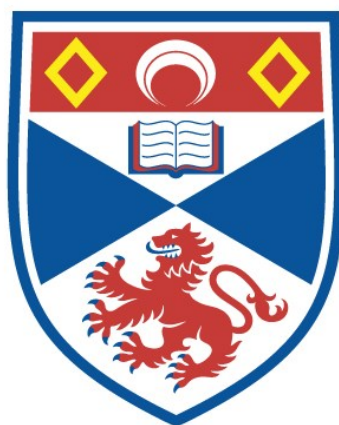


**Psychology, gender and EFL writing:  
a study of the relationship between Saudi students' writing  
performance and their attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy**

Maram Alluhaybi

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews



2017

Full metadata for this item is available in  
St Andrews Research Repository  
at:

<https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/>

Identifier to use to cite or link to this thesis:

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17630/10023-12270>

This item is protected by original copyright

**Psychology, Gender and EFL Writing: A Study of the Relationship between Saudi Students' Writing Performance and their Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy**

**Abstract**

It has long been accepted in the field of EFL teaching and learning that writing in a foreign language by learners is a complex practice that involves not only cognition, but also psychology. With this in mind, in the present study, social-psychological and social-cognitive research frameworks were adopted to explore the relationship between the writing attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy of Saudi learners of English, and their writing performance, with a view to expanding the frontiers of current scholarship. This relationship was investigated on two levels: that of writing in general, and that of writing specific types of text. This relationship has been neglected in previous research; in addition, the scope of past studies of Saudi students has been limited to only one of the two traditional genders. The current study was designed to contribute to filling these gaps.

The thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter One introduces the objectives, research question, theoretical framework and background of the study. Chapter Two reviews the related literature. Chapter Three describes the sample population, data collection and procedures. Chapter Four deals with the data analyses. Chapter Five discusses the findings and implications of the investigation. Chapter Six presents a summary and conclusions.

The research found no correlation between psychological characteristics and writing performance in general, nor between psychological characteristics and the writing of narrative and persuasive text types, in particular. Overall, the results conflict with those

of previous studies, in that it was found that rather than psychological characteristics influencing writing performance gender difference influenced writing performance, and the psychological characteristics did not influence anything, it was the other way round, gender difference also influenced psychological characteristics. This thesis thus contributes to the growing body of knowledge in the field of EFL, by providing evidence that the influence of psychological characteristics on writing is not salient in every socio-cultural context, and that the writers' gender can have an effect on their writing performance.

Maram Alluhaybi

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my wonderful mother, Nora, whose love and prayers infused in me the strength and motivation I needed to complete this work, and to the memory of my father, who passed on his love of the pursuit of knowledge and was himself an admirable example of a knowledge seeker.

I also dedicate this work to my loving husband, Ameen, who has been a great support and a wonderful friend, not only during the process of conducting this research but throughout my life.



## Declaration

### 1. Candidate's declarations:

I, Maram Alluhaybi, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 70.000 words in length, has been written by me, and that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. A 3700-word article, entitled 'Psychology and EFL Writing', based on parts of this work has been published in *ScienceDirect, Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2015, volume 192, pp. 371-378.

I was admitted as a research student in September 2012 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in linguistics; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2012 and 2016.

Date:

signature of candidate:

### 2. Supervisor's declaration:

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date:

signature of supervisor:

### 3. Permission for publication:

In submitting this thesis to the University of St Andrews I understand that I am giving permission for it to be made available for use in accordance with the

regulations of the University Library for the time being in force, subject to any copyright vested in the work not being affected thereby. I also understand that the title and the abstract will be published, and that a copy of the work may be made and supplied to any bona fide library or research worker, that my thesis will be electronically accessible for personal or research use unless exempt by award of an embargo as requested below, and that the library has the right to migrate my thesis into new electronic forms as required to ensure continued access to the thesis. I have requested the appropriate embargo below.

#### PRINTED COPY

No embargo on print copy

#### ELECTRONIC COPY

Embargo on all parts of electronic copy for a period of five years on the following ground: publication would preclude future publication

#### ABSTRACT AND TITLE

I agree to the title and abstract being published

Date:

signature of candidate:

Date:

signature of supervisor:

## Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	xi
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background and Theoretical Framework of the Study .....	1
1.2 Research Question .....	3
1.3 Study Objectives and Hypotheses .....	3
1.4 Rationale for the Study .....	5
1.5 Context of Saudi Arabia: A Geographical and Historical Overview .....	9
1.5.1 The Saudi Educational System .....	12
1.5.1.1 English in Saudi Arabia .....	14
1.6 Chapter Overview .....	23
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review</b> .....	<b>25</b>
2.1 Psychology and Writing .....	25
2.1.1 Attitudes .....	26
2.1.1.1 The Behaviourist Theory .....	27
2.1.1.2 The Mentalist Theory .....	29
2.1.1.3 The Tripartite Theory .....	32
2.1.1.4 Language and Writing Attitudes .....	37
2.1.1.5 Attitudes, Writing and Gender .....	45
2.1.2 Writing Apprehension .....	50
2.1.2.1 Writing Apprehension and Gender .....	59
2.1.3 Self-efficacy .....	60
2.1.3.1 Self-efficacy in Writing .....	69
2.1.3.2 Self-efficacy and Gender .....	78
2.2 Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy: Methodological Framework .....	81
2.3 Chapter Overview .....	87
<b>Chapter Three: Methodology</b> .....	<b>90</b>
3.1 Data Source .....	90
3.2 Ethical Approval .....	91
3.3 Data Confidentiality .....	92
3.4 Research Design .....	92
3.5 Questionnaire .....	93
3.6 Procedure .....	93
3.7 Refinement of the Study Instruments .....	94
3.8 The Final Questionnaire .....	96
3.8.1 Writing Attitudes .....	98
3.8.2 Writing Apprehension .....	99
3.8.3 Writing Self-efficacy Beliefs .....	100
3.8.4 Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire .....	101
3.9 Written Text Type .....	103
3.9.1 Writing Prompts .....	104
3.10 Writing Assessment .....	105
3.10.1 Reliability and Validity of the ESL Composition Profile .....	106
3.11 Main Study .....	108

3.11.1 Procedure .....	108
3.12 Tabular Presentation of Data .....	112
3.13 Chapter Overview .....	114
<b>Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Results .....</b>	<b>115</b>
4.1 Quantitative Analysis of Data .....	115
4.1.1 Results of the Questionnaire Close-ended Items .....	121
4.1.2 Result of Participants' Writing Competence .....	147
4.2 Qualitative Analysis of Data .....	169
4.2.1. Result of Open-ended Question 1 .....	169
4.2.2 Result of Open-ended Question 2 .....	173
4.3 Chapter Overview .....	173
<b>Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings .....</b>	<b>175</b>
5.1 The Influence of Psychology on Writing: General Discussion .....	175
5.1.1 Attitudes .....	175
5.1.2 Apprehension .....	180
5.1.3 Writing Self-efficacy .....	183
5.2 Writing Competence of Saudi EFL Learners .....	194
5.3 Factors Potentially Affecting Participants' Psychology and Competence .....	198
5.3.1 Writing Topics .....	199
5.3.2 Writing Time .....	200
5.3.3 Writing Practice and the Curriculum .....	201
5.4 Narrative or Persuasive Writing .....	205
5.5 The Influence of Gender on Attitudes, Apprehension, Self-efficacy and Writing Competence .....	207
5.6 Chapter Overview .....	212
<b>Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion .....</b>	<b>215</b>
6.1 Summary of the Thesis .....	215
6.2 Conclusion .....	224
6.2.1 Implications of the Study .....	224
6.2.2 Contributions .....	230
6.2.3 Limitations of the Study .....	232
6.2.4 Further Research .....	234
<b>References .....</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>278</b>
Appendix A: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English .....	279
Appendix B: Narrative Essay .....	291
Appendix C: Persuasive Essay .....	292
Appendix D: ESL Composition Profile .....	293
Appendix E: Ethical Approval Letter .....	295

## List of Figures

Figure 1.1: World English in Three Concentric Circles (Adapted from Kachru 1992, P. 356).....	15
Figure 2.1: Schematic Conception of Attitudes (Rosenberg and Hovland 1960, P. 3).....	32
Figure 2.2: Types of Response Used to Infer Attitudes (Ajzen 2005, P. 4) .....	36
Figure 3.1: Map of the Locations of the Universities from which the Data was Collected .....	91
Figure 4.1: Participants' Evaluation of their Writing in General.....	122
Figure 4.2: QQ Plot.....	153
Figure 4.3: Residual Plot.....	154
Figure 4.4: QQ Plot.....	156
Figure 4.5: Residual Plot.....	156
Figure 4.6: QQ Plot.....	158
Figure 4.7: Residual Plot.....	158
Figure 4.8: QQ Plot.....	161
Figure 4.9: Residual Plot.....	161
Figure 4.10: QQ Plot.....	163
Figure 4.11: Residual plot.....	163
Figure 4.12: QQ Plot.....	164
Figure 4.13:QQ Residual.....	165
Figure 4.14: Percentage of Gender Responses to the Preferred Text Type.....	172

## List of Tables

Table 3.1: Data and Methods of Collection and Analysis .....	113
Table 3.2 Description of the Participant Sample .....	113
Table 4.1: Description of the Items in the Questionnaire .....	118
Table 4.2: Participants' Responses to Items about Attitudes.....	123
Table 4.3: Participants' Responses to Items about Attitudes toward Narrative and Persuasive Essays.....	126
Table 4.4: Participants' Responses to Items about Writing Apprehension .....	128
Table 4.5: Participants' Responses to Items about Apprehension with regard to Narrative and Persuasive Essays.....	131
Table 4.6: Participants' Responses to Items about Writing Self-efficacy .....	133
Table 4.7: Participants' Responses to Items about Self-Efficacy in Narrative and Persuasive Essays.....	136
Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes, Apprehension, and Self-Efficacy (in General and for Specific Text Types).....	138
Table 4.9: Statistical Analysis of Gender Significance on Attitudes, Apprehension, and Self-efficacy (in General and for Two Text Types).....	140
Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics of Gender Responses to the Attitudes Items.....	142
Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics of Gender Responses to the Apprehension Items.....	143
Table 4.12: Descriptive Statistics of Gender Responses to the Self-efficacy Items.....	144
Table 4.13: Descriptive Statistics of Writing Competence (in General and for the Five Components).....	149
Table 4.14: Statistical Analysis of Gender Significance for Writing Competence (in General and for the Five Components).....	149
Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Competence for Narrative Essays .....	150
Table 4.16: Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Competence for Persuasive Essays.....	150
Table 4.17: Statistical Analysis of Gender Significance for Narrative Essays Scores (in General and for the Five Components) .....	151
Table 4.18: Statistical Analysis of Gender Significance for Persuasive Essays Scores (in General and for the Five Components) .....	151
Table 4.19: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for Writing Competence and Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy.....	152
Table 4.20: Results of Regression Analysis for Writing Competence and Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy.....	154
Table 4.21: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for Narrative Writing Scores and Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy .....	155
Table 4.22: Results of the Regression for Narrative Writing Scores, Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy.....	156
Table 4.23: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for Persuasive Writing Scores and Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy .....	157
Table 4.24: Results of the Regression for Persuasive Writing Scores, Attitudes, Apprehension, and Self-efficacy.....	159

Table 4.25: Results of the Regression for Writing, Attitudes, Apprehension, Self-Efficacy, and Gender.....	160
Table 4.26: Results of the Regression for Narrative Writing, Attitudes, Apprehension, Self-Efficacy, and Gender.....	162
Table 4.27: Results of the Regression for Persuasive Writing, Attitudes, Apprehension, Self-Efficacy, and Gender.....	164
Table 4.28: Pearson’s Correlation Matrix Split by Gender.....	166
Table 4.29: Frequency counts and percentages for responses to preferred text type	170
Table 4.30: Participants’ Reasons for their Preference of Text Type.....	171

## Acknowledgements

He has not thanked Allah who has not thanked people.

Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him

All praise goes to Allah for providing me with the power and persistence needed to complete this research and for surrounding me with the right people during this journey. This work would have never been completed without the efforts of many individuals to whom I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr K Anipa, for his continuous support, enormous knowledge, tremendous patience, and the insightful feedback that he generously offered me during my PhD study.

A special note of appreciation goes to my mother for her unlimited love and continuous prayers.

My deepest gratitude is to my husband and my lovely children for their endless support, tremendous love, unconditional trust and joyful laughter that enlightened my darkest nights and strengthened my soul to accomplish this work.

Gratitude is also extended to my brothers, Mohammed, Ahmad, Abdual Salam and Marwan, and my sisters, Manal, Najala and Rahaf, for their spiritual support and good wishes throughout my PhD studies and my entire life.

Special thanks go to my friends, Samirah and Manal, for being always there for me; their caring support and cheerful encouragement is deeply appreciated.

I would also like to thank the Saudi Cultural Bureau for its financial support and systematic supervision. In addition, I would like to thank the participants who



provided the data for my work, and the teachers who cooperated by encouraging their students to participate and were willing to give up some of their class time to make this work possible.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background and Theoretical Framework of the Study**

Writing is an important skill in individuals' lives. It 'is one of humankind's most powerful tools' (MacArthur et al. 2006: 1). The act of writing generates valuable benefits, both personal and cultural. These benefits are linked to the functions of writing as a tool for persuasion and self-expression as well as one that makes communication possible over time and space, thus facilitating knowledge transfer and heritage preservation (MacArthur et al. 2006). In spite of these desirable functions, writing is regarded as challenging by most people. This may be because the process of writing is not straightforward. Zamel (1982: 165) defines writing as 'non-linear, exploratory, and a generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning'. Crucially, writing is even more complex when executed in a foreign language and when fundamental to assessing progress in that language. This is because learners are expected to produce written texts that show mastery of content, organisation, purpose, audience, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and mechanics in the foreign language (Abu Rass 2001). The mastery of these writing skills has led some researchers to correlate proficiency in writing with language proficiency. For example, Al-Menei (2008) considers writing competence in a foreign language as evidence that one has learned that language. This highlights the importance of writing in the linguistic development of learners. However, sometimes learners may not perceive writing as being of equal importance to the other language skills; they may think, for example, that speaking is more important than writing, and this may result in a less than solid effort and thus a lack of proficiency in writing.

In an effort to understand its complexity, the focus of research into writing has largely been on the writing *process*. Hidi and Boscolo (2006) observed that despite the early investigations of Daly and Miller in the 1970s, only recently have psychological motivational theories of writing been given adequate attention. The focus has shifted because it has been ‘demonstrated that writing is a complex activity involving not only cognitive and metacognitive processes but also affective components’ (p. 144). The complexity of writing has led to concerns regarding the psychological characteristics that influence students’ progress in writing. These concerns have motivated researchers (e.g. Pajares and Valiante 2006, 2001, 1999, 1997; Clark and Dugdale 2009) to look at how students view writing, at their attitudes, and at how they view themselves as writers – their self-efficacy, or self-perceptions of capability, – in an attempt to connect these views with their overall progress. These methods of investigating learners’ views emphasise the influence of a learner’s self on learning and performance. Learners’ achievements and willingness to learn to write tend to vary, and this variation – even when learners are exposed to the same input – can be explained by motivational factors. Attitudes have been seen from a social psychological perspective as potentially informing behaviour and there is a large body of literature that confirms the significance of learners’ attitudes in their learning progress.

Within social psychology, social cognitive theory is a framework that has been employed in efforts to understand human behaviour. This theory postulates that human functions are an interplay of personal, behavioural and environmental factors (Bandura 1989, 1986). Social cognitive theory includes the underlying assumption that self-efficacy is one of the main psychological and personal variables that influence human functioning. It emphasises the fact that self-efficacy can significantly

determine students' achievement. This construct of self-efficacy has become popular in motivation research (Graham and Weiner 1996). Pajares and Valiante (2006) note that recently it has become 'a central tenet of most modern theories and views of human cognition, motivation, and behaviour [...] that the beliefs that students create, develop, and hold to be true about themselves are vital forces in their success or failure in school' (p. 158). In the field of education, most research into self-efficacy has involved mathematics and language skills, and self-efficacy has been identified as a significant predictor of performance in these disciplines (Britner 2002).

This recent interest in the link between attitudes, self-efficacy and performance was the main inspiration for the conception of the present research.

## **1.2 Research Question**

The following research question was formulated for the current study:

Do Saudi male and female students have different attitudes and levels of apprehension and self-efficacy with regard to writing? If so, can these psychological characteristics be identified in the writings of university students reading for a degree in English?

## **1.3 Study Objectives and Hypotheses**

The study is designed primarily to investigate areas of Saudi students' writing competence that have been overlooked in previous research, in the hope of filling certain gaps in our understanding of the relationship between motivational psychology and gender on the one hand and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing

competence on the other in the context of Saudi Arabia.<sup>1</sup> By doing so, the study aims to present a picture of the attitudes of Saudi students, both male and female, towards essay writing in English, their level of writing apprehension, and their self-efficacy regarding their performance. The research also investigates the relationship between the reported attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy and writing competence in order to understand the relationship between these factors in more depth. Narrative and persuasive writing are the two types of writing commonly used when teaching students to write in English in English departments at Saudi universities. Students' responses to these types of writing have not been empirically investigated, so this constituted another aim of the current study.

Focusing on gender, the study explores if Saudi male and female undergraduates of English report similar attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy toward writing in English in general and toward narrative and persuasive written text types. It also aims to find out if Saudi male and female undergraduates of English achieve a similar level of writing competence.

Taking the above objectives into consideration, the study tests the hypothesis that attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy can show statistically significant relationships with writing performance (hypothesis 1). It also tests the hypothesis that gender is a significant factor in affecting participants' writing attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy, and writing achievement, in general and in narrative and persuasive essays, with female students reporting more positive attitudes, and higher apprehension, higher self-efficacy, and scoring higher in writing (hypothesis 2).

---

<sup>1</sup> The teaching of English as a Foreign language (EFL) is 'associated with non-native speakers of English who study English in a non-native environment, i.e., where most of the population speaks a language other than English. The term is also used with countries, like Saudi Arabia, where English is not used as an official language, but rather a foreign language taught as a school subject and narrowly used or practised outside the classroom, academic settings, or job environment' (Alshenqeeti 2014).

## 1.4 Rationale for the Study

The relevance of social psychology for the current study lies in its view of attitudes as a multidimensional construct, and in valuing the role of attitudes in determining individuals' behaviour. Gardner and Lambert (1972) advanced research into foreign language acquisition by employing this approach to shed light on the learning process. They acknowledged the significance of attitudes in successful language learning, recognising attitudes as both input and outcome in this process. However, despite learning a second or a foreign language being considered a social psychological phenomenon (Giles 1985), attitudes in relation to language learning have not received much research interest. Research is still lacking with regard to attitudes and language learning in general (Baker 1992). Baker (1992) observed that '[m]uch language attitude literature is atheoretical' (p. 8) and not grounded in the social psychological theory of attitudes. He argues that the social psychological theory of attitudes can profitably inform research into language learning and warns that research is 'likely to be naive, not well defined' if attitudes are still to be investigated outside of this theoretical framework.

Unfortunately, social psychological perspectives have not been reflected adequately in research into writing performance. Instead, the tendency of research into attitudes towards writing has been to focus on interest or affect as representing attitudes (see Chapter Two), rather than embracing a theory that places the relationship between writing attitudes and performance at the centre.

While the influence of motivational factors on writing has been researched in many contexts, these factors have not received adequate attention from scholars in the context of Saudi Arabia (see Fageeh 2003), a gap more recently identified by Abdel

Latif (2011) in the broader Arab and Gulf contexts. Although some studies (e.g. Farouk 2014; Al-Asmari and Khan 2014) have shown that Saudi university students feel positive towards learning English, attitudes, whether they are defined as interest or according to the social psychological theory, have never been explored in the Saudi context in relation to writing in EFL, to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Researchers have noted that the EFL literature largely lacks studies about the Saudi situation in general and about writing in particular (Alkubaidi 2014; Javid and Umer 2014; Grami 2010).

Although writing is globally known as an endeavour that involves both cognitive and affective elements (McLeod 1987), Saudi educators and researchers seem to focus on cognitive models and teaching methodologies. The few studies on the writing of Saudis (e.g. Alkubaidi 2014; Alharthi 2012; Grami 2010; McMullen 2009; Al-Hazmi and Scholfield 2007) have focused on the writing process and the influence of interventions in teaching writing, e.g., peer feedback and collaborative writing, in order to improve writing outcomes. These studies were carried out in an attempt to implement more communicative and innovative approaches in the writing curriculum, as this curriculum was criticised and viewed as out-dated by the researchers (see Section 1.5.1.1). Considering the criticism of the writing curricula at Saudi universities, it would not be surprising if learners' attitudes towards writing were affected by the way writing is taught. What is surprising, however, is the paucity of studies exploring attitudes towards writing. This paucity suggests an underestimation of the vital role played by motivational variables in academic achievement. Indeed, it is unknown if the writing performance of Saudi learners, which is criticised in most studies, is related to their attitudes towards writing and their self-efficacy as writers. Most of the few studies on psychological characteristics

and writing in the Arab world in general and in a Saudi setting in particular have researched anxiety (e.g. Huwari and Abd Aziz 2011; Shawish and Atea 2010; Abdel Latif 2007; Hassan 2001; Abdul Fattah 1995). Further, those conducted in the Saudi context, although advancing general knowledge, have been typically limited to one gender group, namely males (e.g. Aljafen 2013; Alnufaie and Grenfell 2013; Alseweed 2009).

As with research into writing and attitudes, research into self-efficacy has been largely conducted in the West, with no research exploring the significance of self-efficacy in relation to writing in academic settings in Saudi Arabia, although researchers (e.g. Meece et al. 2006; Pajares 1996a) have called for research into different ethnic groups and in different geographical locations in order to increase our knowledge about the influence of self-efficacy on performance. This paucity of research suggests that self-efficacy is not yet seen as a variable of major importance in understanding learners' achievements. In other words, the self of learners has not yet received much attention in the Saudi context, which may reflect a lack of awareness of self-efficacy and similar theories that consider the link between affective variables and learning progress. This lack of attention to affective variables and, implicitly, a lack of awareness of their importance in learning writing, provided the impetus for the current research.

There is another gap in research into writing attitudes and self-efficacy in that none of the studies of EFL writing has explored attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy in relation to specific written text types. Generally, in these studies, participants were given one topic to write about, a descriptive or expository text in most of the studies, and were asked about their attitudes, beliefs and performance in



relation to writing in general. This raises the question as to whether researching attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy with regard to specific written text types would yield a stronger statistical relationship to performance than if considering these factors in a more general writing context. Thus this aspect of writing – text types – became an important element in the current study.

Previous investigations of attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy have noted other social variables of interest; for instance, the possibility that gender may play a role in defining writing attitudes (e.g. Graham et al. 2007; Knudson 1993), writing apprehension (e.g. Daly and Miller 1975b), writing self-efficacy beliefs (e.g. Pajares et al. 2007; Pajares and Johnson 1996) and writing achievement (e.g. Pajares and Valiante 1999).<sup>2</sup> However, the findings on self-efficacy beliefs with respect to gender are still inconclusive (Lee 2013; Troia et al. 2012). They have rarely been replicated with Arab or Saudi students, which suggests a need for further investigations in these contexts.

Studies targeting Saudi subjects of one particular gender cannot be representative of the wider population. Indeed, Abdel Latif (2011) noted that nothing is yet known about gender differences in the Arab Gulf EFL/ESL students' writing performance. In Saudi Arabia, this lack of research is a function of the fact that all schools and universities in Saudi Arabia are single-sex, there are no co-educational schools or universities.<sup>3</sup> As a result, gaining access to students is a complex process that requires much time and patience on the part of the researcher, which is why

---

<sup>2</sup> The American Psychological Association (APA) defined gender as classifying men and women as social and cultural groups, whereas sex refers to the biological differences between men and women (Mills 2011). The current research adopts the term gender to refer to any differences between males and females in their attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy and writing competence.

<sup>3</sup> Males and females study in separate departments in most public institutions in Saudi Arabia, e.g., in schools, universities and work places.

comparative studies of Saudi males and females are found infrequently. Little is therefore known about whether or not the two gender groups possess similar experiences, including attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy with regard to writing. As gender differences have been acknowledged in previous studies elsewhere, adopting a comparative approach through a gendered lens could offer valuable information and extend existing knowledge about affective variables and writing, especially when the research is conducted in a different cultural context from past research.

Considering the above-mentioned gaps in the EFL literature, there is the need to shift the focus slightly from investigating the influence of pedagogy on writing, which has been the main focus of most studies in the Saudi context, to considering the relevance of psychological characteristics to learners' competence. Although research into the influence of pedagogy is of great importance in advancing the teaching-learning process, the lack of investigation of the role of social psychology is unjustified.

This thesis therefore was not designed to contribute to research into the process and instructional models of writing, but rather to contribute to the corpus of social psychological research into writing.

### **1.5 Context of Saudi Arabia: A Geographical and Historical Overview**

To understand the context and educational background of the study participants, this section introduces the wider context of Saudi Arabia. Additionally, it reviews the status of English in the Saudi educational system, and how writing as an EFL skill is

presented and viewed in the academic settings where it is taught, i.e. schools and universities.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a large Middle-eastern country located in the west of Asia. It is the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula, occupying four-fifths of the Peninsula, and the largest in the Arab world after Algeria, with a land area of around 2,150,000 square kilometres.<sup>4</sup> It shares borders with Jordan, Iraq, Yemen and the Gulf countries: Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Riyadh, the capital city, is located in the centre of the Kingdom and is the home of the royal family and most of the national and foreign authorities and administrations.<sup>5</sup> Geographically, the Kingdom is divided into four main regions: Najad, Hejaz, Al-Ahsa and Assir that were unified and proclaimed as one country by King Abdel Aziz Al-Saud in 1932. The country derived its name from the founding family name, Al-Saud. Since then, the country has been ruled by the Al-Saud dynasty in accordance with Islam and its teachings,<sup>6</sup> the official religion. Saudi Arabia now has thirteen administrative regions; each governed by a member of the royal family, officially the prince of the region. Arabic is the national and official language of the country. Being the language of the Holy Quran, Arabic is giving further value to people's lives. In 2014 the total population of Saudi Arabia was 30,770,375, comprising 20,702,536 Saudi citizens and 10,067,839 non-Saudis (Central Department of Statistics and Information 2016).

---

<sup>4</sup> See [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi\\_Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia). See also [global.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia](http://global.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia).

<sup>5</sup> Ministries, i.e. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health etc., and foreign embassies, i.e. British embassy, American embassy etc.

<sup>6</sup> Islamic rules and instructions are mainly derived from two sources, the Holy Quran and the sayings and teachings of the prophet Mohammed, Sunnah, peace be upon him.

Being the land of the two holy mosques,<sup>7</sup> Saudi Arabia is seen as the centre of Islam. This gives it a spiritual position, which translates into significant status in the eyes of Muslims all over the world. The country hosts a large number of Muslims who come to perform the Islamic rituals of Omrah, which can be performed any time during the year, and Hajj (pilgrimage), which is performed in a specific Islamic month called Dhu Alhijja.<sup>8</sup> The number of Muslim visitors reaches its height during the months of Ramadan and Dhu Alhijja,<sup>9</sup> owing to their religious significance. Communication with these visitors is in Arabic and English, therefore English is important as the language of trade with pilgrims (Alhawsawi 2013).

Saudi Arabia has the world's largest deposit of oil and is a significant oil producer (Jamjoom 2012). Because of the economic power derived from its oil resources the Kingdom has undergone rapid growth. The education sector, among other important sectors such as health and transportation, has received most of the attention and thus a generous proportion of the state's budget. Developing education is believed to create a stronger generation that values nationalism and cares about improving the country. The Ministry of Education (MoE), seeking to arm people with knowledge, oversees undertakings such as the King Abdullah Scholarship programme, which has funded more than 150,000 students to pursue their education overseas, mainly in English-speaking countries. This programme offers qualified individuals the opportunity to pursue specific courses of education and to acquire knowledge at world-leading universities, to understand and communicate with different cultures, and to introduce Saudi culture to the world, and in turn provide

---

<sup>7</sup> Al Masjid Al-Haram in Makkah and Al Masjid Al-Nabawi in Medina.

<sup>8</sup> Dhu Alhijja is the twelfth month in the Islamic calendar.

<sup>9</sup> Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. It is the month when Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. Omrah during this month is equated to performing a pilgrimage, which is why the Kingdom expects a higher number of visitors during Ramadan as well as in Dhu Alhijja.

Saudi society with highly qualified citizens (Ministry of Education).<sup>10</sup> This is an indication of the country's recognition of the importance of learning foreign languages, especially English, in order to gain access to the knowledge of other nations. The Ministry has also continued to establish schools, universities and colleges in towns and villages to facilitate education and transportation for those who live on the outskirts of the main cities.

### **1.5.1 The Saudi Educational System**

Public education in Saudi Arabia is free of charge for all Saudi citizens and non-Saudi residents. The government provides the schools with textbooks to be distributed free of charge to the students and guidebooks for teachers to be followed during their teaching. Students start primary school at the age of six and study for six years until they enter middle school, which comprises three levels. Students then go to secondary school and study there for three years before they enter university.<sup>11</sup> During their school years, students study science, mathematics, Arabic and Islamic subjects. The number of these subjects increases as students advance in learning and move from one stage to the next. For instance, in primary school students study three or four Islamic subjects,<sup>12</sup> one Arabic language subject, and familiar subjects such as science, mathematics, geography and history. At middle and secondary schools, Arabic and science are taught in more than one subject. For example, there is Arabic literature, Arabic syntax and semantics, and Arabic rhetoric. Science is divided into chemistry, physics and biology. Religious subjects increase in importance from the early years of

---

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.moe.gov.sa/ar/studyaboard/Kingsalmanhstages/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> Upon the completion of first level in secondary schools, students have to decide between two streams: science or literary studies. Those who choose science study only science subjects, i.e., mathematics, physics etc., in addition to religion and English. Similarly, those who choose literary studies study literary subjects in addition to religion and English. This decision influences their further studies at university. For example, those with a science school education can apply to all science degree courses but not to any literary ones.

<sup>12</sup> P1-P3 students study three Islamic subjects. One more subject is added when they reach P4 onwards.

primary school. Primary school pupils are evaluated by continuous assessment, while older students at middle and secondary schools sit examinations.

In addition to public in the sense of state schools students have the option to study at private schools.<sup>13</sup> The quality of education at the latter is perceived to be better than in public education. Private schools charge a wide range of fees (Alhawsawi 2013); however, it is generally accepted that the more expensive the school, the better it is. Students in private schools study the same subjects designated by the MoH for public schools but they can expand the school day with extracurricular subjects and activities, or change the medium of instruction from Arabic to English (Alhawsawi 2013). Alhawsawi (2013) discusses an important point that accounts for people's preference for private schools by pointing out that while teachers in public schools are assigned by the MoH and paid equally regardless of the quality of their performance, private schools seek to recruit well-qualified teachers, either locally or from overseas, who make continuous efforts to improve their performance in order to retain their positions. These schools may thus be a good option for parents who want their children to benefit from the extra learning and skills of teachers.

The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) was established in 1975 to administer education at universities and colleges. Since that time, the number of public universities has increased to 25 plus 147 colleges, while private higher education is offered at 33 private universities and colleges (MoE 2016). To encourage students to undertake higher education, the MoHE offers a monthly stipend, as well as campus accommodation for those from distant areas. In 2015 the MoHE was

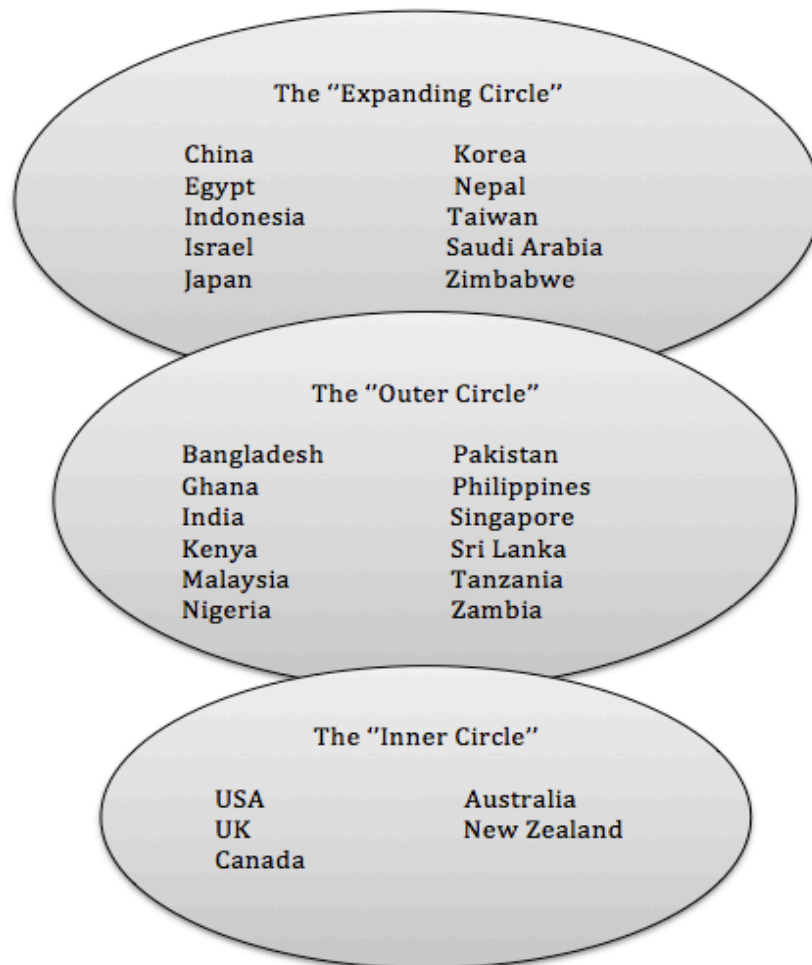
---

<sup>13</sup> In Britain, the term public school is used to refer to private schools.

amalgamated with the MoE, and thus primary, middle, secondary and higher education are now administered by the same ministry. Higher education institutions offer various undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in different fields. Some of the institutions are restricted to medical disciplines and only offer courses in medicine, nursing and dentistry. Similar to general education, the learning system at these universities is highly centralised by the MoE and staff have little academic freedom in their teaching (Alamri 2011).

#### *1.5.1.1 English in Saudi Arabia*

The status of English, referred to as World English, was modelled by Kachru (1992) as taking place in three concentric circles: an Inner Circle, an Outer Circle and an Expanding Circle (see Figure 1.1). The Inner Circle refers to countries where English is the native language, whereas the Outer Circle refers to countries where English is used as an additional but official language in communication. The Outer Circle Context is where English as a Second Language (ESL) is placed. The Expanding Circle refers to countries where English is used as a foreign language. In Saudi Arabia, a developing country that aspires to achieve prominence in the world, the need arose several years ago to learn English, which was seen as a powerful language both for economic reasons and for communication with the outside world. However, Saudi Arabia is one of the countries in the Expanding Circle where English is used to a lesser extent than in countries in the Outer Circle. Students of EFL have few opportunities to practise it outside the classroom; thus English serves a limited purpose in this setting.



**Figure 1.1: World English in Three Concentric Circles (Adapted from Kachru 1992, p. 356)**

Since the Kingdom is a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), Alhawsawi (2013) argues that students' proficiency in English should be one of the top priorities of the MoE. In today's world, English is the language of the global economy, of education, of political power, and of recent developments in knowledge. Those who possess English proficiency have better access to these areas and, most importantly, those who are well skilled in writing in English have the opportunity to participate in international research, communicate with distant institutions, and respond to published papers. Perhaps the goal of introducing a foreign language is best defined by Park (2006), who states that in addition to being a tool for understanding a foreign



culture, education in a foreign language contributes to introducing the culture of the learners to the world. In Saudi Arabia, after the discovery of oil in the mid-thirties, English was introduced as a medium of communication with the foreign companies that operated its exploration and operations (Al-Johni 2009). As a result, English was introduced into the school curriculum along with French in 1958, although French was subsequently dropped (Al-Johni 2009). Since then, English has been the only foreign language taught in all stages of the public education system.<sup>14</sup> It was introduced as a core subject in middle and secondary schools, and in 2003 added to the primary school curriculum (Mahboob and Elyas 2014), with two classes taught per week (Alrashidi and Phan 2015). At primary school, students learn English from the fourth year and it is then taught continuously until a student enters university and chooses to specialise either in English or in another discipline. English is still taught as an additional subject to students specialising in non-English studies. Albedaiwi (2014) points out that ‘even those who do not study English are expected to undertake an introductory course in English’ (p. 17).

In primary, middle and secondary schools, the curriculum, including the English syllabus, is mandated and monitored by the MoE, which means that pupils all over the country study the same English textbook. This textbook contains lessons organised in units, each with a specific focus. Each unit contains exercises on the four language skills. For example, a reading lesson starts with silent reading by the pupils so they can then answer questions on the passage read. Writing is introduced with brief writing activities, where pupils fill in blanks, writing new words in sentences, or writing brief paragraphs (Emarah 1994). Listening and speaking are rarely practised

---

<sup>14</sup> Some English is taught in pre-schools, via the alphabet and numbers. In some private schools, French is also taught, along with English.

adequately, with most of the assigned exercises restricted to drills and prescribed conversations (Emarah 1994). For example, in a listening session, although an example of a dialogue between native speakers is presented on tape, with tape and tape recorder acquired and assigned by the lesson developer, pupils are not usually exposed to the speech of native speakers. Instead, teachers read out the dialogue, either because of lack of materials or to save class time, while pupils are instructed to listen carefully in order to be able to answer the given questions. Similarly, in a speaking exercise, pupils are presented with a prescribed dialogue between two speakers and are expected to practise acting out the dialogue, or to use a new grammatical rule in sentences. In practice, there is no great difference between middle and secondary schools, except that secondary school students are given more exercises.

The structure and content of the English textbooks for all school levels have been contextualised to reflect local culture and religion (Farouk 2014). These textbooks, Alresheed (2008) argues, revolve around topics, e.g. desert life and heroic Arabs, that do not prepare students with an effective understanding of the language suitable for useful communication. Additionally, through using those textbooks, educators have been criticised for not developing critical thinking or encouraging discussion on the part of the students (Emarah 1994). It is believed that the needs of students are not seen as a priority of the educational policy, which aims to evaluate achievement according to the objectives of the curriculum, regardless of the relationship between what these students learn and their actual learning needs (Al-Roomy 2013). This aim defines the content of the lessons, which appear valueless for everyday use. As a consequence, Al-Roomy (2013) argues, students do not internalize what they have learned about English in their actual lives once they have finished

their English examinations. It is believed that what the students have learned about English in general during their school days is not taken seriously (Al-Kahtani 2002). Albedaiwi (2014) points out that because English is not required for general communication in the Kingdom, teachers do not feel motivated to develop communicative competence in their students. This could also apply to the students themselves, who might not feel that there is the need to develop competence in English. This contributes to the difficulty Saudi students face in connecting what they learn in class to real-life situations (Syed 2003) and in passing international language tests such as IELTS and TOEFL (Albedaiwi 2014).

The degree of exposure to English in the school schedule usually comprises four classes of forty-five minutes each per week. This limited amount of time has engendered debate among educators (see Al-Seghayer 2014a). As class time is limited in schools, writing is not taught on a daily basis as the other skills are. Alnasser (2013) noted that, in most cases, only one session per week is devoted to teaching writing, in which students are usually introduced to descriptive or narrative writing. Students only start to sit exams in English at middle school. As mentioned above, most of the writing in this situation involves choosing the right answers and filling in gaps. It is not until secondary school that students learn to write compositions in English.

Despite recent calls, and thus efforts, to implement a more communicative approach to the teaching of English,<sup>15</sup> English is still taught in an old-fashioned manner even at universities. The common teaching approaches for all language skills

---

<sup>15</sup> English is taught differently in private schools from public schools. Students in private schools study English more frequently in a communicative manner and are expected to deliver presentations and projects in English.

in the classroom are the grammar-translation and the audio-lingual approaches,<sup>16</sup> whereby all practices are controlled (Shukri 2014; Alkubaidi 2014; Grami 2010; Alresheed 2008; Zafer 2002). It is believed that teachers may focus on teaching grammar when they feel unsure about their own capability to lead discussions in English in the classroom (Saadi 2012). A major disadvantage of these approaches is that they ignore the autonomy of students as active learners. In class, lessons normally start with teachers explaining the new linguistic items either orally or displayed on the board, while students sit passively as recipients and write down the teacher's explanation (Ankawi 2015; Al-Johni 2009; Emara 1994). Then, in the practice stage, students are required to employ the new items in sentences. This teaching methodology is consistent with what Walker (2003) calls the recitation format, which reinforces the belief that grade, not knowledge, reflects learning. This belief is an objective shared by both parties, students and teachers (Al-Sadan 2000). The emphasis on these out-dated, teacher-centred methodologies has led students to believe that knowledge is only taught by teachers and textbooks and cannot be discovered by them (Ankawi 2015). Indeed, Al-Sadan (2000) observed that Saudi students are not encouraged to seek knowledge from external sources. He argues that 'as the written examinations are based on the contents of the prescribed textbooks, pupils tend to focus exclusively on these and are deprived of the potential benefits of wider reading on specific subjects studied, or of more general education' (p. 154).

---

<sup>16</sup> The Grammar Translation method is 'a method of foreign or second language teaching which makes use of translation and grammar study as the main teaching and learning activities.... [A] typical lesson consists of the presentation of a grammatical rule, a study of lists of vocabulary, and a translation exercise' (Richards and Schmidt 2010). The audio-lingual method is 'a method of foreign or second language teaching which (a) emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing, (b) uses dialogues and drills, (c) discourages use of the mother tongue in the classroom, and (d) often makes use of contrastive analysis' (Richard and Schmidt 2010).

In higher education levels, students enrolled in the departments of English study on a four-year programme and are granted a Bachelor's degree upon successful completion of the programme. When these learners have completed their programme of study, they will be regarded as able to work as translators in private enterprise, or, with those who obtained their degrees from colleges of education and undertook a teacher training course, as teachers of English at middle and secondary schools.

During their undergraduate courses of study, students of English are exposed to a variety of subjects. The focus of courses differs according to the level. Learners study the basic language skills: speaking, reading, listening, and writing, in the first two years; then, in their remaining two years, the focus shifts onto more advanced courses such as translation, linguistics and literature (Al-Seghayer 2014b).<sup>17</sup> Those interested in teaching enrol on a practical training course where they study teaching methodology and teach middle and secondary school students for one term.

Writing is taught to university students from the first year, although the focus changes as students move through the years. In the first two years, learners are introduced to paragraph level writing, and in their third and fourth years they study a module called Essay Writing or Advanced Writing. This is the only module that offers opportunities for writing practice with the focus on writing as a skill, while the other modules focus exclusively on the areas of linguistics and literature, in which minimum communication or authentic writing is required. In general, these writing courses 'focused on sentence structure and combining, appropriate lexical use, and paragraph construction' (Alhazmi and Scholfield 2007: 237); as a result, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to 'write course and exam compositions of

---

<sup>17</sup> These linguistics courses include semantics, syntax and phonology, while the literature course taught at this stage covers the history of English literature, covering novels, drama and poetry (Al-Seghayer 2014b).

expository, argumentative and narrative types [...] formal letters, research reports, lesson plans, and translations of Arabic texts' (Alhazmi and Scholfield 2007: 237–8). The aim seems to be to enable students to master different written genres.<sup>18</sup> However, when it comes to the assessment of students' performance in writing, research has shown that this aim has not been achieved and that students demonstrate unsatisfactory writing performance (see Ezza 2012; Jahin 2012; Rahman 2012; Grami 2010; Alhazmi and Scholfield 2007). This has led scholars (e.g. Alkubaidi 2014; Alnasser 2013; Alharthi 2012; Grami 2010) to criticise the status of EFL writing in Saudi Arabian universities. This criticism has been levelled at both the curriculum and teaching methodologies.

The position of writing in English curricula at universities has not been given adequate attention. A closer look at the objectives of some of the English departments shows a general reference to writing without any specified goals or descriptions of the writing practices the students undertake. This lack of adequate consideration of writing seems to be caused by an overemphasis on literature and linguistics. For instance, a review of the objectives of the English department at Umm Al-Qura University (founded in the city of Makkah, in 1981) reveals this tendency: '[I]n addition to graduating English teachers for secondary and middle schools, the department aims at preparing specialists in applied linguistics and different genres of English literature'<sup>19</sup> ([www.uqu.edu.sa/English](http://www.uqu.edu.sa/English)). This focus is not limited to Umm Al-Qura University or to Saudi universities in particular; it is also evident in the system

---

<sup>18</sup> Genre is defined by Swales (1990) as 'a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes' (p. 58). Genre theorists consider teaching writing through three stages: modelling, joint negotiation of text, and independent construction of texts (Martin 2009). This process starts with the teacher presenting a model text for illustration, then the students engage in a discussion about the text in the joint negotiation stage, before moving to the independent construction level where students produce texts similar to the model text.

<sup>19</sup> See <https://uqu.edu.sa/social-sciences-en/en/1243> for a summary of the aims and objectives of the Department of English at Umm Al-Qura University.

of teaching English at other Arab universities. Ezza (2014) noted that English departments in Arab universities in general, concentrate on linguistics and literature modules, and neglect writing. This leads students to view writing only as a means of evaluating their progress and to overlook the other purposes of writing. It seems that English writing is only taught because of its relevance to learning English, and not as a valuable practical communication skill that can be used in real life. This limited view of the role played by writing can explain why recent approaches in the field, which may be useful, as noted by Alnasser (2013), are not taken into account.

Indeed, Ezza (2014) reviewed the writing syllabus at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia,<sup>20</sup> and three other universities in the Arab world, and found that the syllabi failed to reflect recent developments in the genre approach and focused mainly on structured lexico-grammatical approaches, even for advanced classes. This is a major methodological issue because it is evident that writing, by its very nature, is not restricted to a single text type. The genre approach, Grami (2010) believes, is essential in teaching the different types of writing. This implies that despite studying essay writing, students are not exposed to a sufficient number of written genres and text types, but are led to believe that all writing practices are carried out to serve similar functions. Ezza (2012) observed that even those who were regarded as good students could not perform properly when confronted with different writing genres such as CVs and application forms because they did not learn about these genres in the classroom. Such low performance was also evident in the writing of Saudi students sitting IELTS tests. Grami (2010) found that, among other skills, the weakest performance of Saudi IELTS candidates was in the writing tasks. This suggests that

---

<sup>20</sup> King Saud University was founded in 1957 in Riyadh. At the time it was the first university established since King Abdulaziz united the Kingdom in 1932. It is considered one of the leading universities in the country.

students have not been sufficiently well prepared to demonstrate the writing abilities required by international tests like IELTS. Generally speaking, a graduate of a four-year EFL programme is assumed to be able to demonstrate a good command of the language in IELTS or TOEFL tests. The lack of preparation in their courses means they have to undertake additional studies to pass these tests.

In summary, Saudis' deficiencies in EFL are not limited to writing, however, due to its significance in distance communication, Al-Kahtani (2002) emphasises the fact that writing should be taught only by competent tutors who are able to make it an enjoyable experience. Lack of interest on the part of teachers can negatively affect the activities in the classroom, i.e. limited exercises with no meaningful purposes, which would indicate to the students that writing is only taught because it is a course requirement and that it is not needed for further purposes.

## **1.6 Chapter Overview**

This chapter has set out the basis of the study. It started by presenting the theoretical framework of the study, then moved to state the main research questions, the objectives of the study and the research hypotheses. The chapter revealed certain gaps in the literature on investigation into writing in English as a foreign language, which made the case for further investigation. It then provided an overview of the study context, describing the geographical and social settings, including the role of religion, in Saudi Arabia. The chapter also described the educational system of the Kingdom, which the research participants had experienced, focusing on how both English and writing in English are taught.



In the following chapter, a review of the relevant literature on attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy and writing performance in the settings of English as a first language (L1) and EFL is presented.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

The previous chapter set out the background and the boundaries of the current study. This chapter presents a detailed review of the theoretical framework within which the present study was conducted. This review is divided into three major sections: attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy. Within the review of the literature on these psychological characteristics and their relationship to writing performance, the methodological framework employed to investigate these factors in relation to writing in previous research is examined.

### 2.1 Psychology and Writing

Since writing is an important communicative act, EFL learners need to be sufficiently competent to communicate their thoughts effectively in writing (Hubert 2012). Apart from the external components of learning,<sup>21</sup> the emphasis on writing competence can shed light on internal factors that are now thought of as having a significant influence on writing.<sup>22</sup> Attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy are examples of factors that have been researched in relation to writing performance. Attitudes toward writing are informative about learners' perceptions of writing as a skill and of the efficiency of the writing programme and activities they experience. Awareness of the importance of students' attitudes toward writing can be seen in the efforts of some governmental and educational institutions in English-speaking countries, e.g. the UK, New Zealand and Australia,<sup>23</sup> in conducting surveys to track the writing attitudes of school students. This importance is maximised in foreign language contexts, where attitudes can play a

---

<sup>21</sup> Those factors that are external to the learners and associated with the learning context, such as the classroom and teaching process.

<sup>22</sup> Factors that stem from learners' internal system, in this study, their psychological system. While learners can be exposed to similar external factors, they can differ significantly in their internal factors. The latter include learners' attitudes towards writing, motivation, self-esteem, apprehension, and their perceptions of themselves as capable writers, as having self-efficacy.

<sup>23</sup> These countries were mentioned in a report by Clark and Dugdale (2009): 'Young People's Writing: Attitudes, behaviour and the role of technology'. London: National Literacy Trust.

role in accelerating language learning. Erkan and Saban (2004) warn that if students in these contexts feel apprehensive about writing and lack confidence in their writing capabilities, they will not become proficient writers.

### **2.1.1 Attitudes**

Adequate interpretation of writing performance and variations in this performance as shown in many studies require the consideration of variables not readily apparent. Variability in people's reactions to the same situation has led researchers to investigate psychological factors that might account for such reactions. Attitudes are among the factors posited to account for the diversity of findings about individuals' behaviour. That being the case, many studies have focused on how people think and how behaviour might be connected to their way of thinking. Since attitudes are latent variables, researchers first turned their attention towards behaviour. That different types of behaviour do not occur in a vacuum caused scholars to turn their attention to the psychological characteristics that can be responsible for behaviours, among which are attitudes.

Broadly speaking, two major theories dominate most interpretations in the field of attitudes, the behaviourist and the mentalist. Other theories track the process of attitude formation, such as the tripartite theory, or specifically define the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour. These theories offer insights into attitudes from different perspectives. Despite their validity in explaining attitudes and behaviour consistency, the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour

were not incorporated into this study,<sup>24 25</sup> since the participants' behaviour when writing would have been difficult to examine in the study context, and because the relationship between attitudes and behaviour was not the focus of this research. The study is more concerned with the consistency between attitudes toward writing and writing competence, a relationship that has been examined and confirmed in L1 contexts. For the purpose of this study, participants' performance on given writing tasks, i.e. on two different text types, were treated as a reflection of their writing competence. It was believed that in looking at participants' performance in response to narrative and persuasive prompts, which represent different levels of difficulty, their doing well within reasonable time limits would be a reliable measure of their overall writing competence

#### *2.1.1.1 The Behaviourist Theory*

The behaviourist theory, first advanced by Read Bain (1928), relates attitudes to explicit actions. According to this theory, actions are a direct indicator of attitudes. Bain characterised an attitude as 'the relatively stable overt behaviour of a person which affects his status' and suggested that 'the only way to determine attitudes is by observation and statistical treatment of behaviour in social situations' (pp. 951–7). Accordingly, behaviourist theory assumes ultimate consistencies between attitudes

---

<sup>24</sup> Proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), the Theory of Reasoned Action postulates that the intention to perform the action and the attitudes that stem from the beliefs held about the given object determine an action. The Theory of Reasoned Action can only accurately predict behaviour in two cases: (1) if the measure used precisely detects intentions that precede behaviour and (2) if volitional control of behaviour is guaranteed (Ajzen 1985). The theory falters where individuals have weak or no control over their behaviour and where direct indicators of intentions are absent.

<sup>25</sup> Ajzen developed the Theory of Planned Behaviour in 1985. This theory emphasises the importance of perceived behavioural control. Perceived behavioural control considers previous experiences and predicts future hindrances to determine the difficulty level of the behavioural performance (Ajzen 2005). It acts as a 'determinant of behavioural intentions and behaviour' (Madden et al. 1992: 4). In sum, the Theory of Planned Behaviour extends the applicability of the Theory of Reasoned Action to situations where behaviour can be planned and be under control.

and actions and defines attitudes through observable responses to situations, regardless of verbal responses.

Some researchers have criticised this theory for viewing attitude as a dependent construct (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970). Indeed, through understanding behaviour as a direct reflection of attitudes, behaviourism seems not to account for issues of divergence between attitudes and behaviour. Its dependence on the inductive research approach precludes researchers from setting hypotheses about attitudes and testing their accuracy. In particular, Fasold (1984) considered this point to be demotivating to researchers, as research becomes more interesting when it is conducted to test and prove a formulated hypothesis. By relying directly on observable behaviour, behaviourism assumes that all attitudes are conclusively reflective through behaviours and thus it devalues research about any held attitude that remains un-pronounced or acted out.

Additionally, inferring attitudes directly from overt behaviour is a critically naïve approach. Attitudes cannot be straightforwardly examined. People can have different attitudes and different types of behaviour, depending on whether the behaviour takes place in a public or private place (Allport 1935), for example, a person's style of eating. In such cases, '[O]bservation of external behaviour may produce mis-categorisation and wrongful explanation. Such behaviour may be consciously or unconsciously designed to disguise or conceal inner attitudes' (Baker 1992). In many situations, people may hold certain attitudes toward certain things but choose to demonstrate behaviour inconsistent with them in public; thus attitudes can be incorrectly inferred through the lens of behaviourism. This seems to be even more complicated in learning situations. For example, it may be assumed that a

participant's proficiency in writing and his or her planned approach to mastering writing indicates a positive attitude toward writing. However, a student may dislike writing but still demonstrate favourable behaviours toward it in front of the writing instructors and show an awareness of paragraph organisation and register to meet the task requirements. Behaviourists treat attitudes as context-dependent constructs that can only be directly observed through behaviour and analysed accordingly.

