L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM AND L2 WRITING ANXIETY AMONG FEMALE ENGLISH LANGUAGE MAJORS IN SAUDI ARABIA.

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Abstract

This project relates to two polar domains: second language (L2) motivation, including self-system (Dörnyei, 2009), and L2 anxiety, particularly in writing (Cheng, 2004). The study is important because it sets out to clarify the relationship between motivation and the internal processes of linguistic development by shedding light on motivation and language acquisition in L2 writing and the emotional aspects related to this specific skill (Ushioda, 2016).

The aim of this study is to explore students' levels of L2 motivation in a specific skill (writing) and whether feelings of anxiety exist among a group of learners who are widely known for their comparatively higher levels of motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Dörnyei et al., 2006), specifically as it relates to Arab learners of English (Suleiman, 1993). It furthermore sets out to investigate the sources of both feelings (motivation and anxiety) and how these feelings are reflected in students' achievements (the writing module grades) as well as in students' self-rating of their proficiency levels in the writing skill.

The study adopts a mixed-method approach, utilising students' self-administered questionnaires, L2 Motivational Self System and Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory, student interviews and teacher interviews. The quantitative data were analysed using analysis of variance, correlation analysis and partial correlation analysis in SPSS, and the interview data were analysed thematically.

The data yield significant findings regarding students' levels of motivation and levels of anxiety in L2 writing. It was discovered that high-achieving students can be driven more by feelings of anxiety than by feelings of motivation, whereas low-achieving students can still maintain high levels of motivation. The participants reported on a wide range of factors that are believed to impact L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety. Some of these are related to students' concepts of ideal self or ought-to self, and some are externalised. Teachers and students provided a multitude of strategies that they drew upon in their experiences of dealing with both negative and positive feelings. It suggests that students need to be made aware of their feelings along the journey of acquiring this important skill and, most importantly, that they need to be armed with certain strategies to help them cope with these feelings. However, teachers require essential guidance on how to detect negative feelings among their students and how to eliminate them. Finally, it is recommended that research on L2 motivation

continues to become sharply focused and skill-specific and that L2 anxiety research widens its scope to include the skill of writing instead of being largely focused on L2 speaking anxiety.

Dedication

To my little family, we have all been through a lot in this tough journey.

It's time to reap the fruit.

Acknowledgement

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Study

When I joined the teaching faculty at one of Saudi's universities, I taught various modules that included assessing the students through written essays, whether as homework or in exams. I noticed when correcting exam papers that the students would fall under one of two types. One type was blessed with a strong memory; these students could memorise long texts from the module textbook, managed to reproduce them accurately on the exam paper and got high marks. The other type of student did not have the same ability to memorise and would therefore express their ideas in very short paragraphs, often using incomplete sentences with a considerable number of grammatical, lexical and spelling mistakes.

My teaching colleagues always complained that students are 'lazy', that they are not motivated to write and that they want high marks without working hard for them. 'Never mind, only those who are already excellent will care about their homework and exams', some of my colleagues would comment when I would feel down after marking papers. But why? And who are the 'already excellent'? Are they the ones in class whom we believe are smart, getting very high grades? Or are they perhaps the ones who are keen to improve, even though they are shy in class or do not have the chance to achieve very high marks?

I experienced that when the students had a choice between two assessment tasks, for example, a presentation and a written report, the majority of them would opt for the presentation, often commenting that a written task was going to be too difficult for them. Even the ones whom I guessed to be 'excellent ones' would behave in this way. I was blessed to have the chance to teach and interact with a colourful array of university students of various social backgrounds and with various attitudes and proficiency levels, but I often found they had one issue in common: when it came to writing in English, they were reluctant and apparently unconfident. I was aware of the stereotyping that existed among the faculty and some decision-makers at the university, saying that the students suffered from low proficiency, did not participate in class, did not want to expend any effort to perform better in their written work, etc. However, I also knew that some studies had reported on schools' below-expectation outcomes in the English language. I thought that if this issue (the students'

avoidance behaviour towards English writing) was to be tackled, there had to be another way of looking at it, going beyond measuring their writing proficiency or counting their mistakes on papers. It must be approached from a different angle, from the learners' perspective of what they think and how they feel about writing in English.

Only when I had the chance to do my master's did I come across the term 'foreign language anxiety'. I knew that second language (L2) learners may experience feelings of distress, fear or discomfort when they start an L2. Later on, at the beginning of my PhD journey, I got the chance to read about L2 motivation and deepen my knowledge of foreign language anxiety (FLA) and became aware that it has various modes, including L2 writing anxiety. It was a eureka moment when I realised that the long-held questions about the problem of the students' feelings about writing could be answered by connecting two areas of investigation, L2 motivation and L2 anxiety, in relation to the phenomenon.

After familiarising myself with the L2 anxiety research, I realised that the widely used foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS; Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986), although proven reliable in many contexts, may not be sufficient to address the problems related to my sample. In the present study, the female Saudi students' feelings of anxiety are not necessarily or strictly related to exams or certain tasks in classrooms; these students seem to experience a set of cognitive symptoms, and I should not ignore their remarkable avoidance behaviours. At the same time, I resisted the temptation of looking at foreign language anxiety in a general sense, as I wanted to focus on the specific skill of writing. The model that satisfies this need is Cheng's (2004) Second Language Writing Inventory (SLWAI), with its sharp focus on the skill of writing and its comprehensive tripartite components of cognitive, somatic and avoidance behaviour.

Another aspect that kept me pursuing this issue was learning about the gender factor: female language learners are claimed to be generally more motivated than their male counterparts. These learners are not only female but are also English majors – in other words, they should be inherently motivated to learn English – and competent enough to have gone this far to be accepted to the English Language Bachelor of Arts (BA) programme. From the research on L2 motivation, it was apparent that Dörnyei's (2010) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) has

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been the trend, as many studies are beginning to adopt this theory with various language learning factors, and day by day, it is proven valid. However, the main reason that made me consider this theory and disregard other even older and more renowned theories, lies in the capacity of this theory to encompass various types of learners' sources of motivation, shaped by the students' dreams and goals for the future. In addition, it takes the learning experience into account, which is an integral part that I can relate to, not only in terms of the sample students' situation but also the experiences of many Saudi generations who were taught English long ago, like mine. Both the L2MSS and SLWAI are found to be under-investigated in the context of Saudi Arabia and the Arab world in general (Al-Hoorie, 2019). Thus, this study attempts to establish the affective side of the Saudi students' L2 writing dilemma.

1.2 Overview of the Thesis Structure

The thesis is divided into seven main chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction to the thesis. It explains the problem that inspired the research idea, the aim of the study and the research questions, and it elaborates on the contextual aspects relating to this study, the Saudi Arabia context and the various relevant educational aspects. Chapter 2 presents a review of the main literature. It reviews the pioneering theoretical models and concepts in the fields of L2 motivation and L2 anxiety. It furthermore identifies the gap in the existing literature that this study attempts to address. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the present study, highlighting some important aspects related to the philosophies that form the basis for the investigation, the instruments used and the setting and procedures of the data collection and analysis in addition to considerations of research ethics, validity and reliability.

Chapter 4 presents the quantitative analysis of the questionnaires. It attempts to answer the relevant research questions from a quantitative point of view by drawing upon both descriptive and referential test analyses. Chapter 5 presents the qualitative analysis of the interviews. It sets out to answer questions that cannot be answered by the quantitative data alone and provides explanations from the students' and teachers' points of view. Since the quantitative and qualitative data in this study examine different aspects of motivation and anxiety, they are reported individually in chapters 4 and 5, respectively. The results are then combined in the discussion chapter for further reflection. Chapter 6 discusses the main

findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data, taking the previous literature into account. It also discusses a proposed model of the co-existence of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety. Chapter 7 is the concluding chapter of the thesis. It summarises the problem of the study and the answers to it in accordance with the findings. It also concludes the thesis by highlighting some of the limitations of the study and proposing recommendations. This is followed by the references and appendices.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore and analyse the English L2 writing motivations and anxiety and their co-existence in a sample of female Saudi English majors through the lens of the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2010) and the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (Cheng, 2014). Using a mixed methods approach of questionnaires and interviews, the study explores the various variables that can be associated with the phenomenon, such as the level of study, academic achievement and students' self-rating of their perceived English writing proficiency.

1.4 The Context of the Study

1.4.1 The education system in Saudi Arabia

The education system in Saudi Arabia is noticing an unprecedented rapid evolvement that is in line with current globalisation. In Saudi Arabia, the education system is centrally monitored and guided, and it is sponsored solely by the government. The education system has changed drastically from the system I was familiar with before 2015. When the Ministry of Education was first established in Saudi Arabia in 1952, it focused on planning and organising public education for boys only. After five years, the General Presidency of Girls' Education was introduced as an equal, parallel to the educational administration for boys. The managerial positions (stakeholdership and decision-making) in the Girls' Presidency was run, organised and managed by male Deputy Ministers, with male assistants in the various lead positions above the schools' head teachers. To establish the educational policies at that time, the Saudi education system borrowed a lot from Egypt, as Egypt was then ahead of Saudi in terms of education, pedagogy, curriculum, etc. (Habbash, 2011). Primary education consisted, and still does, of six years of primary school, three years of intermediate school and three years of high school. After that, the high school graduates went on to diploma programmes at colleges or

BA programmes at universities, which could be either public or private. The notion of higher education only emerged about 23 years later. In 1975, the Ministry of Higher Education was established, and the government provided generous support for building new universities.

In primary education, the syllabus, the curricula and the textbooks are uniform throughout the various regions of the country. In 2008, the Ministry of Education launched Tatweer, a hugely budgeted reform programme to develop public education according to a new, improved set of standards. The gradually phased project was established with the development of pedagogy as one of its central aims and to change the traditional instruction at schools into smart learning, based on a professional education community, self-planning, evaluation and professional development. It was also implemented with a vision of promoting equality in excellent opportunities, commitment, accountability and professionalism for everyone and encouraging transparency and clarity by revealing and sharing performance outcomes in order to identify positives and negatives and strengths and weaknesses and report them to stakeholders. The head teachers have responsibilities and duties for managing the various aspects of the school, but recent investigations have revealed that they still suffer from a lack of power, which limits the decision-making opportunities within the schools (Alzaidi, 2008; Alyami, 2014). This reflects that the decision and policy making is still centralised, despite the tremendous effort put into the reform project. A recent investigation has revealed that the ultimate goals of the Tatweer project have not yet been achieved to their full extent. To fully achieve the goals of the project, we have to call for further decentralisation of the decision-making; provide sufficient resources, both in the form of human resources and technological supplies; and, above all, work on the change-resistant mindset that has been detected among many schools' staff (Alyami, 2014).

1.4.2 Higher education in Saudi Arabia

Previously, the Ministry of Higher Education had been operating relatively independently from the Ministry of Education, which is concerned with the primary levels of education. It had its own financial budgets as well as its distinct management and policies. During this time, the number of universities soared to 25 government universities, nine private universities and 34 private colleges, which recruit 2,073,111 students (undergraduates and postgraduates) and

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employ 83,884 faculty members. This increase was in line with the noticeable increase in higher education in the overall Arab world (see Figure 1; Abu-Orabi et al., 2020).
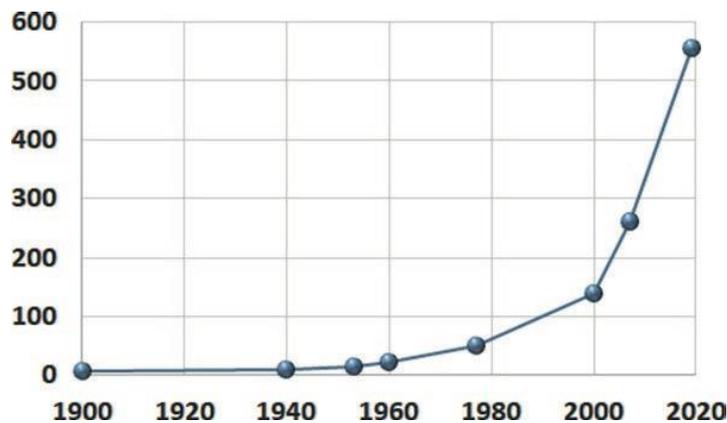
Figure 1: Growth of Arab universities until 2019

More recently, in early 2015, it was announced that the Ministry of Higher Education was merged with the Ministry of Education, functioning under one umbrella: the Ministry of Education. One of the main goals for this initiative was to reduce the gap between public education and higher education (which has been found relevant to the findings of the present study) to improve educational outcomes, develop curricula, meet the requirements of the labour market and unify the efforts of and cooperation between the two ministries (Ministry of Education, 2020).

One of the major reforms in the higher education system was the establishment of the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) in 2004. This association was established with the aim of enhancing the quality of higher education in Saudi Arabia and developing a framework for performance, comparing the status of Saudi's higher education institutions to their global peers (Allam, 2020). It has been argued that the quality of higher education institutions can be evaluated in terms of the benefits they offer the learners and their various methods of social, cognitive, political and economic developments, based on empirical evidence (Allam, 2020). An analysis of the wide range of factors that could be associated with the quality and success of higher education identified six dominant factors:

1. Teaching and learning: This factor revolves around the teachers and faculty, specifically their qualifications, experience and personalities. It highlights the practical aspects that are required for the working atmosphere, with special emphasis on providing the students with a

variety of teaching material. It also confirms the potential of each faculty member to influence the students' behaviour and attitudes as well as their ability to consider individual differences in the teaching process.

2. Institutional resources: This involves the infrastructure of the institutions, i.e. providing well-equipped classrooms and laboratories, attractive campuses and recreation and sports facilities.

3. Admission criteria: This factor focuses on the students' ability to sit for a test as a means to enter the study programme, taking into account students' interests, the range of course options and the English-language qualifications, if required.

4. Curriculum content: This is associated with the relevance of the curriculum to the demands of the labour market, practical knowledge and the importance of the programme. This factor emphasises personal development, the synergy of work, communication and creativity.

5. Outcome and assessment: This component refers to final course grades, periodic assessments and the various methods used to evaluate student performance, such as written tests, as effective means to assess the students' cognitive and affective abilities.

6. Pedagogy: This component concerns the strategies, methods and styles of teaching in addition to the teachers' ability to detect and respond to individual differences (Allam, 2020).

The abovementioned factors are relevant to the phenomenon under investigation, i.e. L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety. Allam's (2020) concern was the achievement of higher education, yet the influential factors he outlined can be seen as aspects of the learning experience, a significant component of Dörnyei's (2005; 2010) L2MSS. This component (the learning experience) is, however, still being investigated and compared with the other two main components of the theory: the ideal self and the ought-to self. Furthermore, Allam (2020) mentions outcome and assessment as aspects that can ultimately impact the quality of learning and attainment, and these are also relevant to one of the main variables in the current study – achievement – measured by collecting the writing course grades of the students.

Currently, if a student wishes to join a university, they have to sit for the Qiyas test, which is a paid-for standardised test, conducted several times every year and monitored by the National Centre for Assessment. The grades of this test in combination with the student's high school cumulative grades will determine whether they can attend the university. Many students and families have expressed negative reactions and view this test as a monolithic means of determining a student's future in higher education, disregarding the student's cumulative efforts and performance at high school. Unfortunately, there has been no systematic investigation of the conflicting opinions on the test or on the impact of its implementation on various aspects, aside from the news and views on social media.

At university, students usually spend four years in a bachelor programme in the humanities or arts; some science programmes, such as physics; or some business studies. Some programmes take slightly longer than that, e.g. medicine. The language of instruction depends on the major. Generally, the disciplines in the humanities, including Arabic language, history, geography, sociology and Islamic studies, are taught in the Arabic language, the only exception of course being the English and Translation major. However, the majors in medicine, some scientific subjects (such as physics and chemistry) and majors related to information technologies are taught in English. This is the case despite scientific findings that have reported on the views of the students' preference regarding the language of instruction, as a significant number of students do prefer to use the Arabic language, or at least a combination of the two languages, in some of the majors that are currently only delivered in English (Al-Jar Allah and Al-Ansari, 1998).

Nowadays, Saudi university students of different majors are seeing a positive shift in their learning experience and the culture of learning, as do their global peers. Because of the availability of the internet, computers and mobile phones, students in Saudi Arabia now have an unprecedented opportunity to access learning resources online and offline, such as seminal books, periodicals, journals, newspapers and interactive intercultural communication programmes. Not only this, but they are now able to participate in and enrich the content of a wide range of information resources, particularly the online platforms (Al-Seghayer, 2013; Hamdan, 2014). The adoption of some of the recent innovative concepts of learning by universities has contributed greatly to this shift in the education culture. This includes mobile

learning (Alkhalaf et al., 2017), flipped learning (Abdelshaheed, 2017) and blended learning (Alzahrani, 2017).

With regard to facilitating higher education for women, according to Alshalawi (2020), the opportunities for women in Saudi Arabia to attain higher education have increased significantly. The past two decades have seen a significant increase in senior managerial positions held by women as part of implementing the Saudi vision of empowering women. Women have also been found to be as competent as their male counterparts; they have proven themselves by outperforming their male counterparts in several undergraduate study disciplines, according to Deepak et al. (2011). Nowadays, the goals Saudi women set for themselves are different from the ones that had long been set as traditional expectations for women due to the leap in the level of education and improvements in social rights (Alhareth et al., 2015). However, equality in access to a wide range of educational institutions remains below expectation. This is one of several multilevel challenges facing the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. Higher education is not without its challenges. Studies have pointed out that the Gulf Cooperating Council's (GCCs) governments are facing the dilemma of having insufficiently competent graduates who do not fulfil the requirements of the work force (Al-Ruwaihi, 2017).

1.4.3 Students' readiness for higher education – the Intensive Course in English majors

Despite the increase in the number of high school graduates who choose to attend tertiary education, the literature has questioned the extent to which they are able to be successful in their university studies (Khoshaim, 2017). For example, many students in undergraduate courses are found to be incompetent and lacking mathematical skills (AlHarbi, 2012; Khoshaim and Ali, 2015), which results in students struggling and becoming demotivated. Several reasons for this deficiency have been suggested (Khoshaim, 2017). Despite the fact that these standard studies have focused on the mathematics domain, I see no drastic difference with deficiencies in other subjects of study, including the English language. The study reviews a set of reasons that are related to both the school stage (then) and the university stage (now), and this categorisation of reasons was found to be in line with the findings of the present study regarding the learning experience (Chapters 5 and 6 in this study). The following were found

to apply to schools: (1) Regarding the curricula and pedagogy, the learners are mainly taught in a 'spoon feeding' manner (Khoshaim, 2017, p.181); (2) The language of instruction during math lessons at school level is Arabic, and the same is true for English lessons, where the teachers explain predominantly by using a grammar and translation approach, mainly speaking Arabic (L1; Alshammari, 2020) and (3) The final assessment is unified via a centralised standard test, which is conducted in all high schools at the same time (Khoshaim, 2017, p. 181).

When students reach university level, they are expected to show independence, draw on a wide range of resources to find information and be cognitively mature enough to take on the challenges of higher education (Khoshaim, 2017). In Saudi Arabia, the English language is the only language of instruction in scientific majors, which is also the case for the department of English Language and Translation. With regard to the assessment, the high school Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Qiyas test are taken as criteria for acceptance to universities. To bridge the gap between higher education and secondary school, the Saudi Ministry of Education has introduced a preparatory year as a means to facilitate the transition to university. In the English Language and Translation department at Saudi universities, an alternative to the preparatory year is a one-term course in extensive reading, writing, speaking and listening. Upon passing this course, the student is able to officially join the English Language Department and pursue their studies for the English Language and Translation major.

Upon arrival at the site of the study (Qassim University), in the early weeks of the second term of the year (February, 2018), the researcher had the opportunity to have several friendly conversations with various members of the faculty (in the Department of English Language and Translation). These conversations highlighted concerns regarding the students' abilities to write in English at a university level. The researcher's previous experience with teaching English at a university in Saudi Arabia, together with the colleagues' views, confirmed the need to carry out a systematic investigation on an important issue: whether there are underlying affective factors related to the students' incompetence in university-level English writing. It is important to explore whether motivation and anxiety are two factors that potentially influence (by advancing or hindering) students' writing proficiency.

1.4.4 The teaching and learning of English in Saudi Arabia

In step with globalisation, the English language is now widely agreed to be the *lingua franca* in the 21st century (Crystal, 2012). It is believed that the English language was formally introduced to the Saudi school system in 1937, in four weekly 45-minute lessons (Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017). It was taught by non-Saudi Arab teachers due to the shortage of human resources.

Recently, governments have been put under pressure to implement educational programme reforms, not only in Saudi Arabia but also in the GCC and many other Middle East countries. These reforms are pushed to encourage increased teaching of the English language and Western cultures. This is a challenge for many GCC governments, as they are simultaneously expected to promote the message of Islam and support the Arabic language and identity (Dahbi, 2004; Mahboob, Elyas and Bawazeer, 2017). Thus, some scholars describe the need to introduce English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to be both complex and fascinating in the Saudi context (Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017). The long-held view of the English language being a threat to the national religion and identity is gradually fading, and GCC countries are employing various policies and strategies for the instruction of the English language as a way to promote successful business and development in various fields, in addition to it being a language of intercultural understanding (Al-Kilani, 2013).

In Saudi Arabia, some of the major reforms have been to gradually implement the English language in primary school, starting at year six and eventually as early as year four, in addition to further enhancing the English language curriculum at the intermediate and high school stages (Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017). The attitudes of Saudis towards the English language are found to be highly positive (Faruk, 2013), as Saudis recognise the vitality of the English language in the country's evolution and prosperity. In 2015, the Ministry of Education launched a programme, Education for Career, which promoted the learning of specialised English as a central qualifier for many job positions. This eruption of policies was accompanied by a widespread tendency to use communicative language teaching in Saudi and some GCC settings, which has been criticised for its heavy reliance on English Westernised culture(s) and its disregard for the local Arab cultures. In addition, the teaching of English was implemented

with uniform approaches, techniques and even assessment methods (Solvi and Yazan, 2017). However, the educational reforms have not managed to fulfil the ultimate goals, and the outcomes remain below expectation. This is believed to be due to four main constraints: pedagogical, administrative, belief-related and curriculum-related constraints (Al-Seghayer, 2014).

