

# The relationship between writing strategies and writing anxiety in EFL

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J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Study Programme: Double Major MA Study Programme in English Language and  
Literature – Teaching English As a Foreign Language and Pedagogy

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EFL**

Master's Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Višnja Pavičić Takač, Full Professor

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## **Sažetak**

Cilj ovog istraživanja bio je istražiti strategije pisanja, strah od pisanja i odnos strategija pisanja, straha od pisanja i uspjeha u pisanju na engleskome kao stranome jeziku. Tristo učenika drugog, trećeg i četvrtog razreda gimnazije ispunilo je Upitnik o strategijama pisanja na stranome jeziku te Upitnik o strahu od pisanja na stranome jeziku. Rezultati su pokazali umjereno korištenje strategija pisanja te umjerenu razinu straha od pisanja. U skladu s nekoliko prijašnjih istraživanja, korelacijska analiza pokazala je negativnu korelaciju između straha od pisanja i uspjeha u pisanju. Nadalje, korelacijska analiza je također pokazala negativnu korelaciju između korištenja strategija pisanja i uspjeha u pisanju, te pozitivnu korelaciju između straha od pisanja i korištenja strategija pisanja. Na temelju rezultata, istraživanje nudi metodološke i pedagoške implikacije. Razlike između muškog i ženskog spola te razlike između drugog, trećeg i četvrtog razreda su također prikazane.

**Ključne riječi:** pisanje na stranome jeziku, strategije pisanja, strah od pisanja, uspjeh u pisanju

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between EFL learners' writing strategies, writing anxiety and writing achievement. Writing Strategy Inventory (WSI) and Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) were administered to a sample of 300 learners attending second, third and fourth grade of secondary school. The results showed moderate usage of writing strategies along with moderate levels of writing anxiety. In accordance with several previous studies, correlation analysis showed negative correlation between writing anxiety and writing achievement. Correlation analysis also showed negative correlation between writing strategy use and writing achievement, and positive correlation between writing anxiety and writing strategies. Based on these unexpected results, the study's methodological and pedagogical implications are discussed. Gender-based differences and differences between second, third and fourth grade are also discussed.

**Key words:** foreign language (FL) writing, writing strategies, writing anxiety, writing achievement

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	9
2. Writing Strategies .....	11
2.1. Definition of writing strategies .....	11
2.2. Classification of Writing Strategies .....	12
2.3. Related Studies on Writing Strategies.....	14
3. Foreign/Second Language Writing Anxiety .....	16
3.1. Foreign Language (Classroom) Anxiety .....	16
3.2. Writing Anxiety as a Skill-Specific Subtype of Foreign Language Anxiety.....	17
3.3. Foreign Language Writing Anxiety as a Situation-Specific Anxiety .....	18
3.4. Foreign Language Writing Anxiety as a Multidimensional concept .....	19
3.5. Foreign Language Writing Anxiety: Debilitative vs. Facilitative Effects .....	19
3.6. Related Research on Second/ Foreign Language Writing Anxiety.....	20
4 Aim and research questions .....	23
5. Methodology .....	23
5.1. Participants .....	23
5.2. Instruments .....	24
5.3. Procedure.....	25
6. Results.....	26
6.1. Descriptive Statistics .....	26
6.2. Correlations .....	30
6.3. One-way ANOVA.....	30
6.4. T-test.....	31
7. Discussion .....	32
8. Conclusion .....	35
9. Bibliography .....	37
10. Appendices.....	42
10.1. Appendix A: Demographic questionnaire (1 <sup>st</sup> part of the research instrument) .....	42
10.2. Appendix B: Writing Strategies Inventory (2nd part of the research instrument).....	43



10.3. Appendix C: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (3<sup>rd</sup> part of the research instrument) ..... 45

# 1. Introduction

As foreign language teaching has evolved from the grammar-translation and the audio-lingual method to the more communicatively-oriented approaches, ideas about how language proficiency develops and ought to be taught have also changed (Homstad & Thorson, 1994). Writing has commonly been viewed as a support skill, used to reinforce the acquisition of grammar, as in the grammar-translation method, or to support the memorization of language structures, as in the audio-lingual method. Even the communicative approaches, with their emphasis on oral proficiency, have tended to de-emphasize writing (Homstad & Thorson, 1994).

Likewise, Williams (2012) claims that until relatively recently, writing has generally been seen as having a minor role in promoting second language (L2) development. It has often been seen as the result of acquisition, rather than as a facilitating factor and has been considered perhaps the most distant reflection of the developing interlanguage, with spontaneous oral language taken as a much better approximation. However, according to Homstad and Thorson (1994), ideas from writing-to-learn, writing across the curriculum, and writing for academic purposes movements in composition and English as a Second Language<sup>1</sup> (ESL) have all had an impact on thinking about the role of writing in L2 education. Consequently, writing has now come into focus as an activity that may promote as well as reflect L2 development (Williams, 2012).

The development of L2 writing in English is complex. It began from product-oriented approach to a process-oriented approach. The emphasis of product-oriented approaches is on the final piece of the writing, which reflects whether the students are fluent and proficient user of the target language. On the other hand, the process-oriented approach puts emphasis on a variety of activities, in other words, *strategies* in order to encourage the use of language proficiently (Abas & Aziz, 2016). Writing strategies seem exceedingly significant to ESL writing since many researchers assert that it is the writing strategies that primarily separate successful from less successful writers (Mu, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> In a second-language acquisition situation, the language is spoken in the immediate environment of the learner, who has good opportunities to use the language by participating in natural communication situations. One can get exposed to a second language, even outside the classroom or learning environment. Opposed to this, in a foreign-language learning situation, the language is not spoken in the learner's immediate environment, since it is usually not an indigenous language, but a language native to another country. In Croatian context it is more appropriate to refer to English as a foreign language, however, mass media may provide opportunities for practicing receptive skills, and consequently, productive ones also. Thus, in this paper, terms second language and foreign language will be used synonymously.

According to Erkan and Saban (2001) writing is an essential language skill vital to academic success and since it is an active and productive skill, foreign language learners face multiple challenges. As a productive skill, writing has been viewed as a demanding process that involves a deliberate, creative, and complex cognitive process on the part of the writer (Silva & Matsuda, 2001).

In current research in English as a foreign language (EFL), a great deal of effort has been devoted to establishing the role of psychological factors in the success or failure of the learners (Salehi & Marefat, 2014).

Some researchers have stated that when students perform activities that require productive skills, they experience considerable amount of anxiety (Kara, 2013). According to Gnokou (2011) the assumption that foreign language learners experience a high level of anxiety is mainly focused on speaking activities but despite not being widely investigated, foreign language writing anxiety also seems to be a concern for many students. To date, however, writing anxiety has been less frequently addressed among language anxiety researchers.

Since writing is still predominantly product-oriented it requires individual work, that is, students are deprived of help, support and encouragement. As a result, learners suffer distress and anxiety associated with the writing process (Mohseniasl, 2014). Gere (1987) argues that the intricate nature of the writing skill ascends the anxiety level of the students, causes de-motivation and discouragement and as a result they may develop negative attitudes towards writing. Accordingly, Flower and Hayes (1981) hypothesized that the cause of writing anxiety stems from inefficient strategy use.

Although writing is a difficult skill, it is essential for second language learners' academic success. In Croatia, writing in a foreign language has been highlighted in state graduation exams which are compulsory for grammar school students in order to get the certificate of completion and to be able to enroll at universities. Students choose one among a number of foreign languages as an obligatory part of state exams where majority of students choose English. The exam includes three parts and students are assessed in reading and listening comprehension and writing ability. Depending on which level they choose (basic or advanced), students are required to write a short essay (200-250

words) on a given topic or a short letter. Therefore, now more than ever, research on foreign language writing in the Croatian context should be strongly urged.