It seems that the behaviourist theory fails to present a comprehensive picture of attitudes and their complex nature.

#### *2.1.1.2 The Mentalist Theory*

The mentalist theory offers an alternative and more nuanced interpretation of attitudes. It was proposed by social psychologist Gordon Allport. As its name suggests, this theory approaches attitude as an internal human psychological process.

Allport defined an attitude as 'a mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related' (1935: 801). Allport's definition does not mention two vital factors when it comes to applying the theory to fieldwork: what forms of response are indicative of an attitude, and how to recognise those forms of responses. However, the definition does view attitude as an 'independent variable in the form of a latent psychological constant which is not tied to the specific external stimulus situations in which the responses are made' (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 138). Many have considered this interpretation to be helpful in understanding the complexity of attitudes and an advantage in motivating further research. Allport's definition has been cited extensively in the literature, perhaps

because it is one of the earliest views that offer an alternative logical explanation of how the process of forming an attitude is organised and demonstrated.

Allport indicated that attitudes are formed from four sources: accumulated experience, differentiation or segregation, emotional trauma, and role models. Accumulated experience is a major source that people depend upon when they develop their attitudes. He explained that attitudes are never the result of a single experience but are formed through the aggregated experiences in the memory of a certain issue. The more experiences an individual goes through, the more definitive his/her attitudes become. Segregation is another source for developing attitudes. As early as infancy, children learn either to engage in or avoid certain patterns of action and their attitudes are then segregated according to these patterns. Attitudes can also be formed through an intense dramatic experience or trauma. Although traumatic experiences are crucial in childhood, they can also influence the attitudes of older people. Allport further elaborated that even if the person has recovered from this traumatic experience, his/her attitudes may not be weakened by this recovery. In addition to these three sources, attitudes can be adopted ready-made from parents, teachers and peers. In that case, a child sometimes fits his or her subsequent experience into these adopted attitudes and may not admit any evidence that conflicts with these attitudes. Attitudes from this source seem to be indirectly formed as they are developed based on other individuals' experiences. These sources may not all be available in all contexts where an individual can only have access to the indirect sources to develop attitudes about certain objects.

Some years later, Allport (1954) went on to elaborate on attitudes further, explaining that an attitude is a 'learned predisposition to think, feel and behave

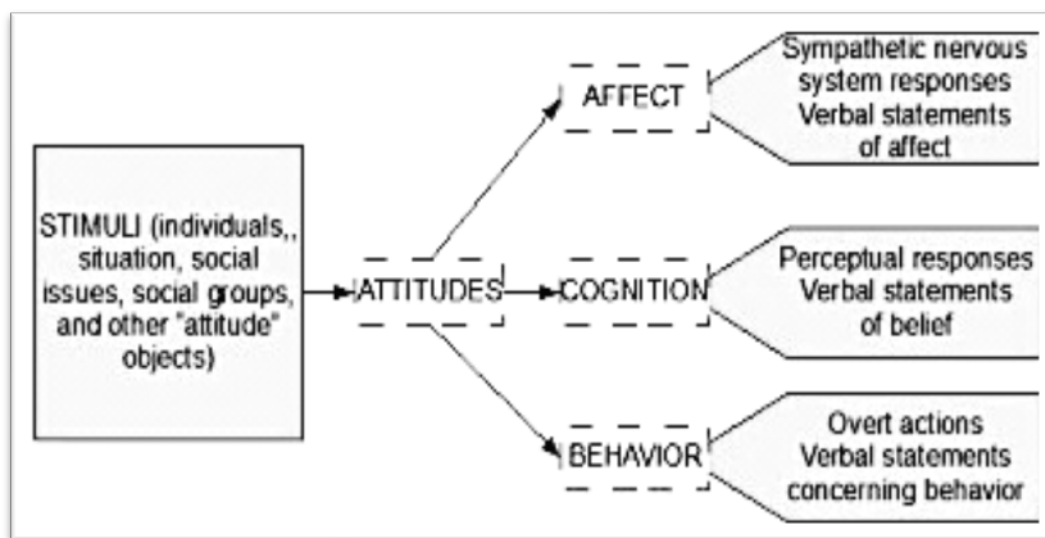
towards a person (or object) in a particular way' (Erwin 2001:5). Clearly, he now acknowledged that one can infer attitude from three main elements: thoughts, emotions and behaviours. Attitudes are also a learned tendency rather than a spontaneous reaction. Accordingly, attitudes are organised by experiences and not inherited. Sarnoff (1970) shared a similar view of attitude by defining an attitude as 'a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects' (p. 279). His simple, though general, view indicates an awareness of attitudes as having a stable form and being two-faceted: they have a stable form because they are responses, elicited and stimulated, but they can be favourable or unfavourable. This evaluative nature is seen by Eagly and Chaiken (2005) as an essential aspect of attitude. They viewed attitude as 'a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour and disfavour'. This view is considered to be useful in providing an overall picture of attitudes and stimulating further studies (Zhang 2010).

Unlike the above researchers, Jung (1971) did not restrict attitudes to reactions only. He viewed attitude as a 'readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way' (p. 414). Although Jung did not explicitly state what psychological components contribute to this state of readiness, this notion of attitude does allow for more than one form of action; in other words, an attitude can be a direct performance or a response to a specific stimulus. Interestingly, Jung seemed to agree with the behaviourist theory that attitudes can be inferred from actions; however, he referred to the 'psyche' as the operator of attitudes. This standpoint demonstrates that attitudes and behaviour are closely interlinked, and that the latter can sometimes be inferred from external behaviour even if they are an internal process.



### 2.1.1.3 The Tripartite Theory

Although most scholars apply either the behaviourist or the mentalist theory of attitude, the tripartite theory, also called the ABC model, proposed by Katz and Stotland (1959) and developed by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960), presents a more detailed view of attitudes. The tripartite theory sees attitude as a multi-dimensional construct that results from a combination of three components: affect, behaviour and cognition. This concept chimes with the mentalist theory that attitudes are multi-dimensional. Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) further stated that attitudes emerge as either verbal or nonverbal responses reflecting the three components (see Figure 2.1). It is worth mentioning here that the behaviourist theory depends entirely on the nonverbal behavioural responses as being representative of attitudes; in so doing, the behaviourist theory ignores affect and cognition as components of attitudes.



**Figure 2.1: Schematic Conception of Attitudes (Rosenberg and Hovland 1960, p. 3)**

As presented in Figure 2.1, the three components do not equate to attitudes; instead, they are seen as causes or triggers (Gratte 2010; Clore and Schnall 2005) or, in another sense, as informational suppliers (Fabrigar et al. 2005). This latter view

attributes a weaker significance to the components. As causes, components are understood as working alone or in combination with other elements to produce and affect attitudes; as informational suppliers, however, components would presumably have a limited role, and other factors may be responsible for activating attitudes. Since attitudes on most occasions do not exceed but are being expressed through those components, these three components can be treated as causes or forms. They simply depict the origins of attitude formation; some attitudes appear to have emotional origins, some appear to be informed by past behaviour, and some may be cognition dependent, or indeed may be formed by two or more of these causes in combination. Despite this multidimensional view, Oppenheim argues that the patterns of attitudes are nevertheless limited (1982). Indeed, attitudes may not be restricted to only patterns originating from these three forms. Other patterns such as stereotypes cannot be placed under any of the three definite forms, thus implying the diversity of the forms they take.

With regard to the three components, affect has been seen as the umbrella term for attitudes and other constructs, including emotions, beliefs and moods (McLeod 1991). The emotions experienced when facing an object can establish an individual's attitude towards it. The individual forms an affective evaluation of the object and includes it in the attitude formation (Gratte 2010; Ajzen 2005). The individual may then verbally articulate the attitude held, either favourable or unfavourable, through a direct expression of feelings, such as admiration or disgust, or nonverbally through facial or physical reactions (see Figure 2.2). However, Ajzen (1988) thought that inferring the actual attitude (positive or negative) towards any situation or object from nonverbal responses can be difficult. For instance, accurate interpretation might depend on the level of control a person possesses; some individuals who have

negative attitudes toward a specific object or a situation may manage to hide their negative physiological reactions or even feign positive attitudes. The awareness of the complexity of interpreting nonverbal responses has influenced researchers to adopt such research approaches as questionnaires and interviews that stimulate verbal responses about attitudes in their studies.

The behavioural component of an attitude highlights the idea that attitudes can sometimes be inferred from an individual's behaviour. For instance, a student might exhibit negative attitudes if he or she avoids writing classes and does not respond to the given homework. As these behavioural patterns are visible, they constitute the nonverbal responses of behavioural attitudes. Verbal responses are the expression of an individual's intention to behave in a certain way with regard to the attitude object, e.g. one stating his/her intentions to skip the writing exam. On the other hand, a student with a positive attitude may demonstrate supportive behaviour, i.e. try to engage in writing activities, or express an intention to do so.

Some components of attitudes are considered to be cognitive because they signify an individual's knowledge and beliefs about the world and the relationship between objects and their social significance (Gratte 2010; Fabrigar et al. 2005; Rokeach 1973). When confronted with a particular situation or object, an individual's mind activates stored beliefs and information to provide a meaningful evaluation of the situation and to guide behaviour. Potentially, the more knowledgeable a person has about a target object or of the consequences of a certain type of behaviour or situation, the more likely he or she is to form an opinion and, as a consequence, an attitude that serves him or her well. This suggests that attitudes based on cognition are

less stable as they are prone to change once an individual obtains more information that challenges his/her previous knowledge about the attitude object.

It is true that knowledge and beliefs can significantly ease the process of attitude formation; however, one should not underestimate the influence of feelings (affect) and behaviour. It is clear that affect, behaviour and cognition do not always have the same influence; the individual may decide the intensity of each component's involvement in shaping an attitude. For example, some individuals may value cognition more than affect when forming their attitudes and, as a consequence, their attitudes are cognitively-based.

With respect to verbal and nonverbal responses, verbal cognitive expressions include stating one's conceptions, opinions and beliefs directly about the attitude object, while nonverbal cognitive responses constitute one's awareness and information about the target object.

Individuals tend to form cognitive beliefs about a target object by considering the value of the outcome. Thus, as previous experience influences attitudes, the relationship between cognition and behaviour seems to be mutually reinforced. Basically, behaviour occurs and outcomes are evaluated; information is obtained and beliefs are then formed and recalled when a person is confronted with similar objects, thereby influencing an individual's overall attitude towards the object. This relationship may also extend to the affective component, as strongly held beliefs can guide feelings. Figure 2.2 shows how verbal and nonverbal responses are expressed to indicate attitudes.

<i>Response mode</i>	<i>Response category</i>		
	<i>Cognition</i>	<i>Affect</i>	<i>Conation</i>
Verbal	Expressions of beliefs about attitude object	Expressions of feelings toward attitude object	Expressions of behavioral intentions
Nonverbal	Perceptual reactions to attitude object	Physiological reactions to attitude object	Overt behaviors with respect to attitude object

**Figure 2.2: Types of Response Used to Infer Attitudes (Ajzen 2005, p. 4) <sup>26</sup>**

In summary, drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of both the behaviourist and the mentalist theories, the tripartite theory offers a compromise stance that acknowledges the diverse facets of attitudes. It provides a valuable explanation by recognising that attitudes can be constructed from three elements: affect, cognition and behaviour, and by not limiting attitudes solely to affect, which is a widely held tendency, or solely to behaviour, as proposed by behaviourists. More importantly, the tripartite theory's division of responses into verbal and nonverbal significantly demonstrates that attitudes can be either explicitly or implicitly expressed. Despite the awareness of these components, they have not been adequately incorporated in investigations about attitudes. Fishbein (1966: 203) noted that most of the published scales of attitudes measured an evaluative trait and neglected to measure their affective, cognitive and behavioural components. This was true until recently. Bohner and Wanke (2002) attributed this neglect to the fact that these components are not always independent and are likely to interlink with each other. Thus, the tendency of some researchers (e.g. Eagly and Chaiken 2005; Sarnoff 1970) to opt for evaluation as a one-dimensional definition of attitude, can be understood. The tendency to separate

<sup>26</sup> The word 'Conation' in Figure 2.2 is used to refer to behaviour.

attitude components or to treat them as an overall unit depends on the scope of the research.

In the current thesis, attitudes are viewed from a unidimensional perspective, in the sense that conclusions about participants' attitudes are compared with performance; however, findings concerning each of the three components will be referred to briefly. In other words, this study intends to reach conclusions about attitudes toward writing through measuring them as a combination of affect, cognition and behaviour.

#### *2.1.1.4 Language and Writing Attitudes*

Most of the studies on language and attitude have drawn on the mentalist theory (Fasold 1984) as the most appropriate theory for the field. This is because language production involves deciding what to express, how to express it and why it should be expressed. The nature of language makes it difficult to rely solely on observing behaviour to infer attitudes toward languages, as the theory of behaviourism advocates. In some contexts, learners may work to acquire a particular dialect of a language not because they admire this dialect but because it is the only one accessible to them, or because they will be assessed in this dialect, or because it is the one required in the job market, or for other reasons.

The most cited work concerning the influence of attitudes on foreign language learning is that of Lambert (1955). In an attempt to identify the factors that have the most influence on language learning, Lambert studied the high attainment in French of an American graduate student and attributed his competence to his attitudes toward the language. Similarly, Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified attitude, among other factors, as influential in determining success in language learning. This sparked an

interest in attitudes toward second and foreign languages among other researchers. Since then, foreign and second language researchers have developed an awareness of latent factors and their possible influence on language achievement. However, it has been argued that a learner's attitude towards a language does not always affect his or her achievement. For instance, Oller and Perkins (1980) found no relationship between attitudes and performance in language learning, and Bratram (2010) argues that 'the connection between attitudes to language learning and performance may not be as uncontentious as it at first sight appears, since attitude does not necessarily translate into observable behaviour or performance' (p. 34).

Similar results have been reported with regard to performance in general education. This situation, when attitudes have no influence on performance, has been referred to as attitudes-achievement paradox. In an attempt to understand why positive attitudes do not lead to a desired outcome, Mickelson (1990) points out that the types of attitude held by individuals can account for this paradox. She argues that attitudes toward education can be either abstract or concrete; abstract attitudes are relevant to ideological beliefs about education as a 'key to success in the future' but bear no relation to achievement, whereas concrete attitudes value the practical consequences of achievement and thus could predict performance. The failure of abstract attitudes to influence achievement render them inconsequential, a characteristic that has been identified by Visser et al (2006) as relevant to weak attitudes. On the other hand, strong attitudes have powerful influence on behaviour. The strength of attitudes is defined by Petty and Krosnick (1995) as 'the extent to which attitudes manifest the quality of durability and impactfulness' (p.3). These characteristics suggest that even positive attitudes may not result in desired outcomes if these attitudes were not strong

enough. Accordingly, abstract attitudes with their lack of influence on performance appear to be weak attitudes.

Mickelson found that abstract attitudes were the types possessed by African-American students and thus did not matter significantly in relation to their performance; this has led her to conclude that factors like ethnicity and social class can influence the type of attitude the individuals develop, and as a consequence, its significance to achievement.

In line with this argument, Ma and Kishor (1997) explain that flaws in the research such as sample size and selection, in addition to ethnicity and social class, can affect the relationship between attitudes and achievement. They identify gender as insignificant in affecting attitudes and achievement. With specific reference to the attitudes-achievement paradox of African-Americans, Downey et al. (2009) offer two explanations: the first one complies with Mickelson's argument and questions the validity of the attitudes held by this ethnic group, while the second acknowledges the validity of the attitudes of African-Americans but suggests that other factors prevent them from being transformed into achievement. They found that African-Americans' attitudes resembled those held by Hispanic and Asian students, and concluded that achievement does not depend solely on attitudes and that the positive attitudes of these ethnic minorities did not lead to high achievement like those of ethnic majority students in the US because other barriers, such as socioeconomic status, interfered with the relationship between attitudes and achievement and could affect correspondence between them. This conclusion was supported by the study of immigrant students in Belgium (Praag et al. 2015), where it was found that the positive attitudes of these immigrants failed to translate into successful educational



outcomes because they, the immigrants, had become aware of the discrimination that existed in the job market, which had led them to realise that obtaining high grades at school would not necessarily mean they would be successful in society. These examples show that the relationship between attitudes and achievement is complex and subject to other factors. Although these studies have provided evidence of the significance of ethnicity in influencing the perception of attitudes and their relation to achievement, their arguments are based on a comparison of ethnic minorities with the ethnic majority of a country; it would therefore be interesting to investigate whether the types of attitudes identified also apply to a single ethnic group in its home context.

Unfortunately, compared with the literature on foreign language attitudes in general, very few studies have been conducted on attitudes and foreign language writing (Lee 2013; Graham et al. 2007; Petric 2002).

Writing is a combination of emotional and cognitive processes (McLeod 1987). It is thus taken for granted that attitudes commonly influence individuals' writing. Taking into consideration the complexity of writing and its importance in learners' educational lives, it is worth investigating whether attitudes toward writing contribute to learners' performance during their learning progress. Attitudes have been given a specific definition within the context of writing, which is different from the broader definitions of attitudes. In particular, Graham et al. (2007) view writing attitude as 'an affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy' (p. 516). It can clearly be seen from the definition that these researchers did not include the cognitive or conative aspects identified by social psychologists as components of writing attitudes, the implication being that only affect is relevant to writing attitudes. As this definition only reflects attitudes toward

writing from one perspective, i.e., feelings, it may fail to reflect a detailed understanding of writing attitudes from other important components in addition to affect. This limited view of attitudes may have coloured these authors' approach to investigating them, as seen in Section 2.4.

Taking the above discussion into consideration, attitudes toward writing have been investigated through different dimensions except through the social-psychological one. One of the earliest studies on writing attitudes and performance was conducted by Wollcott and Buhr (1987). These researchers explored the connection between writing attitudes and performance in an editing skills test and expository essay writing by students enrolled on a developmental writing course at university. The findings suggest that those with positive attitudes performed better in the essay writing than those with neutral or negative attitudes, but this was not the case in the editing test.

In the study by Wollcott and Buhr, the attitudes studied were limited to feelings about writing, the perceived usefulness of writing, writing apprehension and knowledge of the writing process. Although the former three can be relevant to attitudes in general, knowledge about writing process may not in fact be a direct indicator of attitudes. Additionally, a number of items in their questionnaire enquired about writing practices of the participants in their school days.<sup>27</sup> While the researchers referred to these items as students' evaluation of the importance of writing in their past experience, some of these items may have reflected past practices imposed on them but not their attitudes toward writing at the time. This study is an example of writing attitudes being defined differently by different researchers. As a consequence,

---

<sup>27</sup> Example statements are 'During high school I was required to write a report or short paper almost every month' and 'Writing was never emphasized during my secondary school days'.

the conclusions reached by various studies on attitudes toward writing may not be comparable. More importantly, this difference in identifying writing attitudes is evidence that these studies were not based on the theoretical framework of attitudes, thus, they may not inform the general attitude theory.

Research also suggests that writing performance can affect the type of attitude generated (Kear et al. 2000). For instance, good performance is likely to maintain positive attitudes. However, empirical findings concerning reciprocity in the relationship between writing attitudes and behaviour have been deemed to be inconsistent, and some studies have failed to support this notion. For instance, Graham et al. (2007) studied the connection between writing attitudes and writing performance, reporting that attitudes toward writing significantly affected writing achievement, but achievement had no significant effect on attitudes toward writing.

The literature revealed only a small number of studies on the influence of attitudes on writing performance, and these mainly investigated young learners. So far, the attitudes of university students toward writing do not seem to have interested researchers in the L1 context. The few studies that have targeted older students either studied attendees at writing centres and used limited constructs of attitudes (e.g. Wollcott and Buhr 1987), or focused on pre-service teachers and investigated the relationship between their writing attitudes and their teaching practices (e.g. Street 2003). Since most of these studies were carried out in educational contexts, it is possible that the attitudes of older students do not provide rich data for pedagogical writing research, as they might do in EFL contexts. For instance, writing by university students in their L1 might not be as important for language learning progress as it is for students in an ESL/EFL context. Being a language skill, writing contributes to

language acquisition (Raimes 1985) and comprises most of the foreign language production which constitutes the basis for the evaluation of the learners' progress (Hubert 2012).

In EFL contexts, while the prevailing trend is still to investigate attitudes toward language learning in general, some studies have concentrated on attitudes toward writing. However, in these studies there were some problems relating to the correspondence between measures of attitudes and the object, writing. Hashemian and Heidari (2012), for example, investigated the relationship between attitudes, motivation and the writing performance of Iranian EFL university students. Their results suggested a positive correlation between writing performance and integrative motivation and positive attitudes.

Unfortunately, the Hashemian and Heidari (2012) study relied on attitudes toward language learning generally to measure attitudes toward writing specifically. Using Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery Questionnaire, which measures the general language attitudes of EFL learners, they only included one item pertaining to the participants' level of enjoyment of writing. They equated attitudes toward language with attitudes toward writing, which is problematic, since, for example, an individual can hold positive attitudes toward learning English while maintaining a negative attitude toward writing in English. Regarding this very issue, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) emphasise the importance of using measures specifically designed to test attitudes toward the object in question. Any lack of correspondence between the attitudinal measure and the object renders the results unreliable. Additionally, the participants in the Hashemian and Heidari (2012) study only wrote one paragraph (the researchers did not specify the type of text or the topic), and overall performance in

writing was assessed based on that single paragraph. Concerning the amount of writing done for assessment, Jacobs et al. (1981) suggest that at least one page or 200–300 words should be written. Overall, the Hashemian and Heidari (2012) study oversimplified the relationship between writing attitudes and performance and, as a consequence, failed to adequately identify attitudes toward writing and their relevance to performance in the EFL context.

A study of the writing attitudes and performance of students of English for Academic Purposes was undertaken by Rushidi (2012) in Macedonia. Rushidi reported that after the participants had completed the course, there was a decline in negative attitudes as they started to view writing more positively. Despite this positive result, Rushidi's view and resulting treatment of attitudes are somewhat questionable, as she refers to attitudes and needs interchangeably as if they were the same construct. This might have influenced the design of Rushidi's research instrument, a questionnaire, and her interpretations. Although Rushidi looked at participants' performance in various writing genres, the questionnaire used for collecting data about attitudes only contained a list of different writing genres and asked participants to indicate how important each genre was and how well they performed in writing in this genre. Rating the importance of a writing genre may not be a direct indicator of attitudes toward that genre. Similarly, asking participants to rate their performance in the different writing genres is a measurement relevant to self-efficacy, not of attitudes, and eliciting information about writing performance and attitudes toward writing using only two variables seems insufficient. For example, despite a student's lack of interest in a given genre, he or she could indicate that the genre is important because it is a course requirement or because it is relevant to getting a job. Furthermore, as Rushidi did not identify the assessment tool used to evaluate the students' writing, it

is not possible to judge the validity of some of her findings. These issues clearly show the need for a study that examines those components of attitudes that are commonly considered critical when investigating writing.

The studies reviewed above show that an awareness of the impact of writing attitudes on performance in a foreign language context is a recent phenomenon. However, even these studies show a lack of awareness of the complexity of attitudes towards writing. Further studies could focus on how learners feel, what they believe and how they behave when they write and how they evaluate this endeavour and their performance in it. Such studies would inform education policy makers regarding ways in which writing could be taught more effectively. Psychological variables should be taken into consideration during the process of curriculum design to facilitate learning and encourage learners to view tasks positively.

#### *2.1.1.5 Attitudes, Writing and Gender*

The gender of writers has been found to be an influential factor in determining attitudes toward writing and writing achievement. In an L1 setting, a number of researchers have reported significant relationships between these variables. In primary school settings in the USA, Knudson (1995) found that gender significantly correlated with attitudes towards writing as well as with writing performance, with girls reporting more positive attitudes than boys, regardless of grade levels. This finding was replicated with fourth and fifth graders (Kotula et al. 2014) and in other, similar contexts. For instance, in studies by Hansen (2009, 2001) with schoolchildren in New Zealand, girls reported more positive attitudes and were found to have a higher level of achievement than boys. This finding was confirmed by studies conducted in the UK (Edwards 2015; Clark and Dugdale 2009), but only partly confirmed in a series of

studies carried out by Graham et al. (2007), who found that girls reported more positive attitudes towards writing than boys did; however, despite their favourable attitudes, girls' performance was not statistically better than that of boys. The influence of gender on attitudes was further confirmed in a study by Graham et al. (2012), who also found that girls had more positive attitudes; however, attitudes only predicted writing performance at Grade 3 but not at a younger age (Grade 1). This suggests that age can also mediate the influence of gender on attitudes and writing.

A more in-depth study was conducted by Lee (2013). Focusing on eighth-grade Australian students, Lee (2013) investigated the relationship between attitudes and writing performance with respect to gender in a larger sample. He analysed data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for 1998 and 2007, and found that female students demonstrated more positive attitudes towards writing than males and scored higher in their writing. The results of the analysis also indicated that even females with negative attitudes towards writing outperformed males with positive writing attitudes.

Despite this large database, a significant limitation to this study is the fact that Lee took the students' responses to four statements that had already been assessed through the NAEP as criteria to define and test the students' attitudes. The main weakness of this methodology is that the NAEP might have designed these statements to assess areas that are not relevant to attitudes towards writing skill in general: for instance, to measure attitudes towards writing progress, in which case it may pose a challenge with regard to issues of correspondence between attitudes measures and writing measures. This is evident in one of the statements, which asks whether students like writing stories and letters. This statement is more relevant to writing

genres, since it investigates students' attitudes towards writing stories and letters; thus it may not be useful to correlate these attitudes with the students' scores for persuasive and informative text writing, as Lee did. The remaining statements measured the students' ability, feelings about writing, and their beliefs about its importance in communicating ideas.

Large population samples similar to the sample in Lee's (2013) study normally guarantee reliable conclusions, but, in addition to the statements used to define attitudes, the writing tasks used in Lee's study may have negatively influenced the results. In particular, Lee explained that he used essays that had been written in response to 20 topics in different writing text types (seven narrative, seven informative and six persuasive essays) over a period of two years for his analysis. This implies that not all the participants wrote on the same topics, which undermines the reliability of the study. As Jacobs et al. (1981: 16) argue, 'there is no completely reliable basis for comparison of scores on a test unless all of the students have performed the same writing task(s)'. While some participants did carry out the same writing task, i.e., wrote about the same topic, the inclusion of more than one topic in the performance analysis and the association of the results with the students' writing in general may have skewed the findings. Topics often differ in their level of difficulty and students may not be able to demonstrate their writing potential on topics they perceive as unfamiliar or difficult. As a result, different writing topics can produce differences in proficiency.

The review of studies on the relationship between attitudes, gender and writing performance in L1 revealed that most of these studies targeted school-age children. Since all of these studies focused on schoolchildren, the findings may not be



extrapolatable to older subjects. However, studies about writing apprehension and negative attitudes revealed their significance in affecting the performance of participants at university level (e.g. Daly and Miller 1975). This suggests that as students get older, only negative attitudes matter in relation to their writing performance.

In EFL settings, studies that included gender with regard to writing attitudes and performance have targeted older subjects. This may be justified by the fact that younger students, e.g. primary school students, do not receive sufficient exposure to foreign languages, in this case English, and thus are thought to have a poor command of the language. Therefore, these younger students may produce different data for investigation. The few studies that have focused on gender and attitudes towards writing in English reported mixed results. For instance, Ibrahim (2006) revealed that gender was not a significant determinant of the EFL writing attitudes or writing ability of Egyptian secondary school students, whereas Aydin and Basoz (2010) found Turkish female undergraduate students of English had more positive attitudes towards written feedback and revision than their male counterparts. However, these findings cannot be seen as completely reliable as these studies suffered from methodological shortcomings. For example, instead of obtaining essays from the students, Ibrahim measured writing ability through a multiple-choice test and written answers to a reading passage that mainly tested grammatical structures. Although this procedure may have suited the study in investigating the influence of reading on the students' writing, it is not adequately informative about the participants' overall writing performance. Aydin and Basoz (2010) reported gender differences in responses to two items on their questionnaires: attitudes towards revision and teacher's feedback, but not to items about writing in general.

In relation to attitudes and writing text types none of the studies reviewed considered whether a given text type was preferred by one gender or the other.<sup>28</sup> It has been reported that males prefer non-narrative texts for reading; however, it is not clear if they have the same preference in writing (Jones and Myhill 2007). Peterson (1991) points out that women's engagement in diary writing and family memoirs suggests that narrative writing is a feminine genre and, as a consequence, it is believed that women are better at writing narratives than argumentative or persuasive essays. However, no empirical research has explicitly tested whether women really value narrative writing over other text types or whether both genders share similar preferences about written text types. This raises the question of whether gender has more influence on certain written text types than on others in EFL contexts.

The relationship between writing attitudes and written text types is another neglected area in the literature. The only published study about attitudes towards text types is a study by Mahfoudhi (2001). Mahfoudhi investigated EFL students' attitudes towards writing narrative, personal and argumentative essays. Similar to many studies that focused on the evaluative form of attitudes, as noted by Fishbein (1966), in this study attitudes were articulated in the affective form. Limiting the investigation of attitudes to this component of attitudes may have been done intentionally in order to limit the measurements to preference and favourability, which are attributes of affect, with regard to text types in written form. Mahfoudhi (2001) discovered that the least preferred text type was the narrative essay, but did not attempt to identify any differences according to gender, or to test his subjects' performance on these text

---

<sup>28</sup> Biber (1989) defined text types on the basis of certain linguistic features. Biber (1988) categorised text types as involving production, informational production, narrative concern, explicit reference, situation-dependent reference, overt expression of persuasion, abstract information, and online informational elaboration. A simpler classification was proposed by Beaugrande (1980): narrative, argumentative, descriptive, literary, poetic, conversational, scientific and didactic texts.

types to discover whether the reported attitudes bore any relationship to performance on a specific text type. Thus no conclusions can be drawn about attitudes and performance with regard to written text types based on this research.

### **2.1.2 Writing Apprehension**

A factor that is closely related to attitudes is writing anxiety. The literature on writing demonstrates that most of the existing attitudinal studies of writing have focused on negative attitudes and were conducted to investigate writing anxiety, or what is known as writing apprehension. Unlike measuring the broad concept of attitudes, measuring writing apprehension gives the researcher insights into the negative feelings that students experience when they engage in writing, and helps in identifying the main factors that cause it.

First introduced by John Daly and Michael Miller (1975a), the term writing apprehension refers to ‘the general avoidance of writing situations perceived by individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing’ (Daly 1979: 37). According to this definition, two important behaviours are linked with apprehension: writing evaluation, which causes apprehension in most of writing situations, and writing avoidance, which is caused by apprehension.

Apprehension does not exist in a vacuum. It is believed that students first experience unpleasant writing situations, such as timed-writing tasks, when they sit exams, that later cause writing apprehension. Research suggests that apprehension is formed from students’ past experiences, low expectations, teachers’ negative feedback and lack of writing competence (Lee 2002). Each of these factors is capable of leading to a high level of writing apprehension. Although they may act separately,

they all seem to be triggered by a lack of writing skills. It may be argued that past experience may not cause apprehension if the writer is a successful writer, who, as a result of his/her positive experience, has high expectations and obtains positive feedback. However, there are situations when successful writers are likely to be more apprehensive than less successful writers, and in these cases the factors listed above may not be the cause of the apprehension. Other factors, such as fear of failure or fear of being seen as a poor writer, may account for apprehension on the part of competent writers. In educational contexts, these factors may not necessarily be seen in isolation but as interacting with each other and potentially with other sources of apprehension, dependent upon the specific individual and the learning context.

With regard to the influence of apprehension on writing performance, earlier studies (e.g. Faigley et al. 1981; Daly and Miller 1975a, 1975b) reported a negative correlation between writing apprehension and students' performance in writing. Apprehensive writers are thought to consider writing unrewarding and feel anxious when they are required to write; as a result, they tend to avoid writing situations more than non-apprehensive writers do (Daly 1978). This behaviour, i.e., avoidance, is considered to impede the learning process and, as a consequence, results in failure to improve, in most cases. Even if learners cannot avoid writing classes, however, the negative influence of apprehension will be apparent in their written product. Faigley et al. (1981) noted that learners with higher levels of writing apprehension wrote shorter and simpler texts than those with low or moderate apprehension. The role of

apprehension is thus debilitating, and seems to be related to the theory of affective filter.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the burgeoning interest in the relationship between writing apprehension and performance, it is worth mentioning that only a few studies referred to the type of written text and its relation to apprehension. One of the earlier studies that tested the influence of apprehension on writing performance is that by Faigley et al. (1985). They investigated writing apprehension and achievement across narrative and argumentative text types. They argue that the narrative essay promotes high apprehension since it requires the recounting of personal experiences, thus participants feel more apprehensive when writing about their feelings in narrative essays than when they write argumentative essays. As a consequence, the overall quality of narrative essays was more influenced by apprehension than that of argumentative essays. Subsequent research by Kean, Glynn and Britton (1987) on persuasive writing revealed that writing apprehension only weakly influenced performance under time constraints, and when there were no time constraints, it bore no relationship to persuasive writing.

The implication of these two studies is that apprehension does not have the same influence on the production of all written text types, and that it is stronger on certain types of writing than on others. Another condition, proposed by Kean et al. (1987), appears to limit the predictive power of apprehension. Their study suggests that, regardless of text types, apprehension is not a constant predictor of writing performance, but under certain circumstances, e.g., with time limits imposed or under

---

<sup>29</sup> Krashen (1982) proposed that apprehension, motivation and self-confidence can either play a facilitating or a disturbing role in the learning process. When apprehension is high and motivation and self-confidence are low, the affective filter rises and causes a mental block that prevents learners from using the input they acquired during learning.

test conditions, apprehension can impede performance and possibly predict lower performance. The influence of writing apprehension may thus be greater in some contexts than in others.

While the Daly and Miller (1975a, 1975b) studies were mainly concerned with first language writing, they paved the way for considering the situation from the second or foreign language perspective. One question that seems worth asking is whether the influence of apprehension on writing is also significant when writing in the EFL/ESL setting. It is generally assumed that the results of studies conducted in a second or foreign language writing context will support Daly's writing apprehension theory. One might expect apprehension to have a significantly higher level of influence on writing performance in a foreign language context because of the generally difficult nature of language learning and the particularly complex process of acquiring writing proficiency. This expectation was confirmed by Al-Ahmad (2003), who compared the writing apprehension of native and non-native English speakers and, as expected, concluded that the latter experience more writing apprehension than their native speaker counterparts.

Interest in writing apprehension has dominated most studies on writing in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) (e.g. Kirmizi and Kirmizi 2015; Ozturk and Saydam 2014; Alnfaie and Grenfell 2013; Hussein 2013; Capan and Simsek 2012; Negari and Rezaabadi 2012; Jahin 2012; Huwari and Abd Aziz 2011; Atay and Kurt 2006; Cheng 2004, 20024; Chen 2002; Cheng et al. 1999). This reflects a general awareness of the potential influence of apprehension on writing performance. Indeed, Atay and Kurt (2006) warn that apprehension will increase if the problem is not resolved, with the result that

apprehensive students will become apprehensive teachers who are unable to support or help their students.

The studies conducted on writing apprehension in the ESL/EFL context targeted different populations in various academic contexts. For example, in a study of Malaysian undergraduates at one college of technology, Daud and Abu Kassim (2005) found a strong correlation between writing apprehension and achievement. Their findings indicated that low achievers were more apprehensive than their high-achieving counterparts.

It is of interest that a study on EFL writing in an Arab context obtained different findings. Abu Shawish and Atea (2010) explored the relationship between the writing anxiety and performance of Palestinian undergraduate students of English and showed that high achievers reported more writing apprehension than low achievers, leading the researchers to suggest that high achievers were more concerned with their writing achievement. The discrepancy between the findings of these two studies may be attributed to the nature of the writing practices in the participants' field of specialisation. The Malaysian students in Daud and Abu Kassim's study were undergraduates undertaking a Diploma in Accountancy and Business, whereas the Palestinian students in Shawish and Atea's study were studying English. It is plausible that the high achievers in the former case were familiar with the limited writing activities on their course and did not feel anxious about carrying them out since they were not the core activities in their Accountancy and Business course. In contrast, the high achievers in the latter may have sensed the importance of writing in their English course and felt that they should be competent in writing, and thus felt pressure and experienced anxiety.

The results reporting the influence of writing apprehension on performance have led to interest in investigating the factors that are likely to cause ESL/EFL writing apprehension. The findings suggest that the common sources of writing apprehension among learners of English include the following: linguistic difficulties, insufficient writing practice, fear of tests, lack of knowledge, low self-confidence, low English writing self-efficacy, weakness of English education and the instructional practices of English teachers, fear of teachers' negative feedback, and past writing experiences (Rezaei and Jafari 2014; Aljafen 2013; Hussein 2013; Zhang 2011; Abu Shawish and Atea 2010; Abdel Latif 2007; Atay and Kurt 2006). Although this list of factors is comprehensive, it should be emphasised that it is not necessarily exhaustive. Hussein (2013) points out that sources of writing apprehension differ from one context to another as they are interlinked with a variety of factors in the various learning environments. Therefore, more causes may be identified once investigations target participants from age or ethnic groups that differ from those investigated in earlier studies.

Finally, despite the fact that it has received much attention in other EFL contexts, only recently have researchers in Saudi Arabia shown an interest in writing apprehension. In one of the first investigations, Jahin (2012) researched the apprehension level and writing ability of EFL student teachers and found the students to be highly apprehensive and poor writers. Jahin did not, however, investigate whether their apprehension was the cause of their performance in writing. The participants in Jahin's study were given three written text types: narrative, expository and argumentative; however, whether their apprehension and performance differed according to these text types was not investigated. Research into writing by undergraduates at a Saudi science college conducted by Aljafen (2013) and Alnufaie



and Grenfell (2013) found that they generally experienced a moderate level of apprehension. This result mirrors findings about Turkish learners of English (e.g. Kirmizi and Kirmizi 2015; Atay and Kurt 2006), who also demonstrated a moderate level of writing apprehension.

The only research in the Saudi context that has considered the association between writing apprehension and writing performance and gender is that of Al Asmari (2013), who investigated the relationship between writing apprehension, writing strategies and writing performance of male and female undergraduates of English. The results suggested that writing apprehension correlated negatively with writing strategies and writing performance. Al Asmari found gender statistically significant only with regard to writing strategies, and not with regard to writing apprehension or writing performance. While the findings of these relationships are of interest, there were some limitations to the writing task that call them into question. The writing samples were generated by asking the students only to write a short response to four questions about writing, and although the researcher did not reveal what these questions were or how much the students wrote in their responses, it is important to reiterate that ESL/EFL composition researchers (e.g. Jacobs et al. 1981) have argued that the assessment of EFL writing requires an adequate volume of writing, that is, at least one page. Al Asmari also did not refer to the level of participants' writing apprehension in general to find out if it was similar to that reported by other studies on Saudis in English departments (e.g. Jahin 2012) or in other departments (e.g. Aljafen 2013; Alnufaie and Grenfell 2013). Similarly, he did not indicate the level of their writing performance. These two points, levels of apprehension and of writing, could have informed us whether the relationship between Saudis' writing apprehension and performance correlated at a specific level

and, thus, offered insights that would help subsequent researchers to investigate if this correlation occurred between Saudi students' writing and their apprehension in general or if it is only the case at certain levels of apprehension and performance. Additionally, the rubric, or criteria, he used to assess the participants' written work are unknown.

It is clear from the studies reviewed above that despite the numerous studies on anxiety and EFL writing performance, there has been no adequate investigation of its potential correlation with text types. The only study of the influence of apprehension on writing a specific type of text is that of Nagadeh et al. (2014), which focused on narrative writing. They reported that apprehension negatively affected Iranian students' written narratives. The researchers also found that gender correlated significantly with participants' apprehension and narrative writing, with male students experiencing less writing apprehension and producing better essays than their female counterparts. However, a major drawback of this study was that the findings were generated using a general anxiety scale (Spielberger's State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) Questionnaire), even though specific writing apprehension scales (e.g., Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Inventory, ESL Writing Inventory by Cheng 2004) were available. These scales would have better served the aims of their study and yielded a more reliable result.

The conclusion that may be drawn from the above review is that writing apprehension appears to be related to writing performance; however, the nature of this relationship is not always straightforward. For instance, Hassan (2001) found no relationship between writing apprehension and writing performance of Egyptian EFL learners, but when the participants were categorised according to their scores on the

writing apprehension scale, Hassan found that writers with low apprehension performed better than those with high apprehension. His study thus shows the complexity of the association between writing apprehension and achievement in EFL settings. However, a number of studies in both L1 and ESL/EFL contexts (e.g. Saadat and Dastegrdi 2014; Choi 2013; Lee 2005, 2002; Pajares and Valiante 1999, 1997; Kean, Glynn, and Britton 1987; Fowler and Kroll 1980) found that the relationship between writing apprehension and performance in general was statistically non-significant and concluded that apprehension does not impede writing performance.

Daly and Miller did not explain whether certain circumstances or factors could nullify the influence of apprehension on writing performance. This implies that apprehension is a valid predictor of writing scores, at least in their research context – L1 university undergraduate students enrolled in writing and communication courses. Failure to find a relationship between apprehension and writing has led researchers to suggest several factors that could mediate the influence of apprehension. In that respect, Fowler and Kroll (1980) argue that verbal skill affects writing more than apprehension. Also, Lee and Krashen (1997) suggest that sometimes the level of apprehension is not sufficient to influence writing. They also point out that if a writing score is built on different factors, not all these factors may be affected by apprehension. Willingness to enrol in a course and the ability to control the influence of apprehension on performance are identified by Lee (2002) as factors that mediated the negative influence of writing apprehension on the performance of Taiwanese students. These factors suggest that there may be other, not yet identified, factors in different contexts that could challenge any hypothesised relationship between apprehension and writing. These mixed results underline the need for further investigation, especially in the context of EFL.

### *2.1.2.1 Writing Apprehension and Gender*

As in the case of attitudes towards writing, gender has been identified as a potential factor in writing apprehension. Indeed, in one of the earliest investigations conducted by Daly and Miller (1975b), they found that men appeared to be more apprehensive than women. However, this finding was not confirmed in subsequent research (e.g. Faigley et al. 1981). The relationship between gender and writing apprehension has been the topic of recent studies in EFL settings, which implies that interest in gender appears to be more active in ESL/EFL settings. These investigations generated inconclusive results. For example, apart from the studies that found no significant gender differences (e.g. Al Asmari 2013; Daud and Abu Kassim 2005), research conducted with Taiwanese (Cheng 2002), Latino (Martinez et al. 2011), Turkish (Ozturk and Saydam 2014) and Iranian (Nagadeh et al. 2014) students of English found that female students were significantly more apprehensive than males about writing in English. These findings challenge the main argument presented for L1 contexts by Daly and Miller. However, these investigations, with the exception of Nagadeh et al. (2014), did not reflect on the writing performance of the two gender groups or on whether gender correlated with the level of their reported writing apprehension. Interestingly, and in contrast to these investigations, other studies have reached different conclusions about gender and writing apprehension. For instance, a study by Min and Rahmat (2014) with final-year engineering students in Malaysia found that men were more apprehensive than women when writing in English. Liu and Ni (2015) reported similar findings with regard to Chinese EFL students. Although these findings are correlated with findings in L1 contexts (e.g. Pajares and Valiante 1997; Daly and Miller 1975b), they resemble the above studies in their lack of investigation of the relationship between writing performance and the reported

apprehension of each gender, which represents a major limitation in their contribution to research into writing apprehension. The disparity of the findings suggests that gender is context-dependent, and thus different study contexts may yield different results.

### **2.1.3 Self-efficacy**

In addition to attitudes, personal beliefs about competency are an important dimension of writing and a widely researched subject. Rokeach (1972: 113) defined them as ‘any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase “I believe that”’. He views beliefs in descriptive, evaluative and prescriptive terms. As with many general concepts, beliefs have been classified into subcategories with specific terms according to their functions. In relation to writing, some research into the influence of self-belief on writing performance has focused on the perceived value of capability, or what is generally known as self-efficacy. The concept of self-efficacy was introduced by Allbert Bandura through the social cognitive theory. This theory identifies self-efficacy as a significant predictor of human functioning in learning (Bandura 1993).

Bandura (1977) noticed that individuals differed in their perceived capabilities to deal with a target object. He referred to this difference in individuals’ beliefs of their perceived capabilities as differences in their self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1993), self-efficacy is among those beliefs that have been critically linked to an individual’s success and it is the aspect of personal beliefs that most strongly mediates the influence of all environmental factors on individuals’ attitudes and behaviour. Bandura (1986: 391) defined self-efficacy beliefs as ‘people’s judgments of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated

types of performances'. Thus, self-efficacy can determine the activities individuals undertake, the amount of effort they will exert in a task, the length of their perseverance, and the psychological traits (e.g., apprehension) they encounter while performing the task (Pajares 2003b; Bandura 2001; Schunk and Pajares 2001). Self-efficacy assesses the extent to which individuals 'feel they have acquired the knowledge or skill to perform well' (Moore and Chang 2009: 71). Bandura's (1993) view that skill and ability are not sufficient guarantors of success underlines the significance of self-efficacy for educational achievements, i.e. that individuals need perceived self-efficacy to harness their skills and abilities to organise their learning. Accordingly, differences in self-efficacy explain the differences in learners' reactions to learning difficulties (Bandura 1993).

Since the introduction of the concept of self-efficacy, researchers have been keen to understand its origins and its relationship to educational attainment in various contexts. Bandura (1997, 1994, 1986, 1977) explained that students' self-efficacy is drawn from four sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and physiological and emotional states. He considered mastery experience to be the primary source of self-efficacy. This is because it is built on students' personal experience, effort and skill. It provides valuable information about their capabilities, based on their past experience. Students evaluate the outcomes of their performance and, on that basis, form beliefs about the relationship between these outcomes, the efforts they have made, and the extent of their capabilities. Students estimate their ability to succeed based on the success they have achieved previously.

Vicarious experience is the second most important element in the construction of self-efficacy. When students lack the experience required for the process of belief

formation and estimation of their ability, they seek support from outside. It is in human nature to compare oneself with others and to use those others as inspiration. Seeing someone else succeed at a similar task often leads students to believe that they will also succeed, especially if there are similarities in ability and circumstances. Similarly, seeing someone fail can lead students to believe that they will also fail and discourage them from approaching the task (Schunk and Pajares 2001). The influence of vicarious experience seems to be limited in nature. Subsequent performance can significantly refute the influence of vicarious experience (Schunk 1996). An individual obtains more valuable information when he/she performs the task himself/herself, and this devalues the information obtained from observing similar others. This further emphasises the significance of mastery experience as the main source of information about efficacy.

While vicarious experience represents an indirect elicitation of self-efficacy, verbal or social persuasion is likely to be a direct way of addressing self-efficacy. In learning and educational settings, social persuasion includes evaluative comments from a social group with a certain amount of authority. Feedback is a common form of social persuasion in these settings. Researchers (e.g. Kormos 2012; Gore 2006 Schunk and Gunn, 1986; Schunk 1983, 1982) have emphasised the potentially enormous influence of teachers' feedback on students' self-efficacy and performance. In many situations, students depend on this feedback to evaluate their achievement (Schunk 2003).

With this in mind, Bandura (1986) points out that negative persuasion has a stronger negative influence on self-efficacy beliefs than positive persuasion. By strengthening beliefs, positive persuasion assures students that success is achievable.

In contrast, negative persuasion suggests that success is far beyond the student's ability and cracks the structure of self-efficacy. Accordingly, the effect of a red pen on learners' self-efficacy is presumably greater than a teacher's positive appraisals (Pajares et al. 2007).

Students need to be aware of their competence in order to acknowledge their ability and to work towards improving their skills. As feedback influences self-efficacy, evaluation of students' performance in the classroom should be made periodically (Razek and Coyner 2014). Bandura warns that feedback should always be given for those tasks for which individuals cannot evaluate their own performance, in order to help them form a clear picture of their competence. Bandura, however, qualified the influence of social persuasion by an important condition. To him, social persuasion is only effective in enhancing self-efficacy and performance if 'the heightened appraisal is within realistic bounds' (1986: 400). In other words, only social persuasion that takes into account an individual's capabilities, and thus encourages him or her to set goals that are realistic and achievable, has a positive influence on self-efficacy. Social persuasion by others can thus sometimes be inappropriate and have a negative effect on an individual's perceived self-efficacy, which then in turn has either no effect or a negative effect on his or her performance.

Another variable that influences self-efficacy is the physiological and emotional conditions students experience during the performance of a task. Stress, anxiety, confusion and body fatigue can be signs of low self-efficacy (Bandura 1994). These symptoms can indicate negative perceptions of one's capability to succeed, which result in low self-efficacy and, as a consequence, poor performance. Writing apprehension is a good example of the integration of these variables.



In practice, these sources are thought to vary in their influence on subsequent performance. Pajares et al. (2007), indicating the likelihood of a correlation between self-efficacy sources and writing, speculate that the strength of a source's influence differs according to academic level and subject. For her part, Usher (2009) reviewed the studies that had researched the impact of these sources on self-efficacy and found that mastery experience was the primary source of self-efficacy in most studies. The review revealed that the importance of these sources varied in relation to gender and ethnicity. For example, boys at middle and high schools reported higher mastery experience and lower apprehension in mathematics, whereas girls of the same age group showed higher mastery experience and lower apprehension in writing. In addition, it has been suggested that social persuasion appeared to influence middle school girls more than mastery experience. With an older age group, vicarious experience and social persuasion defined women's self-efficacy in mathematics, science and technology, whereas men depended primarily on mastery experience. Mastery experience, therefore, is not consistently a primary source of self-efficacy for females. The review also reported that only mastery experience and social persuasion influenced the self-efficacy of African-American middle school students, whereas all four sources contributed to white students' self-efficacy.

Schunk (1996) argues that learners' self-efficacy depends on past experience, verbal persuasion and attitudes during the learning process, but as learners progress and become more competent, their self-efficacy becomes more influenced by personal factors such as goal setting, and situational factors such as feedback. It therefore seems that the importance of these sources depends also on the learning context. Subjects may also determine the sources of self-efficacy. For instance, in subjects such as writing, verbal persuasion, exemplified by teachers' judgment and feedback

on written work, may be valued more highly than vicarious experience. This is because assessment and grades are given by teachers, thus their feedback acts as guidance on how learners can achieve teachers' satisfaction and, as a consequence, obtain high grades. This value of teachers' feedback is further emphasised in EFL settings where learners rely heavily on the teacher as the main source of knowledge. Thus his/her evaluation is taken for granted in most situations.

In general, self-efficacy has been recognised as a valid predictor of performance,<sup>30</sup> and that learners with high self-efficacy adopt positive behaviours towards learning, which result in high achievement. It has been researched in relation to performance in mathematics, science, writing, music and sport. The importance of self-efficacy is better explained by the meta-analysis of Multon et al. (1991), who confirmed that self-efficacy appeared to be a significant determiner and predictor of performance across different disciplines.

However, as is the case with many theories, the theory of self-efficacy has not been accepted by everyone. Some researchers have argued that the influence of self-efficacy on performance is not always positive. Powers (1991), Vancouver, Thompson, and Williams (2001), Vancouver and Kendall (2006), and Vancouver, Thompson, Tischner, and Putka (2002) have theorised that high self-efficacy does not necessarily lead to a positive performance, at least in some situations. Studies by Vancouver and colleagues (2006, 2002, 2001) suggest that the seemingly positive influence of self-efficacy on performance is actually a function of previous performance, not, as some researchers have thought, of self-efficacy, and that self-

---

<sup>30</sup> A distinction has been established between self-efficacy for performance and self-efficacy for learning. Self-efficacy for performance refers to one's perceived belief in one's ability to perform a learned activity, while self-efficacy for learning is learners' perceived belief in their learning development as they take part in learning endeavours (Schunk 1996).

efficacy beliefs can also have a negative effect on behaviour. They believe that self-efficacy can only indirectly affect performance. The effect can be positive by determining individuals' goals but it can also be negative by making individuals feel complacent about their performance, even if the performance is not satisfactory, which can demotivate learners and lead to academic procrastination. That, Larson et al. (2013) argue, produces a situation of high self-efficacy and low performance (see also Cervone and Wood 1995). In response to criticism, Bandura and Locke (2003) argue that these studies failed to apply adequate methodologies.

Bandura (1986) was among the first to discuss the claim of a lack of correspondence between self-efficacy and performance. He argues that participants' self-efficacy will not contribute to their performance if they lack the necessary incentives, skill and accurate self-knowledge, and if the educational settings lack competent teachers, adequate resources and equipment. These factors will hinder subsequent performance even if an individual possesses a high degree of self-efficacy. If individuals lack the necessary skill to complete a task, no degree of self-efficacy will compensate. On the other hand, if an individual possesses adequate skill, has positive attitudes towards the task at hand and values completion of the task, it is hypothesised that self-efficacy will have a positive influence on behaviour, and, as a consequence, performance.

Additionally, Bandura and Jourden (1991) argue that the relationship between self-efficacy and performance can be largely related to goal settings. They emphasise the importance of goal theory in directing self-efficacy, stating that it is rare that self-efficacy translates into effort if individuals do not have goals preceding their performance of the task, and that the more important the individual perceives the goal,

the higher his/her self-efficacy in performing that task. This emphasis implies that the theory of self-efficacy is not entirely independent but relies on goal theory, which is another motivational theory.

However, even when self-efficacy is combined with goal theory, it can falter, sometimes being developed based on previously achieved goals, which might lead to undesired outcomes. Moores and Chang (2008) argue that high self-efficacy could be linked to the belief that the desired goal has been achieved, causing reduced effort and performance. Schunk and Swartz (1993) point to an important issue that not all goals contribute to improving self-efficacy. They argue that general or product goals may not be as effective as process goals. They found that participants who were given process goals and feedback had higher self-efficacy than, and surpassed, those who were given general and product goals. The link between the process goal and self-efficacy in Schunk and Swartz's study suggests that setting general goals is not sufficient, but that goals have to be established at each stage of learning and to be accompanied by feedback about learning progress in order to increase the self-efficacy and overall competence.