1.4.5 The L2 writing skills among Saudi learners of English

In Saudi Arabia's education, the teachers are required to strictly adhere to uniform English language textbooks, provided by the Ministry in collaboration with several international publishers. Each stage has a series of books, and for each term there is a student book and a workbook, in addition to the teacher's book, audio resources and a CD (Alqahtani, 2019). Nevertheless, previous studies highlighted the teachers' dissatisfaction with the curricula and pointed out several deficiencies (Alharbi, 2015; 2017). A number of concerns have been raised (Al-Seghayer, 2014). The students have little exposure to English in the English language lessons in relation to what was expected or hoped for, and there is almost no opportunity to practise the language outside the classroom. Teachers have expressed the lack of authentic material, appropriate resources and necessary updated technologies. There have been concerns about the teaching of various linguistics aspects, including composition writing, with the curriculum's heavy reliance on the teaching of grammar and vocabulary while neglecting the communicative performance aspect of L2 learning (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Alshammari, 2020). Pedagogy-wise, the teaching remains teacher-centred and does not promote learner autonomy (Syed, 2003; Elyas and Picard, 2010; Alqahtani, 2019). This has resulted in lack of motivation, engagement and participation in class (Abdulkader, 2016).

Close investigation of the L2 writing proficiency among Saudi students, which can also be related to many GCC and Arab world contexts, identified a wide range of deficient areas. Saudi students were found to have some common types of errors in their writing. There are grammatical errors related to the use of verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, relative clauses and punctuation. In terms of lexical errors, the students were found to struggle with word confusion, vocabulary size and idioms. Spelling was also a common area of weakness, as the students frequently made mistakes with vowels and consonants alike. Some of these issues

have been attributed to the first language (L1) effect, while others tend to lay the blame on the syllabus and teaching practices (Abdel Latif, 2011).

Alharbi's (2017) interview participants contextualised the findings by suggesting connecting the writing to goals for and expectations of fluency. Even when one has learned seemingly large numbers of irregular spellings and structures, it can still be easy to make errors that may be perceived as an indication of a lack of writing proficiency in some contexts. This frustration, in turn, was operationalised in the theme of utility. According to Alharbi (2017), the contrasting themes of utility and intrinsic and sociocultural values as perspectives on English writing difficulty can also help shed light on the different patterns in response distribution observed in the pragmatics category and the non-standard variants category.

Some studies have attempted to cast light on several helpful remedies (Abdel Latif, 2011). Recent studies investigated the use of computer-based techniques to teach L2 writing and found it to be an effective alternative to the long-standing tradition of the grammar and translation method of teaching (Al-Jarf, 2002; 2007; 2009). The students were also found to perform better when they work in groups, when they receive group feedback, when they work on assessment portfolios and when they practise a writing process approach and receive strategy-focused instruction, to mention but a few. Direct corrective feedback is found to be the only form of feedback the students receive, and studies have highlighted the lack of other forms of feedback and the absence of review checklists.

The affective aspect of the teaching and learning of writing is still unrecognised in the Arab context. It has been posited that motivation has been the 'neglected heart' in our perception of the teaching process in the Arab context (Khaled, 2019; Dhaif-Allah and Aljumah, 2020). Teachers strictly adhere to the teaching materials with little leeway, and they focus on maintaining order and discipline in the class instead of attempting to create an attractive and encouraging classroom atmosphere. Students, on the other hand, rarely seem to be aware of their learning goals in English language proficiency and, hence, are unable to work hard to achieve their goals. As Dhaif-Allah and Aljumah (2020) put it, unless the curriculum's goals are internalised into group and individual goals, very little can be achieved.

Abdel Latif (2011, p.10) identified at least 10 areas that remain under-investigated in the domain of teaching L2 writing in the Arab world: (1) the L2 writing assessment and teaching practices; (2) detailed description of the teaching method(s) at school stages; (3) academic writing at universities; (4) L2 writing from an affective point of view (which is the scope of the present study); (5) handwriting and computer-based processes; (6) the use of innovative approaches; (7) English L2 writing in the workplace; (8) evaluation of materials; (9) gender effect in the writing performance; (10) the teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices. The present study aims to look at English L2 writing among a sample of Arab learners from an affective angle. The following section concludes this chapter with details of the participants' demographics.

1.4.6 Participants' demographics

At Qassim University, and most state universities in Saudi Arabia, the school years are divided into eight levels: two terms in each year for four years. When a student successfully completes the mandatory and optional modules of level 1, they move on to level 2, which is year 1, term 2. However, if a student fails a module (either a mandatory or an optional) or chooses to withdraw from a module, they can progress to the next study level but have to repeat the module that they failed or re-enrol in the module from which they withdraw. Accordingly, a student who has advanced to the next study year may still have modules to be completed successfully from previous study levels. It is not uncommon to see students from year 2 joining year 1 students in one of the year 1 modules. Furthermore, there are cases where students have proceeded far in their university study levels, for instance, year 3 or 4, but are still struggling with modules from the early levels of university. Participants in this study are examples of such cases, which provides a good opportunity to explore and shed light on the aspects of failure and its link to emotional orientation from this study's point of view.

In the Department of English and Translation (the context of the study), the writing module is taught in levels 1, 2 and 3, that is, in the first and second terms of year 1 and only in the first term in year 2. However, as mentioned above, one can find that students in higher levels (year 2, year 3 or even year 4) who are about to graduate are still struggling with a writing module from the early years. The table below shows the number of participants who are taking the

writing modules (N = 157). Although the writing module is only implemented in the programme for the first three levels, we can see that seven participants are still taking the module while they are in advanced years, even though they should have completed the module successfully in the first three levels. As mentioned above, this is due to previously failing or withdrawing from the module. There are two reasons for highlighting this issue here. The first reason is to draw attention to the diverse types of students who are participating in the study and the importance of taking their study status into consideration, particularly in the context of higher education in Saudi Arabia, where the teachers, researchers and academics are dealing with large numbers of students at varying study levels at any given time. The second reason is that including students who are likely to be struggling with various learning or life circumstances is important for investigating their emotional orientation and how it is reflected in or impacted by their everyday learning experiences and their views, both in and outside the classroom.

Level of study	Frequency	Percentage
Level 1 (Y1, term 1)	62	39.5
Level 2 (Y1, term 2)	34	21.7
Level 3 (Y2, term 1)	54	34.4
Level 4 (Y2, term 2)	3	1.9
Level 5 (Y3, term 1)	1	0.6
Level 6 (Y3, term 2)	Nil	Nil
Level 7 (Y4, term 1)	Nil	Nil
Level 8 (Y4, term 2)	3	1.9
Total	157	100

Y = year

Table 1: Demographics of the students according to their level of study

The next chapter reviews the main literature in the fields of L2 motivation and L2 anxiety and their relevance to the present study.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This research project relates to two different but related topics: L2 motivation, including the self-system (Dörnyei, 2010), and L2 writing anxiety, as observed in the SLWAI (Cheng, 2004). This chapter reviews some of the relevant literature in both language learning motivation and language learning anxiety with a historical overview of the evolvement of the ideas as well as the main definitions and milestones in the field.

Part 1: Language Learning Motivation

2.1 Definition and Main Milestones in the Field

The term *motivation* is rooted in mainstream psychology. It has been widely adopted as an abstract general term consisting of various concepts; however, it has been noted that there is a lack of consent among researchers on a single specific definition (Ellis, 2009). Motivation is considered difficult to observe in a direct manner (Dörnyei, 2001), despite the sense that motivations are easy to infer from behaviour.

Research on motivation is about rationalising human behaviour and actions. In psychology, motivation involves aspects of behaviour, such as initiation, direction, intensity and persistence (Green, 1995). In education, it incorporates intentions, setting goals and pursuing them (Ames, 1992); in other words, the drive to achieve (Harmer, 2001), in which tasks end in success or failure (Brown, 1994), although the achievement may indeed be personal rather than publicly measured. In language learning, the term motivation is comprehensive and has been defined using various aspects. Gardner (1985) perceives language learning motivation as the willingness to learn a language, the extent of the effort that is put into this activity and the feeling of satisfaction. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) add the probability of success or failure, which is in line with Brown's (1994) vision of motivation in the educational field. Along another vein, Li (2006) sheds light on the goals that support language learning motivation. A later definition of motivation by Gardner and MacIntyre (1993, p.159) draws attention to the learner's attitudes, aspirations and efforts and suggests the concepts of *attitudes* and *motivational intensity*. A further step in advancing this concept is Dörnyei's (1998) hint to the dynamic nature of this phenomenon, in which he draws attention to the interplay of various

factors in shaping motivation in a process that is characterised by initiating steps, persistence and termination or goal fulfilment.

Though conceptualising motivation appears to be a complicated task, there are certain common aspects among the previous views; motivation is a comprehensive combination of intention, drive, willingness, setting ultimate goals, pursuing these goals and putting effort into the task; it is a dynamic process that is characterised by full involvement and sometimes satisfaction, and it ends in accomplishment. Accordingly, motivation can be seen as a unique juxtaposition of factors that are both internal and external to the human personality: by 'internal' I refer to the traits, intentions, desires, etc. that are inherently part of every individual's personality. External factors are those that can be observed in the actions that are taken to fulfil a goal as well as the resulting outcomes, notwithstanding that this is – more or less – affected by the surrounding context. The influence of the surrounding context on motivation includes the impact and expectations of family, society, a significant other, colleagues and even the influence of the media, job requirements and the demands for obtaining a certain qualification, all of which ultimately shape the individual's drive and, hence, motivation, as discussed in more detail below.

Research on L2 motivation can be observed to have four distinct stages: the social psychological stage, the cognitive oriented stage, motivation as a process and motivation as a self-regulation system. The social psychological stage (1959–1990) introduced the notions of integrative and instrumental motivation, which were established by the work of Gardner and his colleagues (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993). Briefly speaking, integrative motivation refers to the internal willingness to learn a language of a certain community to be able to communicate with its members, whereas instrumental motivation stands for the factors that shape the aims of learning a language, such as employability or passing exams (Dörnyei, 2005; 2010). This period was characterised by its standardisation of data collection, i.e. the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), an instrument to measure L2 motivation that has been used in various social and cultural contexts and has assisted in formulating the theory on empirical evidence. The L2 motivational models of this period comprised integrativeness and instrumentality, AMTB and the socio-educational model of second language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2000).

Following a call for a more comprehensive conceptualisation of motivation, the next decade (the 1990s) witnessed a dramatic increase in L2 motivation research (Dörnyei, 1998); this era is the cognitive-situated period. Theories from this period were derived from psychology, educational psychology, cognitive psychology and industrial psychology (Dörnyei, 1998). It was marked by the introduction of a wide range of theoretical constructs and ideas, including the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, attributions, self-confidence/efficacy and situation-specific motives as well as strategies to motivate learners in the L2 classrooms. Various models of motivation include (to mention but a few) four micro/macro levels of motivation (micro, classroom, syllabus/curriculum and extracurricular levels) by Crookes and Schmidt (1991); Dörnyei's framework of L2 motivation and a list of 30 motivational strategies (Dörnyei, 1994); identifying the internal and external influential factors on L2 motivation by Williams and Burden (1997); and Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (SDT; Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020) and its intersection with motivation.

Self Determination Theory is based on the theory of Basic Psychological Needs and is relevant to a juxtaposition of several psychological domains, including humanistic, existential and organismic psychology (Noels et al., 2019). This theory claims that humans can only function and flourish if their basic psychological needs are met, highlighting three primary needs: competence, relatedness and autonomy. In language learning, the students' feelings of competence to learn, speak and write in the L2 has been referred to as self-confidence and motivation, while, the student's lack of confidence to speak, or learn another language may trigger feelings of language learning anxiety (Sampasivam and Clément, 2014; Noel et al., 2019). Relatedness, the second component of SDT, refers to feelings of connection, support and care with others as significant features of communication and language learning. The third component, autonomy, emphasises that the main driving agent to perform actions and accomplish achievements should stem from the individual's internal perception of themselves and their willingness to do a particular thing because they realise the value of it. Without internal drive and autonomy, the two other components (perceived competence and relatedness) may be insufficient to pursue any form of action.

In addition to the above, L2 motivation research in the past millennium revolved around motivation and identity and the temporal dimension of motivational change, which is highlighted by the process-oriented model of motivation (Dörnyei, 2000; 2001; 2010). This model includes three stages of motivation in the language learning process: the pre-actional phase, the actional phase and the post-actional phase; these stages identify the motivational influences that impact language learning as occurring in a series of events/actions, from the internal desires through goal setting to operationalised intentions.

Even though these attempts managed to identify significant factors in a learner's motivational disposition, they failed to explain the intertwined relationships between the key components of motivation, which are not necessarily *all* interlinked. Furthermore, recent studies called to go beyond Gardner's definition of what motivation is and to formulate a new comprehensive framework that incorporates a diverse collection of concepts and employs them to investigate *motivating approaches* instead of being limited to the description of what motivation is. This request paved the way for another milestone in the field that considers the re-conceptualisation of motivation as a 'self-system'. This theory is based on self-psychology (Dörnyei, 2005; 2010) and draws special attention to the dynamic nature of human personality; hence, alluding to change in L2 motivation. The current research project visualises motivation as presented in Dörnyei's latest definition of motivation: a self-system (Dörnyei, 2005; 2010). This will be elaborated on in the following subsection below.

2.2. L2 Motivational Self System

The theories and the research stages discussed above paved the way for more advancement in the field of L2 motivation research. The field of L2 motivation has been advanced by the introduction of the idea of L2 motivational self-guides, which was derived from the theory of self-regulation in educational psychology, the concept of possible selves in psychology (Markus and Nurius, 1986), and Higgins' (1987) theory of *self-discrepancy*. The theory of *possible selves* refers to an individual's perception of their purpose, fears, hopes and threats as well as their vision of what they might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming. Higgins' (1987) vision implies the representation of an individual's

beliefs about themselves in three aspects: (1) *the actual self* (the belief about the self at a given point in time), (2) the *ideal self* (the beliefs about who they would like to become or wish to be) and (3) the *ought-to self* (the beliefs about who they should become, attributed to others who influence the learner motivation, be that directly or indirectly). These concepts informed Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS and formed the basis of the new theory of motivation, which is comprised of the *ideal L2 self*, the *ought-to L2 self* and the *L2 learning experience.*

The three theories (self-regulation, possible selves and self-discrepancy) are relevant to L2 motivation in two influential aspects. First, L2 acquisition occurs over a period of time and therefore requires a great deal of time and effort, and it involves the gradual development of cognitive skills (Ushioda, 2008). Second, self-regulation is a learner-centred approach that is concerned with the learner's ability to employ and control their cognitive and emotional resources and maintain their motivation in order to enhance their self-regulated learning (Alexander and Murphy, 1998; Bell and Kozlowski, 2008).

The main distinction among the components of this theory lies in the 'source of the vision': 'Ideal self-images are formed within the learner, whereas ought-to self-images are imported from significant others in the learner's environment' (You, Dörnyei and Csizér, 2016, p.93). The central component of the L2 self-system is the *ideal L2 self*; some studies explored the effect of the ideal L2 self on L2 motivation by interpreting its ability to explain motivational orientations in comparison with the integrativeness described by Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009). One such study partly replicated the Hungarian study in three different settings (Japan, China and Iran), and one of its main goals was to investigate the explanatory power of both integrativeness (from Gardner's model) and the ideal L2 self (as presented in Dörnyei's self-system) using a correlational test. They showed that the correlation between the ideal L2 self and the criterion measure was greater than the correlation between the integrativeness and the criterion measure. They concluded that the *ideal L2 self* can replace the notion of integrativeness because it has an explanatory power in approaching L2 motivation.

As far as gender is considered, Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) pointed out that the L2MSS has significant relevance to an individual's self-concept; hence, gender is inherently connected. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research that tackles this variable. Some of the early studies

pointed out that girls are more motivated towards L2 learning than boys (Wright, 1999; Williams et al., 2002). With regard to the L2MSS, it has been pointed out that there are gender differences in the ideal L2 self. The *t*-test of the outcome of a three-year longitudinal study on Swedish boys' and girls' ideal self towards learning English in the period between year 6 and year 9 revealed that the ideal L2 self scores increased among girls but significantly decreased among boys (Henry, 2009). Henry drew on Kormos and Csizér's (2008) explanation of there being a possible association between the foreign language (FL) ideal self and the individual's self-image. The forming of a self-image is a critical aspect of development at this age, and it goes through multiple changes before it becomes fully formed later in life. It is important to recognise that boys and girls may have profoundly different perceptions about the self, their 'gender-role intensification' and language learning (Henry, 2009, p.185).

The second component is the *ought-to self,* which considers the attributes that one believes one *should* possess as a learner/user in order to accomplish certain goals and meet expectations, obligations or responsibilities and to avoid possible negative outcomes (Dörnyei, 2010). This type of belief is associated with responsibilities and obligations rather than with sheer desire. Some empirical studies examined this notion in comparison with instrumentality and concluded that less-internalised aspects of instrumental motivation agree with this aspect of the ought-to self (Kim, 2009; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi, Magid and Papi, 2009). The relationship between these two aspects is intertwined, which can be seen when learners internalise external influences and when their ought-to self is implicitly transformed into an ideal self. A typical example of this is when it is a learner's ideal vision to meet certain academic or professional requirements imposed by external facets. When a student learns a certain language in order to meet certain academic or professional requirements, these requirements can be seen as a form of ought-to motivational drives, yet some learners do enjoy the learning even if they strive to meet those external demands, thus, their motivation develops into a more ideal self form of motivation. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that while external forces of self-motivation can shape learners' beliefs, they have limited roles as drivers within the learner's motivational behaviour (Dörnyei and Chan, 2013).

It was discovered that in the previous literature, the L2 motivational self-system was largely adopted as a framework, with no directional relationship between its individual components

(You, Dörnyei and Csizér, 2016). Since then, more light has been shed on the interaction between learning experience and the ideal L2 self. Some studies state that the ideal self does impact the learning experience (Papi, 2010; Taguchi, 2013); the ideal self may affect the way an individual perceives their previous experiences, e.g. what used to be seen as a boring activity becomes an interesting one as a result of setting an ideal goal to pursue. In contrast, some studies provide validated evidence of the temporal influence of the learning experience on shaping the L2 ideal self (Csizér and Kormos, 2009; Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér, 2011).

The third component of the L2MSS is the L2 *learning experience*. It differs from the two former components in that the ideal self and the ought-to self are purely psychological constructs and revolve around future self-guides while the learning experience focuses on contextual aspects and revolves around the current learning circumstances and environment and how they shape and impact the learner's motivation for learning a language. This construct, according to Dörnyei (2005; 2010), involves aspects – such as the teacher, the textbooks, the teaching method(s), the classroom atmosphere, etc. – that play an integral part in the learning experience and, hence, the motivation for the language learning. Some studies noted that this component overlaps with Gardener's attitude towards the learning situation (Moskovoksky et al., 2015), yet more recent research (You, Dörnyei and Csizér, 2016) explains that while these two concepts appear to overlap, they are not the same. They contend that there is a need for future research to resolve the issue of whether the learning experience in L2MSS means maintaining positive attitudes towards FL learning or whether it is a wider and more complicated concept that relates to the juxtaposition of contextual factors and their impact on the language learning process.

Ushioda (2009) reinforced that the language learning experience is at the heart of learning motivation, as people's motivation emerges and is continuously being shaped by their experiences. Furthermore, de Bot, Lowie and Verspoor (2007) hinted at the significance of going beyond investigating the current learning experiences in examining situated motivation to also consider prior learning experiences when discussing motivation, as motivation can also be impacted by past learning experiences, rather than focusing on the here and now. Unfortunately, to the knowledge of the researcher, discussions in L2MSS research on the construct of learning experience have been based on present experiences and neglected the

role of the past learning experiences, their link to the present experiences and, ultimately, their impact on the motivation for language learning.

Dörnyei's self-system can be seen as the most appropriate theoretical framework to be adopted in this study for three main reasons. First, when compared with Gardner and Lambert's integrativeness theory (1959), which inspired a lot of the L2 motivation research for many decades, the L2MSS has been found to be more compatible with new advances in motivational psychology, particularly in terms of the relationship between cognitive aspects and L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2009).

Second, learning an L2 is not like learning any other subject. It is not merely acquiring a communication code. Learning L2 skills is inherently related to the individual's 'personal core' (Dörnyei, 2009, p.9); accordingly, learning to write in English can be seen as typically being related to the student's identity and what influences them. Therefore, the constructs of the L2MSS are found to be particularly useful in the context of the study: if we are seeking to gain a well-rounded understanding of the phenomenon being investigated, discovering the English majors' motivation for L2 writing needs to involve discovering aspects of their identity and their personal self system.

Third, the current study is designed to not only focus on the positive emotional orientation towards English L2 writing, i.e. motivation, but also to unveil aspects of negative emotions (anxiety, as will be explained later in this chapter), which can co-occur with the positive emotions. Thus, selecting the L2MSS as a framework has the power and the capacity to facilitate an investigation of both positive and negative emotions. For example, the components of the L2MSS allow us to look into a possible relationship between the two sources of visions (ideal and ought-to), the learning experience, the possible sources of anxiety and how they would co-exist within the learner's personality throughout the journey of learning to write English at a university level.

Looking into the literature on L2 motivation, it was discovered that a few studies set out to examine the status of the ought-to self compared to the ideal self, using structural equation modelling statistics. It can be observed that when there is only a weak statistical probe on the links between these two components, this link is ignored in SEM. Nevertheless, it has to be

highlighted that the individual components of this construct are not static; they are dynamic and so is the imagery representation, as was found in a series of semi-structured interviews by You and Chan (2015). They revealed various aspects that interplay, including imagery, language learning behaviour and motivational intensity. This dynamism is influenced by at least three processes (You, Dörnyei and Csizér, 2016): (a) changes in the relative status of both the ideal self and ought-to self, (b) the consequences resulting from the interaction between these two components with other self-concepts and (c) changes that are influential on the imagery representing the L2 self, be they qualitative or quantitative. Changes in imagery involve aspects of content, elaborateness and frequency.

