Investigating Online Dialogue Journal Writing Impacts on Low Proficiency Students' Writing Anxiety

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Abstract

Writing anxiety issues among ESL learners are apparent in Malaysian education contexts. Studies found low English proficiency students faced more worries due to numerous challenges in the process of stating their thoughts and ideas when writing on paper. Hence, this mixed methods case study was conducted to investigate the impact of online dialogue journal writing (ODJW) on writing anxiety among low proficiency ESL undergraduates at a Malaysian public university. The ODJW intervention project was conducted as a supplementary writing activity outside the regular contact hours of a Preparatory English Course. The project required the students to write dialogue journal entries about some topics posted at the university's e-learning portal to their instructors and peers. 26 first year social science undergraduates was selected using a purposive sampling technique to participate in the 12-week study project. The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) was employed to measure the students' writing anxiety, and to identify its types namely somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety and avoidance behaviour. The project had a positive impact in reducing the students' writing anxiety levels significantly and most of them experienced a shift in the type of writing anxiety, from somatic anxiety to cognitive anxiety. This study therefore, substantiates the usefulness of ODJW in alleviating writing anxiety, and is well recommended particularly for low proficiency ESL undergraduates.

Keywords: Journal writing; Low proficiency; English as a Second Language; Online dialogue; Writing anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of writing anxiety among ESL learners is apparent in Malaysian education contexts. Chastain (1988) defines anxiety as an uneasy feeling or emotion caused by something aggressive that is always associated with nervousness, excessive emotional reactions, apprehension and lack of confidence. MacIntyre (1995) specifies language anxiety as "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (p. 27). On the other hand, the nature of writing, as one of the productive skills in the English language, deems it to be a challenging and demanding process. From generation of ideas and gathering required data to publication of a finalized script (Ansarimoghaddam & Tan, 2014), writing instigates cognitive challenges and thinking process (Kellogg, 2001) because writing and thinking works simultaneously. The mental struggles the writer goes through is a complex learning process and becomes even more so when writing in a second language. In fact, writing is the one of the language skills most associated with sources of language anxiety (Aziz, 2007), and most ESL students are afraid to engage in writing tasks because they perceived writing as difficult, on top of their poor command of the language (Erkan & Saban, 2011).

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Situating the study in Malaysian tertiary and secondary school contexts, researches conducted found clear evidences of writing anxiety experienced by ESL students, and the effect on the their writing performances (Rahim, Jaganathan, & Mahadi, 2016; Ansarimoghaddam & Tan, 2014; Min & Rahmat, 2014; Rahim, & Hayas, 2014; Foroutan et al., 2012; Singh & Rajalingam, 2012). Riasati (2011) identified anxiety as one of the key factors influencing second language learning because it has psychological effects. It was found that the excessive fear in writing are triggered by students' feelings, beliefs and behaviours (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012). This also means writing anxiety can have either a positive or negative effect on students' willingness to do English writing tasks (Rahim et al. 2016). Though the effects may vary, writing anxiety poses a significant influence in determining ESL learners' performance in learning the language.

However, specific research on writing anxiety among low proficiency ESL learners, especially in identifying their levels and types of writing anxiety experienced by these learners at the tertiary level remains scarce. It is expected that low English proficiency students experience more worries and uneasiness when writing in English because of the numerous challenges they face in the process of stating their thoughts and ideas on paper. Hence, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) urge language teachers to consider the possibility of debilitating anxiety causing a student's poor performance instead of attributing the student's poor performance to factors such as a lack of ability, inadequate background, or poor motivation. The urge calls for a continuous effort to identify the impact of anxiety and the appropriate practices of ESL writing methods that can help to lower learners' writing anxiety levels, particularly for the low English proficiency students.

One of the efforts initiated by language instructors in addressing ESL students' writing anxiety is the dialogue journal writing technique. Dialogue journal writing is viewed as a form of written, frequent conversation and dialogue whereby a two-way communication takes place between a teacher and a student (Peyton, 2000). It is a popular free writing method that provides the opportunity to write regularly and informally. Peyton (2000) advocates that, dialogue journals offer the natural setting for written communication to take place with the purpose of developing literacy and language skills. The on-going written interactions between students and instructors can help lower students' writing anxiety levels and concurrently, enhance their writing skills. The instructors on the other hand, play a role as responding partners in the written discussion, not as a grader or evaluator. Overall, the dialogue journal writing has been conventionally considered as a non-threatening, expressive mode of writing.