In addition to the abovementioned factors, Gist and Mitchell (1992) propose four reasons for the lack of a relationship between self-efficacy and performance: (1), self-efficacy was not strongly associated with achievement on the tested task; (2) it might have been difficult accurately to measure self-efficacy in the study context; (3) it might have been owing to a poor self-efficacy scale; and (4) if the foregoing possible reasons had been carefully considered and still did not explain the lack of correspondence between self-efficacy and achievement, then the theory must be wrong and should not be applied in the research context. They also point out that the

ability of self-efficacy to predict performance weakens as task complexity increases, a point that is also identified by Schunk (1991).

Inaccuracy of self-efficacy is perhaps the most discussed among the reasons proposed by Gist and Mitchell for self-efficacy not being related to performance in certain situations. Indeed, the fact that self-efficacy is typically measured through self-report questionnaires allows researchers (e.g., Bandura 1986) to conclude that the apparent lack of a relationship between self-efficacy and performance may be because self-efficacy has been incorrectly reported. Incorrect reporting can be caused by inaccurate judgment, which in turn can result in self-efficacy being higher than actual performance (Bandura 1997, 1986).

Such inaccurate judgement of self-efficacy does not necessarily occur intentionally. For example, a lack of self-knowledge, or of appropriate task analysis, can be responsible for inaccurate self-efficacy (Bandura and Schunk 1981) as it is believed that in some cases it is difficult to estimate one's academic performance (Sawyer et al. 1992). When participants lack sufficient experience regarding the assessed activity, they recall their performances on other activities, which might be dissimilar to the activity involved in the study, and evaluate their self-efficacy on that basis (Bandura 1986). Such behaviour would certainly lead to a faulty assessment of self-efficacy. It is possible that, in the absence of precise knowledge of the tested task as well as of situations where self-evaluation can be practised, students who are not used to being asked to rate their capability or carry out self-assessment find it challenging to rate their perceived pre-task ability accurately, and thus either overestimate or underestimate their self-efficacy. This is evident in studies of medical students (e.g. Liddell and Davidson 2004; Tousignant and Desmarchais 2002) and of

students with learning disabilities (e.g. Klassen and Welton 2009; Klassen 2008, 2006; Sawyer et al. 1992; Graham and Harris 1989a, 1989b; Bandura and Schunk 1981).

Bandura (1986) and Schunk (1996) point out that accurate assessment of self-efficacy in cognitive tasks is not always straightforward, in that participants sometimes do not visualise the complexity of the tasks tested while responding to the self-efficacy items. McCarthy et al. (1985) also held this view, arguing that, in relation to writing, it is not uncommon for students to misjudge their perceived writing ability. Pajares (2003a) found that inaccurate self-beliefs can be responsible for students' academic shortcomings: '[I]n these cases identifying challenges and altering inaccurate judgement are essential to academic success and adaptive functioning' (p. 154). Therefore, attention should be paid to students' self-efficacy because when high or low self-efficacy is formed, it can, sometimes, be impossible to change (Hoy and Spero 2005).

It can be concluded from the above arguments that self-efficacy, behaviour and performance do not have a linear relationship. These arguments rely heavily on findings from studies conducted in the L1 context, and there is the possibility that research carried out in other contexts may result in different findings

#### *2.1.3.1 Self-efficacy in Writing*

Writing is one of the subjects for which a significant relationship with self-efficacy has been demonstrated, especially in the first language context. Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) reason that as writing is a demanding task that is usually performed independently and undergoes several forms of revision, it represents a challenging area in relation to the theory of self-beliefs. The complex nature of writing has

motivated researchers to try to understand what influence writers' internal agency has on writing performance. Findings have highlighted the significance of self-efficacy in relation to writing performance. In particular, studies have speculated that learners' perceived beliefs about their capabilities to perform in writing could predict their overall writing achievement (Pajares 2003a; Klassen 2002b). Various researchers have conducted studies to prove this relationship empirically and define its structure. One of the earliest studies in the literature is that of Meier et al. (1984), who investigated whether self-efficacy would predict college students' performance in two phases; the start and the end of a writing course.<sup>31</sup> Participants responded to 19 items in a self-efficacy questionnaire drawn from the course objectives. The study found that self-efficacy predicted writing performance in the first phase only. Meier et al. (1984) supported the view expressed by Maddox et al. (1981) when they said that efficacy expectations are important in behavior only when individuals experience strong risks with aversive consequences (1984:118). Meier et al pointed out that the participants did not perceive the writing task in phase 2 of their study as aversive. These findings led McCarthy et al. (1985) to conduct a study of first-year college students, using the same methodology as in the Meier's et al. study. The findings confirmed that the students' writing self-efficacy correlated strongly with their writing performance in both phases. However, as the researchers based their conclusion on only one written text type (expository), it is not known whether other text types would be similarly correlated with self-efficacy.

Similarly, Shell et al. (1995, 1989) found that the beliefs that participants held about their writing capabilities were strongly related to their overall achievement.

---

<sup>31</sup> This American usage of the word 'college' to refer to students at undergraduate level is common in the literature.

Their research samples consisted of undergraduate students (1989) and schoolchildren (1995). In the school context, the findings demonstrated gender differences in self-efficacy beliefs regarding writing; however, these differences were underestimated because the correlation of gender with grades or achievement was not statistically significant (Shell et al. 1995).

Pajares and Johnson (1994) investigated the relationship between writing performance and writing self-efficacy, along with other components such as expected outcomes, writing apprehension and general self-confidence among undergraduate students at an American university, finding that self-efficacy was the most significant predictor of writing achievement. However, they acknowledged that their results were limited to the writing task that the students had completed and, as a consequence, they called for further studies. Subsequent studies by Pajares and Valiante (1999, 1997) with elementary and middle schools in the United States reported that self-efficacy was a significant predictor of writing performance.<sup>32</sup> In both their studies, Pajares and Valiante used only one text type – a descriptive essay (‘My Idea of a Perfect Day’) – and treated the outcomes as representative of the students’ overall writing skills.

Recent studies failed to obtain similar findings. Williams (2012) found that neither attitudes nor self-efficacy influenced the writing performance of third grade students, although the two constructs significantly correlated with each other. She acknowledged that this may have been the result of the research tools used: the instrument that assessed self-efficacy and the essay writing task and assessment

---

<sup>32</sup> Although it has been debated that performance is not always an indicator of competence, Pajares and Valiante used these terms interchangeably. They used the term writing performance in their 1997 study with elementary school students and the term writing competence with middle school students in 1999.



rubric. In addition, it is possible that the participants' young age led to inaccuracies in their judgements of self-efficacy.

Prat-Sala and Redford (2012) point out that problems associated with the correspondence between research instruments used, have characterised most of the self-efficacy research focused on writing. They argue that previous studies on self-efficacy focused on basic writing skills in the questionnaires and the writing tasks employed. Instead of using the same procedure, they researched self-efficacy in writing, in addition to reading, of undergraduate students, using a comprehensive writing self-efficacy questionnaire that was specifically tailored to participants in higher education. Writing performance in this study accounted for 25% of the participants' course credit, thus participants performed actual writing for course purposes. The researchers found that writing self-efficacy and reading self-efficacy contributed significantly to the writing performance of the participants. Their instrument for assessing writing self-efficacy and the writing test are very valuable, since they assessed writing that was not part of a test but part of the participants' learning and that mattered to their success on the course.

Reliance on one type of written text to assess participants' writing skill is a common feature of studies reported in the literature about writing self-efficacy. This method can only indicate performance for the given task, and not general writing ability, as 'a single task performed in the classroom under a 40-minute limit cannot tell much about a student's ability' (Lee 2002). Previous studies have therefore not shown whether self-efficacy had a similar influence on performance for different written text types.

In the context of learning foreign languages, the influence of self-efficacy on performance has now also been demonstrated. Studies that have examined self-efficacy in this context have generally focused on both general language achievement and specific language skills. Although most of these studies have reported a positive relationship between participants' self-efficacy and performance (e.g. Nasrollahi and Barjasteh 2013; Tilfarlioğlu and Ciftci 2011; Zare and Mobarakeh 2011; Rahimi and Abedini 2009; Hsieh and Schallert 2008; Mills, Pajares, and Herron 2007; Magogwe and Oliver 2007; Mahyuddin et al. 2006), the lack of such a relationship was also reported by some studies (e.g. Nwosu and Okoye 2014; Anyadubalu 2010). The inconsistency of these findings indicates that self-efficacy is context-specific. This has been demonstrated by some researchers who found that self-efficacy correlated with the achievement of some participants but not others. For example, Mills, Pajares and Herron (2007) found a significant relationship between listening self-efficacy and performance in learning French for female participants but not for males.

Many researchers (e.g. Tanyer 2015; Chea and Shumow 2014; Hetthong and Teo 2013; Fatemi and Vahidnia 2013; Shang 2013; Al-Mekhlafi 2011; Erkan and Sban 2011; Woodrow 2011; Rahimpour and Jahan 2010) have investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and writing in particular. These studies have yielded mixed results. For example, studies of Cambodian (Chea and Shumow 2014), Chinese (Shang 2013; Woodrow 2011), Turkish (Tanyer 2015; Erkan and Saban 2011), Iranian (Fatemi and Vahidnia 2013) and Thai (Hetthong and Teo 2013) subjects, have reported that self-efficacy is statistically significant in determining EFL writing performance. However, detailed analysis revealed that some of the results of these studies (e.g. Chea and Shumow 2014; Fatemi and Vahidnia 2013; Shang 2013) might be skewed by certain factors. For instance, in the Chea and Shumow study

(2014), the participants wrote on different topics and that different teachers rated their scores might affect the reliability of their results. The other two studies ignored the issue of correspondence between measure and task. For instance, Fatemi and Vahidnia (2013) employed two instruments, a general self-efficacy scale and a self-efficacy for English language scale. As neither of these scales measures writing self-efficacy, the finding should not be taken as relevant to writing performance. Similarly, Shang (2013) depended on only one general item, asking respondents to rate their writing level as a measure of self-efficacy, which is a very broad and generalised procedure for measuring self-efficacy and thus affects the validity of the findings.

Other studies failed to find any connection between self-efficacy and writing achievement. For instance, Al-Mekhlafi (2011) reported no correlation between self-efficacy and the writing performance of Omani female undergraduates of English. This study employed students' scores on a writing course, scores which did not depend solely on writing performance but also on other prerequisites of the course such as participation and portfolios. Additionally, the fact that this scale was first designed for schoolchildren suggests that it is inappropriate for assessing the professional writing tasks often practised at university level, and thus it may be inadequate to measure older participants' self-efficacy. More importantly, the self-efficacy scale used by the researcher, the Writer Self-Perception Scale designed by Bottomley et al. (1998), includes items such as, 'I like how writing makes me feel inside' and 'I write more often than other kids', which are more indicative of attitudes and habits than of self-efficacy. This blurring between attitudes and self-efficacy negatively impacted the reliability of the study. Indeed, Klassen (2002a) argues that conceptual blurring of self-beliefs 'results in unclear findings that do not further

understanding of the mechanism of efficacy beliefs in the context of social cognitive theory (99)'. As a consequence, the findings reported by Al-Mekhlafi cannot be seen as reliable and relevant to self-efficacy.

Rahimpour and Jahan (2010) researched the writing self-efficacy of Iranian learners of English in relation to three writing tasks: writing a narrative essay based on given pictures, writing a personal information exchange essay, and writing a decision-making essay. They found a statistically significant correlation between the self-efficacy and performance of proficient writers in both the narrative and personal essays; however, performance on the decision-making essay did not correlate with the participants' reported self-efficacy. As with Al-Mekhlafi's study, a major drawback of this study is its measuring instrument: a general self-efficacy scale was used to measure a specific kind of self-efficacy, i.e., writing self-efficacy.

In Saudi Arabia, only recently has any attention been paid to the influence of self-efficacy on students' attainments in general, and writing continues to be overlooked by most researchers, with only two studies investigating self-efficacy and academic performance. AlQudah et al. (2014) surveyed 195 Saudi college students, all male, in a Science and Arts department, investigating the relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination. They concluded that there was a significant inverse relationship between these two variables, such that students with higher self-efficacy had a lesser tendency to postpone academic tasks than those with lower self-efficacy. However, as the self-efficacy measurement developed by the researchers was also loaded on attitudes,<sup>33</sup> self-efficacy may not have been adequately investigated and the

---

<sup>33</sup> Twenty three items were not accurate measures of self-efficacy in this scale; these items are mainly measures of attitudes, e.g., 'I prefer external control on[sic] internal control', or self-reflection, e.g., 'I suffer from difficulty in concentrating in completing my homework'.

reported finding may not truly reflect a relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination.

A study by Koura and Al-Hebaishi (2014) researched the relationship between self-efficacy and the academic achievement in English of Saudi intermediate schoolgirls. No correlation was found between self-efficacy and performance. However, the researchers reported that regression analysis indicated that self-efficacy could predict students' success in English. The researchers designed their own self-efficacy scale but did not present it in their article.

These mixed results suggest that the relationship between self-efficacy and performance is more complex in an EFL context. Chen (2007) argues that differences in task design, instruments, ethnic background and the tested skill are significant contributors to the inconsistency of findings in EFL contexts. He also suggests that culture has some influence on the significance of self-efficacy,<sup>34</sup> thus findings in a Western context may be different from those in other contexts.

Anyadubalu (2010) believes that collective cultures do not approve of individuals making judgments about their own capability.<sup>35</sup> Students may regard their tutors as the best judges of their capabilities, as they are the ones with more experience, who conduct the assessments, and award the grades. This characteristic

---

<sup>34</sup> Culture is defined as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from those of another' (Hofstede 1984).

<sup>35</sup> Hofstede (1984) classified cultures according to four dimensions: power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. *Power distance* refers to inequality between individuals within a culture and the extent to which these individuals accept this inequality. *Individualism* refers to people deciding on their actions and behaviour based on self-interest; individualism is contrasted with collectivism, in which the interest of the group is valued over that of the individual. In a collectivist culture individuals cannot separate themselves from the larger group to which they belong. With regard to *Masculinity*, masculine cultures refer to cultures in which competition, achievement, and success are important values, while cooperation and modesty characterise feminine cultures. In masculine societies, people's gender define their roles in society, whereas feminine cultures men and women can have similar social roles. *Uncertainty avoidance* is the degree to which people feel threatened by unknown situations and thus avoid, or experience, these situations. In cultures with high levels of uncertainty behaviour people tend to avoid engaging in uncertain situations (Hofstede 1984: 390).

may influence individuals' judgement of their self-efficacy. Research into the self-efficacy of groups from collectivist cultures (e.g. China, Eastern Europe) (e.g. Klassen 2004a, 2004b; Otteningen 1995) has reported lower levels of self-efficacy compared with those that value individualism (e.g. the US, the UK, Canada, Australia). This difference in self-efficacy may be linked to differences in achievement attributions between participants from those cultures. Research in attribution theory (e.g. Yan and Gaier 1991) has found that learners from individualistic culture attribute achievement significantly more to ability than learners from collectivist cultures. Accordingly, it has been suggested that effort and work are valued more than ability by individuals from collectivist cultures (Scholz et al 2002). This difference could influence how individuals from both cultures respond to a self-efficacy questionnaire.

In brief, the fact that different contexts have produced different findings suggest the need to further investigate if self-efficacy is the most significant variable in influencing and predicting academic performance and writing achievement, specifically in EFL contexts. The studies reviewed so far used a variety of text types to test the relationship between self-efficacy and writing performance; none measured self-efficacy in relation to the specific text type elicited. Instead, they used writing self-efficacy and compared it with performance on a single text. More research in EFL contexts is needed to establish the significance of the impact of self-efficacy on writing. Measuring self-efficacy in relation to a specific text type and comparing it with performance on this text type would make a significant contribution to the literature on writing self-efficacy.

### *2.1.3.2 Self-efficacy and Gender*

The issue of gender has dominated various studies about self-efficacy; however, findings concerning the influence of gender on self-efficacy have been inconsistent. This has led researchers to conclude that this impact may be more apparent in specific contexts and in specific age groups. For example, male participants have reported high self-efficacy in scientific domains such as mathematics and physics (Meece et al. 2006; Pajares and Miller 1994), whereas females have reported high self-efficacy in the arts, languages and writing (Huang 2013; Mahyuddin et al. 2006; Meece et al. 2006), although females' levels of self-efficacy tend to diminish when they reach high school (Pajares et al. 2007; Bruning and Horn 2000; Philips and Zimmerman 1990). Some researchers (e.g. Wigfield et al. 1996) have argued that females generally rate themselves lower than males, and that this may be reflected in their assessment of self-efficacy, whereas males are inclined to be self-congratulatory.

Writing has been noted by some researchers (e.g. Schunk and Pajares 2001; Pajares and Valiante 2001) to be generally seen as a 'women's subject'. Because the arts and languages involve more writing than other disciplines, they are considered to be 'feminine' areas. Although plausible at specific school levels, this view has its shortcomings. For example, it does not hold true in settings where both men and women choose to study writing. Students who apply to study English at an undergraduate level realise that they will have to complete writing assignments, and therefore might not see writing as a female-related area.

Pajares and Johnson (1996) found that high school boys expressed a higher degree of self-efficacy than girls, although both genders were similar in their writing performance. However, studies on younger participants by Pajares and Valiante

(1997) yielded different results. Their study of elementary school students found that girls and boys did not differ in their writing performance but that girls showed a higher level of self-efficacy than boys. These results were not, however, confirmed in a study of middle school students by Pajares and Valiante (1999), which reported that while girls were better writers than their male classmates and perceived writing as useful, there were no gender differences in writing self-efficacy. These findings suggest that grade and age can mediate the influence of gender on self-efficacy. More specifically, female study participants appeared to be more modest in their self-appraisal of their writing ability as they grow older, which supports the argument of Wigfield et al. (1996), cited above.

Pajares et al. (2007) also studied the influence of the four sources of self-efficacy on writing in relation to gender and grade level. Girls, at all grade levels, appeared to be more influenced by mastery experience, vicarious experience and social persuasion. They experienced lower levels of writing apprehension and showed greater writing self-efficacy in general. The teachers who were interviewed in the study considered girls to be more competent writers than boys. The study also found that, in general, elementary school students appeared to be more influenced by mastery experience, vicarious experience and social persuasion, and had higher levels of writing self-efficacy in general than middle and high school students. Furthermore, even when no differences in writing performance were detected, the elementary and middle school girls demonstrated higher writing self-efficacy and more positive attitudes towards writing than the boys (Pajares and Valiante 2001, 1997). These findings have led researchers to conclude that gender differences in writing self-efficacy may be a result of previous success in writing (Pajares 2003a) or caused by gender stereotyping (Pajares and Valiante 2001).



As many of the studies were conducted with young learners, differences in self-efficacy between boys and girls might be attributed to the age and grade level of the participants, as stated above. Some researchers (e.g. Meece et al. 2006) have proposed that students in their early adolescence are sometimes inclined to demonstrate beliefs that are largely in line with common gender stereotypes, such as the belief that boys excel at science while girls excel at languages, to indicate affiliation with their gender group. Moreover, adolescence is a critical stage in individuals' lives. Adolescents' thoughts and emotions are sensitive to various influences and tend to be in a state of flux, thus beliefs reported at this stage might reflect temporary beliefs. In addition, Pajares and Miller (1997) speculate that differences in the assessment tools used might be responsible for the inconsistencies reported concerning self-efficacy and achievement by different genders. In particular, items designed to report self-efficacy might fail to attain their goal if they are not carefully designed.

Similarly, in accounting for the potential causes of gender differences, it has been suggested that culture plays a significant role in promoting gendered responses to self-efficacy. An inspiring study by Klassen and Georgiou (2008) investigated writing self-efficacy of two groups with different ethnic origins. They found that Anglo-Canadian males overestimated their writing self-efficacy in contrast to their female counterparts, who underestimated their self-efficacy. By contrast, Klassen and Georgian also found that Indo-Canadian – Canadians of Indian origin – male participants showed low self-efficacy and low writing performance compared to Indo-Canadian females who reported their self-efficacy accurately and scored higher in writing. The findings of the above study suggest that gender groups from different cultural backgrounds may demonstrate incongruent patterns of self-efficacy. Oettingen (1995) suggests that in gender-segregated societies, females and males may

not have access to the same sources of self-efficacy. However, her argument was not based on empirical research, which demonstrates the need for an investigation of the influence of gender on self-efficacy from a cross-cultural perspective.

## **2.2 Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy: Methodological Framework**

The view that attitudes and self-efficacy are hypothetical constructs that cannot be observed directly has justified the extensive employment of self-report questionnaires in previous investigations into the influence of these constructs on writing.

On the attitudes front, various questionnaires have been developed to measure writing attitudes. Rose's (1984) Writer's Block Questionnaire, sometimes referred to as Writing Attitudes, was one of the first. This questionnaire contains 24 statements to be rated on a five-point Likert scale. The statements are distributed along five subscales: blocking, lateness, premature editing, strategies for complexity and attitudes. The attitudinal statements express feelings, beliefs and evaluation with regard to writing.

Similarly, Knudson (1992) developed the Writing Attitude Questionnaire to measure the attitudes of schoolchildren towards writing. It includes 19 items on a five-point Likert scale, expressing feelings, beliefs and behavioural tendencies in relation to writing. Some of the items measure self-perception as a writer; however, this questionnaire has been criticised for lacking norms that would enable a broader comparison of the results and for not being in a format that attracts participants' attention and interest in completing the survey (Kear et al. 2000).

Kear et al. (2000), not entirely satisfied with Knudson's instrument, propose that, to measure schoolchildren's attitudes, the instrument should be based on norms, on psychometric properties, should have adequate reliability and validity, be suitable

for the target population, suitable for group administration, and attractive. They designed the Writing Attitude Survey (WAS), which comprises 28 items in a four-response format, using the popular cartoon character Garfield to demonstrate each of the four responses. Despite these features, the survey measured affect as being representative of attitudes, although affect is just one of the attitudinal components. A comprehensive attitude survey needs to take into account the multidimensionality of attitudes and consider most of the attitude components. One possible reason for limiting this survey to affect is that, since it was concerned with schoolchildren, the researchers may have thought that affect was sufficient to elicit information on the attitudes of this age group. This tendency to focus on affect when investigating attitudes is also evident in instruments developed by later researchers (e.g. Zumbrunn 2010; Graham et al. 2012, 2007), a reflection of the fact that these investigations viewed attitudes towards writing exclusively through the perspective of affect, which may not succeed in representing writers' attitudes effectively.

Other questionnaires that have been used in studies about attitudes were mainly a combination of items adapted from different scales (e.g. Hansen 2009, 2001). Some researchers mixed attitudes with other constructs, for instance, a description of participants' opinions of the instrumental benefit of writing as part of language learning, and participants' beliefs about the role that writing plays in their after-college life (perceived usefulness of writing); the latter were used as measures of attitudes towards writing by Hubert (2012). The value of writing, writing behaviour and self-efficacy were used in the study by Kotula et al. (2014) as components of attitudes towards writing. This conceptual blurring, as reported earlier, can influence the validity of the instrument. The diversity of the components employed to measure

attitudes in past investigations is evidence of the lack of a firm consensus about what constitutes attitude and about its multidimensionality.

In addition to questionnaires, research into attitudes has also employed interviews and focus groups (e.g. Edwards 2015; Hall and Grisham-Brown 2014) as a main instrument. This may be justified by the characteristics of the participants, i.e., young children. The variety of procedures used to elicit information about attitudes could also be owing to the different views of attitudes held by researchers and to the utility of the chosen instrument and procedure to the research objectives.

It is remarkable that all these instruments, except for Rose's questionnaire, were designed to be applied with schoolchildren. The instruments might therefore not be appropriate for the elicitation of the attitudes of older participants. As researchers in L1 contexts seemed to lack interest in investigating the attitudes of older students, no more questionnaires were developed. This could explain some of the methodological deficiencies of the studies about writing attitudes in EFL contexts. In the L1 context the focus seems to have shifted from testing general attitudes towards writing to exclusively investigating writing apprehension. For this purpose, Daly and Miller (1975) introduced their Writing Apprehension Test (WAT). Using a five-response Likert scale format, items included in the test are negative feelings about writing in general, teacher evaluation, peer evaluation and writing environment. Although this test was originally developed to investigate apprehension in the L1 context, Gungle and Tylor (1989) adapted the instrument to measure the apprehension of EFL writers. Similarly, many EFL researchers have employed this version of WAT in their research (e.g. Asawalha and Chow 2012; Abu Shawish and Atea 2010; Daud and Abu Kassim 2005). Other researchers have viewed the WAT as limited and inappropriate

for measuring apprehension and rather as an instrument for measuring attitudes (e.g., Shaver 1990). This view led Cheng (2004) to develop the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), containing 22 items in a five-response Likert scale format to measure somatic, cognitive and behavioural anxiety. Since it is an outcome of research into EFL writing, subsequent researchers interested in the types of apprehension have chosen to use this inventory (e.g. Min and Rahmat 2014; Hussein 2013). Other researchers have adapted items from the existing apprehension scales and employed them in their research (e.g. Abdel Latif 2007).

In a similar way to attitudes and apprehension, self-efficacy has also been investigated through questionnaires. Shell et al. (1989) were among the first to develop a writing self-efficacy questionnaire. Two subscales are included in this questionnaire: one subscale measures participants' perceptions of their ability to demonstrate certain writing skills, e.g., accurate grammar and punctuation; the other tests participants' self-efficacy in performing specific writing tasks, such as writing a letter or filling in an application form. This questionnaire has been adopted frequently by researchers studying writing self-efficacy in L1 settings (e.g. Hansen 2009; Pajares and Johnson 1994). Since instruments sometimes do not reflect the skills appropriate to the writing curriculum taught to the target population, Pajares and Valiante (2001, 1999, 1997,) designed simpler writing self-efficacy questionnaires to investigate the writing self-efficacy of participants at elementary and middle schools. The elementary school questionnaire contains 9 items and the middle school questionnaire contains 10 items. These items ask the students to rate their ability in performing specific writing skills. The inclination to depend on the objectives of the writing course being undertaken by the target population for the development of a self-efficacy instrument was also evident in earlier studies of self-efficacy (e.g. Meier et al. 1984). This was

meant to create a correspondence between what the participants were learning on their writing course, what they believed they were capable of when writing, and what they actually achieved when they wrote. This tendency to maintain correspondence between self-efficacy and writing measures has also been apparent in later research (e.g. Klassen and Georgiou 2008).

The increased interest in researching self-efficacy, and investigations that have challenged the positive effect of self-efficacy on subsequent performance (e.g. Vancouver et al. 2001), led Bandura (2006) to publish guidelines for constructing self-efficacy scales. Four characteristics were identified in these guidelines: content validity, correspondence with activity domain, gradation of challenge, and response scales. In relation to content validity, Bandura emphasises the fact that self-efficacy reflects capability, therefore items used in a self-efficacy questionnaire should start with the phrase 'I can'. With regard to the activity domain, Bandura argues that a self-efficacy instrument should measure the different aspects involved in performing the activity. In addition, the items in the self-efficacy scale should be graded according to difficulty. Bandura advises that the strength of self-efficacy is better measured along a 100-point scale. Variations in the scoring format can be made taking into consideration the participants' age and the field in which self-efficacy is being investigated. However, in relation to this characteristic in particular, several studies (e.g. Sarkhoush 2013; Webb-Williams 2006; Yavuz-Erkan 2004; Maurer and Andrews 2000; Maurer and Pierce 1998) have employed five or seven-point Likert scales to measure self-efficacy and reported valid results. It seems that the population sample can determine the instrument format. It is true that respondents in an older age group, e.g., university students, can comprehend and respond to a 100-point scale; however, in some settings, participants are more familiar with a simpler

and smaller-point scale. Adding to this, limited-point Likert scales makes the process of data analysis much easier.

Prat-Sala and Redford (2010) argue that previous studies about writing self-efficacy seemed to focus on basic writing skills that may not be relevant to all participants (i.e., undergraduate students). As a consequence, they developed the Self-efficacy in Writing scale (SEW) to investigate the self-efficacy of participants in higher education. This scale contains 12 items on a seven-point Likert scale. These items measure participants' beliefs about their ability to demonstrate knowledge or to support an argument; for example, in relation to essay writing. Although this scale was developed for university-level respondents, the items included in this scale might be too sophisticated for some EFL learners who might not have studied writing courses similar to those of native speakers, and therefore the scale may be limited to measuring the writing self-efficacy of native speakers or it may need to be adapted to suit EFL undergraduate students.

For an EFL context, Yavuz-Erkan (2004) presented the Writing Efficacy Scale (WES) to measure students' confidence in their writing ability in relation to five criteria: content, design, unity, accuracy and punctuation. The Writing Efficacy Scale has 21 items on four-point Likert scale to grade the degree of the participants' writing self-efficacy, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This format focuses on the absolute dimensions and lacks a mid-point option, whereas in research, there are many occasions when a genuine response may be the mid-point. Thus, Yavuz-Erkan's questionnaire offers no scope for recording an "indifference" score – neither agree nor disagree, which is a well-known limitation of the even-scored scale. Yavuz-Erkan developed this scale for use with university students; therefore, since this scale was

the first to consider writing self-efficacy from an EFL perspective, it has been widely adopted in studies in EFL contexts (Kirmizi and Kirmizi 2015; Sarkhoush 2013; Erkan and Saban 2011). The popularity of the scale seems to be owing to its consideration of the variety of writing skills that EFL learners usually experience during their writing courses. Thus, it seems appropriate for different population samples as long as the scale closely corresponds with the writing evaluation rubric used in the research. Despite these efforts to develop a reliable writing self-efficacy scale, Pajares (1996a, 1996b) noted that self-efficacy with regard to general writing skill has often been confused with self-efficacy related to specific writing tasks. As a consequence, the results of these studies may not be valid or reliable. This often problematic issue points to the necessity of employing a valid measuring tool that offers accuracy and practicality when investigating writing in both senses: general (writing skill) and specific (writing tasks) (Troia et al. 2012) and which is in correspondence with the assessment tool.

In summary, the above discussion has revealed that questionnaires are extensively used in research into attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy. In addition to using published scales, researchers can adapt items from different instruments and develop a scale that is more relevant to their own particular research needs and to their subjects, a feature that highlights the flexibility of questionnaires. Similarly, researchers can compensate for any lack of reference to attitude or belief in the closed-ended items by including open-ended questions.

### **2.3 Chapter Overview**

This chapter has presented a detailed review of the literature on attitudes, including apprehension, and self-efficacy in relation to writing. The review of the literature



about writing attitudes and achievement suggests that researchers share a common belief that there is a relationship between the two. It is expected that positive attitudes towards writing will lead to high achievements. The literature has acknowledged this correlation, emphasising the fact that females, in most cases, reported positive attitudes and, as a consequence, achieved higher scores than males in writing on some occasions. However, there is still a gap in our knowledge concerning the influence of gender on attitudes towards specific text types and performance. Added to this is the lack of research about Saudi subjects in particular.

Apprehension has been surveyed extensively; leading researchers to conclude that there is a degree of correlation between writing apprehension and achievement in writing. This relationship has been thought to be more significant in the production of written text types that require more personal involvement than in others. However, owing to the limitations of the research methodology adopted in many of these studies, this hypothesis has not yet been tested adequately. There is still a shortage of research into the influence of gender in the EFL context in general and the relationship between apprehension and writing performance in the Saudi context in particular. More studies are therefore needed to investigate the general level of writing apprehension and writing performance of Saudi male and female learners of English, and the relationship between writing apprehension and performance.

The relationship between self-efficacy and writing performance in English has been confirmed by many studies, although most of the studies that have been carried out have been limited to a Western context. Research suggests that belief constructs may operate differently in different cultural settings (Klassen and Georgiou 2008; Klassen 2004a, 2004b). Gender has emerged as a significant variable in the

relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and writing, at least in an L1 context. However, the review of gender influence on self-efficacy and writing clearly shows that investigations about writing self-efficacy in EFL/ESL contexts have not considered gender as a possible variable. Indeed, Meece et al. (2006) noted that the significance of gender for self-efficacy, as well as for other motivational constructs, has not received a great deal of attention in cultural contexts other than Western contexts. Studies needed to be replicated to see whether results will be confirmed in different contexts. In particular, as the theory of self-efficacy has been examined and interpreted in native English-speaking contexts, the generalisability of the theory needs to be tested by examining it in contexts where English, although not the only or primary means of communication, still constitutes a significant part of people's lives. The current study is intended to represent a continuation of these efforts in the under-researched context of EFL learning in Saudi Arabia.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter starts by describing the data source, the study design, and the data collection instruments used for the present research. A questionnaire was developed to elicit information about attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy, and the holistic assessment of given writing tasks was employed to obtain analytical data that would enable the researcher to examine the writing performance of the participants. The chapter also reports on certain methodological concerns, such as instrument validity and reliability and the results of piloting the initial version of the instruments.

### 3.1 Data Source

The study was conducted in the Departments of English Language at five universities in Saudi Arabia (Umm Al-Qura University,<sup>36</sup> Taif University,<sup>37</sup> King Abdul Aziz University,<sup>38</sup> King Faisal University<sup>39</sup> and Taibah University (Yanbu branch))<sup>40</sup> (See Figure 3.1). Final-year students were intentionally targeted because it was believed that learners at this stage of their studies would have reached an adequate level of linguistic competence and would have covered different types of written text and engaged in professional writing activities; therefore, they would be better able to compose and meet the task requirements than students in previous stages. Having gone through frequent writing practices, students at this stage are likely to have formed attitudes toward writing and be able to recognise their strengths and weaknesses and, as a consequence, be able to give an estimation of their writing capabilities.

---

<sup>36</sup> Located in the city of Makkah in the west of the country.

<sup>37</sup> Established in 2004 in the city of Taif, 103 km from Makkah, in the west of the country.

<sup>38</sup> Founded in 1967 in the city of Jeddah, an important port on the Red Sea in the west of Saudi Arabia. It is 67 km away from Makkah.

<sup>39</sup> Founded in 1975 in the city of Al-Ahsa in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. It is 1365 km away from Makkah.

<sup>40</sup> Founded in 2005 in the city of Yanbu. It is a university college under the administration of Taibah University, which is located in the city of Al-Madenah. Yanbu is 374 km away from Makkah.



**Figure 3.1: Map of the Locations of the Universities from which the Data was Collected<sup>41</sup>**

### 3.2 Ethical Approval

This study met the ethical standards required and, thus, was granted ethical approval by the University of St. Andrews at both stages: the pilot and main studies (Appendix E). This approval facilitated the process of gaining access to the research sites. On this basis, the Saudi Cultural Bureau, which provided funding for the present research, and Umm Al-Qura, King Abdul Aziz and King Faisal universities provided a letter of

<sup>41</sup> The map was taken from [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk). It was then adapted by the researcher to show the location of the target universities.

permission that enabled the researcher to collect data. The other universities, Taif University and Taibah University, agreed orally to be involved in the study.

### **3.3 Data Confidentiality**

Participants were informed in both oral and written forms that taking part in this research did not pose any potential risk and their identities would be kept anonymous. Data gathered from the participants was kept confidential and stored only for research purposes. Access to the data was available only to the researcher and her supervisor. To avoid any ambiguity, the researcher explained the research purpose and stated the rights of participants in their native language, Arabic. Students were assured that participation in the study was completely voluntary. The participation of student respondents was acknowledged by the award of a compensatory course bonus. Care was taken to ensure that where the bonus was known beforehand, it was of a magnitude considered unlikely to influence anticipatory responses.

### **3.4 Research Design**

The study used a mixed-methods approach to collect data. It was essential that more than one method be employed in order to answer both sections of the research question. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods.<sup>42</sup> The first stage of the study required the collection of information about the students' attitudes, apprehension and beliefs through a questionnaire. A questionnaire was developed for this task. The second stage comprised the collection of samples of the students' writing and a holistic assessment of those samples to obtain analytical data that would enable the researcher to examine the writing performance of the participants.

---

<sup>42</sup> Questionnaires are examples of a quantitative method since they often deal with numeric data and are statistically analysed. Qualitative methods include interviews, written data, normally in open-ended questions in questionnaires, and observations.

### **3.5 Questionnaire**

In the early stages of the research, a large-scale online questionnaire was initially designed as an instrument to elicit information on attitudes, apprehension and beliefs about essay writing in English from Saudi students. The items about attitudes also asked about attitudes in relation to a variety of text types: i.e., narrative, descriptive and argumentative essays. The questionnaire contained items from published scales, and items designed by the researcher. However, after the pilot study, one group of items was dropped and another group was added to improve the scale (see Section 3.7).

Online instruments, unlike traditional data collection tools, contain certain features that can reduce the number of skipped items. By applying these features, participants can move to the next page only after they have responded to all the items on the current page. For this study, this method provides access to data from the opposite sex in the conservative Saudi culture where the physical presence of a person of the other sex group is impossible. Despite the perceived benefits of online questionnaires, in the main study the questionnaire was administered in traditional paper-based form, as discussed in Section 3.7 below.

### **3.6 Procedure**

The pilot study was conducted in December 2013. The researcher contacted teaching assistants at the English Language Department at Taif University and explained the objectives of the research. Two assistants (one male and one female) volunteered to help in the process of data collection. They were provided with the online links and administered the survey on behalf of the researcher, encouraging students to participate. In total, 96 EFL students logged onto the questionnaire page on Survey

Monkey. However, 41 of the total number of students provided incomplete responses in the first sections; as a result, they were discarded, leaving 55 usable responses that were processed for analysis. All the students voluntarily agreed to participate in the study by ticking the agreement box on the first page of the questionnaire.

A few days later, the tutors provided the researcher with samples of the participants' writing. The samples were 16 essays (8 by males and 8 by females) written as part of the participants' course work. All the essays were descriptive in response to a prompt about food recipes. Although the researcher had hoped to obtain a wider variety of text types, the type provided was accepted because it was the only text the teachers had available at that time. Thus, the essays were used as an indicator of students' writing at the pilot stage. The essays provided were extremely short – most of them were just one or two paragraphs. Brief essays often fail to represent the writer's overall competence, especially if they are mainly lists and procedures, as in the case of the essays obtained, in which no sense of the writer's identity was evident. Additionally, not all of the essays were the students' original work; some were simply copied from the Internet, especially those written by male students. It can be assumed that the male students were at a disadvantage with this topic because cookery is generally stereotyped as being a female responsibility in the society they inhabit. Therefore, it would be more reliable to design a gender-neutral topic that motivates participants from both gender categories to engage actively in the writing task.

### **3.7 Refinement of the Study Instruments**

Based on the outcomes of the pilot study, the researcher decided to amend both data collection tools.

When the survey was first designed, it was expected that participants would find an online survey more convenient since they could access it any time through their computers or smartphones. However, it became clear that the majority of the students were not interested in participating electronically. This lack of interest may have been because students usually go online to do homework or during their break time; by filling in the survey during that time, they might have felt they were giving up their time to complete more work. Tutors were informed about this disadvantage, as a result, the tutors agreed to allow the researcher to conduct the survey during class time in the traditional paper form.

With respect to the questionnaire structure, in the design stage an attempt was made to include many questions about attitudes, apprehension and beliefs. However, one group of items reduced the reliability of the instrument; so, those items were discarded. Since some of the attitude items contained questions about beliefs, it appeared that focusing on self-efficacy instead of general beliefs about writing would produce more valuable data; the research focus, as well as the questionnaire, was therefore amended to investigate self-efficacy rather than beliefs in general.

It was also clear that the questionnaire was too long for the participants to complete, an issue that was also reported by the participants themselves in the final section of the questionnaire where they were invited to submit feedback on the instrument. Moreover, the initial version of the questionnaire contained too many variables, which would prolong the time the participants took to respond and would also cause confusion at the analysis stage. As a result, the questionnaire was modified to a manageable length and to ensure reliability. Those items that were adopted from



past research, that had a close correspondence with the assessment rubric and that were adequate to answer the research question of the present study, were retained.

With regard to text types, after the pilot study, the focus in the writing tasks was limited to only two written text types – narrative and persuasive (see Section 3.9) – in order to reduce the envisaged completion time. Overall, the refined questionnaire contained 39 closed-ended items (see Appendix A).

### **3.8 The Final Questionnaire**

The first page of the questionnaire was designed to provide information to the participants. It described the purpose of the study and listed the rights of the participants. Instructions on the page assured participants that there were no right or wrong answers to the statements and that they should choose the response that most closely described their circumstances. The page also included the consent form, and participants were asked to tick the consent box to indicate their willingness to participate in the two phases of the study: questionnaire and essay writing. It also provided the correspondence address in case any participant wished to contact the researcher with regard to the study or its results.

The writing questionnaire started by eliciting demographic data; specifically, since gender is a prominent variable in the study, it asked about the participant's gender and general evaluation of his or her writing in English. The second section contained items about attitudes and apprehension, while the third section contained items about self-efficacy beliefs. Within these sections, some statements tested issues related to written text types. In order to minimise response bias to either positivity or negativity, some statements were worded positively and some negatively, and these were randomly ordered in the questionnaire. The statements were closed-ended, and

the scoring was done on a three-point Likert scale. The participants had to state whether they agreed, disagreed, or were unsure about each questionnaire item. The rationale for opting for only three responses, rather than the standard five, was that responses in general are along these three stances. Adding two other positions would only emphasise the strength and intensity of the response (e.g. strongly agree), which was not necessary in the context of the current study and would not add any useful information. Besides, on a practical level, it is well known that respondents usually prefer short questionnaires. Dolnicar et al. (2011) point out that five-point format questionnaires take participants longer to complete and can cause confusion in the scoring stage. They suggest reducing questionnaire formats to simpler formats that contain the core answers for ease and speed of administration and scoring.

The next questionnaire pages included two open-ended questions that offered spaces for the participants openly to state their responses. The questions on the first of these pages asked about which type of text (narrative or persuasive) they preferred to write and why, while the questions on the second page elicited responses about their attitudes and beliefs about writing in general. These spaces allowed the researcher to explore more themes about attitudes from the participants' perspectives by encouraging them freely to express their attitudes and beliefs or add any information that the items on the previous pages might have failed to elicit. More spaces were provided to invite the participants to comment on the survey in general. A debriefing page came last, which reminded the participants of the purpose of the study and their rights, in addition to providing the researcher's contact address.

### 3.8.1 Writing Attitudes

This section contained fourteen items on the participants' attitudes toward writing in general and attitudes toward writing specific types of text. According to the tripartite theory, these items can be categorised as verbal expressions of the affect, cognition and behaviour components. Feeling about writing, evaluation of writing, beliefs about writing and writing practices were all categorised as attitudes towards writing in the questionnaire. Four items were adapted from the Writing Attitudes Questionnaire developed by Rose (1984). Ten items were developed to elicit additional responses on certain attitudinal attributes. Four of those items, three positively and one negatively worded, measured attitudes towards learning to write in English at university (2, 4, 5 and 10). One item measured views on previous writing behaviour (3). One measured attitudes towards current writing behaviour (9). Scales used by previous researchers to measure writing attitudes and apprehension have not included items about specific text types and have instead measured writing in general, therefore, four items were added to test attitudes towards narrative and persuasive written text types. The aim of these items was to determine students' feelings about writing narrative and persuasive essays and their preferences in relation to these two types of written text.

All the attitude items were carefully chosen in order to elicit verbal information about the main forms of attitude: affect, cognition and behaviour. Affect was measured by items 1, 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14; items 2, 6 and 7 tested the cognitive aspect of attitude; the behavioural aspect was tested by items 4, 5 and 10. Since this is the first study to explore Saudis' attitudes towards writing, the main focus was on attitudes towards writing in general; thus, all the affective, cognitive and behavioural items were grouped in order to represent the overall essence of the participants'

attitudes, with no specific focus on any of the three components (affect, cognition or behaviour).

### **3.8.2 Writing Apprehension**

Apprehension about writing was included in the attitudes sub-scale because of the close relationship between them. The fact that apprehension describes how writers feel when they write (Daly and Miller, 1975a; Faigely et al., 1981) means apprehension is an attitudinal variable. In this case, writing apprehension reflects a negative attitude towards writing. Measuring apprehension allows us to focus on the negative feelings that the participants experience when they write and sheds light on the factors that produce such feelings. Identifying these factors will assist in designing a less apprehensive writing classroom (Qashoa 2014).

Writing apprehension was measured through twelve items, five of which were adapted from the ESL Writing Anxiety Questionnaire (Cheng, 2004), four from the Gungle and Tylor (1989) ESL version of the Daly and Miller WAT (Writing Apprehension Test), and three about writer's block were taken from Rose's (1984) Writing Attitudes Questionnaire. In order to explore whether the participants agreed that they experienced difficulty and writing block when they wrote in English, two of these items tested writing block in relation to writing in general, while one investigated this behaviour in relation to narrative writing. In addition to these three items, one item about writers' block from the ESL Apprehension Inventory was adapted to measure writing block in persuasive writing. Finding out whether the participants experienced difficulty and writing block when they performed these two written text types would generate interesting information relevant to their overall performance and to their attitudes and self-efficacy regarding these types. Of the

twelve items used to gauge apprehension, two were designed to investigate the level of the participants' writing apprehension about writing narrative and persuasive essays.

### **3.8.3 Writing Self-efficacy Beliefs**

This section was composed of thirteen items all devoted to testing writing self-efficacy. Klassen (2002b) encourages researchers to avoid adopting self-efficacy measures from previous studies and to construct their own items on the basis of the topic of their studies. This is because these self-efficacy measures were designed to meet certain objectives and criteria that might not be relevant to other studies. It is believed that the predictive feature of self-efficacy increases when the self-efficacy scale corresponds with the set tasks. Indeed, it is impossible to determine students' competence in writing through examining their competence in English language in general. Pajares (2003b, 1996a, 1996b) also points out that specificity can increase the prediction level of the self-efficacy measure. Bearing these views in mind and because of the lack of self-efficacy items related to text types, the researcher developed four statements to meet the research requirements. One (29) was intended to measure self-efficacy in meeting the task requirement. Another item (27) was developed to compare writing self-efficacy to speaking self-efficacy, since the belief that speaking is easier than writing is common among Saudi students. The remaining two items (38 and 39) were about self-efficacy in producing narrative and persuasive written text types.

Of the nine adapted items, three (32, 33 and 34) were taken from the Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) Perceived Self-Regulatory Efficacy for Writing Scale, two (35 and 36) were from the Writing Skills Self-Efficacy Scale developed by

Shell, Murphy and Bruning (1989), while four (28, 30, 31 and 37) items were taken from the Self-Efficacy in Writing Scale produced by Yvuz-Erkan (2004).

In general, the items in this section tested the participants' self-efficacy in specific writing skills. In response to the theoretical emphasis that items that measure self-efficacy should be compatible with the scoring scheme (Bandura 1997), the items in the self-efficacy sub-scale reflected the areas evaluated through the ESL Composition Profile. In spite of the growing body of literature on the relationship between self-efficacy and writing, Jones (2008) observed that no study to date has considered designing a self-efficacy measure that is closely aligned with writing assessment criteria. Thus, in an attempt to adopt the advice proffered by Jones, the self-efficacy items were used in the present study with the intention of developing a writing self-efficacy scale compatible with the ESL Composition Profile.

#### **3.8.4 Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire contained items adapted from scales that have been well tried and tested by previous researchers (Attitudes Questionnaire (AQ), Writing Apprehension Test (WAT), ESL Writing Anxiety Questionnaire (ESLWAQ), Perceived Self-efficacy for Writing (PSE), and Writing Skills Self-efficacy (WSSE)).<sup>43</sup> The repeated testing of these scales and the accuracy of the data obtained by using them implied their reliability and validity when measuring attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy.

All the statements in the questionnaire were translated into Arabic to forestall any possibility of misunderstanding, and the instrument was verified by three native speakers of Arabic studying linguistics at postgraduate level in the UK, providing

---

<sup>43</sup> Hansen (2009) found that 'the inclusion of selected items from existing scales provided the foundation for a credible writing questionnaire' (p. 51).

valuable feedback. All three students had undertaken their undergraduate studies in Saudi Arabia and had written various text types in English.

In addition to those checks, when the questionnaires were received from the main study, reliability tests were run in the process of preparing the questionnaire for analysis.<sup>44</sup> For the two sub-scales, attitudes and apprehension, and writing self-efficacy the reliability level ranged from 0.77 to 0.82. This shows that the questionnaire items constituted relevant and consistent measures of the students' attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy, and were thus acceptable in general.

In the open question that invited general comments on the questionnaire, many respondents left this question blank. The majority of those who responded to this question evaluated the questionnaire as 'very good', 'interesting' and 'useful' since 'it discusses an important issue, which is essay writing' (my translation). Some students wrote about their attitudes towards the questionnaire: e.g., 'I loved that', 'I like the questions', whereas others indicated their awareness of its utility: e.g., 'good and useful questionnaire that informs teachers about students' difficulties and urges them to find solutions'. These comments were considered as an indication that the questionnaire items were clear enough for the participants to understand.

---

<sup>44</sup> Cronbach's alpha indicated that three items reduced the reliability of the questionnaire. These items were related specifically to cognitive attitudes: 'I believe that men are better than women at persuasive writing', 'I think women write better narrative essays than men', and 'Students who are good at writing in Arabic are good at writing in English'. The first two items were thought to be beneficial in eliciting data about gender association with certain written text types in order to understand if the participant linked narrative and persuasive written text types with a specific gender group. The third item was intended to demonstrate if participants would link writing competence in English to competence in their mother tongue, Arabic. However, to maintain the internal consistency of the questionnaire, these items were excluded. In total, the questionnaire included 39 items ready to be processed for the analysis stage.

### 3.9 Written Text Type

With respect to the writing samples, the researcher found it more useful to design the tasks herself and to ask the students to write during class time, since the essays obtained during the pilot study did not provide valuable data, and since the main focus of the study was on the participants' authentic production of writing. Compositionists (e.g. Hudelson 1986; Jacobs et al. 1981) have explained that a single text does not completely reflect an ESL student's writing ability. They suggested that researchers should aim to obtain at least two writing samples from each participant in order for the writing to be representative of these participants' writing competence. This tendency is clear in international exams of English such as the IELTS, where candidates have to perform two writing tasks in different genres. Bearing this in mind, in this study two text types were the focus of the writing practice: narrative and persuasive. The fact that these two types represent opposite extremes was the rationale behind choosing them. Narrative writing is writer-oriented, with the focus on the writer's attitudes, experience and emotions. In contrast, persuasive writing is audience-oriented because the aim is to persuade the reader to accept the writer's point of view (Prater and Padia 1983).

Studies of these two types of writing in a foreign language context in particular are scarce (Kormos 2011; Ferris 1994; Conner 1990). It would therefore be interesting to measure students' performance in these types of writing. Moreover, students at university level have already been introduced to the structure of these text types and have engaged in writing essays in these formats; therefore, they are aware of the rhetorical style and requirements of each type.



### 3.9.1 Writing Prompts

Taking into account that writing is a means of communication; the aim of choosing the topics for the narrative and persuasive essays in this research was to encourage genuine engagement in writing practice by placing the writers in authentic social situations. By providing participants with authentic challenges and engaging them personally in the writing, the participants are placed in an ‘effective learning context’ (Adas and Bakir 2013). The study then uses the output to compare the performance of both genders.

Researchers have asserted that the choice of writing topics can decide the level of the students’ involvement in the endeavour. Hayward (1990) emphasises that interest and relevance to the real world are important characteristics for designing writing topics for ESL learners. In the light of this emphasis, the following writing tasks were adopted as prompts for writing; the first task was designed to replicate the writing tasks in past studies about narrative writing, while the other task was inspired by the TOEFL writing prompts.<sup>45</sup>

#### Essay 1 –Narrative Task

‘Life provides us with priceless lessons. Write about a situation that has left you with a valuable lesson. You should describe the situation and your reaction then. You should also state the lesson you have learnt and how it might influence your views about the future.’

---

<sup>45</sup> The studies by Flynn (1988) and Meinhof (1997). In Flynn’s study, the participants wrote narrative descriptions of a learning experience, whereas the participants in Meinhof’s study were given ‘The most important event of my life’ as a prompt for their narrative essays. These two studies focused on gender and writing style. This implies that these two topics are appropriate for participants from both gender groups.

## **Essay 2 –Persuasive Task**

‘If you could change a custom or a tradition in your society, what would you change? You should describe the custom or the tradition and state your reasons for changing it to persuade your reader.’

Since these two topics centred on the participants’ lives and society, the researcher believed that they would stimulate the participants to write purposefully. In one respect, Hidi et al. (2002) point out that including topics related to the participants’ lives and social practices achieved a dual aim; first, it develops a positive environment by involving the writer’s experiences in the endeavour; second, it suggests that writing is not limited to tutors’ evaluation but can be useful and fun, which, as a result, will lead to the nourishing of functional beliefs.

It should be recalled that one of the rationales for incorporating these tasks in this research was the need for a non-gender biased topic. Designing a semi-structured topic, or a topic that is open to a certain extent and does not require special knowledge, is believed to be more engaging for both gender groups and will give students the freedom to decide what to write about and argue, i.e., for or against. Four writing tutors, who were consulted about the suitability of the writing tasks for the level of the target students, agreed that the students would understand the tasks with no ambiguity.

### **3.10 Writing Assessment**

A comparative approach was adopted for analysing the essays of the two genders. The analysis was qualitative in nature. An experienced teacher of English to speakers of other languages agreed to assess the students’ essays. The ESL Composition Profile (Appendix D) by Jacobs et al. (1981) was used as a rubric for assessing the students’

compositions. This rubric is a popular reference for essay marking (Haswell, 2007) because it evaluates writing analytically and holistically.

The rubric assesses five aspects of writing (content, organisation, vocabulary, language use and mechanics), each according to five criteria of skill mastery (excellent to very good, good to average, fair, poor, and very poor writing ability). The total score of the profile is 100. The highest score (30) is awarded for the content section. Proficiency in language use is tested out of 25, while both organisation and vocabulary sections are each tested out of 20. The lowest number of marks (5) is given for mechanical skill. Overall writing competence is thus the sum of the scores given for each section of the ESL Composition Profile, ranging from 0 to 100. In order to interpret the test scoring as accurately as possible, Jacobs et al. (1981) offer the following interpretation guide: a score between 34 and 48 indicates very poor writing ability, between 49 and 63 indicates poor writing, between 64 and 74 indicates fair writing ability, between 75 and 87 indicates good to average writing, and a score between 88 and 100 indicates very good to excellent writing ability. In a simpler sense, Alhaisoni (2012) has suggested considering the score of 63 as the dividing line between good and poor when assessing the EFL writing of Saudi learners. This indicates that this rubric has been applied in studies in a similar context to the present study (Saudi context). This further supports the current study's adoption of the ESL Composition Profile as the main evaluation rubric for assessing the writing of the Saudi participants.

