A Comparative Study of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety Among Croatian Students Majoring in English and German

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Abstract

Writing in a foreign language is often perceived as tedious, complicated and anxiety-provoking. It should therefore not wonder that many researchers have investigated foreign language writing anxiety in order to gain insight into its effect on the student's foreign language learning experience. The main aim of the present study was to investigate and compare the different types of foreign language writing anxiety among English and German majors in Croatia. The sample consisted of 207 participants altogether. 59 participants study German and 148 study English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. Three different questionnaires were used for this quantitative study: a background questionnaire, Cheng's Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory and, lastly, an open-ended questionnaire used to collect data about the different causes of writing anxiety. The study has shown a low amount of overall foreign language anxiety among the students and a significant negative correlation with the students' self-assessment of the writing performance. The research findings identify the third year students in both groups as the ones suffering from the highest amounts of writing anxiety. The participants' most commonly named causes of writing anxiety have been enlisted and all the results further discussed and interpreted. Lastly, this paper also offers some suggestions for the prevention and reduction of writing anxiety which may be useful for pre-service and in-service foreign language teachers.

Key words: foreign language writing anxiety, self-assessment, causes of foreign language writing anxiety

Sažetak

Pisanje na stranom jeziku često se smatra zamornim, kompliciranim i izvorom straha među učenicima. Stoga ne čudi da brojni znanstvenici istražuju strah od pisanja na stranom jeziku kako bi dobili uvid u posljedice koje navedeni strah ima na učenikovo iskustvo učenja stranog jezika. Glavni je cilj ovog istraživanja ispitati i usporediti različite vrste straha od pisanja na stranom jeziku među hrvatskim studentima engleskog i njemačkog jezika. Uzorak se sastojao od ukupno 207 sudionika: 59 studenata njemačkog jezika i 148 studenata engleskog jezika na Filozofskom fakultetu u Osijeku. Za ovo kvantitativno istraživanje koristili smo tri upitnika: upitnik za prikupljanje općih podataka o sudionicima, upitnik o strahu od pisanja na stranom jeziku kojega je sastavio Cheng i upitnik s pitanjima otvorenog tipa za prikupljanje podataka o različitim uzrocima straha od pisanja. Rezultati istraživanja su pokazali nisku razinu straha od pisanja na stranom jeziku među studentima i značajnu negativnu korelaciju između straha od pisanja i samoprocjene vještine pisanja. Nadalje, dobiveni rezultati identificiraju studente treće godine fakulteta kao ispitanike najsklonije strahu od pisanja. U radu se također navode i uzroci straha od pisanja kod obje skupine sudionika te njihova detaljna interpretacija. Naposljetku, ovaj rad nudi i nekoliko prijedloga za prevenciju i smanjivanje straha od pisanja koji bi mogli biti korisni nastavnicima stranog jezika.

Ključne riječi: strah od pisanja na stranom jeziku, samoprocjena, uzroci straha od pisanja na stranom jeziku

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1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language is generally perceived as something complex and difficult. It is not easy to learn a language, which might be completely different from the student's first language. As a result, many students feel anxious when asked to actively use their foreign language of choice. Overall anxiety can be defined as "a mental and physical state characterized by specific emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioral symptoms" (Kralova, 2016: 3). It should not wonder that researchers have, through the years, tried to thoroughly investigate foreign language anxiety and its effect on the overall learning process. Generally speaking, writing and speaking are considered to be the most difficult skills to master and are therefore often considered to be the most common sources of anxiety. While speaking and writing, the student has to show knowledge from a variety of different linguistic fields – grammar, vocabulary, spelling, syntax, etc.

Homstad and Thorson (1994) point out that writing was often viewed as only a support skill and a method to teach grammar and translation. Relatively recently did the focus of foreign language classes shift to a more communicative approach. In other words, speaking in the foreign language has been the main goal for many foreign language teachers and learners. Unfortunately, that has taken the emphasis from writing as a skill. Writing is nowadays often seen as "arduous, challenging, and frustrating" (Yu, 2020: 862) because students feel like they do not possess the knowledge to convey their message in the desired language. Also, it is unfortunately not uncommon that students are only asked to write for the sole purpose of being evaluated, which leads to the direct connection between writing and test taking, another stressful situation.

Since the 1980's, more specifically, since Daly and Miller (1975b) coined the term *writing apprehension*, many researchers have investigated this phenomenon and its effect on writing performance and other factors influencing the language learning process. In the same article, they explained the development of a standardized instrument used to measure the amount of writing apprehension called Writing Apprehension Test (WAT). This was the start of the investigation of writing anxiety, which is still the topic of many research papers. The present study will attempt to add to the ever-growing body of research in this scientific field.

This paper is divided into two main parts. The first part is going to present the theoretical background on the basis of which the present study was conducted. The theoretical overview is

first going to define overall anxiety and some of its many ways of classification. Further, general foreign language anxiety will be presented and divided into smaller components, one of which is foreign language writing anxiety, which is the actual main focus of the present study. The last part of the first chapter contains a summary of the most important research conducted in the field together with the most relevant findings. In this part, it is pointed out that no evidence of research has been found comparing English and German in the given context of writing anxiety.

The second major part of the paper is the research report. The methodology is explained, together with the main aim and research questions. The results are presented for all stated questions using IBM SPSS 24. The paper proceeds with a thorough discussion of the results along with the ways of preventing and lessening writing anxiety among students. Finally, the most important findings are outlined in the conclusion together with some recommendations for future research.

2. The Definition and Classification of Anxiety

Anxiety can be found in many different scientific fields, not only in psychology. The psychologist Charles D. Spielberger (1972: 45) defines anxiety as a "specific emotional state which consists of unpleasant, consciously-perceived feelings of nervousness, tension and apprehension." Even though most people think that they understand what anxiety entails, Scovel (1978: 137) points out that anxiety "is not a simple, unitary construct that can be comfortably quantified into either 'high' or 'low' amounts."

Psychologists have devised different ways to classify anxiety in order to explore it more thoroughly. One of the possibilities is the division between trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation specific anxiety.

According to Spielberger (1972), trait anxiety is connected to the individual's personality traits. It correlates with the specific way the individual perceives the world and the way he or she reacts or behaves with predictable regularity. In other words, trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality characteristic. Someone with higher amounts of trait anxiety tends to interpret different situations as anxiety-provoking more often than someone with lower trait anxiety.

On the other hand, state anxiety is directly connected to one's personality states. It is present at a given moment and at a specific intensity level which means that it can fluctuate and change. According to Spielberger (1972: 31), "personality traits are often transitory, they can recur when evoked by appropriate stimuli, and they may endure over time when the evoking conditions persist". State anxiety is, therefore, connected to a particular stimulus and the individual's reaction to it. It is not as permanent and predictable as trait anxiety.

Horwitz et al. (1986) explain that situation specific anxiety is used to differentiate the people who feel generally anxious in a variety of different situations from those who are anxious only in specific situations. Situation specific anxiety is similar to trait anxiety, i.e. it is relatively stable, but provoked only by a small number of situations, e.g. test taking, mathematics, public speaking, and language classes. In simple terms, an individual might not be generally anxious, but experiences anxiety while taking a test or talking in front of a large number of people.

As already stated, anxiety is complex and not unitary. It consists of two sub-components, namely cognitive and somatic anxiety. Martens et al. (1990, as cited in Parnabas and Mahamood, 2013) explains the difference. Somatic anxiety is the physiological element. When activated, it results

in the feeling of nervousness, difficult breathing, high blood pressure, muscular tension, sweaty palms, etc. The cognitive aspect is the mental component. Its effects include negative expectations, loss of self-esteem, low self-confidence, worries about performance, etc.

Researchers have tried to investigate if anxiety has a debilitating or facilitating effect on performance. The term anxiety usually has a negative connotation, but in some cases, a bit of anxiety may even enhance the performance. The slightly anxious individual may in certain situations start to concentrate more and pay attention to details. However, a high amount of anxiety can have a negative effect on performance. The question is how to distinguish between these two scenarios. Alpert and Haber (1960) have therefore designed the Achievement Anxiety Test in order to "indicate not only the presence or absence of anxiety, but also whether the anxiety facilitates or debilitates test performance" (Alpert and Haber, 1960: 207).

