

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
AND LITERATURE  
(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)

AN ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
WRITING TEST ANXIETY: THE CASE OF  
TWO PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE STUDENTS  
TAKING SOPHOMORE ENGLISH WRITING COURSE

BY  
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*AUGUST 2007*

**An Assessment of English Language  
Writing Test Anxiety: The Case of  
Two Private University College Students  
Taking Sophomore English Writing Course**

**By**

**Melese Mitiku**

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*August 2007*

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The main objective of this study was to assess students' levels of English language writing test anxiety with reference to Admas and St. Mary's private University College students taking sophomore English writing common course in the second semester of 1999 E.C.*

*The subjects of the study were one hundred thirty (i.e. 30% of the total population, 432) in which eighty six (86) of them were selected from Admas University College (AUC) while forty four (44) of them were from St. Mary's University College (SMUC). Subjects were selected using systematic sampling technique. Four kinds of data collection instruments were used in this study, namely, questionnaire, observation, focus group discussion, and interview. The data collected using these instruments were analyzed by making use of different statistical analysis methods and qualitative description, such as frequency counting percentage, mean, and description of some qualitative data.*

*The findings (i.e. the results) indicated that the large majority of the subjects of the study were found to be poor in their writing background before they joined university colleges. And, as a result, their levels of anxiety were high when taking the writing tests. So, the administrations of both university colleges should look for some possible mechanisms (or strategies) which may be helpful to minimize students' levels of writing test anxiety, by giving simple additional writing courses before those complex ones like those of sophomore, for example.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, great interest has arisen in the study of the role of affective factors which pronounce on test anxiety and related problems. Consequently, most language researchers like Scovel (1978), Gardner (1985), Malmah –Thomas (1987), and Young (1999) have tried to identify a number of factors affecting students' language performance when taking tests in different language skills and areas. They further say that the major factor influencing the language examination situation is anxiety, manifested in different language skills and areas at different levels.

Language scholars like Gardner (1985), Horwitz et. al (1986), Horwitz and Young (1991), Lewis (1997-online) and others also point out that there is a strong relation between language class anxiety and test anxiety. This is to mean that if students are in a state of anxiety when they learn the foreign language, in this case English, it is normal that their level of anxiety will automatically increase when they take tests or exams. This, therefore, implies that test anxiety normally results from language class anxiety.

In the Ethiopian context also most often we speak of English language test anxiety. This is because most of the people in Ethiopia do not use the English language for daily communication using the productive skills, writing and speaking. Instead, it is mainly used for academic purpose in the higher learning centers including the two research settings, Admas and St. Mary's University Colleges. For this reason, the English language is considered as a foreign language in Ethiopia.

Hence, this study has dealt with one specific aspect of anxiety, which is test anxiety. And even, within the test anxiety itself, there are different language skills and areas in which anxiety can be seen though the level or degree of

anxiety differs from one skill or area to the other. In view of the broad nature of 'anxiety', this study focuses on the English Language Writing Test Anxiety.

In this introductory chapter, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, application of the results, delimitation of the study and definition of term and abbreviations used are included.

## **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Anxiety is said to be one of the factors which could affect the process of learning. In this regard, language researchers like Horwitz et. al (1986), MacIntyre and Gardner (1989 and 1991), and MacIntyre (1995) claim that language courses are very anxiety-provoking by their very nature. Moreover, some studies have shown that students utilizing productive skills, namely; writing and speaking, are found to experience a considerable amount of anxiety in the process of learning (Hilleson, 1996; Zhang, 2001). As Zhang (2001) particularly notes, foreign language writing anxiety is highly magnified during tests.

As it is well-known, written tests are normally a requirement in any academic pursuit, particularly in higher learning institutions. However, writing has long been claimed to be a very difficult skill to acquire and is dreaded by foreign language (L<sub>2</sub>) students (Gupta, 1998). He (ibid) further states that the notion of success in writing is associated with self-expression flow of ideas, outsider expectations, growing confidence and enjoyment of L<sub>2</sub> academic writing. But, most L<sub>2</sub> students are known to have problems in coping with this (Basturkmen and Lewis, 2002).

In this context, it is appropriate to look at the related research studies with a focus on English Language Writing Test Anxiety, at the global and local levels.

To begin with the international research done on this area, as far as the information obtained by the present researcher is concerned, there are only a few related studies. Some of them can be mentioned as follows:

A study was conducted by Daud and others (2005) on "Second Language Writing Anxiety" in general. Their findings revealed that the subjects of their study suffered from anxiety as a result of their lack of writing skills, and that the better students experienced less anxiety than the weaker ones. Moreover, this study pointed out that low performing students were more anxious than high performing students. This happened due to students' deficiency in certain aspects of writing skills, particularly vocabulary and language use. They further commented that realizing the aforementioned problems, steps can be taken to improve the situation, and this can come in many different forms. The institution or the language teachers may modify the English language syllabus to suit the students' interest or the focus may be changed to specific skills within the teaching of writing itself in which students are more passive with. For instance, according to them students' deficiency in vocabulary and language use can be employed as a guide in the attempt to improve students' writing skills. So, by applying this method, it is possible to reduce students' levels of anxiety when taking the writing tests.

Another study which arrived at almost similar findings with the previous study was conducted by Murphy (2004). His findings showed that students with low proficiency in their writing attempts particularly during tests were found to be more anxious, and their anxiety was caused by their lack of writing skills. This was also found to be the problem even with some students in the United States of America.

Another research study was conducted by Atay and Kurt (2006) entitled "Prospective Teachers and L<sub>2</sub> Writing Anxiety." The purpose of their study was to see to what extent the prospective teachers in Turkey were exposed to writing anxiety during their stay in the university. The results of this study showed that more than half of the participant teachers had high or average writing anxiety. The subjects' responses also indicated that those with high and average anxiety had difficulties in organizing their thoughts and producing ideas while writing in

L<sub>2</sub>. Besides, the prospective teachers cited university instructors and their L<sub>2</sub> writing experiences as the major factors affecting their attitudes towards L<sub>2</sub> writing. Furthermore, the responses of the prospective teachers revealed that their writing experiences might affect their future teaching writing practices.

Coming to the local studies in this area, as far as the knowledge of the present researcher goes, there is only one study which has some kind of relations, carried out locally. That is, Abate Kasahun (1996) conducted a study on 1<sup>st</sup> year students at Ethiopian Civil Service College. The purpose of his study was to find out the extent and direction of the relationship between English language anxiety and learners' English language performance in the Ethiopian context. To achieve his objective, therefore, he used a self-rating questionnaire, a mid-semester test and scales for assessing speaking and writing skills. The results of his study revealed that most of the sample students were highly distressed or anxious in different skills of language performance, for example, in writing and speaking. This happened, according to his findings, because of the sample students' poor English background particularly in the productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing.

As experience shows, the teaching of writing skills does not seem to have received adequate attention in Ethiopian education system particularly in the elementary and high schools. To substantiate this idea, according to Atkins and others (1996), many people express their concern that the kinds of tests used in Ethiopian high schools have a harmful effect on the teaching-learning process of English language. This is because; there is only one kind of test item-multiple choice. Moreover, testing of English tends to be limited to testing grammar and vocabulary items while neglecting the other major language skills, like writing. For this reason, when students are supposed to take the writing courses like sophomore and related ones in the higher institutions, they become frustrated. This problem is most often associated with students' past negative experiences in writing skills. This is to mean that students may not have been given enough

writing practice while they were in elementary and high schools. This situation, therefore, aggravates students' writing test anxiety.

Thus, only limited research has been done so far on foreign language anxiety in the Ethiopian context in general, and no specific study has been conducted on English Language Writing Test Anxiety on private university college students taking sophomore writing course. Consequently, the situation calls for some more work in this area. Thus, this research study was intended to be an additional piece in the area and it mainly focuses on the major causes of anxiety that students encounter when taking writing tests with special reference to two private university colleges, namely; Admas and St. Mary's.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to conduct an assessment on English language writing test anxiety with special reference to Admas and St. Mary's Private University College students taking sophomore English language writing course. So, this study has the following one general objective and three specific objectives.

The general objective of this study was to:

- know the major factors which cause students to be in a state of anxiety when they take writing tests.

The specific objectives that this study aimed to attain were to:

- i. explore the background of students' writing skills when they were in elementary and high schools
- ii. identify the major causes (sources) which make students to be in a state of anxiety before, while and after they take the writing tests.
- iii. identify the practical ways in which subjects commonly use or apply to overcome their writing test anxiety.

Hence, in order to achieve the above stated specific objectives, the following basic research questions were raised.

- i. To what extent had the subject students been exposed to the writing skill when they were in the elementary and high schools?
- ii. What are the major causes (sources) which aggravate students' writing test anxiety?
- iii. What are the practical ways students commonly use or apply to overcome their writing test anxiety?

### **1.3 Application of the Results**

The probable results which have been obtained from this study may have certain areas of application.

The English departments of both university colleges (i.e. AUC and SMUC) may get supportive feedbacks from the results of the study. More specifically, those English instructors in both colleges, teaching English writing courses like sophomore may be the immediate beneficiaries in gaining some insights from the results obtained. As a result, they may set out appropriate mechanisms to revise the writing courses they offer or prepare supplementary writing materials which may reduce students' writing test anxiety. Moreover, the results of the study may pave the way for the actual subjects of the study to make them aware in the sense that they can overcome writing test anxiety by applying the suitable practical methods in their future writing practices.

Coming to the ultimate beneficiaries, the results of this study may be helpful for curriculum designers in preparing relevant writing courses for students right from the elementary level so as to let students practice more on writing skills and thereby reduce the major factors aggravating students' writing test anxiety. In this case, the results of this study might also be considered as an additional reminder to those professional English language curriculum designers. Besides, other elementary and high school English language teachers may use the



results of this study to effectively internalize the features of English language writing skills and subsequently prepare appropriate writing tests for their students in order to reduce students' writing test anxiety.

#### **1.4 Delimitation of the Study**

This study focused on the major factors that make students in a state of anxiety when they took writing tests in two selected private university colleges, namely; AUC and SMUC. The researcher also believed that in order to manage the study very carefully, this study was to be delimited to the two aforementioned private university colleges where sophomore writing course was given, assuming that they might to some extent represent the whole population of the same category in general.

#### **1.5 Definition of Term and Abbreviations Used**

**a) Definition of a phrase:** The following phrase is used frequently throughout this paper. So, it has the following meaning in the context that the researcher used in this paper.

- 'English language writing test anxiety'- The feeling of tension and apprehension experienced by subject students when they take writing tests.

**b) Abbreviations used:** For the sake of convenience, the following abbreviations were used in this thesis.

AUC	- Admas University College
SMUC	- St. Mary's University College
ELWTA	- English Language Writing Test Anxiety
HAC	- High Anxiety Category
AAC	- Average Anxiety Category
LAC	- Low Anxiety Category

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

In this chapter, the concepts of foreign language anxiety, test anxiety due to difficulties of writing process, the relationship between writing test anxiety and the background of students' writing abilities, sources of writing test anxiety and practical ways of overcoming writing test anxiety are treated.

#### **2.1 Concepts of Foreign Language Anxiety**

Various research studies have identified a number of factors or situations which are believed to account for differences in the level of performance attained by language learners. Among these variables is anxiety, which is defined by Davidoff (1987) as an emotion characterized by feelings of anticipated danger, tension and distress and by tendencies to avoid or escape such feelings.

As this is a general idea, the term 'language anxiety' which is specifically related to language learning situations has been coined by language researchers. As a result, foreign language anxiety is expected to be more closely related to language performance than general anxiety. Substantiating this idea, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) argue that language anxiety is the specific type of anxiety most closely associated with language performance.

In addition to this, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) have attempted to create a theoretical model of language anxiety which they viewed as essentially concerning performance evaluation within an academic and social context. Moreover, according to Horwitz and Young (1991), anxiety responses are aroused by personality threatening conditions (for instance, tests) and include physiological activity (for example, sweating) and self-deprecating ruminations. Cognizant of this fact, Horwitz et al (1986) consider communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety as the components of

foreign language classroom anxiety. They define the first component as a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people, the second component as apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others will evaluate one negatively, and the third performance related anxiety, the focus of the study, as a type of performance anxiety concerning apprehension over academic evaluation caused by a fear of failure in tests and test-like situations.

Thus, from this reality, one may sense that foreign language anxiety should not, however, be viewed as a simple construct consisting of amalgamating different performance anxieties transferred to language learning. According to, Horwitz and Young (1991:31) language anxiety is, "*A distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language performance arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process.*" Hence, the subjective feelings, psycho-physiological symptoms and behavioral responses of the anxious language learner are the same as for any specific anxiety. To prove this, anxious learners report that feeling apprehension, worry and even dread of their language class are some of the situations aggravating their anxiety levels (Lewis, 1997-online). Besides, according to Horwitz and Young (1991), the anxious language learners often go to great lengths to miss classes, postpone home work and avoid studying. Therefore, the cumulative effect of all these anxiety provoking-situations usually make learners highly frustrated when they take tests.

Having seen the nature of foreign language anxiety as a back-up information, let us see the nature of test anxiety in terms of its definition and symptoms.

### **2.1.1 Definition of Foreign Language Test Anxiety**

Different scholars like Horwitz and Young (1991), Shapiro (1997-on line), Lewis (1997-online), Robert (2003-online), Hall (2005) and others have tried their best in defining test anxiety. For instance, Horwitz and Young (1991: 30) define test

anxiety as, "... a type of anxiety concerning apprehension over academic evaluation which stems from a fear of failure." This is to mean that students may have unrealistic expectations of themselves with regard to achievement in a test situation and feel that anything less than full marks constitutes a failure. Similarly, Hall (2005:5) defines test anxiety as, "... a fear of negative evaluation, especially in academic domains." In this case, according to Shapiro (1997-online), tests are obstacles for most of the students who suffer from test anxiety.

### **2.1.2 Symptoms of Foreign Language Test Anxiety**

Students often blame test anxiety for poor performance. This poor performance is frequently due to a lack of preparedness for a test, which causes anxiety (Lewis, 1997 - online). According to him (Lewis), most of the symptoms of test anxiety are those that happen while taking the exam. The most common symptom is to experience a block or freeze up. This means, a person with test anxiety may find words meaningless while reading the test instructions and questions. One feeling that is a common symptom of test anxiety is panic. Feeling of panic may occur for a person with test anxiety if she/he does not know the answer to just one question. It may also come as time runs out at the end of an exam period. Some other symptoms of test anxiety which happen during an exam may be worry over one's performance compared to other test takers, being easily distracted during the exam, and plotting ways to escape from a test (such as sneaking out or feeling ill).

## **2.2 Test Anxiety Due to Difficulties of Writing Process**

Test anxiety is most often manifested due to students' inability of writing (Hall, 2005). More specifically, according to Byrne (1988: 4) students' levels of writing test anxiety may increase due to the following three main problems or difficulties. These are: psychological problems, linguistic problems and cognitive problems. Thus, unless these factors are well managed by teachers in the early

stages, they will hinder students' development of writing. Therefore, so as to give a clear picture on each problem, it would be better to see each in some detail.

### **2.2.1 Psychological Problems**

When the teacher reads students' written tests, the writer (student) and the reader (teacher) are isolated from each other. In this case, the teacher hardly has the opportunity of asking the student whatever the teacher faces while correcting students' writing attempts. For this reason, the student might fall in a state of anxiety if what he thinks and what he puts on paper in written form do not go together.

In general, psychological problems are the problems of conveying the message. They refer to the writer's sense of isolation while writing because of the absence of any physical interaction with and feedback from the teacher. Therefore, the writer (the student) feels alienated (Byrne 1988 and Clifford 1991). Thus, students may be in a state of anxiety while attempting the writing tests.

According to Boughey (1997), it is possible to reduce students' psychological problems of writing if they practice on different writing items before they sit for writing tests, by sharing ideas with their classmates and get the opinion of others. He (Ibid) further notes that writing in a group may be a crucial means of introducing valuable writing practice to students. This encourages students to share ideas and develop their writing abilities. And it ultimately motivates students in developing confidence in their writing ability. Consequently, students may not as such be in a state of anxiety when taking the writing tests individually.