### **3.10.1 Reliability and Validity of the ESL Composition Profile**

In holistic assessment, since evaluation is ultimately subjective, the reliability of the score obtained depends on the marker of the paper. Jacobs et al. (1981) explain that

reliability increases as the number of assessors of an essay increases; in other words, the more markers who assess an essay, the more reliable the score is considered to be. They identified the areas every assessor should examine and combined them when designing the sections of the profile so the scores assigned by different markers would be similar. The ESL Composition Profile was rated as the best instrument for analysing writing (Weigle 2002). This may be because it has undergone frequent testing to determine its reliability and validity; therefore, any deficiency in the scale was controlled for in the earliest stages. When applying Cronbach's alpha, the lowest score obtained was 89, which means that the profile would score higher on some occasions (Jacobs et al., 1981). The results obtained from applying the ESL Composition Profile in an EFL context (e.g. Alhaisoni 2012; Salem 2007; Helm-Park and Stapleton 2003; Bacha 2001) confirm its reliability as a scoring system for evaluating writing in this context.

To ensure its validity, Jacobs et al. (1981) correlated the ESL Composition Profile with the TOEFL and the Michigan Battery, reporting significant levels of concurrent validity. Bacha (2001) used the profile in assessing the writing of 30 Arabic-speaking students and reported its correlation with the students' final scores at the end of the term. Jacobs et al. also tested the profile's construct validity by comparing the scores of ESL learners at different times, e.g. at the beginning and at the end of a term, and by comparing the scores of graduate and undergraduate writers. The ESL profile showed a disparity in results; thus, it is regarded as having a high degree of construct validity.

Jacobs et al. (1981) point out that the ESL Composition Profile is considered to have content validity when ESL writers are able to write in diverse modes (e.g.

descriptive, persuasive, and narrative). Since writing curriculum at Saudi universities are taught throughout the undergraduate level and the tasks develop from short compositions to essay writing, students are exposed to different writing tasks that require the demonstration of the various writing skills. Additionally, Alkubaidi (2014) confirms that the profile reflects on all the areas that Saudi students study during their undergraduate course in an English department, and Alhaisoni (2012) regards it as similar to the focus of teachers of writing in Saudi Arabia when evaluating their students' papers. Therefore, according to the criteria suggested, it is taken to have content validity in the context of the current study.

### **3.11 Main Study**

Ethical approval was obtained in March 2014. The researcher also obtained permission from the Saudi Cultural Bureau to collect data. Educational institutions in Saudi Arabia routinely ask for a formal governmental reference if they are to manage research. The fieldwork in Saudi Arabia was conducted between April 2014 and May 2015.

#### **3.11.1 Procedure**

Collecting data from the female participants took approximately three weeks. At first, the researcher aimed to collect data from the leading universities in the country. This step was taken in order to obtain a comprehensive view of the situation in general, rather than limiting the study to just one region. In other words, it was hoped that the researcher would be able to gather data on the attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy beliefs and performance of university students from different geographical areas of the Kingdom. However, after frequent correspondence, and due to time constraints, effort and cost, only two institutions were chosen to participate in the study: Umm Al-

Qura University and Taif University. The rationale for choosing these institutions was that the staff in the English Departments at both universities agreed to help the researcher in conducting her study. Both universities are located near the residence of the researcher; therefore, the researcher had easier access to them than to the other universities. In addition, Umm Al-Qura University is the researcher's Alma Mater, while a friend of the researcher works as a writing tutor at Taif University; all these factors encouraged the researcher to conduct the study at these institutions.

Data was collected from final-year students at three sites: one class from the Girls' College of Education (an institution that is administered by Umm Al-Qura University), two classes from Umm Al-Qura University, and one class from Taif University. These classes were chosen basically because their tutors agreed to give their sessions for the sake of the study.

The study was run for three days in each class, with the exception of the Girls' College of Education, where it took two days and was conducted by the researcher herself. The head of the English Language Department at the Girls' College of Education agreed to give one class to the researcher to explain to the students the purpose of the study and to administer the questionnaire. The researcher informed the students about the nature of the study and reminded them that it was not a test and that they would not be penalised either for their responses to the survey or their writing.

The questionnaire was distributed first. To control for the observer's paradox<sup>46</sup>, the researcher made it clear that the participants should choose the responses that most appealed to them rather than simply selecting all positive responses in order to please the researcher or to appear in a good light. She also encouraged them to read

---

<sup>46</sup> The observer's paradox, first introduced by Labov (1972), happens when participants alter their responses as a result of being observed by the researcher.

the instructions on the first page of the questionnaire to obtain a clearer understanding of the study and to tick the box if they agreed to participate in it. They took approximately 15-20 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. Then they were given the narrative tasks. In order to improvise an authentic context for the writing activity and to make the purpose of the written communication more meaningful to the students, the researcher informed them that their writing would be assessed by native speaker teachers in the UK who had no knowledge of Arabic; thus, the burden lay on the students to present their writing clearly and efficiently. This statement was made with the positive intention to motivate the students to write for a purpose and for an audience other than their national teachers. It is worth mentioning that the students expressed their surprise and excitement when the researcher mentioned the role and nationality of the assessors. In the questionnaire, one student clearly expressed her excitement about taking part in this experiment, while another came to the researcher at the end of the class and thanked her for giving them the opportunity to write about issues that had been locked in their memories for a while. This behaviour implies that these students might have seldom been given an opportunity to practise writing as a real means of communication. The time allocated for the writing was 90 minutes; however, most of the students submitted their essays before the end of the session. The persuasive essay was distributed the following week by the class tutor.

The tutors of the other classes suggested that they conduct the study themselves to ensure that the students took it seriously. The researcher sat with each tutor and explained the procedure conducted in the previous class to guarantee that all the subjects would participate under the same conditions. However, the tutor preferred to administer the questionnaire in one class and to allocate 90 minutes to each of the essays in the next two classes. Although this preference might have implications for

the quality of the responses, the researcher acquiesced with it because those tutors were the only ones who agreed to give time from their classes to support the research. Additionally, given the participants information sheet included in the questionnaire, any implied bias would be unlikely, or with minimal effect.

Prior to the data collection, the tutors had indicated to the researcher that she would likely find the level of the students' writing disappointing. However, this viewpoint added more interest to the purpose of the study and gave the researcher additional motivation to investigate whether the students' unsatisfactory writing performance resulted from their attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy.

By contrast, it took around one year to collect the data from the male students. The researcher started the process at the same time she distributed the instruments to the female students in April 2014, but, unfortunately, this process was not immediately successful. Being a woman trying to transact business with males in the Saudi culture was itself a limiting factor in engaging with them and encouraging their more timely participation. The few tutors who were willing to cooperate with the researcher argued the need to finish their teaching program before the term ended, thus they had not the flexibility to allocate some of their class time for conducting the study. They advised the researcher to defer the survey to the start of the next term. The researcher approached the subjects again in the following terms, in September 2014 and January 2015. This time the instruments were distributed to ten universities, and the researcher contacted tutors frequently through email. However, only five universities actually took part in the study. This is not considered to have negative implications for the validity of the survey outcomes, but may mildly limit the generalizability of the survey results. These universities were Umm Al-Qura



University, Taif University, King Faisal University, Taibah University (Yanbu branch) and King Abdul Aziz University. All but one of these universities is located in different cities in the Western province, the exception being King Faisal University in the Eastern province. The data was collected by two of the researcher's male relatives, brother and husband, who were made fully aware of the objectives of the study and explained them to the tutors and participants. The researcher also described her study fully in the email messages she sent to the tutors and on the instruments of the study. Again, the fact that there was no direct contact between the researcher and the male tutors delayed data collection from the male participants.

A considerable number of the participants only completed the questionnaire, while others wrote only one of the essay types. Therefore, since the study aimed to compare the questionnaire responses with writing performance on the essays, those students were excluded from the final analysis of the data. In total, 228 students, 83 males and 145 females, participated in the study by filling in the questionnaire and performing the two writing tasks.

### **3.12 Tabular Presentation of Data**

The study, as mentioned in Chapter One, is designed to answer the following research question: Do Saudi male and female students have different attitudes and levels of apprehension and self-efficacy with regard to writing? If so, can these psychological characteristics be identified in the writings of university students reading for a degree in English? The review of the literature supported the hypothesis that attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy will possibly show statistically significant relationships with writing performance, in general and in narrative and persuasive written text types. And the hypothesis that gender might be a significant factor in

affecting participants' writing attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy, and writing achievement, with female students reporting more positive attitudes, higher apprehension, higher self-efficacy, and scoring higher in writing, in general and in the two text types. The research question and hypotheses have framed the data collection methods. Table 3.1 below describes the relationship between the selected data collection methods and the research question; specifically, it shows which data was employed to answer a specific part of the research question. The table also displays the overall volume of data collected, the data that was processed for analysis, and the analysis method applied.

**Table 3.1: Data and Methods of Collection and Analysis**

Method of Data Collection	Research Purpose Addressed	Collected Responses		Valid Responses		Method of Analysis
		M	F	M	F	
<b>Questionnaire</b>	Research question  Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2	226	187	83	145	Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)
<b>Writing Tasks</b>	Writing tasks offer information about writing competence which is necessary to answer the research question and the hypotheses.	136	160	83	145	1. Holistic Assessment (ESL Profile) 2. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)

A description of the frequency of count and percentage of gender in the sample population participating in this study is given in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2 Description of the Participant Sample**

Gender	Frequency No.	Percent
<b>Male</b>	83	36
<b>Female</b>	145	64

### **3.13 Chapter Overview**

This chapter has described the quantitative and qualitative methods used for the data collection in this research. The distribution of the items in the questionnaire was presented, in addition to the two writing prompts employed to elicit writing. A detailed explanation of the rationale used to determine the questionnaire items and the writing tasks was also provided. An account was given of the data collection procedure where some issues had arisen during the fieldwork and how these issues had been resolved. Finally, it was demonstrated how the type of the data collected was related to the research question and the study hypotheses.

## **Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Results**

In this chapter the data generated by the questionnaire and the writing samples are presented and analysed. The questionnaire results were analysed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) IBM 21. The quantitative analysis is reported first. This analysis comprises the closed-ended items. The participants' writing competence was measured by means of a qualitative instrument, namely, writing tasks, for which the students submitted essays. Competence was assessed by analysing their scores in the tasks using SPSS, through which mean scores were created. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions. The significance of gender is reported at each stage of the analysis. The relationships between attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy and writing are then tested. The analysis of the participants as a whole is presented first and then the mean of each gender group is calculated and compared with that of the other group.

### **4.1 Quantitative Analysis of Data**

In this section the statistical procedures employed to deal with the data obtained from the closed-ended items in the questionnaire are presented. The participants' responses were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data obtained from the questionnaire was numerically coded for the SPSS analysis. The findings are presented in six sections: attitudes toward writing in English, attitudes toward writing narrative and persuasive text types, writing apprehension, apprehension in writing narrative and persuasive essays, writing self-efficacy, and self-efficacy in writing narrative and persuasive essays. The means, the standard deviations and the medians of the responses are presented in tabular form. The distribution of items in the questionnaire is as follows:

1. Attitudes toward writing in general: items 1–10 (see Table 4.1) measured the participants' general attitudes towards writing; items 1–7 addressed positive attitudes; items 8–10 addressed negative attitudes and are thus reverse-scaled items. Items 1, 3, 4 and 9 measure affect-based attitudes. Items 2, 6 and 7 measure cognitively based attitudes, while items 4, 5 and 10 are concerned with conative/behavioural attitudes. To obtain the overall mean for attitudes, a composite score was created by adding together the scores for all the relevant items and then dividing the total score by the total number of items (10). The composite scores ranged from 1 to 3. A lower composite score indicates that the participant held a more positive general attitude towards writing.

2. Attitudes toward narrative and persuasive written text types: items 11–14 measured the participants' affective attitudes toward written text types. To obtain the mean for attitudes toward writing of each text type, a composite score was created by adding together the scores for all the relevant items and then dividing the total score by the number of items, which is two for each text type. The composite scores range from 1 to 3, with a lower composite score representing a participant's more positive attitude towards writing the text type.

3. Writing apprehension: items 15–24 measured writing apprehension. These items were all negatively worded except for item 24. In a descriptive analysis of the responses to these items, a lower score indicates higher apprehension except for item 24 where a lower score indicates lower apprehension; however, to obtain the overall mean for apprehension, negatively-worded items were reverse coded, so that 3 = agree, 2 = unsure, and 1 = disagree. In questionnaires that contain positive and negative items, it is important to reverse scoring the negative items before calculating the overall mean

in order to guarantee that all items are consistent with each other in terms of agreement and disagreement (see [webcache.com](http://webcache.com)). A composite score was created by adding together the scores for all the relevant items and then dividing the total score by the number of items (10). The composite scores range from 1 to 3. A higher composite score indicates that the participant had greater writing apprehension.

4. Apprehension in writing narrative and persuasive essays: items 25 and 26 measured writing apprehension in narrative and persuasive writing respectively. Since apprehension about narrative and persuasive writing was elicited by a single item for each, a descriptive analysis was undertaken to obtain the mean for apprehension about writing each text type. The scores for these two items range from 1 to 3. A lower score indicates that the participant had greater writing apprehension.

5. Self-efficacy: items 27–37 measured self-efficacy in writing. In order to obtain the mean for self-efficacy of the participants, a composite score was created by adding together the scores for the responses to the self-efficacy items and then dividing the total score by the number of items (11). The composite scores range from 1 to 3. A lower composite score indicates that the participant had a higher self-efficacy in writing.

6. Self-efficacy in writing narrative and persuasive essays: items 38 and 39 measured self-efficacy in writing narrative and persuasive essays. To obtain the mean for self-efficacy about writing each text type, a descriptive analysis was undertaken. Like the other items, the scores for these two items range from 1 to 3. A lower score indicates that the participant had a higher self-efficacy in writing narrative and persuasive essays.

**Table 4.1: Description of the Items in the Questionnaire**

Item no.	Item type	Item description
1	Positive attitude 1	I enjoy writing (in English), though writing is difficult at times.
2	Positive attitude 2	Learning about writing (in English) is important for me.
3	Positive attitude 3	I'm satisfied with the (English) essays I have submitted to tutors.
4	Positive attitude 4	I would like to join a training course in essay writing (in English) to improve my writing.
5	Positive attitude 5	I would take essay writing (in English) even if it were not a compulsory module.
6	Positive attitude 6	I think my writing (in English) is good.
7	Positive attitude 7	I think of my tutors as reacting positively to my (English) writing.
8	Negative attitude 1	Writing (in English) is a very unpleasant experience for me.
9	Negative attitude 2	I do not like to be engaged in writing essays (in English).
10	Negative attitude 3	If the choice had been to me, I would not have chosen to study essay writing (in English).
11	Attitude towards narrative written texts 1	Writing narrative essays (in English) is interesting to me.
12	Attitude towards narrative written texts 2	I feel motivated when given a narrative task to write about (in English).
13	Attitude towards persuasive written texts 3	I enjoy writing persuasive essays (in English).
14	Attitude towards persuasive written texts 4	I like to be engaged in writing persuasive essays (in English).
15	Apprehension 1	At times, I find it hard to write what I mean in an essay (in English).
16	Apprehension 2	Starting an essay (in English) is very hard for me.
17	Apprehension 3	Attending a class/lecture about writing (in English) is a very frightening experience.
18	Apprehension 4	I am afraid of writing essays (in English) when I know they will be evaluated.
19	Apprehension 5	I expect to do poorly in (English) writing classes, even before I enter them.
20	Apprehension 6	When I hand in an essay (in English), I know that I'm going to do poorly.
21	Apprehension 7	I feel my heart pounding when I write essays (in English) under time constraints.
22	Apprehension 8	I freeze up when I unexpectedly am asked to write an essay (in English).
23	Apprehension 9	I'm afraid that the other students would criticize my (English) essay if they read it.
24	Apprehension 10	I usually seek every possible chance to write essays in English outside of the lesson limitations.
25	Narrative writing apprehension	While writing a narrative essay (in English), I spend an hour or more unable to write any word.
26	Persuasive writing	My mind seems to go blank when I start to

	apprehension	work on a persuasive essay (in English).
27	Self-efficacy 1	When required to use English, I believe that I can express myself clearly in writing rather than speaking.
28	Self-efficacy 2	While writing an essay (in English), I can easily generate ideas to write about.
29	Self-efficacy 3	I believe that I am able to meet the task requirements of the essay (in English).
30	Self-efficacy 4	I can write an interesting and appropriate essay (in English) for a given topic.
31	Self-efficacy 5	I can use complex language in writing (in English) with no difficulty.
32	Self-efficacy 6	I can start writing (in English) with no difficulty.
33	Self-efficacy 7	When writing an essay (in English), I can use words to create a vivid picture.
34	Self-efficacy 8	I can adjust my writing style (in English) to suit the needs of the writing task.
35	Self-efficacy 9	I can organise sentences into a paragraph to clearly explain a topic or theme (in English).
36	Self-efficacy 10	I can check and edit my own writing (in English) for spelling errors, correct grammar, and meaning.
37	Self-efficacy 11	I can think of ideas rapidly when given a topic to write about (in English).
38	Persuasive writing self-efficacy	I can write good persuasive essays (in English).
39	Narrative writing self-efficacy	I can write good narrative essays (in English).

For the six constructs outlined above, the aim was to determine whether participants, when writing in English:

- (a) had a negative/positive general attitude towards writing in English
- (b) had a negative/positive attitude towards narrative and persuasive written text types
- (c) had high/low writing apprehension
- (d) had high/low apprehension about writing narrative and persuasive text types
- (e) had high/low self-efficacy in writing in English
- (f) had high/low self-efficacy in writing narrative and persuasive text types.

For each construct, the one-sample *t*-test was used to determine whether the mean score was equal to the mid-point 2 (i.e., unsure, which meant that the participant neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement). The purpose of testing if the mean =



2 was to determine if the overall responses for each item was statistically significant toward agree (reject the hypothesis and the mean was  $< 2$ ) or significant toward disagree (reject the hypothesis and the mean was  $> 2$ ). The corresponding null and alternative hypotheses for one-sample  $t$ -tests are:<sup>47</sup>

$H_0$ : The mean score of the variable of interest is 2 (null hypothesis).

$H_1$ : The mean score of the variable of interest is not 2 (alternative hypothesis).

A  $p$ -value smaller than 5 ( $< 0.05$ ) demonstrates a statistical significance, which, in the case of the current research, suggests that the null hypothesis should be rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. In data analysis, the one-sample  $t$ -test is typically used only if the data is in a normal distribution and independent. Therefore, before opting to use the one-sample  $t$ -test, researchers should check the normality of their data, and on the basis of the outcome, decide on the appropriate tests for analysis, e.g. the  $t$ -test. The normality of the data was examined through the following tests: Skewness,<sup>48</sup> Kurtosis,<sup>49</sup> The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality,<sup>50</sup> and the quantile-quantile (Q-Q) plot (Hollander and Wolfe 1999).<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> The null hypothesis means that there is ‘no difference or no relationship’ between the tested variables (Wiersma 1995).

<sup>48</sup> Skewness: Skewness measures the tendency of the deviations in the sample to be larger in one direction than in the other. Skewness is a measure of symmetry. Observations that are normally distributed should have a skewness near zero (as normal distribution is symmetrical). A negative skew indicates that the tail on the left side of the probability density function is longer than on the right side and that the bulk of the values lie to the right of the mean (skewed to the left). A positive skew indicates that the tail on the right side is longer than the one on the left side and that the bulk of the values lie to the left of the mean (skewed to the right) (Hollander and Wolfe 1999).

<sup>49</sup> Kurtosis: Kurtosis measures the peakedness of the distribution and the heaviness of its tail (relative to a normal distribution). Observations that are normally distributed should have a kurtosis near zero. A high kurtosis distribution has a sharper peak and fatter tails (leptokurtic), while a low kurtosis distribution has a more rounded peak and thinner tails (platykurtic) (Hollander and Wolfe 1999).

<sup>50</sup> The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality: The Shapiro-Wilk test procedure is a goodness-of-fit test for the null hypothesis that the values of the analysis variable are a random sample from the normal distribution. A  $p$ -value less than 0.05 on the Shapiro-Wilk test leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis of normality (Hollander and Wolfe 1999).

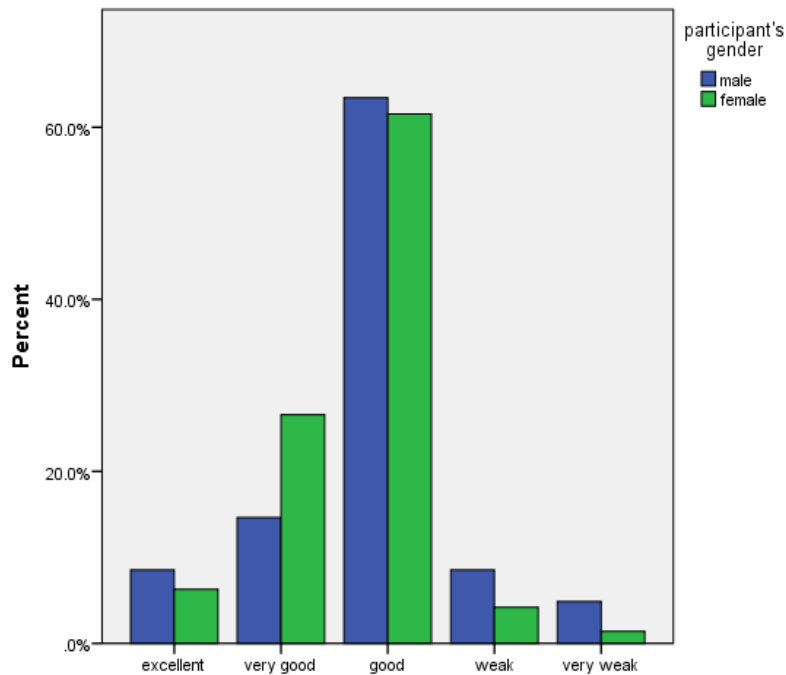
<sup>51</sup> The Q-Q (quantile-quantile) plots compare ordered variable values with quantiles of a specified theoretical distribution (in this case, normal distribution). If the data distribution matches the theoretical distribution, the points on the plot form a linear pattern, following the 45-degree straight line (Hollander and Wolfe 1999).

When the normality assumption may be violated, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test (the non-parametric alternative to the one-sample *t*-test) is recommended (Hollander and Wolfe, 1999). The data were not normally distributed (except for anxiety,  $p > 0.05$ ), and hence the normality assumption of the two-sample *t*-test was not satisfied. Therefore, instead of using *t*-tests, the Wilcoxon ranked-sum tests were performed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the scores between male and female. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test assumes observations are independent of each other and are from the same population. The null hypothesis was that the median would be equal to a given value (in this case, 2), and the alternative hypothesis was that the median would not be equal to the given value.

#### **4.1.1 Results of the Questionnaire Close-ended Items**

This section reports the findings from the closed-ended items in the questionnaire. First, participants' evaluation of their writing according to the given levels of proficiency was analysed. The results of this self-evaluation are shown as percentages in a column bar chart presented in Figure 4.1 below. Responses to this question showed that the majority of the participants (62%) evaluated their writing in English as good. Around a third (26%) indicated that their writing was very good, while only a few (6%) considered their writing to be excellent. Similarly, only a few (4%) evaluated their writing as weak, and the lowest percentage of participants regarded their writing as very weak (2%). This particular finding is relevant to the participants' self-efficacy regarding their capabilities as writers in a foreign language, which is reported later. In sum, given that the chart values ranges from 1 = excellent to 5 = very weak, the overall mean ( $M = 2.75$ ) indicates that the participants in general evaluated their writing as good.

Looking at the information presented in the chart, one can clearly see that more females than males evaluated their writing as very good, whereas slightly more males rated their writing as excellent, good, weak and very weak, respectively. When the Wilcoxon rank-sum test was performed, the result suggested that these differences were statistically insignificant ( $p > 0.06$ ).



**Figure 4.1: Participants' Evaluation of their Writing in General**

For the closed-ended items in the questionnaire, the responses to each variable are presented in frequencies and percentages with the overall mean calculated to determine whether the participants agreed, disagreed, or were unsure about the item. The items are grouped under the construct they measured. For instance, Table 4.2 represents responses about attitudes toward writing.

**Table 4.2: Participants' Responses to Items about Attitudes**

Item number	Responses			Mean	SD	p
	Agree No. (%)	Unsure No. (%)	Disagree No. (%)			
1. I enjoy writing (in English) though writing is difficult at times.	154 (68)	28 (12)	46 (20)	1.53	0.81	0.000*
2. Learning about writing (in English) is important for me.	207 (91)	9 (4)	12 (5)	1.14	0.48	0.000*
3. I'm satisfied with the (English) essays I have submitted to tutors.	109 (48)	52 (23)	67 (29)	1.82	0.86	0.002*
4. I would like to join a training course in essay writing (in English) to improve my writing.	163 (72)	39 (17)	26 (11)	1.40	0.68	0.000*
5. I would take essay writing (in English) even if it were not a compulsory module.	93 (40)	76 (33)	59 (27)	1.85	0.80	0.006*
6. I think my writing (in English) is good.	151 (66)	32 (14)	45 (20)	1.54	0.80	0.000*
7. I think of my tutors as reacting positively to my (English) writing.	97 (43)	60 (26)	71 (31)	1.89	0.85	0.045*
8. Writing (in English) is a very unpleasant experience for me.	46 (20)	85 (37)	97 (43)	2.22	0.76	0.000*
9. I do not like to be engaged in writing essays (in English).	57 (25)	81 (35)	90 (40)	2.14	0.79	0.006*
10. If the choice had been to me, I would not have chosen to study essay writing (in English).	58 (25)	83 (36)	87 (39)	2.13	0.78	0.016*

*Note: Numbers in parentheses under "Frequency counts and % of the responses" are percentages. SD = standard deviation. p = p-value of the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

The data presented in Table 4.2 above shows the frequencies, percentages and overall means for the responses. Starting with attitudes, although the responses are listed according to the items as they are organised in the SPSS worksheet, it is more helpful to present the interpretation of the data according to the main forms of attitudes: affective, cognitive and behavioural. With regard to affect, the above table reveals that in their responses to item1 more than two-thirds of the participants (68%) stated that they enjoyed writing ( $M = 1.53$ ), while 48% (item 3) indicated that they were satisfied with the essays they had already submitted to the tutors ( $M = 1.82$ ). Less than half the students (20 %) agreed that writing was an unpleasant experience for them (item 8). The mean score ( $M = 2.22$ ) indicated that the participants in general felt that writing in English is a pleasant experience. Regarding writing engagement (item 9), the largest number of responses (but only 40 %) showed that the participants liked to write essays in English, which indicates a mildly positive attitude ( $M = 2.14$ ).

With regard to cognitively based attitudes, the majority (91%) of the participants believed that it was important for them to learn how to write in English (item 2). The mean score for the responses to this item (1.14) showed strong positive attitudes in this regard. Additionally, most of the participants (66%) thought that their writing in English was good ( $M = 1.54$ ). This response (item 6) in particular supports the students' evaluation of their writing at the beginning of the questionnaire. Moreover, when asked about tutors' reactions towards their writing (item7), 43% of the participants thought that their tutors would react positively to their writing. The mean score (1.89) suggested mildly positive attitudes in general, though a relatively large proportion (31%) reacted negatively.

Similar to the affective and cognitive attitudes, the responses to the items on behavioural attitudes indicated a favourable orientation in general. In response to item 4, the majority (72%) expressed their willingness to join remedial training courses to improve their competence in writing. The mean score ( $M = 1.40$ ) for this item suggested strongly positive attitudes towards improving their competence. The participants expressed positive opinions ( $M = 1.85$ ) when asked (item 5) about studying essay writing at the undergraduate stage. More specifically, in response to the item about taking Essay Writing if they had the choice, more than one-third (40%) of the participants agreed, one-quarter (27%) disagreed, and the rest (33%) were uncertain. Similarly, responses to item 10 about not choosing to study essay writing were as follows: 25% agreed, 36% were unsure and 39% disagreed, with a mean score ( $M = 2.13$ ) indicating a mild positive orientation towards studying writing even if they had the choice of avoiding it.

In relation to attitudes towards text types, two items measured attitudes towards writing narrative and two measured attitudes toward persuasive essays. Responses to these questions are presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Participants' Responses to Items about Attitudes toward Narrative and Persuasive Essays**

Item number	Responses			Mean	SD	<i>p</i>
	Agree No. (%)	Unsure No. (%)	Disagree No. (%)			
11. Writing narrative essays (in English) is interesting to me.	94 (41)	72 (32)	62 (27)	1.86	0.81	0.010*
12. I feel motivated when given a narrative task to write about (in English).	84 (37)	70 (31)	74 (32)	1.96	0.83	0.426
13. I enjoy writing persuasive essays (in English).	72 (31)	92 (41)	64 (28)	1.96	0.77	0.493
14. I like to be engaged in writing persuasive essays (in English).	74 (32)	88 (39)	66 (29)	1.96	0.78	0.499

*Note. Numbers in parentheses under "Frequency counts and % of the responses" are percentages. SD = standard deviation. *p* = *p*-value of the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

In response to the two items (11 and 12) that investigated narrative writing, only 41% found it interesting, and 37% felt motivated by it. The mean scores for each of these items were  $M = 1.86$  and  $M = 1.96$  respectively. A higher proportion of participants were unsure about their attitudes towards writing persuasive essays. In particular, 41% of the responses indicated uncertainty about whether they enjoyed persuasive writing (item 13), while 39% were unsure about engaging in it (item 14). Similarly, the same mean score about the mid-point of the scale for each of these two items ( $M = 1.96$ ) represented relatively neutral attitudes toward the task.

Ten items (15–24) measured writing apprehension, which is taken to represent a defined writing attitude, possibly supporting evidence of the general attitudes that the students reported towards writing in English. Table 4.4 represents responses to these items.



**Table 4.4: Participants' Responses to Items about Writing Apprehension**

Item number	Responses			Mean	SD	p
	Agree No. (%)	Unsure No. (%)	Disagree No. (%)			
15. At times, I find it hard to write what I mean in an essay (in English).	154 (68)	37 (16)	37 (16)	1.49	0.76	0.000*
16. Starting an essay (in English) is very hard for me.	98 (43)	60 (26)	70 (31)	1.88	0.85	0.031*
17. Attending a class/lecture about writing (in English) is a very frightening experience.	26 (11)	103 (45)	99 (44)	2.32	0.66	0.000*
18. I am afraid of writing essays (in English) when I know they will be evaluated.	135 (59)	50 (22)	43 (19)	1.60	0.78	0.000*
19. I expect to do poorly in (English) writing classes, even before I enter them.	37 (16)	76 (33)	113 (51)	2.34	0.74	0.000*
20. When I hand in an essay (in English), I know that I'm going to do poorly.	30 (13)	89 (39)	109 (48)	2.35	0.70	0.000*
21. I feel my heart pounding when I write essays (in English) under time constraints.	159 (71)	36 (15)	33 (14)	1.45	0.73	0.000*
22. I freeze up when I unexpectedly am asked to write an essay (in English).	78 (34)	65 (29)	85 (37)	2.03	0.84	0.583
23. I'm afraid that the other students would criticize my (English) essay if they read it.	72 (31)	75 (33)	81 (36)	2.04	0.82	0.467
24. I usually seek every possible chance to write essays in English outside of the lesson limitations.	60 (26)	78 (34)	90 (40)	2.13	0.80	0.014*

*Note: Numbers in parentheses under "Frequency counts and % of the responses" are percentages. SD = standard deviation. p = p-value of the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

Regarding the process of writing, the data shows that the majority (68%) struggled to express what they meant when they wrote an essay ( $M = 1.49$ ) (item 15). Almost half of the participants (43%) found it hard to start writing an essay; the mean score ( $M = 1.88$ ) confirmed their apprehension (item 16). The data suggests that, in general, more than half the participants encounter apprehension, a form of writer's block, when they write in English.

The data also shows (item17) that although 44% of participants did not feel apprehensive when attending a class about writing in English, 45% of the participants were unsure, and a minority (11%) agreed that it would make them feel apprehensive. Overall, the mean of the participants' responses to this item ( $M = 2.32$ ) suggests that they were moderately at ease when they attended a writing class in English. A majority of students (59%) admitted that they experienced writing apprehension (item18) when they were asked to write essays that were to be evaluated; the mean score ( $M = 1.60$ ) confirms that evaluation was a cause of writing apprehension for most participants.

When asked to express an expectation about the success of their writing in class, 51% of the students indicated that they did not expect their performance to be poor before entering a writing class (item 19), and a similar percentage (48%) expressed the view that they did not consider their essays to be poor when they handed them in (item 20). The mean scores for these items ( $M = 2.34$  and  $M = 2.35$ , respectively) suggest a moderate level of writing ease.

Whether the students experienced physiological disorders when they engaged in certain writing practices was also measured (item 21). In particular, the participants agreed that they felt their heart pounding when they wrote essays under time

constraints (71%). Indeed, the mean scores for this item ( $M = 1.45$ ) indicated that the participants were apprehensive when they wrote under this condition. A considerable percentage of the students (34%) also agreed that they would feel anxious if they were unexpectedly asked to write an essay in English (item 22); however, a higher percentage (37%) did not agree with this statement. The mean score for the responses ( $M = 2.03$ ) showed that, in general, the students felt indifferent to the implied stress when they were unexpectedly asked to write.

Regarding peer feedback (item 23), 36% of the students were not apprehensive at the prospect of their classmates reading their essays, whereas 31% agreed that they would feel apprehensive about it. In general, the students appeared to be mildly at ease if their writing were to be exposed to their peers ( $M = 2.04$ ).

With regard to extracurricular writing behaviour and apprehension, the participants were asked if they would practise writing in English outside the classroom (item 24). A large number (40%) of the students disagreed that they would seek any opportunity to write outside the classroom and around 34% were unsure, whereas one-quarter (26%) agreed that they would. The mean score for these responses ( $M = 2.13$ ) indicated that the students generally tended to not engage in writing in English in their leisure time apart from their course homework.

Two items (25–26) measured apprehension in writing narrative and persuasive essays. These items investigated whether the participants faced writer's block during writing these types of text. Writer's block generates apprehension, as it suggests a difficulty has been encountered in a certain practice. It has been employed by other researchers (e.g., Cheng 2004) as an indicator of apprehension. Table 4.5 represents the result of the analysis of these questions.

**Table 4.5: Participants' Responses to Items about Apprehension with regard to Narrative and Persuasive Essays**

Item number	Responses			Mean	SD	p
	Agree No. (%)	Unsure No. (%)	Disagree No. (%)			
25. While writing a narrative essay (in English), I spend an hour or more unable to write any word.	72 (31)	85 (38)	71 (31)	2.00	0.79	0.933
26. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a persuasive essay (in English).	114 (50)	66 (29)	48 (21)	1.71	0.79	0.000*

*Note: Numbers in parentheses under "Frequency counts and % of the responses" are percentages. SD = standard deviation. p = p-value of the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

Analysis of these two items showed that (item 25) those who agreed and disagreed with the proposition they were apprehensive, were almost evenly divided at each end of the spectrum, whereas more than one-third of participants (38%) were unsure whether or not they had experienced or would experience writer's block when writing narrative essays ( $M = 2.00$ ). Half the students (50%) confirmed (item 26) that they had experienced writers' block in attempting persuasive writing ( $M = 1.71$ ), indicating a moderate apprehension in general. This finding suggests that more students encountered difficulties in persuasive than in narrative writing.

The participants' self-efficacy in writing was measured through 13 items. The result of the analysis of participants' responses is presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Participants' Responses to Items about Writing Self-efficacy**

Item number	Responses			Mean	SD	p
	Agree No. (%)	Unsure No. (%)	Disagree No. (%)			
27. When required to use English, I believe that I can express myself clearly in writing rather than speaking.	114 (50)	59 (26)	55 (24)	1.74	0.82	0.000*
28. While writing an essay (in English), I can easily generate ideas to write about.	65 (28)	86 (38)	77 (34)	2.05	0.78	0.314
29. I believe that I am able to meet the task requirements of the essay (in English).	118 (52)	43 (19)	67 (29)	1.78	0.87	0.000*
30. I can write an interesting and appropriate essay (in English) for a given topic.	92 (40)	62 (27)	74 (33)	1.92	0.85	0.162
31. I can use complex language in writing (in English) with no difficulty.	13 (7)	116 (50)	99 (43)	2.38	0.59	0.000*
32. I can start writing (in English) with no difficulty.	74 (33)	67 (29)	87 (38)	2.06	0.84	0.306
33. When writing an essay (in English), I can use words to create a vivid picture.	98 (43)	65 (28.5)	65 (28.5)	1.86	0.83	0.010*
34. I can adjust my writing style (in English) to suit the needs of the writing task.	136 (60)	41 (18)	51 (22)	1.63	0.82	0.000*
35. I can organize sentences into a paragraph to clearly explain a topic or theme (in English).	150 (66)	30 (13)	48 (21)	1.55	0.81	0.000*
36. I can check and edit my own writing (in English) for spelling errors, correct grammar, and meaning.	86 (38)	61 (26)	81 (36)	1.98	0.85	0.699
37. I can think of ideas rapidly when given a topic to write about (in English).	79 (35)	67 (29)	82 (36)	2.01	0.84	0.813

Note: Numbers in parentheses under "Frequency counts and % of the responses" are percentages. SD = standard deviation. p = p-value of the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.

As shown in the table, half of the participants (50%) agreed that they could express themselves more clearly in writing than in speaking when using English (item 27). The mean score ( $M = 1.74$ ) showed that the students generally believed that they had greater writing than speaking ability in the English language, though one-quarter (24%) disagreed.

With regard to writing and generating ideas, a large group of students (38%) stated that they were unsure of their capability to generate ideas to write about easily (item 28), and 34% more emphatically agreed they could not generate ideas easily. Similarly, (36%) were unable to rapidly generate ideas for writing, whereas (35%) agreed they could (item 37). The mean scores for these two items ( $M = 2.05$  and  $M = 2.01$  respectively) indicate a mild self-efficacy.

Half of the participants, 52%, indicated (item 29) that they could meet the task requirements of essay writing. Their mean score ( $M = 1.78$ ) indicated that, in general, they were self-efficacious about this task. Notably, with regard to meeting the task requirement (item 30), 40% of the participants believed that they could write an interesting and appropriate essay on a given topic ( $M = 1.92$ ), though 33% felt they could not.

With regard to writing skills, the vast majority of the participants (50%) were either non-confident or unsure of their ability to employ complex language in their writing (item 31), ( $M = 2.38$ ). When respondents were asked (item 32) if they could start writing with no difficulty, 38% of the students agreed that they faced difficulty when they began writing and a further 29% were unsure, while 33% agreed that they could overcome difficulty at the beginning of the writing process ( $M = 2.06$ ). This item correlated significantly with the participants' reported response to the writing

block item 15 ('At times, I find it hard to write what I mean in an essay') and item 16 ('Starting an essay is very hard for me'). When the participants were asked about employing vocabulary to make their writing clearer (item 33), almost one-half of the respondents (43%) stated that they could use words to create a vivid picture ( $M = 1.86$ ). In general, the students had relatively high self-efficacy with regard to using affective vocabulary. A large proportion (60%) of the participants (item 34) felt efficacious in adjusting their writing style to suit the writing task ( $M = 1.63$ ).

With regard to organisation (item 35), the majority of the participants (66%) considered themselves able to organise sentences into a paragraph to express a topic or a theme. The mean score ( $M = 1.55$ ) showed that the participants had a relatively high level of confidence in their organisation skills. When it came to the various aspects of writing mechanics (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalisation and paragraphing), the students seemed to be moderately confident about their capabilities in this regard. In response to the item (36) about self-editing of grammar and spelling errors, similar proportions of the respondents agreed (38%) or disagreed (36%) that they could manage their own work; in other words, nearly half of the students considered themselves able to detect their own mistakes, whereas the other half believed they were incapable of doing so ( $M = 1.98$ ).

With regard to self-efficacy in writing specific text types, the results were revelatory. Table 4.7 represents responses to self-efficacy in writing narrative and persuasive essays.



**Table 4.7: Participants' Responses to Items about Self-efficacy in Narrative and Persuasive Essays**

Item number	Responses			Mean	SD	p
	Agree No. (%)	Unsure No. (%)	Disagree No. (%)			
38. I can write good persuasive essays (in English).	47 (21)	85 (37)	95 (42)	2.21	0.76	0.000*
39. I can write good narrative essays (in English),	60 (27)	77 (33)	91 (40)	2.14	0.80	0.012*

Note: SD = standard deviation.  $p$  =  $p$ -value of the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.

For writing (item 38) good persuasive essays, 42% thought they were incapable and 37% were unsure. For writing (item 39) good narrative essay, 40% thought they were incapable and 33% were unsure of their capability. The means for narrative writing self-efficacy ( $M = 2.14$ ) and for persuasive writing self-efficacy ( $M = 2.21$ ) demonstrate relatively low self-efficacy in writing good narrative and persuasive essays. This is borne out by the statistical tests applied, as the means were statistically significantly different from the mid-point, 2. As a consequence, it can be concluded that the participants had low self-efficacy in their ability to write both narrative and persuasive essays.

The overall means for the items that measured attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy in general and in narrative and persuasive essays were calculated and are presented in Table 4.8 below. As mentioned above, for each construct (i.e., attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy), a composite score was created by calculating the mean scores for all related items (for instance, the overall mean for attitudes was obtained by summing the scores for the responses to all the attitude items and then dividing the total score by the number of items, namely 10). In calculating the overall mean, negatively worded items were reverse-scored. The composite scores ranged from 1 to 3. Lower scores indicate more positive ratings. For example, in the attitudes subscale, lower scores indicate more positive attitudes towards writing in English. Similarly, for self-efficacy, lower scores indicate higher self-efficacy in writing in English. However, in computing the overall score for apprehension, higher scores indicate higher anxiety. For apprehension about narrative and persuasive writing the lower score indicates higher apprehension; similarly for self-efficacy in narrative and persuasive writing.

**Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes, Apprehension, and Self-efficacy (in General and for Specific Text Types)**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>SW test</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Attitude towards writing	1.67	0.38	0.000*	0.000*
Writing apprehension	2.07	0.38	0.064	0.007*
Writing self-efficacy	1.90	0.41	0.000*	0001*
Attitude towards narrative writing	1.91	0.71	0.000*	0.038*
Attitude towards persuasive writing	1.96	0.69	0.000*	0.234
Narrative writing apprehension	2.00	0.79	0.000*	0.933
Persuasive writing apprehension	1.71	0.79	0.000*	0.000*
Narrative writing self-efficacy	2.14	0.80	0.000*	0.012*
Persuasive writing self-efficacy	2.21	0.76	0.000*	0.000*

*Note: SW test = p-value from the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality. p = p-value of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level. N = 228*

According to the results of the analysis (Table 4.8), the participants had positive attitudes ( $M = 1.67$ ,  $SD = 0.38$ ) toward writing in English in general and positive attitudes ( $M = 1.91$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) toward writing narrative essays in English, with these being statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The participants reported that they experienced moderate apprehension when they write in general ( $M = 2.07$ ,  $SD = 0.38$ ) although they demonstrated high apprehension about writing persuasive essays ( $M = 1.71$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ) in English, and these results were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). With regard to narrative essays, the mean for apprehension about narrative writing ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ) was not statistically significantly different from 2. It can be concluded that the participants had moderate (neither high nor low) apprehension about writing narrative essays.

Although the participants agreed that they had self-efficacy in writing in general ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ), they disagreed that they had self-efficacy in writing narrative essays ( $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) or in writing persuasive essays ( $M = 2.21$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ); these results were all statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that the

participants were confident about their capabilities in writing in general but not about their capabilities in writing narrative and persuasive essays.

One of the main objectives of the study was to determine if there was any difference related to gender in the participants' attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding writing in English in general, and between their attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy in writing persuasive and narrative texts in English. According to the results of the Shapiro-Wilk tests, the sampling distributions of the scores of most of these constructs, organised by gender, were not normally distributed ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, as discussed earlier (Section 4.1), Wilcoxon rank-sum tests were used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference according to gender in each of these constructs regarding writing in English. The effect size of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test ( $r$ ) was computed as  $r = \frac{|z|}{\sqrt{N}}$ , where  $z$  is  $z$ -score (the standardized test statistic of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test) and  $N$  is the total sample size (Field, 2013). To interpret the strength of the effect size, the following guidelines were used:  $< 0.3$  (small effect size),  $0.3-0.5$  (medium effect size), and  $> 0.5$  (large effect size) (Field, 2013).

Table 4.9 shows the means, standard deviations and results of the normality test and the Wilcoxon rank-sum test of the psychological constructs regarding writing in English used in this study, segmented by gender.

**Table 4.9: Statistical Analysis of Gender Significance on Attitudes, Apprehension, and Self-Efficacy (in General and for Two Text Types)**

Construct	Male (N = 83)		Female (N = 145)		z	r	p
	Mean (SD)	SW test	Mean (SD)	SW test			
Attitudes	1.52 (0.35)	0.003*	1.75 (0.38)	0.007*	4.476	0.296	0.000*
Apprehension	1.95 (0.45)	0.345	2.13 (0.33)	0.104	3.143	0.208	0.002*
Self-efficacy	1.78 (0.41)	0.019*	1.98 (0.39)	0.089	3.779		0.000*
Narrative attitudes	1.92 (0.72)	0.000*	1.90 (0.71)	0.000*	-0.184	0.012	0.854
Persuasive attitudes	1.84 (0.67)	0.000*	2.03 (0.69)	0.000*	2.038	0.135	0.042*
Narrative apprehension	2.08 (0.81)	0.000*	1.94 (0.78)	0.000*	1.275	0.084	0.202
Persuasive apprehension	1.69 (0.76)	0.000*	1.72 (0.81)	0.000*	-0.218	0.014	0.827
Narrative self-efficacy	1.88 (0.76)	0.000*	2.28 (0.80)	0.000*	3.731	0.247	0.000*
Persuasive self-efficacy	1.94 (0.67)	0.000*	2.37 (0.77)	0.000*	4.372	0.290	0.000*

Note: SW test = *p*-value from the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality. *p* = *p*-value of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.

In this case, males ( $M = 1.52$ ,  $SD = 0.35$ ) had more positive attitudes towards writing in English than females ( $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.38$ ), and the difference was statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). Males ( $M = 1.84$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ) also had more positive attitudes towards writing persuasive essays in English than females ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ), and this difference was also statistically significant ( $p = 0.042$ ). With regard to apprehension, females ( $M = 2.13$ ,  $SD = 0.33$ ) were more apprehensive regarding writing in English than males ( $M = 1.95$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ), this difference being statistically significant at the  $p = 0.002$  level. Finally, males had higher self-efficacy regarding writing in English in general, and writing narrative and persuasive essays in particular than females.

A further analysis was undertaken to identify the items that showed statistically significant differences between the responses of the two genders. Wilcoxon rank-sum tests were performed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the response for each survey item between males and females. A *p*-value less than

0.05 indicates significance. Effect size was used to measure the strength of the difference (Kelley and Preacher 2012). The effect size of Wilcoxon rank-sum test ( $r$ ) was computed as  $r = \frac{|z|}{\sqrt{N}}$ , where  $z$  is the  $z$ -score (the standardized test statistic of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test) and  $N$  is the total sample size (Field 2013). To interpret the strength of the effect size, the following guidelines were used:  $< 0.3$  (small effect size),  $0.3\text{--}0.5$  (medium effect size), and  $> 0.5$  (large effect size) (Field 2013). The analysis results, including the mean response scores by gender, the results of the Wilcoxon rank-sum tests, and the effect sizes, are presented in Tables 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12.

**Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics of Gender Responses to the Attitudes Items**

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Male (N = 83)</b>	<b>Female (N=145)</b>	<b>z</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>Strength of difference</b>
Attitude	I enjoy writing, though writing is difficult at times.	1.53 (0.80)	1.52 (0.82)	-0.174	0.862	0.012	Small
	Learning about writing is important	1.07 (0.26)	1.19 (0.57)	0.930	0.352	0.062	Small
	I'm satisfied with the essays I have submitted to	1.49 (0.61)	2.00 (0.93)	3.937	0.000*	0.261	Small
	I would like to join a training course in essays writing to improve my	1.39 (0.60)	1.41 (0.73)	-0.506	0.613	0.034	Small
	I would take essay writing even if it were not a	1.76 (0.81)	1.80 (0.80)	1.341	0.180	0.089	Small
	I think my writing is good.	1.37 (0.60)	1.63 (0.89)	1.557	0.119	0.103	Small
	I think of my tutors as reacting positively to my	1.54 (0.61)	2.08 (0.91)	4.393	0.000*	0.291	Small
	Writing is a very unpleasant experience for	2.41 (0.80)	2.12 (0.72)	-3.112	0.002*	0.206	Small
	I do not like to be engaged in writing essays.	2.23 (0.80)	2.10 (0.79)	-1.266	0.206	0.084	Small
	If the choice had been to me, I would not have chosen to study essay writing.	2.33 (0.81)	2.01 (0.75)	-3.009	0.003*	0.199	Small
	Writing narrative essays is interesting to me.	1.84 (0.83)	1.87 (0.81)	0.265	0.791	0.018	Small

**Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics of Gender Responses to the Apprehension Items**

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Male (N = 83)</b>	<b>Female (N=145)</b>	<b>z</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>Strength of difference</b>
Apprehension	At times, I find it hard to write what I mean in an	2.63 (0.64)	2.14 (0.62)	-5.695	0.000*	0.377	Medium
	Starting an essay is very hard for me.	1.66 (0.83)	1.56 (0.76)	-0.839	0.401	0.056	Small
	Attending a class/lecture about writing is a very frightening experience.	2.42 (0.78)	2.29 (0.72)	-1.673	0.094	0.111	Small
	I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be	2.33 (0.75)	2.36 (0.67)	0.120	0.904	0.008	Small
	I expect to do poorly in writing classes, even before I	1.66 (0.85)	1.32 (0.63)	-3.197	0.001*	0.212	Small
	When I hand in an essay, I know that I'm going to do	2.31 (0.80)	1.87 (0.84)	-3.813	0.000*	0.253	Small
	I feel my heart pounding when I write essays under time constraints.	2.19 (0.90)	1.95 (0.76)	-2.205	0.027*	0.146	Small
	I freeze up when I unexpectedly am asked to	1.48 (0.72)	1.49 (0.78)	-0.266	0.790	0.018	Small
	I'm afraid that the other students would criticize my essay if they read it.	1.98 (0.88)	1.82 (0.83)	-1.273	0.203	0.084	Small
	I usually seek every possible chance to write essays in English outside of the lesson	2.19 (0.90)	2.10 (0.74)	-1.121	0.262	0.074	Small
	While writing a narrative essay, I spend an hour or more unable to write any word.	2.08 (0.82)	1.94 (0.78)	-1.275	0.202	0.084	Small
	My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a persuasive essay.	1.69 (0.76)	1.72 (0.81)	0.218	0.827	0.014	Small



**Table 4.12: Descriptive Statistics of Gender Responses to the Self-efficacy Items**

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Male (N =</b>	<b>Female (N=145)</b>	<b>z</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>Strength of difference</b>
Self-efficacy	When required to use English, I believe that I can express myself clearly in writing rather than speaking.	1.80 (0.84)	1.71 (0.82)	-0.747	0.455	0.049	Small
	While writing an essay, I can easily generate ideas to write about.	1.86 (0.77)	2.17 (0.78)	2.862	0.004*	0.190	Small
	I believe that I am able to meet the task requirements of the	1.49 (0.65)	1.94 (0.94)	3.306	0.001*	0.219	Small
	I can write interesting and appropriate essay for a given topic.	1.72 (0.65)	2.03 (0.93)	2.458	0.014*	0.163	Small
	I can use complex language in writing with no	2.49 (0.65)	2.31 (0.55)	-2.682	0.007*	0.178	Small
	I can start writing with no difficulty.	1.81 (0.83)	2.20 (0.81)	3.382	0.001*	0.224	Small
	When writing an essay, I can use words to create a vivid	1.65 (0.74)	1.97 (0.87)	2.697	0.007*	0.179	Small
	I can adjust my writing style to suit the needs of the writing	1.47 (0.61)	1.72 (0.92)	1.376	0.169	0.091	Small
	I can organise sentences into a paragraph to clearly explain a topic or theme.	1.45 (0.67)	1.61 (0.89)	0.784	0.433	0.052	Small
	I can check and edit my own writing for spelling errors, correct grammar, and meaning.	1.90 (0.79)	2.02 (0.89)	0.967	0.333	0.064	Small
	I can think of ideas rapidly when given a topic to write	1.89 (0.83)	2.08 (0.85)	1.652	0.099	0.109	Small

	I can write a good persuasive essay.	1.88 (0.76)	2.28 (0.80)	3.731	0.000*	0.247	Small
	I can write good narrative essays.	1.94 (0.67)	2.37 (0.77)	4.372	0.000*	0.290	Small

*Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.  $z$  = z-score (the standardized test statistic of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test).  $p$  = p-value of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test.  $r$  = effect size of Wilcoxon rank-sum test.*

A consideration should be made when multiple comparisons are conducted: 39 tests were performed with 17 significant results. In statistics, the issue of multiple comparisons occurs when one considers a set of statistical inferences simultaneously. The main multiple comparisons problem is that the probability of wrongly concluding that there is at least one statistically significant effect across a set of tests increases with each additional test (Gelman, Hill, & Yajima, 2012). For hypothesis testing, the problem of multiple comparisons results from the increase in type I error that occurs when statistical tests are used repeatedly. If no independent comparisons are performed with each hypothesis tested at the same significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the probability that at least one of these tests yields an erroneous rejection can be computed as  $1 - (1 - \alpha)^n$ . Thus, for performing 39 tests, there would be an 86% ( $= 1 - (1 - 0.05)^{39}$ ) chance that at least one of these would be rejected in error. Thus, to correct for multiple comparisons in this study the Benjamini–Hochberg procedure (Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995) was used to control for the expected proportion of false positives, i.e. the false discovery rate (McDonald, 2014). The SPSS syntax for the Benjamini–Hochberg procedure provided by IBM SPSS (<http://www-01.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?uid=swg21476447>) was applied to obtain the desired results. When the false discovery rate of 0.1 was desired, all original 17 significant results were still considered significant after the correction of multiple comparisons. When the false discovery rate of 0.05 was desired, 15 out of the original 17 significant results were still considered significant after the correction of multiple comparisons ( $p = 0.027$  for anxiety7 and  $p = 0.032$  for persuasive attitude1 were not considered significant after the correction of multiple comparisons).