This study hence, proposes an effort to help low proficiency ESL learners in reducing their writing anxiety through an interactive and non-graded tasks in a low-anxiety environment. Through computer-mediated communication (CMC) that provides relevant authentic space and appropriate platform as an alternative classroom, Online Dialogue Journal Writing (ODJW) intervention project was conducted. This online version of the conventional dialogue journal writing via an e-learning platform aims to alleviate writing anxiety among low proficiency ESL undergraduates studying at a public Malaysian university. This study therefore, aims to investigate ODJW impact on the low proficiency students' level of writing anxiety using the adapted Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI).

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Writing Anxiety among ESL Learners

To most Malaysian ESL students, learning English is not an easy task even though they may have been taught English for 11 years, since their primary and secondary school levels. According to Mohamed & Darus (2012), writing in the ESL context causes problems to a student in terms of psychology, linguistic and cognitive. Psychologically, a student may find it hard to write since the actual writing process involves the student completing the task alone (Bryne, 1988). Moreover, linguistically, writing is difficult because it requires the student to construct grammatically correct sentences and to form the organization of the points accordingly. In the cognitive aspect, the student has to use his initiative and intelligence in putting words together to make the written product 'visible' and meaningful to the audience (Bryne, 1988). The students

may have the content knowledge but at the same time they have to think of the mechanics of writing. In this case, the student has to be able to convey his or her ideas on paper logically and practically. The task is even more difficult as the student will not have the chance to receive immediate feedback from the reader, who is mainly the English Language teacher. As a result, the student will have to be very careful in writing down his ideas so as to avoid any misunderstanding.

Hence, this highly demanding skill can create writing anxiety in ESL learners and most of the time, high levels of anxiety leads to demotivation and discouragement, which indirectly results in students having negative and unpleasant perceptions towards writing (Sharples, 1993). In a similar vein, Pajares (2003) confirms that students with low writing proficiency will most likely display characteristics of unwillingness to write, lack confidence in their ability to write or are apprehensive about writing. These students are afraid to make writing errors and they actually feel that expressing themselves in written English is above their command of the language and their ability to express themselves adequately in writing.

2.2   Second Language Writing Anxiety

The area on Second Language Writing Anxiety has been extensively researched and considered as one of the main factors affecting second language learning. For that, Cheng (2004) developed Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) as an instrument to measure the degree of anxiety experienced by ESL learners in performing writing tasks. The SLWAI consists of three subscales i.e. Cognitive Anxiety, Somatic Anxiety, and Avoidance Behaviour. Cognitive Anxiety encompasses negative expectations, concern with the outcome and fear about others' perception. The Somatic Anxiety refers to one's perception of the physiological effects of anxiety. It is predominantly identified by unpleasant feelings such as nervousness and tension. The behavioural aspect of the anxiety primarily resulting in avoidance of the writing task is known as the Avoidance Behaviour.

Using SLWAI instrument, Cheng (2004) found the relationship between language anxiety and written performance, which was mainly due to cognitive anxiety. Though most of engineering students faced high Somatic anxiety (Min & Rahmat, 2014), Cognitive anxiety was identified as the most common type of ESL writing anxiety experienced by learners. Zhang (2011) who later substantiated the findings revealed that cognitive anxiety was the highest level of anxiety faced by most non-technical programme based (English Language major) students. As such, Cheng's (2004) SLWAI was suitable to be adapted in this study as an instrument in finding out the levels and types of writing anxiety of the low proficiency ESL students.