3. Foreign Language Anxiety

During the mid-1980s, scientists started to explore a specific type of anxiety connected to the individual's experience while learning or using a foreign language (FL).

Horwitz et al. (1986: 128) were one of the first authors who concentrated on the aforementioned type of anxiety. They defined foreign language anxiety (FLA) as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." From this definition it is clear that FLA is situation specific. It is connected to the experience of learning a language and not to the individual's general tendency to feel anxious in a variety of situations.

The definition of FLA has led to the creation of a whole new scientific field which is even today actively researched. Teimouri et al. (2019: 363) claim that "anxiety is arguably the most researched affective variable in the field of second language acquisition."

This raises the question of why it is important to research FLA. Many authors have investigated the effect of FLA on students. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) state that language anxiety influences language acquisition, retention and production. In other words, it has a negative impact on the whole language learning process. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) describe what language anxiety is like for a student. The individual can only focus on negative thoughts and self-degradation. Horwitz et al. (1986) explain that an anxious student avoids communicating

difficult or personal messages in the target language. They also describe the clinical experience of an anxious individual: apprehension, worry, dread, being unable to concentrate, forgetfulness, sweat, heart palpitations. These vivid descriptions show that FLA can have a major impact on an individual and must therefore be thoroughly investigated together with its effect on FL learning and performance.

Horwitz et al. (1986) have also divided FLA into three different components: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is the fear of communicating with people. It plays an immense role in FL classes because the individual seems shy or unable to communicate, which can mislead the teacher to incorrectly evaluate the student's language proficiency and performance. Test anxiety is the second component. It is a type of performance anxiety caused by a fear of failure. Lastly, fear of negative evaluation is broader than the previous component. It may occur in a broader spectrum of situations – job interviews or overall speaking in FL classes.

Horwitz (1983) also developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), a scale consisting of 33 items used to assess a learner's level of FLA. The items can be grouped into three subscales – one for each of the three, previously explained, FLA components. Kralova and Tanistrakova describe this scale as "the most frequently used and adopted self-report tool to measure FLA in classroom setting" (2017: 348).

FLCAS was later critiqued by Cheng et al. (1999) who claimed that it is not as an accurate measurement of overall FLA as initially presented. When analyzing the items, it was found that most of them focus on speaking as the main source of anxiety. This was based on the assumption that this skill provokes the most anxiety when learning a language. The authors have concluded that FLCAS represents a measure of a more general type of FLA in a classroom but with a strong emphasis on speaking anxiety.

Other researchers have also tested the reliability of FLCAS. Aida (1994) used an adapted version of FLCAS in her study among students learning Japanese as a FL. She argued that the test was primarily being used when talking about learning English as a FL. Thus, she wanted to test the scale's reliability with a non-Western language. The author has also found that FLCAS primarily measures the amount of anxiety in speaking situations.

These discussions have lead to the classification of FLA according to the skill it focuses on.

Learning a FL is a complex process which consists of many smaller parts. Researchers wanted to investigate FLA into further detail and during the 1990's, just a decade after they have even begun talking about this subtype of anxiety, they have decided to investigate its parts even more thoroughly. The traditional way of examining FL learning is by talking about the four skills one has to acquire – reading, writing, speaking and listening. It is, therefore, expected that the researchers will also want to investigate FLA in the four different skills. This led to the skill-based FLA classification.

Pae (2013) was one of the first researchers who analyzed the relationship between the four skill-specific FLA. She has found that all four skill areas are connected to general FLA, but that they should still be analyzed as individual parts of it. The conclusion was that "each of four skill areas should receive independent and balanced attention from L2 researchers and practitioners" (Pae, 2013: 249).

Hilleson (1996, as cited in Kralova and Tanistrakova, 2017) was the first person to investigate reading and writing anxiety and started the investigation into all four skills. This has changed the way researchers viewed FLA. Most of them, like in FLCAS, concentrated on speaking as the most anxiety-provoking skill but after Hilleson, all skills have been researched even to this day. Most studies have proven the existence of skill-specific FLA.

4. Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

The term *writing apprehension* was coined by Daly and Miller (1975b). They described it as the general avoidance of writing and of situations in which they might be required to write something accompanied by the potential evaluation of what was written. According to Daly and Miller (1975a) writing apprehension is a trait, but it is measured as a reaction to a specific state – the encoding of a written message. It is, therefore, considered to be subject and situation specific.

Later on the term writing anxiety (WA) was used synonymously (Cheng et al., 1999; Al-Shboul and Huwari, 2015). Through the years, researchers have started to use the new term more often than writing apprehension. In this paper the term writing anxiety will be used.

4.1. The Importance of Investigating Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

Cheng et al. (1999) have investigated the correlation between FLA and foreign language writing anxiety (FLWA). They have found that both have their own unique characteristics, but that they also have a variety of similarities. Both are characterized by the avoidance of certain kinds of communication and a fear of evaluation. These two types of anxiety are therefore connected, but not the same. The correlation between them is still not researched enough.

If a student has high amounts of FLWA, he experiences more cognitive stress in an active encoding situation than someone with low FLWA (Daly and Miller, 1975a). When highly anxious students write, they expect to receive negative evaluation, which is unfortunately the case because they seldom practice writing. In FL classes, these students are the ones who often do not turn in compositions and essays (Daly and Miler, 1975b). The highly apprehensive students find writing unrewarding (Daly, 1978) and also tend to avoid writing classes and professions in which they are required to write on a daily basis. Faris et al. (1999, as cited in Hanna, 2009) found that students affected by WA often choose a career in accounting because they anticipate only working with numbers.

Al-Shboul and Huwari (2015) point out the importance of investigating FLWA. According to them, WA can be experienced by both native and non-native English learners. However, the authors argue that writing is more complex in a FL due to the fact that the language system of the target language might be completely different from the first language.

Bloom (1980) has estimated that about 10% to 25 % of the population has experienced WA. This is not at all a small number. Especially if one considers that this anxiety is connected to writing, a process that is not rare and that some might face every single day. These numbers prove that WA has to be investigated. If enough information is gathered, researchers might find a way to help individuals suffering from FLWA.

4.2. The Measure of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

To be able to measure WA, Daly and Miller (1975b) have designed an instrument called the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (WAT). WAT consists of 26 items measured by a five-point Likert scale. The authors claimed to have developed a "reliable and valid instrument for

the measurement of writing apprehension" (Daly and Miller, 1975b). This instrument is being used to measure WA even today.

However, this instrument has later on faced some critique. It contains 9 items related to the person's self-efficacy beliefs. As a result, McKain argued that the WAT is "a measure of writing self-esteem just as much as a measure of writing apprehension" (1991: 25, as cited in Cheng, 2004a).

Another critique comes from Yuh-Show Cheng. The author has written many research papers about FLWA. In one of them (2004b), he states that writing anxiety is mostly being researched in the context of the first language and not enough in the FL learning scenarios. On a similar note, Cheng (2004a) points out the fact that Daly and Miller's WAT was originally developed for first language learners, i.e. native speakers of English. He expresses the concern that the test may not be applicable to the learning of a FL. Cheng (2004a) also found that the WAT does not consist of any subscales and that it therefore represents a "unidimensional construct" (2004a: 315). As a result, Cheng (2004a) has adapted WAT and designed his own measure for FLWA – Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI).

SLWAI was designed specifically for the experience of learning a second or foreign language. It also takes into account the multidimensional approach to anxiety which is nowadays widely accepted. Cheng (2004a) has introduced the three-dimensional approach to FLWA.

According to him, FLWA consists of cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior. Cognitive and somatic anxiety were already explained according to Martens et al. (1990, as cited in Parnabas and Mahamood, 2013) in a previous chapter. In the context of FLWA, cognitive anxiety is expressed by worry, negative expectations and preoccupation. The second dimension, somatic anxiety, manifests by an upset stomach, a pounding heart, excessive sweating and numbness. Lastly, avoidance behavior entails procrastination, withdrawal and avoidance of writing altogether. Each dimension is in the instrument represented by a subscale. Somatic anxiety is defined by individual items relating to increased physiological arousal, items dealing with perception of arousal, worry or fear of negative evaluation measure cognitive anxiety. Items connected to avoiding writing and situations which require writing represent the subscale for avoidance behavior (Cheng: 2004a).