Despite the rapidly growing research on various aspects of L2 writing, little research has focused on documenting the relationship of writing strategies and writing anxiety as two major factors influencing development of FL/L2 writing. Therefore, this study sets out to investigate the relationship between writing strategies and writing anxiety.

## 2. Writing Strategies

### 2.1. Definition of writing strategies

Although learner strategies are a well-established research area in SLA studies, research into L2 writing strategies is somewhat of a latecomer in the field (Petrić & Czarl, 2003). This, as Petrić and Czarl explain, is due to the fact that L2 writing was, at least initially, strongly influenced by theories and research into first language (L1) writing. In this line of research, the term “writing process” has been in use since the emergence of the influential Flower and Hayes' cognitive theory of writing (1981), which explains writing as a recursive rather than linear process.

In the 1980s, research on writing strategies were entirely cognitive in orientation and writing was regarded as a goal-oriented, recursive, cognitively demanding, and problem-solving task (Manchon et al., 2007). In the 1990s, the aforementioned process-approach to writing emerged and concurrent to this development in L1 writing research, the L2 scholars also tried to research process writing using terms such as writing behaviors and strategies, where the writers engage in writing while they generate, express, and refine their ideas in a non-native language (Manchon, et al., 2007). Corresponding to the development in L1 literature, research into L2 writing strategies has gradually moved from the cognitive approach to socio-cognitive orientation.

While L1 research tradition refers to this area as writing or composing processes, in SLA studies it is usually referred to as learning, more precisely, *writing strategies*. This terminological confusion could also be attributed to the ongoing debate in the field of learning strategies on the issue of

whether learner strategies are exclusively conscious actions taken by learners to enhance their learning, or whether they also include automatic behavior outside the reach of conscious manipulation or reflection (Petrić & Czarł, 2003).

Finally, in the case of L2 writing, the term writing strategy refers to how L2 learners go about composing, that is “any actions employed in the act of producing text” (Manchon, et al., 2007:231). Therefore, the term writing strategies that is used in this research refers to any actions employed in the act of producing an essay that occurred during the prewriting, planning, drafting, revising and editing stages.

## 2.2. Classification of Writing Strategies

Learning strategies are identified through various self-report procedures and although self-report is always subject to error, no better way has yet been devised for identifying mental processes and techniques learners use for completing a learning task (Chamot 2005). Self-reports can be conducted through retrospective interviews, questionnaires, written diaries and journals, and think-aloud protocols concurrent with a learning task. Each of these methods has limitations, but to date they remain the only way to generate insights into the unobservable mental learning strategies of learners (Chamot, 2005).

In general, ESL writing strategies are categorized based on varied standards of classification as conceived by different researchers, making it challenging to identify a taxonomy of ESL writing strategies accepted by all (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). For example, Riazi (1997) categorized composing strategies into three main strategies: cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies. Sasaki (2000) further classified writing strategies into eight main categories: planning, retrieving, generating ideas, verbalizing, translating, rereading, evaluating and others.

Victori (1995, as cited in Mu, 2005) found a myriad of classifications of writing strategies and processes which were differently labeled. Mu (2005) attempts to fill in the gap firstly by reviewing theories related to ESL writing to provide theoretic foundation for the classification of ESL writing strategies, secondly by reviewing prior studies on ESL writing strategies, and finally by synthesizing them into a taxonomy of ESL writing strategies. Thus, he outlined five broader

categories of writing strategies: (1) rhetorical strategies, which refer to the strategies that writers use to organize and to present their ideas in writing conventions acceptable to native speakers of that language; (2) metacognitive strategies which refer to the strategies that the writers use to control the writing process consciously; (3) cognitive strategies which refer to the strategies that writers use to implement the actual writing actions; (4) communicative strategies which refer to the strategies that the writers use to express ideas in a more effective way; and (5) social/affective strategies which refer to the strategies that the writers use to interact with others to clarify some questions and to regulate emotions, motivation, and attitudes in their writing.

Since the classification was developed from the analysis and combination of previous classifications of ESL writing strategies, with different methods, participants and results, Mu (2005) warns that this classification has limitations and states that framing classification of ESL writing strategies is impractical because researchers have diverse criteria for the classification. Secondly, this classification may seem rather unusual because different categories are merged. Another limitation of the classification, as stated by Mu (2005), is its impracticality to incorporate all strategies in one classification because of their resilience and complication for each individual writer. Therefore, the classification is not comprehensive. However, this classification of writing strategies has significant value for the teaching and learning of ESL writing for its clarity and convenience.

Furthermore, according to Hsiao and Oxford (2002:372), strategies can “pave the way toward greater proficiency, learner autonomy, and self-regulation”. Therefore, it is necessary to explore and devise a classification of ESL writing strategies from a theoretic stance so that ESL learners (and teachers) can easily access and acquire it to facilitate their writing. However, as Hsiao and Oxford (2002:368) noted, “exactly how many strategies are available to learners to assist them in L2 learning and how these strategies should be classified are open to debate”.

In their 2003 study, Petrić and Czarl attempted to compose a writing strategy questionnaire with items applicable to both secondary school and university contexts in order to achieve greater generalization of the data obtained. They defined writing strategies as actions or behaviors consciously carried out by writers in order to make their writing more efficient. The ideas for writing items came from the researchers’ personal experience as non-native writers in English and writing teachers, from informal interviews with students, and from the literature on writing as well as questionnaires on similar issues (e.g. Oxford’s, 1990, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

(SILL)). The items were sequenced and grouped following the basic structure of the writing process, i.e. pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing. Petrić and Czarl (2003) further classified these basic three groups according to Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (1990) that is, the pre-writing strategies included the metacognitive and cognitive strategy groups; the while-writing strategies included the metacognitive, cognitive, memory, social and compensation strategy groups; the revising strategies included the metacognitive, cognitive, memory, social and affective strategy groups.

### 2.3. Related Research on Writing Strategies

Most studies on writing strategies were focused on higher level education with participants being English majors, or university students in general. It seems that, so far, only a handful of studies on writing strategies had involved secondary school EFL students.

Graham and Perin (2007) had found instructing learners on writing strategies to be effective, especially for adolescents who have writing difficulty, and it was also shown to be a powerful technique for adolescents in general. Strategies instruction involved teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their compositions.

Mastan et al. (2017) aimed to examine the effect of writing strategy instruction on 36 Malaysian secondary school ESL learners of intermediate English proficiency. One class was randomly assigned to the instruction group and the other to the control group. Over the course of eight weeks, the instruction group was exposed to the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) approach focusing on metacognitive and cognitive writing strategies. The results of the study showed that the strategy instruction group had outperformed the control group with a statistically significant increase in scores from pretest to posttest.

Liu (2015) investigated English writing strategies used by Chinese senior secondary school students and found that student writers with different writing proficiency varied as to the frequency of employing writing strategies, i.e. both high achievers and intermediate achievers reported significantly more employment of writing strategies than the low achievers.

Similarly, Raoofi et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between writing strategy use and L2 writing proficiency of 312 undergraduate ESL students and found that students with high writing abilities reported a significantly higher level of writing strategy use compared with those who had intermediate or low writing proficiency.

On the other hand, studies by Baker and Boonkit (2004) and Nooreiny and Mazlin (2013) found no significant difference in the frequency of writing strategy use between high-proficiency and low proficiency students. Further, Nooreiny and Mazlin's (2013) study on 50 high-intermediate and low proficiency ESL upper secondary school students found that the students were moderate writing strategies users with while-writing strategies used most frequently whereas the revising strategies were least used. However, their study has revealed one important result which is that English proficiency has affected the type of strategy use, rather than frequency of strategy use. More specifically, the high-intermediate students were more concerned with thinking, planning, and outlining in English before they started their writing task. The while-writing strategies were most frequently used whereas the revising strategies were least used. All students displayed approximately similar frequency use of strategies. These findings are consistent with the results in Chen's (2011) study.