The results of a recent longitudinal investigation that adopted Dörnyei's Motivational Self System in order to further explore the motivation for and beliefs towards learning English in a multinational context among a sample of Arab undergraduates (Al Okla, 2015) are in line with the previous findings related to the Motivational Self System. The study lasted for two semesters of two months each, and the data were collected via three tools: interviews, written responses to written prompts and self-portraits (as a means to investigate self-representation), with particular focus on ought-to self-motivation. Three main factors were found to be influential in self-motivation: previous learning experiences, personal orientation towards English language and contextual factors. In turn, these various learning experiences have an impact on the dynamicity and complexity of the participants' motivation. The study identified three main characteristics of the Motivational Self System: diversity, uniqueness and dynamicity, and each of these individual characteristics was said to be a 'complex variable in itself' (Al Okla, 2015, p.87).

Despite the sample being relatively small due to the limited timescale and capacity, this study revealed tremendous diversity among the participants in various aspects. This diversity was evident in the role of English in the participants' lives, personal influences (particularly in learning experiences), contextual factors and, last but not least, the variations in the L2 selves among the participants. There were differences in the participants' opinions on the importance of English language in their lives, which also relates to the extent to which they used English inside and outside the classroom setting as well as their responses to the various learning experiences.

The literature viewed the temporal influence as a critical factor in shaping the respondents' motivation and efforts in learning the language. The research reported a negative change in motivation and fluctuations in emotions among participants during the period of the study. By the end of the study, the respondents reported feelings of dissatisfaction and boredom. This decrease in motivation was mainly attributed to two aspects. First, the level of the course being 'too easy and boring' (Al Okla, 2015, p.86), which resulted in reduced effort and inconsistency in course attendance. Second, unfair treatment of different levels of effort, which came in the form of equal rewards (exams results) regardless of effort and consistency in attendance.

As a result, it was recommended that there should be more emphasis on the learners' awareness of the influential factors that intervene with motivational constructs, and the study called for the use of motivational strategies that enable the learners to have control of their emotions and on enhancing teachers' awareness of the dynamic nature of motivation in order to be able to provide advice and support to their students.

2.3 The Role of Vision in the L2 Motivational Self System

A key component in the recent conceptualisation of L2MSS has been the interplay between vision and motivation. In their seminal papers, Markus and Nurius (1986) highlighted that individuals have certain representations of themselves in their minds and that those representations are imaginary as well as semantic and are strongly related to an individual's current representations of themselves. In other words, people's visions of themselves entail their motivation for what they want to be in the future and what they are trying to avoid.

The L2MSS has two components: the ideal L2 self and the ought-to self, and these two constructs are associated with the mental image (i.e. vision) that language learners have of themselves in relation to their L2 language learning. Al-Shehri (2009) drew attention to the visual learning style as a key variable in L2 self-motivation and proposed further study on the impact of the visual learning style in L2 self-motivation. His investigation on a sample of 200 English as a Foreign Language (EFL)/English as a Second Language (ESL) Saudi learners revealed a strong correlation between visual style and the ideal L2 self, and he suggested further investigation to highlight 'the nature of the sensual element of the ideal self' (Al-

Shehri, 2009, p.169). Significant evidence in this respect was found in Dörnyei and Chan's empirical research (2013) on learners of both English and Mandarin, which confirmed the link between future self-guides and salient imagery/visualisation. Dörnyei (2020) provided an up-to-date comprehensive discussion on the role and the nature of vision in the various aspects of life, highlighting its vital effect in L2 language learning.

2.4 Criticism of Dörnyei's L2MSS

Since the model was suggested, there have been several conceptual criticisms in response (Csizér, 2019). The model is not comprehensive, as it limits itself to only two forms of the self, whereas the human personality has a range of possible selves that may interfere with FL learning, and this should not be neglected (MacIntyre, Mackinnon and Clément, 2009). Furthermore, Dörnyei's model has been enhanced by Taylor's (2014) suggestion of considering aspects, such as the actual versus the possible self and the internal self (ideal and private) versus the external (imposed and public) self. Taylor (2014) and Taylor et al. (2013) contended that individuals have actual selves (referring to their perception of what they are at the present) and possible selves (incorporating their perception of what they may become, or possibly gain, in the future). In other words, there is a set of conceptions that are categorised as (1) ideal, internal and private self, which include people's thoughts of themselves as they are acting as solo individuals when their motivation stems from their internal desires and is not impacted by others and (2) there are situations in which people see their abilities and shape their desires according to the norms of society, and their motivation is then largely shaped by external factors and significant others instead of by a purely internal desire. Taylor argued that even the internal self can be 'socially conditioned' (2014, p.42).

From a methodological standpoint, many previous studies that employed the L2MSS had a pattern of using the self-reported intended effort as a criterion measure and tended to neglect variables that can measure actual motivation outcomes, such as the actual achievement or linguistic input (Al-Hoorie, 2018). Furthermore, the model has been criticised for paying little attention to contextual factors, which are significant in shaping the language learning motivation; thus, the learning experience component should get more attention by making it

more comprehensive and inclusive of the various factors inside and outside the classroom (Csizér, 2019; Csizér and Kálmán, 2019).

The current study considered the criticisms of the L2MSS that were noted in previous research in the field, and some of the outcomes of this study provide more evidence to support counterarguments of the L2MSS. For example, in the early stages of designing this study, the researcher noticed the habit in previous studies of adopting the intended effort or the motivated behaviour as the criterion measure in correlational as well as factorial analyses; thus, instead of these variables, the researcher opted for obtaining data on the learners' actual achievement in L2 writing and testing its correlation with each component of the L2MSS. This method is useful to test the relationship between the learners' motivation and their anxiety regarding L2 writing and their actual achievement in the L2 writing module.

Finally, a noteworthy suggestion by Taylor (2014) entails modifying the L2MSS into a quadripolar model, which incorporates the private and the public self. This is a valid suggestion as it is likely that the students' learning experiences as well as their emotional dispositions might vary in the two different contexts of inside the classroom and outside the classroom. The students' thoughts about themselves, and hence the intensity of their emotions might vary when they are performing free writing, or when they are doing their homework at home as compared to doing writing tasks inside the classroom.

Part 2: Language Learning Anxiety

2.5 Defining Foreign Language Anxiety

Anxiety is a fundamental concept in psychology, defined as 'the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system' (Spielberger, 1983, p.15). Looking into language learning anxiety from this purely psychological angle, Horwitz (2017) agreed with the earlier statement by Scovel (1978) that language learning anxiety is a 'broad' angle to depict language learning through.

The process of defining the emotional foundations of language learning has been both intriguing and complicated at the same time. Early findings in the field were versatile and

inconsistent, which reflected the dire need to be precise in the type of anxiety as well as its effect, as suggested by Scovel (1978). Foreign language anxiety is defined as 'a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to language learning arising from the uniqueness of the (foreign) language learning process' (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986, p.128). It is classified into three types: trait, state and situation-specific anxiety (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Oteir and Al-Otaibi, 2019).

Trait anxiety is established within the individual's core personality as a permanent, stable attribute of the person. It is not specific to certain situations, and the person is constantly anxious and therefore likely to be more prone to anxiety than other people. Early studies in psychology (Eysenck, 1979) pointed out that this type of anxiety may have a negative impact on the person's cognitive function in addition to its effect on memory.

State anxiety is only triggered as a reaction to a situation that the person considers to be threatening or anxiety-provoking. A good example of this type is test anxiety, as the exam's circumstance may trigger feelings of arousal and anxiety. These feelings are specific to a particular situation and not a constant characteristic.

Situation-specific anxiety is a form of anxiety that only occurs momentarily within a specific situation. This form is likely to occur in a fluctuating manner over a period. Language anxiety has been categorised as a form of situation-specific anxiety, as a learner may be faced with a situation in which communication in the FL triggers anxiety, which may differ within a period during any given L2 task or communication situation.

For over four decades, a significant number of studies on language learning anxiety based their investigations on Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) widely used perception of FL classroom anxiety, taking for granted that this concept is a composite of communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation – largely focused on negative, debilitating anxiety (McCroskey, 1977). This definition is simple, superficial and lacks the comprehensive factors of individual differences, cultural aspects and learners' authentic experiences with negative emotion when learning a language. Researchers attempted to closely inspect the specific components of the three constructs mentioned above. They

dwelled on detailed interpretations of how these components related to each other and tried to explain the priori within these components in taxonomy-like manner.

However, in a recent publication, Horwitz (2017) clarified that there have been long-standing misinterpretations, forcing language anxiety investigation in certain direction(s) that may be less than fruitful for anxious learners and practitioners in the field. The most recent definition of FLA – also known as second language anxiety (SLA) – suggests that comprehension apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are *not* three ingredients that exclusively create anxiety, rather, they are *forms* (or *examples*) of many types of anxieties that a language learner may encounter. Those forms are largely contextual, i.e. in a context in which a learner fears speaking in public, they experience comprehension apprehension, whereas tests and evaluations will evoke the form of test anxiety, and if a learner is worried about being judged by others they are showing fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz, 2017, p.33). This definition also takes into account Scovel's (1978) early suggestion that when speaking of language anxiety, it is essential to be specific on the type of anxiety under investigation, to consider the many types of anxieties that learners encounter at any given situation and to recognise that those types are not exclusively limited components but are capable of expansion, with relative effect, depending on the situation a learner faces.

Horwitz (2017) highlighted that revisiting the very early accounts on defining FLA/SLA is important to clarify misinterpretations of those early statements in the literature (Horwitz, 1986). In addition, recent explanations offered a good opportunity to go back and reflect on the large amount of previous research that based their arguments on the old definition and view them from a different, more mature angle of inquiry. Furthermore, the updated definition offers a clear lens for upcoming studies to expand the field of language anxiety investigation with a sharper vision. Finally, the newly explained account of language anxiety will open doors for various methodological and statistical applications (correlations, factor analysis, Varimax rotation, etc.) to accommodate a wider intellectual point of view. It is indeed significant to try and understand the nature of language anxiety in a 'balanced research agenda' (Horwitz, 2017, p.43), not merely for the sake of enriching the literature of psychological studies with complex, profound theoretical explanations but also for the

learners, teachers and practitioners to be able to understand the feelings that they may encounter, to be able to deal with them and to overcome any negative impact.

2.6 Milestones in Conceptualisation of Language Learning Anxiety: A Historical Overview

The notion of *anxiety* is well-rooted in early psychology studies, which state that it is the negative, uncomfortable feeling of tension towards a certain source of pressure (Alpert and Haber, 1960, cited in MacIntyre, 2017: 134).

Despite the long history of investigating language learning anxiety (currently over half a decade), it was only recently that the conceptualisation became systematic and organised. MacIntyre (2017) presented a neat overview of the research stream in language learning anxiety research in three distinct approaches (or historical stages): the confounded approach, the specialised approach and the dynamic approach (p.11).

The confounded approach (late 1970s and early 1980s) included early (rather premature) attempts to understand language learning anxiety, to coin a definition for it and to measure it (Scovel, 1978). Research during that era was largely dependent on existing psychological concepts, which were (at times) incompatible with the distinct contexts of language learning. For example, in psychology, anxiety is measured through the well-established methods of observing physiological indicators and informants' behaviour and gathering informants' self-reports; unfortunately, such methods may not be applicable when measuring language learning anxiety, as there are distinct features of language acquisition that may not be apparent in bodily responses or may be difficult to perceive through the sole superficial interpretations of learners' behaviour. A major accomplishment of this era was the introduction of the conceptual distinction between trait anxiety and state anxiety and between facilitating and debilitating effects, which also have distinctive methodological trends, in the field of SLA. Research conducted during this era yielded interesting findings related to the more or less inconsistent correlation between anxiety and other factors/variables of language learning (e.g. achievement), yet that confusion paved the way for an era of further systematic inquiry (the specialised approach).

The specialised approach (the 1980s and 1990s) marked a prosperous era of language learning anxiety with the introduction of models, tools (with edited versions) and variables to further

investigate language learning anxiety systematically. The relevant models will be reviewed in more detail in the methodology chapter, with a justification of this study's tool design.

This stage in the research progression saw Gardner's (1985) renowned socio-educational model of language learning motivation and his scale of language learning anxiety, the AMTB, which has had widespread application in research ever since and yielded significant results. Furthermore, a reliable scale of language learning anxiety – FLCAS – was introduced by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). It is widely supported by empirical evidence and reflects the interesting correlation between several variables, thereby reflecting the complexity of language learning anxiety constructs. Subsequent studies adopted various edited versions of the models and conducted factor analysis on certain sets of scales, which yielded significant findings (Gardner, 1989; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991). This stage made major contributions by establishing the awareness that language learning anxiety is situation specific (MacIntyre and Gardner 1994), identifying skill-specific anxiety, investigating a wide range of variables related to language use and language learning (MacIntyre and Gardner 1994) and systematically scrutinising anxiety types, sources, roles and effects and their relation to other contextual factors of language learning and communication, such as the learner's personality and willingness to communicate (MacIntyre, 2017). Qualitative methods enhanced the investigation of certain aspects of anxiety, such as sources and consequences, but a few experimental studies (Steinberg and Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994) also offered insights into anxiety from a different angle, which rather re-enforced the anxiety–achievement dilemma but paid less attention to anxiety triggers and causes (MacIntyre, 2017).

The currently emerging era in language learning anxiety is termed the dynamic approach (MacIntyre, 2017), and it adopts the 'complexity and dynamic systems theory' (p.23) and looks at emotional change from a longitudinal perspective. It advances the field by adding the timescale factor to investigate changes in anxiety feelings, whether a momentum shift while communicating or over a period of months or even years. It also takes into consideration the interrelationship between anxiety and other contextual and linguistic factors.

 A trend in this era was the use of heart rate monitors to record momentum changes in participants' emotions. Despite the impeccable reputation of this method, its reliability can

be questioned in terms of arousal that can be created using the monitors for their intended purpose (Gregersen, MacIntyre and Meza, 2014). Studies examined learners' complex reactions in certain anxiety-provoking situations during communication in an L2. When dealing with a linguistic difficulty, learners felt embarrassed, blamed themselves and tended to deploy face-saving techniques to overcome the ordeal that interrupted communication (MacIntyre and Serroul, 2015). The qualitative angle of this approach highlighted the concept of 'attractor states', which suggests four classifications for any given language learning experience: interesting, boring, neutral or anxiety provoking (Waninge, 2015). Researchers have begun to realise the importance of the interplay between various contextual factors on a micro level (i.e. factors that are processed within the learner instead of the circumstances around the learner).

2.7 Characteristics of Foreign Language Anxiety

Early literature provided a distinction between *trait* and *state* anxiety, explaining that the former is rooted in the individual's general personality regardless of their situation, whereas the latter is linked to specific situations that trigger feelings of fear or worry (Horwitz, 2017). FLA/SLA has been characterised as situation-specific anxiety, or 'repeated momentary experiences of anxiety (state anxiety) linked to the context of language learning in particular' (Piniel and Csizer, 2014). A beautiful description of this matter is that language learners have 'the *trait* of feeling *state* anxiety when participating in … language learning and/or use' (Horwitz, 2017, p.33).

> A situation-specific anxiety can be differentiated meaningfully from a generally anxious personality and/or a moment-to-moment experience of feeling anxious. The differentiation between anxiety-provoking situations occurs as anxiety is repeatedly experienced in a certain type of situation such as a language class; at some point learners come to associate the language class with anxiety. (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989: 15)

It has been noted in psychology that anxiety has both a facilitating as well as a debilitating effect on individuals' performance (Kleinmann, 1977), yet research in FLA has largely focused on its negative impact (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986; MacIntyre, 1999).

It has also been noted that anxious students are likely to be slow in language learning (Ortega, 2009), underestimate their competence and avoid such 'risky behaviours' as speaking in class

or communicating complex ideas (Steinberg and Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994; MacIntyre, Noels and Clement, 1997). Furthermore, studies have revealed that 'students high in second language competence may not necessarily perceive themselves as competent language learners and may not be free from anxiety in using that second language' (Cheng, 2002, p.652). This topic remains under-researched in non-Western contexts, and the few studies on this aspect do provide evidence of regional and cultural differences regarding FLA (Cheng, 2002; Al Sarag, 2014; Gerencheal and Horwitz, 2016.

Learners of an FL, as described by Gkonou (2011), are expected to communicate using underdeveloped linguistic input and are evaluated according to a set of unfamiliar linguistic components, making FL learning situations problematic (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986) and face threatening (Dörnyei, 2005).

Qualitative analysis of diaries from a sample of Greek learners of English have revealed that English language classroom anxiety (ELCA) is not only situation-specific but also dynamic (Gkonou, 2013). This agrees with earlier suggestions that FLCA is present throughout the entire time but might vary between situations (MacIntyre, 1999).

Anxiety has been found to have an interrelationship with sociopsychological constraints; FLCA can affect, as well as be affected by, learners' personal traits, including self-confidence and self-esteem (Gardner, Tremblay and Masgoret, 1997; MacIntyre, Noels and Clément, 1997; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley, 1999). It is also related to learners' perceptions of themselves as well as of the learning process as a whole. Accordingly, it can be stated that FLCA can be triggered by both linguistic and non-linguistic factors, including personal traits and classroom constructs, such as the teacher, errors made, evaluation, risk-taking, work on the board and style wars or style conflicts between the learner and the teacher (Gkonou, 2013). FLCA can affect, as well as be affected by, other variables, such as the personal traits of the learners.

Language anxiety can be a transfer from other anxieties; Horwitz and Young (1991) indicated that FLCA can be a result of other forms of anxiety, such as test anxiety and stage fright. At the same time, language learning anxiety can cause pain to the learner even in being themselves, and learners' concern(s) about the new language can inhibit smooth communication with others (Horwtiz, 2017, p.41).

2.8 Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety

Gkonou (2013) identified various causes of English Language Classroom Anxiety (ELCA): input and low self-efficacy, skill-specific difficulties, mistakes and the teacher, extrinsic motivation, marks and tests. They pointed out that skill-specific anxiety is more related to pedagogical practices when teaching and evaluating a given skill than the level of difficulty of the skill itself, particularly in the teaching of listening and writing. Instead of enjoying writing as a purposeful activity, students realise that they are obliged to focus on writing for the sake of writing, which shifts their attention to aiming at a flawlessly written product for exams or under time constraints, which is ultimately anxiety-inducing. Teachers are therefore encouraged to implement real-life and meaningful writing activities without sacrificing the attention to accuracy. Regarding the interrelationship between motivation and anxiety, Gkonou's findings clearly depicted that extrinsic motivation increases anxiety. Finally, anxiety is related to the low self-confidence and low self-efficacy of learners (Gkonou, 2013).

In a large-scale study on the levels and sources of FLA among a sample of Saudi learners of English, Alrabai (2014) stated that students are generally highly anxious, with the three main sources of anxiety being communication anxiety, comprehension apprehension and a negative attitude towards English language class (p.94). Having consistent findings from three studies over a period of three years, Alrabai (2014) presented a context-based model of FLA. The model illustrates that FLA among Saudi learners falls into two major categories: language use anxiety and language class anxiety. Language use anxiety includes speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and social image. Language class anxiety includes negative attitudes towards English class, comprehension anxiety and language test anxiety. Alrabai's taxonomy is of particular usefulness to the current study because it is based on the Saudi EFL learning context, although its high reliability encourages further investigation on the applicability of this model in other global contexts. Alrabai's model is in line with the early model of FLCA by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) in that it does consider comprehension as a major factor of anxiety. Arabai's model is also advantageous because it does not restrict sources of anxiety to classroom-related aspects, but it considers learners' sociopsychological state when using English in communication and fits these neatly into the suggested design. However, this model, despite being suggested more than five years ago, is still under-replicated, be it in the

Saudi context or in other EFL contexts. In addition, this model could be advanced by making it skill-specific and further exploring the sources of language anxiety related to specific language acquisition skills.

2.9 Language Learning Anxiety and Other Variables

When it comes to the differences between genders, despite the well-established belief that female learners are more motivated than male learners in terms of language learning, several studies on anxiety have revealed that female learners may suffer from higher levels of anxiety in writing when compared with their male counterparts (Pappamihiel, 2001; Cheng, 2002; Elkhafaifi, 2003; Gerencheal and Horwitz, 2016). However, there are also studies that yielded different results. For example, Zhao (2007) showed that males are more anxious than females, and Aida (1994) and Batumlu and Erden (2007) reported no relationship between FLA and gender.

Research into the relationship between language learning anxiety and achievement are inconclusive; up until now, findings have been inconsistent. Some of the early studies reported negative or no relationship between anxiety and achievement (Scovel, 1978). A recent meta-analysis focused specifically on this relationship (Botes and Dewaele, 2020) and claimed that achievement correlates negatively with FLCA, considering that achievement is represented by general academic achievement as well as competency-specific scores of the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

2.10 Skill-Specific Language Learning Anxiety: L2 Writing Anxiety

A great deal of research on language learning anxiety revolves around the speech mode, and only recently has research begun to consider anxiety in other modes, including writing (Vogely, 1998; Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert, 1999; Saito, Garza and Horwitz, 1999). For some learners, reading, writing or listening in the target language can be more anxiety-provoking than speaking the language (Horwitz, 2017). There is an increasing call to further investigate language learning anxiety in the specific domains of speaking and writing due to consistent findings that these two skills are the main areas in which learners express high levels of anxiety (Gkonou, 2011).

Writing anxiety in an L2 is distinct from L1 writing anxiety. It is also distinct from L2 speaking anxiety (Cheng, 2002). Writing anxiety in an L2 has been associated with both writing process and performance (Bannister, 1992; Lee and Krashen, 1997). Studies considering the relationships between L2 writing anxiety and performance yielded unequivocal results (Masny and Foxall, 1992; Wu, 1992), yet the interplay between writing anxiety and performance remains complex (Cheng, 2002).

The present study investigates the problem of L2 writing anxiety among the intended sample, taking into consideration the insights of the previous literature, and aims to obtain a holistic view by exploring how L2 writing anxiety co-exists with L2 motivation among English language majors. There is indeed a strong relationship between L2MSS and anxiety; it has been found that English language anxiety can be decreased by controlling the ideal L2 self as well as the L2 learning experience, while external pressures, or the ought-to L2 self, may have a negative impact on learners and may increase their anxiety (Papi, 2010). Along the same vein, it has been suggested that for the ought-to L2 self-motivation to be significantly functional as a driver, it has to be internalised in the individual's motivation (Kim, 2009).