4.3. The Causes of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

As already indicated, FLWA can have a major effect on the students and their experience of FL learning. High levels of writing anxiety can even influence the choice of future career. Researchers have, therefore, identified the importance of investigating FLWA. However, Cheng (2004b) claims that the research in the area of WA has mainly focused on its effect on the written performance and not enough on the sources causing it altogether. Understanding the causing factors triggering FLWA can help develop strategies how to reduce it or even prevent it, if applied early enough. The research has therefore slowly incorporated the investigation into the causes of FLWA.

As with any other type of anxiety, it is not easy to pinpoint the main sources of FLWA. Each anxious student may have different reasons why he/she feels apprehensive towards writing, but some general causes were found by various researchers.

Horwitz et al. (1986), as discussed in previous chapters, made the division of FLA into communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The latter two can be applied to FLWA. Zhang (2011) argues that the fear of failure in tests is often present in school contexts and plays an important role as the common cause of FLWA. Test taking combines writing as a productive activity and time pressure which can cause making mistakes even if the student is well-prepared. On the other hand, fear of negative evaluation can be applied to receiving teacher's negative feedback and error correction on a composition or essay.

Hollady (1981, as cited in Hassan, 2001) has taken a different approach to the sources of FLWA. The author explains that the causes can also be connected to linguistic knowledge of the student. According to him, the causes of FLWA vary from poor skill development and inadequate role models to the lack of understanding of the writing process and, lastly, the mode of teaching.

Atay and Kurt (2006) have designed a short open-ended questionnaire consisting of 6 questions. This questionnaire is made to investigate the sources and effects of FLWA on the students. An adapted version of the questionnaire is also used in the present study. The authors have found that the "sources of anxiety are closely intertwined, creating a difficulty in teasing out a discrete factor or source" (Atay and Kurt, 2006: 108). However, in their study, the most commonly found sources were: teachers, past experiences, time limit/due date, exams, classroom setting, peer effect and the choice of the writing topic. Tanyer and Susoy (2013) have used the same

questionnaire and have found similar sources: worries about exams and grades, lack of practice, time pressure, rules of academic writing, writing topics, teachers and peers.

The authors Lin and Ho (2009) investigated the sources of WA among Taiwanese English majors. The authors have found five commonly mentioned factors of WA: time restriction, teacher's evaluation, peer competition, lack of knowledge about the writing subject and the writing format. Similar results have been documented by several researchers (Cheng, 2004; Atay and Kurt, 2006; Zhang, 2011).

Genc and Yayli (2019) investigated the effect of different writing situations on FLWA. In their questionnaire, students had to evaluate the amount of anxiety they felt while writing at home, in class, an exam, etc. The authors' predictions were proven correct. The students feel the most anxious while writing a test, or writing in class. The participants explained their choices claiming that they feel anxious because of time limitations, the classroom atmosphere, the writing topic and the fear of low grades.

It can be concluded that different authors have found similar causes of FLWA. Of course, a common source is the experience of test taking, due to time restrictions and the classroom atmosphere. Other causes are connected to the knowledge of the student – linguistic knowledge, knowledge about the writing topic and the required format of writing. Lastly, it is important to note that teachers were often named as being a source of WA for many participants.

4.4. Related Research

WA is not a characteristic of just one particular group of students. Hanna (2009) conducted a research among students at different academic levels. The results showed that WA may affect students at all levels and even after they have graduated from college.

There are some conflicting results from various studies concerning the difference of FLWA among students of different years of study. Some have found that FLWA lessens as the study experience in learning a FL is longer (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989; Kostić-Bobanović, 2016; Gardner et al., 1977), others argue that it increases (Cheng, 2002; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Zhang, 2011; Atay and Kurt, 2006).

Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) have tried to investigate which aspects contribute to FLA. They have found that the students' expectations of their achievement were the biggest predictor of FLA. The authors claim that more experienced learners want to perfect their writing skills and use more complex constructions and vocabulary. As a result, they are more concerned during the writing process.

Kostić-Bobanović (2016) investigated the EFL writing anxiety among students majoring in tourism, marketing, informatics and finance in Pula. The participants were first tested in their first year of study and then again during the third year. Kostić-Bobanović found that WA significantly decreased. According to the author, the teachers have actively used strategies to reduce WA among the students and it seemed to have worked.

The effect of self-evaluation and the belief in one's writing skills on FLWA is often the topic of investigation. Most researchers hypothesize that self-evaluation has a negative influence on WA. This hypothesis can be supported by Bandura's work (1988) in which the authors states that the perception of one's abilities has a major influence on the effort expended to pursue a goal. In other words, if someone, for example, thinks that he/she is very bad when it comes to writing, he/she might not even try to improve his/her writing skills. Jones (2008) also found that the ability to learn how to write is greatly influenced by the student's beliefs in their capabilities.

MacIntyre et al. (1997) wanted to investigate the correlation between the self-evaluation of the person's skills in FL and the overall FLA. They have tested 37 students learning French as a FL. An important thing to note is that the students graded their writing skill the lowest (followed by speaking, reading and, lastly, comprehension). The study has shown a negative correlation between FLA and self-evaluation. Additionally, they reported that less anxious students tend to show evidence of self-enhancement while more anxious students are characterized by self-derogation, i.e. anxious students will sometimes even underestimate their skills and capabilities. This is in agreement with the findings of other researchers (Singh and Rajalingam, 2012; Trylong, 1987; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999).

 McCarthy et al. (1985) have investigated the role of self-evaluation on the written performance. They have conducted two studies on this topic and both have shown that self-evaluation is significantly correlated to the student's written performance. More specifically, students who highly rate their writing skills tend to write better essays than the students with a weak self-evaluation of their written performance.

Cheng (2002) wanted to investigate the influence of various learner differences on FLWA. The author has found that "the individuals' confidence in English writing explained the largest amount of variance in L2 writing anxiety" (2002: 652). The study showed that writing achievement has a much weaker contribution (only 2%) to FLWA. In other words, self-evaluation is a better predictor of FLWA than writing achievement.

With respect to the different types of FLWA measured by Cheng's SLWAI, the results vary from research to research. However, cognitive anxiety seems to be the most pronounced among students (Jebreil et al., 2015; Zhang, 2011; Rezaei and Jafari, 2014; Jennifer and Ponniah, 2017). Zhang (2011) explains that this means that students tend to have high pressures of tests and evaluation in ESL writing. This results in the fear of tests and negative evaluation and, as a result, higher cognitive anxiety.

Lastly, it is important to point out that no comparative study on WA among the students of German and English as a foreign language could be found while writing this paper.

5. Aim and Research Questions

The main aim of the present research is to investigate and compare the different types of FLWA among Croatian students majoring in English and German.

More specifically, the following research questions will be answered:

1) Which type of FLWA is the most prominent among Croatian students majoring in English and German?

2) What is the difference of FLWA among students of different years of study at the faculty?

3) What is the relationship between the students' WA and the self-assessment of their writing performance?

4) What are the main sources of FLWA among the students?

6. Methodology

6.1 Participants

A sample of 207 students participated in the present study. All participants are students at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek. 148 students (71.5%) of students are majoring in English and 59 of the participants (28.5%) chose German as their major.

The research was conducted among students at three different years of academic study – first, third and fifth year of study. The distribution of the participants based on their major and the year of study can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Participants

Year of study	The student's major		
	German	English	Total
1st year	17	48	65
3rd year	21	67	88
5th year	21	33	54
Total	59	148	

6.2. Instrument

A three-part questionnaire was used to collect the data for the research.

The first questionnaire collected background information about the participants (see Appendix A). It was designed for the KohPiTekst project, which started in the year 2017. The KohPiTekst project aims to explore the coherence of written compositions in different languages. The project manager, full professor Vesna Bagarić Medve, has given her permission to use the questionnaire for the present study. The questionnaire consists of 13 questions. Some of them require a short answer and some involve a 5-point Likert scale. It was originally written in Croatian and was not translated into English or German for the purpose of the present research.