Chen (2011) investigated the English writing strategies of 132 Chinese, non-English major college students and found that despite students using some writing strategies in the pre-writing stage, while-writing stage and revising stage, they were still not frequent users of many of the strategies. Data from the writing strategy questionnaire indicated that the students employed more writing strategies in the while-writing stage compared to the prewriting and the revising stages. Furthermore, Chen (2011) found that many low achievers reported less use of planning strategies.

Moreover, Ridhuan and Abdullah (2009) have also found planning i.e. pre-writing strategies to be significant to skilled student writers. Their study showed weak students do not often plan their writing and frequently begin writing immediately and that skilled students differ in terms of time spent on planning the writing task. Skilled students spent more time on planning and employed drafting to produce rough plans on how to present their essays.



As far as the differences between genders are concerned, recent studies by Asmari (2013) on university students and by Liu (2017) on secondary school students reported that female ESL learners using writing strategies more than male students

### 3. Foreign/Second Language Writing Anxiety

#### 3.1. Foreign Language (Classroom) Anxiety

After the mid-20th century researchers began realizing that the affective factors are equally relevant in learning a foreign language (FL) as the cognitive factors (Kralova & Tanistrakova, 2017). Since 1980s when Krashen (1981) hypothesized that the affective factors (anxiety, motivation and self-confidence) correlate with the success in FL learning, foreign language anxiety (FLA) was one of the most researched affective variables in the field of FL learning (Kralova & Tanistrakova, 2017). In 1985 R.C. Gardner, who is considered to be a pioneer in studying affective variables in FL learning, hypothesized that anxiety specific to FL learning is related to FL achievement (Kralova & Tanistrakova, 2017).

Foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) is defined as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986:128). It occurs when students attempt to successfully use a L2 or FL which they have not yet adequately or fully mastered (Gnokou, 2011). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) have posited that “anxious individuals think about their own reaction to a task in addition to the demands of the task itself” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991:297). Negative self-related cognition intrudes on their task performance in class and, consequently, anxiety rises. This is what ultimately differentiates language anxiety from other forms of anxiety, suggesting therefore that L2 contexts should be studied in isolation.

### 3.2. Writing Anxiety as a Skill-Specific Subtype of Foreign Language Anxiety

In the 1990s research on FLA has developed from beginning descriptive studies towards the experimental studies as researchers looked more at the causes and factors of FLCA and its effects under various learning conditions and aspects of language learning skills and language levels (Kralova & Tanistrakova, 2017). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991: 284) defined L2 anxiety as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specially associated with L2 contexts, including speaking, listening, and writing”. Consequently, some language anxiety researchers proposed to distinguish language-skill specific anxiety from general FLCA that seemed to be more associated with oral aspects of FL use (Horwitz, 2001, Cheng 2004). This anticipated the research on skill-specific anxieties and most studies provided evidence for the existence of skill-specific FLA, one of the most prominent ones being Cheng et al.'s (1999) study which investigated the links between L2 classroom anxiety and L2 writing anxiety as well as their associations with L2 speaking and writing achievement.

The results of the study indicated that L2 classroom anxiety and L2 writing anxiety are two related but independent constructs. The findings further suggest that L2 classroom anxiety is a more general type of anxiety about learning a L2 with a strong speaking anxiety element, whereas L2 writing anxiety is a language-skill-specific anxiety (Cheng et al., 1999). Furthermore, low self-confidence seemed to be an important component of both anxiety constructs. Learners' beliefs about their English speaking and writing capabilities were found to be a better predictor of their anxiety levels than what they were actually capable of accomplishing since their self-rated proficiency levels in English speaking and writing were correlated more highly with their FLCA scale and SL Writing Apprehension Test scores than their actual grades in English speaking and writing courses. That is:

some language learners may feel particularly anxious about speaking in the second language, and some about writing. the discrepancy between a learner's first and second language competence in different skill areas, a language learner's varied experiences in acquiring each of the four language skills, and his or her history of success and failure in performing each skill might lead to differentiated attitudes, emotions, and expectations about each of the language skills. Language-skill specific anxiety might well be one of the

negative emotions and attitudes formed during the process of second language learning. (Cheng et al., 1999:438-9)

Though FLA is now widely recognized as a mental block against FL learning and conceived as its obvious factor, there are still many inconsistent concepts mixing psychological and linguistic perspectives (Kralova & Tanistrakova, 2017).

### 3.3. Foreign Language Writing Anxiety as a Situation-Specific Anxiety

The traditional psychological classification of anxiety types distinguishes anxiety of people who are generally anxious in a variety of situations (*trait anxiety*) from those who are anxious only in specific situations (*state anxiety*). Trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality characteristics while state anxiety is a temporary response to a certain stimulus (Horwitz, 2001). When associated with learning FL, anxiety is termed as “second/foreign language anxiety” and is related to the negative emotional reactions of the learners towards FL acquisition (Horwitz, 2001). Therefore, FLA, and writing anxiety as its skill-based subtype, can be viewed both as a stable characteristic trait and the temporary state caused by various factors (Kralova & Tanistrakova, 2017). Accordingly, Kostić-Bobanović (2016) points out that these negative feelings of tension and fear may not be pervasive in a person’s writing life. She exemplifies this by giving a hypothetical situation where person might confidently tackle a paper about the sociology of gender but delete and start over twenty times when composing an e-mail to a cute classmate suggesting going for a cup of coffee. According to Hassan (2001) writing anxiety is *situational*. As Kostić-Bobanović (2016) explains, people become anxious through negative or difficult experiences with writing.

Even though not specifically labeled as second/foreign language writing anxiety, Bloom’s (1985) definition of writing anxiety seemed to encompass both psychological and linguistic perspective to second/foreign language anxiety. He suggested that the term writing anxiety be used to describe people who exhibit one or a combination of feelings, beliefs or behaviors that interfere with a person’s ability to start or work on or finish a given writing task that he or she is intellectually capable of doing.

### 3.4. Foreign Language Writing Anxiety as a Multidimensional concept

According to Cheng (2004), anxiety can be conceptualized as being three-dimensional. As she explains, a unidimensional conceptualization of anxiety treats anxiety as a unitary, global construct, contains no subscales and produces only one single summed score. In contrast, a multidimensional conceptualization of anxiety defines anxiety as being composed of several different but intercorrelated facets or dimensions where each facet or dimension of the anxiety construct represents a separate construct. But at a more abstract level, these facets or dimensions are all integral parts of the more global anxiety construct. Developed from this perspective, a multidimensional measure of anxiety comprises several subscales designed to measure the various facets of anxiety. Cheng (2004) differentiates between (1) *somatic anxiety*, (2) *cognitive anxiety*, and (3) *avoidance behaviour*. Somatic Anxiety refers to one's perception of the physiological effects of the anxiety experience, as reflected in increase in state of unpleasant feelings, such as nervousness and tension. Cognitive Anxiety refers to the cognitive aspect of anxiety experience, including negative expectations, preoccupation with performance and concern about others' perception. Avoidance Behavior refers to the behavioral aspect of the anxiety experience, avoidance of writing.

Based on the three-dimensional conceptualization, Cheng (2004) devised the writing anxiety scale entitled Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). Items on the somatic anxiety subscale are concerned with one's "increased physiological arousal" (e.g., feeling stressed and/or nervous), whereas items on cognitive anxiety and avoidance behavior subscales are related to individual's fear of negative evaluation and consequently tendency to avoid L2 writing tasks. The items on each subscale can be summed to get a score representing the degree of reaction in each dimension of anxiety.

### 3.5. Foreign Language Writing Anxiety: Debilitative vs. Facilitative Effects

Another important distinction that has been made between two subclasses of anxiety in different researches is between *debilitative* and *facilitative* anxiety. As the names suggest debilitative one impedes learning and achievements while facilitative one improves them.