When investigating FLA among female college students in the context of Saudi higher education, L2 English writing was found to be a critical source of anxiety (Al-Saraj, 2014); the statement 'I feel nervous when I can't write or express myself in the foreign language' comes second after 'presentation in front of class', accounting for 20%, on a list with 32 other themes of anxiety sources. When investigating self-regulation of Hungarian English majors, Csizér and Tanko (2015) highlighted the difficulty that pupils face during the transitional phase from general English writing at high school to academic writing at university. In the context of Iranian higher education, Rezaei and Jafari (2014) observed a high level of writing anxiety, with cognitive anxiety as its main type, which is also associated with negative preoccupation with performance, expectations and teachers' feedback.

When considering the impact of the study major on L2 anxiety, the findings are controversial. Even though English majors are motivated as language learners/users, they still suffer from L2 writing anxiety, as reported by Csizer and Tanko (2015) who stated that only one third of their sample possessed the ability and willingness to control their writing processes. Some well-

established theories claim that language anxiety levels decline as proficiency improves (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994; Yan, 1998); this contradicts some recent findings by Csizer and Tanko (2015) who, in their investigation of skill-related anxiety, found that L2 writing anxiety increased among EFL majors as they proceeded to higher levels, which corresponds with previous findings on L2 class anxiety (Saito and Samimy, 1996). This has been further corroborated by the findings of the present study (see Chapters 4 and 6).

It has been pointed out that students face difficulties when proceeding from the teacher-led education at school to the relatively independent learning environment of higher education, particularly in English medium colleges with Western-influenced teaching methods (Al-Saraj, 2014). In the context of Saudi educational programmes, the problem of the students' lack of confidence and their inability to cope with various challenges at higher education levels requires careful investigation. This lack of confidence can be an overall state of mind, as students are usually worried and afraid of making mistakes, losing marks or failing, but in the context of language learning, these fears are elevated.

To enhance motivation and eliminate anxiety in L2 writing in higher education, it is important to enhance learners' awareness of their emotions at both micro and macro levels; this includes practice on various academic genres, enhancing the learners' self-guides and vision and investing them in language learning (Dörnyei, 2014). Csizér and Tanko (2015, p.16) re-emphasised the significance of 'empowering students through awareness raising [by] incorporating a self-related concept that is operationalized in a positive way', which makes the role of teachers rather complicated.

In a questionnaire-based investigation that considered both speaking anxiety and writing anxiety, Gkonou (2011) found that writing anxiety is related to learners' attitudes towards writing in English, their self-derogation and their fears of negative evaluation. Despite the amount of time allotted to practise writing tasks (as compared to verbal communication), learners still have various forms and levels of anxiety (which can be in the form of 'writer's block'). This shows that anxiety can be skill-specific and can lead to poor performance (Gkonou, 2013). Nevertheless, it has been suggested that as far as L2 writing anxiety is concerned, to further investigate the influence of L2 writing anxiety on the performance of

the L2 writing class, teachers should be encouraged to use certain techniques that make the writing process more constructive by being topic centred.

2.11 Self-Rating of L2 Learners' L2 Proficiency

The third main element of this study is the students' self-rating of their L2 writing proficiency. In addition to the reviewed affective factors outlined above, the current study concerns itself with investigating how the students perceive their own L2 writing proficiency and whether this perception potentially has a relationship with the other variables of L2 writing motivation and anxiety and their actual achievement in L2 writing.

Upon teaching English language majors in Saudi Arabia, I noticed that some of the students who obtained high grades were not content with the outcome of their assessments; they often expressed that they were aspiring for even higher grades. Some of these high-achieving students were not necessarily highly motivated. Furthermore, when they were asked to evaluate their work, for example by the end of a writing task or a lecture, there were cases of students who would either overestimate or under-estimate their performance in writing. Therefore, including the variable of the students' perceived self-rating is substantial in this study, and it is partly justified by real-life experience.

In addition to the above context, the existent literature relates to my experience of teaching English majors with different levels of proficiencies. The literature reports on a set of interesting findings that are connected to the efficiency of the students' self-rating and its possible correlation with affective factors, particularly language learning motivation and anxiety. There appears to be a lack of agreement among researchers on the effectiveness of students' self-rating of their L2 proficiency. Some of the early researchers argued in favour of this mechanism, claiming that the students' self-rating of their proficiency may aid them in their self-regulated learning of the various skills in any given language (Oscarson, 1984). Self-rating the level of proficiency may be seen as an effective method to determine the appropriate levels of the learners when placing them in learning programmes, requiring minimal time and avoiding the expense of formal testing (Ready-Morfitt, 1991). However, some scholars argued against the use of students' self-rating in language teaching and learning, highlighting its lack of accuracy. Students may underestimate or overestimate their

proficiency levels, which may have negative consequences for their subsequent learning experiences (MacIntyre, Noels and Clément, 1997). This group of scholars also highlighted the discrepancies between the subjective measure of self-rating and the objectives measures, such as the outcome of exams. The students' perceived views on their task performance or their level of proficiency may contradict what the exam results indicate.

Self-rating (or self-assessment [SA]) can be one of two types: general and specific (Li and Zhang, 2021). In a general SA, students are asked to estimate their overall proficiency in one or more language skills. This type is practical to use in large-scale studies (Finnie and Meng, 2005); the self-rating measure in the current study falls under this category, as will be elaborated on in the following chapters. In a specific self-rating, students are expected to give a detailed evaluation of specific language functions according to a pre-defined set of criteria (Edele et al., 2015). For the general assessment to yield efficient outcomes in learning and teaching, it is advised that the students are trained and familiarised with using the SA and to evaluate their performance against a clear set of criteria in a given rubric (Li and Zhang, 2021).

Previous studies pointed out that affective factors can interfere with the students' self-ratings (MacIntyre, Noels and Clément, 1997). Self-rating can impact the learners' learning progress, particularly if they overestimate or underestimate their performance, and learners' emotions have been found to 'systematically bias the self-assessment of language proficiency' (MacIntyre, Noels and Clément, 1997, p.266). In some of the early research, it was found that the affective factors may not only impact the students' perception of themselves and their performance but also influence some of the critical decisions the students may have to make regarding pursuing their learning. For example, Gardner et al. (1987) investigated the proficiency levels in French in two sets of Grade 12 students after a summer break; one group of students decided to drop out of the programme, and the other decided to continue. An objective assessment of their proficiency indicated that there was no drastic difference between the two groups. However, those who decided to withdraw from the programme underestimated their speaking proficiency in French and had been driven to this decision by feelings of anxiety.

Another study revealed that self-rating declines as the level of study increases. By tracking students' self-rating of their proficiency from grade 4 to grade 12, Kraemer and Zisenwine (1989) noticed that the students' self-rating of their proficiency declined even though they were progressing in their study levels, implying that they advanced in their learning experiences. This agrees with earlier claims that self-rating is not only an indicator of perceived proficiency but also reflects some underlying affective issues (Gardner, Smythe and Brunet, 1977). Subsequent research highlighted that the correlation between self-rating of competence and anxiety is stronger than the correlation between self-rating and any objective measure of achievement (Clément, Dörnyei and Noels, 1994).

Finally, previous research highlighted two biases that can be related to self-perception within an L2 learning setting: self-enhancement and self-derogation (MacIntyre, Noels and Clément, 1997; Lynch and VanDellen, 2020). Self-enhancement is a positive perception that relates to the individuals' inspiration for a better self and enhances feelings of contentedness and self-worth (Taylor and Brown, 1994), yet researchers have warned that this feeling may cause individuals to be unrealistically optimistic (MacIntyre, Noels and Clément, 1997), and some of the L2 learners who are confident are likely to overestimate their L2 performance in each skill (Heilenman, 1990). However, self-derogation is a common issue among individuals who are anxious and lack confidence in their abilities, particularly in a potentially embarrassing situation, such as using an FL (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Kantaridou and Psaltou-Joycey, 2021). Self-derogating L2 learners underestimate their abilities, focus on their weaknesses and expect poor outcomes of their performance.

The current study investigates the interrelationship between L2 writing anxiety and motivation as two affective factors on the one hand and self-ratings of the students' L2 writing proficiency on the other hand. In addition, it attempts to compare the findings from the students' self-rating as a subjective variable to the objective outcomes of the students' actual achievement in L2 writing (module grades).

2.12 Research Questions

Looking at the identified research gaps in the existent literature, the current study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the levels of L2 writing motivation among Saudi female English majors across various levels of study?

RQ2: What are the levels of L2 writing anxiety among the Saudi female English majors across various levels of study?

RQ3: To what extent is there a link between L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?

RQ4: What are the sources of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?

RQ5: To what extent is there a link between L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and

      a. academic achievement in writing

      b. self-rating of writing proficiency?

2.13 Summary of the Literature Review

The investigation of both language learning motivation and language anxiety has its roots in mainstream psychology research, and thus the two fields are inspired by a collection of psychological concepts and methods. Defining language learning motivation has been a long and complex process, spanning many decades, but generally speaking, language learning motivation is the willingness to learn a language and to voluntarily expend effort in learning it. According to some scholars, setting goals and successfully achieving them is an essential part of motivation.

So far, research on language learning motivation has undergone four main stages: the social psychological stage, the cognitive-oriented stage, motivation as a process and motivation as a self-regulation system. Each stage has its own methodological and conceptual advents that were shaped by its pioneers. Some of the dominant theories and concepts have been intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation, language learning as self-efficacy, motivation as a process and

motivating strategies. Current research in language learning motivation is experiencing unprecedented growth and has established associations with a wide range of theories and research trends, including motivation as a dynamic process, highlighting the temporal change in motivation and perceiving motivation as a self-identity (Dörnyei's Motivational Self System), which is a core theory in the present study.

The L2MSS ((Dörnyei, 2010) consists of three main constructs: the ideal L2 self, which refers to the learner's aspirations of what they want to be or gain in their future as part of their inner desire and motives; the ought-to self, which is the set of goals that the learner feels obligated to reach in response to some external pressures; and the learning experience, which includes the various contextual factors that shape the learner's learning motivation. The first two components have been widely investigated, whereas the learning experience remains relatively under-investigated (Csizér, 2019). The research problem in the present study has triggered questions related to the role of the learning experience in creating an environment for the conflicting emotions of L2 motivation and anxiety in the acquisition process specific to the writing skill.

Language learning anxiety is a form of situation-specific anxiety that is triggered by a set of beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to the FL learning process. As in the research area of motivation, research on language learning anxiety has passed several milestones, with a range of methods and tools at each stage. Currently, the research trend is to record the change in anxiety in a longitudinal manner. Language learning anxiety can have both a debilitating as well as a facilitating influence. It can be a transfer from other forms of anxieties, such as test anxiety, and it can also be related to personal traits, such as self-confidence and self-esteem. Some studies have suggested that anxiety may be influenced by some independent variables, such as the gender of the learner. Studies have also claimed that anxiety may negatively impact learners' achievement in L2. The present study aims to provide further empirical evidence in this respect and to advance both fields of inquiry (L2 motivation and L2 anxiety) by offering a holistic view on the coexistence of both motivation and anxiety and their interplay with the objective variables of the actual achievement of students in L2 writing and the subjective variable of the students' self-rating of their L2 writing proficiency level (see Chapters, 3, 4, 5 and 6).

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to review the main research paradigms, with a specific focus on the mixed methods approach, providing a rationale for opting for a mixed methods approach as the suitable design for this study. The goals of this research and the research questions are presented in this section, followed by a discussion of the variables and the research instruments that were employed in this study. The chapter provides details about designing, piloting and translating the research instruments in addition to an account of the settings that were used and of the participants in both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study. The chapter concludes with the issues of validity and reliability, the ethical considerations and an outline of the analysis methods, which will be discussed further in the following chapter.

At the outset of this chapter, it is worth mentioning a set of basic definitions that are at the heart of understanding principal research concepts. The notion of 'research' has been widely agreed as a systematic inquiry of a certain problem; this entails the researcher understanding and following the agreed-upon principles underlying and guiding this activity in its various steps and techniques. A researcher in the field of applied linguistics should also be aware of the main research domains of primary and secondary research; the first includes the systematic approach of tackling a problem through collecting data and analysing it to end with an outcome, whereas the latter includes the pieces of writing that set out to explain certain theories, expand on hypotheses or even conduct a literature review around a certain topic (Dörnyei, 2007). A researcher should also be knowledgeable about basic principles that assist in determining their choices and decisions, such as the distinctions between basic and applied research, longitudinal or cross-sectional designs and the concepts of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods.

First, 'methodology' has been defined as 'the conceptual framework that helps researchers to design their study' (Riazi and Candlin, 2014, p.136) and is based on worldviews (Wisker, 2008). The term methodology can also be defined as 'the translation of ontological and epistemological perspectives into tangible conceptual frameworks, including both methods and techniques of data collection and analysis' (Riazi and Candlin, 2014, p.138; see Section 3.2

Philosophical Orientation). It can be an umbrella term for both the philosophical underpinnings as well as the rationale of the research. It is essential to define the methodology, to illustrate it and to be able to justify choosing it. Methodology can also be understood as the overall systematic process, beginning with defining the research stance, problem and theoretical framework, going through the careful selection of methods that should work well to reach answers to the research questions and fulfilling the research aim(s). The methodology of a research project should include a justification of the choice of a particular method over an another.

Second, 'method' has been defined as the 'use of specific techniques and tools and/or particular procedures in undertaking the research study in question' (Riazi and Candlin, p.136). One can understand that considering 'methods' involves careful selection of particular approaches and strategies to collect data or complete an experiment in order to find answers to the research problem. When considering particular methods for a research project, the researcher is advised to consider parameters of previous research in the field and their relevance to the investigation. Finally, 'paradigm' refers to 'a general worldview or a set of beliefs and principles that gives rise to research designs' (Riazi and Candlin, 2014, p.139); this will be elaborated upon in Section 3.2 Philosophical Orientation.

3.2 Philosophical Orientation

There appears to be a lack of consensus among philosophers on a specific definition of 'philosophy'; even though this subject matter is extensively and carefully classified in a wide range of categories and notions, setting a definition is far from being a straightforward mission. If we cannot reach an accurate definition of philosophy itself, it can be defined by its main components; hence, philosophy can be perceived as an accumulation of related notions, such as logic, rationales, ethics, nature, metaphysics the opposing principles of good and bad and right and wrong, and the connection between these notions (Rosenberg, 2018).

Various phrases have been used to refer to the umbrella term of major philosophical components. Creswell uses the term 'philosophical worldviews' to refer to the widely explained subcategories of social science philosophy (Creswell, 2014). I concur with Creswell's terminology and neat classification of philosophical orientations; I agree that a researcher has

certain universal philosophical assumptions about the world and the nature of research, which they bring into the research. In my case, this worldview has largely been shaped by my discipline, professional experience with students and colleagues and my supervisors' valuable suggestions.

In social sciences, defining philosophical boundaries is a difficult task. This is due to the broad, reflexive and yet complex domain of social science studies. The philosophy of social science can be defined generally as the guidelines that organise our quest for knowledge about reality and determine our choice of the methods that we draw upon in the research (Delanty and Strydom, 2003). Social research is guided by two broad categories of philosophy, known as epistemology and ontology.

Epistemology considers knowledge and how it is represented and perceived in the various scientific fields (Wisker, 2008), beginning with the basics of inquiry by looking into the origin, structure or methods of this knowledge and going through the critical territories of validity issues, possibilities and limitations (Delanty and Strydom, 2003, p.5), with careful distinctions between knowledge, which can be in the form of self-knowledge, common sense, wisdom or science (ibid., p.5), and opinion, which, I reckon, is largely an expression of personal thoughts and judgements related to one's personal experience(s).

Ontology, the second philosophical axis, can be defined as 'the theory of the nature of reality' (Delanty and Strydom, 2003, p.6). In social science, it relates to the assumptions and arguments around the nature of social reality. Most importantly, it relates to how the researcher structures knowledge in the real world and how they position themselves as part of the world (Wisker, 2008). Identifying the philosophical and methodological orientation in a research project of any scale is indeed crucial for maintaining a sense of direction that should lead the researcher successfully through the research process. Identifying the methodological position will have a great impact on the research process, all the way from the very early stages of inspiration for the right research questions, the type of research and the suitable methods to the steps that follow the completion of data collection, the analysis techniques and arguing about the findings (Wisker, 2008).

The literature reported on several core philosophical components: positivist, constructivist, pragmatic and transformative. Positivist, also related to the notions of post-positivist/post-positivism, is a purely natural, empirical and scientific orientation of philosophy. It emphasises the primacy of numerical measures, observation of physical factors and cause-and-effect relationships. It is largely based on theory verification. Ideas are usually reduced to minimal and freestanding sets and tested in an independent approach, which is why this philosophical position is frequently described as a reductionist way of seeing the world (Creswell, 2014). It sees human society in a scientific a way, where an individual's behaviour is subject to rigid orders, and with empirical scrutiny with very little room for diversity in interpretation (Wisker, 2008).

The constructivist philosophical position concerns itself with qualitative approaches. Understanding the world through the lens of work or living experiences of individuals is pivotal in social constructivism; hence, meanings can be subjective, varied, multiple and complex (Creswell, 2014). It is important for the researcher to be aware of this complexity and to address it professionally rather than to attempt to reduce ideas into unfit classifications. Considering this, the researcher's role is to formulate and ask broad questions and give the participants an opportunity to create meaning and become able to express it freely while the researcher listens carefully. As Creswell (2014, p.8) advocates, 'the more open-ended the questioning, the better'. Theory-wise, this position is inductive, i.e. it does not stem from a theory to test, rather it reaches theoretical conclusions in light of the accounts of real-life experiences of the participating individuals. The constructivist worldview is context-sensitive; the researcher should pay attention to the contexts and social interactions that affect the participants' experiences and circumstances, and this should lead to a better understanding of the ideas and the phenomena being studied. At the same time, the knowledge or discipline background of researchers influence the way they interpret the set of data. Constructivism is a powerful position that implies that knowledge is shaped by social factors as well as social interests. Therefore, it takes into consideration the role of social actors in creating the reality (Delanty and Strydom, 2003, p.374). The method of using interviews stems from an anti-reductionist philosophical orthodoxy that is in opposition to the positivist worldview, which restricts scientific views to a sterilised and idealised physical standpoint. This philosophy aims

to offer an explanation for a phenomenon, taking into account the 'multiplicity of possible interpretations' (Delanty and Strydom, 2003, p.368).

Interpretivism shares some commonalities with constructivism, as they both address the vital value of human agency in constructing meaning and in the realms of social context, interactions and experiences (Wisker, 2008). It allows for multiple interpretations, and subjectivity is acceptable in attempting to seek understanding of a phenomenon. Knowledge exists as long as we can interpret it (Wisker, 2008), and we can bring our discipline background and experiences into the interpretation, which should enhance our understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2014).

The third philosophical position is the pragmatic worldview, or pragmatism, which is primarily linked to people's actions, the drives behind these actions and the consequences. The primary concern of this worldview is not the research method(s) as much as it is the research problem and how to utilise all the feasible tools to understand the problem. Creswell (2014) concurs with Morgan (2007) in the main views of this philosophy: Pragmatism does not restrict itself to a sole research assumption (qualitative or quantitative); instead, it selects 'liberally' from either of them (Creswell, 2014, p.11). This gives researchers a great deal of leeway to select from various tools and techniques to achieve their goals. This comprehensive standpoint is also reflected in the way mixed methods researchers see the world. In terms of theory, this paradigm adopts abduction, which is midway between induction and deduction (Morgan, 2007, p.71). Pragmatism is in line with the constructivist worldview in the way that it considers the contextual factors and social interaction.

It can be said that the current study operates within the pragmatic philosophical continuum. By using mixed methods, this research project does not commit itself to a sole philosophical assumption; rather, it brings together the best elements of each approach. 'Truth is what works at the time' (Creswell, 2014, p.11), and in this study, the use of mixed methods is suitable to understand L2 students' emotional foundation when they learn, use and practise L2 writing and how this relates to their measured achievement (grades) and the way they perceive their own L2 proficiency (L2 writing self-rating). This project investigates 'what' and 'how', which is one of the aims of the pragmatic philosophy. This study takes into account the

contextual factors, i.e. it perceives the learner as a vital individual within academic and non-academic contexts, and the objective is to investigate the wide range of contextual circumstances, the sources that feed learners' emotions – be they negative (anxiety) or positive (motivation) – and the students' reactions to various L2 writing learning situations.

Epistemologically, the project uses scientific methods and borrows the objectiveness from the positivist position. It adopts the L2MSS and the SLWAI to measure levels of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety among the participants in a quantifiable manner and to establish links between students' grades and how they position themselves in L2 writing proficiency. At the same time, this project utilises a qualitative tool (interviews with students and teachers) to look into the interpretations of behaviours and to seek profound understanding of the phenomenon, highlighting the distinctiveness of human behaviour and real-life experiences. The use of participants' subjective views can be a powerful tool if used properly in a comprehensive mixed methods design.