The second questionnaire used is the aforementioned Cheng's SLWAI (Cheng, 2004a) (Appendix B). The questionnaire measures the amount of FLWA among the participants. It

consists of 22 items and a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). 7 items (1, 4, 7, 17, 18, 21, 22) are negatively formulated and had to be recoded so that the number 5 of the scale always stands for the highest level of FLWA. As it was already explained, SLWAI follows the theory that FLWA is a three-dimensional concept and can therefore be divided into three subscales measuring the individual aspects: cognitive anxiety (items 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20, 21), somatic anxiety (2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 19) and avoidance behavior (4, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18, 22). The original SLWAI questionnaire was translated into Croatian and adapted according to the language in question – English or German. Cheng (2004a) reported a reliability of 0.91, but the Cronbach's Alpha for the present study equals 0.94.

Lastly, the third questionnaire (Appendix C) was an open-ended questionnaire. It consists of 10 questions and was used to collect data about the participant's experiences and potential sources of FLWA. It was made by adapting and combining two different open-ended questionnaires. Six open-ended questions (3-9) were adapted from Atay and Kurt (2006) and the last question was adapted from Genc and Yayli (2019).

6.3 Procedure

Most of the data was collected during January 2020 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. During that month, the whole data of the English majors and the German majors of the fifth year has been collected. The questionnaires were printed out and the learners were given the necessary information about the aims of the study and encouraged to answer the questions as honest as possible. The procedure lasted for approximately 20 minutes.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the faculty closing on March 16th, 2020, the first and third year participants studying German were asked to fill in the questionnaires online. As expected, the number of students wanting to participate was extremely low, which had an impact on the sample. This part of the research was conducted using Google Forms.

Both groups were asked to write their names on the background information questionnaire (the first questionnaire used), but it was explained to them that the names will not be used during the data analysis and the presentation of the results. All the students participated voluntarily.

Owing to the fact that this is a quantitative study, the data was transformed into numbers and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 24. To answer the research questions, descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA and the Pearson Correlation Test were used.

7. Results

7.1. The different types of FLWA

In order to determine the overall level and the amounts of the specific subtypes of FLWA in the research, descriptive statistics was used. It was already explained that Cheng's SLWAI consists of 22 items and that they are coded so that the highest score stands for the highest level of FLWA. The answers given by the participants were added up. The lowest score could be 22 and the highest number possible was 110. Based on their overall score, the participants were divided into three categories according to Zhang (2011): low, moderate and high anxiety. A score above 65 is categorized as high anxiety, a score below 50 as low anxiety and anything between 50 and 65 is considered as a moderate level of FLWA. For this analysis, the students were also divided according to the language they study. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Number and percentages of students in three anxiety categories

	Low Anxiety		Moderate Anxiety		High Anxiety	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
English	109	73.6%	19	12.8%	20	13.5%
German	27	45.8%	16	27.1%	16	27.1%
Total	136	65.7%	35	16.9%	36	17.4%

It is noticeable that students do not suffer from high anxiety (only 36, i.e. 17.4%), but the German students seem to be more affected by FLWA altogether.

The first research question deals with the subdivision of FLWA into three components. To be able to answer it, the mean was calculated for both the overall WA and its individual parts. The results for the English majors can be seen in Table 3 and for German majors in Table 4.

Table 3: The levels of different aspects of FLWA found among English majors

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Anxiety overall	1.00	4.50	1.99	.68
Cognitive anxiety	1.00	4.88	2.17	.86
Somatic anxiety	1.00	4.57	1.81	.79
Avoidance behavior	1.00	4.57	1.96	.68

Table 4: The levels of different aspects of FLWA found among German majors

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Anxiety overall	1.00	4.77	2.47	.68
Cognitive anxiety	1.00	5.00	2.46	.86
Somatic anxiety	1.00	5.00	2.20	.79
Avoidance behavior	1.00	5.00	2.73	.68

The results depicted in Table 3 and Table 4 indicate that there is a difference between the different aspects of FLWA when German and English are compared. English majors experience cognitive anxiety the most, whereas German majors tend to be affected by avoidance behavior the most. It is also visible that somatic anxiety is the least prominent for both languages.

In the third questionnaire, the participants were asked to name any physical changes they have experienced when writing in the FL. For this part of the study, the results were not separated according to the students' major, but were analyzed as a whole. 141 students (68%) have written that they have never experienced any physical changes when writing, the remaining 66 participants have named the following changes: perspiration (27 participants), overall nervousness (17), a faster heart rate (14), shaking (12), stomach ache (4), panic (2), and breathing difficulties (2). The following effects were named only once: insomnia, negative thoughts, blushing, and increased body temperature.

7.2. The difference of FLWA among students of different years of study at the faculty

The second research question focused on the difference of FLWA among students of different years of study at the faculty. First, descriptive statistics were used to show the differences between the years of study and their levels of the overall FLWA. Again, German and English majors were separated so that the results can later on be interpreted more accurately. The found data is presented in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5: The levels of overall FLWA among students of different years of study (English majors)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
1st year	1.99	.78
3rd year	2.12	.67
5th year	1.71	.46

Table 6: The levels of overall FLWA among students of different years of study (German majors)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
1st year	2.67	.93
3rd year	2.67	.75
5th year	2.09	.68

When it comes to English majors, the third-year students at the faculty experience the highest level of FLWA. The first-year students are in the middle with an overall mean of 1.99, which is not that much lower than the mean value of the third-year students. The fifth-year English majors experience the least amount of overall FLWA.

On the other hand, when analyzing the results for the participants studying German, it is noticeable that the students of the first and third year have an equal mean. Again, the fifth-year students are the least affected by FLWA.

While comparing German and English majors, one might notice that the means are consistently higher when it comes to the anxiety connected to writing in the German language.

To investigate where between the groups, i.e. exactly between which years of study, the statistically significant differences at the p<.05 level occurs, a post-hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test was made. In other words, this comparison was made to determine between which years of study a statistically significant change in FLWA can be observed. The test

showed a significant difference between the three groups of German majors ($F_{(2, 56)}$ = 3.690, p = .031, p= Sig.). However, Tukey's post-hoc test did not show any significant difference between the three groups of students. It might be due to the smaller sample size. For further research it is suggested to, in such cases, use the non-parametric method Kruskal-Wallis test.

When it comes to the English majors, one-way ANOVA again showed a significant difference ($F_{(2, 145)}$ = 4.128, p= .018, p= Sig.). This time, Tukey's post-hoc test has shown a significant difference between the third (M=2.21, SD=.67) and fifth year (M=1.71, SD=.46) of study.

7.3. The relationship between the self-assessment of writing performance and FLWA

This part of the present study investigates the relationship between the students' self-assessment of their writing performance and their level of overall FLWA. The participants were asked in the first questionnaire to self-assess their knowledge and performance in four different skills – speaking, writing, reading comprehension and listening comprehension.

First of all, descriptive statistics were used to compare the mean score for the students' self-assessment of their skills. Once again, German and English were separated in the analysis. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: The self-assessment of the students' skills

Skill	Language			
	English		German	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Speaking	4.18	.75	3.90	.84
Writing	4.26	.77	3.90	.80
Listening	4.48	.62	4.39	.72
Reading	4.55	.62	4.36	.71

Descriptive statistics show that English majors self-evaluate their speaking abilities the lowest, closely followed by writing. Among German majors, speaking and writing have the same mean (M=3.90). In other words, the students from both groups rate their performance in the productive skills lower than their receptive skills, which was to be expected.

To be able to answer the third research question, the Pearson Correlation Test was used. The test showed that there is a significant correlation between the students' self-assessment of their writing performance and their level of overall FLWA for both German and English majors. When it comes to the participants studying German, the test showed, according to Cohen's (1988) classification, a significant small negative correlation (r=-.280, p<.050). On the other hand, the results for the English group point to a statistically significant strong negative correlation (r=-5.550, p<.01).

It can be concluded that for both groups of students FLWA has a negative effect on the self-evaluation of their writing abilities, meaning, that if one variable (either FLWA or self-assessment) increases, the other one is going to decrease, and vice versa.

7.4. The main sources of FLWA among the students

As it was already explained, the open-ended questionnaire was used to gain a better insight into the students' FLWA. Their answers were analyzed using descriptive statistics so that the fourth research question could be answered.