Negari and Rezabaadi (2012) explain that anxiety can have both positive and negative effects on performance as it plays an important role in the writing ability of EFL learners, and too much of it has been one of the main problems in language teaching, but sometimes a moderate level of anxiety is needed for more concentration and accuracy of the students on their writing performance. Accordingly, Brown (2007) claims a little stress about a given matter or task is facilitative.

Scovel (1978) suggested that facilitative and debilitating anxiety can work as best as possible together. He believes that facilitative anxiety is used for better coping with a new task and prepares the learner emotionally for that. Correspondingly, Krashen (1982) deduced that low anxiety appeared to be beneficial to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety. However, the debilitating anxiety can make the learner skip the new learning task and cause a learner to exhibit a kind of avoidance behavior (Scovel, 1978, as cited in Negaari & Rezabaadi, 2012)

### 3.6. Related Research on Second/ Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

Since foreign language writing anxiety seems to be a concern for a large number of students (Gnokou, 2011), it calls for more empirical studies.

Gnokou (2011) investigated writing anxiety and self-efficacy beliefs of 218 EFL graduate students in engineering-related fields. As expected, students with higher writing self-efficacy felt less apprehensive. More importantly, this study confirmed Cheng et al.'s (1999) findings that foreign language classroom anxiety and writing anxiety in English are two related but distinguishable variables. In Gnokou's (2011) study, writing anxiety was shown to stem from attitudes to writing classes, self-derogation when writing in English, and fear of negative evaluation.

Among the three sub-dimensions of writing anxiety (as suggested by Cheng, 2004), cognitive anxiety seems to be the most prevalent one in several studies (e.g. Jebreil et al., 2015; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014; Kara, 2013; Kirimizi, 2015).

Jebreil et al. (2015) measured the level of writing anxiety of 45 Iranian EFL students majoring in English language teaching with different proficiency levels – elementary, intermediate and

advanced, using SLWAI by Cheng (2004). The results indicated that students experienced a high level of anxiety. Furthermore, cognitive anxiety was the most common type of anxiety, followed by somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior.

Rezaei and Jafari (2014) also confirmed high levels of writing anxiety among 120 Iranian EFL students of high education with cognitive anxiety as its main type, as reflected in preoccupation with performance and high expectations, and were due to fear of teacher's negative feedback, low self-confidence and poor linguistic knowledge. Similarly, Kara (2013) set out to investigate Turkish second language learners' reasons of anxiety in the academic writing courses and found that learners thought that they lack necessary strategies like organizing ideas, gathering information, combining ideas. Moreover, they thought that their English is not good enough to express themselves clearly. Accordingly, in Hassan's study (2001) students with high levels of writing anxiety wrote shorter composition evaluated their writing to be of less quality than their low anxious counterparts did. Furthermore, Kirimizi (2015) measured writing anxiety level of 172 Turkish university English Language and Literature students and found that the participants experience a moderate level of writing anxiety with time pressure and negative evaluation of the teacher being its major sources.

In the Croatian setting, Kostić-Bobanović (2016) carried out a longitudinal study on a total of 124 students majoring in tourism, marketing, informatics and finance at the University of Pula. Participants were tested twice, once in the first year and once in the third year. The study reported moderate level of writing apprehension. However, there was statistically significant difference between first and third year writing anxiety test scores, in favor of third year students. Kostić-Bobanović (2016) speculates that the writing anxiety was reduced due to students learning to apply writing skills, and developing language usage, nonverbal and verbal communication throughout the course of their education.

Despite the numerous reasons and sources of writing anxiety, it cannot be deducted that experiencing writing anxiety necessarily results in lower achievement or vice versa, since there are studies on writing anxiety having both debilitating and facilitative effect on learners' writing achievement.

For example, Negari and Rezabaadi (2012) investigated whether or not writing performance of Iranian EFL learners is relevant to low writing anxiety and test writing anxiety, and further explored the relation between different degrees of anxiety to see if there is a degree of writing anxiety that is facilitative to learners L2 writing performance. They found that writing performance was higher in the case of having higher anxiety in the final writing test, compared to their writing performance in the case of having low writing anxiety. When students were experiencing higher anxiety in their final exam their marks were not just better in one part of their writing but in all parts.

Accordingly, a study by Dave Putwain (2008; as cited in Negari Rezabaadi, 2012) suggests that some highly test-anxious students put more effort in achieving a good result than low test-anxious students as a compensatory factor. Additionally, Brown (2007) claims a little stress about a given matter or task is facilitative.

When it comes to relationship between writing anxiety and gender differences, research on gender differences so far produced mixed results. For example, Daly and his associates found that female students had significantly lower scores than male students in writing anxiety (Daly et al., 1988).

On the contrary, Thompson's study (1981) revealed that female students felt more anxious than males. Similarly, Cheng (2002), in a research conducted on writing anxiety among Taiwanese students of English, reported higher levels of anxiety in females. Further, Pappamihiel (2002) found that females were much more anxious than males in the mainstream classroom. Other studies did not find statistically significant differences in writing anxiety in terms of gender (e.g. Kirimizi, 2015; Kostić Bobanović, 2016).

When discussing relationship between the year of study (i.e. grade) and language anxiety, some studies reported statistically significant difference. Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) found that participants, who were at three different FL level proficiency (beginner, intermediate, and advanced), displayed a fairly consistent rise in anxiety as they progressed through years of study (i.e. freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors). Cheng (2002), on the other hand, noted that while SL writing anxiety did not increase depending on levels of writing proficiency, it did rise with year of study, freshmen (first year) tending to exhibit least anxiety, and juniors (third year) tending to exhibit most. In contrast, Jebreil et al. (2015) found students with elementary EFL proficiency level to suffer higher level of WA than the students with intermediate and advanced levels.

Asmari's 2013 study on writing strategies, writing apprehension and writing achievement indicated that students with low writing anxiety were more users of writing strategies than the high anxious ones, and a significant negative correlation was found between students' writing apprehension and their writing achievement. Findings also showed that there were no significant differences between males and females in terms of writing anxiety, and no significant differences in writing achievement between genders.

## 4 Aim and research questions

The primary aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between writing strategies that EFL grammar school students employ, writing anxiety and writing achievement. Consequently, the study addressed the following research questions: To what extent do students use writing strategies? Which writing strategies do students use the least and which ones the most? What is the level of students' writing anxiety? What is the relationship between writing strategies, writing anxiety levels and writing achievement? Are there any differences in usage of writing strategies, writing anxiety level and writing achievement between the second, the third and the fourth grade? Are there any gender-based differences?

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1. Participants

A sample of 300 students participated in the study conducted in Grammar School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Osijek. The sample was made up of 177 female (59%) and 123 (41%) male students aged from 15 to 18 years. In terms of grades (year of study) there were 82 second graders (sophmores), 94 third graders (juniors), and 124 fourth graders (seniors). One participant's mother tongue was Hungarian, and another one's Albanian. The rest of the participants shared Croatian as their mother tongue.



## 5.2. Instruments

A three-part questionnaire was used. The first part of the questionnaire was composed by the researcher and addressed general demographic questions. It provided information such as gender of the participant, grade, mother tongue, years of learning English, the latest final grade in English class, and average grade on essays written in English classes. Furthermore, participants were asked to evaluate how much they like to write in English on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“I do not like it at all”) to 5 (“I like it very much”).

According to their teachers, throughout the school year, students were required to write at least two essays per semester. The essays were mostly argumentative essays, like the ones students are required to write as part of Croatian state exams. Since the students were given the questionnaires at the end of the school year, every student calculated their average essay grade based on a minimum of four previous essay grades. The average essay grade that students reported in the first part of the questionnaire was later used as a writing achievement variable.

The second part of the questionnaire was the Writing Strategies Inventory (Petrić & Czarl, 2003) which has been translated to Croatian. The inventory consisted of 38 items and included three dimensions addressing pre-writing (items 1-8), while-writing (items 9-22) and post-writing strategies (items 22-38). Participants answered each item statement using a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (“Never true”) to 5 (“Always true”). The Cronbach’s Alpha of the Inventory was 0.83, suggesting very good internal consistency reliability for the scale with this sample. According to Pallant (2011) values above .7 are considered acceptable; however, values above .8 are preferable.