2.3   The Underpinning Language Theories

There are three language learning theories guiding this study. The first is Vygotsky's (1978) theory of constructivism that advocates learners learn by doing. Learners actively assimilate knowledge while constructing and interpreting new ideas based on their current and past knowledge. The social constructivists' views offer an alternative to the traditional teacher-centred classrooms by focusing on the individual learners, hence creating a student-centred approach. Furthermore, scaffolding which is the central element in a constructivist learning environment serves to assist students to bridge the gap between their existing knowledge and the unknown information. In other words, it enables students to obtain information that may be slightly above their current ability by using what they already know to inform what they need to know with the crucial role of the instructor to help facilitate that process of independent learning. This concept is embedded in the current study as student and teacher write to each other in the ODJW project.

In addition, constructivism is represented by four main elements to ensure that learners are dynamically involved in the process of knowledge construction. The four elements: a) authentic learning, b) engaged or active learning, c) socially constructed and, d) whole language approach to literacy, form as the background of this study. ODJW project aims to promote and provide low proficiency ESL learners an alternative approach to language learning. Vygotsky's theory of learning heightens the importance of creating an appropriate, learning environment where learners are motivated and encouraged to construct new knowledge and perceptions based on their experiences and interactions with others.

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis is also used to guide this study. Krashen (1982) identifies anxiety as one of the variables that has a crucial role is second language acquisition, apart from motivation and self-confidence. The affective filter will be raised or lowered depending on the situation and it affects acquisition. This means students who are highly motivated, self-confident and have low anxiety levels, will stand a better opportunity in acquiring the target language. On the contrary, students who are lowly motivated, have low self-esteem and are highly anxious, will most likely experience 'mental block', which will lead to 'comprehensive input' deficiency. The affective filter is raised due to high anxiety level caused by unfavourable learning conditions (Krashen, 1982). Hence, instructors should make a conscious effort to provide learners with low filter learning conditions that are conducive for language acquisition. Furthermore, acquisition occurs best when learners are in a situation where they internalize the target language unconsciously, similar to a child learning a language from his parents or adults in his immediate environment. In the context of online dialogue journal writing, the regular writing practice indirectly promotes acquisition of writing skills which is internalized through the natural written interaction that occurs between students and teacher.

In addition, Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory (SCT) postulates that self-efficacy, or one's judgment about what one can accomplish, is a powerful determinant of behaviour. In SCT, interactive learning enables students to gain confidence through regular practice. It posits the idea that interactive learning occurs in a social environment, where individuals observe and acquire appropriate models, skills, strategies, beliefs and attitudes. In the context of the study, low proficiency learners with different types of writing anxiety levels will undergo interactive writing practice with instructors via ODJW.

2.4   Studies on Dialogue Journal Writing

Dialogue journal writing supports writing processes by providing an authentic two-way written interaction between writing partners. Students and intructors develop a close relationship through the reader/responder roles they are engaged in during the dialogue journal writing process. The dialogues are ways to empower learners and build trusts between students and instructors to reduce writing anxiety (Foroutan, 2009; Liao & Wong, 2010) because as students' written entries are read, feedbacks are provided by instructors. This two-way interactive written communication provides the students with an opportunity to think, write, read and respond, which inherently improves overall literacy development.

Additionally, the nature of dialogue journals help to alleviate low proficiency learners' writing anxiety as it does not correct students' writing overtly. Modelling of correct grammatical forms and sentence structures is an advantage from the written interaction which is better than overt correction of student errors (Peyton, 1986). This benefit of dialogue journals provide opportunities for students to acquire correct grammatical forms and structures by reading the instructor's responses and imitating them. It subtly encourage students, through their own space and time, to gain self-confidence in writing, and hopefully reduce the fear in writing task.

Much of the literature in this area uses emails as the tool for dialogue journal writing discussion and communication between student-teacher and also student-student (Foroutan et al., 2013; Eksi, 2013; VanderMolen, 2011). As well, the studies investigated the potential of email dialogue journals and its effect on students' writing performance (Thevasigamoney & Md. Yunus, 2014; Foroutan et al., 2012; Rezaei, 2011; Murnahan, 2010; Foroutan, 2009). Apparently, this marks the utilisation of technology like emails to offer a less threatening platform as a means of communication and interaction, hence alleviates writing anxiety. There are also studies on the use of emails as the mode for dialogue journaling (Foroutan et al., 2013; Eksi, 2013; Vandermolen, 2011; Chang, 2011). Likewise, this study chooses a forum tool in the Moodle learning management system as an online dialogue journal writing platform. The tool in this study known as ODJW is used in an intervention project to alleviate low proficiency students' writing anxiety. The investigation then is aimed to identify the impact of ODJW on the targeted group of students' anxiety because this is the identified gap in the literature, apart from the clear evidence of the students' fear in writing based on their performance in Malaysian University English Test (MUET).