First of all, it is important to know the students' attitude towards writing in the FL. 136 English majors (91.9 %) reported that they like writing in English, whereas 48 German majors (81.4%) answered the same for German. When asked how they felt when writing in their FL, 82.4% of English majors and 67.8% of German majors reported experiencing positive feelings. Some of the emotions categorized as positive were: *self-confident, relaxed, without any fear, happy, satisfied, capable, excited, great, calm, focused, free, creative* and *motivated.* Some of the negative emotions named were: *nervous, afraid, scared, worried, tense, confused, awful, stupid* and *stressed.* Altogether, students seem to like writing in the FL.

The participants were then asked what they think about the amount of writing they are required to do in the FL. They chose between three options – too much, sufficient, insufficient.

Table 8: Students' beliefs about the amount of required writing

The amount of writing is	Language			
	English		German	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Too much	9	6.1 %	7	11.9%
Sufficient	123	83.1%	39	66.1%
Insufficient	16	10.8%	13	22.0%

Both German and English students agree that they are required to write a sufficient amount in their FL at the faculty. For both groups of students, more participants believe that they should write more, than less.

In the next question, the students were asked to circle whether or not they have difficulties when it comes to writing in the FL and, if they do, to name the problems they have noticed. In this question, the German majors have shown that they have more difficulties with writing than the participants studying English. When it comes to English, the majority of participants (81.8%) have reported no difficulties when it comes to writing, whereas 42.4% of the German majors reported having some form of difficulties. When asked to clarify which difficulties they have, the students have given a variety of different answers which are presented in Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 9: Difficulties English majors face while writing in English

Difficulty named	N	Percent
None	119	80.4%
Grammar	8	5.4%
Vocabulary	8	5.4%
Spelling	6	4.1%
Inspiration	5	3.4%
Nervousness	1	0.7%
Essays	1	0.7%

Table 10: Difficulties German majors face while writing in German

Difficulty named	N	Percent
None	33	55.9%
Grammar	15	25.4%
Vocabulary	7	11.9%
Spelling	3	5.1%
Essays	1	1.7%

It is evident that both groups of participants mainly have difficulties with different parts of linguistics. For both German and English, grammar and vocabulary seem to be the biggest difficulty in the process of writing. Other than those, spelling and essays were also named for both languages. English majors have also recognized inspiration (or the lack thereof) and general nervousness as difficulties they encounter while writing.

In the next question, the participants were asked to name situations and people connected to their FLWA. Their answers were categorized and listed in Table 11.

Table 11: Situations and people connected to the students' FLWA

Situations and people	English		German	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
None	91	61.5%	30	50.8%
Teacher	7	4.7 %	11	18.6 %
Lack of knowledge	9	6.1%	5	8.5%
Writing essays	2	1.4 %	2	3.4 %
Their own expectations	2	1.4 %	1	1.7 %
Time pressure	15	10.1 %	3	5.1 %
Making mistakes	3	2.0 %	2	3.4 %
Being graded	5	3.4 %	3	5.1 %
Being laughed at	6	4.1 %	1	1.7 %
Exams	8	5.4 %	1	1.7 %

Also, to be able to investigate the different sources of FLWA, the participants had to determine the level of their anxiety during three different environments – writing in class, writing at home

and taking a test. Next to each situation, they were given a 5-point Likert scale. 1 stands for the lowest amount of anxiety and 5 for the highest. The data is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: The amount of anxiety in different environment

Situations	English		German	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Using FL while writing in class	2.02	1.09	2.23	1.22
Using FL while writing at home	1.14	.44	1.41	.83
Using FL while taking a test	2.21	1.10	2.90	1.57

When the two groups are compared, it is noticeable that, once again, German majors are more affected by FLWA. Both groups had similar results in this part of the present research. Both seem to be the most anxious when taking a test and writing in class.

The last two questions aimed at investigating whether or not the person the student is writing to has an impact on the level of FLWA. The participants were asked to determine, using a 5-point Likert scale, the level of anxiety while writing an e-mail or message in the FL to their teacher and their friend.

Table 13: The amount of anxiety according to the recipient of the message

Situations	English		German	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Writing to a teacher	1.99	1.22	1.92	1.10
Writing to a friend	1.12	.59	1.20	.58

Both groups of students do not feel anxious when writing to a friend, but rather while writing an e-mail or message to a teacher. However, the mean value even here is not that high.

8. Discussion

The present study has shown that German and English majors at the faculty do not suffer from high levels of FLWA. However, when compared to English majors, the participants studying German have shown higher amounts of overall FLWA, which is interesting because both groups

of students have a similar education at the faculty and are required to write every day during their lessons. They often have to write seminar papers and essays at home, so both should have a similar experience while writing. It could be implied that German students are not sufficiently "trained" how to write, i.e. they do not know how to cope with WA and are therefore more affected by it.

Descriptive statistics have shown that the two groups of students suffer from different types of FLWA. In line with some previous research findings (Jebreil et al., 2015; Zhang, 2011; Rezaei and Jafari, 2014; Jennifer and Ponniah, 2017), English majors experience cognitive anxiety most frequently. German majors also had a relatively high result for this aspect of FLWA. As mentioned in the theoretical background, cognitive anxiety is characterized by worry, negative expectations and is often connected to test taking. Even though both groups of students are experienced in taking tests in their FL, it is still a source of anxiety together with being evaluated. The students should therefore more often use writing in situations which do not involve tests and evaluation but rather feedback on their writing performance. As a result, they would not directly connect writing to test taking situations and would gain confidence to feel more relaxed even when writing a composition or test which will be graded.

Cognitive anxiety is also connected to others' perception of the student's written performance. In Croatian schools, teachers often like to compare students by openly showing who did the best and who did the worst when it comes to writing performance. This often results in the fear of doing worse than others or being called out in class, which consequently may lead to higher levels of cognitive anxiety. Therefore, teachers should not compare students on the basis of their achievement. Some students have the natural aptitude for writing in the FL. When compared to those students, the rest is going to feel as if they are not good enough and their self-confidence will become lower and lower.

Interestingly, it was shown that German majors suffer mostly from avoidance behavior (M=2.73), which is not prominent in the English group (M=1.96). Avoidance behavior means that German majors tend to avoid situations in which they are required to write in German and they also procrastinate when they have a written task. In Croatia, it is easier to avoid writing in German than in English. People are more often exposed to English and are, thus, more accustomed to it. On the other hand, German is not that common. Students are rarely in situations in which they have to write in German outside the school or the faculty. It could be claimed that students' higher anxiety level stems largely from their avoidance of writing in

German. Consequently, if they do not use German when writing, they will not improve their writing skills, nor will their WA decrease. The faculty should therefore offer more classes in which German students will be taught how to write. English majors have an elective course in which they can learn how to write essays. The same should be available to German students together with some other courses leading the students through the process of writing.

For both groups, somatic anxiety was the least prominent. This means that the participants of the present study are not affected physiologically by anxiety. 141 participants claimed never to have experienced any physical change during the process of writing. However, the answers of the remaining students are alarming and have shown that, even though students do not suffer from high somatic anxiety, writing can have a physiological effect on them and it should therefore not be underestimated. The changes mentioned are similar to those found by Atay and Kurt (2006).

Contrary to previous research in which either the first (Kostić-Bobanović, 2016; Gardner et al., 1977) or the fifth-year students (Cheng, 2002; Zhang, 2011; Atay and Kurt, 2006) are claimed to be mostly anxious while writing, the present study has identified the third-year English majors as the most anxious ones. In the German group, the first and the third-year students have shown equal amounts of anxiety. The question is: Why are the students of the third year of study at the faculty so anxious when it comes to writing?

