is that once a person learns to deal and cope with anxiety in the imagination, he would also be able to cope with it in the real situation. The goal of this technique is to make the clients desensitize to the anxiety-provoking situations in a gradual way. That is why, this technique is also called a “graduated exposure therapy.”

When it is used by the behavior therapists, it depends on functional analysis and radical behaviorism as it stands on the principle of counter conditioning, for example, meditation which is a private behavior or covert conditioning and breathing which is an open or public behavior/overt conditioning. From the cognitive psychological stance, motor actions are activated by the cognitions and emotions. This treatment aims to clear the fear response by changing a relaxed reaction to the conditioned stimulus through counter conditioning. Russian physiologist, Pavlov, did experiments on dogs to understand the concept of classical conditioning. He knew that animals salivate while eating. In his experiments, Pavlov presented a neutral stimulus, like light or bell, before feeding the dogs. Obviously, the sign had no perceptible effect on the dogs' salivation. Yet, Pavlov continued the sign on when the dogs were being fed (and effectively salivating), and, after some time, Pavlov concluded that the sign alone, even without food, made the dogs salivate (Wolpe, 1958).

This idea was the basis of classical conditioning. According to it, an unconditioned stimulus (food) prompts an unconditioned reaction (salivation), a conditioned stimulus (light or bell), when frequently combined with the unconditioned stimulus (food) prompts to a conditioned response (salivation) like to the unconditioned reaction (salivation). Nonetheless, there is another aspect of classical conditioning, and it is called counter conditioning. This idea extended to reduce the intensity of an adapted (conditioned) reaction such as anxiety by forming a mismatched reaction of relaxation to the conditioned stimulus. Wolpe investigated Pavlov's work on neurosis and the research on reducing fears was done by Watson and Jones. In 1947, Wolpe explored that cats of Wits University could beat their fears through this technique. He did experiments and found that deconditioning the animals progressively was the best way to make them free of their disturbances. He knew that this strategy would not generalize to humans so he substituted it with relaxation as a treatment to relieve them from anxiety (Wolpe, 1958).

In this way, Wolpe (1958) developed a therapy for anxiety on the basis of counter-conditioning. Wolpe (1958) found that anxiety could be reduced by presenting the anxiety producing stimuli in a graded way and paired systematically with a relaxation response. Henceforth this procedure of reciprocal inhibition started to be known as systematic desensitization and proved to be profoundly successful. Since then many researchers have inferred that "exposure" to the feared stimulus is important in

its treatment. According to him, the relaxation technique will not work if a client will face the anxiety provoking situation at once. Instead, he prepared his clients to face the anxious situation at first through the imagination. Desensitization is applied to enable the clients to adapt to fears through relaxation. In progressive relaxation, the muscles are tighten and then loosen up. During the repeated relaxation exercises, the learners concentrate on the difference between the underlying pressure and the subsequent feelings of relaxation by knowing once they will become soft, they will be relaxed. Repeated practices enable a person to recreate the relaxed condition in a variety of situation (Wolpe, 1958).

According to Wolpe (1958), systematic desensitization is an intervention that weakens the established connection between anxiety and items/circumstances that are anxiety-provoking. The aim of systematic desensitization is to reduce fears. Phobias and fears are removed by substituting another reaction to an anxious situation, a prepared contradicting response of relaxation which is beyond reconciliation with an anxious response. The procedure of systematic desensitization moves through three stages of the treatment: Relaxation, Constructing a hierarchy of anxiety and matching relaxation with the events portrayed in the list of anxious situations. Wolpe (1958) trained his clients to feel relaxation because it is not possible to be anxious and relaxed at the same time. So in this technique, clients are given the training of different relaxation strategies to stretch and relax different muscles until the client reaches a condition of relaxation.

The goal of this procedure is to learn to cope the fear of each step mentioned in anxiety hierarchy. This progression is very important because of reciprocal inhibition, since it gives the client a way of controlling their fears, instead of bringing them to an uncontrollable level. Just a couple of sessions are required to learn proper ways of dealing with anxiety. The therapist's duty is to encourage the client to take the observation of their imagination on presenting the anxious situation and then to replace the imagined anxious situation with any of the positive stimulus. Specific fears are mental issues frequently treated by means of systematic desensitization. At the point when people experience such fears, they will in general stay away from the feared stimuli; but this is not the solution. It may provide a temporary relief but in the long run such avoidances may strengthen the fears. In this way, the goal of desensitization is to

overcome avoidance by presenting the phobic stimuli in a gradual way, so that it can be endured (Wolpe, 1958).

According to Wolpe (1958), desensitization was an effective therapy for the treatment of phobias as some very common fears had been treated effectively by using it such as anxiety of public speaking, anxiety of flying, phobia of insects etc. To overcome fears, relaxation reactions are prepared through self-motivated relaxation exercises. This strategy was introduced initially by Edmund Jacobson during 1930s. The process of systematic desensitization has proved effective in alleviating anxiety among individuals, especially those who were suffering from academic anxiety. Rothbaum (2003) applied this technique with clients who were scared of flying and found a lesser anxiety level among them than those who had not received this technique. In 2004, McGlynn stated that this is a venerable therapy to control anxiety. Tryon (2014) demonstrated that systematic desensitization is an operative technique for dealing with anxieties. In academic field systematic desensitization has been applied successfully to reduce the speech anxiety but this research is an attempt to observe whether it can be equally beneficial to reduce the writing anxiety.

Initially, Systematic desensitization was developed to be applied by a psychotherapist or instructor with special training but presently it has also been shown to be effective when it is administered by self, however the regular practice is very necessary for maximum benefits. The relaxation strategies in desensitization systems could be Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Autogenic, or some other technique for initiating a profoundly relaxed state of mind. The important factor is that one must pick a strategy which he thinks most agreeable for him. The general objective of systematic desensitization is to reduce the capacity of specific circumstances to cause anxiety by challenging each item of anxiety hierarchy while staying in a state of relaxation. To educate the learners of second language with a special curriculum needs, is one of the fields of language teaching which continually request more consideration from instructors, analysts, educators, trainers and teachers.

The review of literature has highlighted the fact that there are very few studies which dealt with Second Language Writing Anxiety directly. These studies have tried to cope with anxiety indirectly by applying different educational measures to enhance the skill. Their point was that if the student's performance improved, the anxiety level

would decrease automatically. Furthermore, these educational measures and strategies were linked to the internal or external parts of the educational system. Within the internal educational system, some strategies were suggested from teachers' perspective to help the students to learn a second language more effectively and some were given from students' perspective to be applied by the language learners to enhance their abilities.

Whereas the present study dealt with the issue of second language writing anxiety directly. The previous studies such as (Daud, 2016) and (Ningsih, 2018) dealt with anxiety as a consequence of poor skill but the present study dealt with writing anxiety as a cause of poor performance and attempted to reduce the writing anxiety directly. Particularly, in Pakistan, no step has been taken so far to reduce the writing anxiety among the learners of second language. Within the field of language learning, the educationists have discussed and verified numerous strategies but those strategies were not meant to alleviate writing anxiety; instead, they were implemented to improve the overall abilities of second language learners. In short, the steps which have been taken till now were meant to enhance the performance of the second language overall rather than to reduce the language anxiety of the students.

The literature has also shown that the status of writing anxiety as a 'cause of poor performance' or as a 'consequence of poor performance' is still undecided, but one thing which can be said with surety is that there is a tangible connection between writing anxiety and performance of the students. As anxiety is a crucial factor in the learning of a language, it must be overcome. Therefore, there is a dire need to fill this gap. Instead of coming up with suggestions and recommendations, there is a need to apply those techniques which should not be restricted only to increase the performance but must deal with the underlying reasons of poor performance, such as: the anxiety experienced by language learners. 'Systematic Desensitization' can be tested as a solution to deal with the existing problem of reducing writing anxiety among language learners. As far as Pakistani educational system is concerned, to the researcher's knowledge, no example can be found of any teaching strategy which deals with cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects simultaneously. The application of systematic desensitization intends to integrate all the above mentioned aspects of learning. Keeping this in view, the therapy of Systematic Desensitization has been suggested as a remedy for reducing the writing anxiety of second language learners.

2.10 Gap in the Previous Studies

The learning of a second language is the result of combined skills. Sufficient attention has been paid to spoken English as many institutions offer short courses or diploma courses for the improvement of spoken language while writing skill has grossly overlooked, ignored and not given required consideration in spite of the fact that writing skill is equally important. Particularly in Pakistan, no attempt has been made so far to reduce the anxiety of writing in a second/third language despite knowing the fact that anxiety hinders the learning of a language. The need to fill this gap in the existing body of knowledge recognizably emerges. The present study, therefore, intends to bring a psychology-based therapeutic technique of Systematic Desensitization into the second language classroom setting for the purpose of alleviating Second Language Writing Anxiety.

2.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter starts with the demarcation between general anxiety and language anxiety and proceeds to discuss second language anxiety with a particular focus on second language writing anxiety. The review of literature presented in this section illuminates the major and prominent investigations which concentrated on a similar aspect of second language writing anxiety by applying various terms for writing anxiety. Types, components, symptoms, causes and factors of second language anxiety and second language writing anxiety are likewise the part of this chapter. A few studies analyzing the relationship between second language writing anxiety and students' performance have also been presented. Almost all of the studies have verified that language anxiety has impact on the performance, although these studies have submitted discrepant results due to the effects of many variables.

Next, various scales of measurement have been discussed with particular reference of second language writing anxiety. The rationale for selecting the anxiety inventory given by Cheng (2004) for the present study is discussed in this chapter. In the third section, various techniques administered by teachers and students have also been discussed. The issue of measuring anxiety and various strategies to deal with this anxiety have additionally been brought into focus and major works have been reviewed which end up proposing that Systematic Desensitization which has already been applied

to reduce speaking anxiety in second language can likewise be applied to lessen writing anxiety. The chapter closes with pointing out that a psychological therapeutic technique as a solution to deal with the current issue.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research methods, techniques and research tools that are used for the collection and analysis of data for the current research. The research design of this study is divided into three steps: pre-test, intervention and post-test. The details of research type, the process of data collection, research design, and a step-wise detail of the process of data analysis are included in this chapter. Systematic Desensitization is used as a framework to carry out this current research. The fundamental basis of this study is to see the efficacy of a psychotherapeutic technique ‘Systematic Desensitization’ to reduce the writing anxiety prevailing among second language learners. The aim of this study is to investigate whether the anxiety of English writing treated with systematic desensitization would improve the students’ writing skill.

3.1 Type of Research

This is an experimental research which combines both the methods: qualitative and quantitative. Thus, the study is based upon mixed-method research. The learners’ writing anxiety levels have been investigated through close-ended questions to observe the data quantitatively. Nevertheless, major portion of the data utilized for this study is qualitative. The qualitative data is collected by taking individual views of the participants on the phenomenon as well as assigning them writing tasks in English language.

3.2 Data Collection Tools

The data is collected through three different tools. The first tool is close-ended questionnaire that is Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) devised by Cheng (2004). It was applied to measure the students’ anxiety level during writing in second language. It consists of 22 statements. The four statements in the inventory have negative words so the responses on those four statements are scored in reverse before calculating the total anxiety of a participant.

The second data collection tool is an open-ended questionnaire, devised by Atay and Kurt (2006). It comprises of 6 questions. These questions were asked for two reasons. Firstly, to grasp the learners' own opinions and views about their experiences of anxiety during writing in English, the second motive was to add more depth to the understanding of the phenomenon.

The third instrument in data collection process is English composition task. The participants were requested to write a composition in English within 30 minutes in the classroom. Their writings were evaluated by the researcher and a fellow researcher from English Department of NUML for a second opinion. Their scores were used as an index to know the writing performance of the selected students. The quality of composition was assessed with the help of a rubric on four levels: linguistic accuracy, fulfillment of the writing task, organization and content, and neatness.

3.3 Population

The students enrolled in Diploma in English language from fall semester (2018-19) at National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad made the population of this research.

3.4 Sample

After orientation, a total of 40 students from Diploma in English class were selected as a sample for this research through purposive sampling technique.

3.5 Data Analysis Tools

Three different instruments are used to collect data according to three different scales. The first one is Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) by (Cheng, 2004). This questionnaire has been used for three reasons: it is intended to specifically measure the anxiety of writing; it is proved to be valid and reliable by correlation means and factor analysis; and it has been used in many studies investigating second language writing anxiety, but not in Pakistani context. The 22 statements of SLWAI reflect three types of language anxiety; for example, items no.(1,3,7,9,14,17,20,21) reflect cognitive anxiety, items no. (2,6,8,11,13,15,19) reflect somatic anxiety, whereas avoidance behavior is shown through the items (4,5,10,12,16,18,22). So, this questionnaire deals with three different types of anxiety

viz. Cognitive Anxiety, Somatic Anxiety and Avoidance Behavior. This inventory-based questionnaire is being used in Pakistani context for the first time to elucidate whether the anxiety of writing can interfere with the performance of Pakistani ESL learners. The questionnaire has been analyzed by applying Likert Scale going from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). After gathering the responses on Likert scale, the results were calculated in percentages.

The open-ended questions are analyzed through pattern coding category system proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). In addition, the scores of the students, attained by writing an English composition, were used to examine the relationship between writing anxiety and writing performance. The participants' grades on a 30-minute English composition were perceived as an index of their writing performance. Rubric scale is used to assess and to grade each composition. According to Wolf & Stevens (2007), "A rubric is a multi-purpose scoring guide for assessing students' products and performances." In order to test the hypothesis of the study, a paired t-test has been applied to check the significance of the difference between the scores of pre-test and post-test after the intervention of therapy to test the efficacy of therapy.

3.6 Research Procedure

This is an experimental research divided into three stages: pre-test, interventional stage and post-test.

3.6.1 Pre-test

The pre-test is further divided into three steps. Before the first step of pre-test, the researcher administered SLWAI to the entire class of diploma in English at NUML. SLWAI was meant to measure the level of writing anxiety of the participants. The responses of the close ended questions were collected on Likert Scale. After that the researcher selected 40 participants by using purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique is a type of non-probability sampling that is most effective when one needs to study a certain domain (Tongco, 2007). Since the purpose was to check the anxiety level of the participants towards second language writing, that is why only those participants were sought who thought that they were capable but not able to acquire the intended score just because of writing anxiety so the researcher selected 40 participants purposively. Then, the sample was divided into two groups:

experimental group and control group by using random sampling technique. Random assignment of participants helped to ensure that any differences between and within the group recorded at the end of the experiment could be more confidently attributed to the experimental procedure or treatment.