Finally, Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) was used as the third part of the questionnaire. SLWAI measures the degree to which an individual feels anxious when writing in an L2. It is comprised of 22 items divided in three sub-dimensions: somatic anxiety (items 1-7), avoidance behavior (8-14), and cognitive anxiety (items 15-22) that are answered on a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 - ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 - ‘strongly agree’. Some statements in the SLWAI were formed as negations and their values were reversed and registered, so that in all cases, a high score suggests high anxiety. The Cronbach’s Alpha of the Inventory is 0.93.

### 5.3. Procedure

The study was conducted in Grammar School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Osijek in May 2018. Before distributing the questionnaires to students, school pedagogist and principal were informed about all aspects of the research, and after reviewing the research outline and the instrument, they concluded that the questionnaire is well-formed, not overly personal, does not breach students' privacy, and that the results could potentially come useful in improving their practice of teaching English as a foreign language. Therefore, they had decided that the study was acceptable to conduct. The pedagogist and the principal agreed that, considering students' age and anonymity of the research, it was sufficient for the students to be familiarized with the purpose of the research after which they had the right to decline or confirm their willingness to participate, no parental consent was required.

The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire (see 5.2. Instruments) during a regular English class which took them around 15 to 20 minutes. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics was used to describe participants' use of writing strategies and writing anxiety levels. Pearson's correlation was carried out to investigate the relationships between strategies, anxiety and achievement (essay grades). Additionally, one-way ANOVA was conducted to check if there are any differences between second, third and fourth graders in terms of writing strategies usage and writing anxiety levels. Finally, a t-test was run in order to investigate whether usage of writing strategies, writing anxiety levels and writing achievement differ in terms of gender.

## 6. Results

### 6.1. Descriptive Statistics

The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between writing strategies, writing anxiety, and writing achievement of grammar school students. As shown in Table 1., descriptive analysis indicated that students exhibit a moderate usage of writing strategies. They used while-writing strategies the most, followed by pre-writing and post-writing strategies.

*Table 1. Students' use of writing strategies*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Total Strategies	1.63	3.87	2.8047	.43283
Pre-writing strategies	1.50	4.63	2.9859	.53826
While-writing strategies	1.29	4.43	3.0674	.56943
Post-writing strategies	1.31	3.88	2.4842	.48575

Further, a more detailed descriptive analysis for each group of strategies was carried out in order to determine more precisely which pre-writing, while-writing and post-writing strategies students used more or less. Mean scores of the strategy use were grouped into three levels: high (ranging from 3.5 to 5) as presented in Table 2., medium (ranging from 2.4 to 3.5) as presented in Table 3., and low (ranging from 1.0 to 2.4) as presented in Table 4.

*Table 2. Most frequently used writing strategies*

	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Pre-writing strategies	1. Before I start writing I revise the requirements.	1.00	5.00	4.1600	0.96133
	2. I think about what I want to write and have a plan in my mind, but not on paper.	1.00	5.00	3.7433	1.08075
While-writing strategies	3. I start with the introduction.	1.00	5.00	4.6957	.62741
	4. I stop after a few sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea.	1.00	5.00	3.9192	.96573
	5. I reread what I have written to get ideas how to continue.	1.00	5.00	3.9967	1.03613
	6. I simplify what I want to write if I don't	1.00	5.00	3.5667	1.21813

	know how to express my thoughts in English.					
	7. If I don't know a word in English, I find a similar English word that I know.	1.00	5.00	4.1100	.93853	
Post-writing strategies	8. I check if my essay matches the requirements.	1.00	5.00	3.8800	1.03076	
	9. I check my mistakes after I get back the paper with feedback from the teacher and try to learn from them.	1.00	5.00	3.7893	1.03581	

According to Table 2. pre-writing strategies that students used relatively often were revising the requirements before writing and having a mental but not a written plan.

Most often used while-writing strategies were starting with the introduction, stopping after a few sentences or a whole paragraph covering one idea, rereading what has been written to get ideas how to continue, simplifying the content when not knowing how to express thoughts in English, and finding synonyms.

When it came to post-writing strategies, students reported frequently checking if the essay matches the requirements and checking their mistakes after getting feedback from the teacher and trying to learn from them.

*Table 3. Moderately used writing strategies*

	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Pre-writing strategies	1. I make a timetable for the writing process.	1.00	5.00	2.8729	1.29165
	2. I look at a model written by a native speaker or more proficient writer.	1.00	5.00	3.2651	1.35097
	3. I start writing without having a written or mental plan.	1.00	5.00	2.7071	1.22958
	4. I note down words and short notes related to the topic.	1.00	5.00	2.9632	1.39100
While-writing strategies	5. I stop after each sentence to read it again.	1.00	5.00	2.8367	1.17811
	6. I go back to my outline and make changes in it.	1.00	5.00	2.4933	1.25733
	7. I go for sure in grammar and vocabulary.	1.00	5.00	3.0503	1.11350
	8. If I don't know a word in English, I write it in my native language and later try to	1.00	5.00	2.7200	1.39814
	9. I use a bilingual dictionary	1.00	5.00	2.5233	1.45252

	10. I ask somebody to help me out when I have problems while writing.	1.00	5.00	2.9833	1.29392
	11. I only read what I have written when I have finished the whole paper.	1.00	5.00	2.9800	1.34622
Post-writing strategies	12. I make changes in vocabulary.	1.00	5.00	2.9667	1.06584
	13. I make changes in sentence structure.	1.00	5.00	2.8763	1.04339
	14. I make changes in the content or ideas.	1.00	5.00	2.4983	1.05946
	15. I show my text to somebody and ask for his/her opinion.	1.00	5.00	2.6300	1.28267
	16. I compare my paper with the essays written by my friends on the same topic.	1.00	5.00	2.7233	1.20761

According to Table 3., pre-writing strategies students used moderately included making a timetable for the writing process, looking at a model written by a native speaker or more proficient writer, starting to write without having a written or mental plan, and noting down words and short notes related to the topic.

Further, moderately used while-writing strategies were stopping after each sentence to read it again, going back to the outline to make changes in it, using only those grammar structures and vocabulary one is sure of, writing down unknown word in English in one's native language and later finding an appropriate English word, using a bilingual dictionary, and asking somebody for help when encountering problems while writing.

Finally, moderately used post-writing strategies were reading the paper only after it is finished, making changes in vocabulary and sentence structure, making changes in the content or ideas, showing the text to somebody and asking for his/her opinion, and comparing the paper with friends' essays written on the same topic.

*Table 4. Least used writing strategies*

	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Pre-writing strategies	1. I write an outline of my paper.	1.00	5.00	2.3033	1.26887
	2. I write notes or an outline in my native language.	1.00	5.00	1.8797	1.29372
While-writing strategies	3. I write bits of the text in my native language and then translate them	1.00	5.00	1.5800	.92364
	4. If I don't know a word in English, I stop writing and look up the word	1.00	5.00	2.3712	1.26623
	5. I use a monolingual dictionary.	1.00	5.00	2.0909	1.26617
	6. I read my text aloud.	1.00	5.00	2.0033	1.26570

Post-writing strategies	7. When I have written my paper, I hand it in without reading it.	1.00	5.00	1.6723	1.01048
	8. I use a dictionary when revising.	1.00	5.00	1.6622	.96392
	9. I make changes in the structure of the essay.	1.00	5.00	2.2886	1.05278
	10. I focus on one thing at a time when revising (e.g. content, structure)	1.00	5.00	2.3167	1.14926
	11. I drop my first draft and start writing again.	1.00	5.00	1.6376	.85450
	12. I leave the text aside for a couple of days and then I can see it in a new	1.00	5.00	1.6533	.99824
	13. I give myself a reward for completing the assignment.	1.00	5.00	2.1533	1.30467

According to Table 4., the least used pre-writing strategies were writing an outline of the paper and writing notes or an outline in students' native language.