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Research Design

This case study employed a quantitative instrument to gather the necessary data for the study. Since this is a case study focusing on a single case and guided by specific reasons, the respondents for this study were selected purposively. A two-phased approach framed the 12-week study by executing an intervention and non-intervention approach in the study. The intervention approach was carried out outside the regular class hours of the course. In the first six weeks of the project, the researcher played an active role as a participant observer who actively participated in the process of writing dialogue journals with each student. A participant observer is the one who is fully engaged and participated actively in all the tasks and activities of a study (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

Later, in the second phase of the study (the subsequent six weeks), the researcher intentionally refrained from participating with the respondents in their dialogue journal interactions. This time, the role of the researcher was as a nonparticipant observer. In this non-intervention approach phase, the respondents were randomly paired-up with a partner and were required to write to the same person throughout the six weeks. The researcher monitored and observed the written interactions among the respondents without interfering. Hence, the researcher intentionally employed the intervention and non-intervention approach in the study to enable the respondents to interact in two different environments.

3.2   Participants of the Study

This study involved 26 first year undergraduates from the School of Social Science who enrolled in a Preparatory English Course at a public university in Malaysia. The students were categorised as having low English proficiency based on their Malaysian University English Test (MUET) Bands i.e. Bands 1, 2, and 3 out of 6. These students were required to enrol the Preparatory English Course, which is a basic level English proficiency course before they could proceed to the intermediate and advanced levels of English proficiency courses. The purposive sampling technique enabled the researcher to select an intact group of 26 undergraduates who matched the criteria of low proficiency ESL students.

3.3   Instrumentation

As discussed previously, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) questionnaire adapted in this study comprised 22 items. It was adapted and used in this study as the pre and post-test, before and after the 12-week intervention. The SLWAI had a Five-point Likert response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It was divided into three sections in accordance with the types of writing anxiety namely Cognitive Anxiety (CA) eight items, Somatic Anxiety (SA) seven items, and Avoidance Behaviour (AB) seven items. The adapted SLWAI version for this study was validated for its internal consistency reliability with the $\square$= 0.896 for the 22 items. Table 1 presents the types of writing anxiety and item number for each.

Table 1. Types of writing anxiety in SLWAI and its item number

Type of writing anxiety	N Items	Item number
Cognitive anxiety (CA)	8	1,3,7,9,14,17,20,21
Somatic anxiety (SA)	7	2,6,8,11,13,15,19
Avoidance behaviour (AB)	7	4,5,10,12,16,18,22

3.4   Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

Prior to the commencement of the ODJW intervention project, a briefing and training session were held so that the participants of the study could be trained and briefed. After the briefing, they were required to complete the pre-SLWAI questionnaire. This was followed by a hands-on session of using the forum tool in the eLearn@USM platform to practice writing the dialogue journals. The eLearn@USM is the official online learning management system (LMS) for all courses in the university. The ODJW project was conducted for 12 weeks. At the end of that duration, the respondents responded the post-SLWAI questionnaire. Both the pre and post SLWAI questionnaire scores were calculated and analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, median and standard deviation) and paired sample t-test. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22 was used to analyse the pre-post SLWAI. This was to measure if there were any significant differences in the low proficiency ESL learners' writing anxiety levels and the types of writing anxiety.

The writing anxiety scores in the SLWAI are classified into three writing anxiety levels i.e. high writing anxiety (HWA), moderate writing anxiety (MWA) and low writing anxiety (LWA). The scores and writing anxiety levels in the SLWAI are in Table 2. Since SLWAI had 22 items with a 5-point Likert scale scoring system, the total point that can be obtained by a respondent was 110 points (22 items x 5 points). Hence, a score of 65 and above indicated that the student experienced a high level of writing anxiety when writing. A moderate level of writing anxiety was represented by scores between 50 to 64 points, and one had low writing anxiety with scores of 49 and below.