### **2.2.2 Linguistic Problems**

In writing, communication is hampered unless the correct forms of the language (English in this case), such as language structure, words, mechanics and others are used effectively (Pincas 1982, Hedge 1988, Bloor and Bloor 2004). Besides,

different studies identified various linguistic problems faced by students in their writing attempts (Raimes, 1983). To mention some of them, writing ungrammatical and long sentences, the unbalanced distribution of different words in the given samples, wrong distribution of parts of speech, and some types of grammatical errors are believed to be the major areas in which linguistic problems affect writing skills. Byrne (1988) also explains that because of the absence of prosodic features in writing, the writer (student) has to compensate these features by keeping the channel of communication open through own efforts by choosing the appropriate sentence structure so that the text the student produces can be interpreted on its own. However, if students are not practicing the major linguistic features, mentioned above relevant to writing, they will be highly frustrated when they sit for writing tests. This implies that teachers are expected to address these features keeping their students' levels of understanding.

Linguistic problems can be best explained by its subparts: grammatical problems, sentence-structure problems, and the problem of diction (choice of words).

### ***2.2.2.1 Grammatical Problems***

Students have committed a number of mechanical problems in their second language (English) writings (Hedge, 1988). For example, according to Tyner (1987), students may not use verbs properly. This means, they do not realize that verbs can take different forms depending on tense and subjects they are used with. Therefore, due to this problem, students may face a great challenge when taking the writing tests as they can not keep the proper grammatical patterns. Moreover, students have problems with subject verb agreement, pronoun references, and connectors and so on (Krashen, 1987).

From this, one may realize that if students are not well acquainted with the grammatical usage of the language, their anxiety will be high when they take

writing tests. This is because, one's writing will be attractive if one keeps the proper grammar of the language with good flow of ideas to the point.

### **2.2.2.2 Sentence Structure Problems**

As we all know, the test of writing rests on the kind of sentence structures encompassed in the writing, Byrne further elaborates this as follows:

*We have to keep the channel of communication open through our own efforts and to ensure both through our choice of sentence structure and by the way our sentences are linked together and sequenced that the text we produce can be interpreted on its own (1988: 4).*

Likewise, Kharma (1986) emphasizes that those students who have the problem of writing good sentences are unable to produce longer sentences requiring subordination and co-ordination when writing a single paragraph properly. This is to show that being unable to use proper sentence structures leads to being incapable of writing paragraphs and essays. Hence, if students face such big linguistic problems, they can not express what they intend to express, especially during writing tests. Consequently, this situation may aggravate students' levels of writing test anxiety.

### **2.2.2.3 The Problem of Diction**

A good writing or composition should consist of appropriate and varied range of vocabulary used along with proper grammar and varied range of sentence structures (Norrish, 1983; Alamirew G/Meriam, 2005). When the writer makes a choice of vocabulary that would reflect a concern for the reader and purpose of writing, the composition written would give sense to reader(s) (Reid, 1993).

However, writing in a foreign or second language (English, for example) using appropriate words in their right places is a major problem for most students. For example, White (1980) says that most students usually use 'big words' which may not go with the actual context, in writing their paragraphs or essays

to impress their teacher. Inevitably, this attempt leads to a problem of diction. So, the problem with diction can lead a student to develop a negative attitude towards foreign language essay writings (Ibid). If this happens, a student may get frustrated in taking the writing tests as he/she can not choose the appropriate words suitable to the given specific context.

### **2.2.3 Cognitive Problems**

In the past, special attention was given to grammar and lexical problems of students in investigating their English language writing difficulties. But, currently, with the advances of socio-linguistic studies and discourse analysis, the supra-segmental aspects of writing have been given emphasis (Kharma, 1986).

The cognitive problems that students face in their second language writing include-problems of punctuations, capitalization, spelling, organization of ideas and others (Caroll and Willson, 1995; Gower et. al, 1995; Reid, 1993). They further state that these are the major cognitive problems that students frequently forget or miss to apply them in their writing attempts (may be in tests). So, these problems can lead to students' anxiety in this regard.

#### **2.2.3.1 Punctuation Problems**

Students most often encounter punctuation problems in taking writing tests. Notably, there are three basic reasons which make punctuation problematic for students to learn and apply it in their writings. Firstly, the rules of punctuation are not universal or absolute to the meaning they give. Secondly, punctuation marks are complex to learn, and lastly; punctuation relies on the style of the writer and the intended meaning (Caroll and Willson, 1995). This implies that students are expected to be confused in using the appropriate punctuation marks when they take writing tests. So, this problem by itself can lead students to be in a state of anxiety.



### ***2.2.3.2 Capitalization Problems***

When students take the writing tests, they have to know the actual words which should be capitalized (Kharma, 1986). This is basically a mechanical skill. As Kroll (1991) explains, capital letters have always signified important words. Besides they are useful for sentence initials, important words in topics or headings, in proper names and even including the first person pronoun (I), wherever it appears, it has to be capitalized.

Students, however, may not properly use capital letters in their writing. This is to mean that they fail to use capital letters at the beginning of new sentences and to signal titles and headings. This may emanate due to poor students' background knowledge of capitalization rules. In this case, being unable to know words which need to be capitalized in writing tests will aggravate students' levels of anxiety.

### ***2.2.3.3 Spelling Problems***

Owing to the influence of other languages, variant pronunciations and other historical reasons, the English spelling system which has become inconsistent, is complex for students (Gower et. al. 1995). That is why students are expected to study or memorize the spelling rules before they are going to sit for writing exams. This is because, teachers while checking students answer scripts, most often consider spelling as one parameter in giving marks. As students know this very well, they usually get frustrated when they are not sure of the correct spellings of words in their writing exams. This by itself induces anxiety.

### ***2.2.3.4 Organization Problems***

Students may have also problems of structuring the paragraph, topic development of a paragraph, organizing the whole discourse and development of a theme in a discourse (Kharma, 1986). Pincas (1982) has also showed that students or writers have the problems of writing united paragraphs. The reason

for this, according to him (Ibid), may be partly due to their failure to use cohesive devices appropriately. Using these devices properly may help the writer to create clear transition from one idea to the next, developing coherent paragraphs, summarizing the main points in their chronological order (Pincas, 1982; Alamirew G/Mariam, 2005). However, as Pincas (ibid) notes above, students may be in a state of anxiety when they take writing exams if they do not practice well how to organize composition (writing).

### **2.2.3.5 Content Problems**

Teachers are expected to encourage their students to give attention to the message, ideas or thoughts they wish to convey along with other features discussed above (Clifford, 1987). Leki (1991) also states that to keep the content in writing is very important before emphasizing the other aspects of the language:

*... error free writing without substance is not as good as substantive writing even with errors. If all goals of correctness and substance can be accomplished, wonderful; if not, it seems better to save the energy for the content (1991: 10-11).*

Here, we can see how priority is given to content in writing because appropriate language and related tools will be developed as learners attempt to generate ideas to transmit their message or content. This can be achieved by motivating and encouraging learners to write drafts and to develop their editing skills.

So far, we have seen the major features in which students commonly commit errors while writing. And, one may realize that writing is a complex skill which needs frequent practice in different developmental stages. Thus, if students are not well exposed to various types of writing, they will experience test anxiety as a result of their deficiency in writing skills.

## **2.3 The Relationship between Writing Test Anxiety and the Background of Writing Abilities**

As most language scholars like Byrne (1979), Pincas (1982), Hedge (1988), Atkins et. al (1996) Lee (2001), Robert (2003 – on line) have agreed; having a good background in writing skills often reduces writing test anxiety (other factors remaining constant, i.e. classroom settings, students psychological problems, etc). This is to mean that if students have practiced different items of writing skills in their early stages, they can easily express themselves in written form in their later stages without fear and anxiety.

Coming to the writing activities students should practice in their early stages (0-4 grade levels), Byrne (1979) suggests the reinforcement activities which can be done meaningfully in the form of short dialogues. In this way some forms of sentence writing which reinforce particular structures and vocabulary items can be treated during the lesson. The other suggested writing activities to build a good background for students' writing abilities are forming different sentences using sequencing words. The immediate goal of this type of controlled activity is to begin to familiarize students with the cohesive devices which are important to compose ideas. The basic cohesive devices which are mainly used at this stage, according to Byrne (1979: 44-45) are: coordinators (and, but, or, so), conjunctions (although, when, until, so that, and so on), sequencers (then, after that, mean while, first, next, finally and so on), and connectors (moreover, however, therefore, as a result, in fact, of course, on the other hand, and so on).

Moreover, in the second primary cycle (5-8) and high school (9-12) levels, students are expected to develop their writing abilities by practicing some more writing activities which are a little bit tougher than what the students practiced in their early stages (0-4). In these two stages, according to Byrne (1979) and Pincas (1982) reinforcement activities like dialogue writing, sentence linking and sequencing, writing notes and letters, paragraph and essay writings are the recommended writing activities which students should practice in their second cycle and high school levels.

Hence, from the above literature review of the first cycle and second cycle to high school levels of writing practices, it can be noted that many language scholars like Byrne (1979) and Atkins et. al (1996), more specifically, comment that there is a relationship between the background of students' writing abilities and the levels of their writing test anxiety. This is to mean that if students have effectively practiced the writing activities suggested above before they are supposed to join colleges or universities where the skill of writing is highly demanding, they may not suffer from a high level of anxiety particularly when they take writing tests. On the contrary, if students have not practiced the aforementioned writing activities in the respective stages, they may be highly exposed to classroom writing anxiety in general and to writing test anxiety in particular. This is because a testing situation is more serious than a learning situation. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that there is a relationship between students' writing background and their writing test anxiety.

## **2.4 Sources of Foreign Language Test Anxiety**

Accepting the fact that there is anxiety which is specific to language learning situations is the same as considering these situations as the potential sources (causes) of language test anxiety. In this connection, Brown (1987) says that any complex task that we undertake can have elements of anxiety in it. He (Ibid) further elaborates that language learning is no exception to a long list of complex tasks which are sources of human anxieties. For instance, taking tests, speaking, writing, listening and reading activities are among the various tasks which students are supposed to perform in the language classroom.

Anxiety is most often seen in test situations (Madsen, 1982; Brown, 1987; Spolsky, 1989). Let alone during tests, it is common for students to tremble, sweat, experience discomfort, and show behavioral disorganization when they are told that they will be tested (Shohamy, 1982). She also considers anxiety as a major factor affecting students' ability to perform on tests both positively and

negatively. Madsen (1982) also adds that a foreign language testing situation is one of those particular anxieties for many students which most often affect students' test performance. In this context, Horwitz et. al (1986) note that even the brightest students may make errors in tests which could be attributed to anxiety. Similarly, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) report that students who report 'freezing' on tests claim that the material or the course has been learnt but their test performance does not reflect that learning.

Young (1991), on his part, identifies six main sources of language anxiety in general. These are: personal and interpersonal issues, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures and language testing. Likewise, Bailey (1983) cited in Skehan (1989) considers the following as potential sources of language anxiety: comparison of oneself with other students, one's relationship with the teacher, tests, and one's own personal standards and goals. Therefore, considering oneself as being less successful than others, not being in good terms with language teachers, feelings of uneasiness before, during and after a test, and not having a firm belief in oneself are expected to heighten the level of anxiety. Richard – Amato (1988) also includes the factor "not providing a silent period and giving corrections frequently" to the list of sources aggravating language anxiety.

Keeping the above general information about the potential sources of foreign language anxiety in view, let us see the possible sources of writing test anxiety, which is the theme of this study.

#### **2.4.1 Sources of English Language Writing Test Anxiety**

Many language scholars, such as Spolsky (1989), Young (1991), Lewis (1997 – on line) Bline et. al (2001), Wörde Von (2003), and others have identified the following major possible sources of writing test anxiety. They are discussed below.

#### **2.4.1.1 Past Writing Experience**

For Lewis (1997 – on line), more specifically, there are some potential sources aggravating writing test anxiety in relation to students' past writing experiences. Some of these are:- inability to organize one's thoughts, inability to produce any ideas, poor L<sub>2</sub> vocabulary knowledge, poor L<sub>2</sub> grammar knowledge, thinking in mother tongue (L<sub>1</sub>), and lack of preparedness for exam.

#### **2.4.1.2 Teachers**

As it is imperative teachers are expected to play a crucial role for the betterment of students' progress in their academic performance. To achieve this fundamental purpose, there must be a good interaction between teachers and students in the classroom (Pica, 1986). One of the most interactional areas in the language classroom is that of error correction. As Young (1991) reports, students most often worry about how mistakes are perceived by others in the classroom as opposed to simply being concerned about making mistakes. In this case, therefore, special attention should be given to correcting students' errors, for example writing errors. This is to mean that if the teacher follows a harsh error correction method, students will be confused and later their anxiety level towards writing activities will increase (Wörde Von, 2003). The reason for this may be, students may think that whatever they do to their best in their writing tests, their teacher may not give due credit to their writing attempts. Therefore, such behavior of teachers by itself may aggravate students' writing test anxiety. Besides, according to Daly cited in Young (1991), teachers are expected to show their students the actual process of writing right from students' early stages (i.e. in their elementary and high school stages) by keeping with students' levels of understanding. This means, various writing tasks or activities should be offered at different levels or stages so as to make students competent in their writing abilities. In addition to what has been said so far, Palmquist and Young (1992) say that the major role a good teacher has to play is to cultivate students' notions and attitudes towards writing practice for effective communication.

However, if the teacher is not able to help his/her students to be competent in their writing abilities, students may not identify the features of writing. As a result, they may be frustrated and later develop high anxiety especially when they take writing tests. In this respect, teachers can be taken as one possible sources of writing test anxiety.

#### **2.4.1.3 Time Given**

Different scholars like Thompson (1980), Young (1991), Blaine et. al (2001), Robert (2003 – on line) and others suggest that the time given by itself may be one of the possible sources of writing test anxiety. Basically, as writing is complex by its nature, students may need appropriate time when they take the writing tests. This is because; students are expected to follow the four major stages or steps of the writing process: thinking, planning, writing and checking (Raimes, 1983). Thus, in order to apply all the aforementioned steps of the writing process, students should be given enough time matching with the nature of the writing exam.

However, if the time given is not appropriate, the testee is likely to be anxious. For this reason, the testee can not show his/her writing ability in the test (Blaine et. al, 2001). More specifically, Young (1991) states that there are some instances when the nature of the writing test and the time allotment do not match each other. He (Ibid) further explains that when such a situation arises, students' level of anxiety will increase. From the researcher's personal experience as a student, time is found to be the major source of writing test anxiety in the Ethiopian context.

#### **2.4.1.4 Peer Effect**

The peer effect issue most often revolves around the individuals' feelings about others (i.e. friends) during competition (Young, 1991). In this regard, peer effect as one of the major sources of writing test anxiety is commonly seen. For example, as Atay and Kurt (2006) point out, some students often become

panicking during writing tests if their friends finish the writing test and leave the exam hall before those students panicking. So, according to them, this is an effect inducing writing test anxiety because of peers. Moreover, Lewis (1997-online) identifies that some students may be frustrated over their writing performance during tests comparing them to other test takers. Furthermore, from the researcher's personal experience peer effect is commonly seen in the Ethiopian context during tests.

#### ***2.4.1.5 Topics Given for Writing***

If students are told to write on a topic (or topics) that they do not like or are not familiar with, writing will turn into a nightmare (Lee, 2001). He (Ibid) further explains that this problem is highly magnified when students take their writing exams.

This may show that selecting topics for writing tests needs special consideration. This means, teachers should select familiar or interesting topics which students can write well about and also show their writing abilities. In doing so, teachers can easily reduce students' writing anxiety.

#### **2.4.2 Some Sources of English Language Writing Test Anxiety in the Ethiopian Context**

Regarding the sources of English language writing test anxiety in the Ethiopian context, it is possible to mention some of them which are frequently observed. For instance, Abate Kasahun (1996) who conducted his MA Thesis could identify some of the potential sources of writing test anxiety his subjects faced. These were: students' poor writing background which goes with their past writing experience, students' negative expectations on their writing tests, inability to manage the time given in attempting the writing tests.

Moreover, the low-standard of English language students have may make them anxious, particularly in taking tests. Many AAU English language instructors expressed that many students experience serious English language problems,



particularly writing and speaking problems, and the students themselves admitted that their English language ability was insufficient (Hailemichael Abera, 1990).

Therefore, these factors are expected to cause writing test anxiety and foreign language writing test anxiety will develop as a result of the potential sources mentioned so far.