Least used while-writing strategies were writing bits of text in one's native language and then translating them into English, interrupting writing when not knowing a word in English in order to look up the word in the dictionary, and using a monolingual dictionary.

Finally, the least used post-writing strategies were reading the written composition aloud, handing the paper in without reading it, using a dictionary when revising, making changes in the structure of the essay, focusing on one thing at a time when revising (e.g. first grammar, then vocabulary), dropping the first draft and starting to write from the beginning, leaving the text aside for a while so as to see it from a new perspective, and rewarding oneself for completing the assignment.

Descriptive statistics was also used to get insights into students' writing anxiety levels. The results of the Writing Anxiety Inventory are presented in Table 5.

*Table 5. Students' writing anxiety levels*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Anxiety overall	1.00	4.55	2.4402	.79044
Somatic anxiety	1.00	5.00	2.3602	1.02772
Avoidance behavior	1.00	3.86	2.4480	.88470
Cognitive anxiety	1.00	4.38	2.5090	.86008

Results in Table 5. indicate that students experience moderate levels of writing anxiety with cognitive anxiety subscale having the highest mean value, followed by avoidance behavior and somatic anxiety.

## 6.2. Correlations

After analyzing students' usage of strategies and anxiety levels, correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationships between strategies, anxiety and achievement. Students' average essay grades were taken as a writing achievement variable on which they scored mean value of 4.23 (SD=.83). The results of correlation analysis are presented in Table 6.

*Table 6. The correlation coefficients between the writing anxiety, writing strategies and writing achievement*

<b>Variables</b>	Strategies total	Anxiety total
Writing achievement	-.265**	-.597**
Anxiety total	.350**	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results revealed a significant negative correlation between writing achievement and writing anxiety level. Further, there is a significant negative correlation between writing achievement and usage of writing strategies. On the other hand, there is a significant positive correlation between usage of writing strategies and writing anxiety level.

## 6.3. One-way ANOVA

In order to test if second, third or fourth graders differ in usage of writing strategies, writing anxiety levels or writing achievement one-way ANOVA was conducted.

Kolomorgov-Smirnov nonparametric test was conducted to confirm normal distribution for Total strategies variable ( $p > 0.05$ ). Levene statistics confirmed homogeneity of variance [ $F(2.297) = 2.360$ ]

( $p > 0.05$ )]. Further, one-way ANOVA detected significant difference in usage of strategies between different grade levels [ $F(2,299) = 9.923$  ( $p < 0.01$ )].

Consequently, Post Hoc tests comparison showed difference between the second and the third grade, and between the second and the fourth grade. Second graders ( $M = 2.9718$ ,  $SD = .38405$ ) reported using writing strategies more than the third graders ( $M = 2.7882$ ,  $SD = .44237$ ) and the fourth graders ( $M = 2.7066$ ,  $SD = .42637$ ).

Levene statistic showed that variance of Total anxiety variable is not homogenous ( $p < 0.05$ ) therefore one-way ANOVA was not conducted. Welch test of equality of means confirmed there is no statistically significant difference in anxiety levels between second, third and fourth grade [ $F(180,386) = 1,034$  ( $p > 0.05$ )].

#### 6.4. T-test

With the purpose of determining whether there are differences between male and female students in terms of their usage of writing strategies, anxiety level and writing achievement, an independent t-test was carried out. The results of the t-test on gender differences are presented in Table 3.

*Table 7. T-test results for gender differences*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Total strategies	male	2.6996	.45330	-3.574	298	.000
	female	2.8777	.40343			
Total anxiety	male	2.2978	.77236	-2.628	298	.009
	female	2.5392	.78987			
Somatic anxiety subscale	male	2.1398	1.01541	-3.142	298	.002
	female	2.5133	1.01100			
Cognitive anxiety	male	2.3301	.85442	-3.034	295	.003
	female	2.6337	.84119			
Avoidance behavior	male	2.4313	.84044	-.272	298	.786
	female	2.4596	.91637			
Writing achievement	male	4.2705	.89107	.236	297	.493
	female	4.2034	.78580			

Results indicate that there is a significant difference on both Total writing strategies [ $T = -3.574$  ( $p < 0.01$ )] and Total anxiety variable [ $T = -2.628$  ( $p < 0.01$ )] with male students reporting using



strategies less than female, and female students reporting higher anxiety level than male. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between genders on the somatic anxiety subscale and cognitive anxiety subscale with female students reporting to experience higher levels of somatic [T=-1.142 (p<0.01)] and cognitive anxiety [T=-3.034 (p<0.01)] than male students. Finally, there was no significant difference between female and male students' avoidance behavior levels, and no significant difference in writing achievement.

## 7. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between writing strategies that EFL grammar school students employ, writing anxiety, and students' writing achievement. Accordingly, the study explored the amount and types of writing strategies learners used, and the amount and types of writing anxiety they experience. Further, the study addressed the possible differences in usage of writing strategies, writing anxiety level and writing achievement between the second, the third and the fourth grade, as well as between male and female learners.

Firstly, the descriptive analysis of collected data indicated moderate usage of writing strategies. Participants used while-writing strategies the most, followed by pre-writing and post-writing strategies, a finding in line with Chen's (2011) and Nooreiny and Mazlin's (2013) results. In other words, most of learners seem to focus on the strategies during writing their essay and neglect using pre-writing and post-writing strategies which could be attributed to the product approach to teaching writing. This assumption was further established by interviewing teachers who reported that participants were not exposed to any overt instruction on how to approach their writing, apart from tips on essay structure, basic grammatical and lexical advice, and a lot of reminders to pay attention to the requirements of the essay. Furthermore, examining the usage of individual strategies in the revising stage proved the students did indeed seem to focus more on making sure their writing fulfils the essay requirement which is typical of surface writing approach, as indicated by Hu and Chen (2007). Lastly, neglecting pre-writing and post-writing strategies may simply be due to lack of time, since the essays were written during English classes under time constraint.

Secondly, consistent with results of several previous studies (e.g. Jebreil et al., 2015; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014; Kara, 2013; Kirimizi, 2015), learners seemed to experience moderate levels of writing

anxiety with cognitive anxiety subscale having the highest mean value, followed by avoidance behavior and somatic anxiety. A closer look at the results of the cognitive anxiety subscale showed that students demonstrated highest anxiety scores on items “I don’t worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others” ( $M=3.0101$ ,  $SD=1.34437$ ), “While writing in English, I’m not nervous at all” ( $M=2.8209$ ,  $SD=1.37719$ ), “I don’t worry at all about what other people would think of my English composition” ( $M=2.6531$ ,  $SD=1.19814$ ), and “If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade” ( $M=2.5068$ ,  $SD=1.24871$ ). In other words, they are nervous and worried about where their essays stand in comparison to their peers’ essays, and how their essay is going to be evaluated. Once again, these results might be attributed to goal-oriented writing, which in turn might be a consequence of the inevitable state exams that award points for the finished product, and the feelings of stress and competitiveness that go with it.

The results revealed a significant negative correlation between writing achievement and writing anxiety level. The results of Asmari’s (2013) study also showed negative correlation between the two variables, and Hassan’s (2001) found that students with high levels of writing anxiety wrote shorter composition and evaluated their writing as low in quality. These results imply that writing anxiety, despite its moderate level, has a debilitating effect on learners’ writing. This, again, might be attributed to learners’ focus primarily on meeting the requirements, getting the end-product, and a good essay grade instead of focusing on the quality of the process itself.