This might be due to the fact that students in the first year believe that they are experienced when it comes to writing. They have not yet experienced many classes dealing with syntax, linguistics and spelling and they believe that they know everything there is to know about writing in the FL. Additionally, during their high school education, they have been trained how to write essays in order to pass their state exams. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the fifth-year students have spent at least five years intensely focusing on the language and all of its components. They also have a lot of experience in writing and have, therefore, perfected their writing skills. The fifth-year students feel more confident and, as a result, do not experience high levels of FLWA. The third year, however, started to investigate different aspects of the language they are studying and they now know how complicated it can be to write in a FL. They know a lot more about the language than the first year students, but are not yet as experienced and confident as the fifth year students. It might also be that the third year students are more anxious because of the fear of exams. During the third year, the students have to pass all their exams from that and previous years in order to enroll into the next year of study. Sometimes this means that they have many more exams than any other year of study and that the pressure to pass every single one of them if

they want to continue their education is high. In addition to all those exams, they are required to simultaneously write their BA paper, which is also a source of anxiety. On the other hand, the last year of study mostly focuses on practical work. During the fifth year of study, the students do not have many exams to pass, which could be why they do not feel as anxious.

In the third research question, the correlation between FLWA and the students' self-assessment of their written skill was tested. For the present research, it was chosen to investigate FLWA and self-assessment rather than written performance, in order to see if Cheng's (2002) findings would prove to be correct, namely, that self-assessment has a significant correlation to their FLWA. Unfortunately, due to the fact that the sample consisted of students from two different majors and for each three years of study were tested, it was not possible to measure their written performance by asking them to write their grade from a specific subject. Moreover, due to time constraints, it was also not possible to assess their written performance by giving them a writing task.

First of all, it is important to note the difference of the self-assessment of their skills. Both German and English majors have evaluated their productive skills (speaking and writing) lower than their abilities when it comes to their receptive skills (listening and reading). This was expected because productive skills are generally perceived as more difficult and complex. Both speaking and writing consist of many different parts and involve other parts of a FL – vocabulary, spelling, grammar etc. It is interesting that German majors have consistently graded their skills lower than English majors. This proves the widely accepted perception that German is much more difficult and complex than English.

The Pearson Correlation Test showed a significant negative correlation between the two variables tested (writing skill and FLWA), for both groups of students. This means that a highly anxious student is going to rate his/her writing skills lower than someone who has low WA. This finding was in line with research previously conducted (Cheng, 2002; Sign and Rajalingam, 2012; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999).

According to Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) this negative correlation can be interpreted in a variety of different ways. First, due to high levels of FLWA, students tend to lower their self-competence, self-worth and course expectations. Another explanation could be that due to low self-competence, self-worth and negative course expectations the students elevate their level of FLWA. The third possibility states that a recursive relationship occurs in which high levels of FLWA cause students to decrease their self-perception and vice versa. The last possible

explanation given by the authors is that one or more variables are associated with both FLA and the students' self-perception which as a result moderates FLA and self-perception.

However, there is no way of knowing if the participants have accurately evaluated their writing skill. In order to test this, the students' writing skill should be tested in a future study. Nevertheless, the present study has again proven the negative correlation between self-assessment and FLWA for both German and English majors.

To be able to find the main sources of FLWA among the participants, many different factors were taken into account and analyzed.

First of all, it is important to investigate the students' attitude towards writing in the given FL. Generally speaking, students usually do not like to write because they do not understand the purpose of writing when it comes to FL learning. They associate writing only with essays and longer texts in general. Again, teachers should the students the importance of writing in a FL, especially when it comes to different types of texts, e.g. text messages, Facebook comments, movie/book reviews, e-mails, postcards, etc. Surprisingly, both groups have shown that they like writing in English/German. Again, German majors have a lower affection towards writing in German than English majors writing in English. The results show that most students (English majors – 83.1%, German majors – 66.1%) would not change the amount of writing they are required to do at the faculty, which supports the fact that they do not dislike writing.

When asked how they felt while writing, the students have given different responses which were classified into positive and negative feelings. The distinction between the two was clear as can be seen from the examples given in the previous chapter. Even though 81.4 % of German majors like writing, only 67.8% of them reported experiencing positive feelings. This means that, even though some students like to write, they still encounter negative feelings during the process of writing. Due to the fact that they do not dislike writing, the students will keep writing and therefore improve their writing skills which will later on result in an increase of positive feelings and self-confidence.

It is very positive that 81.8% of English students reported no difficulties when it comes to writing. The rest has named the following sources of difficulties when writing: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, inspiration, nervousness and essays. The first three difficulties can only be solved by practicing and learning more about the language itself, which they will do during their education at the faculty.

German majors seem to overall have more difficulties while writing in German. Only 55.9% of them do not experience any difficulties. The remaining 44.1% named difficulties involving grammar, vocabulary, spelling and one student has difficulties particularly connected with essays. Once again, writing in German seems to be more complicated and is a source of more difficulties for the participants. It could be that they do not practice writing enough at the faculty or feel that they do not know enough about the linguistic fields mentioned.

These results are similar to Zhang's (2011), who found that most difficulties students face stem from linguistic difficulties such as vocabulary, sentence structure and grammatical errors.

The purpose of the next question was to investigate the different situations and people connected to FLWA. Even though both groups of students seem not to be affected by FLWA, only 61.5% of English and 50.8% of German students could not think of a person or situation that could be perceived as anxiety-provoking.

Both groups of students seem to agree when it comes to the different answers named, but the percentages are a bit different. English majors are mostly affected by time pressure (10.1%), whereas only 5.1% of the German participants seem to mind it. It could be that English students tend to write in class under time pressure more often than German students and it therefore has a bigger impact on them.

In contrast, 18.6% of German majors (and 4.7% of English majors) named teachers to be the main source of FLWA for them. Learning a FL has enough difficulties as is, the teacher should not be one of them. This result is alarming because teacher's role should be to help the students lessen their FLCA and not increase it. Unfortunately, it seems that many German teachers have not helped their students when it comes to WA. The teacher has a major impact on the students and should be careful not to scare them away from the subject being taught, or, even worse, cause different types of anxieties which will follow them through life. During the education of future teachers, they should not only be taught how to correct different types of tasks, including writing tasks, but also how to give appropriate feedback to the students. The feedback should also include the students' strong points and not only point out the mistakes. In order to help their students during the FL learning experience, teachers should use alleviating strategies and teach students how to deal with the stress when writing in a FL and not make the matter even more difficult.

Other factors named are similar to the findings of previous research (Cheng, 2004; Atay and Kurt, 2006; Zhang, 2011; Lin and Ho, 2009).

Both in this and in the next question, the students have shown that they experience anxiety when it comes to test taking. Under situations connected to FLWA, they have named *exams*, *making mistakes*, *being graded* and *time pressure*. All of these situations can easily be connected to the experience of taking a test. When faced with three different writing environments (tests, writing at home and in class), both groups of students have shown that taking a test using the FL is the most anxiety-provoking. These findings can easily be explained by the cognitive anxiety which was already proven to affect the students.

And, lastly, it was tested whether or not the recipient of the written message has an impact on the amount of FLWA felt by the author while writing. Both groups of students have proven to feel more anxious while writing to a teacher, than when the recipient is their friend. This was to be expected because peers usually do not correct each other's mistakes. Also, peers are often at the same level of knowledge and are therefore not in a position to judge the mistakes which may potentially occur. In contrast, most students do not want to send a message to the teacher if it contains mistakes. Students therefore tend to carefully write the intended message and make sure that everything is correctly written.

9. Pedagogical Implications

The teacher plays a major role in the students' experience while learning a FL. The teachers should therefore be aware of FLCA and its effect on the students' FL learning experience. Unfortunately, in the present study, teachers were identified as one of the causes of FLWA. Consequently, in the following chapter some advice for FL teachers connected to FLWA will be given.

Al-Shboul and Huwari (2015) state that every FL teacher needs to realize the importance of his/her role in the FL classroom. In some cases, where the language is not that available in the students' everyday life (like German), the FL teacher is the only connection between the students and the language. The teacher can bring the FL closer to the students, create a positive learning experience and, consequently, the students will enjoy learning the language and will less likely feel affected by FLCA. Of course, as it was shown, the teacher can also create such an

environment which will only enhance the students' fears and anxiety. In such situations, the students will be apprehensive to learn and use the FL.

First and foremost, the teacher should be aware of the existence of FLWA, its characteristics and the effect it has on the student (Horwitz et al., 1986). When a student does not solve a task the way it was required, it should not immediately be assumed that the student is lazy and did not study enough. One should look for signs pointing to anxiety. If the sings are not noticed and addressed accordingly, the anxiety is going to increase along with its effects on the student (Cheng, 2002).