## **2.5 The Practical Ways of Overcoming Writing Test Anxiety**

Creating a low-stress language learning environment is believed to facilitate learning of a foreign or second language by allowing students to concentrate on communication rather than being distracted by worry and the fear of negative evaluation (Young, 1991). Consequently, language instructors need to acknowledge students' fear about written evaluation and encourage and provide them with ample opportunities to practice various writing activities before students take writing tests. If students have not practiced well before the writing test, they will not show their actual skill in writing as they may be in a state of anxiety. In this connection, Alcalá (2002: 1) states that, "*Anxious students frequently fail to reach their potential and ... their marks do not fully reflect their knowledge of the foreign or second language.*" Thus, it is imperative that language instructors should find some practical ways of evaluating students' language performance without inducing high levels of anxiety and by maintaining a positive climate.

In written tests, it is fundamental that the content of the writing test should be congruent with the content of the course which automatically goes with content validity (Madsen, 1982). Otherwise, students' anxiety levels will increase if they take writing tests which contain grammar, vocabulary and some other writing activities which were not covered in the course. Likewise, Young (1999: 433) states that it is vital to "*Test what you teach.*" This is because tests which are perceived to be unfair will lead to anxiety about future tests and negative attitudes towards the course and the instructor, too.

Hence, in order to overcome students' writing test anxiety – language instructors should expose students to different writing test items and formats during the course, which will be used in the writing tests (Robert, 2003 – on line). Students can also be given an opportunity to practice different writing items along with their formats which will reduce anxiety and the chance of frustration hindering performance in a written test. Thereby, students will have a good idea about performance expectations in terms of the standard required of them which serves to reduce feelings of anxiety when they attempt their writing tests (Thompson, 1980). Furthermore, a number of suggestions have been given to reduce the levels of students' writing test anxiety. One of the suggestions is by identifying the errors in students' written works and requiring the students to correct the mistakes by themselves (Shin, 2002).

Moreover, some language scholars and learning institutions such as Lewis (1997 – on line), Shapiro (1997 – on line), Robert (2003 – on line) and University of Texas Learning Center (2006 – on line) suggest some practical ways of overcoming test anxiety in general, including writing test anxiety, that testees have to follow before, during and after the writing test.

For instance, Lewis (1997 – on line) suggests the following practical ways of overcoming test anxiety before and during the test. The methods suggested by the University of Texas Learning Center (2006-online) is almost similar to what Lewis (ibid) suggested below.

**a) *Before the Test***

- Discussing the test contents with instructors and classmates.
- Developing effective study and preparing for test skills.
- Making intensive review a few days before a test.
- Taking a practice test under exam – like conditions.
- Getting sufficient rest the night prior to the test.
- Developing a positive attitude about the test situation.

- Arriving to class about five minutes early and get relaxed before the test is given out, but coming too early may cause anxiety.

***b) During the Test***

- Relaxing muscles in several parts of the testee's body, then taking deep breaths with testee's eyes closed.
- Practicing to calm oneself by saying a couple of sentences like: "This test will not permanently affect my life. I'm going to feel calm and relaxed."
- Practicing to visualize calm, soothing scene (such as a beach or mountains).

Robert's (2003 – on line) suggesting ways and means to overcome test anxiety classify the stages into three. Her suggestions are more concentrated on writing tests.

***a) Before the Test***

- Taking a practice test the day before the actual test with conditions as much like the test as possible.
- Reviewing the writing formats, how to compose sentences and then form paragraphs constituting essays.
- Getting enough sleep. Avoiding caffeine which increases anxiety.
- Giving oneself time to feel composed and to be on time for the test.

***b. During the Test***

- Looking over the entire writing test, read the directions, planning approach and time.
- Starting with the easiest writing question first.
- Focusing on the test. The testee does not waste his/her time and energy worrying, thinking about the consequences of not doing well, or wondering what others are doing.
- Suggesting to oneself that the testee probably studied the idea and the answer or the concept will come to get back to it.

- Practicing the relaxation techniques if the testee starts to feel anxious. This can be done by closing eyes and taking three deep breaths and then back to the task.
- Organizing thoughts in a brief outline, in an essay exam. Looking for key words, such as contrast, describe, identify. Starting with a short summary or topical sentence and the vital points. Moreover, remembering what the instructors emphasized during writing activities attempted in the learning process.

**c. *After the Test***

- Rewarding oneself for having tried the test. Avoiding the habit of going over the writing test questions with others. The test already went. Saying "Let the bygone be bygone", thinking that the testee can learn a lot about his/her strengths and weaknesses from the answer scripts returned.

To conclude, if the testees try their best to apply or use all the aforementioned practical ways used to overcome (writing) test anxiety, they can easily develop their confidence and then show their writing abilities in relation to the nature of the writing course (for example – sophomore course).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODS OF THE STUDY**

#### **3.1 Research Design and Methodology**

In this section, the research design and methodology adopted for the purpose of the present study are described. This section includes the research type, the research settings, sources of data, sampling size and sampling technique.

##### **3.1.1 Research Type**

The researcher used the descriptive survey method to conduct this study. The reason for choosing this was that this research type is assumed to be helpful to explore the major factors influencing the subjects of the study (i.e. the second year degree students taking sophomore English writing course) in a state of anxiety when they took the writing tests.

##### **3.1.2 Research Settings**

Two research places were selected. These were Admas and St. Mary's private university colleges. The reason for selecting these two private university colleges was that, there has not been any significant research work on these colleges in general, and the present kind of research, in particular. Therefore, the present researcher selected the aforementioned private university colleges by the lottery method and then conducted this research study to fill the gap to some extent.

##### **3.1.3 Sources of Data**

The primary source of data for this research was the sample of degree students taking sophomore writing course in the second semester of 1999 E.C in both Admas and St. Mary's private University Colleges. In addition, the English language instructors offering sophomore writing course in both university colleges were taken as the source of data.

### **3.1.4 Sampling Size**

According to the information obtained from the respective registrar offices of both the selected private university colleges, there were 287 and 145 degree students taking sophomore English writing common course in the second semester of 1999 E.C in Admas University College and St. Mary's University College respectively. Considering this situation, from a total population of 432 one hundred thirty (130) sample students (i.e. 30% of the total population) were selected from the two private university colleges.

### **3.1.5 Sampling Technique**

In the first place, the whole students' names were written according to their alphabetical orders in each section. Then, by applying the systematic sampling technique, i.e. taking every  $n^{\text{th}}$  list of names, the sample students (130) from both private university colleges were systematically selected.

In Admas University College, there were six (6) sections in which students were attending the sophomore English writing common course. Thus, by giving equal opportunity to all sections, 86 sample students were selected. In each section, the number of students varied from 47 to 50. Fourteen (14) students were selected from the first four sections and fifteen (15) from the last two sections. So, the researcher selected the sample students from each section by taking every 3<sup>rd</sup> list of names starting from A to Z for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> sections, whereas for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> sections, the researcher took every 3<sup>rd</sup> list of names starting from Z to A. This was basically done in order not to ignore those students whose names begin with the last letters in English alphabet, such as W, Y and Z.

In St. Mary's University College-there were three (3) sections of students attending the sophomore English writing common course. Hence, by giving equal chance to all the three sections, 44 sample students were selected. In

each section, the number of students varied from 46 to 51. Consequently, fifteen (15) sample students were selected from the first two sections and fourteen (14) from the third one. The researcher selected sample students from each section in St. Mary's University College by taking every 3<sup>rd</sup> list of names starting from A to Z for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sections, while going from Z to A for the 2<sup>nd</sup> section.

### **3.2 Instruments of Data Collection**

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following instruments of data collection were used.

#### **3.2.1 Questionnaire**

Two questionnaires were employed to conduct this study. This was basically done to assess students' levels of writing test anxiety. The first one (please see Appendix –A) was used to assess students' writing background when they were in elementary and high schools. In short, this was used to find out to what extent subject students had been exposed to writing skills as it has a strong relation to writing test anxiety. The second one ( please see Appendix –B) was used to assess subject students' levels of writing test anxiety by using the scale mainly developed by Cheng (2004). There were fifteen (15) and thirty (30) questions in the first (Appendix –A) and the second (Appendix –B) questionnaires respectively.

#### **3.2.2 Classroom Observation**

Three consecutive classroom observations were carried out while students were taking the writing tests. The last two observations were made without video recordings while the first one was carried out by making use of video recording. This was done so because in the first observation aided by video recording, it was not possible to see the major sources of writing test anxiety stated in the review of related literature. Taking this information as a guideline, the

researcher changed his mind and conducted the last two consecutive observations without using video recordings. In doing so, the major sources of writing test anxiety could be easily observed. The purpose of conducting the three consecutive observations was just to triangulate the information given in the two questionnaires mainly in Questionnaire 2 (please see Appendix- B) with the actual realities observed in the examination classroom.

The researcher then conducted all the three consecutive observations along with his co-observer who was also an MA candidate whose research topic was a little bit similar to that of the researcher's. The three observations were also conducted using an observation checklist (please see Appendix-E) focusing on the three major issues of the study, namely; major sources of writing test anxiety, major physical symptoms of writing test anxiety, and some suggested practical ways of overcoming writing test anxiety which were observable.

### **3.2.3 Focus Group Discussion**

Focus group discussion was used as the third data collection instrument for this study. Two focus group discussions were conducted altogether by making use of video recordings. This is to mean that, one focus group discussion was made in each sample university college. In each discussion, six subject students participated. These six students (i.e. two from each group) were selected randomly from three categories (i.e. High Anxiety Category, Average Anxiety Category, and Low Anxiety Category) with reference to their writing test anxiety scores (please see Appendix -D). The researcher, therefore, selected two sample students for focus group discussion from each group assuming that they could represent their group where they belonged. There were seven (7) guided questions (please see Appendix -F) designed for focus group discussion. The discussion was conducted in Amharic in order to let the participants, who attended the discussion in both private university colleges, feel free to express their true feelings regarding the questions reflecting students' writing test anxiety.



### **3.2.4 Interview**

The fourth data gathering instrument which was used in this study was an interview. Two English language instructors, one from Admas University College and the other from St. Mary's University College, offering sophomore English writing common course were interviewed. This was purposely done to understand instructors' perceptions on the extent their students had been in a state of anxiety when they took the writing tests then. Besides, this instrument was used in order to enrich the information obtained through the first three data collection instruments stated earlier. The information obtained from the interviews is presented in Appendix-G.

## **3.3 Procedures of Pilot Study and Data Gathering**

In a pilot study, data gathering was carried out immediately after designing the two data collection instruments (i.e. the two questionnaires, presented in Appendix –A and Appendix –B) in order to verify their validity.

### **3.3.1 Pilot Study**

The data gathering instruments, particularly the two questionnaires were first tested before directly applying them to the actual data gathering process of the main study. The two questionnaires, therefore, were piloted in both sample settings. Twenty students who were not selected for the main study from both private university colleges participated in the pilot survey. Thus, with the responses obtained from the respondents of the pilot study, some relevant modifications were made in the two questionnaires. For example, almost all of the respondents (i.e. 18 out of 20 respondents) did not state their feelings for some open-ended questions. They simply left the open-ended questions unanswered (Questions № 6 and 15, in Appendix –A). When they were asked why they had left out the open- ended questions, they said that it was difficult for them to express their true feelings in English as they had a poor writing

background in their early stages (i.e. in elementary and high schools). For this reason, the researcher was urged to translate the two questionnaires (Appendix –A and Appendix –B) into Amharic by consulting those language professionals who specialized in Amharic language. Besides, some of the questions which were found to be unclear for the respondents and irrelevant to the study were modified and deleted respectively.

### **3.3.2 Data Gathering Process**

The first part of data was gathered by using Questionnaire -1 (Appendix- A) which was used to assess the subject students' writing background when they were in elementary and high schools. All the subjects who were told to fill Questionnaire -1, did so properly and then returned the questionnaire sheets to the researcher.

Next, the second part of data was collected by making use of Questionnaire -2 (Appendix –B). This was done immediately after the subject students took their 3<sup>rd</sup> test (in the case of St. Mary's University College sample students) and 2<sup>nd</sup> test (in the case of Admas University College sample students). One thing to be noted here is that before the subject students filled the second questionnaire (Appendix –B), code numbers (1-130) were given for each respondent. This was basically done in order to easily calculate each respondent's writing test anxiety score. Furthermore, the gender markers (i.e. M= for male students and F= for female students) were used. When female students submitted the filled questionnaire, the researcher put the gender marker (F) at the left top corner of the front page of the questionnaire. The same thing was done for the male subject students by putting down (M) as the gender marker in the same way.

Then, the third part of data was collected by applying focus group discussion (using the seven guided questions mentioned in Appendix-F) after selecting group representatives from the three writing test anxiety categories (i.e. LAC ranging from 30-59, AAC from 60-119, and HAC from 120-150). These three

writing test anxiety categories were actually classified by summing up each student's response for all the thirty statements given in Questionnaire 2. Each score was calculated based on the scoring key of English language writing test anxiety (ELWTA) (See Appendix –C). So, by employing the Tertile Split Method (TSM), the subject students were categorized into three as low, average and high anxious categories based on their writing test anxiety scores. In some studies of this kind different scholars, such as Phillips (1992) and Ganschow and others (1994) administered scales measuring the levels of students' anxiety on foreign language performance and then formed three anxiety categories as mentioned above (i.e. low, average and high) based on students anxiety scores on the provided scale. Thus, in this study 25% of the subject students who scored from 30-59 were regarded as low anxious learners, the middle 50% ranging from 60-119 were regarded as average –anxious and the last 25% ranging from 120-150 were considered as high-anxious students (please see Appendix-D).

The fourth data gathering process was carried out by using observation as data collection tool. The first observation was made with the use of video recording. As mentioned earlier, it was not successful as subject students did not show their true feelings. As a result, the last two consecutive observations were made without video recordings. Then, it was possible to see those major factors generating writing test anxiety.

Finally, the fifth data gathering process was carried out by two interviews held with the English language instructors offering sophomore English writing common course. This was done in order to enrich the information obtained using the aforementioned data collection instruments.

### **3.4 Procedure of Analyzing the Data**

After carefully gathering the appropriate data, using the four instruments of data collection mentioned under Section 3.2, from all subjects of the study, the data were analyzed by using different statistical tools and narration. Thus,

frequency counting percentage, mean, and description of some qualitative data were used to analyze and describe the data. In this respect, the mean value was calculated in the data analysis section for some tables by multiplying the number of respondents and the value given for each response of the items, such as strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree, always, very often... never, and others. The grand mean value was also calculated by adding up all the single mean values and then divided by the total number of items included in the table. Finally, based on the findings obtained in chapter four (i.e. Results and Discussion part), summary, conclusions and recommendations were offered.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to address the specific objectives mentioned in the first chapter, the data collected from all subjects of the study were analyzed by making use of frequency counting percentage, mean and description of some qualitative data. Moreover, the subject students' writing background in their early stages was assessed in order to see the relationship between writing test anxiety and the background of subjects' writing abilities. In each section, therefore, discussion follows the presentation of the results of data analysis.

#### 4.1 Subjects' Writing Background during Elementary and High Schools

##### 4.1.1 The Attention given for Writing Skill at the Elementary Level

In order to explore subjects' writing background, they were asked to which language skill their elementary English language teachers gave emphasis. The following responses were given by the subjects.

**Table 1: Subjects' responses on the English language skill in which their elementary English teachers gave emphasis:**

Language skills	Responses	
	Nº of respondents	%
Speaking	24	18.46
Listening	30	23.08
Writing	23	17.69
Reading	53	40.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>

As can be seen from the above Table (1), the least attention was given to writing skill (only 17.69%) among others while reading (40.77%) was the language skill in which subject students' elementary English teachers gave more emphasis.

From this, one may understand that, according to the information obtained in Table 1, more attention was given by the subjects' elementary English teachers to the receptive skills (i.e. reading, 40.77% and listening, 23.08%) as opposed to the productive skills (i.e. speaking, 18.46% and writing, 17.69%).

This shows that the large majority of the subject students did not get ample opportunities to practice various writing activities in their elementary English language classes. So, this situation may lead them to be anxious when they take more writing tests during their stay in high schools and particularly at the tertiary level. This is because students in the tertiary level are expected to write various term papers followed by presentations (speaking). Besides, they are expected to conduct various types of research work which need dynamic or creative writing skills. As a result, the researcher believes that productive skills (speaking and writing) are more challenging for the Ethiopian students than those receptive ones (i.e. listening and reading). This may be the reason elementary English teachers did not give adequate focus to the productive skills even though they were expected to treat all the language skills proportionally. So, this may show that subject students were found to be poor in their writing background in their elementary education.