According to the results of effect size, for attitude, the response difference was greatest between males and females for the item (I think of my tutors as reacting positively to my writing) ( $r = 0.291$ ), followed by (I'm satisfied with the essays I have submitted to the tutors) ( $r = 0.261$ ), and (Writing is a very unpleasant experience for me) ( $r = 0.206$ ). For apprehension, the response difference was greatest between males and females for (At times, I find it hard to write what I mean in an essay) ( $r = 0.377$ ), followed by (When I hand in an essay, I know that I'm going to do poorly) ( $r = 0.253$ ), (I expect to do poorly in writing classes, even before I enter them) ( $r = 0.212$ ) and (I feel my heart pounding when I write essays under time constraints) ( $r = 0.146$ ). For self-efficacy, the response difference was greatest between males and females for (I can start writing with no difficulty) ( $r = 0.224$ ), followed by (I believe that I am able to meet the task requirements of the essay) ( $r = 0.219$ ), and (While writing an essay, I can easily generate ideas to write about) ( $r = 0.190$ ). This difference in responses indicates difference in the writing experiences of male and female students.

With regard to narrative and persuasive written text types, the difference was greatest (with a  $p$  value of 0.000) only in items about self-efficacy in writing these two essays, whereas it seemed negligible in all other instances about these text types.

#### **4.1.2 Result of Participants' Writing Competence**

In this section the qualitative data obtained from the participants' overall competence in writing and in the specific components of content, organisation, vocabulary, language and mechanics was computed. This was done by obtaining average scores for their competence in narrative and persuasive texts in each of the five components of interest. The SPSS analysis of the scores for these essays is presented below. Following this, the relationship between the

writing competence and the attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy of the participants is described.

A total of 456 essays, 166 written by males and 290 by females, were obtained from the participants. An expert native-speaker teacher of English who had been teaching English to international students for 30 years assessed all these essays for £2 each. This assessor was employed to mark the writing of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) candidates, which meant she was familiar with the writing performance of non-native students such as the participants in this study. The marking process took over 90 days.<sup>52</sup> To ensure consistency in the scoring of the essays, 30 essays were randomly chosen and marked by another professional teacher of English. The inter-rater reliability was 85%.<sup>53</sup> Because it is time-consuming and costly to have a third marker, this level of reliability (85%) was considered to be acceptable in the current context and, as a consequence, is treated as an indicator that the first marker's assessment was reliable.

In order to be able to draw an informed conclusion about the students' competence, it was useful to determine the average overall mark and the top and bottom marks. This process is described below. The participants' overall writing competence was assessed by adding together their scores on the two writing tasks: narrative and persuasive essays. All the essay scores were calculated in SPSS (version 21). The total scores as well as the scores for all five components (i.e. content, organisation, vocabulary, language and mechanics) were analysed via descriptive statistics in order to calculate the means and standard deviations. The results

---

<sup>52</sup> This is the approximate amount of time it might have taken if the marking days were added together, as the process itself was not continuous because not all the data were collected at the same time: i.e., the essays of the female participants were collected first, and even then the essays did not arrive at the same time since they were from different universities. Thus, the essays were sent to the marker in groups at different times. As these essays were coded with codes matching the relevant questionnaires, the researcher entered the data from the questionnaires while the essays were being assessed and then added the scores of the essays.

<sup>53</sup> Jacobs et al. (1981) explain that the range of reliability coefficients for two raters marking 30 papers is normally between 59 and 92, and it goes up as the number of raters increases.

for writing competence in general and according to each section of the ESL Composition Profile are presented below.

**Table 4.13: Descriptive Statistics of Writing Competence (in General and for the Five Components)**

Overall writing competence	Mean (SD)	Min	Max	Possible range
In general	64.22 (9.93)	39	88.5	0-100
Content	19.18 (3.12)	11	28	0-30
Organisation	12.69 (2.12)	8.5	18.5	0-20
Vocabulary	12.64 (2.06)	8.5	17.5	0-20
Language	16.37 (3.01)	9	22	0-25
Mechanics	3.31 (0.50)	2	4.5	0-5

Note:  $N = 228$ .  $SD =$  standard deviation

As seen in Table 4.13, the overall mean score achieved by the Saudi undergraduates of English was 64 out of 100. The table also shows the means of the scores for all five components of the profile. Accordingly, the participants scored 19 out of 30 for content, 12 out of 20 for organisation, 12 out of 20 for vocabulary, 16 out of 25 for language, and 3 out of 5 for mechanics.

Wilcoxon rank-sum tests were used to determine if there were statistically significant differences according to gender in overall writing competence and for each component of the ESL Composition Profile.

**Table 4.14: Statistical Analysis of Gender Significance for Writing Competence (in General and for the Five Components)**

Overall writing competenc	Male (N=83)	SW test	Female (N=145)	SW test	z	r	p
	Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)				
In general	59.98 (10.16)	0.302	66.64 (8.96)	0.135	4.765	0.316	0.000*
Content	18.08 (3.10)	0.028*	19.81 (2.96)	0.049*	4.048	0.268	0.000*
Organisation	11.73 (2.12)	0.002*	13.23 (1.92)	0.004*	5.267	0.349	0.000*
Vocabulary	11.88 (2.03)	0.000*	13.08 (1.96)	0.000*	4.565	0.302	0.000*
Language	15.26 (3.19)	0.014*	17.01 (2.72)	0.000*	4.150	0.275	0.000*
Mechanics	3.05 (0.48)	0.000*	3.46 (0.46)	0.000*	5.810	0.385	0.000*

Note:  $SW$  test =  $p$ -value from the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality.  $p$  =  $p$ -value of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.  $z$  =  $z$ -score (the standardized test statistic of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test).  $r$  = effect size of Wilcoxon rank-sum test.

The results show that males had lower overall writing competence in each component of the ESL Composition Profile than females, and this difference was statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). Descriptive statistics showing the means for the participants' competence in narrative and persuasive essays are presented in Tables 4.15 and 4.16 below.

**Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Competence for Narrative Essays**

Overall writing competence	Mean (SD) No. (%)	Min	Max	Possible range
In general	64.30 (11.07)	36	94	0-100
Content	19.18 (3.69)	4	30	0-30
Organisation	12.78 (2.45)	7	19	0-20
Vocabulary	12.71 (2.36)	7	18	0-20
Language	16.30 (3.51)	7	22	0-25
Mechanics	3.31 (0.58)	2	5	0-5

*Note: N = 228. SD = standard deviation*

**Table 4.16: Descriptive Statistics of Competence for Persuasive Essays**

Overall writing competence	Mean (SD)	Min	Max	Possible range
In general	64.14 (10.78)	39	92	0-100
Content	19.19 (3.53)	13	28	0-30
Organisation	12.59 (2.41)	7	19	0-20
Vocabulary	12.58 (2.31)	9	18	0-20
Language	16.44 (3.24)	7	23	0-25
Mechanics	3.31 (0.61)	2	5	0-5

*Note: N = 228. SD = standard deviation*

The analysis of the participants' scores for the narrative and persuasive essays reveals that in general the students performed similarly in the essays scores in total and the scores for the profile components. Wilcoxon rank-sum tests were used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference according to gender in narrative and persuasive writing competence in general and in each component of the ESL Composition Profile. The results are shown in Tables 4.17 and 4.18 below.

**Table 4.17: Statistical Analysis of Gender Significance for Narrative Essays Scores (in General and for the Five Components)**

Overall writing competence	Male (N=83) Mean (SD) No. (%)	SW test	Female (N=145) Mean (SD) No. (%)	SW test	Z	r	p
In general	59.01 (11.41)	0.124	67.32 (9.69)	0.279	5.542	0.367	0.000*
Content	17.88 (3.63)	0.000*	19.92 (3.52)	0.000*	4.213	0.279	0.000*
Organisation	11.63 (2.49)	0.000*	13.44 (2.18)	0.000*	5.554	0.368	0.000*
Vocabulary	11.69 (2.26)	0.000*	13.29 (2.23)	0.000*	5.088	0.337	0.000*
Language	14.76 (3.76)	0.001*	17.19 (3.03)	0.000*	4.945	0.327	0.000*
Mechanics	3.06 (0.57)	0.000*	3.45 (0.54)	0.000*	5.126	0.339	0.000*

Note: SW test = p-value from the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality. . z = z-score of the Wilcoxon ranked-sum test. r = effect size. p = p-value of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level

**Table 4.18: Statistical Analysis of Gender Significance for Persuasive Essays Scores (in General and for the Five Components)**

Overall writing competence	Male (N=83) Mean (SD) No. (%)	SW test	Female (N=145) Mean (SD) No. (%)	SW test	Z	r	p
In general	60.94 (11.30)	0.036*	65.97 (10.07)	0.112	3.573	0.237	0.000*
Content	18.28 (3.52)	0.000*	19.71 (3.44)	0.000*	3.088	0.205	0.002*
Organisation	11.84 (2.40)	0.000*	13.02 (2.33)	0.000*	3.897	0.258	0.000*
Vocabulary	12.07 (2.39)	0.000*	12.88 (2.22)	0.000*	3.177	0.210	0.001*
Language	15.76 (3.36)	0.005*	16.83 (3.11)	0.000*	2.361	0.156	0.018*
Mechanics	3.05 (0.60)	0.000*	3.46 (0.57)	0.000*	4.891	0.324	0.000*

Note: SW test = p-value from the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality. z = z-score of the Wilcoxon ranked-sum test. r = effect size.. p = p-value of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level

The results of the analysis indicate that gender was significant in determining the participants' competence in narrative writing and in all the composition profile components used to assess narrative writing. Gender was also statistically significant in relation to the participants' persuasive writing and in some of the composition profile components used to assess persuasive writing. The findings generated from a comparison between the male and female scores in the two written text types show that females outperformed males in the overall scores for the narrative essays and also those for the content, organisation, vocabulary, language and mechanics components of their narrative writing. Likewise,



females achieved higher scores in their persuasive essays, and in their persuasive writing content, organisation and mechanics components. Both males and females achieved similar scores in the vocabulary and language components of their persuasive essays

It was one of the main interests of this study to determine whether there was a relationship between attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding writing in English and actual writing performance. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient test is normally used to determine the relationship between the given variables.<sup>54</sup> In this case, '[A] correlation enables a researcher to ascertain whether, and to what extent, there is a degree of association between two variables' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 516). Table 4.19 shows the Pearson's correlation coefficients between overall writing competence, and attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding writing in English.

**Table 4.19: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for Writing Competence and Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy**

Construct	Overall writing competence
Attitudes	0.101 (0.129)
Apprehension	-0.012 (0.856)
Self-efficacy	0.068 (0.310)

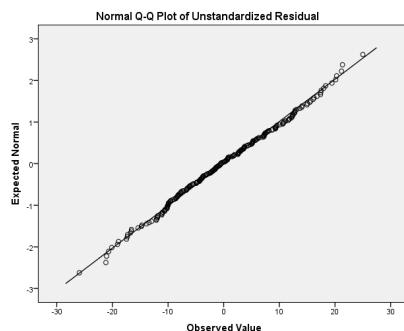
*Note: Numbers in parentheses are p-values.*

The results suggest that overall writing competence was not statistically significantly correlated with attitudes towards writing in English ( $r = 0.101$ ,  $p = 0.129$ ), that it was not statistically significantly correlated with apprehension regarding writing in English ( $r = -0.012$ ,  $p = 0.856$ ), nor was it statistically significantly correlated with self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.068$ ,  $p = 0.310$ ).

<sup>54</sup> Cohen et al. (2007) point out that, 'Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation, one of the best known measures of association, is a statistical value ranging from  $-1.0$  to  $+1.0$  and expresses this relationship in quantitative form. The coefficient is represented by the symbol  $r$ ' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 530). In measuring the relationship between attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy, and writing performance in the current study, the Pearson's correlation coefficient test was used to measure the relationship between more than two variables, i.e., multiple variables.

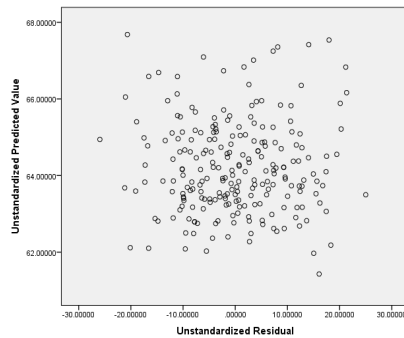
In addition to the Pearson's correlation coefficients, a multiple linear regression,<sup>55</sup> with overall writing competence as the dependent variable, and attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding writing in English as the independent variables, was also undertaken to determine whether the latter could be used to predict overall writing competence.

The VIFs (variance inflation factors) were all less than 10, indicating there was no multicollinearity. The assumptions of the models were checked. The skewness and kurtosis of the residuals in the fitted model were 0.06 and -0.43 respectively. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test meant the null hypothesis that the residuals were from a normal distribution was not rejected ( $p = 0.552$ ), and the QQ plot (Figure 4.2) suggested that the residuals followed a normal distribution. The plot of residuals and fitted values (Figure 4.3) suggested the variance was homogeneous. Thus it is concluded that the assumptions of the model (attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy and writing) were satisfied and hence the model fits the data adequately.



**Figure 4.2: QQ Plot**

<sup>55</sup> Multiple linear regression allows researchers to 'predict and weigh the relationship between two or more explanatory – independent – variables and an explained– dependent – variable' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 539).



**Figure 4.3: Residual Plot**

**Table 4.20: Results of Regression Analysis for Writing Competence and Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy**

Intercept	B	SE	Beta	t	p	VIF
		61.77	4.03		15.33	0.000*
Attitudes	2.86	2.17	0.11	1.32	0.188	1.58
Apprehension	-2.03	2.01	-0.08	-1.01	0.312	0.36
Self-efficacy	0.99	2.09	0.04	0.47	0.637	1.69

*Note: Dependent variable = overall writing competence in general. . B = unstandardized coefficient. SE = standard error, Beta = standardized coefficient, t = t statistic, p = p-value. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

Table 4.20 shows the results of the regression analysis. The value  $R^2 = 0.12$ , indicates that 12% of the variation in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the model. The results of the analysis suggest that there was no statistically significant relationship between overall writing competence and attitudes towards writing in English ( $t(224) = 1.32$ ,  $p = 0.188$ ), or between overall writing competence and apprehension regarding writing in English ( $t(224) = -1.01$ ,  $p = 0.312$ ), or between overall writing competence and self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $t(224) = 0.47$ ,  $p = 0.637$ ). It can be concluded that neither of these variables could be used to predict the participants' writing achievement in English (see Chapter 5).

Pearson's correlation and multiple linear regression tests were also performed to determine whether attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding writing narrative texts

in English correlated with, and could be used to predict, narrative writing competence in general. Table 4.21 shows the Pearson's correlation coefficients between narrative writing competence in general, and attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English.

**Table 4.21: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for Narrative Writing Scores and Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy**

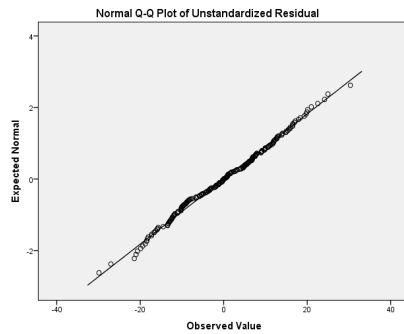
Construct	Narrative writing competence in general
Attitudes towards narrative writing in English	-0.070 (0.291)
Apprehension regarding narrative writing in English	0.078 (0.244)
Self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English	0.035 (0.599)

*Note: Numbers in parentheses are p-values*

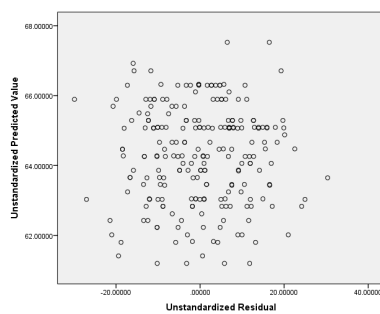
The results suggested that narrative writing competence in general did not have a statistically significant correlation with attitudes towards narrative writing in English ( $r = -0.070$ ,  $p = 0.291$ ), nor with apprehension regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.078$ ,  $p = 0.244$ ), nor did it have a statistically significant correlation with self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.035$ ,  $p = 0.599$ ).

In addition to the Pearson's correlation coefficient test, a multiple linear regression with one dependent variable (competence in narrative writing in English in general), and three independent variables (attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English) was also undertaken. The assumptions of the models were checked. The VIFs were all less than 10, indicating there was no multicollinearity. The skewness and kurtosis of the residuals in the designed regression model were 0.004 and -0.45 respectively. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test meant the null hypothesis that the residuals were from a normal distribution ( $p = 0.491$ ) was not rejected, and the QQ plot (Figure 4.4) suggested that the residuals followed a normal distribution.

The plot of the residuals and the fitted values (Figure 4.5) suggested the variance was homogeneous. Thus it can be concluded that the assumptions of the model were satisfied and hence the model fits the data adequately.



**Figure 4.4: QQ Plot**



**Figure 4.5: Residual Plot**

Table 4.22 shows the results of the regression analysis. The value  $R^2 = 0.13$  indicates that 13% of the variation in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the model.

**Table 4.22: Results of the Regression for Narrative Writing Scores, Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy**

	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>VIF</b>
<b>Intercept</b>	63.66	2.75		23.12	0.000*	
Attitudes towards narrative writing in	-1.63	1.11	0.11	-1.48	0.141	1.15
Apprehension regarding narrative writing in English	1.23	0.98	0.09	1.26	0.211	1.12
Self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English	0.60	1.00	0.04	0.60	0.548	1.20

*Note: Dependent variable = narrative writing competence in general. SE = standard error, B = unstandardized coefficient, SE = standard error, Beta = standardized coefficient, t = t statistic, p = p-value. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

The results of the analysis suggested that there was no relationship between narrative writing competence in general and attitudes towards writing narrative texts in English ( $t(224) = -1.48, p = 0.141$ ) or apprehension regarding writing in English ( $t(224) = 1.26, p = 0.211$ ), nor was there any relationship between narrative writing competence in general and self-efficacy in narrative writing in English ( $t(224) = 0.60, p = 0.548$ ).

Similarly, Pearson's correlation and multiple linear regression tests were undertaken to determine whether attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English correlated with, and could be used to predict, persuasive writing competence in general. Table 4.23 shows the Pearson's correlation coefficients for persuasive writing competence in general, and attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English in particular.

**Table 4.23: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for Persuasive Writing Scores and Attitudes, Apprehension and Self-efficacy**

Construct	Correlation coefficient (p)
Attitudes towards persuasive writing in English	-0.030 (0.657)
Apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English	-0.034 (0.605)
Self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English	0.118 (0.076)

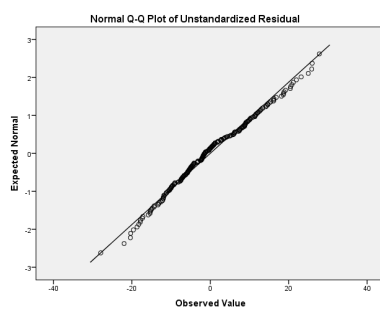
*Note: Numbers in parentheses are p-values*

The results suggested that persuasive writing competence in general did not have a statistically significant correlation with attitudes towards persuasive writing in English ( $r = -0.030, p = 0.657$ ), nor did it have a statistically significant correlation with apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = -0.034, p = 0.605$ ). The analysis did show that self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English correlated with persuasive writing competence in general; however, the level of this correlation was deemed to be insignificant ( $r = 0.118, p = 0.076$ ).

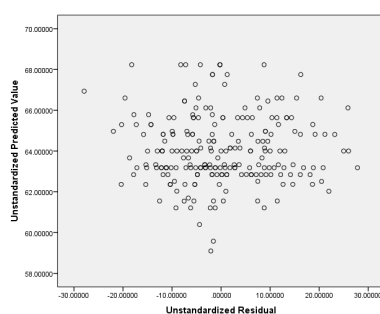
In addition to the Pearson's correlation coefficient test, a multiple linear regression with one dependent variable (persuasive writing competence in general), and three independent

variables (attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English) was also undertaken.

The VIFs were all less than 10, indicating there was no multicollinearity. The assumptions of the models were checked. The skewness and kurtosis of the residuals from the designed regression model were 0.28 and -0.32 respectively. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test meant the null hypothesis that the residuals were from a normal distribution ( $p = 0.070$ ) was not rejected, and the QQ plot (Figure 4.6) suggested that the residuals followed a normal distribution. The plot of residuals and the fitted value (Figure 4.7) suggested the variance was homogeneous. Thus it is concluded that the assumptions of the model were satisfied and hence the model fits the data adequately.



**Figure 4.6: QQ Plot**



**Figure 4.7: Residual Plot**

Table 4.24 shows the regression results. The value  $R^2 = 0.16$  indicates that 16% of the variation in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the model. The analysis results

suggest that there was no relationship between persuasive writing competence in general and attitudes towards persuasive writing in English ( $t(223) = -1.35, p = 0.177$ ). Similarly, there was no relationship between persuasive writing competence in general and apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English ( $t(223) = -0.52, p = 0.604$ ). However, there was a statistically significant relationship between persuasive writing competence in general and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English ( $t(223) = 2.30, p = 0.022$ ). There was a positive relationship between the scores for self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English and persuasive writing competence in general ( $B = 2.45$ ). This suggests that self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English can be used to predict persuasive writing competence in general.

**Table 4.24: Results of the Regression for Persuasive Writing Scores, Attitudes, Apprehension, and Self-efficacy**

Intercept	Parameter estimate	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	VIF
	62.99	2.94		21.45	0.000*	
Attitudes towards persuasive writing in English	-1.63	1.21	-0.11	-1.35	0.177	1.37
Apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English	-0.48	0.93	-0.04	-0.52	0.604	1.07
Self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English	2.45	1.07	0.17	2.30	0.022*	1.31

*Note: Dependent variable = persuasive writing competence in general. SE = standard error, B = unstandardized coefficient, Beta = standardized coefficient, t = t statistic, p = p-value. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

In summary, regarding the relationship between psychology and the EFL writing of Saudi students, the analysis clearly shows that attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy are not direct determinants of students' performance in writing in general or in narrative and persuasive writing in particular. One exception is the positive influence of self-efficacy of writing persuasive essays on predicting performance. However, this relationship appeared non-significant when the prediction model included the participants' gender as one of the



predicting variables. Tables 4.25, 4.26, and 4.27 show the result when the regression models include gender as an independent variable. The coding of gender in the regression was 0 = male and 1 = female. In each regression model, male was the reference group. Therefore, the regression coefficient of gender indicates the difference between male and female.

Table 4.25 shows the regression results of multiple linear regression with the overall writing competence in general as the dependent variable, gender, attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy as the independent variables. The  $R^2 = 0.34$ , indicates that 34% of the variation in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the model.

The analysis results suggest that there was no relationship between overall writing competence in general and attitudes regarding writing in English ( $t(223) = 0.51, p = 0.612$ ), between overall writing competence in general and apprehension regarding writing in English ( $t(223) = -1.53, p = 0.128$ ), and between overall writing competence in general and self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $t(223) = 0.22, p = 0.824$ ). There was a statistically significant relationship between overall writing competence in general and gender ( $t(223) = 5.01, p = 0.000$ ). In particular, female's overall writing competence in general was 6.85 units higher than male's. The VIFs were all less than 10, indicating there was no multicollinearity.

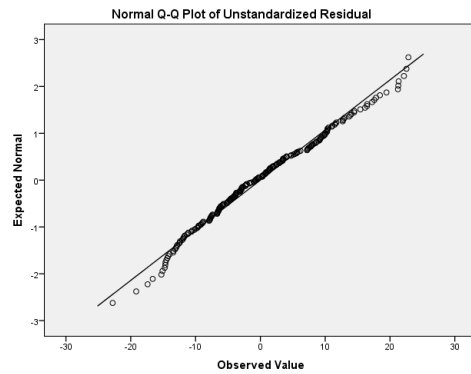
**Table 4.25: Results of the Regression for Writing, Attitudes, Apprehension, Self-efficacy, and Gender**

	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>VIF</b>
<b>Intercept</b>	63.30	3.84		16.48	0.000*	
Attitudes regarding writing in English	1.06	2.08	0.04	0.51	0.612	1.63
Apprehension regarding writing in English	-2.93	1.91	-0.11	-1.53	0.128	1.37
Self-efficacy regarding writing in English	0.44	1.99	0.02	0.22	0.824	1.70
Gender	6.85	1.37	0.33	5.01	0.000*	1.11

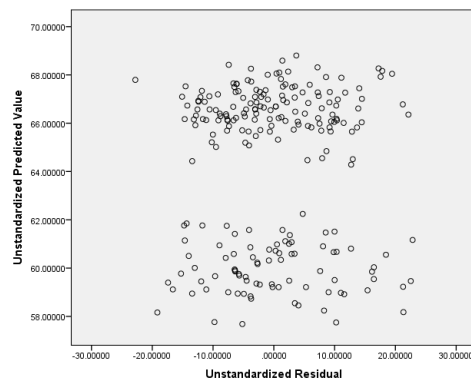
*Note: Dependent variable = overall writing competence in general. B = unstandardized coefficient, SE = standard error, Beta = standardized coefficient, t = t statistic, p = p-value. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

The assumptions of the models were checked. The skewness and kurtosis of the residuals from the fitted model were 0.29 and -0.44, respectively. The Shapiro-Wilk test rejected the null hypothesis that the residuals were from a normal distribution ( $p = 0.021$ ) but

the QQ plot (Figure 4.8) suggested that the residuals seemed to follow a normal distribution. The plot of residuals and fitted values (Figure 4.9) suggested the variance was homogeneous. Thus we concluded that the assumptions of the model were satisfied and hence the fitted model was adequate.



**Figure 4.8: QQ Plot**



**Figure 4.9: Residual Plot**

Gender was also included as an independent variable in predicting performance in writing narrative essay. Multiple linear regression was conducted with narrative writing competence as the dependent variable and gender, attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy regarding narrative writing as the independent variables. Table 4.26 shows the regression results. The  $R^2 = 0.38$ , indicates that 38% of the variation in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the model. The analysis results suggest that there was no relationship between narrative writing competence in general and attitudes toward narrative writing in

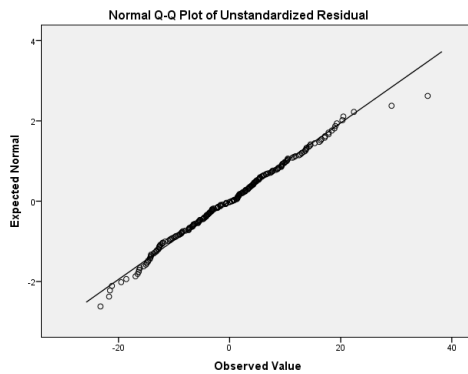
English ( $t(223) = -0.95, p = 0.343$ ), no relationship between narrative writing competence in general and apprehension regarding narrative writing in English ( $t(223) = 1.18, p = 0.238$ ), and no relationship between narrative writing competence in general and narrative writing self-efficacy ( $t(223) = -0.80, p = 0.425$ ). There was a statistically significant relationship between narrative writing competence in general and gender ( $t(223) = 5.72, p = 0.000$ ). In particular, females narrative writing competence in general was 8.45 units higher than males (Table 4.26). The VIFs were all less than 10, indicating there was no multicollinearity.

**Table 4.26: Results of the Regression for Narrative Writing, Attitudes, Apprehension, Self-efficacy, and Gender**

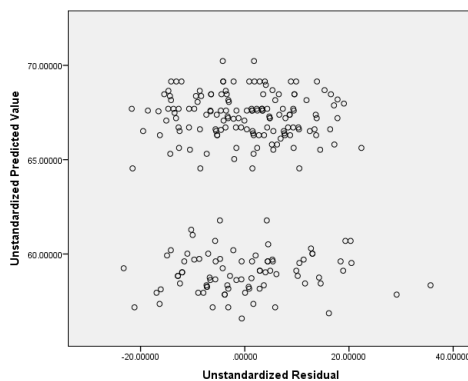
	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>VIF</b>
<b>Intercept</b>	60.29	2.64		22.81	0.000*	
attitudes regarding narrative writing in English	-0.99	1.04	-0.06	-0.95	0.343	1.16
apprehension regarding narrative writing in English	1.09	0.92	0.08	1.18	0.238	1.12
self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English	-0.77	0.97	-0.06	-0.80	0.425	1.28
Gender	8.45	1.47	0.37	5.72	0.000*	1.08

*Note: Dependent variable = narrative writing competence in general. B = unstandardized coefficient, SE = standard error, Beta = standardized coefficient, t = t statistic, p = p-value. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

The assumptions of the models were checked. The skewness and kurtosis of the residuals from the fitted model were 0.24 and -0.04, respectively. The Shapiro-Wilk test did not reject the null hypothesis that the residuals were from a normal distribution ( $p = 0.232$ ) and the QQ plot (Figure 4.10) suggested that the residuals seemed to follow a normal distribution. The plot of residuals and fitted values (Figure 4.11) suggested the variance was homogeneous. Thus we concluded that the assumptions of the model were satisfied and hence the fitted model was adequate.



**Figure 4.10: QQ Plot**



**Figure 4.11: Residual Plot**

Multiple linear regression was also conducted with regard to persuasive essay with persuasive writing performance being the dependent variable, and gender, attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing as the independent variables. Table 4.27 shows the regression results. The  $R^2 = 0.25$ , indicates that 25% of the variation in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the model. The analysis results suggest that there was no relationship between persuasive writing competence in general and persuasive attitudes regarding writing in English ( $t(223) = -1.43, p = 0.153$ ), no relationship between persuasive writing competence in general and apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English ( $t(223) = -0.32, p = 0.751$ ), no relationship between persuasive writing competence in general and persuasive self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $t(223) = 1.55, p = 0.123$ ).

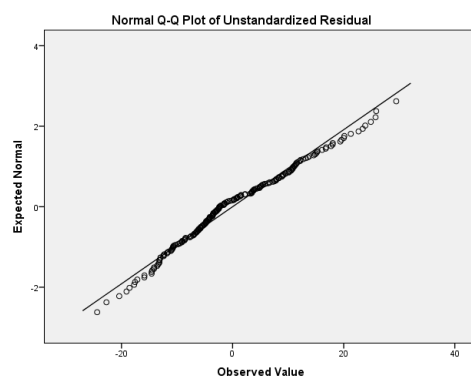
However, there was a statistically significant relationship between persuasive writing competence in general and gender ( $t(223) = 3.03, p = 0.003$ ). In particular, females persuasive writing competence in general was 4.58 units higher than males (Table 4.27). The VIFs were all less than 10, indicating there was no multicollinearity.

**Table 4.27: Results of The Regression for Persuasive Writing, Attitudes, Apprehension, Self-efficacy, and Gender**

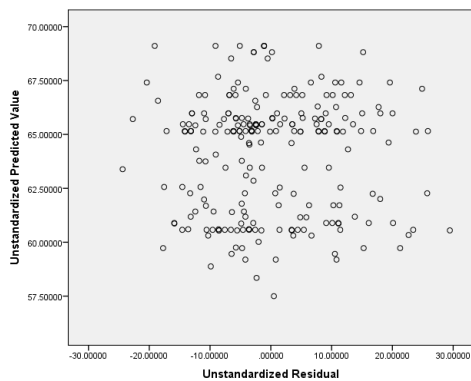
	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>VIF</b>
<b>Intercept</b>	61.50	2.93		21.02	0.000*	
Attitudes regarding persuasive writing in English	-1.70	1.18	-0.11	-1.43	0.153	1.37
Apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English	-0.29	0.92	-0.02	-0.32	0.751	1.07
Persuasive self-efficacy regarding writing in English	1.67	1.08	0.12	1.55	0.123	1.38
Gender	4.58	1.51	0.21	3.03	0.003*	1.08

*Note: Dependent variable = persuasive writing competence in general. B = unstandardized coefficient, SE = standard error, Beta = standardized coefficient, t = t statistic, p = p-value. \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.*

The assumptions of the models were checked. The skewness and kurtosis of the residuals from the fitted model were 0.40 and -0.24, respectively. The Shapiro-Wilk test rejected the null hypothesis that the residuals were from a normal distribution ( $p = 0.005$ ) but the QQ plot (Figure 4.12) suggested that the residuals seemed to follow a normal distribution. The plot of residuals and fitted values (Figure 4.13) suggested the variance was homogeneous. Thus we concluded that the assumptions of the model were satisfied and hence the fitted model was adequate.



**Figure 4.12: QQ Plot**



**Figure 4.13: Residual Plot**

Further analysis was conducted to show inter-relationships among variables. Tables 4.28 shows the Pearson's correlation matrix of overall writing competence in general, attitudes regarding writing in English, apprehension regarding writing in English, self-efficacy regarding writing in English, narrative writing competence in general, attitudes regarding narrative writing in English, apprehension regarding narrative writing in English, self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English, persuasive writing competence in general, attitudes regarding persuasive writing in English, apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English, and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English, for male (top right triangle) and female (bottom left triangle).

**Table 4.28: Pearson's Correlation Matrix Split by Gender**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1		-0.125	-0.108	-0.128	0.896**	-0.177	-0.031	-0.237	0.894**	0.000	-0.051	0.035
2	0.087		0.533**	0.619**	-0.046	0.271*	0.241*	0.299**	-0.178	0.392**	0.356**	0.333**
3	-0.078	0.285**		0.593**	-0.057	0.140	0.352**	0.215	-0.137	0.130	0.370**	0.179
4	0.067	0.521**	0.348**		-0.065	0.314**	0.297**	0.312**	-0.164	0.335**	0.237*	0.292**
5	0.903**	0.017	-0.143	0.062		-0.178	-0.089	-0.245*	0.603**	0.028	0.025	0.106
6	0.009	0.188*	0.082	0.093	0.004		0.341**	0.463**	-0.140	0.044	0.189	0.041
7	0.178*	0.230**	0.080	0.049	0.148	0.161		0.380**	0.034	0.054	0.219*	0.058
8	0.099	0.318**	0.227**	0.373**	0.060	0.290**	0.243**		-0.180	0.034	0.235*	0.227*
9	0.911**	0.138	-0.002	0.060	0.646**	0.013	0.174*	0.118		-0.029	-0.116	-0.044
10	-0.092	0.078	0.100	0.259**	-0.084	-0.095	0.022	0.014	-0.082		0.121	0.495**
11	0.000	0.166	0.323**	0.198*	-0.022	-0.018	0.206*	0.115	0.022	0.328**		0.204
12	0.108	0.154	0.118	0.314**	0.074	-0.091	0.051	0.185*	0.121	0.457**	0.130	

Note: male (top right triangle), while female (bottom left triangle)\*\* indicates significance at the 0.01 level; \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.

1 = Overall writing competence in general, 2 = Attitudes regarding writing in English, 3 = Anxiety regarding writing in English, 4 = Self-efficacy regarding writing in English, 5 = Narrative writing competence in general, 6 = Narrative attitudes regarding writing in English, 7 = Narrative anxiety regarding writing in English, 8 = Narrative self-efficacy regarding writing in English, 9 = Persuasive writing competence in general, 10 = Persuasive attitudes regarding writing in English, 11 = Persuasive anxiety regarding writing in English, 12 = Persuasive self-efficacy regarding writing in English

For male participants, the results suggest that there was a statistically significantly positive correlation between overall writing competence in general and, narrative writing competence in general ( $r = 0.896$ ) and persuasive writing competence in general ( $r = 0.894$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between attitudes regarding writing in English, and apprehension regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.533$ ), self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.619$ ), attitudes regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.271$ ), apprehension regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.241$ ), self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.299$ ), attitudes regarding persuasive writing in

English ( $r = 0.392$ ), apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.356$ ), and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.333$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between apprehension regarding writing in English and, self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.593$ ), apprehension regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.352$ ), and apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.370$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between self-efficacy regarding writing in English and, attitudes regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.314$ ), apprehension regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.297$ ), self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.312$ ), attitudes regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.335$ ), apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.237$ ), and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.292$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between narrative writing competence in general and persuasive writing competence in general ( $r = 0.603$ ). There was a statistically significantly negative correlation between narrative writing competence in general and narrative self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $r = -0.245$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between attitudes regarding narrative writing in English and, apprehension regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.341$ ), and self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.463$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between apprehension regarding narrative writing in English and, self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.380$ ), and apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.219$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English and, apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.235$ ) and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.227$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between attitudes regarding



persuasive writing in English and self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.495$ ).

For female participants, the results suggest that there was a statistically significantly positive correlation between apprehension regarding writing in English and attitudes regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.285$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between self-efficacy regarding writing in English and, attitudes regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.521$ ) and apprehension regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.348$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between narrative writing competence in general and overall writing competence in general ( $r = 0.903$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between attitudes regarding narrative writing in English and attitudes regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.188$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between apprehension regarding narrative writing in English and, overall writing competence in general ( $r = 0.178$ ) and attitudes regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.230$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English, and attitudes regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.318$ ), apprehension regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.227$ ), self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.373$ ), attitudes regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.290$ ), and apprehension regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.243$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between persuasive writing competence in general, and overall writing competence in general ( $r = 0.911$ ), narrative writing competence in general ( $r = 0.646$ ), and apprehension regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.174$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between attitudes regarding persuasive writing in English and self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.259$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between apprehension regarding persuasive writing in English, and apprehension regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.323$ ), self-efficacy regarding

writing in English ( $r = 0.198$ ), apprehension regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.206$ ), and attitudes regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.328$ ). There was a statistically significantly positive correlation between self-efficacy regarding persuasive writing in English and, self-efficacy regarding writing in English ( $r = 0.314$ ), self-efficacy regarding narrative writing in English ( $r = 0.185$ ), and attitudes regarding persuasive writing in English ( $r = 0.457$ ).

This table concludes section 4.1, which has presented the quantitative analysis of the closed-ended items in the questionnaire and of the writing scores. The analyses of the participants' responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire are presented in Section 4.2 below.

## 4.2 Qualitative Analysis of Data

Analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions is largely qualitative; however, quantitative analysis was used to support findings from the analysis. The participants' responses to the open-ended question 1 were classified and entered as numerical data in SPSS, whereas thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data generated by the open-ended question 2.<sup>56</sup> In the responses to the open-ended questions, the data that demonstrated repeated patterns of meaning was identified. Below is a presentation of the findings from the participants' responses to each question.

### 4.2.1. Result of Open-ended Question 1

#### **Which kind of these essays (narrative or persuasive) would you prefer to write? Why?**

In response to this question, 225 participants revealed their preferred written text type. However, only 168 of the participants gave the reasons behind their preference. These

---

<sup>56</sup> Thematic analysis is 'a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun and Clarke 2006: 6).

responses were coded and counted in SPSS,<sup>57</sup> and are presented as descriptive statistics in Table 4.29 below.

**Table 4.29: Frequency Counts and Percentages for Responses to Preferred Text Type**

Response Type	Responses No. (%)
Narrative Essays	107 (48)
Persuasive Essays	77 (34)
No preference	7 (3)
No answer	8 (3)
I like both	26 (12)
Total	225

*Note: Percentages are given in parentheses.*

The descriptive analysis showed that the majority of the students (48%) preferred to write narrative to persuasive essays (34%). Only a small number (12%) indicated that they liked writing both types of essay, while a minority (3%) reported they had no preference at all when it came to written text types.

With regard to the difference between narrative and persuasive essays, the participants' choices appeared to be built on their understanding of the requirements of writing each of these text types. For example, in response to the second part of open question 1 about the reasons behind their preferences for a certain text type, the participants made it clear that ease and interest were the characteristics that most influenced their choices. Some participants referred to flexibility, creativity, and freedom as the features that make the chosen essay type easier and more appealing to them. Therefore, these features were grouped under the 'easiness' category. Other participants acknowledged that they chose a particular written text type because they had a greater ability to write essays of this text type than the other. A few participants indicated that their preference for one of the given text types was related to the overall usefulness of this text type. These reasons were grouped under specific themes and are presented in Table 4.30 (see also Chapter Five).

<sup>57</sup> In SPSS, 1 = narrative essays, 2 = persuasive essays, 3 = no preference, 4 = no given answer, 5 = I like both.

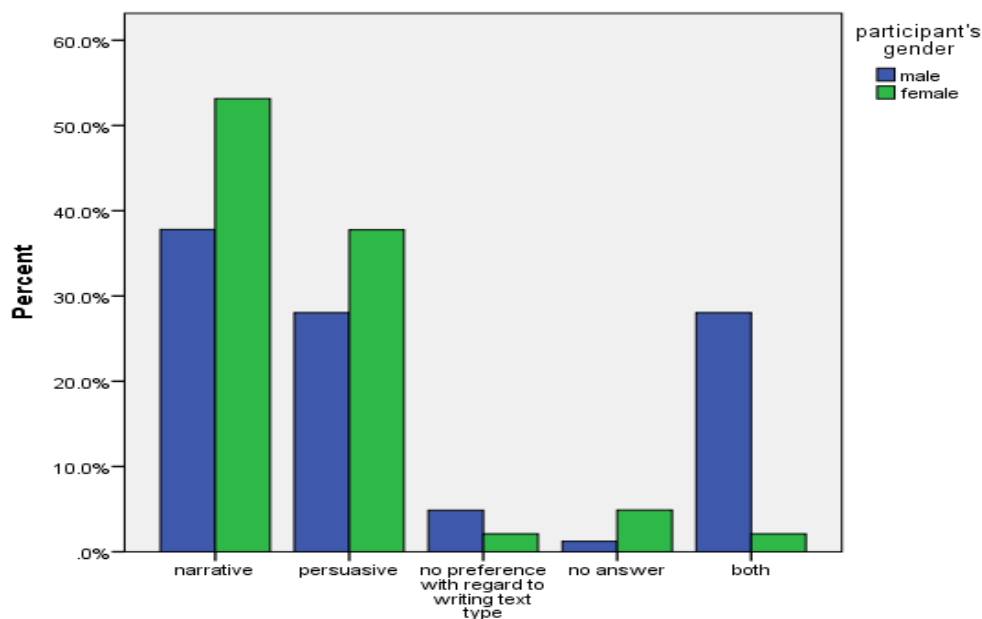
**Table 4.30: Participants' Reasons for their Preference of Text Type**

Reasons for Preferences		Responses No. (%)
Narrative Written Text Type	Interest	19 (M =10, F = 9)
	Ease	69 (M =30, F =39)
	Ability	6 (M =2, F = 4)
	Total	94 (M = 42 , F =52)
Persuasive Written Text Type	Interest	20 (M =7, F = 13)
	Ease	37 (M =20, F = 17)
	Ability	12 (M = 8, F = 4)
	Usefulness (It offers information and suggestions for the readers)	5 (M =3, F = 2)
	Total	74 (M =38, F = 36)

*Note: M = Male, and F = Female*

It is clear from the table that the three most common reasons reflecting the participants' preference for writing either narrative or persuasive texts can be grouped into three themes. Usefulness, although not frequently reported, was only mentioned in the responses of those who chose persuasive essays. Ease was the most frequent reason given for preferring to write either narrative or persuasive essays, followed by interest. More females found writing narrative essays easy, and referred to their ability in writing this type of written text. The responses regarding persuasive essays were similar to those for narrative writing. In other words, the easiness of writing this type of essay was the most commonly reported reason, followed by interest. This time, more males referred to persuasive writing as easy and indicated their ability in writing this type. However, as seen in the table, there was no significant difference in the numbers of responses according to gender. As a consequence, it cannot be concluded that male participants were more in favour of persuasive writing, whereas females were more in favour of narrative writing, though there may have been tendencies in that regard. There were more similarities than differences between the two

genders in the written text types they preferred and the reasons they gave. This is also apparent in Figure 4.14, where both males and females demonstrated similar trends in their responses. Finally, only five participants linked persuasive writing with usefulness on the grounds that, in their view, it demonstrates the writer's opinions and offers information for readers. Further analysis was conducted to find out whether the participants differed in their preference for text type depending on their gender. The results of the analysis are presented in the bar chart below.



**Figure 4.14: Percentage of Gender Responses to the Preferred Text Type**

It was found that the gender of the participants did not influence their preference for text type. In other words, males and females followed similar patterns in their preferences for narrative and persuasive essays, although they had an unequal emphasis on these patterns, i.e., more number of females opted for narrative and persuasive essays than males. In general, the bar chart clearly indicates that the majority of both males (37.8%) and females (53.1%) liked writing narrative essays more than persuasive essays. However, an equal number of males (28%) had a preference for writing persuasive essays and for writing both narrative and

persuasive essays. Compared to females (2.1%), it is clear that more males claimed to like both text types.

#### **4.2.2 Result of Open-ended Question 2**

**Final question on the questionnaire: Your additional comments on your writing attitudes and beliefs are welcome. Please write them below.**

The participants were given the opportunity to express any additional attitudes or beliefs they held about writing in English in general. Out of 228 participants, 81 participants, 29 males and 52 females, answered this question. Only a few students directly articulated negative attitudes by stating that they disliked writing and found it boring. The rest indicated positive attitudes toward writing and supported the quantitative data; in particular, they reported that they liked writing and found it fun and interesting. They showed their awareness of its importance to their progress in English and indicated that writing is a means of expression and communication. They also expressed their desire to learn more vocabulary to improve their writing and acquire professionalism. More interestingly, instead of stating attitudes towards writing itself, some of the participants commented on certain issues that, they believed, needed further consideration by their writing tutors. This behaviour was acknowledged as one of the advantages of open-ended questions for giving participants an opportunity to introduce issues that matter to them (Cohen et al. 2007). The issues the participants introduced included: writing topics, the writing curriculum, teaching methodology and timed writing activities.

#### **4.3 Chapter Overview**

In this chapter the data analysis procedure and the results have been presented. The results suggest that the Saudi undergraduates of English who took part in the research had positive attitudes towards writing in English in general. They only felt moderate apprehension about

writing in English, and their self-efficacy indicates that they believed that they were quite capable of writing well in English. Despite these promising findings, the students' competence in writing was below an acceptable level, and was thus unsatisfactory. As in their general performance in writing, the participants scored poorly on all the writing components: content, organisation, vocabulary, language and mechanics. Correlational tests were employed to see whether there was any relationship between attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy and overall writing competence. The results indicated that the students' attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy did not determine their performance in writing. This result was consistent for all aspects of narrative essays. Only self-efficacy appeared to be a significant predictor of performance in persuasive writing, when the gender variable was controlled.

The detailed analysis revealed that participants' gender influenced their responses to the questionnaire and their overall writing performance. In their responses to the questionnaire, although the participants in general demonstrated positive attitudes, those of males were higher. In relation to apprehension, females were more apprehensive than males who demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy. However, the statistical assessment of actual achievement showed that females scored higher in the two writing tasks. The participants as a whole agreed that they preferred to write narrative essays over persuasive essays when they wrote in English. The investigation of their performance in these two essays revealed that female participants performed slightly better in writing narrative essays than persuasive essays, whereas male participants performed better in persuasive essays than narrative essays. Nonetheless, these differences were not statistically significant.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings**

This chapter interprets the findings reported in the previous chapter in the light of the literature and the main research question of the study. The interpretation is presented according to each of the three psychological characteristics: attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy. Participants' writing competence is also discussed, with relation to previous research in which similar samples have been used. Additionally, issues related to attitudes that emerged during the investigation are covered.

### **5.1 The Influence of Psychology on Writing: General Discussion**

It is widely believed that attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy significantly influence writing competence and that research focusing on them would help in understanding learners' performance in writing. However, the analysis of data from the current research failed to corroborate the tenets of this notion of psychology. The results imply that these theoretical constructs have no relevance to writing performance in this specific EFL context. This suggests that improving attitudes, increasing self-efficacy and reducing apprehension would not necessarily lead to improved writing, and teachers should not rely on these constructs alone to explain writing behaviour or to increase the competence of the students. This result does not discount the importance of these psychological characteristics in the writing classroom, but raises an interesting question regarding their function in practice in this cultural context as opposed to others. This offers additional support to Li's (2012) argument that different social norms and cultural values may render the prevailing theories in the West less than useful in explaining learners' performance in other contexts. As attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy are western-created constructs, they may have little relevance to the writing of Saudi learners of English. This is because the practical role of writing in EFL differs dramatically from that in an L1 context. The way learners view and value writing and how they behave in relation to writing is certainly unlike the views and behaviour of



native speakers. In the current study, conducted in the Saudi context, the participants' experiences and views on the importance of writing in their daily lives probably contributed to the formation of their attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy concerning writing. They may have reached a certain limited level of competence but felt complacent about and satisfied with it since it was sufficient to achieve the goals they had set for themselves, i.e. the passing grade for the course. Moreover, the students' attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy need to reach a certain minimum in order to be reflected in performance. It could therefore be argued that these factors need to be tested on learners of higher level of competence to find out if they are dependent on a specific level of writing. This suggests that these theories need further examination if they are to be applicable to contexts similar to that of the current study. It may be assumed that in such contexts, other factors have a stronger impact on writing than attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy. In the case of the current study, the participants' gender appears to have been a determinant of writing performance and of the students' attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy. Although the above interpretations apply to the three constructs in general, it is helpful to examine the findings in the light of each of the three factors separately so as to determine the reasons for the difference between the results of the current research and those of other studies.

### **5.1.1 Attitudes**

The investigation of the Saudi students' attitudes towards writing revealed that they viewed writing positively. They had positive attitudes towards writing narrative essays and neutral attitudes towards writing persuasive essays. However, in contrast to past studies (e.g. Kotula et al. 2014; Graham et al. 2007; Knudson 1995), which reported a relationship between attitudes and performance in writing in an L1 context, the students' attitudes were not reflected in their performance in writing, neither in general nor, specifically, regarding the two written text types (narrative and persuasive) used in this research.

One possible explanation for the lack of a correlation between attitudes and writing performance may be the type of attitudes the students had developed previous to taking part in the study. In Saudi Arabia, learners of English have few opportunities to practise writing in English outside the classroom. Aware of this paucity of real EFL writing practice, students mistakenly believe that, outside of the educational contexts, there are no benefits to be expected from mastering EFL writing, especially in the labour market. This awareness might have supported the development of what are known as abstract attitudes: students conform to the dominant attitude towards writing as an important element of English language skills without actively working towards achieving improvements in their writing.<sup>58</sup> This means that although the students in the current research had developed positive attitudes towards writing, these attitudes did not lead to the behaviour and performance that would be expected according to previous research into the relevance of attitudes to language achievement.

Abstract attitudes can be detected in the data collected for the current study. For instance, the responses to the closed-ended items demonstrated favourable writing attitudes, whereas the participants' disagreement with item 24 ('I usually seek every possible chance to write essays in English outside of the lesson limitations') suggests that these attitudes do not extend to any planned or self-regulated effort by the participants. Those participants showed a behaviour pattern that conflicts with their positive attitudes and contradicts the claim of Graham et al. (2007) that students with positive attitudes frequently practise writing in their daily lives, even if they are not required to do so. The difference between results may be due to the fact that the study by Graham et al. was conducted with native speakers among whom such a connection between writing attitudes and behaviour seems to exist. Given the lack of

---

<sup>58</sup> As discussed in section 2.1.1.4, researchers established that some attitudes do not lead to the desired outcome such as an improvement in skills and performance because they are inconsequential in that they only represent ideological belief about the attitude object, writing in this case, that do not associate with achievement. It seems that this attitude, although positive, is not strong enough to guide behaviour and influence performance. It is interesting to note that this type of attitude is more commonly held by some ethnic groups.

purposeful EFL essay writing in the participants' everyday context, these responses suggest that unless opportunities for writing practice are offered in their course of study,<sup>59</sup> positive attitudes will not suffice to motivate students to allocate time to writing and make an effort to adopt the kind of behaviour that will compensate for any deficiency in their writing skills, for instance, writing essays.

A second explanation for why this study's results differ from past investigations' in terms of the correlation between attitudes and achievement in writing may be that there is in fact no direct cause-effect relationship and that the link reported previously is based on how attitudes were defined, and, as a consequence, measured. Past researchers used various different concepts when measuring attitudes. Some studies focused only on the affective aspect of attitudes (e.g. Graham et al. 2012, 2007; Kear et al. 2000), others included constructs like self-efficacy and knowledge about writing within the factor of attitudes (e.g. Kotula et al. 2014; Knudson 1995; Wolcott and Bhur 1987), and some of those conducted in EFL contexts (Erkan and Saban 2011) employed a writing block scale (which contains items about blocking, lateness, premature editing, strategies for complexity in addition to attitudes) to measure attitudes. The current study, in contrast, employed the tripartite model (see Section 2.1.1.3) of attitudes. It can be argued that the positive relationship between attitudes and achievement in those investigations is a result of too narrow definitions and, thus, measures that do not reflect attitudes from the tripartite model but represent overlapping components that could indeed have influence on writing in their research contexts. For example, knowledge about writing and past writing practices were treated as elements of attitudes and could predict writing achievement in the study of Wolcott and Bhur.

---

<sup>59</sup> Although this may be true in the participants' case, there is too little evidence for a general conclusion like this. Indeed, although the participants reported that they do not write essays in English outside their class context, it is possible that they write other texts, e.g. writing to pen-friends, in an attempt to hone their EFL writing skills. This possibility of engaging in other forms of writing in English only occurred to the researcher when the questionnaires had already been filled in.

In addition to the attitudes instrument per se, the writing tasks and the scoring systems may be another explanation for the present result and its deviation from the findings of other contributions. Studies investigating native English speakers' writing performance tested the participants' skills in composing expository (e.g. Wolcott and Bhur 1985) and narrative essays (Graham et al 2007; Knudson 1995), while studies in EFL contexts (e.g. Erkan and Saban 2011) used writing sections that were extracted from general English achievement tests. Unlike these studies, the present work sought to test performance using two prompts of different levels of complexity. It is possible that a writing-attitudes relationship is content dependent, which means that performance in some writing types and prompts correlate with attitudes, while other writing contents do not.