Table 2. SLWAI scores and writing anxiety levels.

SLWAI Scores	Writing Anxiety Level
65 points and above	High writing anxiety (HWA)
50-64 points	Moderate writing anxiety (MWA)
Below 49 points	Low writing anxiety (LWA)

Moreover, to identify the types of writing anxiety, the categorisation in Table 2 was employed and a similar scoring system was derived. For each level, the score was divided by the 22 items so that it had the equivalent value to the mean score of each item. Table 3 presents the conversion in the SLWAI scale.

Table 3. SLWAI scores, reduced SLWAI scores and writing anxiety level

SLWAI Scores	Reduced SLWAI Scores	Writing Anxiety level
65 points and above	2.9 points and above	High writing anxiety (HWA)
50-64 points	2.2-2.8 points	Moderate writing anxiety (MWA)
Below 49	2.1 points	Low writing anxiety (LWA)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   ODJW and Writing Anxiety Levels

The comparison of results between the Pre and Post SLWAI indicated a decrease in scores for majority of the respondents after the completion of 12 weeks of ODJW. Figure 1 clearly illustrated a total of 73% of the respondents' experienced high levels of writing anxiety before ODJW intervention. At the Pre-SLWAI stage, 19 respondents were categorised with high writing anxiety level. This proved that almost three quarter of the respondents experienced high writing anxiety as reflected by their writing anxiety scores in Pre-SLWAI. The remaining 27% of respondents experienced moderate (15%) and low (12%) levels of writing anxiety (LWA).
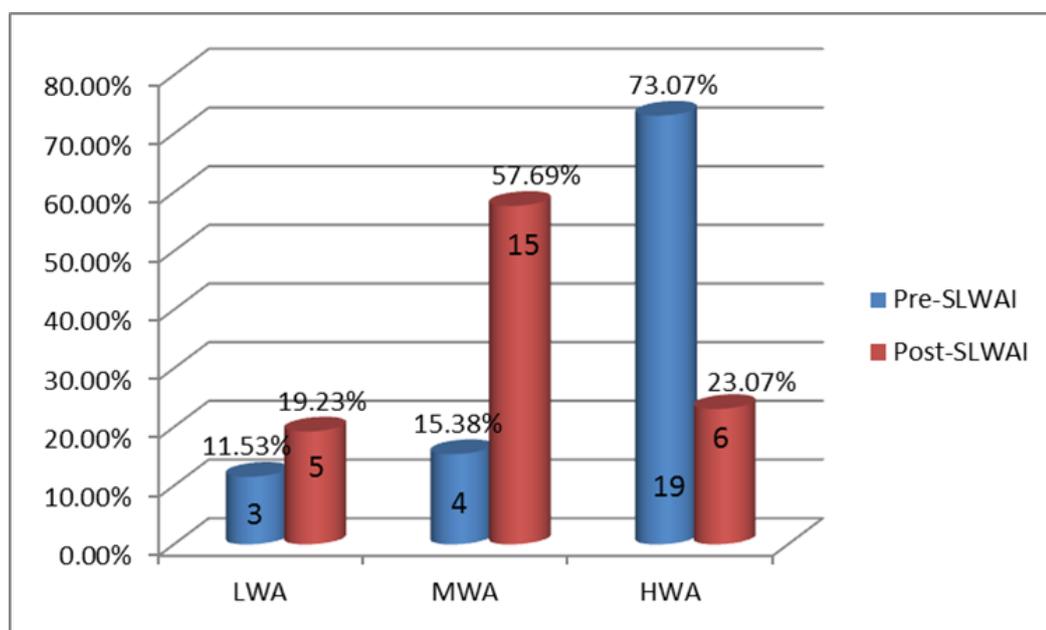

Figure 1. Writing anxiety levels at Pre-SLWAI and Post-SLWAI.

It was also observed that there was a significant decline in the writing anxiety levels as recorded in the post-SLWAI. There was a 50% decrease in the HWA level, as the number of respondents reduced to six (23%) from the original 19 who experienced high writing anxiety level. The respondents displayed less elements of anxiety in their written products after the completion of the ODJW project of 12 weeks.