3.3 Research Framework
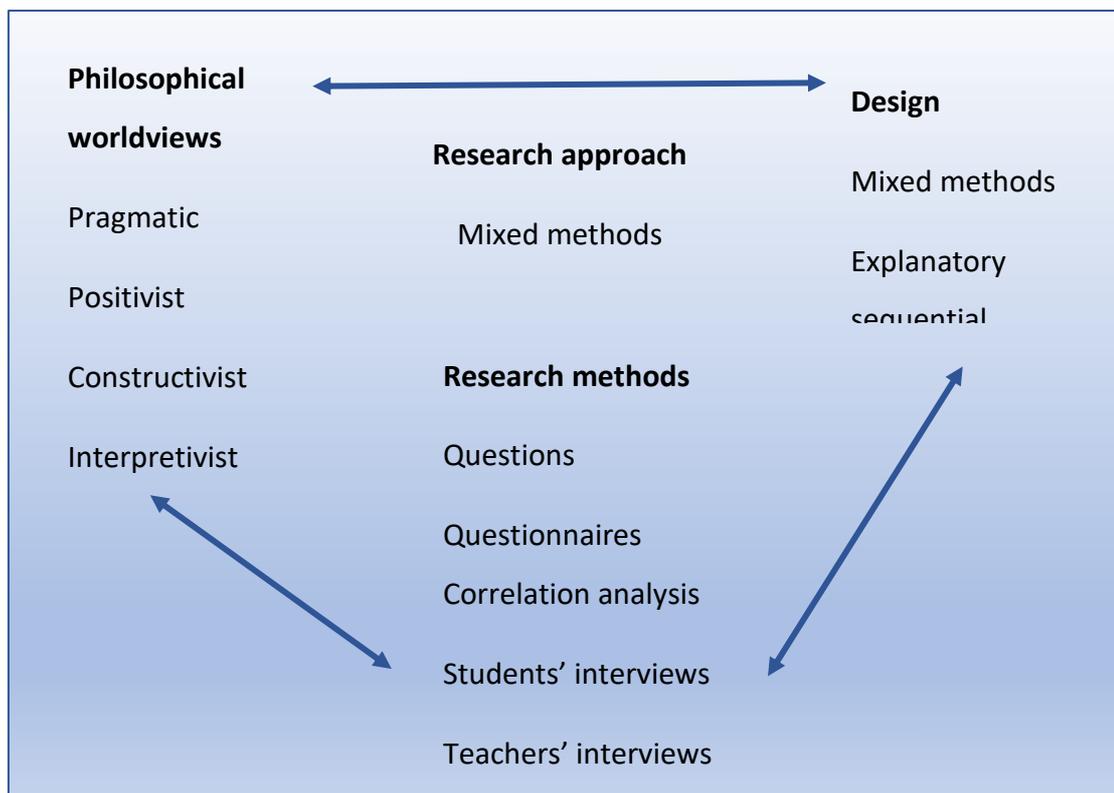
Figure 2: Research framework, after Cresswell, 2014

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3.4 Research Questions and Justification of the Choice of Methods

The study aims to investigate the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the levels of L2 writing motivation among Saudi female English majors across various levels of study?

RQ2: What are the levels of L2 writing anxiety among Saudi female English majors across various levels of study?

RQ3: To what extent is there a link between L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?

RQ4: What are the sources of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?

RQ5: To what extent is there a link between L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and

      a. academic achievement in writing

      b. self-rating of the writing proficiency?

These questions are analysed as follows (see Table 1):

Research questions	Data collection instrument	Data analysis
RQ1: What are the levels of L2 writing motivation among Saudi female English majors across various levels of study?	1. Quantitative: close-ended questionnaire on the L2 Writing Motivational Self System (L2WMSS) 2. Qualitative: student interviews 3. Qualitative: teacher interviews	1. Quantitative analysis using SPSS 26.0. Applying descriptive analysis and inferential analysis (using analysis of variance [ANOVA] 2. Qualitative thematic analysis of student interviews 3. Qualitative thematic analysis of teacher interviews
RQ2: What are the levels of L2 writing anxiety among Saudi female English majors across various levels of study?	1. Quantitative: close-ended questionnaire using the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) 2. Qualitative: student interviews 3. Qualitative: teacher interviews	1. Quantitative analysis using SPSS 26.0. Applying descriptive analysis and inferential analysis (ANOVA)
RQ3: Is there a link between L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?	1. Quantitative: comprehensive questionnaire items of the L2WMSS and SLAWI 2. Qualitative: student interviews and teacher interviews	1. Quantitative: correlation analysis of the L2WMSS and SLWAI items. 2. Qualitative: thematic analysis of student interviews and teacher interviews

RQ4: What are the sources of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?	1. Qualitative: student interviews and teacher interviews 2. Quantitative: comprehensive questionnaires of the L2WMSS and SLWAI	1. Qualitative: thematic analysis of student interviews and teacher interviews 2. Quantitative: analysis using SPSS 26.0 to identify the means of the top-rated questionnaire items (i.e. measuring means at the item level)
RQ5: Is there a link between L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and a. academic achievement in writing	1. Quantitative: questionnaire data from both the L2WMSS and the SLWAI in addition to the students' grand total grades in the writing module 2. Qualitative: student interviews and teacher interviews	1. Quantitative: analysis using SPSS 26.0 to calculate the partial correlation between the three variables of L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and grand total grades in the writing module 2. Qualitative: thematic analysis of student interviews and teacher interviews, drawing upon the quantitative findings of the students' grades, motivation and anxiety

| b. self-rating of the writing proficiency | 1. Quantitative: Questionnaire data of both the L2WMSS and the SLWAI in addition to the students' responses to the self-rating questionnaire. 2. Qualitative: student interviews and teacher interviews | 1. Quantitative: analysis using SPSS 26.0 to calculate the partial correlation between L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and the self-rating 2. Qualitative: thematic analysis of student interviews, drawing upon the quantitative findings of the self-rating, motivation and anxiety |

Table 2: The design of the study

To obtain data on the levels of L2 motivation, the study utilised two methods: close-ended questionnaires for the students and qualitative interviews for both the teachers and the students. The quantitative L2 self-system questionnaire is an appropriate tool to extract a significant amount of data on not only the levels of motivation among the students but also the type of motivation orientation, which will enhance the findings on the sources of motivation among the students, as will be discussed in the following chapters. There are, of course, other well-established instruments, such as the AMTB and Gardner's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation questionnaires, which have been adopted in a significant number of studies. However, these questionnaires were excluded because they are not sufficient for the purpose of the current research. For example, they lack the capacity to account for the students' visions of the self, their goals and the various influences on and sources of their motivation.

Qualitative interviews with the students are also useful as a technique to achieve the goals of the study and answer the research questions. The quantitative questionnaire on the L2 self-system and L2 writing anxiety would not be sufficient to elicit the necessary interpretations of the findings related to the students' real-life experiences, their unrevealed stories and the potential relationship between various aspects of the investigation. Furthermore, and for the same purpose, the study employs qualitative interviews with the teachers, as this should

enhance the findings of possible confirmation of or even contrasting views between the teachers' and the students'. The teachers may have their own views and remarks on their students' levels and types of motivation in L2 writing, and discussing them can be useful for a comprehensive understanding of the problem. In the initial phases of the study design, the researcher considered adopting focus groups as a possible method to collect the required data, but the individual interview method was agreed to be a more appropriate method. The main reason for this choice is that the qualitative approach seeks data on the students' experiences, thoughts, emotions and real-life stories; these can be related to various circumstances and sequences and may include reference to some of the negative aspects of their self-perceptions. These are sensitive topics that the students may feel reluctant to share in an open discussion in the presence of other classmates.

To obtain data on the levels of L2 writing anxiety among the students, the study used the quantitative SLWAI because, again, this quantifiable method can provide us with an ample quantity of data on both the levels of L2 writing anxiety among the students as well as the types and sources of anxiety, as will be explained later in this chapter (see **3.8 The Quantitative Part of the Study**) and in the chapters that follow. There are other questionnaires in the field of language learning anxiety, but they were excluded because of their inability to meet the study requirements. For example, both FLA and FLCAS have been used widely in the field, yet they were excluded from this study for three main reasons. First, both FLA and FLCAS measure language anxiety in its broad aspect. They adopt a general/broad approach towards language learning anxiety, whereas the current study aims at identifying and exploring specific aspects of anxiety related to a specific skill. Thus, one can see the usefulness of FLA and FLCAS in tackling language anxiety in speech, for example, but the current study concerns itself with the skill of writing. In addition, FLCAS revolves around classroom circumstances, while the current study wants to go beyond the classroom context to out-of-class, everyday experiences.

Descriptive analysis, inferential analysis, ANOVA and correlation are all appropriate quantitative tests to analyse numerical data. Descriptive analysis will provide a summary of the data, which is both time and space saving, but it will not be sufficient to draw conclusions and will need to be supplemented with other tests. Inferential statistics will go further than

descriptive statistics, as they will highlight the significance and power of the results. ANOVA will allow us to compare outcomes of the data from the various levels of study by assessing the significance of the differences in the means between the various study levels, as will be seen in detail in the following chapter. Correlation analysis will also be used because it enables us to examine the relationship and the strength of this relationship between the variables. For the qualitative interviews, thematic analysis was opted for as an appropriate method of analysis, mainly because it will support the extracting and organising of frequent and detailed themes. This should help to uncover a wide range of interpretations (Alhojailan, 2012).

In addition to the abovementioned tools, the study collects data on both the students' course grades and the self-ratings of their L2 writing proficiency. The course grades will work as an objective indicator of the students' actual L2 writing proficiency, and the self-rating will act as a subjective variable of the perceived L2 writing proficiency. Obtaining both types of data allows for comparison and reveals any potential relationships between these variables and the affective constructs. Details on the participants in both the quantitative and qualitative data are to be presented later in this chapter (see **3.8.3 Participants of the quantitative study and 3.9.5 Participants in the qualitative interviews).**

Close inspection of the table and the justification described above shows that each instrument and each method serves a certain purpose. The different methods of analysis of the various sets of data help reveal a holistic picture of the phenomenon without disregarding important details. Each aspect of the research question (hence the problem of the study) is explored, tested and verified by multiple applications of analysis methods (mixed methods), and each method brings about more information, clarification and insight. Mixing methods aims to reveal various associations that are inherent in the nature of the problem under investigation.

3.5 Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

The relatively new and rapidly evolving discipline of applied linguistics is increasingly demanding a parallel evolution in research methodology to directly address the ever-developing issues in the field and in the area of innovation to keep up with the diverse collection of topics in language investigation (Byrnes, 2013; Phakiti et al., 2018). The field has

noticeably matured in 'methodological syntheses', which refers to the wide range of research techniques that has been used in various topics of language research. This has resulted in rich outcomes that go beyond description into the more practical implications of the findings in addition to recommendations, guidelines and even ethical requirements for the future of research in the various areas within the field (Phakiti et al., 2018, p,8).

The 1990s saw an ongoing dispute about the superiority of either quantitative or qualitative research. Qualitative research was criticised for being subjective and its inability to provide precise and generalisable outcomes. However, advocates of the qualitative tradition claimed that its interpretive approaches are more capable of interpreting the real experiences of agents and their complex meanings than its rival, the quantitative tradition, which restricts itself to objectivity, a possible hindrance to deep understanding, and thus was considered simply naïve and unrealistic (Danermark, Ekström and Karlsson, 2002). Indeed, the distinction between the two is not merely in the nature of the data but also in the underlying philosophies (Riazi, 2017), which were presented in Section **3.2 Philosophical Orientation**.

3.6 Mixed Methods

A moderate position, taken by some scholars, states that any method, regardless of its orientation, contributes to a better understanding of problematic issues and enhances global knowledge. In the 20th century, the polarisation of the two approaches became less dominant and there was a noticeable increase in the use of the mixed methods approach, which also coincided with the emergence of a set of academic publications (scientific studies and whole journals) that were dedicated to this type of methodology and its application in a wide range of fields. The increase in the use of the mixed methods approach is found to be greater in studies that belong to 'applied' disciplines (such as education and nursing) than in their 'pure' counterparts (psychology and sociology; Alise and Teddlie, 2010). This increase was echoed in the field of language studies, which is shown by the use of the mixed methods approach (compared to single approach studies) in 75% of the articles drawn from 1995 to 2008 (Hashimi, 2012). Some scholars advocated that mixed methods research can serve to bring the orientations of positivism and constructivism together (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Hanson et al., 2005), provide a comprehensive investigation and, as such, enhance our

understanding of the problem under study (Riazi and Candlin, 2014). In rebuttal, some of the early researchers doubted the possibility and feasibility of joining the two strands and claimed that they are simply incompatible (Howe, 1988). In spite of the disputes, it can be concluded that the mixed methods approach is gaining popularity in applied linguistics research (Phakiti et al., 2018).

The present study incorporates two forms of data collection: questionnaires and interviews. This is beneficial to gain a grounded understanding of the interplay between the three variables: L2 motivation, L2 writing anxiety and achievement. In addition, it attempts to explore possible remedial strategies for the problems that are related to L2 motivation and anxiety.

The mixed methods approach combines the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative methods use controlled parameters to reach objective, generalisable outcomes about the phenomenon while qualitative methods can reach the lived experiences of the participants and provide interpretations for a better understanding of the phenomenon that is being studied. The main reason for this study to apply the mixed methods approach is 'complementarity', meaning that the two different methods are utilised to 'deepen and broaden' our interpretation of the complex phenomenon (Greene, 2007, p.101).

This study is exploratory and interpretative in nature. It also adopts a deductive mentality (theory driven, testing hypotheses), since it is driven by the pioneer theories of the L2MSS and L2 writing anxiety (see Chapter 2). It attempts to verify the strength or weakness of the previous hypothesis through collecting and analysing data and drawing upon a correlational design.

3.7 Methodological Issues in L2 Motivation

It has been a common tradition in the literature of the L2MSS to use learners' intended efforts as a criterion to measure motivation outcomes beside the L2 self-guides (Moskovsky et al, 2016). Unfortunately, it has been noted that the L2 ideal self, despite being a good predictor of motivated behaviour, is not a good predictor of achievement (Kim and Kim, 2011). However, there is a lack of studies that have considered course grades as a criterion of achievement. The present study aims to look at the correlation between L2 motivation, L2

writing anxiety and achievement and therefore includes course grades as one of the main variables of this study. Furthermore, it has been determined that the research on L2 motivation has largely neglected the use of measures of subjective criteria, such as the self-rating questionnaire, which can also provide useful insights to complement findings obtained through other variables (Al-Hoorie, 2018). Therefore, in addition to the course grades as an objective criterion measure, the study utilises self-rating as a subjective criterion measure to obtain findings on the students' rating of their own L2 writing proficiency, which can be crucial for understanding the way the students see themselves and their L2 writing proficiency. As explained in Section **2.11 Self-Rating of L2 Learners' L2 Proficiency**, the students' self-rating of their L2 writing proficiency is not necessarily always tied to the teachers' ratings of the students' proficiency; it may not even agree with the students' actual proficiency levels as reflected by the actual achievement (course grades of the L2 writing module). As discussed previously, the students' ratings may be influenced by affective factors, i.e. students with high levels of anxiety may focus on their shortcomings and underestimate their proficiency while, students who are overconfident may overestimate their proficiency. This is one of the methodological issues that is rarely explored in a well-rounded investigation that includes the various variables of positive and negative emotions (motivation and anxiety) as well as measures of objective and subjective criteria measures (actual achievement and perceived proficiency level).

Self-rating relates to the study problem in terms of looking into how motivated or anxious learners perceive their writing proficiency. Accordingly, the study will explore any possible relationship between motivation (or anxiety) and the self-perception of L2 writing proficiency. It will investigate whether motivated students are confident, with the confidence being reflected in their perception of their L2 writing proficiency, and whether anxious students tend to underestimate their actual proficiency. Self-rating, together with the students' actual writing module grades, their scores on the levels of motivation and anxiety and their qualitative interview accounts, can tell us about these issues

3.8 The Quantitative Part of the Study

3.8.1 Designing the quantitative questionnaire

Two pre-existing questionnaires, consisting of close-ended items, have been adopted and adapted in order to formulate one comprehensive questionnaire; they are Dörnyei's L2MSS questionnaire as adapted by Moskovosky et al. (2016) and the SLWAI (Cheng, 2004). The self-report items follow a five-point Likert design to mark the extent to which the participants agree or disagree with each statement, with 'strongly disagree' measuring 1 and 'strongly agree' measuring 5, with the score of some items being reversed during analysis (see **Appendix A** for the questionnaire items). The Likert scale is a well-established scale and has been widely implemented in studies using the L2MSS, which facilitates comparison with previous studies. The current study is concerned with learners' emotional dispositions and attitudes; these are latent variables that cannot be directly measured, but they can be inferred through individuals' actions or statements. The Likert scale, in this study, is able to capture the respondents' emotions and experiences by combining their answers with a series of statements that address the relevant aspects of their emotional orientations and learning experiences (Willits, Theodori and Luloff, 2016). Furthermore, the use of the Likert scale with multiple items that measure specific constructs is likely to yield accurate answers, which can be both more valid and reliable than answers to a single question.

The Likert scale in the current study is kept to a five-point scale for three reasons. First, the five-point scale is the minimum for extracting meaningful and reliable responses. Second, it is appropriate because the respondents can choose on a bipolar scale the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements. Third, the researcher has seen that a scale of more than five points may be impractical, as having to think about and answer each statement against long scales of more than five points may lead to confusion or boredom in the respondents. This, in turn, could lead to the unpleasant outcome of participants withdrawing from the questionnaire or even providing answers that are untrue in their situations. Finally, one more point to highlight is the need to be aware of the possibility of receiving responses that predominantly indicate number 3 on the scale, 'Neither Agree, Nor Disagree', as respondents may sometimes opt for this because it appears the safest, easiest or quickest

choice to select, instead of taking the time to think about each single item and selecting the most appropriate choice. To deal with this aspect, the researcher planned to talk about this issue with the respondents at the time of data collection. When I, as the researcher, met the respondents and at the introduction of the research aim and the survey, I highlighted the importance of honesty and accuracy. The respondents were encouraged to think carefully before they answered and to select the scale that was most applicable to their emotions and experiences. Participants were also encouraged to ask questions if they had any inquiries at any point during the application of the questionnaire. This meeting was held in person in class and at the same time I joined their class WhatsApp group so the students could either ask me directly in person in the class or on WhatsApp. Inquiring through WhatsApp was also useful for the students who were not in the classroom and for those who decided to complete the questionnaire later at their convenience.

Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS focuses on three main aspects: the ideal self, ought-to self and learning experience. To obtain the strongest outcome from the questionnaire, it is important to include other critical elements regarding the learning experience (Moskovosky et al., 2016). The initial stage included selecting certain items of the questionnaire that were relevant to the purpose of the current study; other items were excluded due to being overly repetitive or not applicable to the circumstances of the targeted sample. An example of the unnecessary repetition is in the following statements: 'I can imagine myself living abroad and having a conversation in English', and 'I can imagine myself living abroad and using English effectively for communicating with the locals and international people'. The two statements refer to the same activity (using English to communicate abroad) but the second question is more detailed. Such repetition was intended for the purpose of reliability and validity of the overall questionnaire, yet the repetition can be avoided or limited for the sake of convenience for the participants without jeopardising validity and reliability.

A major modification to the questionnaire was to make it skill specific. The items in the pre-existing L2MSS questionnaire were modified for this study to relate it specifically to writing skills rather than learning English in a broad sense. As a result, the questionnaire items referred directly to writing in English as an L2 and to the learning environment of the writing class. This step adds to the previous studies that used the L2MSS questionnaires by narrowing

the scope of the investigation to be more skill specific, as advocated by Ushioda (2016). One further modification to the L2MSS questionnaire was the addition of an item related to the students being willing to share their thoughts in written English on online platforms: 'I can imagine myself sharing my thoughts on social media in written English (for example, tweeting on Twitter or blogging in English)'. This item was intended as a probe to help students imagine a specific situation in which they would opt for writing in an L2 (English) to share their thoughts publicly; it aims to identify the accurate answers from the students that are true to one of the ultimate goals of language use. Aware of the study's connection to the popular trends among language learners/users of this age, the researcher anticipated the relevance of the described activities, i.e. online sharing, to the disposition towards L2 writing motivation. The presentation of the qualitative data will reveal findings that are relevant to this point, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The SLWAI formed the second section of the questionnaire. This section included all 22 items of the original inventory, and after piloting the English version, I realised that two of the items created confusion among participants and required rewording. This will be explained in the Section **3.8.2 Piloting the questionnaire (reflection)**. The resulting questionnaire contained 64 items that comprised two parts: the L2MSS and L2 Writing Anxiety (see The design of the study), as advised by Dörnyei (2016), who suggested that a properly designed questionnaire should contain no more than six pages.

After the careful selection of the questionnaire items and the modification, the Arabic version of the questionnaire was created and reviewed. Each item was translated into Arabic by the researcher. The translation was then reviewed by a research colleague who is a specialist in the English language and communication and who is also a native speaker of Arabic, being a Saudi lecturer at one of the leading universities in Saudi Arabia. A few alterations to the translation were suggested by the reviewer, taking into consideration clarity of meaning as well as the context of the study.

Multi-item scale	Description	Number of items
L2 Motivational ideal self	The set of beliefs, aspirations, intentions and goals that are internalised within the language learners and that the learners seek to ultimately achieve from learning a language	13
L2 Motivational ought-to self	Attributes that one believes one *should* possess as a language learner/user in order to accomplish certain goals and meet expectations, obligations or responsibilities and to avoid possible negative outcomes	14
L2 Motivational self-system – learning experience	The executive situational factors that impact the learner's motivation to learn an L2, such as the curriculum, teachers and peers	15
L2 Writing anxiety – somatic	Items related to features of excessive physiological stimulation	7
L2 Writing anxiety – avoidance behaviour	Leaners' demeanour and the actions they take to avoid situations that require practising, using or learning about L2 writing	7
L2 Writing anxiety – cognitive anxiety	Subjective elements that are related to learners' negative emotions, particularly fear and worry	8

Total items		64

Table 3: The questionnaire design

The final part of the questionnaire included two sections. The first section was a self-rating question in which students were asked to self-rate their L2 writing proficiency on a five-point scale from 'poor' to 'excellent'. The second, and concluding, section collected personal information, including the student's full name and GPA. This step is significant for two reasons: (1) to have an idea about the students' overall achievement in learning English at the relevant level of study and the writing module grades that have been obtained separately from students' records and (2) for the GPAs to be explored qualitatively as one of the critical variables that can trigger either positive or negative feelings in students' learning experiences. Both Arabic and revised English questionnaires were created on Google Forms to be readily available for piloting and data collection.

3.8.2 Piloting the questionnaire (reflection)

Piloting the questionnaire took place in two phases. The English version was piloted in Newcastle, and the Arabic version was later piloted on a sample of English majors at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia.

The English version of the questionnaire (including both the L2MSS and SLWAI) was piloted on a total sample of 15 participants, including Arab and non-Arab English learners. Twelve of the participants were taking academic English courses for university studies at INTO Newcastle (an English language learning centre), two participants were Arab PhD candidates and one participant had previously studied general English. Most of the participants were Arab, and the majority of them were female. The mixture of Arab and non-Arab participants in this phase of the pilot study was due to the limited feasibility of accessing only Arab English language learners at a non-Arab site. A more focused pilot sample of only Arab learners was used in the second phase of piloting the questionnaire, as will be explained below.