Moreover, the result obtained in this study (Table 1) supports the previous studies in assuring that college or university students were weak in their writing abilities as most English language teachers did not give more emphasis to writing skill right from elementary levels (Haile-Michael Abera, 1990 and Abate Kasahun, 1996). This situation ultimately induces students' writing test anxiety.

#### **4.1.2 The Suggested Reinforcement Writing Activities for Elementary and High School Students**

So as to see whether the suggested reinforcement writing activities for elementary and high school students (Byrne, 1979 and 1988) were given or not, students were asked to give their responses on this issue.

**Table 2: Subject Students' responses on the suggested reinforcement writing activities for elementary and high school students**

A. Reinforcement Writing Activities at Elementary Level (1-8)	Frequency										Total		Mean
	Always (4)		Very often (3)		Sometimes (2)		Rarely(1)		Never(0)				
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	x
a) Copying English alphabets from the board	45	34.61	56	43.08	22	16.92	3	2.31	4	3.08	130	100	3.04
b) Copying English words or phrases from the board	42	32.31	54	41.54	29	22.31	3	2.31	2	1.54	130	100	2.80
c) Gap filling	18	13.85	36	27.69	53	40.77	20	15.38	3	2.31	130	100	2.35
d) Writing simple sentences keeping the subject very agreement	7	5.38	24	18.46	40	30.77	43	33.08	16	12.31	130	100	1.74
e) Writing sentences which reinforce particular structures and vocabulary items	8	6.15	11	8.46	34	26.15	52	40.00	25	19.23	130	100	1.42
f) Joining sentences using cohesive devices	5	3.84	16	12.31	27	20.77	66	50.77	16	12.31	130	100	1.45
g) Writing sentences using cohesive devices during mid or final tests	8	6.15	13	10.00	29	22.31	60	46.15	20	15.38	130	100	1.45
<b>Grand mean</b>												<b>2.04</b>	
<b>B) Reinforcement writing activities at High School level (9-12)</b>													
a) Sentence linking and sequencing	13	10.00	41	31.54	61	46.92	13	10.00	2	1.54	130	100	2.38
b) Writing notes	20	15.38	23	17.69	39	30.00	32	24.62	16	12.31	130	100	1.99
c) Writing letters	2	1.54	7	5.38	38	29.23	43	33.08	40	30.77	130	100	1.14
d) Writing dialogues	2	1.54	8	6.15	33	25.38	34	26.15	53	40.77	130	100	1.02
e) Writing paragraphs	4	3.08	5	3.84	34	26.15	58	44.62	29	22.31	130	100	1.21
f) writing essays	3	2.31	2	1.54	18	13.85	43	33.08	64	49.23	130	100	0.75
g) Writing term papers	3	2.31	1	0.77	10	7.69	23	17.69	93	71.54	130	100	0.45
<b>Grand mean</b>												<b>1.28</b>	

From the above Table (2), one can see that the suggested reinforcement writing activities for both elementary (A) and high school (B) students are stated one after the other. However, if we see the suggested reinforcement writing activities for the above two levels, we can note the following fact.

The attention made to apply the suggested reinforcement writing activities going from simple writing activities to complex ones in both cases was found to be little. For instance, if we look at the results of the first three (listed from a-c) suggested reinforcement writing activities for elementary levels; their

frequencies mainly fall on "always" and "very often" which is rated as positive. This means that subject students were practicing those simple or elementary reinforcement writing activities (Byrne, 1979 and 1988) as they were expected to. On the contrary, when we come to the last four (listed from d-g) suggested writing activities which are a little bit tougher than the previous ones, under 'A' category; the frequencies of the large majority's responses fall on the negative side. This indicates that subject students did not practice them well. In other words, the subjects' elementary English language teachers did not give adequate attention to these suggested reinforcement writing activities.

Coming to the second category (B) of the suggested reinforcement writing activities for high school students, the worst effect could be observed. When we see the suggested writing activities except item (a), the rest (listed from b-g) were not effectively practiced by the subject students during their stay in high school. In line with this finding, different scholars like Byrne (1979), Alamirew G/Mariam (2005) and others claim that if high school students have not been given opportunities to practice the aforementioned reinforcement writing activities, they are going to face great challenges in conveying their ideas in their future writing practices. Other scholars, such as Horwitz et.al (1996), Horwitz and Young (1991), Boughay (1997) and others note that if a student is not well equipped in his/her writing abilities, it is expected that the student may get anxious when he/she takes a writing test. Here, what they have indirectly emphasized in short that having poor writing background can be taken as one of the major sources of writing test anxiety.

#### **4.1.3 Some Yes/No Questions Assessing Subjects' Writing Background**

So as to come up with some kinds of further information (findings) in line with the objectives set, some Yes/No questions were included in questionnaire 1. The following results were then obtained.



**Table 3: Subject students' responses on the four Yes/No questions assessing their writing background as it has strong connection with their writing test anxiety**

Items	Responses		
		No of respondents	%
a) Did your elementary English teachers encourage you to practice different kinds of writing activities in class?	Yes	No of respondents	%
		38	29.23
	No	No of respondents	%
		92	70.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>	
b) In elementary schools, were relevant writing questions based on the activities practiced in class included in mid or final tests?	Yes	No of respondents	%
		60	46.15
	No	No of respondents	%
		70	53.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>	
c) Did you attend the writing lessons properly while you were in high school?	Yes	No of respondents	%
		85	65.38
	No	No of respondents	%
		45	34.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>	
d) Do you think enough writing questions were included during mid or final tests while you were in high school?	Yes	No of respondents	%
		47	36.15
	No	No of respondents	%
		83	63.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>	

According to Table (3) above, three 'yes/no' questions among four received negative responses from the large majority of the sample respondents. This may show that the sample students had not been well exposed to the writing skill before they joined colleges.

If we look at the responses of item a, for example, 92 (70.77%) of the respondents replied that their elementary English teachers did not encourage them to practice different kinds of writing activities in class while 38 (29.23%) of them gave a positive reply. The aggregate result may also imply that the subject students did not get enough opportunities to practice various writing activities suggested for elementary levels (Byrne, 1979). So, it may be the result of this situation which mostly induced students' writing test anxiety at the college level. According to the large majority of the respondents 92 (70.77%), this problem was created because most of their elementary English teachers were not well

trained to teach the writing skills. The respondents further reported that most of their elementary English teachers did not like the teaching profession. It is obvious that in such situations the ultimate goal could not be achieved. That was why the subject students did not get opportunities to upgrade their writing skill as expected. The result of this situation agrees with the concept stated in the review of related literature. For instance, Byrne (1979 and 1988) proves that if students do not practice the suggested reinforcement writing activities in the respective grade levels of elementary education, they may not express themselves effectively in their future writing practices.

Regarding item (b) in Table 3, more than half i.e. 70 (53.85%) of the respondents said that relevant writing questions based on the writing activities practiced in class were not frequently included in mid or final tests while the subjects of the study were attending their elementary education, whereas a little less than half of the respondents i.e. 60 (40.35%) responded positively. So the result shows that the majority of the respondents had not enough exposure to show their writing abilities during tests in their early stages. The subjects of the study also stated the reasons for this problem to happen then that there was a trend to include simple language items in the mid or final tests, like vocabulary and grammar while neglecting the other skills, particularly the productive skills (speaking and writing). Moreover, according to the information obtained from the respondents i.e. 70 (53.85%), their elementary English teachers did not include enough writing questions in mid or final tests as they thought that students were poor in their writing abilities. For this reason, they considered including writing questions in mid or final tests as wastage of time and energy. In addition to what has been said so far, the elementary English teachers did not include relevant writing questions in mid or final tests thinking that it may be difficult to mark and then to give constructive feedback in written form to students' writings. Others also reported that most of their elementary English language teachers were not capable of preparing relevant writing questions for mid or final tests. Therefore, they preferred to ignore the writing questions and

emphasized on questions of multiple choice. In this regard, the result of this study coincides with what most foreign and local scholars like Lewis (1997-online) and Atkins et al (1996) pinpoint the consequences of ignoring writing in tests. They note that lacking this opportunity, i.e. lacking to practice writing during tests, may strongly aggravate students' frustration during writing tests. They further indicate that this problem is mostly magnified when students take the writing tests.

When we see item (c) in Table 3, the majority i.e. 85 (65.38%) of the total respondents reported that they were attending the writing lessons which were supposed to be given for high school levels. But 45 (34.62%) of them replied that they did not attend the writing lessons properly because of a number of reasons. Among those reasons, teachers' incapacibilities of teaching writing, not having good (smooth) relationships with their teachers were the major causes. This implies that teachers could be taken as source of writing anxiety to some extent. In this regard, scholars like Pica (1986), Young (1991), and Worde Von (2003), particularly share this view.

Coming to item (d) in Table 3, the majority i.e. 83 (63.85%) of the respondents reported that they did not think enough writing questions were included in mid or final tests while they were at high school, whereas the remaining 47 (36.15%) responded positively. This may show that most of the subject students did not have enough chances to practice writing during tests in high schools which was also the case during their elementary education. To this end, local studies like Atkins et. al (1996) reveal that if students do not practice writing in tests in their high school levels, they may face great challenges when they join colleges as writing is a more demanding skill at the college level.

#### **4.1.4 Rating the Contributions of Elementary Writing Activities to Subjects' Writing Abilities in High School**

To see the extent to which students' elementary writing activities contributed to their high school writing abilities, students were asked to rate its contribution. The following table presents the relevant analysis of data.

**Table 4: Students' responses on rating the contribution of the writing activities practiced in elementary stages to their writing abilities in the high school**

Rating scales	Responses	
	N <sup>o</sup> of respondents	%
Very good	15	11.54
Good	21	16.15
Satisfactory	23	17.69
Poor	71	54.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>

As the results depicted in Table 4 show, the majority i.e. 71 (54.62%) of the respondents rated that the contribution of their writing activities practiced in their elementary levels to their high school writing abilities was found to be 'poor' while only 15 (11.54%) of the total population rated the contribution as 'very good'. Others constituting 21 (16.15%) and 23 (17.69%) also rated its contribution as 'good' and 'satisfactory' respectively.

This implies that the majority of the subject students were found to be poor in their writing abilities when they were in high schools as their elementary English teachers did not give them any opportunity to practice various writing activities. The findings of this study in this regard support the concept forwarded by some scholars like Atkins and others (1996), Murphy (2004), Daud and others (2005), and Atay and Kurt (2006). They point out that if students do not practice the recommended activities on different language skills, including writing, in the respective grade levels they could not properly utilize the skills as they would like to. And this, therefore, induces students' anxiety when they take writing tests.

The existence of this students' problem (i.e. being poor in their writing abilities) was also proved when the researcher and his co-observer carried out the three consecutive observations when the subject students took their writing tests. And, it was observed that most of the subject students were anxious while they took the writing tests. Moreover, the researcher and the co-observer felt that

most of the sample students were found to be below the standard expected. This is because they could not even read and understand the directions on how to attempt the writing tests. In this connection, one critical incident was observed during the third observation session. One student was seriously weeping as she could not write the summary of a short essay. She was simply looking at the essay and then weeping. At the same time, the researcher and his co-observer were looking at her seriously. Besides, the instructor noticed this problem and finally advised her not to attempt the given writing test and later he ordered her to leave the class in peace. This dramatic situation has its own implication in relation to the main issue summarized in Table 4. In short, not only the aforementioned student but also more than half of the sample students were poor in their writing abilities even at the tertiary level. For this reason, most of them were found to be highly anxious when they took the writing tests.

One of the reasons, having poor writing background may be related to the teacher's not giving proper feedback/ comments to students' writing attempts. The following table presents the data on this issue.

#### **4.1.5 The Extent to which High School English Teachers gave Comments to Subjects' Common Writing Errors**

To answer the first basic research question assessing students' writing background before joining colleges, one question was included in the questionnaire with items as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Subjects' responses on to what extent their high school teachers gave comments to the following common errors subjects probably commit**

Writing Errors (Writing Features)	Frequency								Total		Mean
	A lot (3)		Some (2)		Little (1)		None (0)		fr.	%	x
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%			
a) Spelling	30	23.08	56	43.08	31	23.84	13	10.00	130	100	1.79
b) Punctuation	27	20.77	64	49.23	31	23.84	8	6.15	130	100	1.85
c) Capitalization	47	36.15	58	44.62	20	15.83	5	5.85	130	100	2.13
d) Grammar	43	33.08	52	40.00	28	21.54	7	5.38	130	100	2.01
e) Diction (choice of words)	18	13.85	23	17.69	54	41.54	35	26.95	130	100	1.18
f) Organization	17	13.08	22	16.92	65	50.00	26	20.00	130	100	1.23
g) Content	11	8.46	33	25.38	67	51.54	19	14.62	130	100	1.26
<b>Grand mean</b>											<b>1.64</b>

As indicated in Table (5) above, most of the sample students reported that some comments were given by their high school English teachers to the first four (listed from a-d) writing features where errors can be made in, but few comments were given to the last three writing features (listed from e-g). To prove this, one can simply look at the mean value of each item ranging from (1.79 – 2.13) incorporated in Table (5) above. If we see the mean values of the first four items (a-d), each of the mean values inclines to the frequency "some" which has 2 points. But if we see the mean values of the last three items (e-g) ranging from (1.18 – 1.26) each of the mean values inclines to the frequency "little" which has 1 point.

This shows relatively better attention was given to the first four items by the subjects' high school English teachers in giving comments to their students' writing errors than to the last three items. The reason for this situation may be related to the nature of each writing feature (listed from a-g). In relative terms, the first four writing features are by far easier than the last three. Consequently, it might be due to this reason that students' high school English teachers would prefer to give comments on the first four items rather than to the last three. On the contrary, as it is stated in the review of related literature, scholars like Pincas (1982), Norrish (1983), Kharma (1986), Leki (1991) and others point out that the last three (e-g) writing features are by far complex as compared with the first four (a-d) items. So, the researcher believes that this may be the reason why the subject students' high school English teachers did not give enough comments on students' writing errors related to the last three writing features.

#### **4.1.6 The Extent to which Subjects' Exposure to Write Paragraphs and Essays, and the Responding Behaviour of High School English Teachers**

To measure both the extents to which subject students were exposed to write paragraphs and essays along with their formats and the responding behaviour of high school English teachers in giving constructive comments on their

students' writing attempts in general, two questions were included in Questionnaire 1 (appendix – A) which was used to assess students' writing background. The following Table (6) presents the relevant data.

**Table 6: Students' responses on to what extent both items were treated**

Items	Frequency								Total		Mean
	To a great extent (3)		To some extent (2)		Little (1)		None (0)				
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	$\bar{x}$
a) To what extent were you exposed to write paragraphs and essays along with their formats while you were in high school?	12	9.23	27	20.77	58	44.62	30	25.38	130	100	1.14
b) To what extent did your high school English teachers give you constructive comments to your writing attempts in general?	22	16.92	28	21.54	61	46.92	19	14.62	130	100	1.41
<b>Grand mean</b>										<b>1.28</b>	

According to the above Table (6), the majority i.e. 58 (44.62%) of the respondents said that the extent to which they were exposed to writing paragraphs and essays along with their formats (i.e. heading, indentation, margin, etc) while they were in high school was little. Similarly, 61 (46.92%) of the respondents said that the extent to which the high school English teachers to give constructive comments to their students writing attempts in general was also little. To prove this, one can simply look the mean values of items a ( $\bar{x}=1.14$ ) and b ( $\bar{x}=1.41$ ) which each of them tilts to 1 i.e. little. Moreover, the grand mean value of the two items ( $\bar{x}=1.28$ ) tends to 1 referring little.

This, therefore, implies that the subject students did not have adequate practice in writing both paragraphs and essays which are the core elements of the sophomore writing course. In this regard, Alamirew G/Mariam (2005) also

suggests that writing paragraphs and essays along with some other constituting elements should have been given attention in college writing courses, like sophomore.

However, as the data indicate in Table 6, the majority of the respondents were not well exposed to writing paragraphs and essays. This was to some extent proved in the sense that they were highly anxious when they took the writing tests as most of them did not have good exposure to the core elements stated above while they were in high schools.