Learning in a formal classroom climate is always stressful. The teacher should therefore create a positive and more relaxed learning environment (Jebreil et al, 2015; Jennifer and Ponniah, 2017). The students should not feel afraid of being wrong, but realize that they learn by making and correcting mistakes. The teacher should not constantly point out the negative, but rather focus on students' stronger points in writing, while encouraging them to improve even more. Also, students' results should never be compared. Peers are also recognized as a source of FLWA. Instead, the teacher should encourage students to help each other and not to compete against one another. The feeling of being worse than someone else is a big source of overall anxiety (Rezaei and Jafari, 2014). Nowadays, many teachers tend to use peer evaluation in their classes, but they might not be aware of the fact that it first needs to be taught. Students should slowly be introduced to it at a younger age in order not to take the evaluation personally and not get the impression that their writing skill is not as advanced as the other students'.

Tanyer and Susoy (2013) and Cheng (2004) have found that sharing experiences can also help the students understand that they are not alone in their struggles. The teacher should also encourage group discussions in which the students will verbalize their fear of writing. A less anxious student might share some ways of dealing with anxiety. Additionally, the teacher could show different steps one might take to decrease FLWA. Of course, the teacher can also share his/her own experiences connected to FLWA, but in moderation. It would certainly help the students to admit if they have problems in the field. That way they would see that even teachers can feel FLWA and other types of anxiety. Reeves put it nicely into words: "We can be better writing teachers when we struggle with our own writing and let our students know a little bit about our struggles to put words down on paper" (Reeves, 1997: 44).

While teaching writing, a big mistake often made is only using the skill when the students need to be evaluated and assessed, i.e. essay writing, test taking. Students should gradually be

introduced to writing as it is a very complex skill (Zhang, 2011). Cheng (2004) states that students should be taught how to write more complex compositions. The teacher should lead the students through each stage of writing – from gathering ideas and inspiration, writing a concept to writing the composition itself. Sadly, teachers usually focus on speaking as the main skill being practiced and students are expected to know how to write without any help. Every skill can only be perfected if practiced numerous times. Teachers should also assign written tasks which they will not grade, but will serve students to improve their writing skill, although it is time consuming. This way they will receive feedback from the teacher which is not necessarily connected to a grade (Tanyer and Susoy, 2013). They will be more motivated to write and feel less anxious when being graded. Also, they would be able to work on the weaker parts of their writing, but they could also self-assess the improvement of their skills. After a certain period of time, the teacher could ask the students to compare the compositions which they first wrote to the ones they have written more recently. If the student notices the progress, he/she will be more motivated and happy with the achievement.

The negative correlation between self-assessment and FLWA was already discussed and proven. It was also mentioned that highly anxious students tend to underestimate themselves and their performance. The teacher should therefore help students become more confident and believe in themselves and their skills. According to Cheng (2004), it is important to identify the writing success areas of each student and not just weaknesses. If a student is highly anxious, he/she will only be able to focus on the negative and overlook any positive qualities. In that case, the teacher should help the student focus on their strong points, positive achievements and improvements. Of course, one should not give the student false hope and ignore the potential mistakes being made. It is important to find the balance. One must not be overly critical, but also should not set unrealistic and unattainable goals for the students (Cheng, 2002).

It is evident that every FL teacher plays a major role when it comes to the prevention and lessening of FLWA. Unfortunately, some teachers seem to do the opposite. They should be careful not to repel students from writing in a FL.

10. Conclusion

It was once again proven that writing is one of the most demanding skills in the context of FL learning. In the theoretical background, it was argued that researchers mostly focus on

investigating WA in the context of the first language. The present study set out to contribute to the growing body of research into FLWA. The aim of the present study was to investigate and compare the different levels of FLWA among German and English majors.

Additionally, the study investigated the different types of FLWA among the students and addressed its correlation with the year of study of the participants and the self-assessment of the writing skill. Lastly, the present study tried to investigate the possible factors causing FLWA.

Concerning overall FLWA, both German and English majors mostly fall into the category of low anxiety. However, the German students seem to be more anxious. They are mostly affected by avoidance behavior, meaning that they tend to avoid writing in German whenever possible. On the other hand, both German and English majors experience cognitive anxiety, which is characterized by the fear of evaluation and the experience of test taking.

When it comes to English majors, the third year of study has proven to be the most anxious one. The mean difference between the third and the fifth year has shown to be statistically significant. The first and third-year German students at the faculty have the same level of overall FLWA, but no statistically significant mean difference between the three years of study was noted. However, when compared to the English group, it is clear that German students are once again more anxious.

Many researchers claim that self-assessment and FLA have a negative correlation. This was also the case in the present study. The students have evaluated their productive skills lower than listening and reading, which was expected. However, considering the fact that the English students do not experience high levels of overall FLWA, it was not expected that there would be a significant strong negative correlation to their self-assessment. This just goes to show that, no matter how low, FLWA can still have an impact on the individual's perception of his capabilities.

Lastly, the main sources of FLWA were investigated. It was found that both groups of students like to write in the FL, but not all of them experience positive emotions while doing so. Even though some of them experience negative feelings while writing, the majority of students feel like the required amount of writing at the faculty is sufficient and would not increase the number of written tasks.

Writing in German was proven to be a source of more difficulties for the students, but both groups of participants have stated facing similar difficulties when writing. Most of them can be classified as lack of linguistic knowledge and will only be resolved while practicing writing.

When asked to name the people and situations connected to their FLWA, both groups have given similar answers. They are mostly anxious because of the time pressure, exams, lack of knowledge and, unfortunately, teachers. In both groups, they were named as a source of FLWA several times.

It was also shown that students feel anxious when taking tests and writing a message to a teacher due to the fear of making a mistake.

The present study has several limitations. First of all, notably less German majors participated in the study when compared to the English participants. At the faculty, there are more English majors, than German ones to begin with, but since the lockdown caused by COVID-19, it was not possible to conduct the research with the first and third year of study of German in person, as it was the case with the English students. As a result, only a small number of students were willing to fill out the questionnaires online, even though it required only 10 – 15 minutes of their time. Also, it was not possible to gather information about the students' written performance. The participants do not have the same subjects and as a result asking for their grades was not an option.

Future research should further investigate the influence of FLWA on written performance by giving them a written task. FLWA among younger students should also be researched in order to understand its impact on the FL learning experience for beginners. Also, due to their complexity, it is recommended to further research the causes of FLWA using different methods, for example interviews with the participants, think-aloud protocols etc. A study focusing on English-German double majors would help understand the nature of FLWA is required. That way, it would be possible to investigate whether or not a student experiences the same amount of FLWA regardless the FL in question. Furthermore, a longitudinal study would provide a better insight into the factors influencing students' FLWA at different points in their life.

Further research is recommended in order to gain insight into factors influencing students' experience while writing.

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12. Appendices

12.1. Appendix A: Background questionnaire (1st part of the research instrument)

Projekt „Koherencija pisanoga teksta u inome jeziku: hrvatski, njemački, engleski, francuski i mađarski jezik u usporedbi" (IP-2016-06-5736)

UPITNIK ZA STUDENTE/UČENIKE ENGLESKOG JEZIKA

Informacije koje ćete dati u ovom upitniku bit će nam dragocjena pomoć u razumijevanju izvora i načina usvajanja jezika koji studirate/učite kao strani ili drugi jezik.
Molimo Vas da odgovarate iskreno i da odgovorite na sva pitanja.
U većini pitanja od Vas se očekuje da odaberete jedan ili više ponuđenih odgovora. U nekim pitanjima je potrebno dopuniti, obrazložiti ili dati opširniji odgovor. U slučaju da Vam određeno pitanje nije jasno, molimo Vas da zatražite pojašnjenje od ispitivača. Iako upitnik nije anoniman, podatci koje ćete dati strogo su povjerljivi i s njima će se odgovarajuće postupati. Samo će osoba koja će unositi podatke u računalo vidjeti Vaše ime. Podatci koje ćete dati neće ni na koji način utjecati na Vašu uspješnost u studiranju ili ocjene tijekom studija. U publikacijama nastalim na temelju ovih podataka umjesto Vašeg će se imena koristiti šifra iz koje neće biti moguće utvrditi Vaš identitet.
Zahvaljujemo Vam na suradnji!