The pilot project reviewed the time the participants spent completing the questionnaire and any outstanding remarks made by participants about the questions. The only modification that was made to the inventory was an adjustment to the wording of some sentences where

confusion may arise. For example, two sentences where originally about actions of avoidance that the students use to avoid writing in English. This behaviour is considered a negative issue, yet in the original questionnaire, the items referring to this behaviour began with 'I do my best to…', a phrase that would normally imply positive aspects. The sentences were 'I do my best to avoid writing English compositions' and 'I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English, and one can see the mingling of positive and negative expressions to describe a negative attitude or action. This was likely to create confusion, which may have threatened the validity. Accordingly, the two items were reworded to begin with 'I try', a more neutral expression than 'I do my best'.

The Arabic version of the study was piloted on 17 female undergraduates from Saudi Arabia, ensuring that none of the participants was likely to participate in the main questionnaire. The average time to complete the questionnaire was 20 minutes, and feedback from the participants to the Arabic and English versions was positive. Comments highlighted that the questionnaire was inclusive and comprehensive. Some participants pointed out the repetition of some items, which was intentional to ensure validity and reliability.

I intended to pilot the questionnaires in both traditional pen-and-paper format and electronic format in order to have the practical experience of surveying a population using the two different modes, which should give me insights into their possible advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, if during the preparation for the main study a technical failure or lack of access to the internet were to occur, I would have had prior experience in collecting paper surveys from the intended participants. When I approached the participants in the pilot sample with the questionnaires in paper format, some of the students inquired about any ambiguities they may encounter in the questionnaire, and after completing the questionnaire, some of them briefly chatted with me and shared some interesting anecdotes about their personal opinions, feelings or experiences in learning English L2 writing. This, however, did not happen when I collected pilot data via the online questionnaires. Even though I had prior familiarity with the students who participated in the pilot sample, there was remarkable silence while they were completing the questionnaire on their mobile phones, the beeping of receipt notifications was the only consoling signal that things were going well.

There is no doubt about the convenience, capacity and speed of online surveys, which is why they are widely used and why I opted for them in the main study. However, the pen-and-paper format has the charm of simply being analogue, as they do not require an electronic device or internet connection to view them, allowing me to turn the pages over and go back and forth through them at the tip of my fingers and, above all, sparking spontaneous human interactions between me and the participants while they were taking their time filling out the paper forms. These charms cannot be fully mitigated by the convenience of modern electronic media. At the same time, collecting questionnaires online has its own advantages. Online questionnaire forms are fast to build, easy to distribute to a large number of participants, convenient to get back from the participants and secure. Online questionnaires save both time and effort. Thus, by weighing the advantages of both versions, the online questionnaires proved more convenient. Nevertheless, attempting both channels when piloting the questionnaires was a valuable experience.

3.8.3 Participants of the quantitative study

The study was geared towards female Saudi English language majors in the Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University, and they were selected as a convenience sample. The quantitative data – the questionnaire– was collected from students who were enrolled in one of the bachelor's degree programmes. Their first language is Arabic. The participants were not limited to one year of study or one level of proficiency; rather, I gathered data from the three different levels where writing is being taught as a core module:

Level 1 is year 1 first term

Level 2 is year 1 second term

Level 3 is year 2 first term

The students had to meet certain criteria in order to participate in this study. The first criterion was regarding their demographic information: each participant had to be either a Saudi Arabian citizen or someone who had lived in Saudi Arabia for most of their study years. The reason for this is that the study is interested in the experiences of students who have been

through fairly similar L2 learning experiences. Students who do not comply with these criteria are likely to have L2 learning experiences and situations that are different from those of the intended sample, which may affect the reliability of the study. The second criterion was that the participants had to be enrolled in a writing module. Students who were in the same levels but not enrolled in the module were excluded. It should be noted that proficiency varies among students of the same level, i.e. despite being grouped in the same year of study, students are likely to have different levels of proficiency. Therefore, a student at Level 1 may have higher proficiency than one at Level 2. This was carefully controlled in the demographic information where students were asked to provide their level of study (which reflects the year and term they are in) and rate their perceived proficiency level in a multiple-choice question.

Second, the purpose of the focus on female students is to find out why this specific type of learner, claimed in the literature to have a comparatively high level of motivation, given the conditions of gender (female) and choice (English majors), could still be facing problems regarding their L2 motivation and its possible coexistence with anxiety related to the acquisition of L2 writing. Finally, the age of the participants was not restricted, as I aimed at exploring their experiences regardless of age limitations. In terms of the size of the sample, the study aimed at collecting questionnaire responses from the whole cohort sample of all the students enrolled in any of the three writing modules, which are targeting the first three levels of study in the programme. However, there were cases in which a student had passed Level 1 to Level 2 but failed the module, so they were taking Writing 1 while studying as a Level 2 student. In other cases, students withdrew from the module and decided to take it in the following term; in those cases they would be similar to the previous case, studying the Writing module from the previous level while advancing in the programme as a whole.

Of the initial cohort of students, 161 participants responded to the questionnaires, with 155 responding to the Arabic version and only six responding to the English version. After cleaning the data, only 157 questionnaires were proven valid to go through the analysis process. The participants were aged between 18 to 25 years.

3.8.4 Quantitative study procedures and data collection

Upon obtaining the ethical approval (see Section Error! Reference source not found.) and completing the research field trip procedures, access permission was gained from the relevant authorities at the campus. All surveys were collected by the researcher in person (See Error! Reference source not found.).

Close to the time the writing lectures were to end, the researcher joined the class for each intended level (class). Students were given a brief explanation of the subject matter of the survey and were given the opportunity to ask questions. Having been added as a group member in the students' WhatsApp group, the researcher had prompt and direct access to all or most students in each class. The URL links to the Arabic and English questionnaires were posted to the group and students had prompt access to it. Very few students who were interested in participating did not belong to the WhatsApp group; they were either added to the existing WhatsApp group upon their request or sent the link as a direct personal message, depending on their preference. This medium of collecting online questionnaires provided immediate interaction with the participants, yet some participants preferred to complete the forms at a later time, and their preference was respected.

While completing the questionnaires, it was noticed that students tended to have some side discussions with their colleagues. These discussions were found to revolve around the relatedness of the questionnaire's items to their real-life experiences. Those brief spontaneous chats hinted at the level of truthfulness in the situations and perceptions that were depicted in the questionnaire items and how they touched upon their feelings. The researcher took the opportunity to engage with the students during these conversations, and their views inspired some of the interview questions and eventually proved useful in answering the research questions.

The researcher emphasised that some of the questionnaire items were related to emotions (positive and negative) and to L2 writing learning situations and that it was therefore important for the students to be careful with their scale choice and to only opt for what was true for their real experiences. For example, when a student who had come through a negative experience with classmates related to the L2 writing class (maybe encountered some tension)

reads the item, 'I find students at my writing class really friendly', that student, being in the classroom surrounded by their classmates, may feel pressured to select a positive view, which is contrary to their real-life experiences. By having been reminded of the importance of truthfulness regardless of anything else, students would not feel obligated to gloss over negative feelings, to compromise or to exaggerate positive emotions. This was critical to the reliability of the measuring tool.

3.8.5 Quantitative data analysis

The objectives of the quantitative survey were three-fold: to explore the position of the L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety among learners, to map out how the students perceive themselves in terms of L2 writing proficiency and to collect students' GPAs as a quantifiable measure of their L2 writing achievement level. This will allow for comparison and contrast with previous studies in the field of L2MSS as well as L2 writing anxiety and L2 language learning anxiety as a whole. Furthermore, the quantitative data will support the study's findings from the qualitative research that related to students' and teachers' views; this should enhance the understanding of the complexity of experiencing positive and negative feelings when acquiring a specific skill (writing) among a type of learners who chose to pursue their higher education in a particular L2 (English). The data has been coded using SPSS 26.0 and analysed using descriptive statistics – ANOVA, correlation and partial correlation – using Spearman's rho, which will be presented in Chapter 4. The following section will describe the second part of this project: the detailed method of the qualitative study.

3.9 The Qualitative Part of the Study

This section will discuss several aspects, including designing the interviews (students and teachers), piloting the interviews, the participants in the main interviews and how the interviews results were collected and analysed.

3.9.1 Designing the qualitative interviews

The qualitative part of the study utilised semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with both teachers and students (this has been justified in **3.4 Research Questions and Justification of**

the Choice of Methods). A juxtaposition of the L2MSS theory and SLWAI was used as the basis for formulating the interview guides. The study adopted semi-structured, individual, face-to-face interviews, which were aimed at exploring the views of both teachers and students; thus, two different guides were designed for each category of participant (see **Appendix B: Student Interview Guide** and **Appendix C: Teacher Interview Guide)**. Dörnyei (2010, p.237) commented on the effectiveness of interviews due to their capacity to reveal the complexity of various interacting factors and highlight the emerging dynamic patterns related to various motivational forces, personal priorities and time.

3.9.2 Student interview guide

The student interview guide is divided into three different sections (see Appendix B). The first section revolves around students' previous learning experiences, with particular reference to L2 writing in English. Initiating the interview was done with broad questions, beginning with generalities and narrowing down to specifics, widely exploring students' previous learning experiences in prior education years and linking this to learning at a university level, and finally, including both in-classroom and out-of-classroom factors that shape or impact the learning journey. This part of the interview focused on the student's attitudes towards English L2 writing, highlighting both previous and present learning experiences as well as their views on future expectations regarding their learning. It also tackled the influences of some external factors in shaping the student's learning experiences, such as family, society, teachers and media. This part of the interview highlighted the challenges the student faces or faced in their learning experience. Part of exploring the learning experience is investigating the marking schemes for the writing modules, to what extent the students are aware of them and whether they are satisfied with them.

The second and third sections of the interview moved closer to the essence of the subject: the three main variables, i.e. L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and L2 writing achievement. It included questions around the levels and sources of L2 writing motivation and highlighted aspects of L2 writing anxiety, its sources and its impact. This section tackled the students' willingness to voluntarily choose to write in English in everyday life beyond the obligatory writing of assignments. The students were also asked to evaluate their L2 writing motivation

and anxiety, their levels and their dynamicity. There were two main topics that are of particular significance to the research questions and to the problem of the study: what causes L2 writing anxiety and what enhances L2 writing motivation among students (i.e. sources of both emotions)? These pieces of information could not be obtained by quantifiable data alone, but qualitative interviews have the capacity to provide elaborate interpretations of these aspects. Nevertheless, this part required a careful approach to interviewing, as the research may face overlapping views when the students described the wide range of motivating or anxiety-provoking sources and the impact of these on their learning motivation and anxiety.

The final section concluded the interview by discussing the various views on suggested ways to combat negative affect and enhance motivation towards writing in English. Here, the interview aimed to encourage the students to think through possible solutions to any problems they face and want to overcome. This section investigated the availability of any training opportunities geared at helping students overcome writing difficulties, which may lead to helping the students regulate their feelings, lower their levels of anxiety and sustain their motivation.

The interviews aimed to explore students' experiences, identities and feelings with utmost clarity, openness and diversity. At the same time, interviews have to consider the sensitivity of certain aspect of the phenomena; they may touch on certain unpleasant feelings or memories of unsuccessful experiences, which could evoke negative feelings. Therefore, it is important to show compassion, be sensitive and prioritise the respondents' feelings. The interview guide was prepared in three distinct parts, serving three major subjects, yet the interview is meant to be conducted in one sitting. The reason for the design was to offer clear organisation of the topics, which should allow for clarity and comprehensiveness at the same time. Exploring the three main topics in a single extended interview serves ecological purposes, saves the students' and researchers' time and allows for cohesion, depth and breadth of themes.

3.9.3 Teacher interview guide

Teacher interviews were aimed at exploring the phenomenon from the teachers' perspectives (see Appendix C). The purpose of this part of the qualitative data was to confirm and compare the findings with the findings from both students' qualitative interviews and students' quantifiable responses. I wanted to elicit comprehensive answers from the teachers about their students, with particular reference to the L2 writing module. Thus, the selection of the teachers was mainly based on teaching the writing module. Accordingly, four teachers were selected for the teacher interviews. These teachers currently teach or recently taught the writing module. Teacher interviews focussed on the teachers' views on their students' L2 motivation and L2 writing anxiety, how they react to their students' problems and whether or not they use any particular strategies to overcome the acquisition problem(s) that are related to the students' affects (i.e. motivation and anxiety).

The first set of questions deals with teachers' opinions of the students L2 writing motivation, the levels of motivation and the dynamicity of it, and explores the teachers' use of motivating strategies and their effect. The second section explores the teachers' awareness of and views on the existence of L2 writing anxiety among their students and how they react to it. The third section investigates the link between the two emotions and the third variable – L2 writing achievement – and whether the teachers can see any association between the variables. This may uncover any beliefs on associating motivation with high-achieving students and will help explore the teachers' interpretations of the behaviour of the low-achieving students, such as avoidance behaviour, which is a form of L2 writing anxiety according to SLWAI.

The fourth section aims to investigate the basic learning elements of the classroom environment. It also deals with certain contextual factors related to the BA programme's design in the specific institutional setting of the current study. The researcher assumed that some of the new changes in the syllabus design of some modules have an influence on the learners' L2.

The teachers' interview guide concludes with a discussion on solutions that the teachers may propose and feel comfortable with. It includes questions about suggesting solutions to the students in terms of getting additional assistance for their L2 writing and other training needs.

Both interview guides (for the students and the teachers) were designed in English, since all the intended participants were at an L2 English proficiency level that enabled them to understand the guide's questions and respond to them in their preferred language.

3.9.4 Piloting the interviews

The interview guides were designed, reviewed and amended where necessary, and the consent forms were prepared in accordance with Newcastle University Ethics (see Appendix D). One teacher and one student were selected for the pilot interviews, based on suitability to the purpose of the study and convenience.

The teacher was a lecturer in the Department of English Language and Translation who had experience in teaching writing modules to various levels for several years. They obtained a copy of the guide prior to the interview. The interview lasted approximately 25 minutes and covered all the aspects that were mentioned in the guide. The participant commented that the interview was thoroughly designed and inclusive.

The student pilot interview was conducted with a student from Level 8 (year 4, second term) who was in her final term and about to graduate from the Department of English Language and Translation. She failed the writing module in Level 4 and re-enrolled in it this semester. The interview lasted about 25 minutes, and the participant found the interview questions to be clear and comprehensive.

Minor modifications were applied to the guide according to the findings of the pilot interviews. Those modifications included the rewording of some of the questions for clarity. In addition, one long question was divided into two separate questions to facilitate understanding and elicit comprehensive answers from the participants.

Furthermore, the pilot interviews gave me the real-life experience of interviewing participants to obtain specific information. They enhanced my awareness of the practicalities of interviews, such as dealing with the recorders, managing time, knowing how to elicit lucid answers from the participants and, last but not least, making the participants feel comfortable and cooperative enough to answer questions and provide sufficient details. Piloting the interviews raised my awareness of the notion posited by Dilthey (2010, p.100) that

'understanding … is determined by interest', which refers to human nature and people's tendency to show an increase in attention and listening when they feel that the subject matter is of interest or significance to them, suggesting that one should refrain from details that may appear irrelevant or less practical to the goal of the interview. However, piloting and conducting the main interviews several times have sharpened my skills in tackling each topic more than once in different styles of conversation, regardless of how irrelevant the details might appear, which often made way for aspects that were relevant and important to the subject matter of the interviews.

3.9.5 Participants in the qualitative interviews

The interview participants were university students and teachers. Students' interviews were based primarily on the students' grades in the mid-term exam in the three writing modules that are mandatory in the four-year Bachelor in English Language and Translation programme. After obtaining the students' records of the mid-term results, the researcher chose one student from each level of achievement, high, medium and low. This method was applied for all three levels of the writing modules. Writing 1 is for Level 1 students, Writing 2 is for Level 2 students, and Writing 3 is for Level 3 students. The distribution of the students across modules levels were as follows:

1. Writing 1:
   a. High: Interviewee 4
   b. Medium: Interviewee 6
   c. Low: Interviewee 5
2. Writing 2:
   a. High: Interviewee 8
   b. Medium: Interviewee 7
   c. Low: Interviewee 9
3. Writing 3 (Academic Writing):
   a. High: Interviewee 2
   b. Medium: Interviewee 3
   c. Low: Interviewee 1, Interviewee 10

The teachers' sample included four lecturers of the mandatory writing modules in the three different levels of the study programme. Teachers' interviews varied in terms of the language used in the interviews: three teachers strictly used the English language because they were non-Arab (Pakistani), and one teacher used both languages (Arabic and English) interchangeably, being an Arab using English as a second language. All the teachers had a teaching experience of more than five years. The teachers' profiles are as follows:

1. Teacher 1: female, a native Pakistani who is qualified with MA TESOL and has taught the writing module several times in the past

2. Teacher 2: female, a native Pakistani who is qualified with MA TESOL and has been teaching Writing 1 to Level 1 students

3. Teacher 3: female, a native Arab who has a PhD in English Language and has been teaching Research and Academic Writing (or Writing 3) to Level 3 students

4. Teacher 4: female, a native Pakistani who is qualified with MA TESOL and has been teaching Writing 2 to Level 2 students.

Selecting the participants for the students' interviews was primarily based on the levels of L2 writing achievement. After obtaining a record of the students' mid-term grades in the writing module in each of the three study levels, the researcher identified the three levels of achievement: high, low and mediocre. The researcher contacted several students covering the ranges of achievement levels. Some of the contacted students rejected the invitation for an interview while other students were welcoming and cooperative. Finally, a sample of 10 students was available for the student interviews, covering each of the three representative levels of L2 writing achievement. Three of the students were high-achieving, three were mediocre and four were low-achieving students. The student interviews were conducted in Arabic. This was in accordance with the preference of the participating students, which may indicate that although these L2 learners had a relatively decent level of L2 proficiency (given that they were accepted into the BA English Language and Translation programme), they still preferred to use their L1 in their interviews.

3.9.6 Conducting the student interviews

In February 2018, the researcher began interviewing the participants at Qassim University. The researcher explained the goal of the interview to the participants, provided them with the interview guide and set a specific date, time and venue to meet (within the college building). They were also given the opportunity to enquire about the interview and were guaranteed confidentiality. Before the interviews began, the participants were welcomed and were encouraged to relax and provide transparent, detailed answers to the questions. They were also made aware that they were being recorded, were given the information sheet and provided consent.

3.9.7 Conducting the teacher interviews

The teacher interviews took place after the student interviews. The reason for this was to be able to relate to the students' views while discussing issues with the teachers; this process facilitated comparison between the two sets of interviews (students and teachers) and served to answer the research questions with adequate answers and explanations. Towards the end of the term, the lecturers were contacted and provided with the interview guide in advance, and we met at an agreed time and venue. The lecturers were also made aware of the recording and were encouraged to provide exhaustive answers. They read the information sheet and signed their consent forms.

This research adopts a holistic view towards the research problem. It aims at collecting relevant information from both the students and the teachers. This approach allows us to see the phenomenon not only from the students' perspective but also through their teachers' eyes. We can also find out whether there are any substantial differences in views between the students and their teachers, or whether they have similar views on any of the relevant qualitative themes. Furthermore, interviewing teachers allows us to confirm (or contrast) the data related to the students' levels of motivation and anxiety, which were obtained using the quantitative questionnaire. The relevance of each instrument (including the teacher interviews) to the research questions are outlined in **Error! Reference source not found.** (see Error! Reference source not found.).

3.9.8 *Follow-up interviews*

Nineteen months after the main interviews took place, the researcher managed to reach the students again, and they agreed to participate in a follow-up interview. Due to the timing corresponding with the university's term holidays, reaching the participants was challenging. Only one participant agreed to a face-to-face interview; the rest of the participants cooperated through phone interviews. The phone interviews were treated like face-to face interviews in terms of recording the interviews on dictaphones with the participants' awareness and consent. The follow-up interviews provided a good opportunity to check on the participants and observe changes in their motivation and anxiety dispositions, their attitudes, experiences, the status of their academic achievements and their GPAs, which will be elaborated upon in Chapter 5. The follow-up interviews were different from the original interviews in that they involved aspects of confirmation of the findings from the original interviews and aspects of change. In other words, the goal of the follow-up interviews was to find out more about the issues that continued to exist related to the students' experiences, emotional dispositions and achievements in addition to finding out about the issues that had changed and whether these changes were for better or worse. For example, in the original interviews the participants were asked about their current learning experiences and how these experiences shaped their emotions towards writing (in a positive or a negative way). The follow-up interviews fulfilled two purposes: (1) to check on the previous findings on participants' experiences and explore any aspects of change in their latest learning experiences and (2) to determine whether these changes impacted their motivation, anxiety or academic achievement. This will be elaborated on in Chapter 5.

3.9.9 *Qualitative data analysis*

The qualitative interview data were transcribed and analysed using thematic analyses, drawing upon appropriate types of thematic analysis according to the data provided. This will be presented in Chapter 5.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are a central part of any robust research. The value of the research as well as the intentions and means used by the researcher can be called into question.

Therefore, researchers should be aware of two main issues: the way they treat people who are involved in the research and whether there are any actions, procedures or tasks that could cause harm to those people (Bryman, 2010). Research may be ethically questionable if it implements any activities that could result in any form of physical or psychological harm to the participants or if the researcher deceived or disguised certain information from participants.

Ethics, and acquiring ethical approval from institutions, are an essential part of any research process. The main reason for this step is to ensure the physical and emotional safety and dignity of all parties participating in the research, including participants, gatekeepers and the researchers themselves. Ethical oversight ensures that no rules are violated and that human rights are not compromised. It should ensure confidentiality of information (of any type) that is provided by the participants. In addition, informed consent should be obtained from the participants, and they should understand every aspect of it, including their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Among past and current researchers, views are varied on the degrees of ethical position. There are universalist researchers who argue that disguised observation can be beneficial to social research and that without the option to do so, some social phenomena would not have been uncovered (Erikson, 1967). Others call for flexible procedures without violating ethical guidelines and suggest considering each research instance independently, known as 'situation ethics' (Goode, 1996). Other researchers raise the criteria higher and consider all research situations to be ethically concerning because researchers, particularly in social research, may have to conceal a certain amount of information and compromise their integrity to obtain the information they need (Punch, 1994).

