

The Effect of Anxiety on the Attitudes of Iraqi Post Graduate Students towards EFL Writing in UKM

Ahmed Abdulateef Sabti

Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia)

ahmdarts@yahoo.com

Abstract

The aim of study was to investigate the attitudes and the anxiety level of Iraqi postgraduate students towards EFL writing, and the mechanisms that can help them reduce such anxiety. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed on 30 Iraqi postgraduate students at the National University of Malaysia (UKM). The respondents comprised 18 male and 12 female students aged between 20 and 40 years old. Two instruments were administered to obtain data, namely, the "Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)" survey questionnaire that was adopted from Cheng (2004) and a semi-structured interview. SLWAI consisted of 22 items that identified the attitudes of the respondents towards EFL writing. Based on the analysis of the study by One-Sample T-Test revealed that majority of students had low attitudes towards EFL writing. Via Independent Sample T-Test, gender was indicated as a significant factor, which affected the attitudes of the respondents towards EFL writing. Female respondents showed higher and more positive attitudes towards EFL writing than males. The Chi-Square test showed a significant association between attitude and gender. In terms of attitude towards EFL writing, female respondents showed low anxiety, whereas male respondents had high anxiety. Qualitative data showed the same pattern, and thus, affirmed the quantitative results. Therefore, Iraqi postgraduate students required additional exposure to academic writing regardless of their gender. Other activities can familiarize them with the significance of academic writing at the tertiary level.