Moreover, as the findings of this research revealed, the subjects' high school English teachers were found to be weak in giving constructive comments on their students writing attempts in general. From this situation, one may realize that the subjects of the study did not know their strong and weak sides in terms of their writing attempts as they had not been given enough constructive comments on their writing attempts. However, as some scholars, such as Pincas (1982) and Byrne (1988) say giving constructive feedback/ comments, are helpful for students in order to let them distinguish their strong and weak sides in their writing. Students can easily develop their writing abilities by maintaining the good sides and ignoring/ improving their weak sides in writing. In this way, students' level of writing test anxiety may be reduced to some extent.

In a nutshell, the assessment showed that the subject students' were found to be weak in their paragraph and essay writings as they were not well exposed to such writings in high schools. Consequently, most of the subject students were confused and distressed when they took the writing tests because they did not get constructive comments on their writing attempts in high school. This implies that if they had got constructive comments which might encourage them to improve their writing abilities, they would not have faced the challenges observed during their writing tests.



#### 4.1.7 The Three Categories of Writing Test Anxiety

In order to assess the influence of subject students' elementary and high schools writing background on their college writing performance (ability), the subjects' writing test anxiety scores (please see Appendix -D) based on their responses obtained from Questionnaire 2 (Appendix B) were categorized into three. The data pertaining to this variable are presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Classification of subject students' writing test anxiety scores in to three categories**

Writing Test Anxiety Category	Male		Female		total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
High Anxiety	10	7.69	30	23.08	40	30.77
Average Anxiety	43	33.08	43	33.08	86	66.15
Low Anxiety	3	2.31	1	0.77	4	3.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>43.08</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>56.92</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>

The above Table (7) shows that the majority i.e. 86 (66.15%) of the subjects were categorized under 'Average Anxiety category" in which their anxiety scores range from 60 to 119. And 40 (30.77%) students were categorized under "High Anxiety Category" in which their anxiety 'scores range from 120 to150, while a very few i.e. 4 (3.08%) of them were under "Low Anxiety Category" in which the anxiety scores range from 30 to 59 (please see Appendix –D).

So, from the above data it may be noted that only 4 (3.08%) students from the total sample population (130) were found to have their writing test anxiety scores low. Thus, this may imply that a large majority constituting 86 (66.15%) and 40 (30.77%) of the total sample population were found to be averagely and highly- anxious respectively while taking the writing tests. Hence, this finding strengthens those findings which have already been obtained in the previous discussions of this chapter. To make this idea clear, the previous findings in this study proved that most of the sample students were found to be poor in their writing background before they joined colleges, and that problem was reflected in colleges as well. In addition to this, their writing test anxiety levels

were also average and high while only four sample students' writing test anxiety scores were low. Therefore, the above two findings complement each other. This is because according to some scholars like Byrne (1979 and 1988), Atkins et. al (1996) Daud and others (2005), and Atay and Kurt (2006) as discussed in the review of related literature and statement of the problem, the level of writing test anxiety will increase for those students whose writing background is poor, and vice versa.

## 4.2 The Real Causes/Sources Aggravating Subjects' Writing Tests Anxiety

### 4.2.1 The Common Difficulties of Writing during Writing Tests

In order to identify the serious common difficulties of writing process during writing tests, the following five common difficulties were included in the Questionnaire. The analysis of the data on this variable is presented in Table 8 as under.

**Table 8: Students' responses on the common difficulties of the writing process during writing tests**

Common difficulties during writing tests	Responses										Total		Mean
	SD (1)		D (2)		UD (3)		A (4)		SA (5)		fr.	%	x
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%			
a) Inability to organize ideas	7	5.38	8	6.15	8	6.15	54	41.54	53	40.78	130	100	4.06
b) Inability to produce any ideas (when mind goes blank)	11	8.46	22	16.92	27	20.77	48	36.92	22	16.92	130	100	3.36
c) Poor L <sub>2</sub> vocabulary knowledge	15	11.54	16	12.31	8	6.15	29	22.31	62	47.69	130	100	3.82
d) Poor L <sub>2</sub> grammar knowledge	11	8.46	15	11.54	9	6.92	46	35.38	49	37.69	130	100	3.82
e) Thinking in L <sub>1</sub> (mother tongue)	6	4.62	9	6.92	10	7.69	47	36.15	58	44.62	130	100	4.09
<b>Grand mean</b>												<b>4.06</b>	

**NB:** The scales used above are abbreviated hereafter as follows: Strongly Disagree = SD, Disagree = D, Undecided = UD, Agree = A, and Strongly Agree = SA.

As can be seen from the Table (8) above, most of the respondents regarding the item (a) with mean value ( $x = 4.06$ ) agreed that they were unable to organize their ideas while they were taking the writing tests. Furthermore, most of the subject students agreed that they were poor in both their vocabulary and grammar knowledge. The mean values for these two items (having  $x = 3.82$  each) also proved the respondents' agreement as their mean values tend to 4 which shows agreement. They also reported that they most often thought in their mother tongue while they were attempting the writing tests as the mean value of this item (e) being ( $x = 4.09$ ). But, the response given for item (b) tends towards undecided (i.e.  $x = 3.36 \Rightarrow x = 3.00$ ).

This basically indicates that the subject students had poor writing background which may be the result of not having enough opportunities to practice various writing activities in their elementary and high schools. So, this result supports the findings depicted in the preceding Tables in this chapter. Furthermore, the finding in this Table (8) coincides with what most scholars have pointed out. For example, scholars like Byrne (1979), Hedge (1988), Lee (2001) and Robert (2003 – on line) say that having a good background of writing skills often reduces writing test anxiety (keeping other factors constant, such as classroom settings, students' psychological problems, etc). However, if the situation above does not obtain, that is, if students are poor in their vocabulary and grammar knowledge, it will be hard for them to match what they have written with what they intend to write. They may not put down their true feelings in their writings as they are poor in their vocabulary and grammar knowledge. From this fact, one may understand that maintaining the standard vocabulary knowledge and grammar knowledge (which may be suggested in the textbook for each grade level) play significant roles to help students to express effectively their true feelings in writing. Then, students can easily develop confidence to express themselves in writing. However, as we see the actual results in Table 8, most of the subject students were found to be poor in both their vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Consequently, the subject students could not think or generate

relevant ideas in L<sub>2</sub> (in this case, English language) while they attempted the writing tests. So, the researcher believes that it may be this situation that did not permit the subject students to organize their ideas while they were writing on something(s) during the writing tests.

#### 4.2.2 The Major Sources of Writing Test Anxiety

In order to answer the second basic research question of the study, various statements were included in the second questionnaire (Appendix – B) reflecting the major sources of writing tests anxiety. And the following results were found as shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: Students' responses on the following major sources of writing test anxiety**

Sources of Writing Test Anxiety	Responses										Total		Mean
	SD (1)		D (2)		UD (3)		A (4)		SA (5)				
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	x
a) Teachers	30	23.08	39	30.00	16	12.31	25	19.23	20	15.38	130	100	2.74
b) Past experiences	13	10.00	17	13.08	18	13.85	45	34.61	37	28.46	130	100	3.58
c) Time	2	1.54	14	10.77	10	7.69	53	40.77	51	39.23	130	100	4.05
d) Peer effect	10	7.69	16	12.31	24	18.46	61	46.92	19	14.62	130	100	3.48
e) Topic	3	2.31	8	6.15	13	10.00	50	38.46	56	43.08	130	100	4.14
<b>Grand mean</b>												<b>3.60</b>	

**NB:** Since all the major sources listed under Table 9 are anxiety positives or show the existence of anxiety in other words, the values given for SD, D, UD, A and SA, to calculate the mean value for each item, are 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively.

As the data depicted in Table (9) above, the results of the items except item (a), were taken to be considered as the major sources of writing test anxiety. This means, their mean values are well above the average mean value scale (i.e.  $x = 3.00$ ). This can, therefore, be an indication for most of the sample respondents who agreed that they were anxious when they took the writing tests due to their poor past writing experiences, unable to budget the time given to take the writing tests, looking at their peers who left the exam hall finishing the writing

test soon, and when they were told to write something about the topic(s) which were not familiar to them. The grand mean (i.e.  $x = 3.598 = 3.60$ ) also shows that the levels of the subject students' writing test anxiety enhanced as a result of the above major sources of writing test anxiety.

The results shown in Table 9 gathered from Questionnaire 2 (Appendix –B) also coincide with what scholars like Spolsky (1989), Lewis (1997-online), Palmquist and Young (1992), Blaine et. al (2001), Worde Von (2003) and others point out (discussing in the review of related literature). For instance, Worde Von (2003) points out that if students do not have good relations with their teachers, they may think that whatever they do to their best in writing tests, their teachers may not give due regard to their writing attempts. For this reason, teachers could be taken as one major source of writing test anxiety. Likewise, the other sources of writing test anxiety identified by the aforementioned scholars were frequently affected when subjects took their writing tests as the analysis of data indicates.

To crosscheck the extent to which the stated major sources of writing test anxiety affected the subjects, three consecutive classroom observations and two focus group discussions were carried out. Thus, when the researcher carried out three observations along with his co-observer while students were taking the writing tests, all of the major sources of writing test anxiety but one (listed in item (a), i.e. teachers) were noticed in one way or the other.

Teachers in this regard, were not taken as the major source of writing test anxiety as compared with the other major sources. In this case, therefore, what the data suggests in this study and what Worde Von (2003) says in the review of related literature do not support each other.

But when we come to students' past writing experiences, the researcher and his co-observer came to realize that it was the major source of writing test anxiety. This means, most of them were highly distressed during writing tests as they

had not good writing background before they joined colleges. That was why most of them called their instructor frequently for further clarifications while the instructions given on the test by themselves dictated how and what to do.

In respect of time as a source of writing test anxiety, the researcher and his co-observer understood that most of the subjects in both private university colleges (AUC and SMUC) were found to be highly anxious as they were not able to manage the time given when they attempted the writing tests. Just to give one example of what happened in relation to time as a source of writing test anxiety, most of the subjects were shouting and aggressively looking at their instructors when they were told that they had only "fifteen minutes left," "ten minutes left," and "five minutes left" towards the end of the test. This implies that the subject students did not take enough writing tests, as a result of which they could not have chances to practice or to get acquainted with managing time during writing tests. Hence, time can be taken as a source of writing test anxiety.

Coming to the third source of writing test anxiety, namely; peer effect, the majority of the sample students, i.e. 61 (46.92%) were highly affected by those students who had finished the writing test earlier. To make this clear, when some students submitted the answer scripts to the instructor, the others (the large majority of them) were looking mentally disturbed because of those few students who had left the examination room. So, the researcher and his co-observer could observe the effect of some peers on others whose writing test anxiety was relatively high.

However, it was not possible to observe the role of topics as source of writing test anxiety during the three consecutive observations carried out. But it was during the two focus group discussions that the researcher could realize how unfamiliar topics which students were required to write about during writing tests could affect students' mind as a source of writing test anxiety. As it is explained in chapter three (the methodology part), the two focus group

discussions were made by using video recordings as one data gathering tool, particularly to triangulate the information obtained through the two questionnaires (Appendix –A and Appendix –B). Hence, during the focus group discussions, the representative students selected from each of the three writing test anxiety categories participated in the discussions for about 25 minutes. They mentioned and discussed thoroughly the major sources of writing test anxiety listed in Table 9. The participants further reported that the major source of writing test anxiety which frequently raised their levels of anxiety during writing tests was their poor past writing experience.

When instructors were interviewed to cross-verify the information obtained, they pointed out students' poor writing background as first and strongest major source of the subjects' writing test anxiety. The instructors interviewed were also not satisfied with their students' written performance. This, according to the interviewees, was because their students had no good writing background before they joined colleges.

#### **4.2.3 The Major Physical Symptoms of Writing Test Anxiety**

In order to explore the probable physical symptoms of writing test anxiety which are inseparable from the major sources of writing test anxiety presented in the previous Table (9), the subject students were asked to state their true feelings on the following eight physical symptoms, and also checked whether or not they affected the subject students during taking writing tests. Table 10 presents the data relevant to this variable.

**Table 10: Students' responses on the major physical symptoms of writing test anxiety**

Physical Symptoms for Writing Test	Responses										Total		Mean
	SD (1)		D (2)		UD (3)		A (4)		SA (5)				
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	x
a) Trembling (shocking)	2	1.54	14	10.77	10	7.69	53	40.77	51	39.23	130	100	4.05
b) The whole body becoming rigid and tense	17	13.08	26	20.00	38	29.23	29	22.31	20	15.38	130	100	3.07
c) Finding words meaningless when reading the instructions and questions	9	6.92	28	21.54	28	21.54	45	34.62	20	15.38	130	100	3.30
d) Having rapid heart beat	7	5.38	8	6.15	2	1.54	65	50.00	48	36.92	130	100	4.07
e) Having a headache	26	20.00	18	13.85	19	14.61	45	34.62	22	16.92	130	100	3.15
f) Perspiring (sweating)	28	21.54	27	20.77	15	11.54	37	28.46	23	17.69	130	100	3.00
g) Nothing	38	29.23	54	41.54	10	7.69	24	18.46	4	3.08	130	100	3.75
<b>Grand mean</b>												<b>3.48</b>	

**NB.** The values given for SD, D, UD, A and SA to calculate the mean values of items (a-f) are 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively. But for the last item (g) as it is anxiety negative or shows the absence of anxiety, the values used to calculate the mean are reversed.

In the Table (10) above, seven items are listed with the statistical details corresponding to each item to which the participants of the study responded.

If we look at the responses given for item (a), for example, only 2 (1.54%) of the respondents said 'strongly disagree', 14 (10.77%) of them 'disagreed' while 10 (7.69%) of them had no opinion, but a large majority i.e. 53 (40.77%) and 51 (39.23%) 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' respectively. So, the results indicate that by adding up the figures of one extreme (i.e. left= SD +D) 16 (12.31%) of the respondents all together disagreed to the physical symptom (item a), as they did not tremble or feel shocked when they took the writing tests. On the other extreme (i.e. right = A + SA), a large majority of 104 (i.e. 80.00%) of the total respondents concerning item (a), agreed that they were trembling while they were taking the writing tests. The mean value (x= 4.05) of item (a), also shows that the responses of the total population incline to agreement. This, therefore, implies that trembling as the major physical symptom of writing test was associated with most of the respondents' behaviour when taking writing tests.



This symptom may be related to one of the sources of writing test anxiety indicated in Table 9. This situation may also indicate that the majority of the respondents did not develop relative confidence in their writing abilities before they joined colleges.

Concerning item (b), by applying the same procedure used to interpret the data in the previous item (a) it can be noted that, 43 (33.08%) of the total population disagreed to the statement " the whole body becoming rigid and tense" which shows the existence of anxiety during writing tests, whereas 49 (37.69%) of them reported the opposite. That means, they agreed that their whole body became rigid and tense during taking writing tests. But the remaining, 38 (29.23%) of the respondents could not decide anything. This implies that relatively large numbers of respondents were in a dilemma to decide between the two extremes as compared to the other responses obtained in Table 10.

In the case of item (c), 37 (28.46%) of the total respondents disagreed, whereas 65 (50%) of them agreed. The grand mean ( $\bar{x}=3.30$ ) also shows that the cumulative responses regarding item (c) is a little bit above the neutral scale (undecided). Generally speaking, the result shows that half of the total respondents (i.e. 65 of them) had found words meaningless when reading the instructions and questions during the writing tests. This situation also shows that students' poor writing background induced their writing tests anxiety.

Regarding item (d), only 15 (11.54%) of the total respondents disagreed. This means, they did not feel they had rapid heart beat as a symptom of writing test anxiety while they took the writing tests, whereas the large majority i.e. 113 (86.92%) of the total respondents agreed that they felt their heart beating rapidly when they had written English compositions during writing tests under time constraint. That is, most of them agreed that they experienced such symptom which proves the existence of anxiety (in this case writing tests anxiety). The mean value ( $\bar{x}=4.07$ ) also proves the existence of the

aforementioned symptom of writing test anxiety which is most often resulted from students' lack of confidence in their writing abilities.