In the literature, participants in a study are indicated by various terms, such as subjects, objects and participants (Oliver, 2003). The term subject implies a sense of experimentation, i.e. something is being tested on those individuals or those individuals are being tested against certain tools. Another term is object, which implies the power to select and the active involvement of the people who provide information to the researcher. This term is largely used in feminist studies. In this research, I prefer using the term participants for both groups

in the sample (teachers and students). This term gives a clear sense of being actively involved in providing the necessary data to the researcher and to the research, and it also indicates involvement in negotiating meaning-making with the researcher throughout the research process. I see teachers and students as equally active informants and participants; together, we venture to unfold various interesting aspects of emotional constructs and practicalities in learning or teaching L2 writing within a wide range of contexts, influenced by numerous variables.

This research project conforms to the ethical guidelines of Newcastle University. The design did require access to people in the workplace, i.e. teachers and students, but it ensured that the tools used to gain data (questionnaires and interviews) did not cause any form of physical or psychological harm to the students or the teachers. Students and teachers were encouraged to take part in the quantitative and qualitative sections of the study, but they were also assured that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, even after the completion of data collection, should they reconsider their participation. It was explained to the students that participation in the research did not have any impact on their rights as students. Quantitative questionnaires were conducted at the end of the writing lectures, but it was explained that their responses would not have any impact on their grades in the writing module courses. At the outset of the online questionnaire, the students read, agreed and signed the consent form. During the analysis of the questionnaire, students' names were replaced by pseudonyms. They were guaranteed that if at any point they decided to withdraw from the study, their data would not be used and would be destroyed without any request for justification from the student.

For the student interviews, the sample of students was selected based on their mid-term exam marks. They were contacted and welcomed to participate in an interview. They were assured that the information that they would provide would not impact any of their rights and would be kept to the strictest measure of anonymity and confidentiality. Students and teachers were provided with the Participant Information Form, which provided brief information on the study, its general purpose and the instruments involved. Participants provided signed consent (see Appendix D). They were aware of the recording procedure for the interviews and were assured that these recordings would be kept safe and secure and only be used for research

purposes, and that their identities would be anonymised. Finally, all participants were provided with the researcher's contact details.

3.11 Validity

In this study's design, the weakness of one method can be overcome by the strength of the other; the potential bias of unrepresentative samples (in the context-specific qualitative interviews) can be avoided if the representative survey forms the basis of sampling for the interviews (Dörnyei, 2016). Furthermore, utilising the numeric data in the questionnaires alongside detailed accounts from the interviews offers a comprehensive, multilevel analysis. 'Words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words' (Dörnyei, 2016, p.45). This design generates triangulation, which improves the validity of the findings and produces generalisable findings (external validity).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified certain criteria for the trustworthiness of research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The credibility of research is reflected in the findings and the aspect of 'truth' in them. The transferability is related to the extent these findings can be applicable in another context. Dependability stands for the consistency of the findings when the experiment is repeated. Confirmability requires the study to be neutral, i.e. not impacted by the researcher's biases, hidden intentions or interests. The current study took these criteria into consideration at various stages of the investigation. First, to ensure the credibility of the qualitative research, the researcher adopted prolonged engagement. This entailed spending an adequate amount of time in the relevant social setting of the phenomenon, understanding the setting of the university study context, establishing rapport with both the students and the teachers (who were the heart of the study) and acquiring sufficient and up-to-date knowledge of the two fields of research – language learning motivation and anxiety. This facilitated trust between the researcher and the participants and contributed to the co-construct of meaning. Second, the researcher utilised frequent member checking with the participants as a useful technique to ensure credibility. Third, the criteria of transferability were met by including a thorough description of the phenomenon; the thematic analysis in the qualitative study includes a comprehensive description of the phenomenon with sufficient details of the students' affective dispositions

(motivation/ anxiety) and the wide range of sources that shape their motivation and anxiety, based on the students' detailed accounts of their experiences, real-life stories and views. Finally, confirmability was ensured through triangulation; as previously mentioned, the study used more than one source of data to obtain rich and robust accounts, which contributed to gaining a good understanding of the phenomenon.

3.12 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed the main research paradigms in social sciences, quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. The word 'research' implies investigating a problem following a set of principles, techniques and designs. Methodology and methods are two different concepts; the former refers to the conceptual framework, while the latter stands for the techniques, tools and procedures used in the study. This chapter discussed the research questions and how each question was tackled using a variety of quantitative and qualitative instruments for data collection and analysis.

The chapter also reviewed the philosophical notions, which form the underpinning of any type of systematic investigation. Epistemology, ontology, constructivism, interpretivist and pragmatism are leading philosophies that largely outline scientific inquiry. The present study adopted a mixed methods approach, utilising a set of quantitative close-ended Likert-style questionnaires with the students and face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with both the students and the teachers. Both instruments of data collection went through the systematic procedures of being designed, modified, piloted and reconsidered before they were applied in the main study. The sample included teachers and students engaged in the L2 writing module at the university. The chapter explained the procedures of each step. Finally, this study was designed with the utmost care, adhering to ethical considerations of research and considering aspects of internal as well as external validity.

Chapter 4. Presentation and Analysis of Quantitative Data

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the quantitative data. There is a lack of studies in the literature that explore in detail the relationship between the three components of the L2MSS (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and learning experience) with exam grades as an objective criterion measure of achievement. According to Al-Hoorie's (2018) meta-analysis of a pool of 678 published and unpublished studies that examined the L2MSS, only three studies used grades as a criterion measure of achievement in a correlational investigation on each of the L2MSS components. The dominant trend was the use of the subjective measure of intended effort as the criterion measure. Even though the use of a subjective self-rating criterion was lacking, Al-Hoorie (2018) reiterated that referring to the 'subjectivity' of the variable does not imply that the variable violates reliability or validity conditions; rather, it refers to drawing a response from learners' views instead of objective outcomes of formal tests (Al-Hoorie, 2018, p.730).

The quantitative data includes responses to an online questionnaire that was self-administered by female English majors who were taking (or had taken) the writing module at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia at the time of data collection (see Appendix A). Details of the participants of the quantitative questionnaire were discussed in Error! Reference source not found.. Since the study focuses on the motivational dispositions towards a specific skill, the selection of students was based primarily on the university's writing module. Participation in both the quantitative study and the qualitative study was restricted to students who were enrolled in the writing module at the time of data collection; it excluded students who were not enrolled in the module, even if they were English majors. This sampling strategy was used to ensure that the characteristics of the participants were controlled. It was clearly explained that the study focused on the writing skill, not the English language in general and not any other specific skill. Furthermore, writing was explicitly stated in each questionnaire item where relevant, aimed at soliciting responses that were solely focused on the writing skill, with no general statements that may confuse participants when responding to the questionnaire, as that could ultimately impact the consistency of the data and, thus, the

overall study design. Another reason for selecting the students from the writing module was to control the criterion measure against which the findings of the questionnaire with its two distinct sections, the L2WMSS and the SLWAI, were compared. This study used the GT of the writing module as an objective criterion measure to investigate the relationship between students' achievement in the writing module and their positive and negative emotions regarding writing.

This chapter reports on the outcome of the first section of the questionnaire, which is the L2WMSS; the outcome of the second main section of the questionnaire, namely the SLWAI; the responses from students' self-rating of their proficiency in L2 writing and students' levels of achievement in the writing module using the GT of the writing module across three different levels of study. The chapter discusses the background questionnaire (BQ), levels of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety and their correlation with the other variables: achievement and self-rating.

The quantitative data includes responses to an online five-point Likert questionnaire. Two pre-existing questionnaires were adopted and adapted to form one comprehensive questionnaire: the SLWAI (Cheng, 2004) and Dörnyei's L2MSS questionnaire as adapted by Moskovsky et al. (2016). A major modification to the questionnaire was to make it skill specific. The variable of students' achievement was measured by the GT of the writing module at the end of the term when data was collected, and the variable of self-rating was measured by including a question on the self-rating scale on which students rated themselves in terms of writing proficiency on a scale from 'low' to 'excellent'. In addition, information about students' GPA was collected from students in Levels 2 and 3, if it could be obtained. Students in Level 1 do not have a GPA, since they are in the first term of the first year. By including the two objective measures of grades and GPA together with a subjective measure of self-rating, the quantitative part of this study attempts to obtain an overview of the correlation between learners' positive and negative emotions (motivation and anxiety), their actual achievement in the writing module and their perception of themselves.

This section aims to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the levels of L2 writing motivation among Saudi female English majors across various levels of study?

RQ2: What are the levels of L2 writing anxiety among Saudi female English majors across various levels of study?

RQ3: To what extent is there a link between L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?

RQ4: What are the sources of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?

RQ5: To what extent is there a link between L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and

a. academic achievement in writing

b. self-rating of the writing proficiency?

These questions are addressed from a statistical perspective, since statistical tests are appropriate analytical tools to extract, organise and summarise numerical outcomes that have been drawn via suitable quantitative instruments. This enables us to answer the research questions and provide a comprehensive overview of the findings.

4.2 Variables

The variables for the quantitative analysis are as follows:

- Motivation – three constructs of the L2WMSS, namely ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and learning experience in L2 writing

- Anxiety – three constructs of the SLWAI, namely somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety and avoidance behaviour

- Achievement – GT

- Self-rating – students' rating of their proficiency level in L2 writing

- Level of study – students' year of university study

4.3 Reliability Analysis

After completing the data collection, the data was analysed using SPSS version 26.0. First, a reliability analysis was done to explore the reliability of the questionnaire scales being applied

to the sample of the study and compare these values with the reliability scores of previous studies in the field of L2 motivation and L2 anxiety in general and those in studies in the context of Arab countries and Saudi Arabia in particular, excluding studies on Saudi participants outside Saudi Arabia because of the difference in experiences and circumstances. The reliability analysis was checked in terms of the internal consistency of the L2WMSS and SLWAI and the internal consistency of each scale. This was accomplished by using Cronbach's alpha coefficients and the mean inter-item correlations (see Table 2). Subsequently, correlation and regression analyses were applied to these scales to investigate the relationships.

According to George and Mallery (2003, p.231), statistical reliability is categorised into six levels:

$\alpha > 0.9$ – Excellent, $\alpha > 0.8$ – Good, $\alpha > 0.7$ – Acceptable, $\alpha > 0.6$ – Questionable, $\alpha > 0.5$ – Poor, $\alpha < 0.5$ – Unacceptable.

The data shows that the overall L2WMSS has good reliability ($\alpha = 0.854$), whereas the overall SLWAI has excellent reliability ($\alpha = 0.912$; see Table 4). This means that both variables are statistically reliable in relation to the sample; however, the SLWAI is slightly more reliable than the L2WMSS. Looking closely at the scales of each section, namely ideal self, ought-to self and learning experience from the L2WMSS and cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour from the SLWAI, we can see that all the scales maintain good reliability. Four of the scales have good reliability, $\alpha > 0.8$ (ideal L2 self and learning experience from the L2WMSS and somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour from the SLWAI). Two of the scales, ought-to self and cognitive anxiety, have a highly acceptable Cronbach's alpha value, $\alpha > 0.7$, with the Cronbach's alpha of cognitive anxiety alpha being closer to 0.8. ($\alpha = 0.782$).

Name of the scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha value	Mean inter-item correlation
L2WMSS	42	0.854	0.130

Ideal L2 self	13	0.860	0.317
Ought-to L2 self	14	0.709	0.139
Learning experience	15	0.822	0.244
SLWAI	22	0.912	0.324
Cognitive anxiety	8	0.782	0.313
Somatic anxiety	7	0.863	0.475
Avoidance behaviour	7	0.830	0.412

Table 4: Reliability analysis of the second language (L2) motivational self system (L2MSS) scales and the L2 writing anxiety index (SLWAI)

The reliability analysis also assessed the internal consistency of the scales by calculating the inter-item correlational means of the scales. The data shows that all the scales have satisfactory inter-item correlational means with the exception of ought-to L2 self, which has a relatively low inter-item correlational mean of 0.139. This impacted the overall L2WMSS correlational mean (0.130).

Regarding the ought-to self having the lowest alpha value and the lowest inter-item correlation, this is in line with the results of previous studies. For example, the alpha for ought-to selfcalculated by Moskovsky et al. (2016) was 0.67, by Alshahrani (2016) was 0.84 and by Alanazi (2020) was 0.86. The ought-to inter-item correlation measured by Alanazi (2020) was 0.84 when using a total number of four items under this construct.

However, since the Cronbach's alpha value of ought-to self is acceptable for this construct and has not impacted the overall Cronbach's alpha value for the L2WMSS, and considering the number of items in this scale (14), the scale can be retained in the analysis without affecting the reliability of the overall questionnaire.

4.4 Background Questionnaire

Sections of the BQ have been included after the two main sections of the questionnaire. Some relevant information about the participants has been included, such as demographic information (age, gender and nationality), academic level of study, GPA (or intensive course passes in the case of freshers) and students' self-rating of their L2 writing proficiency levels. The self-rating section has not been included in this section but will be presented independently due to its significance as a variable. In addition, the GPA (or intensive course pass) will be grouped with the writing module grades for the variable of achievement.

The students' ages ranged from 18 to 25 years. Their levels of study ranged from Level 1 (year 1) to Level 8 (final year of study), with the majority of the responses (39.5%) being from students in the first term of the first year. Seven students were studying the writing module in levels past what the officially designed modules plan for; they were in Levels 4, 5 and 8.

4.5 Descriptive Statistics

The first two research questions relate to the levels of motivation and writing anxiety among female English major university students at different levels of study and, therefore, different levels of L2 writing proficiency.

RQ1: What are the levels of L2 writing motivation among Saudi female English major university students (at different levels of proficiency)?

RQ2: What are the levels of L2 writing anxiety among Saudi female English major students?

These questions can be answered by applying descriptive statistics to the two variables of the levels of motivation towards L2 English writing and the levels of English L2 writing anxiety from the students' responses to the self-administered five-point Likert scale. Means of 1–1.99 are considered low, 2–3.99 are considered medium and 4–5 are considered high. These are not exact measurements; they are indicators that enable distinction and comparison between what is considered high, moderate or low. As highlighted in the previous chapter (see Error! Reference source not found.), this method is in line with the majority of the previous studies using the L2MSS, which allows for comparisons with previous findings. The researcher also considered certain practicalities, such as the distance between scale points and the

encouragement the participants received to read the items carefully and provide truthful and accurate answers rather that select the middle score, which could impact the reliability of the outcome of the study.

Table 5 shows that students had moderate levels of both L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety, with mean scores of 3.46 and 3.03, respectively. This means that this group of learners had both positive and negative emotions regarding L2 writing. Although they, being English majors, were expected to be motivated, motivation and anxiety can occur concurrently. A detailed analysis of each set of emotions is presented in the following sections, using inferential statistical analysis.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Motivation	157	2.31	4.57	3.469	0.438
Anxiety	157	1.14	4.91	3.037	0.770
Valid N (listwise)	157				

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for second language (L2) writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety

4.6 Analysis of the L2 Motivational Self System

This section aims to address RQ1: What are the levels of L2 writing motivation among Saudi female English major university students (at different levels of proficiency)?

4.6.1 Levels of L2 Motivational Self System across study levels

To determine the levels of motivation across the levels of study, the mean of each construct of the L2WMSS was calculated across all levels of study (eight levels). Subsequently, one-way ANOVA was applied to the means of the ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and learning experience across the eight levels of study. One-way ANOVA is a suitable test to obtain an overview of the various means in the sample because it can analyse the means across more than two

groups, which enabled us to compare the levels of L2 motivation of the groups of students towards writing in English.

First, it has to be noted that there is a significant difference in the number of students between the first three levels and the remaining levels up to Level 8; accordingly, the analysis was performed with attention to this difference. As explained above (see 4.4 Background Questionnaire), the first three levels have more students than the remaining levels since the writing module is introduced in these levels as a mandatory module in the curriculum as part of the BA programme, and students who are in Level 4 and above are either repeating the module after a previous failure or re-enrolling in the module after previously withdrawing from it.

Starting with a general overview of the L2 motivation towards writing (see Table 6), overall, the students have a moderate level of motivation towards writing in English, as all the means are between 3 and 4, which is considered a moderate level. However, looking closely at the first three levels of study (year 1, terms 1 and 2, and year 2, term 1), the motivation levels appear to form a pattern; it can be seen that motivation decreases slightly as students move up in study years, with means of 3.7, 3.4 and 3.1 in Levels 1, 2 and 3, respectively. In other words, students seem to slowly lose motivation as they proceed in their years of study. In fact, the motivation of Level 3 students approximates the lowest end of the moderate level. Knowing that Writing 3 (aimed at Level 3) is the students' last compulsory writing module raises several questions regarding the possible reason for this decline, whether it continues in the same pattern until students become demotivated in the final year or whether this pattern changes for the students' good. Finally, the motivation levels of the few students in Level 4 and above fluctuate, but the means remain in the range of moderate motivation. Unfortunately, the data does not fully explain why there is a slight increase in motivation at Level 4 or the general fluctuation of means at Levels 4, 5 and 8. Nevertheless, I have decided to include the responses from the few students at Levels 4, 5 and 8 in this analysis, as they reflect the issue of finding students who are taking the writing module at later stages of their study due to previous failure or withdrawal from the module. These cases should not be neglected because their experiences may be useful to uncover certain aspects of motivation, learning experiences and anxiety towards L2 writing, as will be seen in the qualitative data.

Level of study	Mean of motivation	N	Std. deviation
1	3.705	62	0.358
2	3.438	34	0.376
3	3.193	54	0.4012
4	3.856	3	0.1814
5	3.570	1	-
8	3.466	3	0.645
Total	3.469	157	0.438

Table 6: Overall levels of second language writing motivation across levels of study

The motivation towards L2 writing was further analysed in terms of the three constructs of the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2005): ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and learning experience (see Table 7). Of the three constructs across all the student groups, the ideal L2 self is the most predictive construct of the students' L2 writing motivation (overall mean of 4.2), ought-to L2 self is next (overall mean of 3.5) and learning experience is in last place (low overall mean of 2.7). This can be interpreted as the students' visions of their ideal self in relation to the writing skill being the main factor promoting their motivation towards writing; conversely, the learning experiences of students have a very low impact on their motivation towards writing in English.

	LEVEL OF STUDY	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
MEAN IDEAL	1	62	*4.46*	*0.451*
	2	34	*4.32*	*0.537*
	3	54	*3.92*	*0.612*
	4	3	*4.43*	*0.363*
	5	1	*3.69*	*.*
	8	3	*3.66*	*0.621*
	Total	*157*	*4.22*	*0.583*

MEAN OUGHT-TO	*1*	*62*	*3.48*	*0.443*
	2	*34*	*3.55*	*0.597*
	3	*54*	*3.41*	*0.641*
	4	*3*	*4.23*	*0.526*
	5	*1*	*4.00*	*.*
	8	*3*	*3.50*	*0.681*
	Total	*157*	*3.49*	*0.562*
MEAN EXP	*1*	*62*	*3.24*	*0.637*
	2	*34*	*2.56*	*0.444*
	3	*54*	*2.34*	*0.440*
	4	*3*	*3.00*	*0.352*
	5	*1*	*3.06*	*.*
	8	*3*	*3.26*	*0.702*
	TOTAL	*157*	*2.78*	*0.664*

Table 7: Levels of ideal second self, ought-to self and learning experiences

The data also reveals distinctive patterns for each of the three constructs across individual study levels. The pattern of reduced motivation as the study level goes up can also be seen in the constructs. As mentioned above, ideal L2 self is the most effective construct in the students' motivation towards L2 writing. However, by looking closely at the first three study levels, we can see a steady decline in the mean of ideal L2 self, with means of 4.5, 4.3 and 3.9 for Levels 1, 2 and 3, respectively. In other words, although the students' ideal thoughts of themselves in the future (either the near or distant future) is the major driver that promotes their motivation towards L2 writing, these thoughts can become less effective as the students proceed in their university study years. This can be interpreted to either mean that the students have fewer visions of their ideal self as they progress in university study years or that the students' visions become less influential and have less impact on their motivation towards L2 writing. Both scenarios have a negative influence on the students' motivation. The former

interpretation suggests that students commence their university studies with high hopes for their writing proficiency and aspirations for themselves and what they wish to become in the near or distant future, but these hopes fade year by year, and there are various reasons for and circumstances related to this negative trend. The latter interpretation suggests that students do maintain those high hopes and visions of their future ideal self but gradually become less effective in maintaining their motivation, let alone promoting it further as they continue their learning journey.

The data yields a negative outcome related to the impact of the learning experience (see Table 7, mean exp) on students' overall motivation. Unfortunately, the learning experiences of the students has the lowest mean of all three constructs. This construct includes questionnaire items that are related to the students' experiences either within the classroom, such as the teacher, classmates and textbooks, or outside the classroom, such as the use of online or offline communication platforms to practise and improve their writing in English. Having relatively low numbers in this component suggests that learning experience is the least effective component in enhancing the students' motivation towards writing. Further information and interpretations will be presented in the next chapter. Looking again at the trend across the first three study levels regarding the learning experience, the means of learning experience decrease as students move up in the levels of study, with the students at the very beginning of their university study (Level 1) reporting more positive responses (3.2) than those who have progressed to the second year (mean = 2.3 in Level 3). The pattern of decline observed in the students' overall motivational orientation and their ideal self also occurs in learning experiences. In other words, learning experiences is the component of the L2 self system that is the least able to predict students' motivation towards L2 writing, and its role declines term by term.

Generally speaking, the students have a moderate level of motivation towards English L2 writing. This motivation deteriorates term by term in the first two years of study. There are also a few students who are taking the writing module at later years (reasons explained above), and these students are also moderately motivated towards L2 writing. Looking into the detailed constructs of the L2MSS (ideal L2 self, ought-to self and the learning experience), it can be seen that overall, the most dominant source of motivation towards writing is the

ideal self. In other words, the students' views of their ideal self and their ideal visions of what they wish to become (or to gain) in the future is the most dominant source of motivation. Next is the ought-to self. The students do have perceptions of what they have to do or what they should acquire. They have drives that are imposed on them by external factors, such as meeting the requirements of exams or responding to family and social pressures. These drives are not their own internalised visions of themselves (as in the case of the ideal perceptions of the self). This type of perception occurs at a moderate level among the students, yet its impact on the students' motivation is less effective when compared with the students' ideal self. Finally, the data shows that the learning experiences is the least dominant construct of the three. In other words, the learning experiences that the students go through are the least effective factor to enhance their motivation towards writing. The students' perceptions of their ideal self in the future are found to be the most influential factor in shaping their motivation towards L2 writing, whereas the learning experiences play a comparatively small role in motivating the students.