Further, there is a significant negative correlation between writing achievement and writing strategies. This result was not consistent with findings of almost any previous research concerned with the relationship between writing achievement and writing strategies. The relationship between achievement with strategies and anxiety found in this study should be interpreted with caution for several reasons. First, the negative correlation between achievement and strategies might be a consequence of a methodological error in terms of not using an instrument valid enough. To elaborate, when they were creating Writing Strategy Inventory, Petrić and Czarl (2003) defined writing strategies as actions or behaviors consciously carried out by writers in order to make their writing more efficient thus implying that “the study focuses on students’ perceptions of the writing strategies they use, which may not be the same as the actual strategies applied” (Petrić and Czarl, 2003:189). Therefore, students from this sample might have used a different set of strategies that were not suggested in the instrument, hence, the instrument did not measure what it was intended to

measure. Petrić and Czarl (2003) also pointed out that problems related to the idiosyncratic ways in which respondents may understand certain words or items, and various issues related to recent experiences, attitudes, reasons, and circumstances behind actual strategy use cannot be entirely solved by rewriting and validating items. This is an important limitation of questionnaires that needs to be taken into consideration.

Second, when asked to evaluate how much they like to write in English on a scale from 1 “do not like it at all” to 5 “like it a lot”, students scored a mean value of 3.9 (SD= 1.21032). Combination of their liking of writing in English, their average number of years of learning English being 11.4 years, and lack of overt instruction on writing strategies might have made the students unaware of strategies they employ by thinking good writing comes “naturally” to them. In many previous studies, researchers have suggested that there are connections between learners' metacognitive knowledge or beliefs about language learning and the variety and flexibility of language learning strategies they choose to use, arguing that some preconceived beliefs are likely to restrict learners' perceived range of strategy use (Abraham and Vann, 1987; Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Wenden, 1986a, 1987a, all cited in Yang, 1999).

Third, it is difficult to know how well the average of four essay grades reflected participants' actual proficiency in the writing skill as there were no consistent and explicit essay grading criteria across a number of different teachers involved in this study.

Fourth, Nooreiny and Mazlin (2013) found that writing proficiency depended on the type of strategy use, rather than frequency of strategy use. More specifically, in their study the high-intermediate students were more concerned with thinking, planning, and outlining in English before they started their writing task. It is possible that learners in this study are in fact skilled writers who primarily use, for example, cognitive, metacognitive and memory strategies over compensation and socio-affective strategies. Thereby, not reporting high frequency of strategy use does not necessarily characterize an unskillful or less proficient writer.

Finally, the last correlation analysis indicated significant positive correlation between usage of writing strategies and writing anxiety level. This result might suggest that more anxious students turn to conscious use of writing strategies to give them better control over the writing process in order to alleviate the feeling of anxiety. However, the negative correlation between anxiety and

achievement may indicate the students are aware of and employ a considerable amount of strategies, but are not skillful enough, or do not have sufficient time to find out which set of strategies works best for them. Furthermore, it could once more be that the type of strategies used, rather than frequency of strategy use is more important in getting clearer insight into the relationship between writing strategies and writing anxiety.

When it comes to differences between the second, third and the fourth grade, second graders ( $M=2.9718$ ,  $SD=.38405$ ) reported using writing strategies slightly more than third graders ( $M=2.7882$ ,  $SD=.44237$ ) and fourth graders ( $M=2.7066$ ,  $SD=.42637$ ) which may be attributed to simply receiving a more adequate writing strategy instruction from their teachers, but in this case, from a standpoint of an outside researcher, it is impossible to be certain. Further, no statistically significant difference was found in anxiety levels between the second, third and the fourth grade.

As far as the differences between genders are concerned, female students reported using strategies more than male students, which is concurrent with recent studies by Asmari (2013) and Liu (2015).

Furthermore, female students reported higher anxiety level in general, and higher levels of somatic and cognitive anxiety than male students, which is also in accordance with the results of several previous studies (Thompson, 1981; Cheng, 2002; Papamihel, 2002; Kirimizi, 2015).

Finally, there was no significant difference between female and male students' avoidance behavior levels, and no significant difference in writing achievement. Therefore, gender may not be a significant issue in terms of writing achievement of participants.

## 8. Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between writing strategies that EFL grammar school students employ, writing anxiety, and students' writing achievement. The study addressed the amount and types of writing strategies learners used, the amount and types of writing anxiety they experience, correlation between writing strategies, writing anxiety and writing achievement, possible differences between the second, the third and the fourth grade, and gender-based differences.

The present study has shown learners used writing strategies moderately, with more focus on while-writing strategies, followed by pre-writing and post-writing strategies, with special attention paid to following and checking the requirements for the task. They also experienced moderate level of writing anxiety, with cognitive subscale being the most prominent one, implying they were especially nervous and worried when their compositions are being evaluated and graded. Moreover, they were worried where their achievement stands in comparison to that of their peers'. Further, anxiety level was negatively correlated with writing achievement and positively correlated with writing strategies. These results point to goal/product-oriented attitude to writing which is most likely a consequence of preparing learners for state exams where they are awarded important and valuable points based solely on their end-product. Moreover, the positive correlation of anxiety and strategies indicates students are most likely familiar with and employ a decent amount of strategies but are not skillful enough or do not have sufficient time to find out which set of strategies is the most optimal for them and to focus on the process rather on the product. Thus, regarding teaching implications, teachers are urged to focus on teaching process-writing and to investigate their students' use of writing strategies in relation to their writing capabilities and writing anxiety. By doing so, they can help their students find which strategies work best for them and help them understand how writing strategies can enhance their EFL writing achievement and decrease their anxiety. That way, teachers can put writing into focus as an activity that can promote as well as reflect L2 development.

Concerning methodological implications, it is recommended that subsequent research focuses more on specific types of writing strategies used and their effect on writing anxiety and writing proficiency, rather than on frequency of strategy use throughout phases of the writing process. Moreover, when measuring writing achievement, a consistent and explicit essay grading criterion should be followed in order to assure the reliability and validity of the achievement measure. It would also be beneficial to look more thoroughly into the sources of writing anxiety, rather than focusing solely on measuring its levels and effect on achievement.

Further research is recommended in order to gain more insight into the field of teaching and developing SL writing skill and factors it is influenced by.

## 9. Bibliography

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## 10. Appendices

### 10.1. Appendix A: Demographic questionnaire (1<sup>st</sup> part of the research instrument)

Ovo je upitnik kojim želimo saznati nešto više o Vašim osobnim stavovima i pristupu pisanju na engleskome jeziku. U ovome upitniku nema točnih i netočnih odgovora. Upitnik je anoniman stoga Vas molimo da izrazite svoje mišljenje iskreno i što preciznije možete.

#### 1. Opća pitanja

Spol (zaokružite): M    Ž

Razred: \_\_\_\_\_

Materinski jezik (napisati na liniju): \_\_\_\_\_

Koliko godina učite engleski jezik? \_\_\_\_\_

Posljednja zaključna ocjena iz engleskog: \_\_\_\_\_

Kakve tipove tekstova inače pišete na engleskome jeziku? Molim zaokružite slovo i broj na skali uz odgovor (moguće je zaokružiti više odgovora).