In relation to item (e), some respondents constituting 44 (33.85%) of the total population disagreed. This is to mean that they did not have a headache when they took the writing tests, whereas more than half i.e. 67 (51.54%) of the total respondents agreed that they had a headache while taking the writing tests. This implies that this symptom was experienced by a majority of the subjects during writing tests.

Concerning item (f), balanced responses were given. That is, 55 (42.31%) of the respondents disagreed (by adding up both strongly disagree = 28, and disagree = 27) while only 15 (11.54%) of them had no opinion. On the contrary, 60 (46.15%) of the total respondents agreed that they most often perspire or sweat when they took writing tests. Moreover, the mean value for the item (f) is exactly ( $\bar{x} = 3.00 =$  undecided) which falls on the dividing line of presence of anxiety and absence of anxiety.

Regarding the last item (g), the responses are different from those given to the previous items. This is because it refers to the absence of anxiety while the rest of the items (listed from a-f) refer to the presence of anxiety. For this reason, by considering the fact stated above, the large majority 92 (70.77%) of the respondents disagreed while only 10 (7.69%) of them had no opinion, and 28 (21.54%) of the total respondents agreed that while taking the writing tests in English they were not nervous at all. But the mean value ( $\bar{x} = 3.75$ ) proves what the large majority 92 (70.77%) of the respondents said which inclines to disagreement. That means, they (i.e. 92 of them) did not accept the statement as it was as there are some uncontrolled situations or factors forcing them to become nervous while attempting the writing tests.

Therefore, from the above interpretations and analysis made for all items, most of the physical symptoms of writing anxiety summarized in Table 10 affected the

subject students during the writing tests. This situation was clearly a result of the subjects' poor writing background and some uncontrolled factors aggravating their anxiety. Most of these symptoms were also observed in one way or the other during observations. Furthermore, the subject group representatives also mentioned during the focus group discussions that most of the physical symptoms, particularly, those like, being trembling, perspiring, having rapid heart beat, and finding words in the question paper meaningless during tests as the major physical symptoms affected these subjects. The instructors interviewed also observed most of the symptoms when their students were taking the writing tests. They also ascribed the existence of these physical symptoms directly to students' poor writing background (please see Appendix -G). Finally, the interviewees suggested that to overcome these symptoms, students have to practice writing on various topics in addition to what they have been taught the writing skill in class. So, for them practice is the key solution to overcome the major physical symptoms of writing test anxiety.

### **4.3 The Practical Ways Recommended to Overcome Writing Test Anxiety**

So as to answer the third basic research question, the following practical ways recommended to overcome students' writing test anxiety were included in the form of statement in Questionnaire 2 (please see Appendix -B). This was basically done to see whether or not subject students knew or applied them during their writing tests. As they did not apply most of the recommended practical ways stated in the review of related literature (Chapter Two), their anxiety during writing tests would have been high. The data pertaining to this variable are presented in Table 11 below.

**Table 11: Students' response on the practical ways recommended to overcome writing test anxiety**

Practical Ways of Overcoming Writing test Anxiety	Responses										Total		Mean
	SD (1)		D (2)		UD (3)		A (4)		SA (5)				
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	x
a) Choosing to write down thoughts in English during writing test	26	20.00	55	42.31	20	15.38	21	16.15	8	6.15	130	100	2.46
b) Seeking possible chances to write English compositions before taking the writing test	29	22.31	48	36.92	19	14.62	20	15.38	14	10.77	130	100	2.55
c) Relaxing one self during the writing test	31	23.85	51	39.23	14	10.77	24	18.46	10	7.69	130	100	2.47
d) Arriving early and getting relaxed before the writing test is given out	15	11.54	38	29.23	18	13.85	32	24.61	27	20.77	130	100	3.14
e) Practicing a writing test under exam like conditions	38	29.23	57	43.85	10	7.69	10	7.69	15	11.54	130	100	2.28
f) Developing a positive attitude about the writing test situation	24	18.46	61	46.92	26	20.00	8	6.15	11	8.46	130	100	2.39
g) Getting sufficient rest before the writing test	29	22.31	63	48.46	17	13.08	14	10.77	7	5.38	130	100	2.28
h) Applying the writing formats while taking the writing test	31	23.85	46	35.38	22	16.92	24	18.46	7	5.38	130	100	2.46
i) Looking over the entire writing test (i.e. directions and time allotment)	37	28.46	49	37.69	16	12.31	24	18.46	4	3.08	130	100	2.30
j) Starting to compose with the easiest writing test question first	11	8.46	35	26.92	28	21.54	29	22.31	27	20.77	130	100	3.20
k) Utilizing the time and energy effectively by avoiding wondering what others doing during the writing test?	5	3.84	22	16.92	28	21.54	38	29.23	37	28.46	130	100	3.62
l) Remembering the major writing activities practiced in class which the instructor gave emphasis	32	24.62	42	32.31	23	17.69	28	21.54	5	3.84	130	100	2.48
m) Avoiding the habit of going over the writing test questions with others after the test is over.	43	33.08	48	36.92	10	7.69	16	12.31	13	10.00	130	100	2.29
n) Discussing the writing test contents with instructors and classmates before the writing test	36	27.69	39	30.00	25	19.23	20	15.38	10	7.69	130	100	2.45
<b>Grand mean</b>												<b>2.59</b>	

As can be seen from Table (11) above, most of the practical ways used to overcome writing test anxiety, which are recommended by scholars like Lewis (1997-on line), Shapiro (1997-on line), Robert (2003-on line), and learning institutions, such as University of Texas Learning Center (2006-online), have not been practiced well and then employed during the writing tests by the large majority of the respondents as the results indicate in Table 11. Also, the mean value of each item except three items (i.e. items d, j and k) was found to be below the average (i.e.  $x= 3.00$ ). This means, the majority's responses inclined to the negative side (i.e. to strongly disagree and disagree). This implies that most of the recommended practical ways which are used to overcome writing test anxiety were not effectively used by most of the sample students.

The data in Table 11, shows that the least mean values obtained among others were ( $x=2.28$ ), ( $x=2.28$ ) and ( $x=2.29$ ) for item (e), item (g), and item (m) respectively. Basically, items (e) and (m), originally stated in Questionnaire 2 (See Appendix- B, Q. N<sup>o</sup>. 17 and 16 respectively) point to the presence of anxiety. But when the researcher included them under Table 11, they point to the absence of anxiety. This was basically done so as to make all items (listed from a-n) anxiety negatives as coinciding with the heading (i.e. practical ways of overcoming writing test anxiety). Consequently, the subjects' responses regarding items (e) and (m) were changed from 'strongly agree' and 'agree' to 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' respectively. Therefore, the above mentioned three items (e, m, and g) were found to be the least practical ways in which the subject students did not apply them before or during the writing tests.

Coming to the items having relatively better mean values as compared with the others, were only three among the fourteen. These were item (d) ( $x=3.14$ ), item (j) ( $x=3.20$ ) and item (k) ( $x= 3.62$ ), the highest of all. From this, the researcher understood that the subject students applied the above three methods in relative terms when the subjects took the writing tests. However, when the researcher along with his co-observer carried out the three consecutive

observations, it was noted that the large majority of the sample students did not utilize their time and energy effectively by avoiding wondering what their classmates were doing during taking the writing tests (in the case of item k) in both sample settings (i.e. in AUC and SMUC). That is, most of the sample students were wondering what their peers were doing and even most of them were seriously shouting at their instructors when they were told the time was over. So, the researcher thought (concerning item k) that the information obtained through Questionnaire 2 (Appendix-B) and what was seen in reality during observations did not tally with each other. This implies that most of the subjects responded to item (k) in Questionnaire 2 carelessly.

However, when we see the aggregate mean value (Grand mean  $x=2.59$ ) most of the subject students did not practice and apply the suggested practical ways of overcoming writing tests anxiety. As the results of this study indicated, inability to apply the recommended practical ways when subjects took their writing tests may be the result of their poor knowledge on the nature of English language in general and English writing skills in particular.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter, the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the major findings are presented.

#### **5.1 Summary**

This research was conducted to assess students' level of English language writing test anxiety with reference to Admas and St. Mary's Private University College students taking sophomore English common writing course in the second semester of 1999 E.C.

So as to address the above major objective, the following basic research questions were raised.

- i. To what extent had the subject students been exposed to the writing skills when they were in both elementary and high schools?
- ii. What are the major causes (sources) which aggravate the subjects' writing test anxiety?
- iii. What are the practical ways that the subjects commonly use or apply to overcome their writing test anxiety?

One hundred thirty (130) college students from both research settings (i.e. AUC and SMUC) participated in the study. The researcher used systematic sampling technique to select the samples of subjects for the study. Moreover, various data collection instruments were used to gather enough information to answer the aforementioned basic research questions. Hence, information obtained through questionnaires, focus group discussions, and observations from the subject students, and interviews from instructors had been analyzed.

The data obtained from close-ended items in the two questionnaires (see Appendix- A and Appendix –B) were first presented in tables then interpreted

and finally analyzed using percentages and mean values. On the contrary, the data obtained from open-ended items in the questionnaire (i.e. Appendix-A), focus group discussions, observations and interviews were qualitatively described.

Based on the analysis made in the previous chapter (i.e. in Results and Discussion Part), the following major findings were obtained.

5.1.1 Writing skill was not given attention as compared with the other language skills (please see Table -1). Only 17.69% of them reported that the writing skill was given attention by their elementary school English language teachers. Among the four language skills, reading was found to be the language skill to which the subjects' elementary English language teachers gave much emphasis.

5.1.2 The elementary writing activities like copying the alphabet, words and phrases from the board were by far well treated as compared with the later ones, such as writing sentences which reinforce particular structures and vocabulary items, joining sentences using cohesive devices and so on (please see Table 2, part -A). Likewise, the same thing happened in the case of reinforcement writing activities at the high school level. This means, relatively better attention was given to sentence linking and sequencing, and writing notes, almost neglecting the last five reinforcement writing activities, such as writing: letters, dialogues, paragraphs, essays and term papers (please see Table 2, Part -B).

5.1.3 Enough and relevant writing questions based on the recommended writing activities practiced in class were not mostly included in the mid or final tests in both elementary and high schools.

5.1.4 Based on the subjects' writing test anxiety scores using Questionnaire -2 (i.e. Appendix - B), only four sample students were found to be low-anxious while the remaining were categorized into average (66.15%) and



high (30.77%) anxiety groups. A closer look at the responses of the sample students, in both high and average anxiety groups, revealed highest anxiety in statements related to arousal physiology which Cheng (2004) called 'somatic anxiety.' The statements which received the highest scores from both groups were items 2, 4, 6, 26, 27 and 30 (please see Appendix – B).

5.1.5 With regard to sources of writing test anxiety, almost all sources were found to be responsible for the subjects' anxiety during their writing tests. But the role of instructors as a source of writing test anxiety was a little bit weaker as compared with other sources. On the contrary, past writing experience and test time were found to be the major sources of writing test anxiety by which the majority of the sample respondents were highly affected.

5.1.6 Most of the physical symptoms of writing test anxiety mentioned in the review of related literature were found to be present while the subjects took the writing tests. More specifically, trembling and having rapid heart beat took the lion's share among others.

5.1.7 With reference to subjects' implementation of the commonly used practical ways of overcoming writing test anxiety, most of the subjects were found to be poor in using or applying all the recommended practical ways except a very few. The commonly used ones were the following: answering the easiest writing test question first, and arriving early and getting relaxed before the writing test is given out.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

Based on the major findings listed under 5.1 above, the following conclusions could be drawn.

- 5.2.1 It is believed that having good writing skill in the early stages is much helpful to create better communication skills in English. But, the subjects of the study did not have good exposure to the writing skill before they joined colleges. This may therefore, indicate that the subjects' elementary English teachers did not lay much emphasis on the writing skills as they were not well-trained to teach writing and lacked the needed commitment to teaching profession.
- 5.2.2 The results of the study revealed that when going from simple writing activities to the relatively complex ones, attention given to them gradually decreased. From this, it may be possible to conclude that most of the recommended reinforcement writing activities both at elementary and high school levels were not properly implemented. As a result, there could be a big gap which made the subject students more anxious during writing tests.
- 5.2.3 A student can not be successful in his/her writing performance during tests unless he/she has got enough opportunities to practice the various recommended writing activities in mid or final tests before she/he joins colleges. Not having such opportunities, most of the subjects were confused when they took the writing tests at the college level. This may imply that they did not have good exposure to assess their own writing performance during tests before they joined colleges.
- 5.2.4 As the results of the study depicted, most of the subjects of the study were categorized into average and high anxiety groups. The statements which received the highest scores from both groups were on items 2, 4, 6, 26, 27 and 30. From this one may conclude that the subjects were found to be highly anxious in most of the anxiety-provoking situations related to 'arousal physiology' which Cheng (2004) called 'somatic anxiety.'

5.2.5 Generally speaking, the subjects of the study were highly affected by most of the major sources of writing test anxiety. This may indicate that subjects' exposure to express themselves through writing during tests was poor before they joined colleges. From this, the researcher has come to the conclusion that the real source for this problem might be the subjects' poor past writing experiences among others.

5.2.6 Trembling and rapid heart beat as physical symptoms of writing test anxiety were found to be rooted in the subjects' past writing experiences.

5.2.7 It is agreed that the recommended practical ways used to overcome students' writing test anxiety play significant roles in letting students develop confidence during writing tests. However, the majority of the subjects failed to apply most of the recommended practical ways. From this, one may conclude that the majority of the subjects were not well-acquainted with most of the suggested practical ways used to overcome writing test anxiety.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

On the basis of the major findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the researcher suggested the following recommendations which might be helpful in reducing the problems (i.e. related to anxiety) that the subjects of the study encountered in taking the writing tests.

5.3.1 One general suggestion which could be made is that elementary English language teachers need to give considerable attention to the writing skill in order to scale up students writing abilities right from their early stages. Besides, if the government and private schools carefully recruit elementary and high schools teachers who are devoted and qualified to teach English language effectively, the problems observed in the two research settings may not be so severe in the future.

- 5.3.2 Elementary and high school English language teachers have to treat all the recommended reinforcement writing activities instead of focusing more on relatively simple and easy ones. In doing so, it may be possible for them to bridge the gap which makes students to be more anxious during writing tests.
- 5.3.3 Elementary and high school English language teachers also need to include enough and relevant writing questions, based on the recommended writing activities to be practiced in the class, in mid or final tests. Consequently, students may not be highly anxious, in most of the anxiety provoking situations, when they take writing tests in their later stages, i.e. in colleges where writing is often a more demanding skill.
- 5.3.4 It may be good if the English language instructors, in both private university colleges and other similar academic institutions, give constructive advice and follow up particularly to high- anxious students. One mechanism which may be used to alleviate the identified problems is, by letting these subjects participate in a writing club in a college, etc.
- 5.3.5 If various efforts are exerted by the responsible bodies to orient students to identify the major sources and physical symptoms of writing test anxiety from the very beginning, students may take appropriate measures in order not to be affected by the major sources and physical symptoms of writing test anxiety, keeping other factors constant.
- 5.3.6 Different researchers have suggested (as discussed in the review of related literature) a range of practical ways which can help students to cope with writing test anxiety-provoking situations before, while and after the writing tests. If successfully employed, these practical ways are expected to minimize students' levels of writing test anxiety. Moreover, the researcher believes that if the language departments in all the private university colleges create different forums to orient their students to use

the recommended practical ways, students may easily develop confidence through practice. Then, they can generate ideas in an organized manner and convey their ideas properly in their written answers during writing tests without any anxiety.

5.3.7 However, it should be mentioned that this study focused on two private university colleges (i.e. AUC and SMUC) in Addis Ababa and it has dealt with a common problem faced by many college students in Ethiopia. Therefore, it is hoped that more research studies in this area will supplement the findings of this study. Finally, the present researcher does not make any claims of comprehensiveness with reference to the topic under investigation. Future studies may throw further light on the problem of students' anxieties during written tests in English language.

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**APPENDIX -A**  
**STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE (1)**

Dear Student,

Currently, I am conducting a postgraduate (MA) research entitled "English Language Writing Test Anxiety." This questionnaire is designed to assess your writing background while you were in elementary and high schools. Consequently, the researcher requests you to give your genuine response for each question below. Your co-operation in responding to the questionnaire will be of considerable help to the success of this research and subsequently it may be used to improve the quality of students' English writing ability right from their early stages.

Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated!

Thank you in advance!