During the second stage, the students were instructed to express their views on six open-ended questions. The views and opinions of the respondents were assigned fifteen codes for recognizing the sensitivity of the participants regarding their anxiety of writing in second language. Fourteenth and fifteenth codes were further categorized into two options of positive and negative. The first open-ended question was analyzed through four codes: grammar and syntax, inappropriate vocabulary, spelling errors and confusion. The second question was analyzed through these codes: surprise test, stress of limited time, teachers and class mates while third question included codes like: nervousness, trembling/shaking, low blood pressure, and compulsive behavior. The fourth question was examined through the codes of, lack of confidence and blank mindedness while fifth question was interpreted as if the students had shared their feelings with someone. The last question was examined through positive or negative attitude towards professional life.

On the third step, all the students were assigned a task to write an English composition. The composition was analyzed by applying rubric system of assessment. Rubric is the method of assessment in the form of a matrix (grid). It is an instrument to assess the content work through grades or percentages and can be calculated for any content field. On the rubric, there were four writing assessment criteria: organization and content, linguistic accuracy (Grammar and spelling), fulfillment of the writing task, and neatness. Only the participants of the experimental group were informed that they will participate in the treatment session whereas the participants of control group were told that they will get training in the later stage.

3.6.2 Intervention

Based on the random sampling, the selected 40 students were separated into two groups: experimental and control group. In each group, there were 20 students. The students with numbers 3,6,7,10,11,12,13,15,16,17,23,25,26,27,28, 29,30,32,39 and 40 were included in experimental group whereas 1,2,4,5,8,9,14,18,19,20, 21,22,24,31,33,34,35,36,37 and 38 were included in control group. The treatment was

given only to the students of experimental group whereas the participants of control group were told they will receive treatment at later stage.

This study completed eighteen sessions, each session was approximately of thirty minutes. These sessions were conducted twice in a week during their regular semester. During each session, both the things went side by side: relaxation through systematic desensitization and completion of curriculum regarding writing skills assigned by the Department so that the language learners could focus on the maximum ease of the treatment without thinking that their precious academic time was going wasted. In this way, they were having two strong motives, reduction of writing anxiety through systematic desensitization and completion of course within a specified time limit.

At this stage the remedial program of systematic desensitization was applied on the experimental group to reduce the English language writing anxiety level of the students. The systematic desensitization procedure was developed by Wolpe in 1950s. Originally, it was thought to be directed by a psychotherapist, but one can also administer it to himself/herself and it is also possible to administer it to someone else. The procedure of this ongoing research is based on self-desensitization instructions by Stevens (2019). It was observed that systematic desensitization proved to be more effective and productive when it was self-administered and regular practices brought surprising benefits. The instructions are based on these three steps:

3.6.2.1 Desensitization therapy

Systematic desensitization is one of the various forms of exposure therapies used by health professionals to help individuals to get rid of their fears. Sometimes it is also called “Graduated Exposure Therapy”. The main purpose of this therapy is to help students who go through anxiety of writing English by giving them relief from negative destructive feelings which provoke anxiety and make them feel discouraged when attempting to learn English as a second language. The aim of this therapy was to imagine or to do something that was not compatible with the anxiety of writing one felt in facing a situation and to train him/herself to remain relaxed in the desired situation by applying repeated experiences of imagining various states that were related to the feared situation while keeping themselves relaxed. This therapy involved three steps.

1. Anxiety/Fear Hierarchy

The hierarchy of writing anxiety is a list of the conditions in which one becomes progressively more fearful. It is making a list graded in order from the slightest to the greatest disturbing situation related to writing anxiety in a second language. This list is vital as it provides a framework for approaching the problem. If, at the beginning of desensitization therapy, a person is expected to visualize his/her anxious situation in its highest frightening form, he would perhaps not be able to get calm and peace. In such cases, one should try to desensitize himself/herself to approach the situation progressively. The person should begin from the least anxiety-provoking situation related to writing in second language first so that desensitization could progress gradually enough. The motive behind is that nobody should try to face a situation of writing from the point that is beyond his/her control.

The students were provided some of the sample hierarchies, just to assist them to make their own hierarchy. Of course, each person is exceptional and unique, but there are a lot of resemblances between hierarchies. After going through the detailed analysis of students' hierarchies, the researcher set her own representative hierarchy in order to approach the problem in the required time. The students were instructed to place the most disturbing situation at the bottom of the list and the least disturbing at the top. They were told that every student would start working with the top (least disturbing) item on the hierarchy and will work gradually through the hierarchy to the last (most disturbing) situation. Thus, the hierarchy meant a list of situations arranged according to their anxiety-arousing intensity. It served as a basis for the procedure of desensitization through relaxation.

2. Relaxation Technique

The strategies which are used to control writing stress and writing anxiety are known as 'relaxation techniques'. The idea behind desensitization is to deactivate the anxiety of writing with relaxation. The motive of relaxation is that the muscle systems in human body cannot be both tensed and relaxed at the same time; therefore, having attained the relaxation, one can use it to counter the fear and tension he/she experiences in the writing situation. In order to tackle the anxiety of English writing, it was important to learn a relaxation technique. To do this, the students were introduced to

learn the coping techniques first, to get relaxed completely and then taught how to achieve this relaxation at their will.

One single relaxation technique cannot be best for everyone as every individual is different from the other. The students were introduced with some of the top relaxation techniques to counter the anxiety they were facing at the time of writing. There are some methods which are frequently used in relaxation training, such as: deep breathing exercise, deep muscles' relaxation, visualization, repetitive prayer, yoga, tai chi, qigong, self-massage, meditation, body scan meditation, rhythmic movement and other mindful exercises. Above all, the most important thing is that everybody should try to choose that technique which is compatible with him/her regardless of what others are doing. The technique should be the most relaxing just for that particular person who is using it. It is not difficult to learn the application of these techniques because they are very easy. The students were told that only thing which is needed is the regular devotion of time. It is recommended by the stress experts that everybody should practice their selected exercises for at least 10 to 20 minutes every day and if someone wants more benefits, s/he can increase the time to get maximum results.

The students were told to choose a technique that appealed to them and suited with their lifestyle. The students were told that instead of choosing just one technique, it would be better to choose more than one relaxation technique so that they could feel the difference which one suited them and worked best for them. They were told that even a few minutes of exercise could be helpful to reduce anxiety of writing but everyone should try those techniques for a time of 20 minutes at least per day. Regular practice will make them able to apply the techniques during the phases of anxiety. The students were told that if they would practice those exercises with regularity, they would get advantages out of them to handle their anxious conditions related to the anxiety of writing in English. The students were instructed that if they wanted maximum benefits out of these relaxation techniques, they should rehearse them often during the time when they were not very tensed.

Before beginning desensitization sessions, the students were instructed to practice the relaxation exercises for at least two half-hour sessions in a day or to adjust the time for two days, a half hour per day. The students were trained to follow some guidelines as they were advised to devote one session of at least 30 minutes for every

other day. During these sessions, they were expected to try to practice relaxation while imagining the phases stated in writing anxiety hierarchy. Sessions of relaxation and sessions of imagination, both were to be carried out without interruption. Moreover, the desensitization session, was to be carried out in an uninterrupted environment. This is the reason that students were given instructions of relaxation strategies in the class and were told to practice them at home. Not only the environment was to be kept uninterrupted but it was also instructed to keep the setting quiet, in semi-darkened room with a comfortable sitting chair or couch. It was important because only a relaxed and comfortable mind is capable of concentrating during a training session or a desensitization session.

Moreover, the students were instructed to practice relaxation exercises other than the actual training sessions of relaxation. They were told that an excellent time to practice them is before going to bed. Such practice not only enhances the speed and effectiveness of getting relaxation during a session but also makes them fall asleep earlier and enjoy relaxation throughout the day. Requirement of the practice sessions varies from person to person. Some may be satisfied on six to seven sessions, some may demand for more sessions. The students were instructed to practice for twenty/thirty minutes for two days but it was decided that if they demanded for more sessions, they would be able to practice more relaxation at their will. The students were told that when they realized that they were feeling no tension or anxiety and that they were fully relaxed, that was the actual time to start their sessions of desensitization. Again they were told to practice systematic desensitization in the same environment, they had selected for relaxation.

3. Desensitization Sessions/Exposure

After the construction of writing anxiety hierarchy of ten to twenty items and after practicing deep muscle relaxation, when the students came to report that they felt that they had achieved the ability to relax at their will, they were told that now they could start desensitizing themselves to the hierarchy. The students were told that when they would be able to imagine a situation with its full vivid and realistic details, and simultaneously when they would report of feeling completely relaxed, it would mean they had desensitized an item. After the desensitization of one item, they were allowed to take a step further, to move on to the next stage. So, the items (related to the anxiety

provoking situation) on the hierarchy were to be imagined repeatedly until the students used to be able to imagine it with the feelings of complete relaxation and comfort, i.e., without experiencing any anxiety or tension. When they reported that they were able to imagine a given situation with complete relaxation, they were allowed to move on to the next item and repeat the process that was the visualization of the situations with all minute details and with complete relaxation.

In this way, they proceeded by imagining the writing anxiety situations on the hierarchy which were arranged according to the intensity of the anxious writing situations. It was suggested that a required anxious writing situation must be visualized many times so that every student will come to the point of complete relaxation, exhibiting no sign of writing anxiety on facing that situation. Thus, the anxiety signals gradually reduced until everyone reported facing the most anxious writing situation without feeling any anxiety. The fact behind the procedure of desensitization is that a student's writing anxiety response to the visualized situation resembles with his/her response of writing anxiety to the real situation.

3.6.3 Post-test stage

This is an experimental research which went through three stages of pre-test, intervention and post-test. First and third stages were further conducted in three steps each. At this post-test stage, the participants were again given the same anxiety scale conducted in pre-test: close ended questionnaire, open-ended question and an English composition to draw the conclusion whether the relaxation techniques were helpful in reducing the anxiety associated with writing in English. After the intervention, intergroup and intra-group comparisons are presented for a detailed analysis. The results of the pre-test and post-test were compared for the experimental group then pre and post- test scores of the experimental group were compared with those of the control group. In order to get the more accurate results, the acquired data was tested by applying two type of methods: firstly the researcher compared the percentages of the scores of pre- and post-test, and then the Paired Samples t-test was applied. T-test determines how significant the differences between groups are. T-test was applied after calculating means and standard deviation of the scores.

3.7 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter mainly focuses on the procedure of applying systematic desensitization therapy for reducing the writing anxiety of English language learners with major emphasis on the three key steps involved in the research method, which are: pre-test, intervention and post-test. The chapter also throws light on the importance of these three key steps for the application of therapy. Research design of the present study is also discussed with the details of sampling procedure and participants' selection for this study. In order to achieve reliability, the study makes use of three different methods to collect data with three different procedures to analyze the data.



CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter is devoted to deal with the analysis and interpretation of data to investigate writing anxiety among the learners of English language and to lay emphasis on the effects of systematic desensitization for reducing writing anxiety. There are three sections in this chapter. The first section deals with the pre-test. The second section deals with the process of intervention through systematic desensitization. In the third section, the post-test has been conducted, and after that the comparative analysis of pre-test and post-test results of the study are presented. The chapter ends with a brief summary.

4.1 Pre-test

In this section, data is collected, analyzed and interpreted in three ways. It is very difficult to diagnose the anxiety because of its highly complex and personalized nature. It is also difficult to detect it because of the complex network of its symptoms and causes; neither can we use a medical test to investigate anxiety. However, it can be measured through the application of different scales. In order to meet the first objective of the current research, there was a need to investigate the writing anxiety levels of the learners and its effects on their performance. For the identification of writing anxiety, the SLWAI constructed by Cheng (2004) was used. The participants were told to respond to the statements of SLWAI on a Likert scale (5-point) ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In the questionnaire, four of the statements were stated with negative words. The researcher reversed the scoring of those statements in order to show the exact degree of anxiety. The results were obtained in percentages. The analysis begins with the first scale of measurement, i.e., close ended questionnaire.

4.1.1 Close-ended Questionnaire (SLWAI)

Cheng (2004) divided the questionnaire into three subscales on the grounds of Lang's (1971) idea that writing anxiety is a combination of three relatively independent mechanisms: cognitive, somatic and avoidance behavior. So, the analysis has been made with the same sequence of the items representing one type of anxiety among these three types. The data of close-ended questionnaire is presented after adding the responses on SD (strongly disagree) and D (disagree) under one category of (D), similarly SA (strongly agree) and A (agree) responses are under one category of (A) to show the total responses on agreement and disagreement whereas (NSF) represents 'no strong feelings'. Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory has been divided into three subscales, viz. cognitive, somatic and avoidance behavior so the responses of the questions have not been given in the sequence rather they have been divided according to the type of anxiety. First, the questions regarding cognitive anxiety then somatic and at the end questions related to avoidance behavior are discussed. In other words, question numbers: 1,3,7,9,14,17,20 and 21 are designed to test cognitive anxiety, question numbers: 2, 6, 8,11,13,15 and 19 are for somatic anxiety, whereas the rest of the seven questions: 4,5,10,12,16,18 and 22 are designed to test the avoidance behavior. The following are the detailed analyses of each statement of the questionnaire.

4.1.1.1 Analysis of Statements on SLWAI Representing Cognitive Anxiety

On the scale of SLWAI, the eight statements were meant to test the cognitive anxiety of the participants. Cognitive anxiety is the mental index of anxiety and represents the exact supposed processes that happen during anxiety, such as concern or worry. The questionnaire is attached in the Appendix 1. Here, only the variables which were intended to measure cognitive anxiety related to writing skill, have been mentioned against each question.

Question 1: The question was meant to evaluate nervousness.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
26	6	8

This was a negatively worded statement. When 26 participants marked on disagreed option it means that 26(65%) participants of diploma class experienced cognitive anxiety in writing situations. They gave 26(65%) responses for they felt nervous while writing in second language. Only 8(20%) participants stated that they agreed with the statement and they did not feel nervous while writing. Whereas 6(15%) participants did not show strong feelings towards anxiety in response of first question.