1 – nikada	2 – rijetko	3 – ponekad	4 – često	5 – vrlo često			
a) e-mailove	1	2	3	4	5		
b) pisma	1	2	3	4	5		
c) bilješke	1	2	3	4	5		
d) sastavke (eseje)	1	2	3	4	5		
e) seminare	1	2	3	4	5		
f) kreativno pisanje (npr. prozu ili poeziju)			1	2	3	4	5
g) drugo: _____			1	2	3	4	5

Sviđa li Vam se pisati na engleskome jeziku? (zaokružiti)

Uopće mi se ne sviđa    Ne sviđa mi se    Niti mi se sviđa niti mi se ne sviđa    Sviđa mi se    Jako mi se sviđa

Koju ocjenu u prosjeku dobivate iz pisanja sastavaka na engleskome? (zaokružiti)    1    2    3    4    5

## 10.2. Appendix B: Writing Strategies Inventory (2nd part of the research instrument)

**2. U ovome dijelu upitnika nalaze se tvrdnje koje se odnose na različite etape pri pisanju na engleskom: prije pisanja, tijekom pisanja i provjeravanje nakon pisanja. Molim pažljivo pročitajte svaku tvrdnju i zaokružite broj koji prema Vašoj procjeni označava u kojoj se mjeri izjava odnosi na Vas.**

- 1 - nikada
- 2 - rijetko (manje od pola vremena)
- 3 – ponekad (otprilike pola vremena)
- 4 – često (više od pola vremena)
- 5 – vrlo često (gotovo uvijek)

### 2.1. PRIJE NEGO POČNEM PISATI SASTAVAK NA ENGLESKOME JEZIKU....

Molimo zaokružite odgovarajući broj.

PRIJE NEGO ŠTO POČNEM PISATI SASTAVAK NA ENGLESKOME....	1 - nikada	2 - rijetko	3 - ponekad	4 – često	5 – vrlo često
1. Napravim raspored tijekom pisanja.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Prije nego što počnem pisati provjerim upute i što se točno očekuje.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Pogledam primjerak teksta koji je napisao izvorni ili napredni govornik.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Počnem pisati bez da imam zapisani ili zamišljeni plan.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Razmislim o čemu želim pisati i imam plan u mislima, ali ne i na papiru.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Zabilježim riječi i kratke bilješke povezane s temom.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Pišem nacrt sastavka.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Zapisujem bilješke ili nacrt sastavka na svom materinskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5

### 2.2. ZA VRIJEME PISANJA NA ENGLESKOME...

Molimo zaokružite odgovarajući broj.

ZA VRIJEME PISANJA NA ENGLESKOME...	1 - nikada	2 - rijetko	3 - ponekad	4 – često	5 – vrlo često
9. Prvo počnem pisati uvod.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Nakon svake nove napisane rečenice zastanem pa ju još jednom pročitam.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Zastanem nakon nekoliko rečenica ili cijelog odlomka kad pokrijem određenu ideju.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Ponovo čitam sve što sam napisao/napisala da dobijem ideje kako nastaviti.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Vratim se na svoj nacrt i napravim promjene u njemu.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Pišem manje dijelove teksta i bilješke na hrvatskom jeziku te ih zatim prevodim na engleski.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Kad dođe do gramatike i vokabulara, „igram“ na sigurno.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Kad ne znam kako izraziti svoje misli na engleskom, pojednostavim ono što želim napisati.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Ako ne znam riječ na engleskom, zapišem ju na svom materinskom jeziku i kasnije pokušam pronaći prikladnu englesku riječ.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Ako ne znam riječ na engleskom, pronađem sličnu riječ na engleskom koju poznajem.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Ako ne znam riječ na engleskom, zastanem s pisanjem i potražim riječ u rječniku.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Koristim se dvojezičnim rječnikom.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Koristim se jednojezičnim rječnikom.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Kada imam problema s pisanjem pitam nekoga za pomoć.	1	2	3	4	5

### 2.3. DOK PROVJERAVAM...

Molimo zaokružite odgovarajući broj.

	1 - nikada	2 – rijetko	3 - ponekad	4 – često	5 – vrlo često
23. Pročitam svoj sastavak naglas	1	2	3	4	5
24. Pročitam što sam napisao/napisala tek kad dovršim cijeli sastavak.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Nakon što napišem svoj sastavak, predam ga bez da ga prethodno pročitam.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Dok provjeravam sastavak koristim se rječnikom.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Unosim promjene u vokabularu.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Mijenjam strukturu rečenica.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Mijenjam strukturu sastavka.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Unosim promjene vezane za sadržaj i	1	2	3	4	5

ideje.					
31. Kad pregledavam, usmjerim se na jednu po jednu stvar (npr. na sadržaj, a zatim na strukturu)	1	2	3	4	5
32. Odustanem od svoje prve skice i počnem pisati ponovo.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Provjerim ispunjava li moj sastavak sve što je prethodno traženo/očekivano.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Ostavim sastavak po strani nekoliko dana te ga onda mogu vidjeti iz nove perspektive.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Pokažem svoj sastavak nekome i pitam ga za njegovo/njezino mišljenje.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Uspoređujem svoj sastavak sa sastavcima svojih prijatelja koji su pisani na istu temu.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Nagradim se jer sam ispunio/ispunila zadatak.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Nakon što dobijem povratnu informaciju od nastavnika (ispravljeni esej), provjerim svoje pogreške i pokušam naučiti iz njih.	1	2	3	4	5

### 10.3. Appendix C: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (3<sup>rd</sup> part of the research instrument)

**3. U ovome dijelu upitnika nalaze se tvrdnje koje se odnose na različite osjećaje i ponašanja vezana uz pisanje na engleskome jeziku. Molim pažljivo pročitajte svaku tvrdnju i zaokružite broj s obzirom na to koliko se slažete ili ne slažete s tvrdnjom.**

- 1 – uopće se ne slažem
- 2 - ne slažem se
- 3 - niti se slažem niti se ne slažem
- 4 - slažem se
- 5 - u potpunosti se slažem

	1 – uopće se ne slažem	2 - ne slažem se	3 - niti se slažem niti se ne slažem	4 -slažem se	5 - u potpunosti se slažem
39. Misli mi postanu zbrkane kad pišem sastavke na engleskome pod vremenskim ograničenjem.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Često osjećam paniku kad pišem sastavke na engleskome pod vremenskim ograničenjem.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Drhtim i znojim se kad pod	1	2	3	4	5

vremenskim pritiskom pišem sastavke na engleskome.					
42. Osjećam kako mi srce lupa dok pišem sastavke na engleskom pod vremenskim ograničenjem.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Osjećam kao da mi je cijelo tijelo ukočeno i napeto dok pišem sastavke na engleskome.	1	2	3	4	5
44. „Zablokiram“ i ne mogu misliti kad se od mene iznenadno očekuje da napišem sastavak na engleskome.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Moj um se često čini praznim kad počnem raditi na sastavku iz engleskog.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Jako bih se potrudio/la pronaći izliku da izbjegnem pisanje sastavka na engleskome.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Koristim engleski pri pisanju sastavaka i drugih tekstova kad god je moguće.	1	2	3	4	5
48. Obično tražim svaku moguću priliku za pisanje na engleskome izvan nastave.	1	2	3	4	5
49. Često odabirem zapisati svoje misli na engleskome.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Obično dam sve od sebe da izbjegnem pisati na engleskome.	1	2	3	4	5
51. Osim kad ne bih imao/la drugog izbora, ne bih odabrao/la engleski kao jezik na kojem ću pisati svoj sastavak.	1	2	3	4	5
52. Dam sve od sebe kako bi izbjegao/la situacije u kojima moram pisati na engleskome.	1	2	3	4	5
53. Uopće se ne brinem što će drugi ljudi misliti o mojim sastavcima na engleskome.	1	2	3	4	5
54. Uopće ne strahujem da će moji sastavci biti ocjenjeni kao jako loši.	1	2	3	4	5
55. Ne brinem da su moji sastavci puno lošiji od ostalih.	1	2	3	4	5
56. Strahujem da će drugi učenici ismijavati moj uradak ako ga pročitaju.	1	2	3	4	5
57. Strahujem da će moj sastavak biti odabran kao primjer o kojem će se raspravljati na satu.	1	2	3	4	5
58. Za vrijeme pisanja na engleskome uopće nisam nervozan/na.	1	2	3	4	5
59. Da znam da će moj sastavak pisan na engleskome biti ocjenjivan, brinuo/la bih se da ću dobiti lošu ocjenu.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Dok pišem sastavak na engleskome	1	2	3	4	5

<b>osjećam se zabrinuto i nervozno ako znam da će biti ocijenjen.</b>					
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