Moreover, writing scores were obtained in a way different from the assessment measures applied in other studies. This means that the criteria for writing quality differs in this study from that in past investigation. A holistic assessment scale of seven points or less which focused on certain writing skills such as purpose and audience, was used to assess writing performance in these (e.g. Graham et al. 2007; Knudson 1995), whereas the current study used a more analytical scoring scheme ranging from 0 to 100, specifically tailored to measuring the five writing skills of non-native speaker students (the ESL profile). This detailed assessment affected how writing scores were calculated. In other words, due to the more detailed analysis, results, i.e. students' scores, are likely to reflect their abilities far more accurately than the assessment scales used in past research. These low scores of the participants, as a consequence, did not correlate with their positive attitudes.

In brief, the finding of the current study implies that the relationship between attitudes and writing performance is more complex than previously suggested and cannot be easily

determined. This lends further support to Daly's (1978) explanation that attitudes and performance can be independent areas in writing, and may not be significantly related.<sup>60</sup>

With respect to the attitude sources, as attitudes are developed through experiences (see section 2.1.1.2), it seems that the writing attitudes demonstrated by the participants were developed as the result of positive past writing experiences. It is also possible that those attitudes were adopted ready-made as a means of showing conformity with the common attitude, if there is any, of the English department and of showing awareness of the importance of writing in the programme of study of these participants.

### **5.1.2 Apprehension**

The student participants demonstrated a moderate level of writing apprehension. Moderate writing apprehension has been reported in previous studies involving Saudi EFL students (Aljafen 2013; Alnufaie and Grenfell 2013). However, unlike findings in an L1 context (e.g. Daly and Miller 1975a, 1975b) and some ESL/EFL contexts (e.g. Al Asmari 2013; Daud and Abu Kassim 2005), this study found that the participants' apprehension had no statistically significant influence on their general writing competence or on their performance in narrative and persuasive text types. This finding is in line with the results of Fowler and Kroll (1980) in an L1 context, and of Lee (2005, 2002), Choi (2013) and Saadat and Dastgerdi (2014) in an EFL context.

The participants differed in their apprehension level according to the text type they were writing. In the literature, certain text types have been acknowledged as producing higher levels of apprehension than other text types. Previous research (e.g. Faigly et al. 1981) found that the narrative essay, because it requires the involvement of personal feelings and experiences, gives rise to higher levels of apprehension than persuasive essays. The findings

---

<sup>60</sup> In the article 'Writing Apprehension and Writing Competency', Daly (1978) referred to apprehension as partially representing attitudes.

of the current study do not confirm the results of previous research, however. The participants reported that they were unsure whether they would feel apprehensive during narrative writing, which suggests moderate apprehension, but they agreed that they do feel apprehensive when they write persuasive essays. This implies that the participants are less apprehensive when expressing their feelings and experiences than when trying to persuade the reader. This difference could be due to a difference in difficulty. In persuasive writing, the students are expected to develop a logical argument to present their viewpoint and convince their readers: this probably requires a higher level of competence. This difference between the levels of apprehension of the participants who took part in this project and those in the study by Faigly et al. may be indicative of a difference in the perception of the difficulty of writing certain text types by native and non-native writers. Despite the dissimilarities in apprehension levels concerning these text types, apprehension had no impact on the writing of either narrative or persuasive essays by the Saudi participants.

Different factors could account for the lack of a relationship between writing apprehension and performance. One of them is related to the reported *level* of apprehension. Since the moderate apprehension of the participants in the current study did not impede or improve their achievement, it may be suggested that moderate apprehension is not influential and that apprehension levels need either to be significantly high or significantly low to affect the writing performance of students.

Another interpretation regarding the lack of relationship between apprehension and performance pertains to the difference between the writing tasks and assessment in this research and those in the participants' course of study, and how the participants perceived the questions in the questionnaire. Whilst not known explicitly, the researcher conjectures the possibility that the participants had become familiar with specific writing activities during the

course of their studies, which differed from the two writing tasks used in this research, thus reported apprehension with those activities in mind. As a result, their apprehension level might not necessarily be associated with their performance in the writing tasks employed in this research. This interpretation could also be relevant to the lack of a relationship between positive attitudes, self-efficacy and writing performance.

The assessment rubric might also have contributed to the results regarding apprehension. There is evidence that EFL tutors of writing focus only on mechanics and ignore cohesion and coherence in their students' writing (Atari 1998), whereas the rubric used in this study for essay marking followed structured analytical criteria modelled after reliable international language tests. That being the case, the participants' lack of familiarity with the ESL Composition Profile and, thus, lack of awareness of the different criteria used for marking their essays, their apprehension level cannot have been high enough to be reflected in their performance.

Age is likely to have been another factor contributing to the lack of relationship between writing apprehension and performance. It is possible that the influence of apprehension on performance diminishes as students age (Bowman 2000). As university students, the participants had some control over their apprehension, which will have limited its influence on their writing. The students stated that they did not feel apprehensive when they attended a writing class. This willingness to take the writing course in the first place, as noted by Lee (2002), could have weakened the influence of apprehension on writing even in assessment situations. Being undergraduate students of English, the participants must have been aware that writing would be one of the activities in their programme of study, and thus they might have been able to control their apprehension to the extent that it did not affect their performance, especially in low stakes circumstances, which do not provoke

apprehension in the same way as when students write for course assessment. In the current study, the writing practices were for research purposes only and did neither represent a significant contribution to their final course assessment, nor were they assessed by their course teachers. It is therefore possible that the students' apprehension level did not affect their performance in carrying out these tasks. The only two situations in which the students reported that they felt highly apprehensive were, firstly, writing for assessment, which is the only function of writing in their context, and, secondly, being required to write an essay within a limited time frame. Writing under time constraints provoked significantly higher levels of apprehension than a fear of evaluation. This offers support to the above interpretation that apprehension is likely to have an influence on writing in high stakes circumstances, i.e., when the students' success depends on the quality of writing. As a result, this leads to an important methodological consideration: the relationship between apprehension and performance should be examined in an actual learning context. For example, future research can look into apprehension in situations when writing is assessed as part of the learning course.

In the light of this result, it should be emphasised that not all writing contexts are the same and the finding that apprehension had no influence on writing in the current context does not mean that learners' apprehension should be ignored in writing classes.

### **5.1.3 Writing Self-efficacy**

The current examination revealed that the Saudi EFL students who participated in the study perceived themselves as capable in writing in English. In other words, they were efficacious about their abilities as writers in English. Despite this level of self-efficacy, their writing achievement showed a competence level below average. This result contrasts with that of past research in English L1 contexts (e.g. Pajares and Valiante 1999, 1997; Pajares and Johnson



1994; Zimmerman and Bandura 1994). There seems to be no link between participants' self-efficacy and performance, neither regarding writing in general nor concerning narrative essays. Self-efficacy in writing persuasive essays was related to performance in persuasive essay but this relationship appears only significant when the gender variable is controlled. Similar to the results respecting attitudes and apprehension, this finding is compelling proof that the relationship between self-efficacy and performance can, in some EFL settings, be complex and that participants' self-efficacy does not always reflect performance.

The most probable explanation for the lack of a connection between self-efficacy and performance in this context is the inaccurate level of self-efficacy. In other words, the participants' confidence in their writing abilities was incorrectly reported, and did therefore not correspond to their actual competence. This interpretation is supported by the participants' responses to the item (38) that measured self-efficacy in persuasive writing. The participants perceived their ability to write a good persuasive essay as low, a perception that actually corresponded to their performance in writing this text type. This correspondence was evident in the result of the regression analysis that shows that self-efficacy in writing persuasive essays predicted performance in persuasive essay writing (discussed below). This was the only instance where the participants' level of self-efficacy seemed accurate. In all other instances they overestimated their ability to write essays. This inaccuracy undermines the predictive power of self-efficacy (Chen 2003).

Given their limited writing competence, it is surprising that the participants reported this level of self-efficacy. Although it is impossible to determine with certainty what caused the participants to rate their writing capabilities higher than they actually were, inaccurate self-efficacy, as has been discussed in the literature (Section 2.1.3), can be attributed to several factors. Misunderstanding of the task demands is believed to be one of these factors

(Klassen 2008; Usher and Pajares 2008; Chen 2003; Schunk 1996). In the current study, efforts were made at an early stage to avoid any opportunities for misunderstanding. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic, the participants' mother tongue, to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding. The two writing tasks were confirmed to be at the appropriate level for the participants by their writing tutors; therefore it is believed that the students' inaccurate self-efficacy was not the result of any misunderstanding of the questionnaire items. Despite these precautions, certain influences on self-efficacy ratings are less easily avoided. A comprehensive review by Klassen (2002a) shows that subject areas can affect the calibration of self-efficacy. In this review, students with learning difficulties demonstrated accurate self-efficacy in mathematics but not in writing, where they overestimated their self-efficacy. Klassen points out that the task analysis component of writing self-efficacy is not always as clear as is the case with subjects like mathematics. As Klassen's review concerned students with learning difficulties, a parallel might be drawn to assessing the writing self-efficacy of EFL learners, which might represent similar difficulties due to the complex nature of language learning. Indeed, researchers acknowledge that it is likely that learners do not thoroughly contemplate the complexity of writing tasks when they respond to self-efficacy questionnaires (see Section 2.1.3.1). Students are sometimes misled by the apparent easiness of a task and fail to recognise the complex requirements embedded within it; thus, according to Bandura and Schunk (1981), the incongruence between self-efficacy and performance is in such cases caused partly by misperceptions of the task requirements and partly by inaccurate self-knowledge. Accuracy of self-knowledge is crucial for the learning process (Pintrich 2002) as inaccurate self-knowledge hinders learners from regulating their effort to improve their writing skills.

Relevant to the potential misunderstanding of tasks' demands is the students' mastery experience. Self-efficacy is built on prior accomplishments (Bandura 1986; Schmidt and

Deshon 2009); the tasks in which the participants had been successful in the past may have been different from those used in this research. It is therefore possible that the participants recalled their attainment in recent assessments, this being the only accessible resource at that stage, and rated their self-efficacy on the basis of these achievements, which led to levels of writing self-efficacy that were higher than the actual writing performance.

Another factor that may have caused the discrepancy between self-efficacy and writing performance is the assessment scheme used and its application by native English-speaker assessors when the participants had been taught writing by Saudi lecturers. It is argued that the quality of essays written by learners of English is judged more harshly by native speakers (Silva 1993). With that in mind, there could have been a discrepancy between the perceptions of the Saudi teachers and those of the British assessors. In other words, Saudi writing teachers may generally have lower criteria for judging the students' writing, and might in this specific case have been overly generous, not only because they probably did not use a standard writing assessment rubric but because the students were about to finish their degrees. As a consequence, the participants might have felt confident about their writing competence and formed a high level of self-efficacy that was not matched by a high performance when assessed by independent English native-speaker teachers.

This difference in writing judgement is evident in a study conducted by Alhaisoni (2012), which shows an example of Saudi teachers' leniency when they approach the writing products of Saudi undergraduates of English. Similar to the present study, Alhaisoni used the ESL Composition Profile, albeit a modified version, for assessing his respondents' writing. He regarded 63 out of 100 as the dividing line between good and poor results (in the ESL Composition Profile, any score between 74 and 64 is *fair*, while *good* is between 87 and 75).

Accordingly, a score of 65 achieved by the participants in the current study would, from his perspective, be considered *good*.

As a consequence, feedback given by teachers contributes to the students' perception of their capabilities in writing. Social persuasion is an important source in developing self-efficacy. Feedback is a form of this source that is common in educational settings. Correctional and periodic feedback is crucial for learners to establish accurate perceptions of their capabilities ( Moores and Cheng 2008; Hattie and Timperley 2007; Pajares and Johnson 1994; Bandura 1997, 1993). Inaccurate self-efficacy thus suggests a lack of adequate or appropriate feedback on the part of the teachers. Saudi teachers, as seen in the above example of Alhaisoni's perception of good writing, may offer complacent feedback that leads students to misconstrue their writing ability and establish a false sense of self-efficacy. Indeed, Oettingen (1995) points out that students' self-efficacy in collectivist cultures is largely developed on the basis of teachers' evaluation and feedback. Jahin (2012) reports that tutors' feedback at a Saudi university is limited to highlighting technical errors; such feedback may tend to focus on the micro rather than the macro aspects of writing,<sup>61</sup> and may be too infrequent to allow learners to recognise either their deficiencies or their potential.

A lack of incentives may also have contributed to inaccurate assessments of self-efficacy. It has been suggested that incentives lead to maximum performance and decrease the possibility of inaccurate self-efficacy having an effect on performance (Schmidt and Deshon 2009). A lack of incentives could be linked to the conditions in which the tasks are performed. Low apprehension levels were reported in low-stakes task conditions; in the same way do these conditions fail to represent incentives for the participants in a research study and thus might be responsible for a lack of correspondence between self-efficacy and

---

<sup>61</sup> Micro skills are sentence and paragraph level skills, i.e., correct usage of punctuation, conjunctions, vocabulary and grammar. Macro aspects refers to skills at essay level, i.e., paying attention to organisation, style, clarity of meaning, communicative function and readership.

performance, especially in foreign language contexts (Mills, Pajares and Herron 2007). Participants are aware that their performance in the writing tasks will not contribute to the final grades they are given on their course, and so they do not have a long-term goal in performing these tasks; they might therefore invest less effort in them (Mills 2004).

In a similar fashion, goals can determine the relationship between self-efficacy and writing. It has been confirmed that achievement goals are very important for enhancing self-efficacy and that it is rare that self-efficacy is transformed into effort if individuals do not have a specific goal in performing the task (Pajares, Britner and Valiante 2000; Bandura 1986). In the current project, the Saudi students were aware that their responses would form part of a research study and would not be relevant to their learning progress. They are likely to have realised that the course tutors would neither check nor evaluate the essays they wrote. That being the case, it is probable that the participants did not put as much effort into the two writing tasks as they would have if the tasks had been performed in high-stakes conditions. On the other hand, since a lack or inaccuracy of self-knowledge can cause inflated self-efficacy (Klassen 2008), it may likewise be the case that the students, on account of having already managed to reach this level (i.e. the final year of their studies), had been led to believe that they had successfully acquired the appropriate writing skills.

Overestimated self-efficacy can indicate that students are insecure about their performance and pretend to be confident in order to cover their insecurity (Klassen 2008).<sup>62</sup> It is thus possible that the participants deliberately rated their efficacy higher than their actual performance because they did not want to be seen as incapable (that is, by the researcher)

---

<sup>62</sup> Although Klassen studied students with learning disabilities, this argument can also apply to the participants in the current study.

<sup>63</sup> Halo and observer effects are common when eliciting data directly from respondents, i.e., in questionnaires/surveys and interviews.

(Schunk 1996), especially since they were in their final year and about to graduate as teachers of English.<sup>63</sup> Here the intentionally overestimated self-efficacy plays a self-protective role.

With regard to the relationship between level of self-efficacy and cultural background, as discussed in Chapter Two, this overestimated level of writing competence is not consistent with past findings indicating that individuals from collectivist cultures possess low but accurate self-efficacy.<sup>64</sup> In the current study, however, the cultural dimensions of collectivism or individualism were not taken into account and no other groups, e.g. Western groups, were measured in order to compare their level of self-efficacy with those of the Saudis. In addition to being raised in a collectivist culture, it was assumed that since they were learning a foreign language, the students would tend to underestimate, rather than overestimate, their competence in that language. However, the findings show that not all members of collectivist cultures display similar patterns of self-efficacy, i.e. low and/or accurate self-efficacy, and that the self-efficacy prevalent among students from some collectivist cultures does not, in fact, influence their achievements.<sup>65</sup> In other words, the Saudi participants had constructed patterns of self-efficacy different from those of participants from other collectivist cultures remarked upon in past research, and this pattern bears no relationship to their performance. Self-efficacy, therefore, varies in the ways it is developed, structured, and exercised cross-culturally (Bandura 2002). Oettingen (1995:151) states that ‘culture may affect not only the type of information provided by the various sources, but also which information is selected and how it is weighted and integrated in people's self-efficacy judgments’. With regard to Saudi culture, an emphasis on portraying

---

<sup>64</sup> In Hofstede's classification of countries according to the four cultural dimensions, Arab countries were identified as large in power distance, low in individualism, masculine, and possessing strong uncertainty avoidance.

<sup>65</sup> It is possible that self-efficacy is differently influenced by the different societal structures within these collectivist cultures. For example, Saudi culture possesses specific aspects that may be absent from other cultures and, as a result, clearly distinguish it from previously investigated cultural groups, e.g., Indians and Chinese.

the self positively in order to be seen as good and competent by others is valued among Saudis, as it might be in other societies, and overestimating one's self-efficacy could be relevant to or part of this emphasis. This emphasis, in many situations, may not exceed mere verbal statements, especially in cases when others cannot test the veracity of these statements of efficacy. Indeed, Whang and Hancock (1994) argue that some populations from collectivist cultures place different emphasis on motivational factors than those from individualist cultures, which, as a consequence affect their influence on achievement. Besides, as theories of achievement motivation have been primarily developed in Western countries and, thus, are rooted in individualism (Eaton and Dembo 1997; Whang and Hancock 1994), they may be less valid in populations that do not share this dimension. In addition to the influence of collectivism, the fact that the application of the concept of self-efficacy is still in its infancy in the Saudi context should be noted: the participants may not have had much experience of judging themselves, especially if adequate teacher resources and feedback have been lacking. To better understand the connection between culture and self-efficacy, more research is needed, especially with regard to the Middle East.

In previous studies, efforts were made to identify learners who are more inclined to overestimate their capabilities (see Klassen 2008; Campillo and Pool 1999; Woolliscroft et al. 1993). In the current study, the low performance of the participants demonstrates that below-average Saudi EFL writers are likely to overestimate their self-efficacy. Poor students are limited in their metacognitive skills, failing to estimate the task difficulty, thus rating their capabilities inaccurately (Ghatala et al. 1989). According to Kruger and Dunning (1999), the limited metacognitive skills of such learners prevent them from realising that they have drawn false conclusions and chosen inappropriate activities; therefore, these individuals are shouldering a 'dual burden' – a lack of both skill and awareness. Thus, '[s]tudents' confidence may not always signal adequate preparation and well-developed skills; instead,

for students with a history of low achievement, apparent confidence may be masking skill deficits or inadequate preparation' (Klassen 2007:185).

In addition to metacognition, other researchers suggest that unrealistic judgement of capabilities can either be a matter of personality, which, if it is the case, is hard to change (Kennedy et al 2002), or be due to self-enhancement needs (Brown 2012). The current study neither used personality measures nor placed the participants into a situation where their self-worth was threatened. Therefore, no firm conclusion can be drawn about the relevance of these factors to the overestimated writing efficacy of the participants.

With respect to the influence of optimistic self-efficacy on future performance, it has been theorised that it promotes accomplishment by positively increasing individuals' persistence and aspirations for attempting challenging tasks (Bandura 1997). However, this study agrees with Klassen (2002b) that overconfidence in one's capabilities is not likely to improve future performance. On the contrary, the complacency of the participants regarding their writing competence suggests that their self-efficacy already exerted a negative influence on their performance of the tasks for this research. Complacent or overestimated self-efficacy 'may result in appropriate strategies not being used, faulty task understanding, and difficulties with self-regulating and monitoring one's progress' (Klassen 2002a: 98). Indeed, researchers (e.g. Artino 2012; Vancouver and Kendall 2006; Vancouver, Thompson, Tischner and Putka 2002; Pintrich 2002; Vancouver, Thompson and Williams 2001; Campillo and Pool 1999; Power 1991; Schunk 1991) have cautioned that optimistic or complacent self-efficacy can prevent learners from investing more effort into improving their writing performance. The participants in the current study were in their final term at university, which means that they would graduate as teachers of English with an obviously inadequate level of writing ability,



and because of their overestimation of their own capability, it is improbable that they will invest time and effort into raising the current level of their writing competence.

With regard to self-efficacy and text types, by contrast, the participants did not overrate their capabilities in writing narrative and persuasive essays; their achievements were in fact as low in these two essays as they had anticipated. However, looking separately at the relationship between self-efficacy and narrative writing, self-efficacy did neither correlate with nor predict performance. Persuasive writing self-efficacy, on the other hand, was found to be related to the participants' performance in writing said text type. The question therefore arises: Given that the self-efficacy rating was similar, i.e., low, for the two text types, why was a link between self-efficacy and competence evident with regard to only one of them? In other words, why did the analysis fail to find any connection between self-efficacy and performance in the case of writing narrative essays?

As shown in the analysis in the previous chapter, the participants reported lower self-efficacy for writing persuasive essays than for writing narrative essays (persuasive writing self-efficacy,  $M = 2.21$ , narrative writing self-efficacy,  $M = 2.14$ ). The findings thus suggest that because the participants' self-efficacy rating was accurate with regard to persuasive writing (i.e., in line with their actual performance in the task), it can be used to predict their actual performance in the task. This particular finding appears to suggest that accurate self-efficacy is indeed related to performance. It can nevertheless not be taken as evidence that accurate self-efficacy is the most significant predictor of the quality of the participants' writing because further analysis showed that the significance of this particular result was nullified if the regression model contained gender. Gender appeared to be the most significant predictor of writing performance in general and with regard to narrative and persuasive writing in particular (see Section 5.5).

In conclusion, it might be argued that the predictive role of self-efficacy can differ according to the learning context of the participants. The influence of motivational constructs, especially self-efficacy, on writing seems to have been overlooked in the Saudi context. The fact that the participants in this study had never been asked to rate their writing self-efficacy before may, therefore, have also been a cause for their failure to produce an accurate assessment. The neglect of this concept is not limited to the Saudi setting; as Webb-Williams (2014) has noted, after two decades of research, teachers are still not aware of the (potentially) important role of self-efficacy and how it might affect students' performance. A most important result of the current study is that the students might not be aware of the level of their writing competence. With regard to this point, it is appropriate to conclude with Bandura (1993) that:

Saying something should not be confused with believing it to be so. Simply saying that one is capable is not necessarily self-convincing. Self-efficacy beliefs are the product of a complex process of self-persuasion that relies on cognitive processing of diverse sources of efficacy information conveyed inactively, vicariously, socially, and physiologically (Bandura 1986). Once formed, efficacy beliefs contribute significantly to the level and quality of human functioning. (p. 145)

The implication of Bandura's argument for the current study is that the participants have simply not yet developed a realistic sense of self-efficacy. High self-efficacy, according to Bandura, leads students to persist in the face of challenges and maintain positive in their behaviour. Although it is not clear whether the students' self-efficacy assisted them in overcoming any difficulties they might have faced during the learning process, it is obvious that this level of confidence in their own writing capability did not lead to the desired writing outcome.

## 5.2 Writing Competence of Saudi EFL Learners

The incongruence between attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy and competence in the EFL writing tasks employed in this research revealed that the Saudi participants were not as competent as might be thought when studying their reported attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy. The mean score for overall writing competence obtained by the participants was 64 out of 100. This level of writing competence was consistent in the two types of essay although writing them required different rhetorical, lexical and linguistic techniques. This consistency of scores in the two tasks is evidence of their low writing level. In the words of Jacobs et al., students at this level ‘will probably experience great difficulty completing writing requirements in subject matter courses. [They] [m]ay be unable to compete fairly with native writers of English’ (1981: 66). They recommend that ESL writers with scores in the 60s in the ESL Composition Profile, as the participants in this study, complete a composition course before enrolling in university English courses that require extensive writing. This assessment means that although the participants are in their final year, their writing level is below that expected of undergraduate students, which warrants reconsideration of the effectiveness of the writing classes they take during their course of study. Indeed, the participants’ incapability to compose complex texts and the fact that they are advised to join supplementary courses points towards a major weakness in their programme of study.

A similar level of competence (*fair*) was found when the participants’ writing was analysed according to the five sections of the ESL Composition Profile. The marks the participants obtained for the *content* section raised the question as to whether or not they were capable enough to respond appropriately to the writing prompt. The students’ mean scores for this section did not differ within the two text types; in other words, the mean scores for the content of the narrative and persuasive text types were identical (19 out of 30). According to the ESL Composition Profile, this score demonstrates a limited knowledge and

irrelevant development of the topic. These identical scores for narrative and persuasive texts suggest that the nature of the individual writing tasks did not affect the participants' capability to discuss and develop their essays.

Similarly, the students' scores for *organisation* indicated non-fluent writing with disconnected ideas. This shows that both the narrative and persuasive essays of the participants lacked adequate logical sequences of presentation. Organisation was identified as a problem by Saudi writers themselves in a study conducted by Javid and Umer (2014) and has also been found in the writings of other EFL learners, e.g., Taiwanese university students (Chen 2002). The level the participants achieved in content and organisation demonstrates that they did not know how to communicate their message effectively in writing, a skill that should long have been acquired considering their years of study in the department. These findings imply that the students did not receive adequate writing training so as to be able to express their opinion and lay out an argument and may not have been given sufficient opportunity to practise essay writing. In the Saudi classroom students never write for a reader other than their writing teacher. It is therefore possible that the perceived importance of form, i.e., producing error-free writing, overshadows the importance of the communicative aspect of writing.

The scores for *vocabulary* revealed that the students had a limited vocabulary, which prevented them from expressing themselves accurately, and they frequently made mistakes related to word forms and word choice. This low command of vocabulary contributed to the students' low scores for content, since it would have prevented them from writing long explanatory paraphrases. Javid and Umer (2014) reported that Saudi male and female undergraduate students of English recognised their weak command of vocabulary and ranked using suitable vocabulary at the top of the list of difficulties they face when writing in

English. In the current context, in contrast, the participants reported that they believed they could employ their vocabulary effectively to produce clear writing, a belief belied by their actual scores for the vocabulary section. These low scores lend further support to the literature (e.g. Al-Khairi 2013; Al-Khasawneh 2010; Rabab'ah 2003) that Saudi and Arab EFL writers in general lack an adequate range of vocabulary and that this is one of the major problems that prevents them from communicating successfully through writing.

The scores of the students in the current study for *linguistic and grammatical competence* were no better than their other scores. The students had difficulty using many linguistic features accurately; subject-verb agreement, articles and prepositions posed particular problems. However, in contrast to their confidence regarding the other sections, the participants acknowledged their limited competence in language use: they reported a low self-efficacy in this respect. This is in line with previous studies conducted by Al-Khairi (2013) and Javid and Umer (2014) reporting that Saudi students rated grammatical and linguistic issues as the second most problematic writing issue, (after vocabulary), that they encounter when they write. A weak command of grammar in writing has also been found in studies of Sudanese, Jordanian and Taiwanese students of English (e.g. Al-Khasawneh 2010; Kambal 1980; Chen 2002). This could be caused by the differences between the linguistic system of the students' mother tongue, Arabic in the case of the current study, and English.

Finally, the ESL Composition Profile addresses writing *mechanics* (i.e., spelling, punctuation, capitalisation and paragraphing), which is usually one of the first writing skills taught to ESL students. Saudi students are normally introduced to the mechanics of essay writing in English in middle and high school and study them extensively in their first year at university. Despite these frequent revisions, the mean score for mechanics obtained by the participants in this study in both essays was 3 out of 5, a score that clearly shows that they

lacked competence even in this primary feature of essay writing in English. Writers at this level commit ‘frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, [and] paragraphing’ (Jacobs et al. 1981: 96). A lack of or low competence of writing mechanics results in poor handwriting with meaning confused or obscured (Jacobs et al 1981). The participants in the current study felt only moderately capable of editing their own work and use correct forms of spelling. The low writing performance of Saudi students has been referred to in several studies (e.g. Alkubaidi 2014; Althobaiti 2014; Jahin 2012; Garmi 2010). Althobaiti (2014) argues that it can indicate further weaknesses in other areas of the target language.

Students’ perception of the usefulness of writing can be a prominent factor directing their learning. It is possible that they restrict competence in writing to the ability to achieve small tasks. This was evident in Al-Khairi’s study (2013), which found that Saudi students at Taif University believed that being able to write short summaries and paragraphs during their undergraduate studies in an English department was indicative of a sufficiently high level of language skills. This restriction of writing activities is likely to be related to the role EFL writing plays in those learners’ lives. It has been argued that students do not seriously engage in learning English because it is not directly relevant to their everyday use. Thus, it is believed that the students’ efforts are only devoted to acquiring the competence level they need to pass to the next grade level (Al-Seghayer’s 2014a: 18). Although there is no direct evidence that the participants in the current research engaged in the above behaviour, the fact that they did not practice any writing in their free time indicates that they might see writing from a similar perspective. As the students would not be required to practice writing when they teach in the future, their writing level and views would affect their teaching approach. Students with a low level of writing skills become teachers with a low level of writing skills who then teach students who, in consequence, are likely to acquire only a low level of writing skills.

Success on different English courses requires competence in writing, even though students might interpret this to comprise only the ability to answer exam questions, in which case their efforts would largely be devoted to memorising answers from their course books in order to be able to write them down correctly in their examinations. The participants in this study having succeeded in passing all their previous assessments and having reached this stage of their learning – the final year at university – by engaging in those limited writing activities, have probably formed positive attitudes towards writing and become complacent, resulting in inaccurate levels of self-efficacy. This behaviour, memorising written pieces, was found to be common among Saudi learners of English (see Elyas and Picard 2010).

### **5.3 Factors Potentially Affecting Participants' Psychology and Competence<sup>66</sup>**

The participants' responses to open-ended question number 2 (participants' comments on their writing attitudes and beliefs) were examined. 29 males and 52 females responded to this question. There were no great gender differences in these responses. Both males and females produced statements like 'I like writing' or 'writing is important'. In addition to these statements, some participants provided genuine responses that can be seen as proposals for a writing instructional framework. Generally speaking, these responses reflected the students' attitudes towards important academic issues from their perspective as learners. These issues can be viewed as affecting the students' overall competence in writing as well as their attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy. In general, the students' responses revolved around specific areas that they feel need further development in the writing classes, and can be summarised into three themes: writing topics, writing time, and writing practice and the curriculum. These themes correspond to some of the sources of writing apprehension reported in EFL writing literature (e.g. Rezaei and Jafari 2014; Aljafen 2013; Zhang 2011;

---

<sup>66</sup> The discussion begins with an examination of responses to the second, rather than the first, open-ended question, since the second question is relevant to writing in general, while the first open-ended question specifically measures preferred text types.

Abu Shawish and Atea 2010; Abdel Latif 2007). These three themes are discussed in detail below.

### **5.3.1 Writing Topics**

A lack of choice in terms of writing topics was the issue mentioned most frequently by the participants, who stated that they would like to be given the freedom to choose what they were to write about. Comments such as ‘It is better to make students write about a topic they want to write about rather than [to give them a] limited list that they stuck [sic] to’, and ‘It is preferable that the students are given topics about subjects that are important to them’, clearly show that the topics assigned in class did not involve issues that the students liked to write about. This suggests that the students would like their tutors to consider their interests, knowledge and familiarity with the subject before assigning topics. Interest has been noted by writing theorists (e.g. Hidi and Boscolo 2006) as one of several motivational variables that influence writing. Writing topics can significantly influence students’ attitudes towards writing and the overall quality of their writing (Bruning and Horn 2000; Albin, Benton and Khramtsova 1996; Bowie 1996; Sutton 1992; Fontaine 1991; Hayward 1990; Edelsky and Smith 1984).

In the present study, the participants’ request for topics relevant to their personal interests and to have control over what to write about was acceded to in the careful selection of topics for the two text types. However, because the researcher did not have a record of the participants’ work, it was not possible to look for differences between past and present performance. As mentioned previously, the fact that the students performed similarly on the two writing tasks, despite the different topics of each, suggests it is unlikely that the writing topic would significantly influence the overall written product. The implication is that the choice of topic may not have a direct positive influence on performance. Nevertheless,



offering learners common interest topics would improve the atmosphere for practising writing.

### **5.3.2 Writing Time**

The students also proposed that writing time should be unlimited, because they needed time to produce their best performance. Comments such as: ‘I like to write but sometimes I feel that I’m stuck in some areas. Especially if I’m given a limited [amount of] time to finish a whole essay without [making] grammar mistakes, punctuation etc.’, imply that allocating a specific amount of time for a writing task causes some students to experience writer’s block, an unintended consequence. There is no doubt that time constraints pressure the students and cause feelings of stress, especially if the teacher’s main focus is on form. Another student stated, ‘I believe writing should not be restricted to a specific time because a student needs to take her time to perform her best’ (my translation). These comments were supported by the participants’ responses to one of the apprehension items (‘I feel my heart pounding when I write essays under time constraints’), which was accorded a high rating of agreement.

There is no doubt that many students feel that time-limited writing puts them under pressure and makes the writing process more stressful. Due to this negative influence, Raimes (1983) argues that writing time should not be limited, while other researchers (e.g. Kroll 1990) point out that timed writing might not be representative of the students’ real capabilities. However, research that compared ESL students’ performance on time-limited essays written in class and on essays they wrote at home without time constraints (e.g. Caudery 1990; Kroll 1990) found no significant differences in competence. In the light of this finding, Kroll (1990) suggested that it is possible that students lack understanding of what constitutes good writing and, as a result, also lacking appropriate writing skills, tend to perform similarly under different conditions.

In the present study the participants were given sufficient time to write (90 minutes), evidenced by their submitting their essays before the end of the allotted time. The time aspect, therefore, could not have negatively affected their performance. It is, however worth mentioning that the writing tasks in the present study were artificial writing practices – there was no direct link to the participants’ course assessment. Different results would perhaps have been reached if the students had written the pieces for final examinations. It may therefore be argued that ‘the study of writing under other conditions and by other writers is also necessary if we are to obtain a full understanding of the effects of time pressure’ (Caudery 1990: 131). Whether time constraint influences writing performance or not, students should be given all the time they need, at least in some of the writing sessions, in order for them to feel at ease when they write and to enable them to see that any weaknesses in their performance are not solely caused by time constraints but by a lack of skill and/or understanding of the task requirements.

### **5.3.3 Writing Practice and the Curriculum**

Some students reported their dissatisfaction with the teaching methodologies and the writing curriculum. One comment suggested certain improvements to the current structure of writing classes: ‘We really need to evaluate our essays in the class. I don’t like the group work in the class!! And I hope the teacher will consider changing her plans for teaching us the writing course in this way!’ This student listed the practices she (dis)approved of in the learning process. Her preference for in-class evaluation emphasised the need for a prompt response from the teacher. A teacher’s ignorance of the appropriate technique to use in evaluation and giving feedback to her students may weaken the power of feedback to improve learning. For feedback to be effective, Nicol and Macfarlane argue that it should be offered in a ‘timely manner (close to the act of learning production)’ (2006: 9).

The same student also commented on group work as being one of her principal concerns. Group work was also criticised by another student who protested that ‘teachers should not force students to work in groups’. These participants obviously failed to see any benefit in writing in groups. Apparently, not all of the students were in favour of collaborative writing, which might be due to discrepancies in their writing proficiency. These comments are in line with Shehadeh’s (2011) remark that EFL students do not value group work in writing. Although the purpose of group work is to enable students to generate ideas and offer peer feedback (Storch 2005) and although it thus represents a remedy for weaknesses and for accentuating strengths, competent writers may be left at a disadvantage in the process. It is also common in EFL classes that weaker students abandon the writing task and depend entirely on the other members of the group to do the writing – usually the competent ones and those who care about completing the assigned activities. Even though group work was only referred to by two students in the current study, it becomes evident that for some it is a major issue. It may consequently be a good idea if teachers mentored students in this activity and made sure that *all* students take part in writing.

Again, writing for evaluation was another concern raised by the students as a negative influence on their writing: ‘writing improves my style but it becomes very difficult when it is associated with evaluation and grades’ (my translation). This comment aligns with the finding mentioned in Section (5.1.2) that writing for assessment promotes high levels of apprehension. This finding, and the student’s comment imply that evaluation is not seen by the participants as functioning for their benefit by helping them recognise their weaknesses but is rather seen as a threat to their success.

The writing curriculum was another issue raised by the students in their responses to the open-ended question number 2. One student stated that, ‘I think everything we take on

this course is repeated; even the book we study, we studied it in the first level'. This view was supported by another comment: 'I think we should try new things cause [sic] sometimes writing the same thing is boring'. A result of repeating writing subjects is that students do not consider writing an independent, communicative skill that is valuable in diverse contexts and for diverse purposes. They begin to regard it as something not worth studying for its own sake but rather, and exclusively, as a tool for practising and acquiring competence in other linguistic areas (e.g. vocabulary and grammar). This tendency is evident in some of the students' comments about the importance of writing: e.g. 'writing is an important element if I want to learn English', and 'I think the [sic] writing is important to everyone and helps the [sic] people improve their language'. Similarly, a lack of knowledge about the correct grammatical structures can significantly demotivate students from engaging in more writing, as one of the participants stated: 'we do not feel very interested because we are weak in grammar'. Recently, researchers have criticised the writing courses in the syllabuses at some leading Arabian universities. More specifically, it has been pointed out that the writing programmes at these universities seem to value form at the expense of meaning (see Section 1.5.1.1). The comments of the students in the current study on the writing curriculum confirmed this criticism regarding the deficiencies of the EFL writing curriculum in Saudi higher education institutions. In the same vein, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) argue that policy makers have not created a well-designed English language curriculum that considers learners' needs. They emphasise the importance of employing a needs-analysis approach in advance of designing the curriculum. The participants' comments support the above arguments of Rahman and Alhaisoni and point to weaknesses in the writing programme offered at higher education establishments in the Kingdom.

Some of the participants endorsed the view that writing classes should offer a more intense experience by stating, e.g. 'writing classes should be intensive', and 'we need more

classes in a week'. They expressed their hope that the department of English will consider re-designing the writing syllabus and run workshops especially for improving writing. These comments closely mirror the demands of participants in the study of Javid and Umer (2014). It is unfortunate that these deficiencies in the writing syllabus have not been recognized by the policy makers in the writing syllabus but by the students themselves who suggested solutions to improve their learning in the department. This stresses the urgent need to translate these demands into practise.

With regard to beliefs about writing, only two students wrote about their beliefs concerning writing. These respondents argued that 'writing is a gift that can only be mastered by some' (my translation). According to Bandura (1993), students who believe that ability is inherent and not acquired will suffer from weak self-efficacy when they experience difficulties and will, as a result, have low aspirations (see also Palmquist and Young 1992).

In summary, it is possible that the above aspects contributed to the unsatisfactory level of the participants' competence in writing in English. Although the students held positive attitudes towards learning English, they did not take any action to improve their writing. This was evident in their negative response to the item about seeking opportunities to practise writing outside the classroom and in their responses to open-ended question 2: they criticised the teaching methodologies and materials but not their own attitudes towards, or behaviour in, learning writing. The participants blamed their teachers and the curriculum designers for their writing deficiencies. Although it is without doubt not restricted to this context, the tendency to externalise blame was found to be common in Saudi educational establishments (Althobaiti 2014), in which the teacher is considered to be the only source of knowledge and where students consequently depend more or less completely on their instructors for their learning. Comments like 'writing is hard, we have never been taught how to write well;

teachers are not putting enough effort into the teaching of writing' (my translation), confirm the above mentioned tendency.

#### **5.4 Narrative or Persuasive Writing**

The participants' preference with regard to narrative and persuasive essays was investigated. In response to open-ended question 1 ('Which kind of essay, narrative or persuasive, would you prefer to write?'), most (48%) participants answered that they preferred narrative essays. No significant differences were found in terms of gender. This preference for writing narrative over persuasive texts conflicts with Mahfoudhi's (2001) finding that narrative writing is the least liked written text type for Tunisian learners of English and the argument by Faigley et al. (1981) that students find narrative writing daunting. Situational and methodological differences can account for this dissimilarity between the result of the current study and those of Mahfoudhi and Faigley et al. For example, Mahfoudhi asked Tunisian EFL learners who were studying English in their second year at university to rate the essay type they like from 1 (I like most) to 3 (I like least), while Faigley et al tested the connection between apprehension and performance on narrative and argumentative essays of American undergraduates and concluded that narrative essays promotes more anxiety. The present study, in contrast, asked participants directly about their perceptions about narrative and persuasive essays in close-ended questions and about their reasons for their text type preference in an open-ended question. Additionally, it is important to stress that learners' experience when writing these types of essays in these contexts are not similar, which may explain the difference in their preference with regard to these text types. It seems that the participants in the current study perceived narrative writing prompts easy. Comments like 'it is faster to prepare ideas for narrative writing', 'it depends on imagination' and 'it is easier to create a story' clearly support this speculation and demonstrate that this type of writing does not put pressure on the participants. They seem to perceive narrative writing not, or not

necessarily, as an exposure of personal feelings and experiences and be easily capable of depending on their imagination to create content. It may be concluded that narrative writing in a higher education context does not always represent a threat to privacy as claimed in past research. On the contrary, some participants preferred narrative writing because it involves personal engagement, which they seemed to enjoy: ‘I like to write about the past’, and about ‘facts [that] happened’.

Apart from the reasons mentioned, some participants reflected on other aspects that supported their choice of text type. For instance, two students attributed their preference in writing to their reading habits; they stated that they liked reading stories and novels, an activity that assisted their narrative writing. This points to a possible relationship between attitudes towards reading and attitudes towards writing: favourable attitudes towards reading particular genres could influence attitudes towards writing in that genre or type. Relatedly, one student stated that, ‘I prefer the narrative style because I have a dream of becoming a novelist in the future’. The sources of these participants’ attitudes are different from those who based their preference on the ease of writing. Attitudes so intensely influenced by the participants’ personal life, may be stronger and more functional. The participant who aspires to be a writer, for example, probably works passionately towards their goal and this work is likely to influence their writing and writing attitude.

In addition to ease, interest, and ability, put forward by students who prefer narrative essays, one more characteristic, usefulness, was mentioned by those who chose persuasive writing. This suggests that some of the students were aware of the requirements of persuasive writing. They reported that they preferred writing this text type because ‘it depends on logic’ and ‘actual facts’, ‘proves to the reader the facts about the topic of discussion’, ‘opens gates for debate’, and because a writer may achieve a goal in writing and ‘persuade others with

his/her essay' (my translation). In other words, the participants appeared to favour persuasive writing for its role in knowledge exchange and for the opportunities it offers: the expression of their views and debates with others.

In summary, participants in this study had specific features that determined their choice of written text type as can be seen in the explanations they provided. There was a high degree of agreement between students with the same preference, regardless of gender. Ease, interest, and ability were the most common reasons given for the participants' preference for narrative or persuasive writing. Other characteristics, which can reflect more engagement, appear to determine some students' attitudes to written text types, i.e., some students may have their own specific reasons, like the example of the aspiring writer. Interestingly, preference for one text type over the other is not linked to a higher competence in that text type, as seen in Section 4.1.

### **5.5 The Influence of Gender on Attitudes, Apprehension, Self-efficacy and Writing Competence**

As discussed in Chapter Two, gender has been linked by other researchers in L1 to attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy, and associated with writing achievement. In the light of the research question and hypotheses, the findings of the present study indicate that Saudi male and female students do differ indeed in their attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy in relation to writing. Specifically, the study found that males reported more positive attitudes, lower levels of apprehension and higher levels of self-efficacy, while achieving lower scores in their writing than females. This means that the hypothesis that females would report more positive attitudes, higher levels of apprehension, and higher levels of self-efficacy must partly be rejected.



In relation to attitudes, this finding contradicts those of previous studies that have strongly argued that females favoured writing more than males (e.g. Lee 2013; Hansen 2009; Graham et al. 2007; Knudson 1995) and the argument, as put forward by Unal (2010), that males all over the world frequently hold negative attitudes towards writing. The current study presented compelling evidence that gender has a different influence on attitudes in L1 settings than in foreign language learning, and that male writers in EFL contexts may hold more favourable writing attitudes than females. As gender differences were mostly reported in school settings in L1, a possible cause for this difference is that native schoolchildren go through different writing practices than EFL learners and that these may be more interesting to girls and thus support the development of their positive attitudes. This study revealed the attitudinal patterns that marked the differences between the two genders (see section 4.1). It is probable that the Saudi males displayed more favourable writing attitudes in general because they were more satisfied with the essays they wrote and felt more positive about the feedback they received from their tutors. Their positive attitudes towards the teacher's feedback imply that they did not expect negative comments on their EFL writing; these attitudes might have been built on accumulated experiences of positive feedback. This was in contrast to females, who displayed uncertainty about their tutors' reactions, suggesting that the female students have encountered negative feedback more frequently than males. The male participants' perception of EFL writing as a pleasant experience, which in turn might have been influenced by a lack of negative feedback, and their willingness to engage in the course could have also supported their overall positive attitudes.

In addition to its influence on attitudes, gender was a significant factor in the students' reported writing apprehension, which contradicts recent results in the Saudi context (e.g., Al Asmari 2013). The current study's finding of higher levels of apprehension among female students supports study outcomes in other EFL contexts (e.g. Taiwanese, Turkish, Iranian

students of English). The effect gender has on apprehension may be due to the difference between the male and female participants' perceptions of certain writing practices. This difference shows that females were more physiologically, i.e. experience stress, affected in the writing classroom. The concerns female participants voiced suggest that they suffered more in terms of writing – e.g. through negative experiences or feedback – than the male participants did. It appears that females are, for some reason, more concerned about their tutors' impression of their writing, thus worry more about their performance than male participants who, as discussed below, were more confident about their writing performance. The difference in responses implies that the causes for writing apprehension are not exactly the same for males and females, as some writing situations and practices caused higher levels of apprehension among one gender group than among the other.

Writing self-efficacy was also affected by gender. Male participants indicated higher levels of self-efficacy regarding the writing skills of content, organisation and vocabulary than females. In other words, male participants were more optimistic about their capability to use specific writing skills, such as selecting appropriate and interesting content for a given essay, generating ideas, and having an adequate vocabulary. This higher self-efficacy among males was consistent in narrative and persuasive written text types. The implication is that Saudi male students are more assertive than females. The higher self-efficacy of the male participants contradicts findings from earlier research carried out in L1 classrooms (e.g., Pajares and Valiante 1997), on account of which some theorists (e.g., Schunk and Pajares 2001) have argued that writing is seen as a feminine domain and that it is, consequently to be expected that female students possess a more positive orientation and higher self-efficacy than males. The view that writing is a feminine activity might be restricted to school settings in the Western context. The participants in the present study probably did not regard English

or writing as female-related areas and their positive perceptions challenge the view that arts and languages are feminine fields.

Past researchers reason (see Section 2.1.3.2) that females are more modest in responding to self-report questionnaires. However, the females in the present study cannot be regarded as 'modest', since the levels of self-efficacy they demonstrated, although moderate in general, still exceeded their actual writing ability. The causes of the moderate writing self-efficacy of the female participants may be linked to the gender-segregated society in which they live: females and males in such societies may not be exposed to the same sources for developing self-efficacy, or at least not to a similar degree. In collectivist cultures, men and women's activities are often strongly influenced by social norms, in which particular activities may be seen as valuable for one gender but not for the other. Saudi culture is highly masculine, with males often given more powerful positions than females, who are less exposed to outside activities and may thus be exposed to limited sources of information. Because of the societal structure, it may be the case that males develop their self-efficacy based on various models and sources that are not always available to females.

It was found that gender not only had a significant influence on the three variables of attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy but also was the only significant predictor of writing achievement. This result challenges the claim that in a model that contains gender, grade level and motivational variables, self-efficacy, with pre-performance assessment, is the only predictor of writing performance (Pajares 2003a). It demonstrates that gender has an even stronger influence on the writing of Saudi students than motivational constructs. In addition to having been identified as a predictor of writing achievement, the analysis of the data shows that gender significantly correlates with writing competence, the findings thus confirm those

of previous researchers that females commonly outperform males in writing, although it must be repeated that in this study both genders' scores reflect low writing ability.

Gender disparity in writing achievement has been documented in several studies of L1 writing, with researchers claiming that teachers do not rate or treat male and female writers in the classroom in the same manner, a tendency that is thought to nurture negative attitudes and the underachievement of males. In the present study, this circumstance cannot be the cause of male underachievement, as male and female students in Saudi Arabia attend single-sex universities, meaning there is no opportunity for teachers to be biased in favour of one gender or the other within the same classroom. Gender differences in writing performance are also related to gender differences in learning behaviour (Alton-Lee and Pratt 2000). The findings from the current research suggest that a lack of adequate teaching, of adequate opportunities to practise writing and of self-regulated effort are the most influential factors for the poor performance in writing by both genders, not just males. It is also probable that the male participants were low-achieving because of their gendered roles in the society in question: they engage in a multitude of activities and have commitments that lessen the time they spend studying; Saudi females, in contrast, often have more time on their hands.

With regard to the written text types, gender had only a limited significance on attitudes towards writing persuasive essays, with male participants expressing more positive attitudes than females in responding to a persuasive task. These positive attitudes in writing persuasive essays suggest that male students are more likely than females to engage in this type of writing despite their feeling of apprehension during the writing process. A greater significance (with a *p* value of 0.000) of gender was found in responses to items about self-efficacy in writing narrative and persuasive essays (see Section 4.1.1). This significance shows that male participants had higher confidence in their abilities in writing both text types

than females. The research results showed that female students nevertheless outperformed their male counterparts in both text types. The males' higher level of confidence but lower level of writing skills suggests that the male students are more likely to miscalculate their competence. Given that the self-efficacy items about narrative and persuasive writing generally asked if the students could write good persuasive (item 38) and narrative (item 39) essays, it might be suggested that male participant had perhaps different conceptions of *good* than females, i.e. lower criteria for what constitutes a good essay. Because the underachievement of male students has been referred to in the literature on L1 classes, there have been calls urging teachers to consider learning practices that are better suited to males (Hansen 2001). The findings of this study add weight to these calls. However, since the females were also low achievers, it might be suggested that Saudi English teachers are generally not well-equipped for the role of teaching English in that they themselves lack a high level of language skills and, moreover, appear to neither consider the learning behaviour of male nor of female Saudi EFL students and, as a consequence, fail to address their needs (see Section 1.5.1.1).

## **5.6 Chapter Overview**

The findings of this study are not consistent with those reported in the L1 literature or with the results obtained in some L2/EFL settings (e.g. China, Iran and Turkey) insofar as they indicate that the motivational theories of attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy are not associated with EFL writing performance in the Saudi higher education context. Abstract attitudes, inaccurate judgment and, most importantly, the participants' lack of awareness of their inadequate writing skill, seem to be the major causes of the inapplicability of these theories in the Saudi context.

Previous studies of Saudi students have completely overlooked motivational variables and focused solely on the influence of certain types of intervention (e.g. peer feedback) on language outcomes. The present findings prove that the Saudi students did not come to the writing class with predetermined negative attitudes towards writing in English; on the contrary, they have a positive orientation towards writing and their writing apprehension does not stem from any belief in their own deficiencies but is a result of classroom practices (e.g. writing for evaluation and writing under time constraints). The participants stated that they would like to see teaching practices that made lessons more interesting; relevant writing topics and no time limits imposed on writing were two suggestions offered. However, their optimistic evaluation of their writing capabilities reflects a lack of awareness of their own low writing competence.

This lack of awareness highlights the importance of teachers' feedback, and questions its quality in guiding the students towards improvement. Elaborative feedback would have informed the students of their competence and, as a consequence, increased their accuracy in self-evaluation. Educators and teachers should bear in mind that sometimes participants might not be aware of the seriousness of the situation they find themselves in as learners, which can result in misjudgements of their own capabilities.

Gender had an influence on Saudi EFL learners' writing attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy, and performance and, consequently, can be used to determine participants' psychological characteristics and writing performance. Unlike past studies in L1 contexts, Saudi male had more positive attitudes, lower apprehension, and higher self-efficacy than females, which suggests that the function of gender may act differently in some EFL settings than elsewhere, i.e. English as an L1. In this study, the different writing experiences and

social roles of Saudi males and females may account for their differences in reporting their psychological characteristics and for their achievement.

## **Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion**

This final chapter brings together the findings and insights gathered from the current research. It briefly summarises the previous chapters of the thesis, draws together the study's main findings, implications and contributions, states its limitations and offers recommendations and suggestions for future research.

### **6.1 Summary of the Thesis**

This section summarises the previous chapters in order to offer a general overview of the thesis. Chapter One discussed the theoretical framework underlying the thesis. It stated that this work drew on the field of social psychology in researching the influence of attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy on the writing performance of Saudi EFL university students in the light of a specific social attribute, i.e., gender. The investigation aimed to fill a gap in the literature concerning studies about Saudi EFL students from both gender groups. It focused specifically on this group of learners as a case in point – understanding the influence of psychological characteristics on writing performance could potentially represent an invaluable contribution to the field of language learning in general.

In past research, it was acknowledged that Saudi learners of English at university level generally possess positive attitudes towards learning English and the language as such (see Section 1.4). However, researchers did not distinguish between attitudes towards different aspects of language and language learning, so that it cannot be determined whether such positive attitudes extend towards writing and, thus, potentially influence the learners' writing performance. Moreover, as social cognitive theory identifies self-efficacy as a significant motivating power and predictor of success, an exploration of Saudi learners' perceived beliefs about their capabilities as EFL writers was required to discover whether these



contribute to the students' actual performance. The fact that pointed to a gap in the literature is that since neither writing attitudes nor self-efficacy were given much attention in investigating English writing performance in Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions, i.e., colleges and universities, an investigation of these factors was clearly warranted.

A review of the small number of studies of Saudis' writing revealed that they generally failed to compare the performances of males and females. This may be due to the difficulty of obtaining data from both genders since education in Saudi Arabia is provided in single-sex institutions in which the presence of the opposite sex is highly restricted. The evident lack of such studies emphasised the need to compare Saudi male and female EFL students' attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy with regard to writing as well as their performance in writing. Findings of a study designed to meet this need can contribute to the wider literature about the factors associated with the process of improving writing skills and, additionally, serve as a guide for educators in Saudi Arabia in regard to the achievements of both gender groups.

The study thus set out to explore the influence of writing attitudes, writing apprehension and writing self-efficacy on writing performance in Saudi male and female learners of English. It answered the following research questions: do Saudi males and females have different attitudes and different levels of apprehension and self-efficacy beliefs with regard to writing? If so, can these psychological characteristics be identified in the writings of university students reading for a degree in English?