Question 3: the question was asked to guess the students' worries for evaluation.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
0	1	39

Testing anxiety, which is a major issue in this context, is felt by thirty nine participants which is the 97% of the total sample. They confessed that they felt uneasy and worried of their writing being assessed in an undesirable way. All of the participants showed worry for evaluation for English writing, however there was only one participant who did not mention this anxiety.

Question 7: On this statement, participants showed fear for comparative analysis

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
6	3	31

Students' predisposition to compare themselves to others is one common source of anxiety which is evident by the heavy weightage of 31(77%) of the participants. This result shows the fear of relative analysis. There were 6(15%) participants who were not concerned with others' participants' scores. Whereas, 3(7%) participants did not show strong feelings.

Question 9: This item showed the worries for poor grades and evaluation.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
2	5	33

In response of 9th question, 33(82%) were afraid of receiving a very poor grade if their composition was evaluated. Whereas only 2(5%) participants were not worried about assessment and 5(12%) did not show strong feelings.

Question 14: The statement was asked to investigate the participants' fear of being mocked by others.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
5	4	31

31(77%) were afraid of being mocked by their class-mates on their English composition scores, it depicted their excessive concern about others. Only 5(12%) disagreed with the statement; whereas, 4(10%) were neutral. They were not worried about what other students thought about their grades on English writing.

Question 17: This query was asked to infer the preoccupation of participants about others' thinking.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
3	1	36

Thirty six (90%) participants were concerned about what other people thought about their proficiency in English and only 3(7%) disagreed with the statement and only one participant stayed neutral.

Question 20: Responses on this item expressed the participants' obsessions for their compositions being chosen for discussion in the class.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
2	2	36

There were 36(87%) participants who were anxious of others' comments about their English proficiency. Therefore they were obsessed of being discussed openly in the class. Only 2 (5%) did not find the situation disturbing and did not express.

Question 21: The participants were asked to judge how they judged or misjudged their own abilities

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
3	2	35

Lack of confidence in their own abilities is another crucial factor of language anxiety which is clearly shown by the results of this statement as 35(87%) participants showed lack of confidence in their abilities and only 3(7%) participants were confident while 2(5%) participants were neutral.

4.1.1.2 Analysis of Statements on SLWAI Representing Somatic Anxiety

Second language may cause physical symptoms. To diagnose the somatic anxiety, there were seven statements in SLWAI. Through their responses, some participants complained against the physical effects of writing anxiety. They experienced signs of anxiety to varying degrees. Such as:

Question 2: This question was asked to find out if the participants felt heart pounding while writing English under time constraint.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
2	3	35

As far as physical reactions were concerned, 35(87%) participants accepted to experience heart pounding, only 02 (5%) participants were not anxious and 03 participants showed neutral response.

Question 6: The question concerned the feelings of blank mindedness.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
6	3	31

31(77%) participants complained of being absent minded at the time of writing whereas 06 (15%) participants did not show anxiety while 03(7%) of them gave a neutral: response.

Question 8: The question was asked to seek if they felt trembling and perspiration during writing.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
7	3	30

There were 30 (75%) participants who complained of having physical shivering whereas 07(17%) did not face this type of impediment, and three remained neutral.

Question 11: This question was asked to find out if their thoughts became jumbled while writing.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
0	0	40

Writing apprehension results in concentration and attention difficulties which was proved when all of the participants came up with agreed response on the statement of their thoughts getting mixed-up at the time of writing. The limited time situation was the one reason of anxiety among the second language English writers and this was the reason that they could not achieve a required level of proficiency in the language in spite of the fact that they had studied it from their schooldays. The participants showed 100% anxiety in response to question no 11 and complained against limited time.

Question 13: This question was concerned about the panic feelings of the participants.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
2	3	35

Feeling of panic is the most observed emotion among students of diploma class as 35 (87%) participants agreed on the above statement and only 02 (5%) were not anxious; whereas, 3 participants remained neutral.

Question 15: on this statement, the respondents showed the feelings of being frozen.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
5	6	29

The participants of diploma also showed the tendency of being frozen at the time of surprise writing as 29(72%) respondents agreed and 5(12%) participants did not agree.

Question 19: The participants expressed the feelings of bodily tension in response to this question.

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
12	7	21

The above mentioned reaction of body tension seems to be rare as only 21(52%) participants admitted to experience this difficulty of tension in body and 12(30%) did not report such feelings.

4.1.1.3 Analysis of Statements on SLWAI Representing Avoidance Behavior

One important thing is that anxiety of English writing as a second language can have adverse effects on learner's behavior too. In fact, when it becomes impossible for the language learners to compete with the situation they start to avoid the situation that demands writing in English. The observation of this tendency among English language

learners of diploma class at NUML reflected through the further seven items given in SLWAI is given below:

Question 4: The statement was, 'I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.'

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
13	5	22

The responses on the above statement exposed that majority of the participants did not show reluctance in writing English as 21(52%) participants agreed and only 14(25%) participants disagreed with the statement of not choosing English to write their thoughts.

Question 5: The statement was, 'I usually do my best to avoid writing English composition.'

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
24	4	12

12 (30%) participants tried to avoid the writing situation whereas 24 (60%) participants wanted to write. The responses reflected the positive attitude of participants towards English.

Question 10: The statement was, 'I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.'

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
27	2	11

The ratio of 27 (67%) participants stated that they did not try to escape the situation in which English writing was mandatory. There were only 11 (27%) participants who admitted their reluctance in writing English

Question 12: 'Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions'

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
16	3	21

Twenty one (52%) participants stated that until they did not have any other choice except English, they would not use it; whereas 16(40%) respondents disagreed with the statement.

Question 16: 'I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English composition'

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
20	5	15

Again almost the same number of the participants (as in previous statement) showed reluctance and unwillingness towards English writing as 15 (37%) stated that they avoided the situation and 20(50%) did not avoid the situation.

Question 18: 'I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.'

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
20	3	17

In response to this statement, 17(42%) participants proclaimed that they tried to write in English even outside the class and 20(50%) participants disagreed with the statement.

Question 22: 'Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.'

SD+D	NSF	A+SA
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17

4

19

In response to this question 19(47%) participants showed willingness every time to write in English, whereas, 17(42%) participants did not show inclination for writing in English while 4(10%) participants were neutral on this statement.

4.1.1.4 Pre-test Results from SLWAI

Describing anxiety is difficult because it is an emotion with multi-layered causes and degrees of intensity. The results of the questionnaire showed that the participants of diploma class at NUML do experience anxiety in writing situations. After administering pre-test, the anxiety level of the whole sample on cognitive, somatic and avoidance behavior as shown by the individual responses on the twenty two questions of SLWAI was 83%, 78% and 38% respectively. When the ratio of experimental and control group was calculated separately, it was found that the experimental group showed 78%, 80% and 44%; whereas, control group was suffering from 81%, 77% and 47% on these three sub-scales of cognitive, somatic and avoidance behavior. It was observed that the participants in the present study, were feeling, anxiety of writing.

Cognitive anxiety refers the mental state of anxious person such as nervousness or fear and it plays a great role in making students disturbed when they are producing English writing. Cognitive anxiety was observed to be experienced by the participants in the greatest degree that is 80%. The participants of diploma course exhibited nervousness, worries for exam evaluation, worries of comparative analysis, worries for getting poor grades, worries of being ridiculed, worries of others' views, and lack of confidence. The highest agreement was found on worries regarding evaluation. There were only two participants who did not show strong feelings for evaluation. Based on this, it can be said with quite surety that obsessions of examination and evaluation procedures provoked anxiety. The participants of diploma at NUML were obsessed by the thought that other students or teachers will underestimate them and as a result they will have negative attitudes towards them. The results of the questionnaire reflected this component of apprehension. Through the results of the scale, an anxiety producing hierarchy can be observed as participants reported that they felt worried about

evaluation; they thought that they would get poor grades, a lot worse than others and if teacher would choose their English composition as a sample for discussion, they know that other classmates would make fun of them. So, this whole situation provoked anxiety among them.

Somatic anxiety is the manifestation of physical symptoms of anxiety. Due to somatic anxiety, students become prone to a surge in their autonomic arousal and disagreeable feelings like muscle tension and restlessness, which may accelerate sweating, hand shaking, trembling, headache and low blood pressure. It was also observed that the participants also exhibited the signs of physical tension in writing context. For example, the heart pounding was observed to be the most common symptom followed by, trembling, blank mindedness, jumbled thoughts, panic attacks, freezing up and muscular tension. A ratio of 77% respondents complained that their mind snoozed when they tried to work on writing activities. This is an understood symptom in this context that results in concentration difficulties. When asked to analyze the factor of time constraint, every student agreed that they experience problems of attention and concentration on the task during writing activities. The respondents were also inquired about the highest level of anxiety, viz. panic. The acquired results on the questionnaire showed that it is was a common feeling prevailing among the selected diploma students.

Avoidance behavior is considered as a conscious or unconscious mechanism of defense by which a person attempts to avoid from anxious situations or disagreeable feelings and pain such as headache. Despite of the symptoms of apprehension, the participants were disagreed on showing avoidance behavior as they reported to be ready to participate in the tasks of writing compositions in English and to seek chances of writing in a second language. Based on these results, it was predicted that participants might get benefit from writing classes because they were showing intentions of taking part so they could avail the chance to improve their writing skills.

To sum up, it can be concluded that the two most common types of writing anxieties among the participants of English diploma class at NUML are the cognitive and somatic anxieties that are 80% and 76% respectively. Whereas, the majority of the participants were willing to write in English and only there were 34% of the participants who did not show the intentions for writing. Moreover, the participants became more

anxious when they tried to write without mistakes or when they tried to prove themselves according to the set standards. In such cases, negative thoughts, such as the thoughts of underestimation, of being ridiculed, or thoughts of failure made their anxiety worse. This proposes that participants who suffered from the anxiety of cognition must be capable of tackling the numerous destructive thoughts that originated from outside. Furthermore, the somatic symptoms also appeared due to cognitive anxiety. So, the students must be able to learn how to deal with anxiety so that they are not nervous and manage their stress and perform effectively during evaluation.

4.1.2 Analysis of Open-ended Questionnaire

The participants were given the chance to express themselves freely on open-ended questionnaires. The qualitative responses obtained from the open-ended questionnaire were examined through the pattern coding strategy presented by Miles and Huberman (1994). For the analysis, the following six open-ended questions were considered as six main classes. Then, each class was assigned a code on the basis of the most frequent answers. The participants' responses were read and revised many times before assigning them a code, with the emerging consistent or inconsistent patterns of categorical classes. In this way, the researcher accomplished assigning codes to a matching class. For example, in response to the first open-ended question, the participants were required to mention the quandaries they faced in the course of writing in English, so the first class was assigned the code 'observed quandaries of writing in L2'. Then, participants' responses like 'I face difficulties due to lack of vocabulary' was coded in the class of "inappropriate vocabulary". In this way, the researcher managed to construct six classes and 15 emergent codes. Finally, the responses were calculated for each class with the same code in the form of frequencies and percentages. A colleague of the researcher individually examined the data for a consistent agreement over the results. Furthermore, to get an unbiased representation of the responses, the participants' responses were added verbatim to give examples.

The first question inquired about the experienced difficulties of the participants of English diploma class at NUML, they were facing while writing in English. The main difficulties observed by the students in the process of writing in English were:

Category 1: Observed quandaries about writing in L2 Frequency (f) Percentage (%)

1.	Spelling errors	34	85%
2.	Grammar	29	72%
3.	Inappropriate vocabulary	28	70%
4.	Confusion/hesitation	25	62%

Examples of verbatim statements

The following statements are a depiction of the observed difficulties faced by the L2 learners in writing. The researcher has chosen only one statement as the representative of each category.

'I become confused among rules of grammar, if I concentrate on rules, I forget writing material'. I feel that I use wrong grammar.

'I wanted to write some more difficulties but due to insufficient vocabulary I couldn't write'

'When I write I do mistakes' I become confuse even in the most common things '

'I feel hesitation to express my thoughts'

More than half of the comments were related to the confession that they did grammatical mistakes in writing second language; the comments indicated that the participants considered that error-free writing in English was something which was very important. So when they gave an over importance to any factor, naturally they became self-conscious on the performance of those particular variables. Moreover, there were two participants who wrote only 'yes' in response to question no 1 but they did not mention any specific difficulty. One more source of anxiety was insufficient vocabulary knowledge. It was also alarming that 65% of the students' comments showed that they did not have adequate vocabulary to complete the tasks of English writing and so they came up with the problems of selection of words. In other words, some participants were suffering from the feeling that writing in English was something beyond their access as they could not express themselves clearly due to a lack of enough vocabulary. The problem of lack of vocabulary and spelling mistakes is considered a main issue for English language learners. In fact the aspect of confusion is also the cause of their incorrect spellings. They become double minded regarding the accuracy of spellings.

The second question demanded to mention situations and people which the participants thought were associated with their anxiety. It was observed that the phobia of limited time, teachers, class mates and most of all surprise tests and their results were serious matters for participants.

Category 2: Situations linked with writing anxiety		frequency (f)	percentages %
5.	Surprise tests	33	77%
6.	Stress of limited time	33	77%
7.	Class mates/teachers	25	62%

Examples of verbatim statements

In the following statements, students complained about the pressure of limited time and over expectations from teachers and peers. They shared,

'Abrupt call for writing in English makes me anxious'

'I write wrong words in tensed situations of limited time.'

'I think what teacher will think of me if I write wrong words'

'I can write good at home, but when writes in front of class fellows, makes me conscious'

The third question inquired about physical changes or physical reactions that occurred during writing anxiety.

Category 3: Physical symptoms of L2 writing Anxiety:		Frequencies (f)	Percentages%
8.	Panic/nervousness	29	72%
9.	Trembling/sweating	26	65%
10.	Low blood pressure	17	42%
11.	Compulsive behavior	11	27%

Examples of verbatim statements

The following statements are the examples of above mentioned physical and psychological symptoms.