This was followed by 58% of the respondents who experienced moderate levels of writing anxiety (MWA) in the Post-SLWAI. The MWA formed the highest percentage of writing anxiety, with 15 respondents. This was an increase of 11 respondents (73%) from the initial four respondents at Pre-SLWAI. As for the high writing anxiety level, there were only six (23%) respondents who remained in this category at the end of the 12 weeks. There was close to 8% increase for LWA level, indicating more respondents experienced LWA after the 12 weeks of ODJW. Five respondents (19%) experienced LWA level at the Post-SLWAI as compared to 3 (12%) at the pre-SLWAI.

Further, the mean score for pre-SLWAI was 72.5 (HWA), and the mean score of post-SLWAI was 59.7 (MWA). The results revealed a reduction in the mean scores. This means the respondents' writing anxiety level dropped one level, from high to moderate writing anxiety after ODJW intervention. Figure 2 illustrates the mean scores obtained for the Pre-and Post SLWAI.
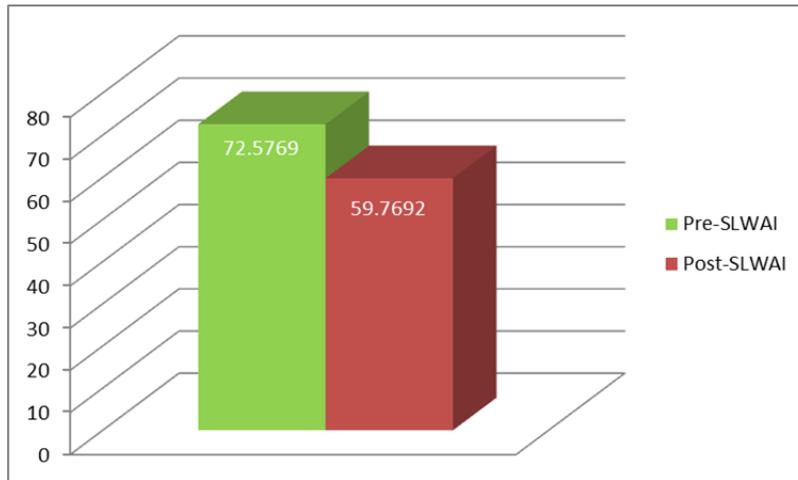
Figure 2. Mean Scores of Pre-SLWAI and Post-SLWAI

Further, a paired-sample t-test was conducted and the results presented in Table 4 revealed a significant difference in the mean scores of pre-SLWAI and post-SLWAI. There was a statistically significant difference in the writing anxiety level between the pre-SLWAI and post-SLWAI (p <0.05). The results obtained from the paired-sample t-test also displayed a significant decrease in the students' writing anxiety levels.

Table 4. Paired-sample t-test for pre-SLWAI and post-SLWAI.

	Mean	**S.D**	**t**	**df**	**p**	**Sig (2-tailed)**
Pre-Post SLWAI	12.80	14.80	4.41	25	.000	

*significance at p<0.05

4.2   ODJW and Types of Writing Anxiety

This findings presents the analysis of the impact of ODWJ on the students' writing anxiety according to the three categories mentioned earlier i.e. LWA, MWA and HWA. Table 5 shows the mean scores and standard deviation (SD) for each type of writing anxiety namely Cognitive Anxiety (CA), Somatic Anxiety (SA) and Avoidance Behaviour (AB). The mean scores for the three types of writing anxiety were referred as the mean score for one item, and not 22 items.