Based on the literature, it was hypothesised that attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy, would show statistically significant relationships with writing performance (hypothesis 1) and that gender would be a significant factor in affecting participants' writing attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy, and writing achievement, in general and in narrative

and persuasive essays, with female students reporting more positive attitudes, higher apprehension, higher self-efficacy, and scoring higher in writing (hypothesis 2).

In addition to stating the research question and hypotheses, the first chapter also positioned the study in the research context. It described the geographical, historical, and educational settings of Saudi Arabia and discussed how English is taught in Saudi public education institutions. A review of studies into teaching English in the Saudi context revealed that English education needs to be reformed since assessment largely focuses on accuracy at the expense of fluency of expression. Despite this focus on accuracy, Saudi learners demonstrate surprisingly low levels of language proficiency. Regardless of whether this is a result of curriculum shortcomings, unqualified teachers, negative attitudes, high apprehension or low self-efficacy, writing is probably the one skill EFL students have the greatest difficulties to master.

Chapter Two reviewed the literature about attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy and these aspects' relationship with writing and gender. Attitudes were defined and discussed in the first section, beginning with the identification of the two major approaches to attitudes, the behaviourist and the mentalist approach. The literature review showed that studies about attitudes and language have largely built on the mentalist approach, considering it best suited to account for the complexity of attitudes. Expanding on the mentalist approach, the section defined attitudes as having three components: affective, cognitive, and behavioural. These three components are also referred to as the tripartite theory/model. Other theories, such as the theory of Reasoned Action and its extension, the theory of Planned Behaviour, were introduced to describe the relationship between attitudes and behaviour in general (see Section 2.1.1).

Having reviewed research into the relationship between attitudes, writing competence, and gender, and having, firstly, concluded that attitudes have a certain influence on writing performance, and, secondly, found that female students were reported to have more positive attitudes and to score higher, in most cases, than their male counterparts, it was argued that studies on attitudes towards writing in ESL/EFL contexts clearly did not link attitudes towards writing and writing performance. A large number of these studies measured writing attitudes through instruments that were designed to measure general language attitudes.

Apprehension, as a type of attitude, was also reviewed in Chapter Two, showing that this specific element has received much attention in relation to writing, more than the concept of attitudes in general. While some studies suggested that apprehension negatively influences students' performance in writing, others found no such correlation. This implies that the effect apprehension depends on additional factors and may, therefore, be controllable.

Several factors were found to increase writing apprehension, among which were linguistic difficulties, insufficient writing practice, fear of evaluation, lack of knowledge, low self-confidence, low self-efficacy, shortcomings of English educational programmes and instructional methods of English teachers, and fear of teachers' negative feedback. Further factors suggested to exert influence on apprehension levels are gender and text type. The literature furthermore provided mixed results regarding the influence of gender on apprehension levels, which suggests that the relationship between gender and apprehension has not yet been established conclusively and, consequently, requires further investigation. Only a few studies have given attention to the role of written text type. The consensus is that writing narrative text types lead to higher levels of anxiety than argumentative text types and are considered to be the least preferred text type by learners of English (see Section 2.1.2). It

is surprising that there are still no studies relating Saudi students' gender and/or their attitudes to their writing performance.

In relation to attitudes and apprehension, the literature review discussed the concept of self-efficacy in academia. Developed by Bandura (1977), this theory highlights the connection between people's perceived beliefs about their competence and their actual competence. The importance of this theory to academic achievement becomes evident when looking at the extent to which self-efficacy can determine individuals' persistence in the face of challenges. Mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states were identified as the four sources of individuals' self-efficacy. If self-efficacy is reported accurately, it proved to be valid in predicting students' academic performance. A strong correlation was found between writing self-efficacy and performance on the one hand and writing self-efficacy and gender on the other (see Sections 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.3.2). However, there is a dearth of theory-based studies about these variables in ESL/EFL contexts. The reviewed literature showed that some of the contributions that investigated writing self-efficacy and performance in these contexts employed measures about general self-efficacy to investigate writing self-efficacy and performance, which may have influenced their findings. Besides, no reference was made in any of these studies to gender as an influential variable on self-efficacy. Chapter Two concluded with a review of the scales that were introduced to measure attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy with regard to writing. The discussion showed that attitudes instruments employed in the majority of past research were designed to elicit affect towards writing, which reflects researchers' limited consideration of the breadth of attitudes. The fact that the Daly-Miller's Writing Apprehension Test was popular in both L1 and EFL settings indicates its validity in researching writing apprehension across different contexts. Concerning self-efficacy scales, a guideline was issued by Bandura for designing a self-efficacy scale suggesting that self-

efficacy can only be adequately reflected if specific conditions are taken into consideration, for example, the use of 'I can' rather than 'I wish'. Some of these conditions, such as specificity, also apply to designing attitudes and apprehension scales.

Chapter Three described the methodological framework of the study. The choice of study participants was made on the basis of their writing skills: students in higher education can be expected to have a significantly higher degree of proficiency in this area than school students and would therefore be able to respond to the given writing tasks without great difficulty. University students, being at an advanced stage of their education, are furthermore likely to already have formed their attitudes towards writing and, thus, to be capable of recognising situations in which they feel apprehensive. The probability of their being able to assess their writing capabilities was a further point of consideration. Data were collected from five universities across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Umm Al-Qura University, King Abdul Aziz University, King Faisal University, Taif University, and Taibah University (Yanbu Branch). The study sample comprised 228 Saudi male and female undergraduates in departments of English matriculated in the final year of their study. A mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed. A survey questionnaire was administered to obtain information about attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy, while two writing tasks (narrative and persuasive) were designed to measure the students' overall competence. The rationale behind setting two different writing tasks was to investigate whether participants' performance differed according to text type. Besides, setting two different tasks was expected to reveal a more comprehensive picture of the students' competence in writing. A pilot study was conducted to help in developing the design of the main study. This showed that an online questionnaire was not an appropriate method of collecting data from the sample population since it yielded a low rate of response. As a result, a traditional paper-based questionnaire

was adopted. The chapter concluded by summarising the study objectives and research question.

Chapter Four presented the procedures followed to analyse the gathered data. The frequency of count and percentages of the given responses to the questionnaire items were analysed first, with the overall mean of responses to each item presented. Regardless of gender, the overall mean in terms of each of the three constructs studied showed that the participants had generally positive attitudes towards writing, felt efficacious about their writing capabilities, and were only moderately apprehensive when writing in English.

A detailed analysis of the writing performance showed that participants, in general, scored low on the writing tasks and at the five components (content, organisation, vocabulary, language use, mechanics) of the writing assessment rubric (the ESL Composition Profile), and that females scored higher than males. Disproving the first hypothesis, correlational and regression tests indicated no statistically significant relationship between attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy and writing achievement of the study sample, in general, and regarding the two written text types separately. Gender appeared to be the only variable with a statistical significance as regards attitudes, apprehension, self-efficacy and writing performance. The finding partially confirms the second hypothesis, that gender influences these psychological characteristics. Contrary to expectations, however, male students reported more positive attitudes and higher self-efficacy than female ones. Females, on the other hand, suffered from higher apprehension despite the fact that they scored higher than males in writing. Regarding the written text types, the analysis revealed that the participants had more positive attitudes towards narrative writing and higher apprehension concerning writing persuasive essays. Participants also demonstrated low-self-efficacy in writing these two types. Further analysis investigated which practices boost writing

apprehension and negative attitudes. The result confirmed prior research in that time constraints and writing for evaluation are among the factors that increase writing anxiety most drastically (see Section 4.1.1).

Chapter Five discussed and interpreted the main findings, concluding that there was no direct influence of these psychological characteristics on the participants' writing performance. This challenges the findings of studies in the literature (e.g. Graham et al. 2007; Pajares and Valiante 1999, 1997; Knudson 1995; Zimmerman and Bandura 1994; Daly and Miller 1975a, 1975b), which suggest that these factors affect writing performance.

A particular focus on attitudes identified a difference between the Saudi participants of this study and participants from various sample populations in past research. Unlike participants in other studies who reported positive attitudes towards writing, the Saudi students [who did] did not practice writing in their free time. The tendency to rely in their learning solely on the writing course suggested that Saudi students had inconsequential or abstract attitudes – attitudes that do not lead to actions on their part – towards writing in English. This type of attitudes, could have been formed as a result of the current status of EFL writing in the Saudi context in the sense that learners feel positive towards writing either because they wish to conform to the attitudes of the authority, i.e., staff at the department of English, or because it is an essential skill of the language they learn. While they may appreciate its significance, they may entertain the opinion that it is a skill not required outside their learning context and, consequently, may not work towards improving it. This lack of a relationship between attitudes and performance could be regarded as evidence that attitudes do not associate with writing performance in the Saudi EFL setting and that contrasting results might be due to variations in contexts and research methodologies (see Section 5.1.1).

With regard to the factor of apprehension, Section 5.1.2 discussed that moderate apprehension may not be a strong enough emotion to affect performance, taking into account that the quality of performance – in this specific study context – would not significantly alter the participants' overall course score. Moreover, their willingness to learn English and the age of the participants might have been additional factors that concealed the influence that apprehension might have had on their writing performance.

Section 5.1.3 showed that the identified lack of a relationship between self-efficacy and writing performance was mainly due to the participants' inaccurate perception. They described themselves as efficacious in writing in English, but their scores in the two writing tasks did not confirm these claims. This overestimation of self-efficacy may be a reflection of a lack of awareness of the students' low writing competence. It may also be a result of misperceptions of the demands of the writing tasks in this research, prior success in other assessments, faulty self-knowledge, a lack of incentives, and complacent feedback.

In terms of writing, Saudi EFL university students were not competent writers despite the long time they had spent learning English. Section 5.2 presented a detailed interpretation of the participants' writing performance. It revealed that they achieved low scores in content, organisation, vocabulary, language use (e.g. tense, word order, articles) and mechanics (e.g. spelling, punctuations, paragraphing). This low level of competence in writing may reflect low levels of competence in other language skills, such as listening or speaking. In brief, the current study brought to light that regardless of their incompetence, Saudi students did not lack positive writing attitudes or self-confidence in their capabilities as writers and that, therefore, low writing performance might be caused by factors other than attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy.



Section 5.3 summarised the potential factors that influenced the writing performance of the study participants. Writing topic, writing time, and writing practices and curriculum were the most common factors mentioned by the participants. Looking into writing text types, narrative writing was favoured. It appeared that participants generally found writing narrative essays easier than writing persuasive essays. By this, they demonstrated different preference patterns than those reported in past studies. Notwithstanding this preference, there was no difference between participants' performances in narrative and persuasive essays. In other words, the study indicated that preference of a specific text type over another does not necessarily result in a better performance when writing the preferred text type.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

This study concludes that a relationship between attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy, as found in prior studies, is unlikely to extend to the context of writing in English as a foreign language, specifically in Saudi Arabia. Having discussed plausible reasons for this lack of a connection, the fact that this relationship is widely unstudied on Saudi EFL learners raises interesting questions about the salience of the study context on determining the link between writers' psychology and performance; a link that has been received as an established knowledge in other contexts. It is equally important to take the ecological setting and the difference between research and real life circumstances into account.

### **6.2.1 Implications of the Study**

The research results could have important implications for theory and practice. Literature about writing has reported that the theoretical concepts of attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy are closely linked to learners' performance. This was not supported by the findings of this study, which, although based solely on a Saudi sample, indicate that the strongest

influence on learners' writing performance is gender. The implication is that, in the context of the present research, social attributes (in this case, gender) may be more closely correlated with, and more accurate predictors of, not only performance in writing, but also writers' attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy, than psychological characteristics. Since predicting writers' performance from their attitudes, apprehension or self-efficacy is, consequently, not necessarily possible in this EFL context, it may be suggested that attempts to link these constructs to performance in foreign language learning in general are unlikely to yield similar results to those made in L1 contexts in the West. The significance of psychological characteristics has to be reconsidered. For example, a re-examination in the context of the current research is required. That being said, it is necessary to warn writing tutors against placing higher expectations on students who favour writing, and perceive themselves as capable and less anxious, than on those who do not. Such unwarranted high expectations can result in assigning those students tasks above their level of proficiency, which might lead, as a consequence, to procrastination and demotivation.

The findings regarding the influence of gender show that male students are more positive about writing and confident about the ability to write than females who feel more apprehensive when they write. In other words, males and females do not write, view writing, or view their capabilities as writers the same, although they may, of course, demonstrate similar attitudes and levels of apprehension concerning specific written text types. That being the case, it would be useful to investigate the effect of gender on students' writing, attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy at other levels of learning, e.g., first-year undergraduates, and in respect of other subjects, to determine whether the impact of this social factor on these constructs is limited to a particular age group.

With its particular focus on self-efficacy, the study has revealed that not all learners who come from a collectivist culture tend to underestimate their capabilities. The participants in the current study, for example, demonstrated optimistic self-efficacy regarding their writing abilities. This suggests that collectivist cultures do not necessarily produce similar patterns of self-efficacy.

Classifying potential sources of writing difficulty, Byrne (1988) argues that it can be the result of psychological, linguistic or cognitive factors. The outcome of the current study, which focused on the psychological aspect exclusively, suggests that students' writing difficulties and low performance are not related to psychological factors. The participants' low performance was, rather, due to a lack of linguistic competence. The assessment of the students' writing, two text types quite different in nature, supports this theory and indicates that the students' have low-level skills both at macro (content, organisation) and micro (language, vocabulary, and mechanics) levels of writing. Linguistic competence, variation in classroom practices, amount of time spent in writing, meaningful writing contexts are all factors that may influence and predict writing achievement. It may be concluded that, despite a large investment in improving education in Saudi Arabia, the current writing curriculum has not succeeded in creating learners who can communicate effectively through writing. The data obtained for this study showed that the writing tasks submitted by the students have to be evaluated as unsatisfactory, reflecting negatively on the Saudi writing curriculum; however, the evaluation rubric employed, the ESL Composition Profile, provided a deep understanding of the linguistic features of the students' writing, an understanding which can inform teachers as to which aspects need increased emphasis.

The findings of the present thesis, based on the students' perspective, have important implications for stakeholders, language instructors and learners of English in Saudi Arabia.

This learners' point of view, Reigstad (1985) remarks, is beneficial to teachers and learners alike, since knowledge about their students' opinions may lead teachers to modify their teaching and assessment approaches and help them to create a successful writing classroom. It has been shown that, in general, students come to the language classroom with positive attitudes. However, some writing practices may influence them negatively and cause apprehension. Through the responses to the questionnaire, this study identified some sources of negative attitudes and high apprehension. For example, it was clear from the students' comments on the writing curriculum that they were aware of its deficiencies and of the fact that further improvements need to be made. Their responses to the attitude questions, both closed and open-ended, even provide practitioners and teachers with explicit suggestions for writing classes. Most students expressed the need for remedial writing courses, for instance. A good way to address this point would be for universities to set up writing centres that students can be referred to when they need further support. As centres of that kind have been available at universities in native English-speaking countries at least since the 1980s, an argument can be made that universities where ESL/EFL is taught would profit from providing a similar service.<sup>67</sup> The merit of the comments should encourage teachers to obtain more information from the students' perspective through common course evaluation instruments.

The thorough evaluation of the sample writing that was an element of this study could be particularly helpful in informing Saudi undergraduates of English, as it demonstrates the common criteria according to which ESL/EFL writing is generally assessed and how their

---

<sup>67</sup> An examination of the websites of universities in Saudi Arabia revealed that a writing centre was officially established in 2013 at King Saud University. Its services were summarised as follows: '[T]he Centre for Writing in English offers free, one-to-one consultations, aimed at improving critical thinking and academic writing skills' (<https://cwe.ksu.edu.sa/node/367>).

writing, as EFL writers, is perceived and evaluated by native speakers, based on a formal international linguistic assessment rubric. A case can be made for the importance of teachers explaining the structure of the evaluation scheme to their students, in order to raise their awareness of the evaluation method and inspire preparatory measures.

Feedback was also addressed in the participants' responses to the questionnaire. Although it is not clear what sort of feedback these students were usually given, it is obvious that it was not highly valued by some of the students. Teachers may consider revising the form and quality of their feedback. There are various approaches to delivering feedback discussed in the literature from which their students may benefit. For instance, Grami (2010) and Alnasser (2013) found that the writing of Saudi university students improved after peer feedback was implemented. Anonymous peer feedback can expose students to varying levels of writing proficiency and make them understand and learn to identify the characteristics of good writing.

Researchers into self-efficacy recognise the importance of feedback. Schunk and Pajares (2001), for instance, argue that '[f]eedback is a persuasive source of self-efficacy information. Performance feedback informs learners of goal progress, strengthens self-efficacy, and sustains motivation' (p. 18). The fact that Saudi Arabia is a collectivist culture that values figures with social authority, such as teachers, and expects them to set the norms (Saba 2013), suggests that students consider teachers' feedback as a valuable source of information about their weaknesses and strengths as writers; high-quality feedback thus enables students to recognise the extent of their capabilities and to judge their self-efficacy as writers. The degree of self-efficacy reported by the participants in this study seems to suggest that their teachers did not offer them sufficiently comprehensive and constructive feedback.

Identifying participants' overestimated self-efficacy should encourage writing teachers and instructors to design informative feedback and implement teaching strategies that help students to improve the judgment of their self-efficacy, for example, periodic assessments of students' self-knowledge. 'An assessment of efficacy beliefs would provide the teacher with insights into the perceptions held by students about their abilities, and help identify miscalibration' (Klassen 2002a). These strategies should be carefully considered in order to help improving students' writing skill and, at the same time, maintaining a positive attitude. It is this positive attitude of their students towards writing that should motivate teachers and writing instructors at Saudi universities to design a coherent and intelligible structure for the teaching of writing.

Based on the participants' comments about the current writing curriculum and practices, teachers and language instructors are advised to devote more time and effort to designing general writing workshops and sessions to support and assist students with their writing. In this regard, innovative writing tasks and practices can motivate learners and facilitate learning. Abu Seileek (2006) found that the EFL writing of Saudi students benefited from the editing facility (the Spelling and Grammar Check) of word-processing software. With this in mind, Khan (2011) encourages teachers to incorporate technology into the language classroom in order to enable students to better cope with the pace of the fast-changing world and to make classes more enjoyable and interesting for them.

Acting upon these implications and recommendations, based on the students' attitudes, would certainly bring improvements to the classroom and help in providing a positive and non-threatening atmosphere for students to learn writing in. The attitudes of learners, Baker (1992) argues, are crucial to the development of educational policy. He (1992) highlights Lewis's (1981) argument concerning the importance of attitudes to education:

Any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected. In the long run, no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement. In any case knowledge about attitudes is fundamental to the formulation of a policy as well as to success in its implementation. (p. 262)

The fact that the participants in the current study expressed positive attitudes toward writing in general but demonstrated negative attitudes towards their writing programme at university should be of great interest to their teachers and to policy makers, and may stimulate them to amend the writing course(s). Ezza and Al-Mudibry (2014) warn that unless policy makers consider improving the writing syllabus according to learners' immediate and future needs, writing will remain a challenging task for many Arab learners of English. The current study emphasises that it is important for teachers and policy makers to continue collecting information from students about writing courses in English and to obtain an understanding of students' needs and priorities in order to be able to design alternative programmes that meet the learners' requirements.

### **6.2.2 Contributions**

Unlike certain strands of past research, which focused on specific aspects of attitudes such as interest or emotions, this study has extended research into writing attitudes and contributed to the field of social psychology by examining, for the first time, writing attitudes through the tripartite model, incorporating affect, cognition and conation as aspects of attitudes towards writing. In the same vein, as the study was inspired by the lack of research into the relationship between the psychological characteristics and writing performance in ESL/EFL

contexts in general, and among Arab students in particular, researching Saudi students has enhanced our understanding of EFL undergraduates' writing attitudes and apprehension more generally and contributed to filling a gap in the literature about this sample population. In particular, as the theory of abstract attitudes have been linked to other ethnic groups, such as African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Turkish and North African minorities, the study contributes to this theory in suggesting that Saudis could be another cultural group subject to this paradox between attitudes and performance.

With regard to social cognitive theory, this study has responded to Pajares' (1996a, 1996b) call for an exploration of self-efficacy in non-Western contexts and shown how Saudi EFL learners perceive themselves as writers and the relationship between this perception and their actual writing capabilities, which differs from those found in Western settings. It thus explores a different avenue to that researched before. The study is important because it is the first to reflect on the writing self-efficacy of Saudis, representing a collectivist culture that differs from those considered in previous research, revealing an important tenet: members of collectivist cultures do not necessarily possess the same self-efficacy.

In terms of methodological contributions, the study also took Jones' (2008) call for correspondence between self-efficacy instruments and performance assessment tools into consideration. Therefore, it included specific well-tested items from past research in the writing self-efficacy scale to correspond to the assessment criteria in the ESL Composition Profile. The study thus contributes suggestions for a closely corresponding writing self-efficacy scale and writing assessment tool for investigating EFL/ESL writers.

By considering written text types when exploring attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy, this work has examined performance consistency across different written text types and shed light on learners' views on these types of writing. It is the first contribution to



inform about how Saudi EFL learners perceive written text types and what characteristics they look for when they choose which text type to write.

Concerning EFL writing, the researcher offers a holistic and analytical evaluation of the writing competence of this particular EFL group of learners and stresses that the perception of what constitutes good writing is an area of slight disparity between local and international assessors, even if using the same assessment rubric.

This thesis also contributes to the field of gender studies by reflecting on the responses given by Saudi males and females. Embracing a comparative perspective, it is, to the researcher's knowledge, the first study that has focused on the potential influence of gender on the attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy of Saudi students, on the basis of their overall performance in writing in English. By establishing that gender is a significant factor affecting students' achievement as well as their attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy, it offers a detailed picture to educators in Saudi Arabia of the achievement potential of both gender groups and paves the way for other researchers investigating Saudi EFL learners in particular, and learners of other academic subjects in general, to control for gender in their investigations.

### **6.2.3 Limitations of the Study**

There are certain features of this research that may limit the generalisability of the findings. The most obvious weakness is the self-report nature of the questionnaire. Using survey questionnaire to explore latent constructs brings with it the risk that participants will not provide honest and sincere responses about their attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy. Mills et al. (2006) argue that 'self-report instruments do not always appropriately capture the participants' perceptions and feelings. Ensuring participant anonymity and using measures

with strong empirical qualities, however, help minimize this threat' (p. 437), which this study has done during the data collection stage (see Section 3.3).

A second drawback is that the scope of the items included in the questionnaire designed to elicit information on attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy were somewhat limited. They were certainly sufficient to generate data concerning the focus of the study; however, information regarding attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy in writing could be elicited through an enormous variety of questions in addition to those used in this research. For example, an endless number of questions could be created based on the components of the relevant definitions. The current study approached attitudes, for instance, through the tripartite theory of affect, cognition and conation. These three components alone could lead to a multitude of questionnaire items. If all items pertaining to attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy were included, it would be impossible to maintain a short format. The questionnaire would become burdensome and, thus, potentially discourage complete responses.

Thirdly, the findings of the current study apply solely to the population sample investigated, and the extent to which they are generalisable is dependent upon whether the sample profile can be considered to be consistent with larger population frames. As described in Chapter Three, the study took place in five public Saudi universities and was limited to 228 fourth-year undergraduate students of English at these institutions. It has been suggested that any study in an educational institution in Saudi Arabia (such as schools and universities) will be representative of other institutions (in this case, in particular universities) since they all share the same cultural and educational milieu (Saadi 2012; Aljafen 2013). However, it should be noted that even if the larger research context has certain characteristics in general (in this case, Saudi educational institutions), learning situations may not be similar. As a result, other findings may arise due to situational differences. In addition to situational

differences, it is believed that even if populations share similar characteristics, individuals can differ on some points (Wang 2004). That being said, other students, at levels either similar to or different from the participants in this study, studying at universities located in more cosmopolitan cities,<sup>68</sup> i.e., Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, may produce different survey outcomes.

#### **6.2.4 Further Research**

In the current literature on Saudi learners of English there is a shortage of investigations about psychological characteristics. In order to attain a critical understanding of the influence of psychological characteristics on writing performance further research is required. Future investigations could involve interviews in addition to a questionnaire to enrich our understanding of writers' attitudes, apprehension and self-efficacy. These would give researchers the opportunity to follow up on the participants' responses, which could potentially contribute to the development of English-language programmes in higher education.

It is still not clear whether the overestimation of self-efficacy found in this study is a pattern of Saudi learners in general and whether it is solely the result of a lack of self-awareness of the studied sample, perhaps itself owing to inappropriate feedback, or the result of other factors, e.g., the observer effects. Klassen (2006) notes that the relationship between performance and self-efficacy calibration has rarely been investigated in past research. A pre-post investigation in which a survey is administered to the participants before and after the writing task might shed more light on the issue.

---

<sup>68</sup> Owing to the rapid economic development of these cities, a higher percentage of foreigners who are English speakers are recruited there, either as company employees or university teachers, and this has also supported the establishment of many international schools and centres; consequently English is used more frequently and widely than in other cities or regions in the Kingdom. Therefore, students who inhabit these cities may be exposed to a variety of English usage and may work personally to improve their language skills in order to meet communication and employment requirements.

Further research could also target other advanced groups of learners, e.g., postgraduate students of English, or those taking other undergraduate degrees, for instance at colleges of science, so as to determine whether the findings of the present study could be replicated at higher proficiency levels and/or with different study subjects. Such investigations would offer a better understanding of the root of the overestimation problem and would, as a consequence, assist educators in designing effective solutions.

Additional research could investigate which of the components of attitudes (i.e., affective, cognitive, conative) determine students' attitudes, and which factors most commonly cause apprehension with regard to writing. Research is also required to determine whether mastery experience, which is considered to be the most important source of self-efficacy, is the most significant factor in shaping the writing self-efficacy of Saudi undergraduates, or whether other factors are more important.

The present study discovered that the writing performance of the Saudi sample group is, generally, low, considering the years they have spent studying English. Future research could address areas that need further improvement, for instance, vocabulary and organisation, and propose tailor-made solutions. Such studies could include a broader range of written text types in addition to narrative and persuasive texts and a variety of writing topics to discover whether these exert influence on students' writing performance.

## References

- Abdel-jawad, H. 1981. Lexical and phonological variation in spoken Arabic in Amman. Unpublished PhD dissertation submitted to the University of Pennsylvania dissertation.
- Abdel-Latif, M. 2007. The Factors Accounting for the Egyptian EFL University Students' Negative Writing Affect. *Essex Graduate Student Papers in Language & Linguistics* 9(1): 57-82.
- Abdel Latif, M. M. 2011. What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know About Arab Gulf EFL/ESL Students' Writing? *Perspectives - TESOL Arabia Publications* 18(2): 6-14.
- Abdul-Fattah, H. S. 1995. FL Writing Apprehension of University Students. *Mu'tah Lil-Buhooth Wa Al-Dirasat*. 1 (5):1-7.
- Abu Ras, R. 2001. Integrating reading and writing for effective language teaching, *English Teaching Forum*, 39(1): 30-39.
- AbuSeileek, A. 2006. The Use of Word Processor for Teaching Writing to EFL Learners in King Saud University. *J. King Saud Univ.* 19 (2):1-15.
- Abu Shawish, J., and Atea, M. 2010. An Investigation of Palestinian EFL Majors' Writing Apprehension: Causes and Remedies. *Proceedings of the First National Conference on: Improving TEFL Methods & Practices at Palestinian Universities*. Retrieved in June 2014 from: <http://www.qou.edu/english/conferences/firstNationalConference/pdfFiles/drJaberDrMohammad.pdf>.
- Adas, D., and Bakir, A. 2013. Writing Difficulties and New Solutions: Blended Learning as an Approach to Improve Writing Abilities. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 3 (9):254-266.
- Agheyisi, R., and Fishman, J. 1970. Language Attitude Studies: A Brief Survey of Methodological Approaches. *Anthropological Linguistics*. 12, (5): 137-157.

- Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In J. Kuhl & J. Beckman (Eds.), *Action-control: From cognition to behavior* (pp. 11-39). Heidelberg: Springer.
- Ajzen, I. 1991. The Theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Processes and Human Decision Behavior Organizational*. Vol. 50, p: 179-211.
- Ajzen, I. 2001. Nature and operation of attitude. *Annual Review. Psychol.* 52(1): 27–58.
- Ajzen, I. 2005. *Attitudes, Personality and Behavior*. Second Edition. Open University Press.
- Ajzen, I., and Fishbein, M. 1977. Attitude-behavior relations: A theoretical analysis and review of empirical research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 84(5): 888-918.
- Ajzen, I., and Fishbein, M. 1980. *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. 2005. The influence of attitudes on behavior. In D. Albarracín, B. T. Johnson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *The handbook of attitudes* (pp. 173-221). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ajzen, I., & Madden, T. J. 1986. Prediction of goal-directed behavior: Attitudes, intentions and perceived behavioral control. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. 22(5):453-474.
- Al-Ahmad, S. 2003. *The impact of collaborative learning on L1 and L2 college students' apprehension and attitudes toward writing*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- Alamri, M. 2011. Higher Education in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice* 11(4):88-91.
- Al Asmari, A. 2013. Investigation of Writing Strategies, Writing Apprehension, and Writing Achievement among Saudi EFL-Major Students. *International Education Studies* 6 (11):130-143.

- Al-Asmari, A., and Khan, M. 2014. E-learning in Saudi Arabia: Past, present and future. *Near and Middle Eastern Journal of Research in Education* 2014:2  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5339/nmejre.2014>.
- Albarracín, D., Johnson, B. T., & Zanna, M. P. 2005. *The Handbook of Attitudes*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Albedaiwi, S. 2014. *EFL Materials in public school classrooms in Saudi Arabia: an investigation of the extent to which teachers engage in materials/textbooks development in order to design learning experiences to meet the needs of their students as an indicator of teacher autonomy*. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Glasgow University. Retrieved in April 2016 from <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/5502/>.
- Albin, M. Benton, S., and Khramtsova, I. 1996. Individual Differences in Interest and Narrative Writing. *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 21(4): 305–324.
- Al-Eid, S. 2000. The Use of Pictures and Drawings in Teaching English Paragraph Writing in Saudi Arabia Schools, King Saud University: unpublished MA thesis.
- Alharthi, K. 2012. The Impact of Writing Strategies on the Written Product of EFL Saudi Male Students at King Abdul-Aziz University. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to New Castle University.
- Al-Hazmi, S., and Scholfield, P. 2007. Enforced Revision with Checklist and Peer Feedback in EFL Writing: The Example of Saudi University Students. *Scientific Journal of King Faisal University (Humanities and Management Sciences)* 8 (2):237-267.
- Alhawsawi, S. 2013. Investigating Student Experiences of Learning English as a Foreign Language in a Preparatory Programme in a Saudi university. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the University of Sussex. Available on <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/48752/>.

- Al-Hazmi, S., 2003. EFL teacher preparation program in Saudi Arabia: Trend and challenges. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(2):341-344.
- Al-Hazmi, S., 2006. "Writing and reflections: Perspectives of Arab EFL learners". *South Asian Language Review*, XV I (2):36-52.
- Alhaisoni, E. 2012. The Effect of Writing Proficiency on Writing Planning Strategy Use: A Case Study of Saudi Learners of English. *International Journal of Linguistics* 4 (3): 78-100.
- Aljafen, B. 2013. Writing Anxiety Among EFL Saudi Students in Science Colleges and Departments at a Saudi university. Unpublished Master thesis, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- Al-Johni, H. 2009. *Finding a Way Forward: The Impact of Teachers Strategies*, beliefs and knowledge on teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Strathclyde University. Retrieved in April 2016 from <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.510864>.
- Al-Kahtani, S. 2002. The progress of A Saudi Student in ESL Literacy: A Case Study. Retrieved in May 2016 from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240633251\\_The\\_progress\\_of\\_A\\_Saudi\\_Student\\_in\\_ESL\\_Literacy\\_A\\_Case\\_Study](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240633251_The_progress_of_A_Saudi_Student_in_ESL_Literacy_A_Case_Study).
- Alkubaidi, M. 2014. The Relationship between Saudi English Major University Students ' Writing Performance and Their Learning Style and Strategy Use. *English Language Teaching* 7, (4):83-95.
- Al-Khairiy, M. 2013. Saudi English-Major Undergraduates' Academic Writing Problems: A Taif University Perspective. *English Language Teaching*, 6 (6), pp.1-12.
- Al-Khasawneh, F. 2010. Writing for Academic Purposes: Problems Faced by Arab Postgraduate Students of the College of Business, UUM. *ESP World*, 9(2):1-28.



- Allport, G.W. 1935. Attitudes. In *Handbook of social psychology*. Edited by C. Murchison, 798–844. Worcester, MA: Clark Univ. Press.
- Allport, G. W. 1954. The Historical Background of Modern Social Psychology. In *Handbook of Social Psychology*, edited by G. Lindzey, and Elliot Aronson. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Al-Mekhlafi, M. A. 2011. The Relationship between writing self-efficacy beliefs and final examination scores in a writing course among a group of Arab EFL Trainee-teachers. *International Journal for Research in Education (IJRE)*, 29: 16-33. Retrieved in May 2015 from [www.fedu.uaeu.ac.ae/journal/docs/pdf/pdf29/2\\_E.pdf](http://www.fedu.uaeu.ac.ae/journal/docs/pdf/pdf29/2_E.pdf).
- Al-Menei, A. (2008). *An Investigation of the Effect of Computer-assisted Writing Instruction on EFL Saudi Learners' Ability*. Unpublished Msc thesis submitted to King Saud University. Retrieved in February 2016 from [http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/searchq=cache:http://repository.ksu.edu.sa/jspui/bitstream/123456789/19275/1/Thesis%2520by%2520Ahmed%2520M.%2520O.%2520AlMenei.pdf&gws\\_rd=cr&ei=3jvcVuSLLYSRUeCOlqAH](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/searchq=cache:http://repository.ksu.edu.sa/jspui/bitstream/123456789/19275/1/Thesis%2520by%2520Ahmed%2520M.%2520O.%2520AlMenei.pdf&gws_rd=cr&ei=3jvcVuSLLYSRUeCOlqAH).
- Alnasser, S. 2013. *A New Form of Peer Feedback Technique: An Investigation into the Impact of Focusing Saudi ESL Learners on Macro Level Writing Features*. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Newcastle University.
- Alnufaie, M., and Grenfell, M. 2013. EFL Students' Writing Strategies in Saudi Arabian ESP Writing Classes: Perspectives on Learning Strategies in Self-access Language Learning. *SiSAL Journal* 3(4):407-422.
- AlQudah, M., Alsubhien, A., Al Heilat, M. 2014. The Relationship between the Academic Procrastination and Self-Efficacy among Sample of King Saud University Students. *Journal of Education and Practice* 5 (16):101-111.

- Alrashidi, O., and Phan, H. 2015. Education Context and English Teaching and Learning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: An Overview. *English Language Teaching*; 8, (5): 33-44.
- Alresheed, S. 2008. EFL Program of the secondary schools in Qassim region (Saudi Arabia):Problems, Causes and Solutions. *Newcastle University Journal*. Retrieved in March 2015 from <http://faculty.mu.edu.sa/public/uploads/1357382794.1003EFL%20P%20R%20Q%20%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%AB%20%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%20PdF.pdf>.
- Al-Roomy, M. 2013. *An Action Research Study of Collaborative Strategic Reading in English with Saudi Medical Students*. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Sussex University. Retrieved in April 2016 from <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/46830/>.
- Al-Sadan, A. (2000): Educational Assessment in Saudi Arabian Schools, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, Vol. 7, (1), pp. 143-155.
- Alsawalha, A., and Chow, T. 2012. The Effects of Proficiency on the Writing Process of Jordanian EFL University Students. *Educational Sciences*, Vol. 3, (2) 2012.
- Al-Seghayer, K. 2014a. The Four Most Common Constraints Affecting English Teaching in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of English Linguistics*; Vol. 4(5), p17-26.
- Al-Seghayer, K. 2014b. The Actuality, Inefficiency, and Needs of EFL Teacher-Preparation Programs in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 3(1), 143-151. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.3n.1p.143>.
- Alseweed, M. 2009. Attitudes of Saudi Secondary School Level Students Towards Learning of English as a Foreign Language. *Journal of Arabic and Human Sciences*, Qassim University, 2 (1): 9-22
- Alshenqeeti, H. 2014. *Questioning in the Saudi EFL University Classroom Student Perspectives and Teacher Practices*. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Newcastle University.

- AL-Serhani, W. 2007. The Effect of Portfolio Assessment on the Writing Performance of EFL Secondary School Students in Saudi Arabia. Unpublished MSc dissertation submitted to Taibah University.
- Alton-Lee, A., and Praat, A. 2000. *Explaining and Addressing Gender Differences in the New Zealand Compulsory School Sector*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education Research Division.
- Althobaiti, N. 2014. Error Correction in EFL Writing: The Case of Saudi Arabia, Taif University, *Journal of Modern Education Review* 4 (12): 1038-1053.
- Ankawi, A. 2015. The Academic Writing Challenges faced by Saudi Students Studying in New Zealand. Unpublished Msc thesis submitted to Auckland University.
- Anyadubalu,C. 2010. Self-Efficacy, Anxiety, and Performance in the English Language among Middle-School Students in English Language Program in Satri Si Suriyothai School, Bangkok. *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology* 5(3):193-198.
- Artino, A. R. (2012). Academic self-efficacy: from educational theory to instructional practice. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 1(2):76–85. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-012-0012-5>.
- Atari, O. (1998). EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Writing Quality and Holistic Evaluations. *Journal of King Saud University* , 10(1): 49-5.
- Atay, D., & Kurt, G. 2006. Prospective teachers and L2 writing anxiety. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(4): 100-118.
- Aydin, S., and Basoz, T. 2010. The Attitudes of Pre-service Teachers towards EFL Writing. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies* 6 (2): 54-68.

- Bacha, N.2001. Writing evaluation: what can analytic versus holistic essay scoring tell us? *System*, 29(1): 371–383.
- Bain, R. 1928. An Attitude on Attitude Research. *American Journal of Sociology*, 33 (6): 940-957.
- Baker, C. 1992. *Attitudes and language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Bandura, A. 1977. Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2): 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. 1989. Human Agency in Social Cognitive Theory. *American Psychologist*, 44(9): 1175-1184.
- Bandura, A. (1993) Perceived Self-Efficacy in Cognitive Development and Functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28(2):117-148.
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press. (Reprinted in H. Friedman [Ed.], *Encyclopedia of mental health*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1998), 153-174.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W.H. Freeman.
- Bandura, A. 2001. Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52: 1-26.
- Bandura, A. 2002. Social Cognitive Theory in Cultural Context. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 2002, 51 (2), 269–290.
- Bandura, A. (2006). Guide for constructing self-efficacy scales. In F. Pajares & T. Urdan (Eds.). *Self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents*, (5: 307-337). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

- Bandura, A., and Jourden, F. 1991. Self-regulatory Mechanisms Governing Social Comparison Effect on Complex Decision Making. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 41: 586-598.
- Bandura, A., and Locke, E. A. (2003). Negative self-efficacy and goal effects revisited. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(1):87-99.
- Bandura, A., and Schunk, D. 1981. Cultivating Competence, Self-efficacy, and Intrinsic Interest Through Proximal Self-Motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 41(3): 586-598.
- Baron, N. 2013. Cultural Challenges in Online Survey Data Collection in Mallinson, Childs, and Herk (eds) *Data Collection in Sociolinguistics: Methods and Applications*. Routledge.
- Beattie, S., Lief, D., Adamoulas, M., Oliver, E. 2011. Investigating the possible negative effects of self-efficacy upon golf putting performance. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 12( 4 ):434-441.
- Beaugrande, R. de (1980). *Text, discourse, and process*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Benjamini, Y., and Hochberg, Y. (1995). Controlling the false discovery rate: a practical and powerful approach to multiple testing. *Journal of the royal statistical society. Series B (Methodological)*, 289-300.
- Biber, D. 1988. *Variation across Speech and Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Biber, D. 1989. "A Typology of English Texts." *Linguistics*, 27: 3-43.
- Bohner, G., and Wanke, M. 2002. *Attitudes and Attitude Change*. Psychology Press.

- Bowman, E. 2000. Examining the Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Writing and How Self-Efficacy Affects Writing Outcomes in English Classrooms. Retrieved in January 2016 from <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=Examining+the+Relationship+Between+Self-Efficacy+and+Writing+and+How+SelfEfficacy+Affects+Writing+Outcomes+in+English+Classrooms+Erin&oq=Examining+the+Relationship+Between+Self-Efficacy+and+Writing+and+How+Self-Efficacy+Affects+Writing+Outcomes+in+English+Classrooms+Erin&aqs=chrome..69i57j492j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>.
- Bowie, R. 1996. Future Teachers' Perceptions of Themselves as Writers and Teachers of Writing: Implications for Teacher Education Programs. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the College Reading Association.*
- Bottomley, D.M., Henk, W.A., & Melnick, S.A. (1998) Assessing children's views about themselves as writers using the Writer Self- Perception Scale. *The Reading Teacher* 51 (4):286-291.
- Brown, J. 2012. Understanding the Better Than Average Effect: Motives (Still) Matter. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 38(2): 209 –219.
- Brown, M (2006) “Addressing Writing Apprehension in Adult English language Learners. CATESOL State Conference.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2):77-101.
- Bratram, B. (2010) *Attitudes to Modern Foreign Language Learning* Insights from Comparative Education. Bloomsbury.
- Brewer, W. F. 1980. Literary theory, rhetoric, and stylistics: Implications for psychology. In R. Spiro, B. Bruce, & W. Brewer (Eds.), *Theoretical issues in reading comprehension* (pp. 221-244). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

- Bruning, R., and Horn, C. (2000). Developing motivation to write. *Educational Psychologist* 35 (1):25- 37. Burgoon.
- Britner,S. 2002. *Science Self-Efficacy of African American Middle School Students: Relationship to Motivation Self-Beliefs, Achievement, Gender, and Gender Orientation*. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Emory University. Retrieved in June 2015 from <http://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/BritnerDissertation.pdf>.
- Bruning, R., and Horn, C. (2000). Developing motivation to write. *Educational Psychologist*, 35(1): 25–37.
- Byrne, D. 1988. *English Teaching Perspective*. Longman Group Press.
- Campillo,M., and Pool,S. 1999. *Improving Writing Proficiency through Self-Efficacy Training*. Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Association, Montreal, Canada.
- Capan, S., and Simsek, H. 2012. General Foreign Language Anxiety among EFL Learners: A Survey Study. *Frontiers of Language and Teaching*, 3(1) : 116-124.
- Caudery, T., 1990. The validity of timed essay tests in the assessment of writing skills. *ELT Journal* 44 (2): 122–131.
- Central Department of Statistics and Information, accessed 19 January 2016 ,<<https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/node>>.
- Cervone,D., and Wood, R. 1995. Goals, feedback, and the differential influence of self-regulatory processes on cognitively complex performance. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*. 19,(5): 519-545.
- Chea,S., and Shumow, L. 2014. The Relationships Among Writing Self-Efficacy, Writing Goal Orientation, and Writing Achievement. *Language Education in Asia*, 5, (2):253-269.

- Chen, H.2007. The Relationship Between EFL Learners' Self-Efficacy Beliefs and English Performance. PhD Dissertation submitted to Florida State University.
- Chen, P. P. 2003. Exploring the accuracy and predictability of the self-efficacy beliefs of seventh-grade mathematics students. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 14(1) 79–92.
- Chen, Y. 2002. The Problems of University EFL Writing in Taiwan. *The Korea TESOL Journal*, 5 (1): 59-79.
- Cheng, Y.2002. Factors Associated with Foreign Language Writing Anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*. 33(6):647-656.
- Cheng, Y.2004. A measure of second language writing anxiety: Scale development and preliminary validation. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 13(.4): 313-335.
- Cheng, Y.-S., Horwitz, E. K., & Schallert, D. L. (1999). Language anxiety: Differentiating writing and speaking components. *Language Learning*, 49(1) 417-446.
- Choi, S. 2013. Language Anxiety in Second Language Writing: Is it Really a Stumbling Block? *Second Language Studies*, 31(2):1-42.
- Clark, C., and Dugdale, G. 2009. *Young people's writing: Attitudes, behavior and the role of technology*. London: National Literacy Trust. . Retrieved in August 2015 from [http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0226/Writing\\_survey\\_2009.pdf](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0226/Writing_survey_2009.pdf).
- Clore, G. L., and Schnall, S. 2005. The influence of affect on attitude. In D. Albarracín, B. T. Johnson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Handbook of attitudes*.
- Cohen,L., Manion,L., and Morrison, K. 2007. *Research Methods in Education*. Sixth edition, New York: Routledge.



- Conner, U. 1990. Linguistic/rhetorical measures for international persuasive student writing. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 24(1), 67-87. Retrieved in September 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/pss/4017144>.
- Corkett, J., Hatt, B., and Benevides, T. 2011. Student and Teacher Self-Efficacy and the Connection to Reading and Writing. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 34 (1): 65-98.
- Crystal, D. 2003. *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Daud, N., and Abu Kassim, N. 2005. Second Language Writing Anxiety: Cause or Effect? *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research, Inaugural 1* (19):1-19.
- Daly, J., and Miller, M. 1975a. The Empirical Development of an instrument of writing apprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 9(3)242-249.
- Daly, J., and Miller, M., 1975b. Further Studies on Writing Apprehension: SAT Scores, Success Expectations, Willingness to Take Advanced Courses and Sex Difference. *Research in the Teaching of English* 9(3) 250-256.
- Daly, J. 1978. Writing apprehension and writing competency. *Journal of Educational Research*, 72 (1), 10-14.
- Daly, J. 1979. Writing apprehension in the classroom: Teacher role expectancies of the apprehensive writer. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 13:37-44.
- Dockery, T., & Bedeian, A. Attitudes versus actions“: Lapiere's (1934) classic study revisited. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*. 17(1): 9-16.
- Dolnicar, S., Grün, B, and Leisch, F. 2011. Quick, simple and reliable: forced binary survey questions. *International Journal of Market Research*, 53(2):231-252.
- Dornyei, Z. 1990. Conceptualizing Motivation in Foreign-Language Learning. *Language Learning*, 40(1): 45-78.

- Dornyei, Z., and Clement, R. 2001. Motivational characteristics of learning different target languages: Results of a nationwide survey. In Z. Dornyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center.
- Downey, D., Ainsworth, J., and Qian, Z. 2009. Rethinking the Attitude-Achievement Paradox Among Blacks. *Sociology of Education January* 82 (1): 1-19.
- Eagly, A. and Chaiken, S. 2005. "Attitude Research in the 21st Century: The Current State of Knowledge. In Albarracín, Dolores, B. T. Johnson, & M. P. Zanna (eds.), *The handbook of attitudes*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 743-767(2005).
- Eaton, M., and Dembo, M. 1997. Differences in the Motivational Beliefs of Asian American and Non-Asian Students. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 89(3)433-440.
- Edelsky, C., and Smith, K.1984. Is That Writing — Or Are Those Marks Just a Figment of Your Curriculum? 61 (1), pp. 24-32.
- Edwards,G. (2015) Understanding boys' attitudes to writing influences of gender and socio-economic stereotyping. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to King's College London.
- [Elyas](#),T., and [Picard](#), M.(2010) "Saudi Arabian educational history: impacts on English language teaching", *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 3 (2): 136 – 145.
- Emara, H. (1994) The effectiveness of the English language programme in Saudi state female schools with particular reference to *students of medicine*. *PhD thesis submitted to Glasgow University*. Retrieved in September 2015 from <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/4781/>.
- Erkan, D., and Saban, A. I. (2011). Writing Performance Relative to Writing Apprehension, Self-Efficacy in Writing, and Attitudes towards Writing: A Correlational Study in Turkish Tertiary-Level EFL. *Asian EFL journal*, Vol.5(4), pp.164-192.

- Erkan, D., and Saban, A. (2004). Writing performance relative to writing apprehension, self-efficacy in writing, and attitudes towards writing: A correlational study in Turkish tertiary-level EFL. *Asian EFL Journal*, 13, 1, 164-192.
- Erwin, P. 2001. *Attitudes and Persuasion*. Psychology Press.
- Ezza, E., and Al-Mudibry, K. 2014. A Critical Review of EFL Writing Syllabus at Tertiary Level in the Arab World. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 3(6): 80-84.
- Ezza, E. 2014. Towards Genre-based Approach to Writing Syllabus in Arab Tertiary Institutions. *British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science*. 4(5): 573-580.
- Ezza, E. 2012. Writing curriculum at Tertiary Level in the Arab World: Challenges and Solutions. Accessed on 22/07/2014 via <http://faculty.mu.edu.sa/public/uploads/1333635394.3655corrected%20manuscript.pdf>.
- Fabrigar, L., MacDonal, T., and Wegener, D. 2005. The Structure of Attitudes in In D. Albarracín, B. T. Johnson, & M. P., Zanna (Eds.), *Handbook of attitudes* (pp. 437-489) Mahwah: Erlbaum.
- Fageeh, I. A. 2003. Saudi college students' beliefs regarding their English writing difficulties. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University, Pennsylvania).
- Faigley, L., Daly, J., & Witte, S. P. 1981. The role of writing apprehension in writing performance and competence. *Journal of Educational Research*, 75(1): 16-21.
- Faigley, L., Cherry, R. D., Jolliffe, D. A., & Skinner, A. M. 1985. *Assessing writers' knowledge and processes of composing*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Fall, M., and McLeod, E. H. (2001). Identifying and assisting children with low self- efficacy. *Professional School Counseling*, 4(5) 334-341.

- Farouk,S. 2014. English Textbooks and the Objectives of ELT in Saudi Arabia: Gaps and Rationale. *Scientific Bulletin of the Politehnica University of Timișoara Transactions on Modern Languages*, 13(1): 47-56.
- Fasold, R. 1984. *The Sociolinguistics of Society*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Fatemi,F., and Vahidnia,F. 2013. An Investigation into Iranian EFL Learners’ Level of Writing Self-efficacy. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(9): 1698-1704.
- Ferris, D.1994. Rhetorical Strategies in Student Persuasive Writing: Differences between Native and Non-Native English Speakers. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 28, (1):45-65.
- Field, A. 2013. *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I.1975. *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. Retrieved online in March 2013 through <http://people.umass.edu/aizen/f&a1975.html>.
- Fishbein, M. (1966). The relationships between beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. InS. Feldman (Ed.), *Cognitive consistency* (pp. 199–223). New York: Academic Press.
- Fletcher, F., & Portalupi, Y. 2001. *Writing workshop: The essential guide*. Portsmouth, NH:Heinemann.
- Flynn, E. 1988. Composing as a Woman. *College Composition and Communication*,39(4): 423-435.
- Fontaine, I. (1991). Recording and transforming: The mystery of the ten-minute free write. In P.Belanoff, P. Elbow, & S. Fontaine (Eds.), *Nothing begins with N: New investigations of free writing* (pp. 3-15). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University.

- Fowler, B., and Kroll, B. M. (1980). Relationship of apprehension about writing to performance as measured by grades in a college course on composition. *Psychological Reports*, 46(1) 583-586.  
From retrieved in January 2014 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1980.46.2.583>.
- Gardner,R., and Lambert,W.1972. *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*, Rowley, MA. Newbury House.
- Garrett, P. 2010. *Attitudes to language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Galyon, C.E., Blondin, C.A., Yaw, J.S., Nalls, M.L.,and Williams, R.L. 2012. The relationship of academic self-efficacy to class participation and exam performance. *Social Psychology of Education*, 15(2):233-249.
- Gelman, A., Hill, J., & Yajima, M. (2012). Why we (usually) don't have to worry about multiple comparisons. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 5(2), 189-211.
- Ghatala, E.S., Levin, J.R., Foorman, B.R., & Pressley, M.1989. Improving children's regulation of their reading PREP time. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 14: 49-66.
- Giles,H. 1985. *The Social Psychology of Language*. London: Edward Arnold. Retrieved in August 2014 from <http://publish.uwo.ca/~gardner/docs/SECONDLANGUAGE1985book.pdf>.
- Gist,M., and Mitchell,T.1992. Self-Efficacy: A Theoretical Analysis of Its Determinants and Malleability. *The Academy of Management Review*, 17(2):183-211.
- Gore 2006,P. Academic Self-Efficacy as a Predictor of College Outcomes: Two Incremental Validity Studies. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 14(1): 92-115.
- Goodman, S., and Cirka, C. 2009. Efficacy and anxiety: An examination of writing attitudes in a first-year seminar. *Journal on Excellence In College Teaching*, 20(3): 5-28.

- Graham, S., Berninger, V., and Fan, W. 2007. The structural relationship between writing attitude and writing achievement in first and third grade students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 32: 516-536.
- Graham, S., Berninger, V., & Abbott, R.(2012). Are attitudes toward writing and reading separable constructs? A study with primary grade children. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 28(1): 51-69.
- Graham, S., and Harris, K. R. 1989a. Components analysis of cognitive strategy instruction: Effects on learning disabled students' compositions and self-efficacy. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 81(3): 353-361.
- Graham, S., and Harris, K. R.1989b. Improving learning disabled students' skills at composing essays: Self-instructional strategy training. *Exceptional Children*, 56(3), 210-214.
- Graham, S., and Weiner, B.1996. Theories and principles of motivation. In D. C. Berliner and R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 63–84). New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.
- Grami, M. (2010). The Effects of Integrating Peer Feedback into University-Level ESL Writing Curriculum: A Comparative Study in a Saudi Context. Doctoral dissertation submitted to Newcastle University, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences.
- Gungle, B.W., and Taylor,V. (1989). Writing apprehension and second language writers. In D. M. Johnson & D. H. Roen (Ed.), *Richness in writing: Empowering ESL students*. New York: Longman.
- Hall,A., and Grisham-Brown,J. 2011. Writing Development Over Time: Examining Preservice Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs About Writing. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 32(2): 148-158.
- Hansen, S. 2001. Boys and writing: reluctance? reticence? or rebellion?. *Language Arts*, 32(5), pp. 5-30.