'When teacher comes in the class, it makes me nervous'

'I cannot write properly because of hands shaking'

'Though I am confident but still my heart beats faster when teacher say to write in English'

'When I write in front of teachers, sweating and perspiration comes on my face'

'I chew pencil in teeth' 'I play with my fingers'

Some participants reported that though they remained uncomfortable, but they did not think that any physical symptoms appeared on their bodies. However, the appearance of physical reactions is an understood phenomenon in the context of somatic anxiety.

The objective of the fourth question was to explore the feelings of the participants while writing in L2, can be observed from the responses that 75% participants complained about lack of confidence while writing in English. On the other hand, 29 participants felt empty minded during and after their writing.

Category 4: Feeling while writing in L2	Frequencies (f)	percentages%
12. Lack of confidence	30	75%
13. Blank minded	29	72%

Examples of verbatim statements

The following statements are the examples of above mentioned somatic symptoms.

'Whenever I write composition in English, it always makes me feel uncomfortable by the thought if I could not perform well'

'It is not because of my lack of interest, in fact, I know I cannot write correctly'

'I always realize that my writing is not up to standard'

The students set standards by themselves for producing perfect work, and when they failed to achieve the standard, they felt pressure and consequently they became

anxious. Besides the self- confidence, the self-imposed criteria also became a cause of anxiety.

In the fifth question, the participants were asked to mention the people with whom they have shared their experiences. It is evident by the results that 13 out of 40 students reported that they had not shared their feelings of anxiety with anyone. However, 27 students admitted that they had shared their problem with someone they felt comfortable with.

Category 5: Writing experience shared with someone	Frequencies (f)	percentages%
14. Those who share with someone	27	67%
15. Those who do not share	13	32%

Those who shared, reported that they did so to receive support and assistance, especially from their classmates because they expected their classmates to be experiencing the same feelings. This idea is exemplified in the statement given below:

Examples of verbatim statements

'I do share, because it gives me a sense of security that I am not alone in this labyrinth'

'No, I don't share.'

It can be concluded that some of the participants were found reluctant in sharing their writing fears because of their ego which further adds to their problems. Whereas, others like to share because of the satisfaction that others also have the same problems.

In the last question, the students were requested to share their views about their attitude towards becoming an English teacher in the future. Out of 40 participants, 22 gave positive responses for their future as a teacher or similar position in academia. 10 participants gave confused responses thus could not be categorized; whereas, 8 participants predicted negative effect of their writing on their future professional life.

Category6: The outcome of writing attitude on future teaching

	Frequencies (f)	percentages%
Positive effect	22	55%

Negative effect

8

20%

There are some verbatim statements which can present a clear reflection of the participants' attitudes towards writing in future.

If I will learn good English, I will be more confident in front of my students.

Those who stated that it will have a negative influence, gave such comments as '*How can I become a good instructor when I am not able to write?*'

The aim of the study was to reduce the writing anxiety of the participants through the application of systematic desensitization so prior to the application of therapy it was necessary to collect information about the real causes of their frustration. That is why the participants were given the opportunity to share their feelings freely about their second language anxiety. Through these questions, the participants shared everything which they wanted to share. They reported their underlying perceptions, possible anxiety sources and their attitude towards anxiety of writing in English as a second language. The objective of these questions in a way was a catharsis of the participants as second language learners so that the researcher could have a clear picture of their writing anxiety before starting a treatment of their anxiety.

4.1.3 Analysis of Pre-test Writing Task

Anxiety is considered a powerful factor in language learning as it can impede the process of learning a language and can become a source of poor performance. This is one of the reasons that researchers have always investigated the harmful effects of apprehension upon performance. According to Horwitz & Young (1991), it is very necessary to analyze the process of language learning to study, understand and interpret the special effects of anxiety on performance. By keeping in view the importance of the consequences of anxiety on the writing performance, the researcher gave the students an English composition task that was used as a key to know their writing performance. Each composition was graded according to a rubric that was used for the assessment of their writing. It was decided that 25 will be the maximum points on rubric representing the maximum marks out of one hundred. Four evaluative categories were specified in the rubric: organization and content, linguistic accuracy, fulfillment of the writing task or purposes, and neatness. Each evaluative category was presented with brief justified explanation of four intervals, while criterion of neatness was categorized into two

intervals, either clear or not. Largest proportion of the overall score that was 40% was assigned to the criterion of 'organization and content' and 20% of weightage was assigned to other three categories. More emphasis was placed on content and creativity as compare to linguistic accuracy.

The compositions were re-checked by a fellow teacher, a researcher from the same university. She was provided with the rubric and was told to use it for assessment of participants' writing compositions. She separately graded the four categories on each writing sample and tabulated their final scores in terms of percentages. The scores on English compositions were calculated as parameters of writing performance. The scores of composition indicated that a high level of writing anxiety posed a negative influence on writing performance. The participants who complained of high writing anxiety on SLWAI showed lower writing proficiency than those who conveyed lower writing anxiety. For example, participants no 11, and 39 from the experimental group and participants 1, 18, 33 and 35 from the control group showed 54% writing anxiety on SLWAI. All these participants were suffering from comparatively less anxiety and the same participants were those who were comparatively high achievers on English written task by achieving comparatively higher marks within the range of (56-64) %. Similarly those participants who were highly anxious in the class such as participants 13, 23, 25, 27 and 40 from experimental group and students no 14, 24, 34, 38, 19 and 37 who scored 77% or above on SLWAI, they achieved very low scores on the composition. Their range was between (32-44) percent. Overall calculation of the scores on SLWAI, revealed that students of diploma class have scored within the range of (32-64) %. It was obvious that writing scores were probable to fall when and where writing anxiety was intense.

Definitely, the above mentioned details of facts are neither complete nor certain to comprehend the phenomenon of anxiety of writing in second language. The main purpose of this research is not to investigate whether the second language learners felt anxiety in learning a second language or not. It has already been investigated by many researchers and all have agreed that second language learners experience anxiety. The main purpose of this study is to figure out a remedy for reducing second language learners' writing anxiety. For this purpose the pre-test was conducted to investigate the level of second language (L2) anxiety while writing in English and the correlation

between their writing anxiety and writing performance. The ultimate purpose was to observe the effects of Systematic Desensitization.

4.2 Intervention

After the pre-test, the sample was separated into two groups: experimental and control, for the purpose of intervention. The intervention was given only to the participants of experimental group. The whole intervention procedure consisted of nineteen sessions, each session was of half-hour arranged twice in a week for nine weeks but during the third week, the sessions were conducted thrice. The researcher applied systematic desensitization on the experimental group as a technique to assist them in reducing anxiety. Thus, systematic desensitization was applied to help those students who used to suffer from second language writing anxiety by controlling and reducing the effect of negative and destructive thoughts which made them feel anxious, depressed and disheartened when attempting to face writing situations in English as a second language. The process of systematic desensitization progressed through the following sessions:

4.2.1 Week 1: Session 1

The objective of first session was to develop the relationship between the researcher and the students and to introduce them to the treatment that how this step-by-step method of systematic desensitization was designed to guide them. They were encouraged to participate in this therapy if they really wanted to overcome their anxiety of writing in English. They were told about the purpose and efficacy of the therapy that was designed to help them in getting rid of their anxiety of writing in English. They were advised to observe how small steps could bring a big change. They were explained that the basic idea behind this treatment was to prepare them gradually to face the frightening situations by keeping them relaxed through visualizing numerous situations that were connected to their writing anxiety. A homework assignment was given to the students.

Session 2

In this session, possible writing activities were discussed to lessen the anxiety of writing in a second language. Their homework was evaluated. English language

anxiety was explained to the participants. They were encouraged to share their own views about second language with respect of writing. The causes and effects of anxiety of writing were discussed through lecturing and interaction. They were given the basic idea about what they were going to do. The session closed with a small assignment to be done at home.

4.2.2 Week 2: Session 3

This session was conducted to explain the procedure of systematic desensitization. After reviewing the previous homework, there was a discussion on the treatment of systematic desensitization and its three phases. The academic concept of systematic desensitization was discussed. Illogical ideas that accelerated second language writing anxiety were brought into discussion. Again the participants were given home task at the end of the session.

Session 4

In this session, the importance of getting control over those aspects which were the hindrance in the way of effective learning, were discussed along with the importance of relaxation strategies for tackling writing anxiety. They were explained that relaxation and discomfort were two opposing factors so it was not possible to be relaxed and anxious at the same time. A state of deep relaxation physically and psychologically incompatible with fear, discomfort, and anxiety. In this method, the participants were taught the means of controlling the fears rather than leading them to an intolerable stage. They were told how a situation troubled them and how they usually avoided facing on it or they did not like to think about it; because whenever they thought about it, they felt nervous and anxious. By applying desensitization therapy, they would be able to face and to think about these fears and visualize them beforehand without becoming anxious for they will be in entirely stress-free state. Once they will become capable to visualize the tensed situation of writing in total relaxation, they will be in a position to decrease the anxiety they felt in the actual situation, enabling them to feel more relaxed and self-reliant. In brief, while imagining the feared situation or object through subsequent process of relaxation, they will become desensitized to it, and the object or situation will lose much in its power to cause them anxiety. In the beginning, the session comprised of discussion and dialogue; after wards they were given a familiarity of

relaxation techniques. The session again concluded by assigning an activity to be done at home.

4.2.3 Week 3: Session 5

The previously assigned home work was reviewed in the beginning of the session. Then discussion started on the first step of systematic desensitization technique of constructing the writing anxiety hierarchy through dialogue, discussion and self-suggestion. At the first stage, they were instructed that everyone will identify the situations that were causing them the anxiety of writing in English. Then, they were required to arrange them in a sequential order from the least disturbing to the most disturbing. They were instructed to make this list with keen interest as it was very crucial for the therapy because if they will imagine their anxiety in its most alarming form at the very beginning, they would perhaps never be able to reduce anxiety. The reason is, although it is not impossible but definitely difficult to desensitize oneself all at once for approaching the fearful situation. So, it is necessary to desensitize oneself bit by bit. They were told to act upon the given instructions.

Session 6

During this session, there was no progress as the participants were confused. They did not know what to write about the anxiety producing situations and showed little confusion in constructing the hierarchies. However, the researcher gave them full support and assured them to help them out at each and every step. They were ready to participate. Initially, the participants' work was dissatisfactory as they failed to write situations with increasing difficulty. There were three or four students who showed reluctance in constructing anxiety situations but with the researcher's full support, they started doing work. The researcher gave them the opportunity to write their difficult situations regarding writing anxiety at home with peace and calm. The participants wrote their conditions. Some of them were not able to write the anxious situations effectively; the researcher observed each situation and provided every required assistance. The participants' progress was observed, analyzed, and they were guided during the next days of the week. Their anxiety producing situations were discussed individually. The participants were given guidelines and feedback on their work and assignment.

Session 7

The students were given a sample of hierarchies related to other types of fears such as: anxiety hierarchy while meeting with fellows from opposite sex, anxiety hierarchy when interacting with a boss, anxiety hierarchy when interacting with strangers, etc. Although these hierarchies were not related to anxiety of language but at least provided a guideline to the participants for making their own hierarchy of situations. Each participant discussed their situations and participated in the activity. The whole week passed while constructing anxiety hierarchies.

4.2.4 Week 4: Session 8

As usual, the homework tasks were checked which were assigned in the last session. These two consecutive sessions were devoted to make and discuss the hierarchies of the situations that provoked the anxiety of writing in English among the participants. No doubt, every individual is different from the other but there were similarities as well. So, the researcher prepared one main hierarchy after the integration and analysis of individual anxiety provoking situations. Even then, each participant was given freedom to work on their own hierarchies. Infact this main hierarchy served as the representative list of all the situations. This final hierarchy is attached in the Appendix D.

Session 9

The 9th session was devoted to the second stage of systematic desensitization that is giving awareness about the techniques of relaxation. It comprised mainly of using the method of relaxation training practically through explaining what 'relaxation' stood for, and how it could be attained. The participants were told that there was no compulsion to use one specific technique; it was all upon them to use whichever method of relaxation appealed to them. The main purpose was to feel relaxed and comfortable. This session also concluded with a homework assignment. It was mentioned earlier, that an acquaintance and familiarity with relaxation exercises was necessary before starting the actual process of systematic desensitization.

4.2.5 Week 5: Session 10

The homework assignment was discussed and reviewed in the beginning of the session. Then, explanation of the muscle relaxation training was provided to the participants along with a clarification of how participants could acquire this skill and apply it to their lives on a daily basis. As was told to them earlier in the preliminary sessions, individuals were desensitized to the situations and anxiety-provoking objects mentioned on their hierarchies by countering the anxiety with comfort and relaxation. For this purpose, they must first acquire the coping technique to relax wholly and also acquire how to get this comfort at their will. This was directed through lecturing, discussion and one-on-one interaction. The session concluded with a homework assignment. The students were given the introduction of some commonly used relaxation exercises such as: deep breathing, square breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, yoga, self-massage, repetitive prayers, meditation, and rhythmic exercises. They were told the procedure of some of these techniques and how to choose out of those techniques according to their life-style and needs.

Session 11

This session was also devoted to discussing different relaxation strategies. The session concluded with a class assignment.

4.2.6 Week 6: Session 12

The session was based on a discussion of different techniques of relaxation. The participants were told that besides these techniques, there could be applied any other relaxation therapies. Moreover, the students were suggested to use more than one relaxation technique instead of choosing only one technique so that they could have the idea which one therapy suited them. This is the reason that experts recommended the sampling of several technique simultaneously to perceive which single technique works the best. Much of the importance is that, everybody should choose a technique of relaxation that is most suitable for him/her.

Session 13

The participants were told that they should practice relaxation for at least two half-hour sessions for two days before beginning their actual desensitization session, or

they may spend a half hour per day. In order to achieve deep muscle relaxation, they were given the plans to follow during relaxation training. The participants were given options to choose whichever method they felt would be beneficial for them. The only thing is that they have to learn relaxation technique in order to know how to relax and then practice it. The researcher gave them relaxation training in their classroom but they were told to practice those techniques at home in their free time. They were told to practice for at least twenty minutes every other day. All the twenty participants reported positive feelings after taking these exercises. All these sessions were given to the awareness regarding exercises of relaxation, until all the students reported being relaxed.