Table 5. Mean scores and standard deviation for cognitive anxiety (CA), somatic anxiety (SA) and avoidance behaviour (AB)

	Mean	**N**	**SD**
Pre-CA	3.4327	26	.52468
Post-CA	2.9617	26	.43131
Pre-SA	3.4451	26	.85172
Post-SA	2.6759	26	.72908
Pre-AB	3.0000	26	1.04119
Post-AB	2.4451	26	.77441

The results in Table 5 indicate that the respondents experienced high levels of cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour at the onset of the study. After undergoing 12 weeks of ODJW, all the three types of writing anxiety recorded a reduction in the writing anxiety levels. Cognitive anxiety reduced slightly from Pre-CA at 3.4327 to Post-CA of 2.9617. Though this mean score was categorised as high writing anxiety, it was lower than the Pre-CA mean score. As for both somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour, the decrease in the mean scores indicated a shift in the level of writing anxiety. Both SA and AB shifted to the category of moderate writing anxiety after 12 weeks of ODJW, which was one level lower than the high writing anxiety. This means the students' cognitive anxiety remained at the high writing anxiety level at Post-CA, but their somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour displayed a significant reduction in the respective types of anxiety.

Table 6 reveals the results acquired from the paired-sample t-test for the three types of writing anxiety. All the three categories were statistically significant as the p-values are less than 0.05.

Table 6. Paired-sample t-test for cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior

	Mean	S.D	t	df	p Sig (2-tailed)
Pre-CA & Post-CA	.47096	.62026	3.872	25	.001
Pre-SA & Post-SA	.76912	.82934	4.729	25	.000
Pre-AB & Post-AB	.55489	.87266	3.242	25	.003

*significance at p<0.05

The significant difference between the mean scores showed that there was a change in cognitive anxiety level. Similarly for Pre-SA and Post-SA, the mean scores between the two is significant and this was depicted in the shift from high writing anxiety level to moderate writing anxiety level. Hence, this proved the decline in the respondents' somatic anxiety level. A similar trend was also mirrored in avoidance behaviour as the mean score was significant and there was also a change from high writing anxiety level to the moderate level. To sum, there were significant decreases in the students' cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour levels after 12 weeks of ODJW intervention.

Overall, the ODJW intervention resulted in a positive and significant impact on the low proficiency ESL learners' writing anxiety levels. The results from the paired-sample t-test (See tables 4 and 6) for both classifications were significance with the p value <0.05. The impact was further proven through the shifts in the respondents' type of writing anxiety from the original category at the initial stage of the ODJW project. This was an expected phenomenon among low proficiency ESL learners who typically displayed the feelings of nervousness and anxiousness when involved in a writing project. Prior to ODJW, they were indeed nervous, anxious and tense at the thought of writing in English. However, after undergoing regular writing practices via ODJW for 12 weeks, most of them experienced a change in their type of writing anxiety. A crucial move from Somatic anxiety to Cognitive anxiety spotted for most of the respondents revealed that most of them experience high and moderate levels of Cognitive anxiety at the completion of the 12 weeks, and very few had Somatic anxiety. This outcome was consistent with the findings of Cheng (2004) and Zhang (2011) who also found their social science students experienced high levels of Cognitive anxiety using SLWAI.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ODJW intervention had a positive impact on the respondents' writing anxiety. Most of the respondents recorded a decrease in their writing anxiety levels after participating in the ODJW. Majority of them reduced their writing anxiety levels from high to moderate and some to low writing anxiety levels. The results showed the students were more positive about the thought of writing and they felt more

comfortable writing via ODJW. Moreover, the ODJW also had significant positive impact on the types of writing anxiety. Most of the respondents moved from somatic writing anxiety to cognitive writing anxiety for the type of writing anxiety they experienced. This indicated a shift from being nervous and anxious when engaging in writing tasks, to a position of being more particular with the end product of the written text and having fear of others' perception of their writing.

What was more interesting was ODJW provided the opportunity for these low proficiency students to communicate and interact in authentic and natural contexts for language and literacy development. This certainly worth future investigations particularly with regards to the integration of technology such as CMC in alleviating learners' interest in learning ESL. Indirectly, this calls for maximum utilisation of e-learning platform because the students found it to be relaxing for them to share ideas and work together with instructors and partners to write and edit their writing before submission. This also implicates the shift in instructors' roles as facilitators in assisting students so that the students become more relaxed and less pressured. Finally, this study recommended ODJW for other groups of students i.e. high and mediocre groups in finding out similarities or differences in impact and types of anxiety. The findings will provide insights as to how curriculum structures and contents need to be designed and developed in addressing the expansive issues related to writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL students.

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