- Hansen,S. 2009. Gender Differences and Writing; Self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes, preferences and perceptions. Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Harrison, E. 2006. EFL Writing Anxiety: An examination of recent quantitative research. Retrieved in June 2014 from <https://doctormarlen.files.wordpress.com/2006/12/efl-writing-anxiety.doc>.
- Hashemian, M., and Heidari, A.2012.The relationship between L2 learners' motivation/attitude and success in L2 writing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 70(1):476 – 489.
- Hassan, B. 2001. The Relationship of Writing Apprehension and Self-Esteem to the Writing Quality and Quantity of EFL University Students. *Mansoura Faculty of Education Journal*, 39(1): 1-36.
- Haswell, R.2007. Researching Teacher Evaluation of Second Language Writing via Prototype Theory. A paper presented at the Third Second Language Writing Conference at Purdue University.
- Hattie,J., and Timperley,H. 2007; The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research*,77 (1):81-112.
- Hayward, M. 1990. Evaluations of essay prompts by nonnative speakers of English. *TESOL Quarterly* 24 (4):753–758.
- Helms-Park, R., and Stapleton, P.2003. Questioning the importance of individualized voice in undergraduate L2 argumentative writing: An empirical study with pedagogical implications. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12(1): 245- 265.
- Henderson, M., Morris,L., and Fitz-Gibbon.1987. How to Measure Attitudes. Sage Publications.
- Hetthong, R. and Teo, A. 2013. Does Writing Self-efficacy Correlate with and Predict Writing Performance? *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 2(1): 157-167.

- Hidi, S. and P. Boscolo, 2006. Motivation and writing. In Charles MacArthur, Steve Graham and Jill Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research*, pp.144-157). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Hidi,S., Berndorff, D., and Ainley, M. 2002. Children's argument writing, interest and self-efficacy: an intervention study. *Learning and Instruction*. 12(1): 429–446.
- Hofstede, G.1984. The Cultural Relativity of the Quality of Life Concept. *Academy of Management Review*,9(1): 389-398.
- Hollander, M. and Wolfe, D. (1999). *Nonparametric statistical methods*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Hoy, A. W, and Spero, R. B.2005. Changes in teacher efficacy during early years of teaching: A comparison of four measures. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21: 343-356.
- Hsieh, P., and Schallert, D. 2008. Implications from self-efficacy and attribution theories for an understanding of undergraduates' motivation in a foreign language course. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*.33(4): 513-532.
- Huang, C.2013. Gender differences in academic self-efficacy: a metaanalysis. *Eur. J. Psychol. Educ*,Vol. 28(1):1-35.
- Hubert, M. 2012. US University Learner Attitudes towards Foreign Language Writing. *International Scholarly Research Network*.1(1): 1-9.
- Hudelson, S. 1986. ESL children's writing: What we've learned, what we're learning. In P. Rigg & D. S. Enright (Eds.), *Children and ESL: Integrating perspectives* (pp. 25-54). Washington, DC: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- Hussein, 2013. *An Investigation into the factors that associated with writing Anxiety for English Language Learners in UAE Universities*. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the British University in Dubai.



- Huwari, I., and AbdAziz, N. 2011. Writing Apprehension in English among Jordanian Postgraduate Students at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). *Academic Research International*, 1(2):190-198.
- Ibrahim, M. 1986. Standard and Prestige Language: A Problem in Arabic Sociolinguistics. *Anthropological Linguistics*. 28(1):115 -126.
- Ibrahim, H. 2006. The Effect Of Using The Reading For Writing Approach On Developing The Writing Ability Of Egyptian EFL Learners And Their Attitudes Towards Writing. Scientific Methodologies In Educational Research. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service NO. ED 498363):1-28.
- Ismail, M. 2008. A Comparative Sociolinguistic Study of Gender Related Differences and Attitudes in the Use of Standard Arabic Speech Forms in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Retrieved in September 2015 from <http://repository.ksu.edu.sa/jspui/bitstream/123456789/19320/1>
- Jacobs, H., Zingraf, S., Wormuth, D., Hartfiel, J., and Hughey. 1981. *Testing ESL Composition: A Practical Approach*. Newbury House Publishers, Inc.
- Jahin, J. 2012. The Effect of Peer Reviewing on Writing Apprehension and Essay Writing Ability of Prospective EFL Teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 37 ( 11):60-84.
- Jamjoom, Y. 2012. *Understanding Private Higher Education in Saudi Arabia Emergence, Development and Perceptions*. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the University of London. Retrieved in January 2016 from <http://www.albany.edu/dept/eaps/prophe/Yussra%20Jamjoom's%20DISS-PHE%20in%20Saudi%20Arabia.pdf>.
- Javid, c., and Umer, m. 2014. Saudi EFL Learners' Writing Problems : a move towards solution. Proceeding of the Global Summit on Education GSE 2014.

- Jones, E.2008. Predicting performance in first-semester college basic writers: Revisiting the role of self-beliefs. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. 33(2): 209–238.
- Jones,S., and Myhill , D. 2007. ‘Discourse of Difference? Examining Gender Differences in Linguistic Characteristics of Writing’. *Canadian Journal of Education*. 30(2):456-482.
- Jung, C.1971. *Psychological Types*. London: Routledge.
- Kachru, B. 1992. *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures*. University of Illinois Press.
- Kadwa, M.2012. Attitudes Of Saudi Arabian Learners To Online Communication In EFL. Master dissertation submitted to the University of South Africa.
- Kambal, M. 1980. An Analysis of Khartoum University Student’s Composition Errors with Implication for Remedial English in the Context of Arabicization. PhD Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin. USA.
- Katz, D., and Stotland, E. 1959. A preliminary statement to a theory of attitude structure and change. In S. Koch (Ed.), *Psychology: A study of a science*, 3:423-475. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Kean, D., Glynn, M., and Britton,B.1987. Writing Persuasive Documents: The Role of Students' Verbal Aptitude and Evaluation Anxiety. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 55, (2):95-102.
- Kear, D., Coffman, G., Mckenna, M., and Ambrosio, A. 2000. Measuring Attitude toward Writing" A New Tool for Teachers. *The Reading Teacher*. 54(1): 10-23.
- Kelley, K. and Preacher, K. (2012). On effect size. *Psychological methods*, 17(2): 137-152.
- Kelman, H. 1974. Attitudes are Alive and Well and Gainfully Employed in the Sphere of Action. *Journal of American Psychologists*. 29:310-324.
- Kennedy, E., and Lawton, L.2002. Blissful Ignorance: The Problem of Unrecognized Incompetence and Academic Performance. *Journal of Marketing Education*. 24(3): 243-252.

- Ketter, J., and Hunter, J.,1997. Student Attitudes toward Grades and Evaluation on Writing in Tchudi, S. ed '*Alternatives to Grading Student Writing*'. National Council of Teachers of English, pp. 103-11.
- Khan, I. A. 2011. Learning difficulties in English: Diagnosis and pedagogy in Saudi Arabia. *Educational Research*. 2(7): 1248-1257.
- Kim, Y. and Kim, J. 2005. Teaching Korean university writing class: Balancing the process and the genre approach. *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(2):1-15.
- Kim, J. and Lorschach, A.W. 2005. Writing self-efficacy in young children: Issues for the early grades environment. *Learning Environments Research*, 8(1): 157-175.
- Kirmizi, O., and Kirmizi,G. 2015. An Investigation of L2 Learners' Writing Self-Efficacy, Writing Anxiety and Its Causes at Higher Education in Turkey. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 4, (2):57-66.
- Klassen, R. 2002a. A Question of Calibration: A Review of the Self-efficacy Beliefs of Students with Learning Disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*. 25 ( 2): 88-102.
- Klassen, R. 2002b. Writing in Early Adolescence: A Review of the Role of Self-Efficacy Beliefs. *Educational Psychology Review*. 14(2): 173-203.
- Klassen, R. 2004a. Optimism and realism: A review of self-efficacy from across-cultural perspective. *International Journal of Psychology*, 2004, 39 (3), 205–23.
- Klassen, R (2004b). A cross-cultural investigation of the efficacy beliefs of South Asian Immigrant and Anglo non-immigrant early adolescents. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96(4):731-742.
- Klassen, R. 2006. Too much confidence? The self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents with learning disabilities. *Information Age*, 181-200.

- Klassen, R. 2008. The Optimistic Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Students with Learning Disabilities. *Exceptionality Education International*, 18(1): 93-112.
- Klassen, R., and Georgiou, G. 2008. Spelling and Writing Self-efficacy of Indo-Canadian and Anglo-Canadian Early Adolescents. *Int. Migration & Integration*, 9(3): 311–326.
- Klassen, R., and Welton, C. 2009. Self-efficacy and Procrastination in the Writing of Students with Learning Disabilities in Toria, G. (Ed) *Instruction and Assessment for Struggling Writers*, The Guilford Press.
- Knudson, R. E. 1993. Development of a writing attitude survey for grades 9 to 12: Effects of gender, grade, and ethnicity. *Psychological Reports*, 73, 587-594.
- Knudson, R. 1995. Writing Experiences, Attitudes, and Achievement of First to Sixth Graders. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 89(2): 90-97.
- Knudson, R. E. 1992. The development of written argumentation: An analysis and comparison of argumentative writing at four grade levels. *Child Study Journal*, 22: 167-184.
- Kormos, J. 2011. Task complexity and linguistic and discourse features of narrative writing performance. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 20: 148–161.
- Kormos, J. 2012. The role of individual differences in L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21 (4): 390–403.
- Kotula, A. W., Tivnan, T., and Aguilar, C. M. 2014. *Students' Voices: The Relationship Between Attitudes and Writing Outcomes for Fourth and Fifth Graders*. Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.
- Koura, A. A., and Al-Hebaishi, M. 2014. The relationship between multiple intelligences, self-efficacy and academic achievement of Saudi gifted and regular intermediate students. *Educational Research International*, 3(1): 48–70.

- Krashen, S. 1982. *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press Inc.
- Kroll, B., 1990. What does time buy? ESL student performance on home versus class compositions. In: Kroll, B. (Ed.), *Second Language Writing Research Insights for the Composition*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 140–154.
- Kruger, J., and Dunning, D. (1999) Unskilled and unaware of it: How difficulties in recognizing one's own incompetence lead to inflated self-assessments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(6):1121-1134.
- Labov, W. 1990. The intersection of sex and social class in the course of linguistic change. *Language Variation and Change*, 2(1):205-254.
- Lambert, W.E. 1955. 'Measurement of the Linguistic Dominance of Bilinguals' *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 50(1):197-200.
- LaPiere, R. 1934. Attitudes vs. Actions. *Social Forces*, 13( 2):230-237.
- Larson, L., Stephen, A., Bonitz, V., and Wu, T. 2013. Predicting Science Achievement in India: Role of Gender, Self-Efficacy, Interests, and Effort. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 22(1):89-101.
- Lee, J. 2013. Can Writing Attitudes and Learning Behavior Overcome Gender Difference in Writing? Evidence From NAEP. *Written Communication*, 30(2):164-193.
- Lee, S. 2002. The influence of cognitive/psychological characteristics on L1/L2 literacy transfers. *Studies in English Language and Literature*, 10(1): 17-32.
- Lee, S.Y., and Krashen, S.D. (1997). Writing apprehension in Chinese as a first language. Review of *Applied Linguistics*, 115:27–37.
- Lee, S. Y. (2005). Facilitating and inhibiting factors on EFL writing: A model testing with SEM. *Language Learning*, 55 (2): 335-374.
- Lewis, R (1981). *Bilingualism and Bilingual Education*. Oxford: Pergamon.

- Li, L.2012. A study of the Attitude, Self-efficacy, Effort and Academic Achievement of City University Students towards Research Methods and Statistics. *Research Education*, 1:154-183.
- Liddell, M., and Davidson, S. 2004. Student attitudes and their academic performance: is there any relationship? *Medical Teacher*, Vol. 26(1), pp. 52–56.
- Light, Singer, and Willet (1990) *By Design: Planning Research on Higher Education* By Richard J. LIGHT, Judith D. Singer, John B. Willett, Richard J Light, Harvard University Press.
- Liu, M., and Ni, H.2015. Chinese University EFL Learners' Foreign Language Writing Anxiety: Pattern, Effect and Causes. *English Language Teaching*, Vol.8(3),pp.46-58.
- MacArthur, C., Graham,S., and Fitzgerald, J. 2006. *Handbook of Writing Research*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Madden, Ellen, Ajzen. 1992. A comparison of the theory of planned behavior and theory of reasoned action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 18 (1): p:3-9.
- Maddux, J. E., Sherer, M., & Rogers, R. W. (1981). Self-efficacy expectancy and outcome expectancy: Their relationship and their effects on behavioral intentions. *Cognitive Therapy and Research in Meier*, S. T., McCarthy, P. R., and Schmeck, R. R. 1984. Validity of self-efficacy as a predictor of writing performance. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 8, 107–120.
- Magogwe, J., and Oliver, R. 2007. The relationship between language learning strategies, proficiency, age and self-efficacy beliefs: A study of language learners in Botswana. *System*, (35): 338–352.
- Mahboob, A., and Elyas, T. 2014. English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *World Englishes*, 33(1):128–142.
- Mahfoudhi, A. (2001). Teaching EFL writing: Students' hidden agenda. *Cahiers linguistiques d'Ottawa*, 29, 19-49.

- Mahyuddin R., Elias H., Cheong L. S., Muhamad M. F., & Noordin N. Abdullah M. C. (2006). The relationship between students' self-efficacy and their English language achievement. *Malaysian Journal of Educators and Education*, 21, 61-71.
- Martin, J. 2009. Genre and language learning: A social semiotic perspective. *Linguistics and Education*. 20, 10–21.
- Martinez, C. T., Kock, N., & Cass, J. 2011. Pain and pleasure in short essay writing: Factors predicting university students' writing anxiety and writing self-efficacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54, (5):351-360.
- Masgoret, A.-M., & Gardner, R. C. (2003). Attitudes, motivation, and second language learning: A meta-analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and associates. *Language Learning*, 53(1), pp. 123–163.
- Maurer, T., and Pierce, H. 1998. A Comparison of Likert Scale and Traditional Measures of Self-Efficacy. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83, (2): 324-329.
- Maurer, T., and Andrews, K. 2000. Traditional, Likert, and Simplified Measures of Self-efficacy. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 60 (6):965-973.
- Ma, X. and Kishor, N., 1997. Assessing the relationship between attitude toward Mathematics and achievement in mathematics. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 28 (1), 26-47.
- McCarthy, P., Meier, S., & Rinderer, R. (1985). Self-efficacy and writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 36, 465-471.
- McLeod, S. 1987. Some Thoughts about Feelings: The Affective Domain and the Writing Process. *College Composition and Communication*, 38, (4): 426-435.
- McLeod, S. 1991. The Affective Domain and the Writing Process: Working Definitions. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 11, 95-105.

- McMullen, M. 2009. Using language learning strategies to improve the writing skills of Saudi EFL students: Will it really work? *System* 37, 418–433.
- Meece, J., Glienke, B., Burg, S. 2006. Gender and motivation. *Journal of School Psychology*, 44(5):351–373.
- Meier, S. T., McCarthy, P. R., and Schmeck, R. R. 1984. Validity of self-efficacy as a predictor of writing performance. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 8, 107–120.
- Meinhof, U.H. 1997. ‘The most important event of my life!’ A comparison of male and female narratives. In Johnson, S. and U.H. Meinhof (eds), *Language and masculinity*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 208-239.
- Mickelson, R.A., 1990. The attitude-achievement paradox among black adolescents. *Sociology of Education*, 63 (1): 44-61.
- Mills, M. 2011. ‘Sex Difference vs. Gender Difference? Oh, I'm So Confused!’ *Psychology Today*. HealthPros.com. Oct. 2011.
- Mills, N. A. 2004. Self-efficacy of college intermediate French students: Relation to motivation, achievement, and proficiency. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Emory University.
- Mills, N., Pajares, F., and Herron, K. 2007. Self-efficacy of College Intermediate French Students: Relation to Achievement and Motivation. *Language Learning*, 57, 417-442.
- Min, L., and Rahmat, N. 2014. English Language Writing Anxiety among Final Year Engineering Undergraduates in University Putra Malaysia. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 5 (4): 102-106.
- Ministry of education, accessed 14 February 2015 <  
<https://www.moe.gov.sa/ar/Pages/default.aspx>>.



- Moore, T., and Chang, J. 2009. Self-Efficacy, Overconfidence, and the Negative Effect on Subsequent Performance: A Field Study. *Information and Management*,46(6):69-76.
- Multon, K. D., Brown, S. D., & Lent, R. W. (1991). Relation of self-efficacy beliefs to academic outcomes: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 18,30–38.
- Naghadeh, M.A., Naghadeh, N.A., Kasraey, S., Maghdour, H. & Kasraie, S. (2014). The relationship between anxiety and Iranian EFL learners' narrative writing performance, *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Research*. 3(6):602-609.
- Nasrollahi,A., and Barjasteh,H. 2013. Iranian Students' Self Efficacy and Their Language Achievements. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(10) : 1837-1843.
- Negari,G., and Rezaabadi, O. 2012. Too Nervous to Write? The Relationship between Anxiety and EFL Writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(12): 2578-2586.
- Nicol and Macfarlane 2006. Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2): 199-218.
- Nwosu and,K., and Okoye, R. 2014. Students' Self-Efficacy and Self-Rating Scores as Predictors of Their Academic Achievement. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 4(3): 223-228.
- Oller Jr., J.W., Perkins, K., 1980. *Research in Language Testing*. Newbury House.
- Oppenheim, B. 1982. An exercise in attitude measurement. In *Social Psychology: A Practical Manual* ( eds.) G. Breakwell, H. Foot, and R Gilmour. Basingstoke: Macmillian.
- Otteningen,G.1995. Cross-cultural Perspectives on Self-efficacy. In A. Bandura (Ed.), *Self-efficacy in Changing Societies*.PP149-176. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ozturk,G., and Saydam, D. 2014. Anxiety and Self-efficacy in Foreign Language Writing: The Case in Turkey. *Başkent University Journal of Education BAŞKENT*, 1(2), 10-21.

- Pajares, F., Britner, S., and Valiante, G. 2000. Relation between Achievement Goals and Self-Beliefs of Middle School Students in Writing and Science. *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25: 406–422.
- Pajares, F., and Johnson, M. 1994. Confidence and Competence in Writing: The Role of Self-Efficacy, Outcome Expectancy, and Apprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 28, (3) : 313-331.
- Pajares, F., & Johnson, M. J. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in the writing of high school students: A path analysis. *Psychology in the Schools*, 33,(2): 163-175.
- Pajares, F., and Miller, M. D. (1997). Mathematics self-efficacy and mathematical problem-solving: Implications of using different forms of assessment. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 65: 213-228.
- Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (2006). Self-efficacy beliefs and motivation in writing development. In C. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (pp. 158–170). New York: Guilford Press.
- Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (2001). Gender differences in writing motivation and achievement of middle school students: A function of gender orientation? *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 26: 366–381.
- Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (1999). Grade level and gender differences in the writing self-beliefs of middle school students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 24, 390–405.
- Pajares, F., and Valiante, G. 1997. Influence of writing self-efficacy beliefs on the writing performance of upper elementary students. *Journal of Educational Research*, 90: 353-360.
- Pajares, F., Johnson, M., and Usher, E. (2007). Sources of Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Elementary, Middle, and High School Students. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 42(1), 104-20.

- Pajares, F., and Miller, D. 1994. Role of Self-Efficacy and Self-Concept Beliefs in Mathematical Problem Solving: A Path Analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 86, (2): 193-203.
- Pajares, F., & Miller, M. D. (1997). Mathematics self-efficacy and mathematical problem-solving: Implications of using different forms of assessment. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 65, 213-228.
- Pajares, F. 2003a. Self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing: a review of the literature. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*. 19:139-158.
- Pajares, F. 2003b. Current Directions in Self-efficacy Research. In M. Maehr & P. R. Pintrich (Eds.). *Advances in motivation and achievement*. Volume 10, (pp. 1-49). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Pajares, F. 1996a. Self-efficacy Beliefs in Academic Setting . *Review of Educational Research*, 66(4):543-578.
- Pajares, F. 1996b. Assessing self-efficacy beliefs and academic outcomes: The case of specificity and correspondence. Paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, abstract retrieved in April 2015 from <http://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/aera2.html>.
- Palmquist, M., and Young, R. 1992. The Notion of Giftedness and Student Expectations about Writing. *Written Communication*, 9 (1): 137-168.
- Park, S. 2006. The Impact of English Language and Cultural Variations on Korean Students in Australian Undergraduate Programs. Unpublished Msc dissertation submitted to Queensland University. Retrieved in June 2015 from <http://eprints.usq.edu.au/1480>.
- Peabody, D. 1962. Two components in bipolar scales: Direction and extremeness. *Psychological Review*, 69(2): 65-73.

- Petty, R. E., & Krosnick, J. A. (1995). *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Peterson, L. 1991. Gender and the Autobiographical Essay: Research Perspectives, Pedagogical Practices. *College Composition and Communication*, 42, (2): 170-183.
- Petrić, B. 2002. Students' attitudes towards writing and the development of academic writing skills. *The Writing Center Journal*. 22(.2):9-27.
- Peyton, J., Staton, J, Richardson, G., and Wolfram, W. 1990. The Influence of Writing Task on ESL Students' Written Production. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 24(2): 142-171.
- Phinney, M.1991. Word Processing and Writing Apprehension in First and Second Language Writers. *COMPUTERS and COMPOSITION* 11(1):65-82.
- Phillips, D. A., and Zimmerman, M. (1990). The developmental course of perceived competence and incompetence among competent children. In R. J. Sternberg & J. Kolligian, Jr. (Eds.), *Competence considered*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Pintrich, P. 2002. The Role of Metacognitive Knowledge in Learning, Teaching, and Assessing. *Theory into Practice*, 41 (4) 4: 219-215.
- Powers, W. T. (1991). Comment on Bandura's "human agency." *American Psychologist*, 46, 151–153.
- Praag, L., D'hondt, F., Stevens, and Houtte, M. 2015. Is the Sky Really the Limit? Exploring the Attitude-Achievement Paradox in the Belgian Context. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1(2) : 225–238.
- Prat-Sala, M., and Redford, P. 2012. Writing essays: does self-efficacy matter? The relationship between self- efficacy in reading and in writing and undergraduate students' performance in essay writing. *Educational Psychology*, 32, (1): 9–20.

- Qashoa, S. 2014. English Writing Anxiety: Alleviating Strategies. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* (139): 59-65.
- Rabab'ah, G. 2003. "Communication problems facing Arab learners of English". *Journal of Language and Learning*,3(1) : 180-197 .
- Race, P. 2001. Using feedback to help students learn .The Higher Education Academy. [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id432\\_using\\_feedback.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id432_using_feedback.pdf) Accessed February 2016.
- Rahimpour, M., and Nariman-jahan, R. 2010. The Influence of Self-Efficacy and Proficiency on Efl Learners' Writing. *Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 7(11): 19-32.
- Rahman, M., and Alhaisoni, E. 2013. Teaching English In Saudi Arabia: Prospects And Challenges. *Journals.savap.org.pk* 4 (1):.112-118.
- Rahman, M. M. 2012. An evaluation of English writing text at the preparatory year, Najran University, Saudi Arabia. *Academic Research International*, 2:706–714.
- Rahimi, A., & Abedini, A. 2009. The interface between EFL learners' self-efficacy concerning listening comprehension and listening proficiency. *Novitas-ROYAL*, 3(1),14-28.
- Raimes, A. 1983. *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Raimes, A. 1985. What Unskilled ESL Students Do as They Write: A Classroom Study of Composing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, (2):229-258.
- Razek, N., and Coyner, S. 2014. Impact of Self-efficacy on Saudi Students' College Performance. Retrieved in August 2015 from [http://ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=edc\\_fac\\_pub](http://ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=edc_fac_pub).
- Reigstad, T. 1985. Perspectives on Anxiety and the Basic Writer: Research, Evaluation, and Instruction. *Journal of Basic Writer* 4(1): 68-77.

- Reio, J., Alexander, P., Reio, T, and Newman, I. 2014. Do students' beliefs about writing relate to their writing self-efficacy, apprehension, and performance? *Learning and Instruction*, 33:1-11.
- Rezaei, M., and Jafari,M. 2014. Investigating the Levels, Types, and Causes of Writing Anxiety among Iranian EFL Students: A Mixed Method Design. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 98: 1545 – 1554.
- Richards,J., and Schmidt, R. 2010. *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. Longman.
- Rokeach, M.1972. *Beliefs, Attitudes and Values: A Theory of Organization and Change*. Jossey-Bass Inc Pub.
- Rokeach, M.1972. *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values*. Jossey-Bass Inc., Publisher.
- Rokeach, Milton (1973), *The Nature of Human Values*, New York: The Free Press.
- Rose, M. (1984). *Writer's block: The cognitive dimension*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rosenberg, M. J., & Hovland, C. I. 1960. Cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of attitudes. In C. I. Hovland, & M. J. Rosenberg (Ed.), *Attitude organization and change: An analysis of consistency among attitude components* (pp. 1-14). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Rushidi, J.2012. *Perceptions and Performance: Students' Attitudes towards Academic English Writing*. *SEEU Review*, 8(2):1-15.
- Saadi,I. 2012. *An Examination of the Learning styles of Saudi Preparatory School Students who are High or Low in Reading Achievement*. PhD thesis submitted to Victoria University.

- Saadat, M., and Dastegrdi, M. 2014. Correlates of L2 Writing Ability of Iranian Students Majoring in English. Paper presented at International Conference on Current Trends on ELT. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 98: 1572 – 1579.
- Saba, M. 2013. Writing in a New Environment: Saudi ESL Students Learning Academic Writing. PhD Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- Salem, M. 2007. The Effect of Journal Writing on Written Performance, Writing Apprehension, and Attitudes of Egyptian English Majors. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Pennsylvania State University.
- Sarkhoush, H. 2013. Relationship among Iranian EFL Learners' Self- efficacy in Writing, Attitude towards Writing, Writing Apprehension and Writing Performance. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4, (5):1126-1132.
- Sarnoff, I. 1970. Social attitudes and the resolution of motivational conflict. In *Attitudes*, eds.
- Sawyer, Richard J.; Graham, Steve; Harris, Karen R. (1992). Direct Teaching, Strategy Instruction, And Strategy Instruction With Explicit Self-Regulation: Effects On The Composition Skills And Self-Efficacy Of Students With Learning Disabilities. *Journal Of Educational Psychology*, 84: 340-352.
- Schunk, D., and Gunn, T. P. (1986). Self-efficacy and skill development: Influence of task strategies and attributions. *Journal of Educational Research*, 79, 238–244.
- Schunk, D., and Pajares, F. 2001. The Development of Academic Self-Efficacy. Chapter in A. Wigfield & J. Eccles (Eds.), *Development of achievement motivation*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Schunk, D. H. 1982. Effects of effort attributional feedback on children's perceived self-efficacy and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74, 548-556.

- Schunk, D. H. 1983. Ability versus effort attributional feedback: Differential effects on self-efficacy and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75: 848-856.
- Schunk, D. 1991. Self-Efficacy and Academic Motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, 26(3 & 4), 207-231.
- Schunk, D. H. 1996. Self-efficacy for learning and performance. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New York.
- Schunk, D. H. 2003. Self-efficacy for reading and writing: Influencing of modeling, goal setting, and self-evaluation. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19: 159-172.
- Schunk, D. H., and Swartz, C. W. 1993. Goals and progress feedback: Effects on self-efficacy and writing achievement. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 18: 337-354.
- Schmied, J. 1991. *English in Africa: an introduction*. Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- Schmidt, A., and DeShon, R. 2009. Prior performance and goal progress as moderators of the relationship between self-efficacy and performance. *Human Performance*, 22: 191- 203.
- Scholz, U., Doña, B., Sud, S., Schwarzer, R. 2002. Is general self-efficacy a universal construct? Psychometric findings from 25 countries. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, Vol 18(3):242-251.
- Shang, H. 2013. Factors Associated with English as a Foreign Language University Students Writing Anxiety. *International Journal of English Language Teaching* Vol.1(1):1-12.
- Shaver, P. 1990. Reliability and validity of measures of attitudes toward writing and toward writing with the computer. *Written Communication*, 7:375-392.



- Shawish, J. A., and Atea, M. 2010. An investigation of Palestinian EFL majors' writing apprehension: Causes and remedies. [on-line available] <http://www.qou.edu/english/conferences/firstNationalConference/pdfFiles/drJaberDrMohammad.pdf>.
- Shehadeh, A. 2011. Effects and student perceptions of collaborative writing in L2. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 20:286-305.
- Shell, D.F., Murphy, C.C., & Bruning, R.H. 1989. Self-efficacy and outcome expectancy mechanisms in reading and writing achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 81, 91-100.
- Shell, D, Colvin, C., and Burning, R.1995. Self-efficacy, attribution, and outcome expectancy mechanisms in reading and writing achievement: Grade-level and achievement-level differences. *Journal of Educational Psychology*,87(3):386-398.
- Shukri, N. 2014. Second Language Writing and Culture: Issues and Challenges from the Saudi Learners' Perspective. *Arab World English Journal*. 5 (3):.190-207.
- Silva, T. 1993. "Towards an Understanding of the Distinct Nature of L2 Writing: the ESL Research and Its Implication". *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(4): 657–75.
- Storch, N. 2005. Collaborative writing: Product, process, and students' reflections. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 14:153–173.
- Street, C. 2003. Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes about Writing and Learning To Teach Writing: Implications for Teacher Educators. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 30(3):33–50. Retrieved in April 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23478439>.
- Sutton, B. 1992. Undergraduate writing research papers: Twenty-four case studies. A PhD dissertation submitted to the Ohio State University.

- Swales, J. 1990. *Genre Analysis. English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge University Press.
- Syed,Z. 2003. TESOL in the Gulf The Sociocultural Context of English Language Teaching in the Gulf. *TESOL QUARTERLY*,37(2): 337-341.
- Tanyer, S. (2015). The role of writing and reading self-efficacy in first-year preservice EFL teachers' writing performance. Paper presented at GlobELT 2015: An International Conference on Teaching and Learning English as an Additional Language, Antalya, Turkey.
- Tariq Elyas,T., and Picard, M.2010 "Saudi Arabian educational history: impacts on English language teaching", Education, Business and Society: *Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 3 (2):136 – 145.
- Thaipakdee, S. 1992. Relationship among writing quality, attitudes toward writing, and attitudes toward computers in a computer-mediated technical writing class for English as a foreign language students. PhD Thesis. University of North Texas. DAI, A:53-1135-A.
- Tilfarlioğlu, F. T., & Ciftci, F. S. (2011). Supporting self-efficacy and learner autonomy in relation to academic success in EFL classrooms (A Case Study). *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 1(10), 1284-1294. Retrieved in July 2015 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4304/tpls.1.10.1284-1294>.
- Tousignant, M., and Desmarchais, J. 2002. Accuracy of Student Self-Assessment Ability Compared to Their Own Performance in a Problem-Based Learning Medical Program: A Correlation Study. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 7: 19–27.
- Troia, G. Harbaugh, A., Shankland, R., Wolbers, K., and Lawrence,A. •2012. Relationships between writing motivation, writing activity, and writing performance: effects of grade, sex, and ability. *Read Writ*, 26(1):17–44.

- Trudgill, P. 1972. Sex, Covert Prestige and Linguistic Change in the Urban British English of Norwich. *Language in Society*, 1( 2):179-195.
- Unal, E. (2010). An analysis of the writing disposition of fourth and fifth grade elementary school pupils. *Project Innovation*, 131(2): 319-330.
- Usher, E., and Pajares, F. 2008. Sources of Self-Efficacy in School: Critical Review of the Literature and Future Directions. *Review of Educational Research*. 78( 4): 751–796.
- Usher, E. 2009. Sources of middle school students' self-efficacy in mathematics: A qualitative investigation. *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 46(1): 276-314.
- Vancouver, J. B., Thompson, C. M., Tischner, E. C., & Putka, D. J. 2002. Two studies examining the negative effect of self-efficacy on performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87:506–516.
- Vancouver, J. B., Thompson, C. M., & Williams, A. A. 2001. The changing signs in the relationships between self-efficacy, personal goals and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86: 605–620.
- Vancouver, J., and Kendall, L. 2006. When self-efficacy negatively relates to motivation and performance in a learning context. *J Appl Psychol*. 91(5):1146-53.
- Visser, P., Bizer, G., Krosnick, Jon 2006.. Exploring the latent structure of strength-related attitude attributes. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, 38:1-67.
- Walker (2003) Walker, B. J. (2003). The cultivation of student self-efficacy in reading and writing. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 19(3):173–187.
- Wang, C. 2004. Self-Regulated Learning Strategies And Self-Efficacy Beliefs Of Children Learning English As A Second Language. PhD thesis submitted to the university of Ohio State University.

- Webb-Williams, J. L. 2006. Self-efficacy in the primary classroom: an investigation into the relationship with performance. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Warwick. British Education Index. Available on-line at [www.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.leeds.ac.uk).
- Webb-Williams, J. 2014. Gender differences in school children's self-efficacy beliefs: Students' and teachers' perspectives. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 9(3):75-82.
- Weigle, S. 2002. *Assessing writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wang, P., and Hancock, G. 1994. Motivation and Mathematics Achievement: Comparisons between Asian-American and Non-Asian Students. [\*Contemporary Educational Psychology\* 19\(3\): 302-322.](#)
- Wicker, A. 1969 Attitudes versus Actions : The Relationship of Verbal and Overt Behavioral Responses to Attitude Objects. *Journal of social issues*. 4:. 41-78.
- Wiersma, W. 1995. *Research methods in education: an introduction* (6th, ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Williams, H. 2012. Third Grade Students' Writing Attitudes, Self- Efficacy Beliefs, And Achievement. Unpublished Master Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland.
- Wollcott, W., and Buhr, D. 1987. Attitude as it Affects Developmental Writers' Essays. *Journal of Basic Writing*, 6,(2):1-13.
- Woodman, T., Akehurst, S., Hardy, L., Beattie, S. (2010) Self-confidence and performance: A little self-doubt helps. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 11(6):467-470.

- Woodrow, L. 2011. College English writing affect: Self-efficacy and anxiety. *System*,39(4): 510-522.
- Woolliscroft, J.O., Tenhaken, J., Smith,J. & Calhoun, J.G. 1993. Medical students' clinical self-assessments: comparisons with external measures of performance and the students' self-assessments of overall performance and effort, *Academic Medicine*, 18:. 285–294.
- Yan, W, and Gaier, Eu. 1991. Causal Attributions for College Success and Failure: An American-Asian Comparison. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April, 1991).Retrieved in May 2015 from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED334906> in September 2016.
- Yavuz-Erkan, D. (2004). Efficacy of cross-cultural e-mail exchange for enhancing EFL writing: Unpublished Dissertation Abstract. lukurova University, The Institute of Social Sciences English Language Teaching. Adana/Turkey.
- Zafer, A. 2002. A Survey of Saudi School Teachers' and College Professors' Perspectives on topics and Roles to Emphasize in English as a Foreign Language in Teacher Preparation Course (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.
- Zamel, V. 1982. Writing: The Process of Discovering Meaning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 16(2), 195-209. doi:1. Retrieved in September 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3586792> doi:1.
- Zare, M. and Mobarakeh, S. (2011). The Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Use of Reading Strategies: The Case of Iranian Senior High School Students. 3(3),98-105.
- Zhang, H. 2011. A study on ESL writing anxiety among Chinese English majors - Causes, effects and coping strategies for ESL writing anxiety.(D-essay in English Didactics.) Kristianstad University, Sweden.
- Zhang, Q.2010. Attitudes beyond the Inner Circle: Investigating Hong Kong Students' Attitudes towards English Accents. PhD thesis submitted to Newcastle University.

Zimmerman, B. J., and Bandura, A. (1994). Impact of self-regulatory influences on writing course attainment. *American Educational Research Journal*, 31, 845–862.

Zumbrunn, S.2010. Nurturing Young Students ' Writing Knowledge , Self-Regulation, Attitudes, and Self-Efficacy: The Effects of Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD). *Open Access Theses and Dissertations from the College of Education and Human Sciences*. Paper 71.  
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsdiss/71>.

## Appendices

## Appendix A: Survey – Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

### Survey Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

#### 1. Information for Participants in the Study

This information page has been included to inform you about the nature of your participation in the survey. It is up to you and you alone whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without providing any reason.

This survey is being conducted as part of my research at the University of St Andrews. It is designed to investigate your beliefs and attitudes about essay writing in English.

This survey is not a test, it is only an attempt to encourage you to share your experience during writing essays in English. It does not intend to elicit information on controversial or highly personal topics. Therefore, please make sure that you respond to all of the statements given as honestly as possible.

1. Please note that you will not be graded on your responses to this survey. Therefore, you can feel free to report candidly your beliefs and how you feel when you write a paper in English.

2. Please note that all responses given to the survey, including any personal information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your input will only be used in combination with the responses of others participating in the questionnaire.

Apart from me (the researcher), only my supervisor will have access to the raw data. Data will be confidentially stored approximately for 3 years for research purposes.

3. Please note that you can use either English or Arabic to answer the open questions.

4- In addition to the survey, you will be asked to respond to two writing prompts by writing two essays in English.

Any questions concerning my research can be directed to:

Maram Alluhaybi (researcher)

ma74@st-andrews.ac.uk

Or

Dr K. Anipa (supervisor)

ka17@st-andrews.ac.uk

Your participation is highly appreciated, thank you for your time.

#### \* Consent of the Participant

Please tick the box below to indicate your willingness to participate in the study including both the survey and the 2 essays writing.

Yes



## Survey Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

### معلومات للمشاركين في الاستبيان 2.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

هذه الصفحة خصصت لإعلامك حول طبيعة مشاركتك في الاستبيان.

القرار يعود اليك وحدك حول المشاركة في الاستبيان ، ولديك كامل الحرية في الانسحاب متى شئت.

هذا الاستبيان جزء من بحثي في جامعة سانت اندروز وقد صمم لتقصي آرائكم حول كتابة المقال باللغة الإنجليزية وشعورك أثناء كتابة المقالات باللغة الإنجليزية. هذا الاستبيان ليس امتحاناً بطبيعته إنما هو محاولة لتشجيعك على المشاركة بخبرتك أثناء كتابة المقالات باللغة الإنجليزية.

أتمنى الإجابة على جميع العبارات علماً بأن جميع العبارات لا تحتوي على قضايا شخصية أو جدلية.

١ - لن يقيم الطالب/ة على اجاباته في هذا الاستبيان لذا أرجوا الأيضاح بدقة عن اعتقادك وشعورك خلال كتابة مقال باللغة الإنجليزية

٢- الرجاء الملاحظة بأن جميع اجابتك في هذا الاستبيان بما في ذلك البيانات الشخصية سوف تحفظ بسرية تامة لمدة ٣ سنوات لأغراض البحث وسوف تكون متاحة للباحثة والمشرّف المباشر فقط

٣ - لك الحرية في استخدام اللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية في الإجابة على الأسئلة المفتوحة في القسم الثاني من الاستبيان

٤- بالإضافة الى الاستبيان سوف يطلب منك كتابة مقالين باللغة الإنجليزية كجزء من البحث

اي استفسار متعلق بالبحث يمكن توجيهه الى ايميل الباحثة مرام النهيبي

ma74@st-andrews.ac.uk

او ايميل المشرّف الدكتور انيبا

ka17@st-andrews.ac.uk

شكراً لوقتكم ودعمكم، ولمشاركتكم القيمة

إقرار بالموافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة \*

الرجاء وضع اشارة في الصندوق بالاسفل اذا رغبت/ي بالمشاركة في الدراسة المتضمنة الاستبيان وكتابة مقالين باللغة الانجليزية

اوافق على المشاركة

## Survey Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

### 3. General Information

Please indicate:

الرجاء التوضيح

You are:

Male ذكر

Female انثى

Your estimated evaluation of your essay writing in English in general:

بصفة عامه، تقييمك لادائك في كتابة المقال باللغة الانجليزية

Very weak جدا ضعيف

Weak ضعيف

Good جيد

Very good جيد جدا

Excellent ممتاز

## Survey Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

### 4. Instructions التعليمات

Below is a series of statements about essay writing in English. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by stating whether you:

1. Agree, 2. Disagree 3. Are unsure

with/about the statement. Some of these statements may seem repetitious; just take your time and try to be as honest as possible to make your participation worthwhile in all respects. Thank you.

بالأسفل سلسلة من العبارات عن كتابة المقال باللغة الانجليزية. لا يوجد هناك اجابة صحيحة او اجابة خاطئة

ارجوا الاشارة الي اي درجة تنطبق عليك كل عبارة من العبارات التالية بايضاح ماذا كنت :

١. موافق ٢. غير موافق ٣. غير متأكد

قد تبدو بعض هذه العبارات متكرره، ارجوا منك اخذ الوقت الكافي في قرانتها والاجابة بدقة قدر الامكان لتكون مشاركتك قيمة.

شكرا لك.

## Survey Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

### 5. Writing Attitudes

I enjoy writing (in English), though writing is difficult at times.

استمتع بالكتابة (باللغة الانجليزية) بالرغم من صعوبتها في بعض الاوقات.

موافق Agree

غير موافق Disagree

غير متأكد Unsure

Learning about writing (in English) is important for me.

تعلم الكتابة (باللغة الإنجليزية) مهم بالنسبة لي

غير موافق Disagree

غير متأكد Unsure

موافق Agree

I'm satisfied with the (English) essays I have submitted to tutors.

انا راضي عن المقالات (المكتوبة بالانجليزية) التي سلمتها للأساتذة

موافق Agree

غير متأكد Unsure

غير موافق Disagree

I would like to join a training course in essays writing (in English) to improve my writing.

احب ان انضم الي دورة تدريبية في كتابة المقالات (باللغة الانجليزية) لتطوير كتابتي.

غير موافق Disagree

غير متأكد Unsure

موافق Agree

I would take essay writing (in English) even if it were not a compulsory module.

كنت سأخذ مادة كتابة المقال (باللغة الإنجليزية) حتى لو لم تكن مادة الزامية

موافق Agree

غير متأكد Unsure

غير موافق Disagree

I think my writing (in English) is good.

اعتقد بأن كتابتي (الإنجليزية) جيدة.

غير متأكد Unsure

موافق Agree

غير موافق Disagree

I think of my tutors as reacting positively to my (English) writing.

أعتقد أن ردة فعل أساتذتي بالنسبة لكتابتي (باللغة الانجليزية) إيجابية.

غير موافق Disagree

موافق Agree

غير متأكد Unsure

Writing (in English) is a very unpleasant experience for me.

الكتابة (باللغة الانجليزية) تجربة مريرة بالنسبة لي.

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق




I do not like to be engaged in writing essays (in English).

لا احب ان اشارك في كتابة المقالات (باللغة الانجليزية).

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق




If the choice had been to me, I would not have chosen to study essay writing (in English).

لو كان لدي الخيار لما اخترت دراسة كتابة المقال (باللغة الانجليزية).

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد




Writing narrative essays (in English) is interesting to me.

اجد كتابة مقالات روائية (باللغة الانجليزية) ممتعا بالنسبة لي

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق




I feel motivated when given a narrative task to write about (in English).

اتحفز للكتابة (باللغة الانجليزية) إذا كان موضوع المقال المطلوب كتابته روائي.

Agree موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

Disagree غير موافق




I enjoy writing persuasive essays (in English).

أستمتع بكتابة المقالات الإقناعية (باللغة الانجليزية)

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق




I like to be engaged in writing persuasive essays (in English).

احب ان اشارك في كتابة مقالات إقناعية (باللغة الانجليزية)

Unsure غير متأكد

Disagree غير موافق

Agree موافق

## Survey Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

### 6. Writing Apprehension

At times, I find it hard to write what I mean in an essay (in English).

أحيانا يصعب علي كتابة ما أقصده عند كتابة المقال (باللغة الانجليزية).

Agree موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

Disagree غير موافق




Starting an essay (in English) is very hard for me.

أجد البداية بكتابة المقال (باللغة الانجليزية) صعبة جدا علي.

Disagree غير موافق

Agree موافق

Unsure غير متأكد




Attending a class/lecture about writing (in English) is a very frightening experience.

حضور حصة/محاضرة عن الكتابة (باللغة الانجليزية) تجربة مخيفة جدا.

Unsure غير متأكد

Disagree غير موافق

Agree موافق




I am afraid of writing essays (in English) when I know they will be evaluated.

اشعر بالخوف عند كتابة مقالات (باللغة الانجليزية) عندما اعلم انها سوف تقيم.

Agree موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

Disagree غير موافق




I expect to do poorly in (English) writing classes, even before I enter them.

حتى قبل أن أدخل حصص الكتابة (باللغة الانجليزية) أتوقع بأن انجازي فيها سيكون سيء.

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد




When I hand in an essay (in English), I know that I'm going to do poorly.

اجزم بسوء أدائي عندما أسلم مقال (باللغة الانجليزية).

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق




I feel my heart pounding when I write essays (in English) under time constraint.

اشعر بتسارع نبضات قلبي عندما اكتب مقالات (باللغة الانجليزية) تحت ضغط التوقيت.

Unsure غير متأكد

Disagree غير موافق

Agree موافق

I freeze up when I unexpectedly am asked to write an essay (in English).

أعجز عن القيام بأي شيء (أتجمد في مكاني) عندما يطلب مني فجأة كتابة مقال (باللغة الإنجليزية).

غير متأكد Unsure

غير موافق Disagree

موافق Agree




I'm afraid that the other students would criticise my (English) essay if they read it.

أخشى أن ينتقد زملائي مقالي (المكتوب باللغة الإنجليزية) إذا قرأوه.

غير موافق Disagree

موافق Agree

غير متأكد Unsure




I usually seek every possible chance to write essays (in English) outside of the lesson limitations.

عادة أحاول أن أنتهز كل فرصة ممكنة لكي أكتب مقالات (باللغة الإنجليزية) خارج نطاق الدرس.

موافق Agree

غير موافق Disagree

غير متأكد Unsure




While writing a narrative essay (in English), I spend an hour or more unable to write any word.

قد اقضي ساعة أو أكثر بدون كتابة أي كلمة (باللغة الإنجليزية) إذا كان المقال روائي.

غير موافق Disagree

موافق Agree

غير متأكد Unsure




My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a persuasive essay (in English).

أجد ذهني فارغا من الأفكار عندما أحاول أن أبدأ بكتابة مقال إقناعي (باللغة الإنجليزية).

غير موافق Disagree

موافق Agree

غير متأكد Unsure

## Survey Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

### 7. Writing Self-efficacy

When required to use English, I believe that I can express myself clearly in writing rather than speaking.

عندما يطلب مني استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية، اعتقد اني اعبر عن نفسي بوضوح في الكتابة اكثر من الحديث

Disagree غير موافق

Agree موافق

Unsure غير متأكد




While writing an essay (in English), I can easily generate ideas to write about.

عند كتابة مقال (باللغة الانجليزية) ، استطيع بسهولة انشاء افكار للكتابة عنها

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد




I believe that I am able to meet the task requirements of the essay (in English) .

اؤمن بقدرتي على اجابة متطلبات سؤال المقال (باللغة الإنجليزية) .

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق




I can write an interesting and appropriate essay (in English) for a given topic.

استطيع كتابة مقال ممتع ومناسب (باللغة الانجليزية) للموضوع المعطى

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق




I can use complex language in writing (in English)with no difficulty.

استطيع استخدام لغة معقدة في الكتابة (باللغة الانجليزية) بدون صعوبة

Agree موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

Disagree غير موافق




I can start writing (in English) with no difficulty.

استطيع البدء بالكتابة (باللغة الانجليزية) بدون صعوبة.

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق




When writing an essay (in English), I can use words to create a vivid picture.

استطيع توظيف الكلمات لخلق صورة واضحة عندما كتابة مقال (باللغة الانجليزية)

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد



I can adjust my writing style (in English) to suit the need of the writing task.

أستطيع أن اعدل من اسلوبي في الكتابة (باللغة الانجليزية) ليتناسب مع احتياجات المهمة الكتابية المطلوبة.

Disagree غير موافق

Agree موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

I can organise sentences into a paragraph to clearly explain a topic or theme (in English).

أستطيع ان أنظم الجمل لأكون قطعة تشرح بوضوح الموضوع او الفكرة الرئيسية للمقال (باللغة الانجليزية).

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق

I can check and edit my own writing (in English) for spelling errors, correct grammar and meaning.

أستطيع ان اصحح الاخطاء الاملائية والنحوية المتعلقة بالمعنى في كتابتي (باللغة الانجليزية).

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

I can think of ideas rapidly when given a topic to write about (in English).

أستطيع بسرعة ايجاد افكار عندما أعطى موضوع للكتابة (باللغة الانجليزية).

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق

I can write good persuasive essays (in English).

أستطيع كتابة مقالات إقناعية (باللغة الانجليزية) بشكل جيد.

Disagree غير موافق

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق

I can write good narrative essays (in English).

بأستطاعتي كتابة مقالات روائية جيدة (باللغة الانجليزية).

Unsure غير متأكد

Agree موافق

Disagree غير موافق

## Survey Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

### 8. Writing Attitudes and Beliefs

Please answer the following questions:

الرجاء الاجابة على الاسئلة التالية:

Which kind of essays- narrative or persuasive- do you prefer to write ? Why?

في أي نوع من أنواع المقالات (روائي او إقناعي ) تفضل الكتابة؟ لماذا؟

Your additional comments on your writing attitudes and beliefs are welcome. Please write them below.

أرحب بإضافة اي تعليقات اضافية مرتبطة بمشاعرك و اعتقادك بالنسبة للكتابة في المكان المخصص بالأسفل

End of Survey نهاية الاستبيان

Thank you for your participation شكرا لمشاركتك

## Survey Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English

### 9. Participant Debriefing Form ملخص الدراسة للمشاركين

**Project Title: Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing in English**

**Researcher's name: Maram Alluhaybi**

**Supervisor's name: D. Kormi Anipa**

**Nature of the Study: Thank you for your kind decision to take part in my research. The survey aims to investigate the attitudes and beliefs you have when you write in English.**

**Storage of Data: I would like to assure you that all your responses will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will be only used for the research purposes.**

**Should you have any concerns about the study, a full outline of the procedures governed by the University**

**Teaching and Research Ethical Committee are outlined on their website://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/utrec/complaints/**

**For further questions or inquiries, please contact me on:**

**ma74@st-andrews.ac.uk**

عنوان المشروع :الاعتقادات والشعور حيال الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية

الباحثة: مرام اللهيبي

المشرف: الدكتور كورمي أنيبا

طبيعة الدراسة : . يهدف الاستبيان الى تقصي اعتقاداتكم وشعوركم اثناء الاخراف في الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية

تخزين البيانات: .أود التذكير بان جميع الإجابات سوف تعامل بسرية وسوف تكون مكرسة فقط لأغراض البحث

الرجاء الإطلاع على ملخص اجراءات لجنة الجامعة للتدريس واخلاقيات البحث في الرابط المدون بالاعلى في حالة لديك قضايا متعلقة بمشاركة في الدراسة

لأي اسئلة او إستفسارات في المستقبل، الرجاء التواصل من خلال العنوان البريدي المزود:

**ma74@st-andrews.ac.uk**





## Appendix D: ESL Composition Profile

1 <http://thandbook.heinle.com>  
**Appendix 9.12 ESL Composition Profile**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Score	Level	Criteria	Comments
<b>Content</b>			
30–27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic	
26–22	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	some knowledge of the subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail	
21–17	FAIR TO POOR:	limited knowledge of the subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic	
16–13	VERY POOR:	does not show knowledge of the subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate	
<b>Organization</b>			
20–18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive	
17–14	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	somewhat choppy • loosely organized, but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical, but incomplete sequencing	
13–10	FAIR TO POOR:	non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and developing	
9–7	VERY POOR:	does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate	
<b>Vocabulary</b>			
20–18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	sophisticated range • effective word/idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register	
17–14	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage <i>but meaning not obscured</i>	
13–10	FAIR TO POOR:	limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>	
9–7	VERY POOR:	essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate	
<b>Language Use</b>			
20–18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	
17–14	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions <i>but meaning seldom obscured</i>	
13–10	FAIR TO POOR:	major problems in simple constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>	
9–7	VERY POOR:	virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate	
<b>Mechanics</b>			
5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing	
4	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing <i>but meaning not obscured</i>	
3	FAIR TO POOR:	frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>	
2	VERY POOR:	no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate	

2

<http://thandbook.heinle.com>

---

Total Score	Reader	Comments
-------------	--------	----------

---

Source: Jacobs, H.L., Zingraf, S., Wormuth, D., Hartfield, V., and Hughey, J. (1981). *Testing ESL composition: A practical approach*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

## Appendix E: Ethical Approval Letter



University of St Andrews  
*from first to foremost*

600 YEARS  
1413 – 2013

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Gender and Language Use: A Study of Academic Written English amongst Saudi Students in Saudi Arabia</b>
<b>Researchers Name(s)</b>	<b>Maram Alluhaybi</b>
<b>Supervisor(s)</b>	<b>Dr Kormi Anipa</b>
<b>Department/Unit</b>	<b>School of Modern Languages</b>
<b>Ethical Approval Code</b> (Approval allocated to Original Application)	<b>ML10566</b>
<b>Original Application Approval Date</b>	<b>15/11/2013</b>
<b>Amendment Application Approval</b>	<b>16/03/2014</b>

### Ethical Amendment Approval

Thank you for submitting your amendment application which was considered by the School Ethics Committee. The following documents were reviewed:

- |                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Ethical Amendment Application Form | 07/03/2014 |
| 2. Amended Questionnaire              | 07/03/2014 |
| 3. Original Ethical Application Form  | 21/10/2014 |

The University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) approves this study from an ethical point of view. Please note that where approval is given by a School Ethics Committee that committee is part of UTREC and is delegated to act for UTREC.

Approval is given for three years from the original application only. Ethical Amendments do not extend this period but give permission to an amendment to the original approval research proposal only. If you are unable to complete your research within the original 3 three year validation period, you will be required to write to your School Ethics Committee and to UTREC (where approval was given by UTREC) to request an extension or you will need to re-apply. You must inform your School Ethics Committee when the research has been completed.

Any serious adverse events or significant change which occurs in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration, must be reported immediately to the School Ethics Committee, and an Ethical Amendment Form submitted where appropriate.

Approval is given on the understanding that the 'Guidelines for Ethical Research Practice' (<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/UTRECguidelines%20Feb%2008.pdf>) are adhered to.

Yours sincerely

Prof Derek Duncan

Convenor of the School Ethics Committee