4.2.7 Week 7: Session 14

This is the third stage of systematic desensitization. Like every previous session, there was also a discussion on the assigned homework. The participants were encouraged to apply systematic desensitization through the process of muscle relaxation. At the end, a homework was given as usual. Finally, as they had chosen a relaxation technique and laid out a proper hierarchy, they were ready to get into exposure exercises. They were able to use relaxation techniques to achieve a calm state and they started with the least anxiety provoking situation. Initially when they started imagining a situation, their anxiety level was higher but it gradually began to reduce. For this purpose, the participants were given instructions on ‘visualization’.

Each situation on writing anxiety hierarchy represented a state of anxiety. For the effective treatment of desensitization, it was highly recommended that the imagination of the situations in the mind of the participants should be as realistic and vivid as possible as if they were confronting the real situation. An excellent technique to conceive this image representative of a reality was to visualize the situation very intensely with all its details. For example, even a minute description of a situation, its sights, sounds, and smells should be a part of imagination so that the participants could imagine the actual situations.

Concisely, desensitizing a state through imagination is completed when a person states that he/she is able to visualize the scenes of anxiety provoking situation without feeling tension and nervousness. Then he/she is instructed to imagine the situation again and again until a stage comes when the person reports that he/she is completely relaxed.

At this stage, when they become able to conceive a given point with complete relaxation, then they are told to move on to the next situation and repeat the process. In this way, the participants proceeded through the hierarchy arranged from least to the most anxiety-provoking states and desensitized the hierarchy situation by situation. Each step mentioned on anxiety hierarchy was fantasized until they no longer demonstrated any symptom of anxiety at the presentation of it. Then, they were required to imagine the next comparatively advanced anxiety-producing stage, and so on. In this way, the anxiety nodes were slowly began to reduce until the participants were able to imagine the scariest scene without feeling tension and anxiety.

Session 15

The participants learnt to achieve complete relaxation and comfort during the training and practice session of deep muscle relaxation. As stated earlier, the completion of imagination depends upon the imagination of anxiety-provoking situations with a completely relaxed mood. One drawback of this progressive process is that a person may leave a situation before completing it so the participants were instructed to remember that a state cannot be completed without attaining a total degree of relaxation and if any slight tension or nervousness was still associated with a dreaded situation, it meant the situation was incomplete so, they were told to stay with the situation in such cases until they reported complete absence of nervousness.

During desensitization sessions, first of all, the participants learnt to relax completely by acting upon those strategies they had learnt during training sessions. Under completely relaxed situations, they soon learnt to recognize when pressure and anxiety came into the imagined scene and interfered with their relaxation. At this stage, the participants were told that if they felt even a slight anxiety while imagining a scene, they should immediately stop imagining the situation and should start imagining a relaxing scene or just focus on relaxing again. They were told to imagine the situations again and again by adding new scenes into the hierarchy to fill the distance or to cover the gaps.

4.2.8 Week 8: Session 16

The third stage of the technique ‘desensitization session’ was to be conducted in a relaxed and peaceful environment which was only possible at home. That is why

the participants were given the choice to practice relaxation techniques at home according to their will. Basic purpose was to relax and not to take tension of any sort. For this they were told to act upon these instructions: First of all the participants were asked to sit completely and comfortably in a chair or couch with two piles of cards in front of them. Next, the participants had to try to remember the first 3-4 situations of each pile of cards. The participants had to follow the self-desensitization instructions. The main purpose was to get complete relaxation. When they felt completely relaxed, this would supposed to be a time to start a desensitization session. Each time they conceived a scene on hierarchy, it was called a trial. Every trial continued for 25 seconds, during which they tried to retain the scene as intensely before them as possible while remaining completely relaxed. They were suggested to take a rest of 15 seconds after the end of each episode, during which they had to concentrate only on the relaxation of their bodies.

The session was divided into three trials. Everybody was required to practice imagination for three consecutive times of three trials without experiencing tension. After completing an event successfully at the beginning of desensitization session, they were told to start working on another, but not try to desensitize more than two situations in one session. They were told to remember that they had to live with each particular scene until they had developed a complete set of three trials without feeling anxiety. If someone had tried a given state for nine trials and was still feeling anxiety when s/he imagining it, then he/she was advised to go back to the previous state and complete an anxiety-free set of three trials on that one specific situation. After that, he/she was instructed to try the difficult scene again. If, after going through this three times, the difficulty was still not clear, that meant that the jump was too high between two scenes. Then, there was a need to modify their hierarchy by inserting one or two more situations between the last two. These new entries were supposed to be less intense as compared to the previous one but slightly more severe than the last one that they completed.

Each session had to begin with a previously practiced situation on the hierarchy. For example, if someone was working on item no 5, and had not accomplished it when the session ended, he/she should switch the next meeting with item no 4 and work on it for three times consecutively without anxiety. Then he/she would be able to proceed to no 5. After completing the desensitization of each dreaded situation, the participants

were advised to go back through the entire list of situations, once more just to make unquestionable warranty that they had completed the situations listed in the hierarchy.

Session 17

The completion of exercises on individual hierarchy in desensitization sessions represented that the participants were progressing towards the tackling of problem which was to reduce the anxiety in writing English. However, to testify that a person was really capable of handling the situation. This ability must be followed by an ability to face real-life situation without feeling anxiety. However, there were no fixed number of sessions for everyone. They fluctuate from person to person. Some took longer time and some reached the target in a lesser time. One could analyze their situation by taking notice of their progress by themselves. In order to get good results, they were instructed to avoid those situations which were beyond their access.

The process of self-desensitization can help to control almost any real life situation of anxiety. It only needs practice. The participants were advised to visualize dreaded situations until they stopped feeling anxiety at all. This indicated that the therapy had proved successful. This process was repeated again and again until the most anxiety-provoking item even changed into an anxiety free or less anxiety free item.

4.2.9 Week 9: Session 18

In this session, the participants were given information about the precautions they ought to keep in their mind during desensitization sessions.

Final session

Final session again started with the checking of homework. The participants of experimental group were advised to apply everything what they learned during previous sessions in order to maximize the benefits of systematic desensitization. Even this session not ended without homework. Moreover, the researcher thanked the students for their fair efforts and participation. After that, the course of the therapy was appraised and evaluated. The participants were motivated to stay in touch with the researcher. They were encouraged to seek guidance and counseling whenever they needed.

4.3 Post-test

The post-test was administered after the intervention session. At this stage, both the groups: control and experimental, were again provided with all the three data collection tools as it was done in pre-test: the three data collection tools were: close ended questionnaire, open-ended questions and an English composition task. The purpose was to observe the differences in performance and to draw the conclusion whether systematic desensitization technique was helpful in alleviation of writing anxiety or not. The results of pre-test and post-test were compared for the experimental group. Then, pre-test and post- test scores of the experimental group were compared with those of the control group.

4.3.1 Results from Close-ended Questionnaire (SLWAI)

After the intervention period, the participants again filled in the SLWAI which consisted of 22 questions. The responses were again collected on Likert scale in order to notice any differential changes in the intensity of anxiety levels after the intervention while performing a writing activity in second language. The following data presents the differences in experienced anxiety.

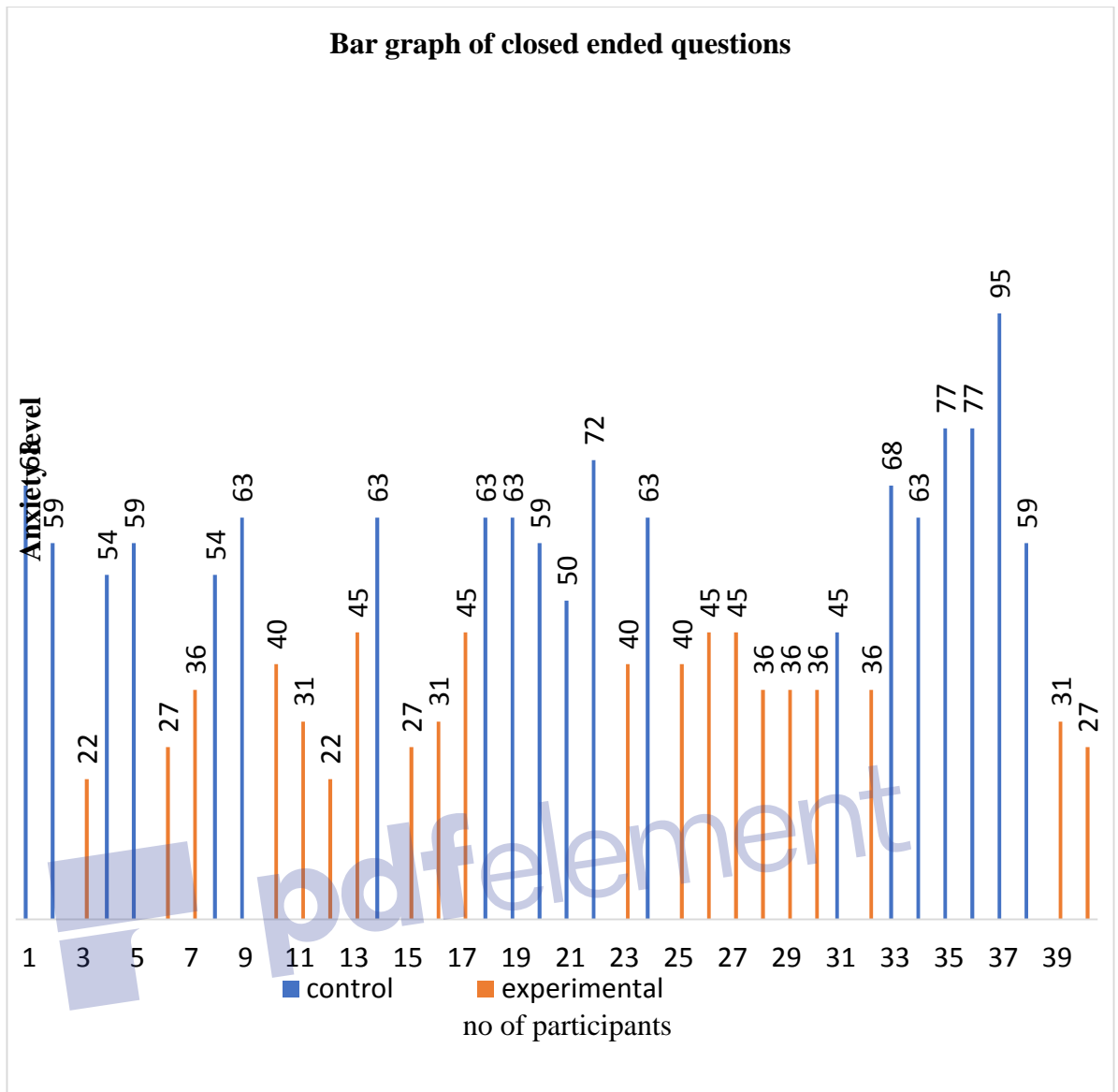
Table No.1. Results of control group and experimental group on Close-ended Questionnaire

Control Group		Experimental Group	
Participant No.	Results in percentages	Participant No.	Results in percentages
01	68%	03	22%
02	59%	06	27%
04	54%	07	36%
05	59%	10	40%
08	54%	11	31%
09	63%	12	22%

14	63%	13	45%
18	63%	15	27%
19	63%	16	31%
20	59%	17	45%
21	50%	23	40%
22	72%	25	40%
24	63%	26	45%
31	45%	27	45%
33	68%	28	36%
34	63%	29	36%
35	77%	30	36%
36	77%	32	36%
37	95%	39	31%
38	59	40	27%

The following graph is presented to show the anxiety levels of both the groups. The experimental group was given the therapy of Systematic Desensitization whereas the control group was not given any treatment. Blue lines represent control group and red lines represent the experimental group on the graph.

Graph of Table No 1.



The participating students were made to complete the SLWAI before and after the treatment to record differences in the anxiety levels experienced while writing in second language after the treatment. The data suggests that the SLWA level of the experimental group, after receiving the treatment, is evidently lower than it was before the treatment. Before the application of systematic desensitization, the cognitive anxiety among the participants of control group was found 81% followed by somatic anxiety with 77% and avoidance behavior 33% respectively; whereas, the overall anxiety level among the participants of experimental group was 78%, 80% and 44% on cognitive, somatic and avoidance behavior respectively.

After the treatment given to the experimental group through systematic desensitization, a noteworthy decrease in anxiety level was observed. The anxiety level among the members of experimental group after treatment was 53% on cognitive anxiety, 25% on somatic anxiety and 28% of the participants showed avoidance behavior. Whereas, in the control group, the anxiety was slightly less on somatic aspects but was consistent on cognitive and avoidance behavior. On Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory, the responses of control group reflected that they were still suffering from nervousness, worries of evaluation, poor grades and lack of self-confidence. Because of these cognitive anxieties, they also manifested the physical symptoms of anxiety like pounding heart, empty mindedness, trembling, shaking, jumbled thoughts, frozen mind, tensed body and pressure of time.

The data presented that the second language writing anxiety levels in the participants were comparatively lower than they were before the treatment. According to the pre-test results, the type of anxiety which was observed the most frequently was the cognitive anxiety and it was followed by somatic anxiety and then avoidance behavior. After the intervention period, there was a clear difference found in overall performance of the participants as compared before pre-test and after post-test on Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory. The SLWAI scores and the open-ended qualitative data plus the English composition task discussed in the next paragraph supported the efficacy of the treatment.

Table No 2. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Experimental Group on Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory.

Pre-test		Post-test	
Participant No.	Result in percentages	Participant No.	Result in percentages
03	68%	03	22%
06	63%	06	27%
07	72%	07	36%
10	68%	10	40%

11	54%	11	31%
12	63%	12	22%
13	77%	13	45%
15	68%	15	27%
16	63%	16	31%
17	63%	17	45%
23	77%	23	40%
25	77%	25	40%
26	72%	26	45%
27	77%	27	45%
28	63%	28	36%
29	72%	29	36%
30	59%	30	36%
32	68%	32	36%
39	54%	39	31%
40	81%	40	27%

After the application of systematic desensitization, the participants from diploma class demonstrated substantial differences between pre-test and post-test scores. The participants showed 83% cognitive anxiety, 78% somatic anxiety and 38% avoidance behavior. After calculating the post-test scores, the results were 68%, 46% and 33% on the three subscales. The experimental group showed 78% cognitive anxiety, 80% somatic anxiety and 44% avoidance behavior on pre-test whereas after the treatment their intensity was 53%, 25% and 28% on post-test. The decrease in anxiety level after the treatment of systematic desensitization has been shown through

the following bar graph in which, blue lines representing pre-test and red lines represent post-test performance.