**General Directions**

- i. You are not expected to write your name.***
- ii. More than a single answer is possible for some questions.***

***I. Direction***

Please remember to what extent you were exposed to writing activities while you were in elementary schools. Please answer all the questions as honestly as possible. You can also put the mark (✓) when you give the answer for each question on the space provided.

1. To which language skill did your English language teachers give emphasis in your elementary schools?
  - A. Speaking \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Listening \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Writing \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Reading \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Did your elementary English teachers encourage you to practice different kinds of writing activities in the class?
  - A. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. No \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. If your answer for question N<sup>o</sup> 2 is 'No', what do you think the reason may be?
  - A. They were not interested to teach writing \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. They were not well trained \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. If others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. To what extent did you practice the following reinforcement writing activities in your elementary writing lessons?

Reinforcement writing activities	Frequency				
	Always	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) Copying English alphabet from the board					
b) Copying words or phrases from the board					
c) Gap filling					
d) Writing simple sentences keeping the subject-verb agreement					
e) Writing sentences which reinforce particular structures and vocabulary items					
f) Joining sentences using cohesive devices					
g) Writing sentences using cohesive devices during mid or final tests					

5. Do you think the relevant writing questions based on the writing exercises you practiced in the class were included in the mid or final tests?

A. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

B. No \_\_\_\_\_

6. If your answer for question № 6 is 'No', what do you think the reason may be? Please write some of the reasons that you think are the major ones.

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## **II. Direction**

Please remember to what extent you were exposed to writing activities while you were in high schools. Please put the mark (✓) when you give the answer for each question on the space provided.

7. Did you attend the writing lessons properly?

A. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

B. No \_\_\_\_\_

8. If your answer for question № 8 is 'No', what was your problem for not attending the writing lessons properly?

A. I did not like writing \_\_\_\_\_

B. I did not have good relation with my English teachers \_\_\_\_\_

C. The English teachers did not teach the writing lessons well \_\_\_\_

D. If others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

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9. How do you rate the writing activities you practiced in your elementary stages contributed to your writing abilities in the high school?

A. Very good \_\_\_\_

C. Satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_

B. Good \_\_\_\_\_

D. Poor \_\_\_\_\_

10. To what extent did you practice the following reinforcement writing activities in your high school English writing lessons?

Reinforcement writing activities	Frequency				
	Always	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) Sentence linking and sequencing					
b) Writing notes					
c) Writing letters					
d) Writing dialogues					
e) Writing paragraphs					
f) Writing essays					
g) Writing term papers					

11. To what extent did your high school English language teachers give you comments or feedback to the following errors you probably committed in writing:

Writing errors	A lot	Some	Little	None
a) Spelling				
b) Punctuation				
c) Capitalization				
d) Grammar				
e) Diction (Choice of words)				
f) Organization				
g) Content				

12. To what extent were you exposed to write paragraphs and essays along with their formats (i.e. headings, margins, spacing, indentations and so on) while you were in high school?

- A. To a great extent \_\_\_\_\_ C. Little \_\_\_\_\_  
 B. To some extent \_\_\_\_\_ D. None \_\_\_\_\_

13. To what extent did your high school English language teachers give you constructive comments for your writing attempts in general?

A. To a great extent \_\_\_\_\_ C. Little \_\_\_\_\_

B. To some extent \_\_\_\_\_ D. None \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you think enough writing questions were included in your mid or final tests?

A. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ B. No \_\_\_\_\_

15. If your answer for question № 15 is 'No' what do you think the reason may be? Please state some of the reasons that you think are the major ones:

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# አባሪ 1

## በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ተቋም የውጭ ቋንቋዎችና ሥነ ፅሁፍ ትምህርት ክፍል (የድህረ ምረቃ መርሃ ግብር)

### የተማሪ መጠይቅ (1)

#### ውድ ተማሪ!

በአሁኑ ሰዓት የድህረ ምረቃ (ኤም.ኤ) የመመረቂያ ጥናት በማካሄድ ላይ እገኛለሁ። ጥናቱም የሚያጠነጥነው ተማሪዎች የጽሁፍ ፈተና ሲፈተኑ የሚጋጥሟቸውን የጭንቀት መንስኤዎች ለይቶ በማውጣት ጠቋሚ መፍትሔዎችን ለማመላከት ነው። ይህ መጠይቅ የተዘጋጀው የርስዎን በአንደኛ ደረጃ እና በሁለተኛ ደረጃ የትምህርት ዘመናት የነበርዎትን የጽሁፍ ችሎታ ደረጃን ለመገምገም የታለመ ነው። ስለሆነም ከዚህ በታች ለሚጠየቁት ጥያቄዎች ትክክል ነው ብለው የሚያስቡትን መልስ በመስጠት እንዲተባበሩኝ በታላቅ ትህትና እጠይቃለሁ። ይህም ማለት ለመጠይቁ ትክክለኛ ምላሽ መስጠት ለጥናቱ ትልቅ አስተዋጽኦ የሚያደርግና ውጤቱም የተማሪዎችን የጽሁፍ ብቃት ከዝቅተኛ የክፍል ደረጃ ጀምሮአንዴት ማሻሻል እንደሚቻል ሊጠቁም እንደሚችል ስለሚታሰብ ነው።

የሚሰጡት መረጃ በሚስጥር እንደሚያዝ ከወዲሁ ለመጠቀም እወዳለሁ።

በቅድሚያ አመሰግናለሁ።

#### ማሳሰቢያ

1. መጠይቁ ላይ ስም አይጻፍም።
2. ለአንዳንዶቹ ጥያቄዎች ከአንድ በላይ መልስ መስጠት ይቻላል።

#### መምሪያ፡ ሀ

እባክዎ በአንደኛ ደረጃ የትምህርት ቋጭ ምን ያህል የጽሁፍ ክንዋኔዎችን (ልምምዶችን) የማድረግ አጋጣሚዎች እንደነበሩ ለማስታወስ ይሞክሩ። ከዚህ ፁች ያሉትን ጥያቄዎች በታማኝነት መልስ ይስጡ። ለእያንዳንዱም ጥያቄ መልስ ለመስጠት ይህን ምልክት (✓) በመጠቀም ባዶ ቦታ ላይ በማስቀመጥ ትክክለኛውን መልስ መሥጠት ይችላሉ።

1. የአንደኛ ደረጃ ቁንጥራዝ ኛ መምህርዎቻዎ ለየትኛው የቋንቋ ክህሎት ነበር ትኩረት የሚሰጡት?  
ሀ. ለንግግር ----- ሐ. ለጽሁፍ -----  
ለ. ለማዳመጥ ----- መ. ለንባብ -----



2. የአንደኛ ደረጃ ቋንቋ ጽንፍ መምህራንዎ በክፍል ውስጥ የተለያዩ የጽሑፍ ክንቅጫዎችን (ልምምዶችን) እንዲያደርጉ ያበረታታው ነበርን?

ሀ. አዎ ነበር ----- ለ. አይ አልነበረም-----

3. ለጥያቄ ቁጥር 2 መልስዎ «አይ አልነበረም» ከሆነ፣ ምክንያቱ (ቶቹ) ምን ነበር (ነበሩ) ብለው ይገምታሉ?

ሀ. መምህራኖቹ ጽሑፍን (writing) ለማስተማር ፈቃደኛ አልነበሩም -----

ለ. መምህራኖቹ በቂ ሥልጠና አልነበራቸውም -----

ሐ. ሌሎች ካሉ እባክዎ ከዚህ በታች ይጻፉ -----

4. ከዚህ በታች ለተዘረዘሩት የጽሑፍ ማጠናከሪያ ክንቅጫዎች በአንደኛ ደረጃ የጽሑፍ ትምህርት ክፍለ ጊዜያት ምን ያህል ልምምድ ያደርጉ ነበር?

የጽሑፍ ማጠናከሪያ ክንቅጫዎች	ድግግሞሽ				
	ሁልጊዜ	በተደጋጋሚ	አንዳንድ ጊዜ	ከስንት አንዴ	በፍፁም
ሀ. ቋንቋውን ፊደላትን ቀጭ ከሠሌዳ ላይ መገልበጥ					
ለ. የቋንቋውን ቃላትንና ሐረጎችን ከሠሌዳ ላይ መገልበጥ					
ሐ. ክፍት በታዎችን መሙላት					
መ. የባለቤትና የግስ ስምምነትን በመጠበቅ ቀላል አረፍተ ነገሮችን መጻፍ					
ሠ. የተለዩ መዋቅሮችንና የቃላት አይነቶችን የሚገልፁ አረፍተ ነገሮች መጻፍ					
ረ. አያያዥ ስልቶችን በመጠቀም አረፍተ ነገሮች ማገናኘት					
ሸ. በአጋማሽ ወይም በዋና ፈተናዎች ጊዜ አያያዥ ስልቶችን በመጠቀም አረፍተ ነገሮች መጻፍ					

5. በክፍል ውስጥ ልምምድ ያደረጉባቸው አስፈላጊ የጽሑፍ ጥያቄዎች በአጋማሽ ወይም በማጠቃለያ የቋንቋ ፊደሎች ላይ የተካተቱ ይመስልዎታልን?

ሀ. ይመስለኛል ----- ለ. አይመስለኝም -----

6. ለጥያቄ ቁጥር 5 መልስዎ «አይመስለኝም» ከሆነ ምክንያቱ ምን ይመስልዎታል? እባክዎ ዋና ዋና ምክንያቶች ናቸው ብለው የሚገምቷቸውን ከዚህ በታች ይጻፉ::

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**መመሪያ: ሰ**

እባክዎ በሁለተኛ ደረጃ የትምህርት ቋጭ ምን ያህል የጽሑፍ ክንፍዎችን (ልምምዶችን) የማድረግ አጋጣሚዎችን እንደነበሩ ለማስታወስ ይሞክሩ። ከዚህ ቆይታ ላሉት እያንዳንዱ ጥያቄ መልስ ለመስጠት ይህን መልክት (✓) በመጠቀም በተዘጋጀው ባዶ ቆይታ ላይ መልስ ይስጡ።

7. የጽሑፍ ትምህርት ክፍለ ጊዜዎችን በአግባቡ ይከታተሉ ነበርን?

ሀ. አዎ በአግባቡ እከታተል ነበር ----- ለ. አይ በአግባቡ አልከታተልም ነበር -----

8. ለጥያቄ ቁጥር 7 መልስዎ «አይ በአግባቡ ተጠቅሞ ነበር» ከሆነ፣ በአግባቡ እንዳይከታተሉ የነበረብዎት ችግር(ዎች) ምን ነበር (ሩ)?

ሀ. የጽሑፍ ትምህርትን አልወድም ነበር -----

ለ. ከእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ መምህራኖች ጋር ጥሩ የሆነ ግንኙነት አልነበረኝም -----

ሐ. የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ መምህራኖች የጽሑፍ ትምህርቶችን በአግባቡ አያስተምሩም ነበር -----

መ. ሌሎች ምክንያቶች ካሉ እባክዎ ከዚህ በታች ይጻፉት።

9. የአንደኛ ደረጃ የጽሑፍ ክንፍዎ (ልምመድዎ) ለሁለተኛ ደረጃ የጽሑፍ ብቃትዎ ያደረገውን አስተዋጽኦ እንዴት ይመዘኑታል?

ሀ. በጣም ጥሩ -----

ሐ. በቂ -----

ለ. ጥሩ -----

መ. አነስተኛ -----

10. በሁለተኛ ደረጃ የእንግሊዝኛ የጽሑፍ ትምህርት ክፍለ ጊዜያት ከዚህ ቆይታ ላሉት የጽሑፍ ማጠናከሪያ ክንፍዎች ምን ያህል ልምምድ ያደርጉ ነበር?

የጽሑፍ ማጠናከሪያ ክንፍዎች	ድግግሞሽ				
	ሁልጊዜ	በተደጋጋሚ	አንዳንድ ጊዜ	ከስንት አንዴ	በፍፁም
ሀ. አረፍተ ነገር ማገናኘትና ቅደም ተከተል ማስያዝ (sentence linking and sequencing)					
ለ. ማስታወሻዎን መጻፍ (notes)					
ሐ. ደብዳቤዎችን መጻፍ (letters)					
መ. ቃለ ምልልሶችን (ተዋስኮዎችን) መጻፍ (dialogues)					
ሠ. አንቀጾችን መጻፍ (paragraphs)					
ረ ወጎችን (ምንባቦችን) መጻፍ (essays)					
ሸ. የኮርስ ማሟያ ጽሑፎችን መጻፍ (term papers)					

11. ከዚህ በታች ለተዘረዘሩት ጽሑፍ ሲፃፍ (during writing) ሊያጋጥሙ ለሚችሉት ስህተቶች ለማስተካከል የሁለተኛ ደረጃ የአንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ መምህርዎችዎ የሰጥዎትን ድጋፍ እንዴት ይለኩት ነበር?

ጽሑፍ ሲፃፍ ሊያጋጥሙ የሚችሉ ስህተቶች	ብዙ	ትንሽ	በጣም ትንሽ	ምንም
ሀ. ሆሄ (spelling)				
ለ. ሥርዓተ ነጥብ (punctuation)				
ሐ. ትልቅ ፊደል capitalization)				
መ. ሰዋሰው (grammar)				
ሠ. ቃላት አመራረጥ (Diction= choice of words)				
ረ. ቅንብር (organization)				
ሸ. ይዘት (content)				

12. የሁለተኛ ደረጃ ተማሪ በነበሩበት ጊዜ የጽሑፍ ሥርዓቶችን ማለትም (ሕደግ (margin) የአንቀጽ መነሻ (indentation)፣ አርዕስት (heading) ፣ የመሳሰሉትን) በመከተል አንቀጾችንና ወጎችን (ምንባቦችን) ለመፃፍ ምን ያህል እድሉን አግኝተው ነበር?

ሀ. በብዙ ----- ሐ. በጣም በትንሹ -----  
 ለ. በትንሹ ----- መ. ምንም -----

13. የሁለተኛ ደረጃ የአንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ መምህራኖችዎ ምን ያህል ገንቢ የሆነ ሃሳብ ለጽሑፍ መከራዎ ይሰጥዎ ነበር?

ሀ. በብዙ ----- ሐ. በጣም በትንሹ -----  
 ለ. በትንሹ ----- መ. ምንም -----

14. በሁለተኛ ደረጃ የትምህርት ጊዜዎ በቂ የጽሑፍ ጥያቄዎች በአጋማሽ ወይም በማጠቃለያ የአንግሊዚኛ ፈተናዎች ውስጥ ተካተው ነበር ብለው ያስባሉን?

ሀ. አዎ ተካተው ነበር ብዬ አስባለሁ -----  
 ለ. አይ አልተካተቱም ነበር ብዬ አስባለሁ -----

15. ለጥያቄ ቁጥር 14 መልስዎ «አይ አልተካተቱም ነበር ብዬ አስባለሁ» ከሆነ ምክንያቶቹ ምን ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ ብለው ይገምታሉ? ዋና ዋና ምክንያቶች ናቸው ብለው የሚገምቷቸውን ከዚህ በታች ይፃፏቸው::

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**APPENDIX – B**  
**STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE (2)**

Dear Student,

Currently, I am conducting a postgraduate (MA) research entitled "English Language Writing Test Anxiety." The purpose of this scale is to gather information concerning the degree of anxiety you experience when taking the writing test. Having this in mind, read each statement below very carefully in order to indicate your true feelings which would be very important to the success of this study. For each statement, among the choices 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, circle the most suitable one you choose. As the findings of this questionnaire are going to be used for research, you are requested to be honest while answering each question below.

1. I strongly disagree
2. I disagree
3. I neither disagree nor agree (undecided)
4. I agree
5. I strongly agree

1. While taking the writing test in English, I am not nervous at all.

1            2            3            4            5

2. I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions in the examination room under time constraint.

1            2            3            4            5

3. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English during the writing test.

1            2            3            4            5

4. My mind often goes blank when I start taking the writing test.

1            2            3            4            5

5. I would worry about getting a very poor writing test grade as I do not have good relation with my English instructor.

1            2            3            4            5

6. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions during writing tests.