1. **Prezime, ime:** …………………………………..……………….………………
2. Spol (*zokružite*):   m   ž   3. Dob:……………….. godina
4. Studij:……………………………………… 5. Godina studija:…………..…..
6. Materinski jezik:…………………...…………………. …………………………
7. Koliko godina učite engleski jezik ili, ako ste tek počeli, koliko mjeseci učite engleski

   jezik?   ………………… godina / ……………….. mjeseci
8. Na koji ste sve način učili engleski jezik do sada? (*više je odgovora moguće*)

   a) Redovna nastava u školi
   b) Dodatni programi u školi
   c) Nastava izvan škole (npr. u školi stranih jezika)
   d) Instrukcije
   e) Samostalno (npr. uz pomoć raznih priručnika ili materijala s interneta)
   f) U obitelji kao drugi jezik
   g) Drugo (*navedite*

      što):………………………………………………………………….
9. Koliko u prosjeku imate nastavnih sati svih predmeta koji se izvode na engleskom jeziku tjedno

   na fakultetu?   Ukupno u prosjeku ………..... nastavnih sati tjedno.

10. a) Jeste li ikada bili u nekoj zemlji engleskog govornog područja?   □ da   □ ne

b) Ako da, molim Vas da kratko opišete svoja iskustva (npr. U kojoj ste državi bili? Koliko puta? Koliko ste dugo bili i s kojom svrhom ste odlazili tamo?)

…………………………………………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………………………….

11. Procijenite koliko se, u prosjeku, **izvan nastave** bavite sljedećim **aktivnostima na engleskom jeziku**. Zaokružite broj prema sljedećoj ljestvici:

1 – nikad   **2** - rijetko   **3** - povremeno   **4** - često

a. Gledam filmove, serije i druge emisije na engleskom jeziku bez prijevoda.	1 2 3 4
b. Slušam pjesme, radio-emisije ili video *clipove* na internetu na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
c. Čitam novine/časopise na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
d. Čitam knjige na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
e. Čitam obavijesti, reklame, rasporede i sl. na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
f. Čitam Internet-stranice na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
g. Vježbam na internetskim portalima za učenje engleskog jezika.	1 2 3 4
h. *Chatam* i komuniciram na društvenim mrežama na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
i. Razgovaram s drugim osobama (stranci, prijatelji, obitelj, profesori itd) koji govore engleski.	1 2 3 4
j. Pišem domaće zadaće na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
k. Dopisujem se elektroničkom poštom na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
l. Ispunjavam obrasce, upitnike i sl. na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
m. Pišem poruke na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4
n. Drugo (navedite što):………………………………………………………..	1 2 3 4

12. U donjoj tablici, upisivanjem ocjene **od 1 (vrlo niska razina) do 5 (vrlo visoka razina)** sami **procijenite razinu svojih jezičnih znanja i vještina u engleskom jeziku**:

Govorenje		Vokabular	
Pisanje		Gramatika	
Slušanje s razumijevanjem		Izgovor	
Čitanje s razumijevanjem		Pravopis	

13. Navedite sve **ostale strane ili druge jezike** koje govorite ili ste učili u školi te dopunite podatke u tablici za sve jezike koje navedete.

Jezik	Koliko godina ili koliko mjeseci učite/ste učili taj jezik?	Kako učite/ste učili taj jezik? (npr. u redovnoj nastavi u školi, u školi stranih jezika, na instrukcijama, u obitelji ….)	Procijenite razinu znanja na skali 1-loše ; 2-dovoljno 3-dobro; 4-vrlo dobro 5-izvrsno
	…. god / …. mj		
	…. god / …. mj		
	…. god / …. mj		

12.2. Appendix B: Cheng's SLWAI (2nd part of the research instrument)

Molim pažljivo pročitajte svaku tvrdnju i <u>zaokružite broj</u> na skali od 1 (uopće se ne slažem) do 5 (u potpunosti se slažem s navedenom 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. Za vrijeme pisanja raznih tekstova na engleskom jeziku uopće nisam nervozan/na.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Osjećam kako mi srce lupa dok pišem sastavke na engleskom jeziku pod vremenskim ograničenjem.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Dok pišem sastavak na engleskom jeziku osjećam se zabrinuto i nervozno ako znam da će biti ocijenjen.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Često odabirem zapisati svoje misli na engleskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Obično se trudim na sve načine izbjeći pisati na engleskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Moj se um često čini praznim kad počnem raditi na sastavku na engleskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Ne brinem se da su moji sastavci na engleskom jeziku puno lošiji od ostalih.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Drhtim i znojim se kad pod vremenskim pritiskom pišem sastavke na engleskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Da znam da će moj sastavak koji pišem na engleskom jeziku biti ocijenjen, brinuo/la bih se da ću dobiti lošu ocjenu.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Dam sve od sebe kako bih izbjegao/la situacije u kojima moram pisati na engleskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Misli mi postanu zbrkane kad pišem sastavke na engleskom jeziku pod vremenskim ograničenjem.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Ako bih imao/la izbora, ne bih odabrao/la engleski kao jezik na kojem ću pisati svoj sastavak.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Često osjećam paniku kad pišem sastavke na engleskom jeziku pod vremenskim ograničenjem.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Strahujem da će drugi učenici ismijati moj sastavak na engleskom jeziku ako ga pročitaju.	1	2	3	4	5
15. „Zablokiram" i ne mogu misliti kad neočekivano dobijem zadatak da napišem sastavak na engleskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Jako bih se potrudio/la pronaći izliku da izbjegnem pisanje sastavka na engleskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Uopće se ne brinem što će drugi ljudi misliti o mojim sastavcima na engleskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Obično tražim svaku moguću priliku za pisanje na engleskom jeziku izvan nastave.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Osjećam da mi je cijelo tijelo ukočeno i napeto dok pišem sastavke na engleskom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Strahujem da će moj sastavak na engleskom jeziku biti odabran kao primjer o kojem će se raspravljati na satu.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Uopće ne strahujem da će moji sastavci biti ocijenjeni jako loše.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Kad god je moguće, koristim se engleskim jezikom pri pisanju sastavaka i drugih tekstova.	1	2	3	4	5

12.3. Appendix C: Open-ended questionnaire (3rd part of the research instrument)

1. Volim pisati na stranom jeziku   a) DA   b) NE
   Zašto? (navedi razloge zašto voliš/ne voliš pisati)
   _____

2. Pismenih radova na engleskom jeziku pišemo   a) previše b) dovoljno c) nedovoljno
3. Kakvu vrstu teksta najčešće pišete (eseje, opise, prepričavanje, pisma..)?
   _____

4. Imate li poteškoća u pisanju na engleskome jeziku?   a) DA   b) NE
   Ako imate, navedite kojih?
   _____

5. Navedite situacije ili osobe povezane s vašim strahom od pisanja na engleskome jeziku?
   _____
   _____

6. Kojim se fizičkim promjenama manifestira vaš strah od pisanja na engleskome jeziku?
   _____

7. Kako se osjećate kada pišete na engleskome jeziku?
   _____

8. Jeste li svoja iskustva o strahu od pisanja podijelili s nekim?
   _____

9. Na koji način mislite da će vaši stavovi o pisanju na engleskome jeziku utjecati na vaše buduće poučavanje?
   _____
   _____

10. Navedite razinu anksioznosti za svaku od sljedećih situacija (1 minimum, 5 maksimum) i objasnite razloge zašto se (ne)osjećate tjeskobno u tim situacijama.

   a) Pisanje na engleskome jeziku na satu   1 2 3 4 5
      Zašto? _____
   b) Pisanje na engleskome jeziku kod kuće   1 2 3 4 5
      Zašto? _____
   c) Pisanje testa na engleskome jeziku   1 2 3 4 5
      Zašto? _____
   d) Pisanje e-maila ili poruke profesoru na engleskome jeziku   1 2 3 4 5
      Zašto? _____
   e) Pisanje e-maila ili poruke prijatelju na engleskome jeziku   1 2 3 4 5
      Zašto? _____