Graph of Table No 2

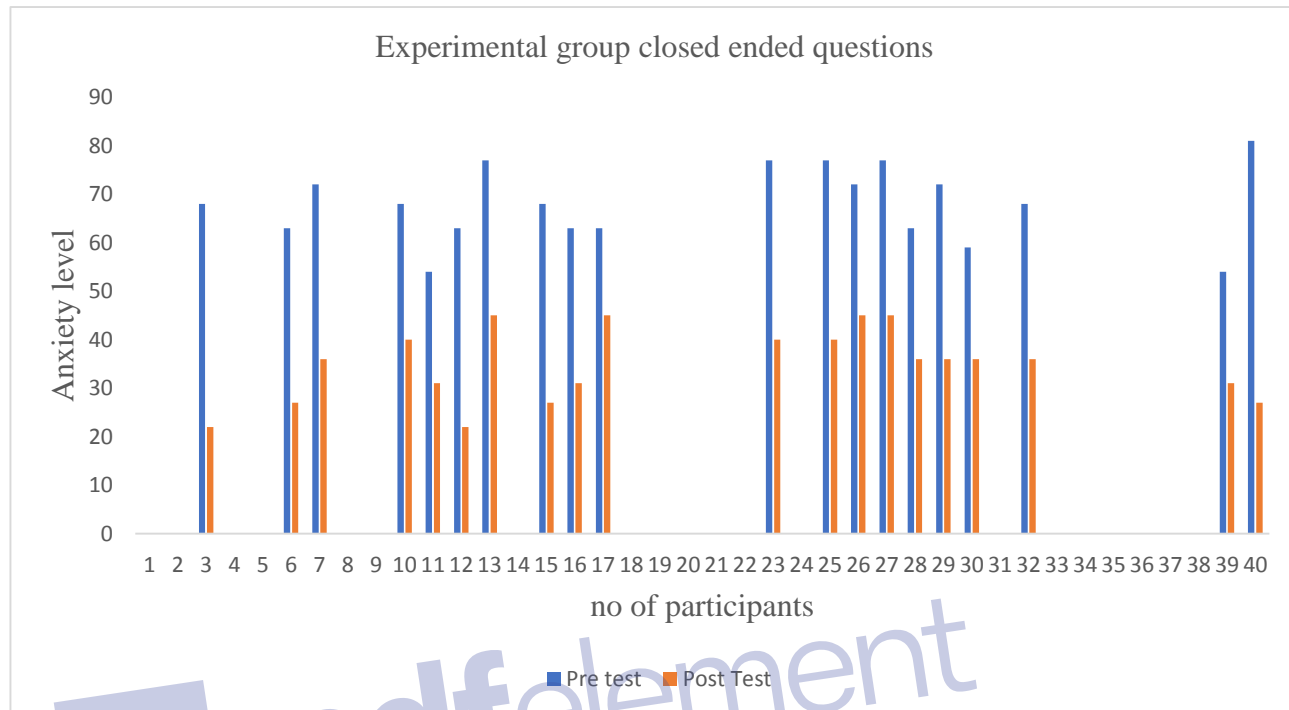
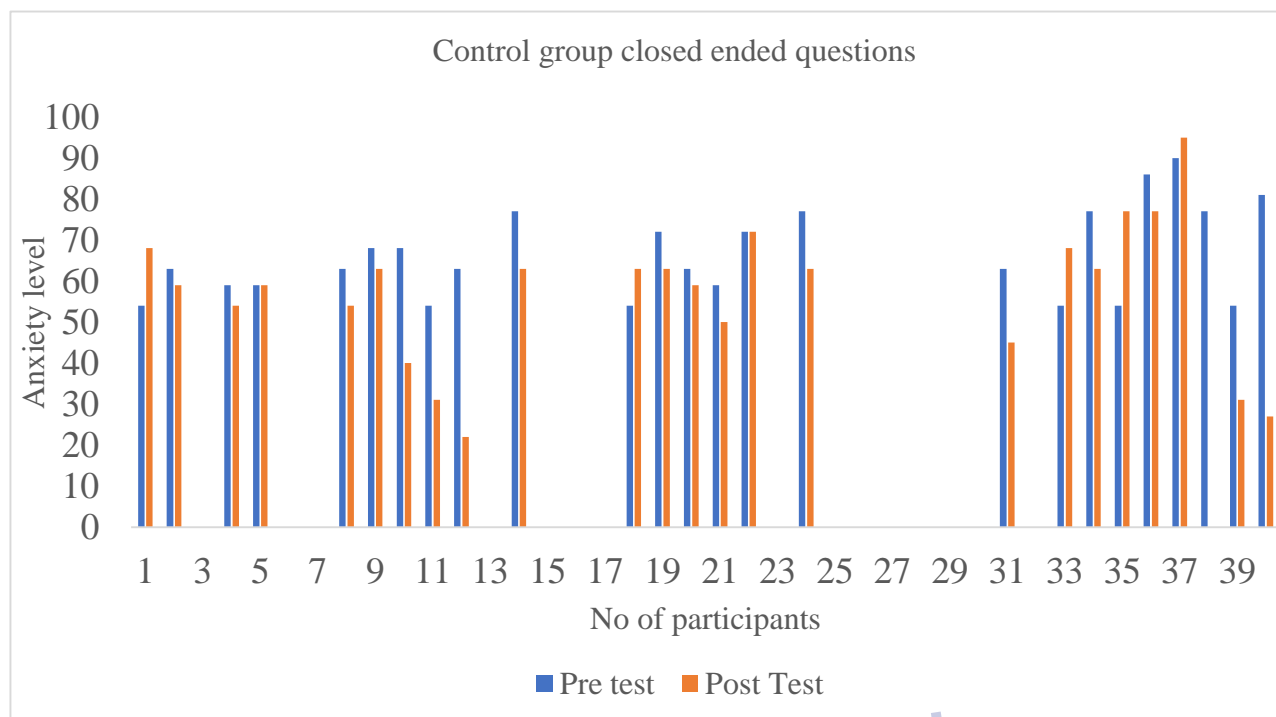


Table No 3 Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Control Group on Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory

Pre-test		Post-test	
Participant No.	Result in percentages	Participant No.	Result in percentages
01	54%	01	68%
02	63%	02	59%
04	59%	04	54%
05	59%	05	59%
08	63%	08	54%

09	68%	09	63%
14	77%	14	63%
18	54%	18	63%
19	72%	19	63%
20	63%	20	59%
21	59%	21	50%
22	72%	22	72%
24	77%	24	63%
31	63%	31	45%
33	54%	33	68%
34	77%	34	63%
35	54%	35	77%
36	86%	36	77%
37	90%	37	95%
38	77%	38	59%

The fluctuation of the anxiety level of the control group can be seen through the following graph



Although the above-mentioned results in percentages clearly show that there is a significant difference in the scores of pre-test and post-test of experimental group which are enough to prove the effectiveness of systematic desensitization but to present the results in more authentic way, the researcher has applied t-test, which compares the actual difference between two means in relation to the variation in the data which is expressed as the standard deviation of the difference of the means. The t-test determines how significant the difference between groups is. In other words, it helps to determine if those differences (measured in means/averages) could have happened by chance. A t-test is a type of inferential statistical tool used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups, which may be related in certain features.

The researcher has chosen a paired t-test because in this study, there are two measurements of the same person, that is, to compare the means to test the same student in two conditions. For the paired t-test, the null hypothesis is that the pair wise difference between the two tests is equal

$$(H_0: \mu_d = 0)$$

$$(H_1: \mu_d > 0)$$

After applying paired sample T-test, the following findings emerged:

T-test for Experimental group

ΣD	ΣD^2	$d = \Sigma D/n$	SD	DF	t-value	Significance
661	23269	33.05	8.65	19	17.08	1.729

Critical region

$$t > t_{1-\alpha, N}$$

$$t > t_{0.95, 19}$$

$$t > 1.729$$

As the calculated value of $t = 17.08$ which is far higher than 1.729 (table value) hence falls in the rejection region. So, on the basis of this evidence, the (H_0) can be rejected with the conclusion that anxiety level has decreased due to intervention.

T-test for control group

ΣD	ΣD^2	$d = \Sigma D/n$	SD	DF	t-value	significance
67	2669	3.35	11.34	19	1.32	1.729

As calculated value of $t = 1.32$ which is less than the critical value (1.729 or 2.093) the null hypothesis of no mean difference cannot be rejected. Therefore, on the basis of this sample evidence, it can be concluded that there is no mean difference between the scores of pre-test and post-test for the control group.

4.3.2 Results from Open-ended questions after Intervention

At the post-test stage, the participants were again inquired about their views on six open-ended questions regarding their experienced difficulties, physical reactions and their feelings about second language learning. They were also inquired about the situations and people connected to their writing anxiety. They were asked to mention

their positive or negative attitude after the intervention. A substantial change in attitudes of the participants was observed after the intervention. The students of control group mentioned almost the same difficulties in response to first question whereas the students of experimental group showed improved attitude towards difficulties. When the students of experimental group were inquired to mention the states and people connected to their writing anxiety, they reported that now they did not feel fear of situations which was terrible for them as they had faced those situations many times and now they were not tensed any more about them. The participants of experimental group did not feel any physical symptoms of writing anxiety anymore. Through the sessions of systematic desensitization, the participants of experimental group learnt to interact with each other so they reported that they shared their feelings with their class fellows and teachers and did not feel burdened any more. Overall, they showed positive attitude towards their targets.

After getting the results and views on open ended questions, and the scores of written compositions, the pre-test and post-test results were analyzed. The findings showed that all participants of experimental group had observed the strategies as valuable for their academic growth by dealing with writing anxiety. All the participants admitted that they observed a change in their behavior and response towards anxiety symptoms. The participants' comments demonstrated that they were satisfied with the treatment.

4.3.3 Results from Writing Task after Intervention

The basic purpose of systematic desensitization was to lessen the writing anxiety of second language learners so that they could improve their performance. When there was a decrease in the anxiety level due to systematic desensitization, the participants performed better on English composition task. They committed less errors on compositions and their performance was much better than before.

The results suggested a statistically visible change on performance among the members of experimental group before the application of systematic desensitization and after the treatment. For example, the participant No. 40 from experimental group was considered highly anxious person with 81% anxiety on SLWAI. The same participant scored 32% on English writing task but after the intervention he was able to reduce his anxiety. In the post- test, he scored 76 % marks on English composition. Similarly, the

participant's No. 13, 23, 25 and 27 were found to be anxious students having anxiety of 77% on SLWAI. These candidates achieved 36, 36, 32 and 40% on composition in the pre-test but after the treatment they got 68, 52, 52 and 72% respectively. The participants No.7, 26 and 29 who were anxious students before the treatment having 72% writing anxiety, their improved performance was 68, 64 and 60 % whereas it was 36, 40 and 40% before the treatment. The participants No: 3, 10, 15 and 32 from the experimental group experienced 68% anxiety before the treatment and achieved 48, 44, 48 and 44% marks on composition but after the treatment they achieved above 70% marks on the writing task. The participant's No. 6, 12, 16, 17 and 28 were suffering from writing anxiety with the percentage of 63 and got marks on English composition within the range of 52 and 56; they scored above 80% after the treatment. The participants no 39 and 11 were not very anxious before the treatment; even then they improved their writing skill after the treatment. On the whole the performance of experimental group was much better after the treatment so it can be concluded that writing performance is probable to fall when writing anxiety is intense.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter focused on revealing difficulties and experiences in the process of second language by the students of diploma course at NUML. The chapter has also focused on the description of anxiety levels of the learners and its impact on their performance, before and after the treatment of systematic desensitization. For this purpose, the participants' views, opinions and experienced difficulties have been mentioned as the main objective was to reduce the anxiety levels. In this chapter, the data has been presented from three data collection methods: the close-ended questionnaire (SLWAI), open-ended questions and English writing task. These three data collection methods were analyzed by using three different scales. The close-ended questionnaire was analyzed by Likert scale in the form of percentages, the open-ended questions were analyzed by using coding strategies, and the writing task was assessed through a rubric. In this chapter, the data from the three data collection methods, with three different analysis tools have been presented in three different stages of pre-test, post-test and intervention periods.

During the pre-test, the experienced anxiety levels of the participants, causes of their experiences, attitude towards English as a second language and their performance

on English through assignment of written composition was gauged and interpreted. The participants were introduced to the relaxation training of Systematic Desensitization in the second stage by conducting sessions twice in a week and sometimes thrice in a week. At the third stage, the post-test stage, all the three data collection tools were administered again. At the end of this chapter, the comparative difference between pre-test and post-test responses, and the effect of these differences upon the overall writing performance was investigated and the results of this investigation have been presented in this chapter. The comparative graphs have been presented to make the comparison more explicit and vivid.



CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study that were gained after analyzing the data and comparing the results of pre-test and post-test. Section 1 of this chapter has been dedicated to the findings of this research. Section 2, thoroughly discusses the findings of the study in relation to previous studies. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

5.1 Findings

While reporting the findings, the focus is kept on ‘systematic desensitization for reducing writing anxiety of the second language learners. As mentioned earlier, three scales were used for collecting data: close-ended questionnaire (SLWAI), open-ended questions and a writing activity. The three methods were used in this study to explore the problem from three dimensions. The findings of the study gained after the analysis from the three data collection methods have been presented below:

5.1.1 Findings from the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)

In an attempt to make the English language learners capable of dealing with their writing anxiety, it was necessary to know their understanding of writing anxiety during their learning of English as a second language. For this purpose, Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng (2004) was selected for the identification of writing anxiety among the selected English language learners. So this was the first scale used by the researcher to quantify the participants’ anxiety levels. This scale also measured the current status and condition of second language learners with respect to writing anxiety. This particular scale was selected for the following reasons: firstly, it was prepared exactly for anxiety faced by second language learners; secondly, it was constructed particularly for the identification of writing anxiety; thirdly, it complements the concept of anxiety as being multidimensional because it measures anxiety from three dimensions (cognitive, somatic and avoidance behavior) and lastly, since its construction until now, it is continuously in use which shows the validity of this scale. When it is said that anxiety is a multi-dimensional phenomenon then using a scale which measures anxiety from more than one dimension is quite

suitable. A detailed process for the identification of anxiety has been described in Chapter 3. The data from the 22 statements on SLWAI was analyzed through Likert scale in terms of percentages. Then t-test was applied to test the hypothesis of the study. The findings from SLWAI are presented below:

1. Application of Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) before treatment revealed that the participants from Diploma at NUML were experiencing anxiety while writing in English.
2. All the participants showed anxiety on the three sub-scales of inventory: cognitive, somatic and avoidance behavior. The experienced anxiety range before the treatment was (54-81) % for experimental group, and for control group it was (54-77) % which gave the rationale for the application of systematic desensitization as a therapeutic technique. The 83% participants showed symptoms of cognitive anxiety. About 78% were experiencing somatic anxiety as shown by their responses on the seven statements of somatic scale. The avoidance behavior was exhibited by 38% of the total sample.
3. According to the subscales of SLWAI, the highest proportion of the anxiety experienced by the participants was recorded on the scale measuring 'cognitive anxiety'. It meant that the learners were highly anxious due to external factors, such as: their class fellows' opinion for themselves, or their teachers' assessment of their writing.
4. In response to 22 statements representing three type of anxiety, the participants showed cognitive symptoms of nervousness, fear of evaluation, fear for comparative analysis, dread of poor grades, fear of being ridiculed, concern for others' opinions and lack of confidence.
5. On statements, representing somatic anxiety, the participants shared the feelings of heart pounding, blank mind, trembling, jumbled thoughts, panic, freezing up and physical tension in muscles of their body.
6. On the rest of the six statements, which designed to measure the avoidance behavior, the participants showed apprehension but it was comparatively less than cognitive and somatic anxiety.

7. The participants shared their views about second language writing anxiety on SLWAI. They stated that they felt anxiety in writing. They also stated that the anxiety of writing was not confined to one factor rather multiple factors were involved that caused anxiety, that is why, when it is said that anxiety is a multi-dimensional construct it seems to echo the same findings as reflected by the participants' views.

5.1.2 Findings from the Open-ended Questionnaire

Through the second tool of six open-ended questions, the participants were provided a chance to discuss the difficulties and problems that prevented them from doing their best. Again the motive was to improve the writing skills of the learners by focusing on those aspects which were crucial to their learning. Although these were only six questions, but they served as the guidelines for the application of systematic desensitization. The researcher collected the data in terms of categories. These categories were the representative of the difficulties and experiences observed of the participants that they faced during their Diploma course. The researcher tabulated these observations in terms of frequencies and percentages. The findings from the open-ended questions are presented below:

1. Surprise tests and limited time were the conditions which aggravated the participants' anxiety, whereas, the teachers and class fellows were the people associated with a rise in anxiety.
2. Due to anxiety, the participants exhibited physical symptoms of which were similar to those as they mentioned in response to the statements included in SLWAI.
3. Compulsive behavior and lack of confidence were two main factors responsible for their high anxiety levels, as shared by the participants.
4. Some participants were reluctant in sharing their feelings of anxiety while others were not.
5. Most of the students showed a positive attitude towards writing in English.

5.1.3 Findings from the Writing Task

In order to observe the effects of anxiety on the writing performance of the participants, their written compositions were observed. It was observed that the participants who scored high on anxiety scale showed poor performance on written task.

5.2 Findings from Intervention (Systematic Desensitization Treatment)

1. Systematic desensitization helped the participants to examine their beliefs regarding second language and to deal with their writing anxiety. It taught them how to handle stress, made them capable to deal with physical symptoms, to reduce their obsessions with the symptoms, to reduce avoidance attitude due to disturbing physical sensations, to improve their every behavior at home, at university and in social dealings.
2. The study established that if a participant suffered from second language writing anxiety, he/she showed their symptoms like: panic, unrelenting worries and obsessive thoughts, incapacitating that he/she was in need of treatment. The treatment of systematic desensitization helped the participants to expose the underlying sources of their doubts and terrors. It helped them to familiarize with the ways of relaxation and to perceive a fearful situation in a new and less terrifying way and to improve their confidence and problem-solving skills. In short, this treatment helped them overcome their writing anxiety.
3. The study revealed that all the participants of experimental group found the training of systematic desensitization as useful to reduce the fears related to writing in English. All the participants of experimental group admitted that their performance on English writing tasks was improved and enhanced by the strategies applied during the intervention. There was not a single participant who reported that s/he had not benefitted from the therapy.
4. It is not the situation that determines the way a person feels; rather, a person's thoughts determine his/her feelings towards a situation. This was the basic principle of systematic desensitization. According to it, not the external events, but the thoughts are responsible for feelings. For example, in this study, the participants were not incapable

of learning, but their thoughts about learning English as an insurmountable task made them anxious and they reacted accordingly.

5. Anxiety cannot be reduced in the blink of an eye. It takes time and it demands for dedication and commitment. Moreover, the number of sessions needed to work through the anxiety hierarchy varies from person to person. In this study some participants overcame their fears in short time whereas some took more time, so, it can be said that some fears can be handled in just six or seven sessions, more severe cases need several sessions of therapy.

6. Teaching second language to the learners of English to acquire the skill of writing is not an easy task. Systematic desensitization emphasized on facing the fears rather than avoiding them. There were cases when participants had worse condition before getting better. In such those cases, there was a need to stick to the treatment and follow instructions.

7. Through regular practice, the participants were taught stress management which brought effective results.

8. There are two methods to deal with anxious students; one is to help them to manage the anxious situation and the other is to make the learning context less stressful. Systematic desensitization proved to be a double action therapy. It helped the participants to control their fears and side by side made the setting less stressful for them.

5.3 Findings from Post-Test Measures

Only the experimental group underwent the intervention procedure. After that, both the groups were again tested on already applied three methods to record the differences in their responses and to see the difference on anxiety levels between the pre-test and post-test stages. The findings drawn from the post-test measures are given below:

5.3.1 Post-test Findings from SLWAI

After the intervention, although it cannot be said that there was a complete absence of anxiety, but a substantial difference of reduction in anxiety, was observed by the researcher. A difference in the results of control group was also noticed although

it was a slight difference. The difference may be due to attending regular classes though they were not given any treatment.

5.3.2 Post-test Findings from Open ended Questionnaire

Negative attitude towards writing in English turned into positive, the sensitivity of feeling was not intense and future expectations were also improved.

5.3.3 Post-test Findings from the Writing Task

It has been found that the participants' anxiety level was directly proportional to their writing performance. When the level of anxiety was high, the participants' performance was low and when the anxiety was low, the participants' performance went high. The final results were gauged by providing the participants with the same testing scales in order to investigate the effects of the therapy provided to them. Although the participants were still experiencing anxiety, but after the treatment it was comparatively less with a significant improvement in their writing. Hence, the findings demonstrate that the psycho-therapeutic technique of systematic desensitization is an effective remedy for reducing second language writing anxiety.

5.4 Discussion of the Findings

This part of the study encompasses the discussion of how this research achieved its objectives and attested the hypothesis, which concerned improving the writing skill of second language learners by reducing their anxiety through Systematic Desensitization. Second language learning is a multi-faceted phenomenon and when English is discussed as a second language in Pakistan then the status and demand of English in Pakistan poses an additional challenge to the learners. The most demanding challenge for the language learners is the issue of second language anxiety (writing and speaking) which reciprocates the importance of controlling it. Language anxiety is more obvious in the productive skills, such as: speaking and writing. The anxiety of writing in a second language and systematic desensitization as a remedy for it are the main facts of this research.

In order to meet the first objective of the study, there was a need to investigate two variables: one was writing anxiety and the other was the performance of the participants. Therefore two scales were implemented: one was SLWAI to detect the

participants' writing anxiety and second was the writing task to observe the effects of writing anxiety on their performance. The task was given to the participants twice, one before the treatment and then after the treatment. The purpose behind the writing task was to determine the effects of writing anxiety on performance and to observe the difference between two performances to gauge the efficacy of the therapy. The third measure was the open-ended questionnaires, which were filled by the participants to give them a chance to express their feelings about writing anxiety. The first scale of measurement that was SLWAI, analyzed the writing anxiety from three dimensional perspective based on Lang's (1971) idea that writing anxiety is a combination of three relatively independent mechanisms: cognitive, somatic and avoidance behavior. The analysis revealed that students of diploma class at NUML experience anxiety while writing second language. The 83% participants showed symptoms of cognitive anxiety, about 78% participants were experiencing somatic anxiety as shown by their responses on seven statements of somatic scale. The avoidance behavior was shown by the 38% of the total sample. According to the subscales of SLWAI, the most experienced anxiety is related to cognitive aspect.

The finding of the study that the students of Diploma in English experienced writing anxiety is in line with the previous studies. For example, it lends support to the studies conducted by Kusumaningputri, Ningsih & Wisasongko (2018), Jebreil, Azizifar, Gowhary & Jamalinesari (2015). All these studies also found that cognitive anxiety was one of the greatest experienced type of anxiety related to writing in a second language. The results of this study comply with writing anxiety factors presented by them. Whereas, the results of this study are different from Genc (2017) and Min & Rahmat (2014). According to them, somatic anxiety was the most common type of anxiety but the analysis of the data in this study revealed the highest percentage of cognitive aspect. Though three of the previous studies, such as Cheng (2004), Rezaei & Jafari (2014) have stated that the reason for these conflicting results may be the diversity in context as well as of respondents. All the above mentioned studies have been conducted with second language learners from diverse backgrounds so the difference in results can be attributed to those variations.

Cognitive anxiety which is represented by the mental states related to anxiety and has many consequences, is found to be the most frequently observed anxiety. On cognitive scale, it was found that the participants were experiencing nervousness,

worries of evaluation, worries of comparison with other students, anxiety of being under estimating, anxiety of poor grades, feelings of being ridiculed and lack of confidence. Due to cognitive anxiety, the participants often lose interest in class activities. The participants with this type of anxiety were prone to analyze the situation in a negative way. They also underestimate their abilities. For example, the participants No. 3,7,11,13,15,16,17,23,25,26,27,28,29 and 40 from the experimental group was underestimating their abilities.

Normally, at the first stage of anxiety, students underestimate their abilities and, at the next stage, they start losing confidence. Out of the sample, there were 82% participants who were worried about getting poor grades. More than 70% of the participants were suffering from the fears of being ridiculed by their class fellows. The most anxiety-provoking element among the participants was the fear of being misjudged by the others. 90% of the participants were suffering from this fear. The experimental group had this fear with 90% agreement. Even after receiving the treatment, they, complained of this fear with the intensity of 80%. 87% of the participants were afraid that their English compositions would be graded as very poor. In response to 20th question on SLWAI, 90% of the participants showed an excessive concern for their English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in the class.

The results of the last statement on cognitive scale, are in line with the observation made by Cheng (2004). He stated that cognitive anxiety referred to learners' mental characteristics through which they felt anxiety including undesirable expectations, obsessions with negative evaluation and concern about others' judgments. In this context, a common cause and effect relationship between test anxiety and the dread of being assessed can be observed as 95% of the participants were suffering from the fear of being evaluated which made them anxious. According to the studies by Yan & Horwitz (2008), stress may be a cause of students' excessive concern about academic assessment and academic attainment. The students set their own standards for themselves and when they cannot achieve the standard, they become tensed. Another strong element observed by the researcher was the 'fear of social evaluation' which was reflected by the responses of the participants. According to Horwitz (1986), students are obsessed with the thought that other student or teacher will misjudge them; consequently, they form a negative opinion about them or even laugh at them.

MacIntyre et al. (1997), for example, found that anxious students underestimate their competence as compared to less anxious ones who, on the other hand, overestimate their competence. Other researchers like, Aida (1994), Horwitz (1986) and Cheng (1999) also pointed out a negative correlation between anxiety level and performance. Similarly, Min & Rahmat, (2014) also considered second language writing anxiety as one of the crucial factors influencing second language learning. The results of the current study also reflected the same component of apprehension among the selected second language learners.

During pre-test, through open-ended questions, the researcher found out that the participants experienced the adverse feeling of anxiety owing to spelling errors, grammatical errors, inappropriate vocabulary, surprise tests, class fellows, and teachers' judgment, limited time, compulsive behavior, empty mind and lack of confidence. The results of the study fully support the writing anxiety factors presented by Kusumaningputri, Ningsih & Wisasongko (2018). The language learners stated that in addition to these experiences they also felt confusion, hesitation, panic, nervousness, low blood pressure, trembling and sweating. After the treatment, the participants' perception of L2 learning was quite positive. The participants' changed perception about writing in English can also be observed in their worries about sharing their performance with their classmates.

The results of writing task verified that high level of writing anxiety led to a low level of performance. The students who were recognized as highly anxious, their performance was low as compared to those who were less anxious on SLWAI. This finding was not surprising as many earlier studies had come up with the same relationship between writing anxiety and performance (such as, Cheng, 2004; Hassan, 2001; Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). According to them, high anxiety might have negative consequences on students' overall language performance in general and on specific language skills in particular. The results of the present study was consistent with and supported these earlier findings providing specific evidence for the harmful effects of writing anxiety on learners' timed writing performance as well. Furthermore, Horwitz et al. (1986), have shown in their studies that students' anxiety levels are high during language courses. It is also likely that writing performance is probably going to drop when and where writing anxiety is high. These findings are in line with a set of past researches which have revealed negative

relationship between writing anxiety and performance both in EFL and ESL settings (e.g., Kean et.al, 1987; Masny and Foxall, 1992; Hassan, 2001; Cheng, 2004; Zhang, 2011).