1            2            3            4            5

7. I freeze up when I am asked to write about unfamiliar topics during the writing test.
- 1            2            3            4            5
8. I often feel panic (tremble) when I write English compositions during writing test under time constraint.
- 1            2            3            4            5
9. I keep thinking during the writing test that the other students (i.e. my classmates) are better in their writing abilities than I am.
- 1            2            3            4            5
10. I usually seek the possible chances to write English compositions before I am going to take the writing test.
- 1            2            3            4            5
11. When taking the writing test, I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense
- 1            2            3            4            5
12. I am afraid at all when taking the writing test that my English composition would be rated as very poor
- 1            2            3            4            5
13. I am usually at ease (relaxed) during the writing test.
- 1            2            3            4            5
14. I usually arrive to the class about five minutes early and get relaxed before the writing test is given out.
- 1            2            3            4            5
15. I most often find words meaningless while reading the writing test instructions and questions.
- 1            2            3            4            5
16. I usually discuss the writing test contents with instructors and classmates before the exam.
- 1            2            3            4            5
17. I do not have a habit of taking a practice writing test under-exam like condition.
- 1            2            3            4            5
18. I usually develop a positive attitude about the writing test situation
- 1            2            3            4            5

19. I often get sufficient rest the night before the writing test.  
1            2            3            4            5
20. I usually apply the writing formats while taking the writing test.  
1            2            3            4            5
21. I most often look over the entire writing test-the directions and time allotment.  
1            2            3            4            5
22. I start composing with the easiest writing question first.  
1            2            3            4            5
23. I do not waste my time and energy wondering what others (i.e. my classmates) are doing when the writing test is given.  
1            2            3            4            5
24. When taking the writing test, I usually remember what the English instructor emphasized in the case of writing activities practiced in English language class.  
1            2            3            4            5
25. I do have the habit of going over the writing test questions with others after the test is over.  
1            2            3            4            5
26. Most of the time, I am afraid when taking the writing test as I am poor in my English vocabulary knowledge.  
1            2            3            4            5
27. Most of the time, I am afraid when taking the writing test as I am poor in my English grammar knowledge.  
1            2            3            4            5
28. When writing the English composition during the test, I usually think in my mother tongue.  
1            2            3            4            5
29. I usually feel headache when taking the writing test.  
1            2            3            4            5
30. I most often perspire when taking the writing test.  
1            2            3            4            5



3. በአብዛኛው በጽሑፍ ፈተና ጊዜ ለምጽፍባቸውን ዋና ዋና ሃሳቦች በቅድሚያ ንድፍ አዘጋጃለሁ።  

1	2	3	4	5
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4. በአብዛኛው ጊዜ የጽሑፍ ፈተናን ስጀምር አይምሮዬ የሚፅፈውን ነገር ያጣል።  

1	2	3	4	5
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5. ከእንግሊዝኛ መምህራ ጋር ጥሩ ያልሆነ ግንኙነት ስላለኝ የጽሑፍ ፈተና ውጤቴ ጥሩ አይሆንም ብዬ እጨነቃለሁ።  

1	2	3	4	5
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6. የእንግሊዝኛ ድርሰቶችን በፈተና ወቅት ስጽፍ ሀሳቤ ይቆራረጣል።  

1	2	3	4	5
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7. በጽሑፍ ፈተና ጊዜ በማላውቀው ርዕስ/ ርዕሶች እንድጽፍ ስጠየቅ እደነግጣለሁ።  

1	2	3	4	5
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8. በጽሑፍ ፈተና ወቅት የጊዜ እጥረት ሲያጋጥመኝ አብዛኛውን ጊዜ እርበተባለሁ።  

1	2	3	4	5
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9. በጽሑፍ ፈተና ጊዜ ጓደኞቼ ከእኔ የተሻለ የጽሑፍ ችሎታ አላቸው ብዬ አስባለሁ።  

1	2	3	4	5
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10. አብዛኛው ጊዜ ወደ ጽሑፍ ፈተና ከመግባቴ በፊት በቂ የጽሑፍ ልምምዶችን የማድረግ አማራጮችን እጠቀማለሁ።  

1	2	3	4	5
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11. የጽሑፍ ፈተና ስወስድ ብዙ ጊዜ መላ ሰውነቴ አይታዘዝልኝም።  

1	2	3	4	5
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12. የእንግሊዝኛ የድርሰት ፈተና በምወስድበት ወቅት ለሥራዬ አነስተኛ ውጤት ይሰጠዋል የሚል ሥጋት ያድርብኛል።  

1	2	3	4	5
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13. በአብዛኛው በጽሑፍ ፈተና ጊዜ እራሴን ነፃ አደርጋለሁ።  

1	2	3	4	5
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14. ብዙ ጊዜ የጽሑፍ ፈተናው ከመሠሰጠቴ አምስት ደቂቃ ቀደም ብዬ በመድረስ እራሴን አረጋጋለሁ።  

1	2	3	4	5
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15. አብዛኛውን ጊዜ የጽሑፍ ፈተና መመሪያዎችንና ጥያቄዎችን ሳነብ ቃላቶቼ ትርጉም አልባ ይሆኑብኛል።  

1	2	3	4	5
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16. ከፈተና በፊት በአብዛኛው ስለ ጽሑፍ ፈተናው ይዘት ከመምህራኖቼ እና ከክ ፍል ጓደኞቼ ጋር እወያያለሁ።  

1	2	3	4	5
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17. ፈተና ሊመስል በሚችል መልኩ የጽሑፍ ፈተና አዘጋጅቼ ልምምድ አላደርግም።  

1	2	3	4	5
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18. ብዙ ጊዜ ለጽሑፍ ፈተና ጥሩ ስሜት እንዲኖረኝ እሞክራለሁ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
19. ብዙ ጊዜ ከጽሑፍ ፈተናው አንድ ቀን በፊት በቂ እረፍት እንዲኖረኝ አደረጋለሁ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
20. በአብዛኛው የጽሑፍ ፈተናን ከመጀመሪያ በፊት የጽሑፍ ሥራዓቶችን ማለትም ሕዳግ (margin) የአንቀጽ መግቢያ (indentation) የአንቀጽ አካፋይ (spacing) ወዘተ እጠቀማለሁ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
21. በአብዛኛው የጽሑፍ ፈተና ከመጀመሩ በፊት አጠቃላይ የጽሑፍ ፈተናውን መመሪያ የተሰጠውን የግዜ መጠን እመለከታለሁ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
22. የእንግሊዝኛ ድርሰት በምጽፍበት ጊዜ ከቀላል የጽሑፍ ጥያቄዎች እጀምራለሁ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
23. በጽሑፍ ፈተና ወቅት ሌሎች ተፈታኞች የሚሠሩትን ሥራ በማየት ውድ ጊዜዬን አላባክንም።
- 1 2 3 4 5
24. በጽሑፍ ፈተና ወቅት የቋንቋ መምህራ በክፍል ውስጥ ልምምድ ሲደረግ አጽንኦት የሰጠባቸውን/ችባቸውን ጉዳዮች ለማስታወስ ብዙ ጊዜ ሙከራ አደርጋለሁ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
25. ከፈተናው በኋላ ስለ ጽሑፍ ፈተና ጥያቄዎች ከክፍል ጓደኞቼ ጋር የመወያየት ልምድ አለኝ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
26. የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ቃላት እውቀቴ ደካማ ስለሆነ በአብዛኛው የጽሑፍ ፈተና በምወስድበት ጊዜ እፈራለሁ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
27. የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ሰዋሰው እውቀቴ ደካማ ስለሆነ በአብዛኛው የጽሑፍ ፈተና በምወስድበት ጊዜ እፈራለሁ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
28. በአብዛኛውን ጊዜ የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ድርሰት በምጽፈበት ጊዜ በቅድሚያ በአፍ መፍቻ ቋንቋዬ አስባለሁ።
- 1 2 3 4 5
29. የጽሑፍ ፈተና ስወስድ ብዙ ጊዜ የራስ ምታት ስሜት ይሰማኛል።
- 1 2 3 4 5
30. የጽሑፍ ፈተና ስወስድ ብዙ ጊዜ ያልበኛል።
- 1 2 3 4 5

## **APPENDIX –C**

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE WRITING TEST ANXIETY SCALE SCORING KEY (BASED ON QUESTIONNAIRE 2, APPENDIX –B)**

1. The choices of items 1, 3, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 have weights as follows
  - 5 point for – Strongly Disagree
  - 4 point for – Disagree
  - 3 point for - Undecided
  - 2 point for – Agree
  - 1 point for – Strongly Agree
  - This was done as each of the above mentioned items (statements) in Questionnaire 2 (Appendix –B) shows the absence of anxiety
2. The weights given for the remaining seventeen items are reversed as follow:
  - This was once again done as each of the seventeen items show the existence or presence of anxiety.

To get the actual English language writing test anxiety score (ELWTAS) of each subject of the study, the researcher added up all the weights of the thirty items. It is known that the range of the scores should be found between 30-150. As this is the expected range, the lowest and the highest scores in this study were 47 and 134 respectively.

## APPENDIX –D

### SUBJECTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE WRITING TEST ANXIETY SCORES

Code	A	B	C
01	F	120	H
02	M	76	A
03	F	132	H
04	F	84	A
05	M	70	A
06	F	78	A
07	M	90	A
08	M	82	A
09	F	91	A
10	M	97	A
11	M	129	H
12	F	79	A
13	F	88	A
14	M	74	A
15	F	101	A
16	F	87	A
17	F	95	A
18	M	90	A
19	F	52	L
20	M	75	A
21	M	79	A
22	F	126	H
23	F	101	A
24	F	97	A
25	M	128	H
26	M	95	A
27	F	125	H
28	F	90	A

Code	A	B	C
29	F	100	A
30	M	47	L
31	F	114	A
32	M	94	A
33	F	97	A
34	M	97	A
35	M	109	A
36	F	130	H
37	M	71	A
38	F	91	A
39	M	86	A
40	F	78	A
41	F	121	H
42	F	122	H
43	F	129	H
44	M	118	A
45	F	120	H
46	F	71	A
47	F	110	A
48	F	127	H
49	M	108	A
50	F	123	H
51	M	88	A
52	M	123	H
53	M	96	A
54	F	114	A
55	M	105	A
56	M	87	A

Code	A	B	C
57	F	90	A
58	M	101	A
59	F	109	A
60	M	92	A
61	M	109	A
62	F	70	A
63	F	123	H
64	F	110	A
65	F	124	H
66	M	120	H
67	F	112	A
68	M	122	H
69	F	85	A
70	F	102	A
71	M	58	L
72	F	83	A
73	M	73	A
74	M	121	H
75	F	100	A
76	F	134	H
77	F	125	H
78	F	128	H
79	F	93	A
80	M	104	A
81	F	124	H
82	M	106	A
83	F	103	A
84	F	107	A

Code	A	B	C
85	F	121	H
86	M	54	L
87	M	94	A
88	F	103	A
89	F	126	H
90	M	112	A
91	F	125	H
92	M	97	A
93	F	130	H
94	F	113	A
95	M	126	H
96	F	124	H
97	F	94	A
98	F	84	A
99	M	92	A
100	F	89	A
101	F	100	A
102	M	75	A
103	M	107	A
104	F	129	H
105	F	126	H
106	M	71	A
107	F	126	H
108	M	84	A
109	M	98	A
110	F	128	H
111	M	87	A
112	F	107	A

Code	A	B	C
113	M	98	A
114	F	120	H
115	M	119	A
116	M	125	H
117	F	94	A
118	F	110	A
119	M	83	A
120	M	100	A
121	M	107	A
122	F	106	A
123	F	114	A
124	F	128	H
125	M	126	H
126	F	123	H
127	M	96	A
128	M	131	H
129	F	76	A
130	F	120	H

**Key:**

- A. Subject's Gender
- B. Subject's Anxiety Score
- C. Anxiety Category:
  - H. High
  - A. Average
  - L. Low

## APPENDIX – E

### CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

In order to check the presence of the major sources and symptoms of writing test anxiety by which students are most often affected, this observation checklist was used. Besides the researcher used this checklist for some observable practical ways used to overcome the writing test anxiety.

No	Type	Observable Points	Presence
1	Sources of Writing Test Anxiety	A. Teachers (Instructors)	
		B. Past experiences (students')	
		C. Time	
		D. Peer effect	
		E. Topic (s)	
		F. Others	
2	Symptoms of Writing Test Anxiety	A. Trembling (Shocking)	
		B. The whole body becoming rigid and tense	
		C. Unable to understand the meanings of writing test instructions and questions	
		D. Having rapid heart beat	
		E. Having a headache	
		F. Perspiring (Sweating)	
		G. Others	
3	Some Observable Practical Ways used to overcome Writing Test Anxiety	A. Relaxing oneself during the writing test	
		B. Arriving early and getting relaxed before the writing test is given out	
		C. Utilizing the time and energy by avoiding wondering what others doing during the writing test	
		D. Others	

## **APPENDIX- F**

### **SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION GATHERED USING THE GUIDED QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

First of all I would like to thank you for your kind co-operation to participate in the focus group discussion.

1. Do you experience any difficulties while taking the writing test? If yes, what are they?
  - Tense problem
  - Inability of organizing ideas
  - Inability of using appropriate words, i.e. having poor vocabulary knowledge
2. Can you mention some of the major situations and people connected with your writing test anxiety?
  - Giving instructions and corrections by teachers frequently during writing tests
  - Unable to budget the time given
  - Poor classroom setting (i.e. shouting around)
  - Poor past writing experiences
  - Facing with unfamiliar writing topics
3. What kind of physical changes occur while you are taking the writing test?
  - Headache
  - Sweating
  - Trembling
  - Rapid heart rate
  - Foot tapping

4. What do you feel when you take the writing test?
  - Negative feeling
  - Feeling nervous while attempting the writing test
  - Fear of getting low marks
  - Unable to concentrate on the writing test
  - Feeling of inferiority (i.e. giving less value to oneself)
5. Have you shared your experience of writing test anxiety with anyone?
  - No! Because:
    - Solving problems through discussions or sharing experiences have not been considered as a remarkable culture in Ethiopian context.
    - Guidance and counseling units have not carried out the expected roles in this regard.
    - Most people/students assumed that it is one's own problem.
6. How do you think your attitudes towards English language writing test anxiety will affect your future writing practice?
  - It will affect to a great extent.
7. What solutions do you suggest to minimize the level of students' writing test anxiety in general?
  - Attending basic writing courses in language schools for further information.
  - Informing the English language curriculum designers to include the features of writing in a better way.
  - Providing enough trainings on how to teach writing skills to English language teachers in order to increase their awareness and by which they can give due emphasis to writing skills.
  - Giving orientations and follow up for all students in general and for those highly –anxious students in particular.

## **APPENDIX- G**

### **TRANSCRIPTION OF INSTRUCTOR'S INTERVIEW**

1. For how long have you been teaching writing courses, such as sophomore and related ones?

I<sub>1</sub>: "Well, only for one year (this year, 1999 E.C)"

I<sub>2</sub>: "I have been teaching writing courses, like sophomore, advanced compositions, and the like for the last ten years, 8 years at Mekele University and 2 yeas in Addis Ababa."

2. Are you satisfied with your students' writing test results? If not, what do you think to be the real source(s) of this problem?

I<sub>1</sub>: "To be frank, I am not satisfied with their results. Their standard of writing is not the expected one. I feel that the real source for this problem may be their past poor writing experiences."

I<sub>2</sub>: "I am not satisfied with my students' writing test results. It exists all over the country. According to my understanding, the real sources for this problem may be; the system of education in the country, the policy of education on language program, students' poor writing background, ..."

3. To what extent are your students anxious when taking the writing test?

I<sub>1</sub>: "I think, it is difficult to tell you the real extent. But there is one thing which should not be forgotten. That is, testing is not a welcoming thing for any person so that students may get anxious when they take writing tests to some extent."

I<sub>2</sub>: "Ow! Difficult to tell you. But I feel that they are anxious well above average."



4. What kind of physical changes have you observed in your students when they take their writing test?

I<sub>1</sub>: "Actually, you haven't seen any positive things during tests and I have seen so far only few people (i.e. students) sweating, shaking (trembling), ..."

I<sub>2</sub>: "I usually observe students looking to the ceiling, cheating during writing tests. Sweating is also a common feature during writing tests."

5. What solutions do you suggest to students overcome writing test anxiety in general?

I<sub>1</sub>: "Telling them to attempt better, telling them to improve their writing, encouraging them that whatever they produce is valuable."

I<sub>2</sub>: "Only practice!"