However, when the participants were learning relaxation exercises and side by side they were writing and discussing their anxiety hierarchies, this activity indeed contributed in reducing their anxiety and they shared that they felt relaxed. According to Zhang (2008), in a second language class, activities are very essential to confirm that the learning process is really going well. Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1991), stated that students are very self-conscious especially when they are demanded to participate in classroom activities. These kinds of activities expose their shortfalls and this sensitivity often becomes a cause of anxiety or even panic. Second language writing anxiety is situation-specific anxiety which is aroused by a specific type of situation or event. According to Horwitz (1986), there are two options to deal with situation-specific anxious students. Firstly the teachers can assist the students to cope with the existing anxiety provoking situation and secondly they can make the learning context less stressful. So the procedure of systematic desensitization acted successfully in both ways.

Moreover, it is imperative for the instructors and teachers of second language learners to be more cautious of this matter and try to generate a non-threatening setting for the learning of second language. This study has demonstrated systematic desensitization as an effective treatment for second language writing anxiety. All the participants of experimental group gave positive feedback after its application. None of the participants conveyed that his/her condition had worsened after attending the sessions on the therapy. It proved the efficacy of systematic desensitization as a remedy for treating second language learners' writing anxiety, thereby, improving their performance on written tasks.

5.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter is dedicated to present the findings that emerged after the interpretation of the results presented in the previous chapter. While presenting the findings, the focus was maintained on two variables: one was the issue of second language writing anxiety and the other was a therapeutic technique of systematic

desensitization as the solution. The data was collected by using three different methods, viz. close-ended questionnaire, open-ended questions and a writing task. Three different tools were used to analyze the data collected from the three methods. The findings were presented in 3 sub-sections: the first sub-section was devoted to the findings from the second language writing inventory (SLWAI), the second sub-section was dedicated to present the findings from open-ended questions and the third sub-section focused on the findings drawn from the writing task.

The findings from the first scale SLWAI revealed that the participants from Diploma in English experienced anxiety during their English writing tasks. Among the three types of second language writing anxiety, the cognitive anxiety was the most prevalent form of anxiety. They also felt anxiety of the other two types, somatic and avoidance behavior, but the percentage was less on those two types of anxiety. When the participants were allowed to express their feelings regarding second language writing anxiety on open-ended questions, the participants recorded their underlying difficulties with their views about future outcomes. The results of the writing tasks reflected the relationship between their performance and their acquired anxiety scores on SLWAI as those participants who were highly anxious were low achievers on writing task. Similarly, the participants with less anxiety scored better on writing tasks. This findings also testified the relationship between writing anxiety and performance in writing.

The second phase of the research was a major step on which the therapy was given to the participants of experimental group. The therapy comprised of nineteen sessions which were conducted during the participants' regular classes. The therapeutic sessions gave the students a platform to discuss, share and face their problems in a systematic way. At the third stage of the study, the selected participants provided data on all the three research methods again to testify the efficacy of the treatment. A substantial difference was found between the scores of experimental and control group. The participants' views about the therapy, after the intervention, proved the effectiveness of systematic desensitization as a remedy for the participants' writing anxiety. Thus, the findings of the study demonstrated that systematic desensitization which is a therapy for reducing anxieties and phobias can also be utilized in English language classroom to reduce the writing anxiety of ESL learners.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study intended to investigate how a psycho-therapeutic technique systematic desensitization could be brought into the realm of language learning for reducing the anxiety of writing in order to enhance the skill. This study had three purposes. The first purpose was to investigate whether the students of Diploma in English at NUML experienced anxiety while writing, and if they did, was it affecting their performance? The second purpose was to implement a psychological technique of systematic desensitization to make the students capable of reducing their anxiety; whereas, the third purpose was to see the effects of this therapy on the writing skill of the participants. The motive behind this study was to find out the efficacy of a psychotherapeutic technique which was basically developed to treat the irrational fears (phobias). The present study intended to apply this technique to deal with the fears concerning the learning of second language by keeping in mind that language learning is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and psychological aspect is one of its dimensions. In a way, it is the most important dimension as any lacking in this aspect cannot be compensated by the strengths of other dimensions.

So far, the previous studies have tackled numerous difficulties and problems that second language learners face and suggested multiple strategies, but it has been accepted and acknowledged that language anxiety is not only a social and educational problem but psychological too, therefore, it needs to be treated by using psychological therapies. One key objective of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of writing anxiety by combining insights from two interlinked approaches: psychology and linguistics. To achieve its aim, the study reviewed some of the leading psycholinguistic experimental studies examining the issue of anxiety during the learning of a second language. The focus was particularly on the strategies which have been adopted so far to deal with the issue of second language anxiety.

A survey of psycholinguistic experimental studies has already established its significance, yet at the same time revealed their overwhelming dependence on a single skill of language, i.e., speaking and their grave neglect of the other skills of language which are equally important. To fill this gap, the present study set out to find a solution

for the anxiety of writing, another very important language skill. For this purpose, a psychotherapeutic technique is used as the premise on which this experimental study is based in order to achieve a more effective solution for the problem and by doing this adds to the body of existing research on reducing writing anxiety.

This study combined both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data collection methods were chosen keeping in view the study's demands of eliciting the participants' experiences regarding anxiety during the learning of second language. Three tools were used to gather data comprising of close-ended questionnaire (SLWAI), open-ended questions and a writing activity. Accordingly, three different analytical tools were employed for the analysis of data, viz. Likert scale, a coding strategy and a rubric. The results from the three data collection methods satisfactorily met the objectives of this research. The findings of this study were compared with those of the previous studies.

According to the first objective the study tried to reveal that writing anxiety could affect the performance of ESL learners. The responses on SLWAI provided evidence that the students of English Diploma at NUML were experiencing writing anxiety. The results were obtained after calculating the percentages of the responses of the participants. The results from SLWAI when correlated with the results obtained from the English writing task confirmed that the selected second language learners were suffering from writing anxiety. The harmful effect of writing anxiety on their performance on English writing task was also confirmed.

Furthermore, the comparison of the pre-test and post-test performances on writing task also verified the link between writing anxiety and performance by suggesting that the anxiety of writing in second language serves as an obstacle in the way of learning. The participants were asked to submit written assignments with the purpose of observing the performance of particularly those participants who had scored high on anxiety scale. All the participants confirmed that second language writing anxiety affected their writing performance. Those participants who scored high on SLWAI, achieved low scores on written tasks whereas those students who were less anxious on the inventory scored high on their written work.

In order to meet the second objective, the technique of Systematic Desensitization was applied to reduce the anxiety of writing among English language learners. The participants from Diploma in English were tested on three different scales

through pre-test and post-test. Before the treatment, the students were high on anxiety scale and their performance reflected their anxiety. After the treatment, their anxiety level was low and in response their performance was better. Moreover, there was also a positive transformation in their vision towards second language which was undoubtedly the consequence of systematic desensitization. This positive change was felt after the post-test application of six open-ended questions. In order to meet the third objective, which meant to determine whether systematic desensitization technique could improve the writing skills of the participants by reducing their anxiety levels, the affirmative results were in sync with the hypothesis. Hence the hypothesis was verified. The hypothesis of the present research tested the effects of systematic desensitization technique in reducing the anxiety of writing in second language which was English in this case.

The hypothesis of the study was tested by using the following statistical measures:

1. The mean and standard deviation were calculated for the scores of the participants on the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI).
2. A paired T-test was used to investigate if there were any statistically significant differences in the level of second language anxiety among the participants due to the intervention of systematic desensitization.

The results of the study revealed that there were statistically considerable differences between the scores of experimental and control group on SLWAI and writing task. The results showed that systematic desensitization was quite influential in reducing second language writing anxiety of the participants. Therefore, the findings supported the hypothesis. The results may be interpreted in light of the level of effectiveness in using systematic desensitization in reducing second language writing anxiety as reflected by the post-test results of English writing task. Therefore, it may be claimed that the writing anxiety of second language learners can be treated effectively by using the therapy of systematic desensitization.

The selected participants of diploma in English at NUML were divided into two groups: experimental group and control group on the basis of random sampling. Only the experimental group was given the therapy of systematic desensitization, which

consisted of eighteen sessions. Both the groups were attending their regular classes. Both the groups were going through the same learning, same curriculum with one exception that the experimental group was getting the therapy whereas the control group was not given any additional treatment. After the treatment when both the groups were tested, there was a significant difference between the scores of both the groups. Since the assignment of the participants to experimental and control group was based on random sampling and both the groups were same on all required measures so at the end of the experiment, it helped to ensure that this difference of scores between and within the groups was solely the impact of the experimental procedure, systematic desensitization.

Moreover, systematic desensitization may prove essentially helpful for treating specific fears, for example, social fears which are related to the surrounding people. This therapy is essentially powerful when anxiety is not because of the skills' shortfall. For instance, if a student feels anxiety of writing in the class or tests with the habit of not studying or not doing homework, at that point the reason for anxiety might be presumably the consequence of absence of learning; desensitization may not be of much assistance in those cases. The viability of systematic desensitization does not seem to rely on the measure of anxiety, the length of anxiety, and the amount of anxiety or whether the anxiety was gained all of a sudden or gradually. Systematic desensitization is a moderate procedure taking by-and-large 6-8 sessions. However, the experts recommend that the more extended the method, the more compelling it becomes.

In the end, it is worth-emphasizing that the study holds significance not only in the field of linguistics but also in the field of psychology. It may safely be stated that second language learners are not born anxious so the use of appropriate strategies can contribute to lessen their stress and direct them towards a smooth process of learning. The results suggest that the application of systematic desensitization is highly successful and valuable for reducing the writing anxiety, in particular, and language anxiety in general, among second language learners.

6.1 Recommendations for Further Research

The recommendations for further research are given below:

1. In future, the research may include the examination of other potential factors as well. For example, although the second research tool in the present study consisted of six-open ended questions and the students were free to give opinions even then the students were restricted to remain under those six categories. In future research, the students may not be restricted to six categories mentioned in this research. The future research may add other categories for further exploration of second language writing anxiety.
2. The size of the sample should also be increased in future research regarding second language anxiety in order to generalize the results. The sample was too small, therefore, the findings from this research might not represent Pakistani L2 learners and English learning context in general. For future research, researchers should include more representative and sample groups to better reflect Pakistani students in general.
3. The therapy, systematic desensitization, was considered as a co-curricular activity in this research. A future research can be conducted after making this therapy a part of the curriculum for ESL learners.
4. In the future research, the students from different regional and linguistic backgrounds can be taken as sample as they may vary on the types of anxieties, they experience.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

As with any research, there are constraints that must be accepted and considered when appraising the findings and results of the study. The limitations of this study are given below:

1. Psychological treatment is a slow and gradual process that demands sufficient time. There was very short time available for the treatment.
2. Systematic desensitization continued focusing on helping second language learners to reduce tension, apprehension and anxiety, without considering probable relationship with factors, such as: low language proficiency.

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APPENDIX A

SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING ANXIETY INVENTORY

Read these statement below very carefully. For each statement, among the choices (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5), put a tick (√) under the most suitable one for you. We kindly request you be honest while answering the question.

Thank you for your participation.

- (1) SD : I Strongly Disagree
 (2) D : I Disagree
 (3) NSF : I have no Strong feelings either way
 (4) A : I Agree
 (5) SA : I Strongly Agree

	(1) SD	(2) D	(3) NSF	(4) A	(5) SA
1. While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.					
2. I feel my heart pounding, when I write English composition under time constraint.					
3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated,					
4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.					
5. I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.					
6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.					
7. I worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others.					
8. I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure.					
9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grades.					
10. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.					
11. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.					
12. Unless, I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions.					
13. I often feel panic when I write English composition under time constraint.					

14. I am afraid that the other students would deride my English composition if they read it.					
15. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.					
16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.					
17. I worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.					
18. I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.					
19. I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when write English compositions.					
20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.					
21. I am afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.					
22. Whenever possible, I wold use English to write compositions.					

APPENDIX B

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

(adapted from Atay and Kurt, 2006)

1. Do you experience any difficulties while writing in L2? If yes, what are they?
2. Name the situations and people connected with your writing anxiety?
3. What kind of physical changes occur while you are writing in L2?
4. How do you feel when writing in L2?
5. Have you shared your experience of writing anxiety with anyone?
6. How do you think your attitudes towards L2 writing will affect your future teaching practices?

APPENDIX C

WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Criteria Of Assessment	Criteria For Points			
Organization & Contents	4 Points	6 Points	8 Points	10 Points
	Writing is not coherent at all and hard to understand content	Writing is not coherent and consistent frequently and only lists information	Writing is logical and comprehensive without much creativity	Writing is coherent and logical creative
Linguistic Accuracy (Grammar & Spelling)	1 Points	2 Points	3 Points	5 Points
	If there are more than 15 grammatical mistakes or misspellings	If there are over 10 grammatical mistakes or misspellings	If there are 8 to 9 grammatical mistakes or misspellings	If there are less than 07 grammatical mistakes or misspellings
Fulfilment of the task or purpose	1 Points	2 Points	3 Points	5 Points
	Irrelevant to the topic with short amount of writing	Often off the topic with the short amount writing	Relevant to the topic with short amount of expected amount of writing	Highly relevant to the topic with appropriate amount of writing
Neatness	2 Points		5 Points	
	Illegible handwriting and irritating smudges		Legible writing or typing with neat layout	

APPENDIX D

WRITING ANXIETY HIERARCHY

1. Getting ready to go to university in the morning.
2. Walking to the university, thinking about writing class.
3. Walking into the classroom and thinking about writing task.
4. Sitting at the back of the seat.
5. Sitting in the middle of the class.
6. Sitting at the front of the seats.
7. The teacher ask the students to make groups and write anything they want without time limit within groups.
8. The teacher ask the student to write any composition under time limit within groups.
9. The teacher told the students to write on the given topic within time limit and within group members.
10. The teacher instructs to check the group activity by the group itself.
11. The students were told to write within the group but were instructed to be checked by the next group.
12. The students were given individual activity without time limit.
13. The students were told to do individual free writing within time limit.
14. The teacher announces to write individual writing with given topic under time limit.
15. The writing task is being passed out and you receive a copy of the task topic.
16. Starting the writing task.
17. Being stuck in the middle of the writing task.
18. Noticing that the time is almost up and you are only half finished within the task.
19. The time is up.
20. Collecting the finished task.
21. Evaluation of the task by the teacher.
22. Discussion on evaluation.