4.6.2 Motivation items that scored the highest

To obtain a well-rounded view of the students' L2 motivation in writing, it is necessary to look at the data in terms of the individual questionnaire items and their rankings in students' responses, which are categorised as follows:

1. Ideal L2 motivation: items 1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, 21, 30, 35, 36, 38, 40 and 42 (13 items)

2. Ought-to motivation: items 2, 7, 12, 15, 18, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 32, 37 and 39 (14 items)

3. Learning experience: items 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 26, 31, 33, 34 and 41 (15 items)

This can be accomplished by calculating the mean of each item from the L2MSS section of the questionnaire. The full list of the 42 items and rankings is provided in Appendix A. Table 6 shows that items related to the students' ideal L2 self dominate the list of the top ten ranked questionnaire items, with only two items belonging to the ought-to self construct and no items relating to learning experiences on the list. This confirms the previously presented data (see 4.6.1 Levels of L2 Motivational Self System across study levels) that indicated that the ideal L2

self is the most predictive component of the three constructs of the motivational self system on writing. What motivates students the most is their ideal visions of themselves, their aspirations for their writing proficiency in the future, their anticipation of what they will be doing in the future and their imagination of what their written communication will look like with colleagues and native speakers or even on social media.

Rank	Questionnaire items (L2MSS)	Component	Mean	Std. deviation
1	'If my dreams come true, I will write proficiently in English in the future'	Ideal self	4.78	0.573
2	'I can imagine a time when I can write in English to native speakers'	Ideal self	4.72	0.504
3	'I can imagine myself sharing my thoughts on social media in written English (for example, tweeting on Twitter or blogging in English'	Ideal self	4.55	0.788
4	'Whatever I do in the future, I think I will need to write in English'	Ideal self	4.53	0.747
5	'I can imagine myself writing in English to international friends or colleagues'	Ideal self	4.46	0.836
6	'The things I want to do in the future require me to be a good writer of English'	Ideal self	4.34	0.966
7	'Improving my writing skill in English is necessary because people around me expect me to do so'	Ought-to self	4.21	0.913
8	'I can imagine myself writing emails fluently in English'	Ideal self	4.20	0.996
9	'I have to study for the writing module because I don't want to get bad marks in it'	Ought-to self	4.17	0.982
10	'The job I imagine having in the future requires me to write well in English'	Ideal self	4.17	1.213

Table 8: Highly ranked items of the second language (L2) motivational self system (L2MSS) in writing

Conversely, looking at the items that ranked lowest in the exhaustive list of 42 items, it can be seen that nine of the 10 items belong to one component: learning experience. One item (the lowest ranked) belongs to the ought-to self component. The students' learning experiences is

the weakest of the three L2 constructs of the L2MSS in shaping students' L2 motivation in writing. Factors related to the class, teacher and textbooks are found to contribute less to enhancing students' motivation to write than the visions of the ideal self and ought-to self. The impact of enjoyment of the class and its activities is moderate (mean = 2.78), and students indicated that they find the class boring, that teachers lack interesting teaching styles and that the writing class is not a preferred class. Those factors were found to have limited motivational influence.

Rank	Questionnaire items (L2MSS)	Component	Mean	Std. Deviation
33	'I really enjoy studying writing'	Learning experience	2.78	1.338
34	'The writing textbook/s that we use is/are really boring' (reversed)	Learning experience	2.65	1.280
35	'I like the overall atmosphere of my writing class' (reversed)	Learning experience	2.41	1.235
36	'I think the writing class is boring' (reversed)	Learning experience	2.31	1.299
37	'I enjoy the activities of our writing class much more than those of my other classes'	Learning experience	2.25	1.149
38	'My writing lecturer does not teach in an interesting way' (reversed)	Learning experience	2.18	1.347
39	'My writing lecturer has interesting teaching styles'	Learning experience	2.15	1.307
40	'The lecturer of the writing class is better than the other subjects' lecturers'	Learning experience	2.08	1.062
41	'I would prefer to spend more time in my writing class and less in other classes'	Learning experience	1.94	1.021
42	'I took the writing module because I don't like to be considered a weak student'	Ought-to self	1.53	.971

Table 9: Low ranked questionnaire items of L2MSS in writing

Finally, since items at both the top and bottom of the list relate predominantly to two components, with ideal self ranked high and learning experiences ranked low, it is inferred that the ought-to self makes a moderate contribution to students' motivation. Although they contribute moderately to enhancing students' motivation towards writing, aspects related to students' feelings of obligation to study writing had less impact on students' motivation than the students' ideal visions. Externalised feelings of having to study the writing module to pass exams, maintain a high GPA or even impress their significant others had less impact on students' motivation than the students' own feelings of the ideal picture that they have internalised; however, the externalised sources of visions had a greater influence than what the circumstances of the learning experiences offered to boost students' motivation towards L2 writing.

4.7 Analysis of the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory

This section answers RQ2: What are the levels of L2 writing anxiety among Saudi female English major students?

4.7.1 Levels of second language writing anxiety

The second part of the questionnaire focuses on L2 writing anxiety among the students using the three constructs of the SLWAI (Cheng, 2004): cognitive anxiety (feelings of worry or fears of negative evaluation), somatic anxiety (physiological symptoms that depict arousal) and avoidance behaviour (any behavioural techniques that are used to avoid the source of anxiety).

The level of L2 writing anxiety in each study group was analysed by calculating the means of the overall SLWAI in each level of study (see Table 10). It was stated in the descriptive statistics above that students have a moderate level of L2 writing anxiety (mean = 3.03); however, there is a distinction between the year groups in terms of the amount of L2 writing anxiety they experience. The mean of the SLWAI is the lowest in Level 1 (2.78), increases as students move up to Level 2 (2.96) and Level 3 (3.31) and seems to flatten after that. This suggests that students who are commencing their university study (Level 1) have less L2 writing anxiety than those in the upper years.

Level of study	Mean of anxiety	N	Std. deviation
1	2.78	62	0.789
2	2.96	34	0.700
3	3.31	54	0.707
4	3.39	3	0.352
5	4.36	1	-
8	3.31	3	0.656
Total	3.03	157	0.770

Table 10: Overall levels of second language writing anxiety across levels of study

When combining these findings with the findings from the motivation section above, a comparison can be established (see Table 11). Students at the beginning of their university studies (Level 1) have a higher level of motivation than anxiety. In Level 2, the motivation level declines slightly, whereas the anxiety level increases until, in Level 3, students' level of L2 writing anxiety is slightly higher than their motivation level. Again, whether this trend continues throughout the upper years among the whole cohort of students is unknown and requires further investigation. This is a clear indication that both feelings of motivation and anxiety co-occur in an approximate mean and dynamic manner.

Level of study	Mean of motivation	Mean of anxiety	N
1	3.70	2.78	62
2	3.43	2.96	34
3	3.19	3.31	54

Table 11: Comparison of motivation and anxiety levels in the first three levels of study

The types of anxiety that the students have were investigated by looking at the means of cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour across the study levels (see Table 12).

	LEVEL OF STUDY	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
MEAN-COG	1	62	2.96	0.805
	2	34	3.05	0.838
	3	54	3.44	0.797
	4	3	3.66	0.563
	5	1	4.37	-
	8	3	3.37	0.572
	Total	*157*	*3.17*	*0.829*
MEAN-SOM	1	62	3.00	0.996
	2	34	3.13	0.893
	3	54	3.56	0.871
	4	3	4.23	0.436
	5	1	4.14	-
	8	3	3.47	0.918
	Total	*157*	*3.26*	*0.955*
MEAN-AVOI	1	62	2.36	0.886
	2	34	2.69	0.727
	3	54	2.92	0.955
	4	3	2.23	0.412
	5	1	4.57	-
	8	3	3.09	0.918
	TOTAL	*157*	*2.65*	*0.912*

Table 12: Types of second language writing anxiety across the study levels

All three types of L2 writing anxiety were experienced moderately by L2 English majors, although they occurred at slightly different levels. Cognitive anxiety and somatic anxiety were at similar levels, 3.17 and 3.26, respectively. Avoidance behaviour was experienced slightly less, with a mean of 2.65. This suggests that students experienced symptoms of both physiological distress and emotional agitation equally. However, this did not seem to significantly impact the students' behaviour regarding L2 writing, as the mean of avoidance behaviour was slightly lower than the other two forms of L2 writing anxiety, which is line with results of a previous study (Hartono and Maharani, 2019).

It would be interesting to determine whether the students display physical manifestations of their inner emotional discomfort and worry, which can be a good indicator for teachers to enable them to recognise L2 writing anxiety among their students. The qualitative interviews with teachers provided more information on this aspect. In addition, although these students suffered emotionally as well as physically from anxiety, they tended to be resilient and persistent when dealing with L2 writing, and very few of them tried to avoid situations that demanded L2 writing. Similarly, students were open in their interviews and provided enlightening explanations of their negative feelings towards L2 writing and the coping mechanisms that they deployed to mitigate the situation.

Regarding the pattern of growth in the types of anxiety as students moved up the study levels, the data reflected that for each type of anxiety, the mean increased slightly as the study level increased. For instance, cognitive anxiety had a mean of 2.96 in Level 1, which increased to 3.05 in Level 2 and to 3.44 in Level 4. This pattern was also identified in both somatic anxiety and avoidance behaviour. This indicates that physiological and emotional arousal as well as avoidance behaviour were experienced less among students who are at the beginning of their university studies and more among students in higher levels of study. This raises the question, why do students in the higher study levels experience more anxiety and less motivation than students in the lower study levels? This question may be partially answered by looking further into other variables and their relationship with emotional orientation, such as the variable of achievement, which is discussed in later subsections.

4.7.2 Anxiety types that scored the highest

To learn more about the students' L2 writing anxiety, we need to explore their responses to the SLWAI in more depth. This will provide insights into and more details on the type of anxiety that was most or least common among the students, which, in turn, will predict the main reasons for these types of anxiety and help to eliminate them from the learning environment. Exploring the types of anxiety in the SLWAI in more depth can also help us to identify the possible reasons behind students' L2 writing anxiety or to determine the type of anxiety.

The anxiety questionnaire items fall into the following categories:

1. Cognitive anxiety – items 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20 and 21 (8 items)

2. Somatic anxiety – items 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15 and 19 (7 items)

3. Avoidance behaviour – items 4, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18 and 22 (7 items)

Similar to the analysis of motivation, L2 writing anxiety was analysed by calculating the mean for each item of the SLWAI and ranking them. The ranking was obtained from the participants' responses to the questionnaire. These findings, together with the qualitative interpretation of the interviews, will answer our concerns around the types of anxiety that are more or less common and their possible sources. Table 13 lists the ten highest-ranked statements out of the 22 items rated by the students (the full list is provided in the Appendix A). The data yielded significant findings regarding the dominance of the physiological symptoms of anxiety (somatic) as well as the mental status (cognitive) of the students when they are put in situations in which they have to write in English. Only one statement relates to avoidance behaviour, and it ranks tenth. Students reported feelings of worry, fear and unease as examples of the cognitive form of L2 writing anxiety. Students also reported that their thoughts became jumbled, their heart pounded, their mind went blank, and they froze up and panicked, which are all physiological symptoms related to the somatic type of L2 writing anxiety. Interestingly, three of the ten selected items related directly or indirectly to the students' concern about negative evaluation (1, 2 and 9). The first item suggests that students worry that the teacher's evaluation of their writing will result in 'poor grades' and negatively impact their academic achievement. The second rated item refers to students' concern about

negative evaluations in general; this item is connected to the item rated ninth, which relates to students having unpleasant feelings if their piece of writing is chosen for discussion in class, since their errors may be highlighted, which could lead to embarrassment. The items ranked third, fourth and seventh relate to the element of time pressure and how it can trigger unpleasant physiological reactions. So far, the analysis has reported on students' objective responses to a tailored set of statements; the next section will attempt to broaden the view by looking into students' subjective self-rating of their writing proficiency.

Rank	Questionnaire items (SLWAI)	Type of anxiety	Mean	Std. deviation
1	'If my English composition is to be evaluated, I worry about getting a very poor grade'	Cognitive	3.83	1.150
2	'While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated'	Cognitive	3.76	1.248
3	'My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraints'	Somatic	3.67	1.195
4	'I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraints'	Somatic	3.66	1.380
5	'I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor' (reversed)	Cognitive	3.61	1.343
6	'My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition'	Somatic	3.39	1.213
7	'I often feel panic when I write compositions under time constraints'	Somatic	3.33	1.308
8	'I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions'	Somatic	3.31	1.294
9	'I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class'	Cognitive	3.30	1.474
10	'Unless I had no choice, I wouldn't use English to write compositions'	Avoidance	3.10	1.336

Table 13: Highly ranked second language writing anxiety inventory (SLWAI) items

4.8 Correlation Tests

This section aims to answer the third and fifth research questions, which relate to the relationship between the positive feeling (motivation) and the negative feeling (anxiety), as well as the relationship between these emotions and other variables in the study, such as achievement and self-rating.

4.8.1 The relationship between motivation and anxiety

This section answers RQ3 'Is there a link between L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?' by investigating correlational relationships between motivation and anxiety, which is an effective method to extract information from quantitative questionnaires. Bryman and Cramer (2005, p.16) stated:

> Survey designs are often called c*orrelational* designs to denote the tendency for such research to be able to reveal relationships between variables and to draw attention to their limited capacity in connection with the elucidation of the causal processes. Precisely because in survey research variables are not manipulated (and often are not capable of manipulation). The ability of the research to impute cause and effect is limited.

Further support for the use of correlation tests on questionnaires is provided by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p.218): 'In L2 motivation studies the usual strength of the meaningful relationships detected is between 0.30 and 0.50 … [the] disadvantage of the correlational research is that it cannot identify cause and effect'.

To explore the link between the two variables of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety (RQ3), a scatterplot and a regression line were created (see Figure 3).
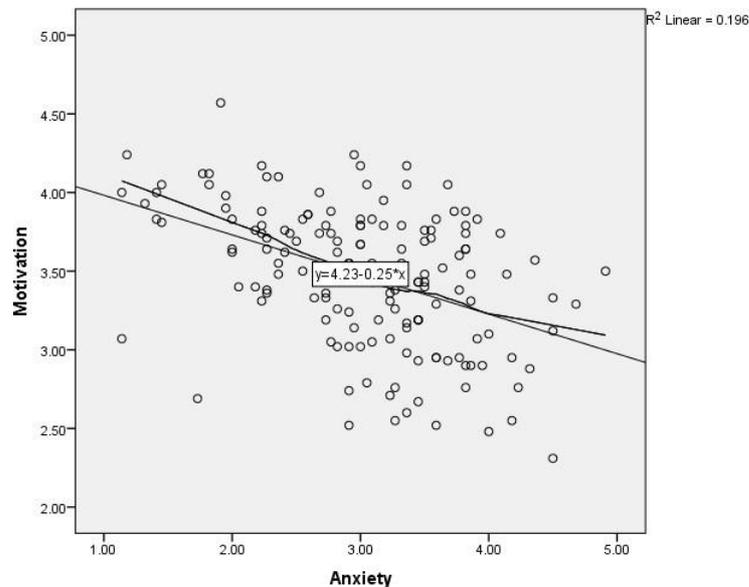
Figure 3: Scatterplot and regression line for second language (L2) writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety

The scatterplot allows us to quickly discover the relationship between motivation and anxiety in English L2 writing. Each dot on the graph represents an individual student and their combination of motivation and anxiety. At a glance, one can see that there is a relationship between motivation and anxiety. As motivation increases, anxiety tends to decrease.

A regression line was created, and it can be seen that the relationship between motivation and anxiety is linear, i.e. there is a linear correlation between motivation and anxiety. From the direction of the line, it can be said that there is a negative correlation between motivation and anxiety.

It is essential to measure the effect size of the correlation by examining the R^2 linearity (see Figure 3, top-right corner) as well as the scattered points. The R^2 reflects how much of the variance in one variable is accounted for by the other variable. The closer the R^2 is to 1, the better the fit it has in the size of the correlation; if the R^2 is around 0.1, it suggests that the correlation is insignificant. Linearity in R^2 is also reflected in the distance between the scattered points. If the distance between them is great and the points are scattered far from the linear line, it suggests a weak correlation between the variables, whereas a perfect fit would have the scattered points lined up exactly on the regression line.

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The study examined the effect size of the correlation between motivation and anxiety, namely how much of the variance do motivation and anxiety have in common. Looking at the effect size for this correlation (see Figure 3, top-right corner), it can be seen that the R^2 is 0.196, which is far from 1 in the measure of the effect size of the correlation. We can also see that the scattered points are far from the line. This suggests that although motivation and anxiety are related to each other, the size of the correlation is not perfect. If we take, for example, point 3 on anxiety (of the Likert scale on the graph), one can see that there is a range of motivation levels associated with it. However, the general tendency is that motivation and anxiety are negatively correlated. Nonetheless, there is leeway in defining the strength of the correlation. Cohen (1992) and Larson-Hall (2010) considered $R^2 = 0.09$ to be moderate and $R^2 = 0.25$ and $R^2 = 0.01$ to be high and low, respectively. Larson-Hall suggested that researchers can 'define the effect sizes for their own fields' (2010, p.162).

In addition, to further discover the correlation between motivation and anxiety, Spearman's rho correlation was applied to discover the correlation coefficients (see Table 14).

Correlations

			Motivation	Anxiety
Spearman's rho	Motivation	Correlation coefficient	1.000	−0.435[**]
		Significance (two-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	157	157
	Anxiety	Correlation coefficient	−0.435[**]	1.000
		Significance (two-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	157	157

** Two-tailed correlation was considered significant at 0.01

Table 14: Spearman correlation between motivation and anxiety.

It can be seen that there is a negative correlation between motivation and anxiety. The correlation coefficient is −0.435 and p = 0.000, giving a moderate negative correlation between motivation and anxiety. In summary, motivation and anxiety co-exist, and the data suggest that highly motivated students appear to have lower levels of anxiety.

4.8.2 The relationship between emotions, self-rating and achievement

To answer RQ5 regarding the correlation between motivation, anxiety and other variables, partial correlation is a suitable test since it measures the effect of certain variables while eliminating the impact of the unwanted variables. First, regarding RQ5a, 'Do levels of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety correlate with the writing module final score?', the variable of achievement was measured by the GT, i.e. the total score on the writing module that was obtained at the end of the year. The researcher obtained students' GPAs as one of the main achievement measures that students were likely to be worried about. However, after analysing the data, it was decided to include only the GT because students who are at the very beginning of the study programme (Level 1) do not have a GPA. Future studies could apply the GPA in its broad sense across a wider range of years of study to investigate how it relates to the students' feelings of anxiety. In this study, the GPA was mentioned in the qualitative interviews. An analysis of the frequency of the students' scores in the writing module revealed that 10.8% of the students obtained a score of 80 out of a total of 100, 10.2% obtained 90 and 8.9% obtained 95.

Applying a scatterplot (see

Motivation	Correlation coefficient	1.000	-0.435^{**}	0.133
	Significance (two-tailed)	-	0.000	0.099
	N	157	157	156
Anxiety	Correlation coefficient	-0.435^{**}	1.000	-0.232^{**}
	Significance (two-tailed)	0.000	-	0.004
	N	157	157	156

GT	Correlation coefficient	0.133	−0.232**	1.000
	Significance (two-tailed)	0.099	0.004	-
	N	156	156	156

Spearman's rho's correlation (see   **The two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01

Table 15) shows the bivariate relationships between the three variables (motivation, anxiety and achievement); it suggests that there is a correlation between them, and that GT (achievement) is positively correlated with motivation and negatively correlated with anxiety. In addition, we can see the negative correlation between motivation and anxiety (as stated earlier). The correlation between GT and both motivation and anxiety is considered small. This indicates that the relationship between the students' achievement in the writing module and their emotional orientation is relatively small. However, the students' achievement in writing is generally driven positively by motivation, and it can be negatively impacted by anxiety. The qualitative data provided more insights into this aspect.

Motivation	Correlation coefficient	1.000	−0.435**	0.133

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	Significance (two-tailed)	-	0.000	0.099
	N	157	157	156
Anxiety	Correlation coefficient	−0.435**	1.000	−0.232**
	Significance (two-tailed)	0.000	-	0.004
	N	157	157	156
GT	Correlation coefficient	0.133	−0.232**	1.000
	Significance (two-tailed)	0.099	0.004	-
	N	156	156	156

*__**The two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01__*

Table 15: Spearman's rho's correlation of motivation, anxiety and the grand total (GT) for the writing module

The second part of this research question (RQ5b) examines the self-rating and how it relates to motivation and anxiety (see Table 16). It explores how students rate their proficiency in writing on the following scale: 1 = poor, 2 = intermediate, 3 = upper intermediate, 4 = excellent and 5 = I don't know. The previous sections presented data from the purely objective perspective of close-ended questionnaire items and module scores measuring objective criterion measures, whereas this variable (self-rating) relies on the participants' thoughts or opinions; it is a more subjective criterion measure. The table below shows that 40.8% of students rated their L2 writing proficiency in English as upper intermediate and 39.5% considered their writing level as intermediate.

Level of self-rating L2 writing proficiency	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	3	1.8

Intermediate	62	39.5
Upper intermediate	64	40.8
Excellent	21	13.4
I don't know	7	4.5
Total	157	100.0

Table 16: Levels of students' self-rating of their second language (L2) writing proficiency

By applying scatterplots and identifying the correlation between motivation, anxiety and self-rating, RQ5b, 'Is there a relationship between L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and students' self-rating of their L2 English writing proficiency?', can be answered (see Figure 5 and **The two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01

Table 17), and it can be seen that there is a linear correlation between them. There was a positive correlation between motivation and self-rating, whereas self-rating correlated negatively with anxiety. Qualitative interviews with students of various proficiency levels provided enlightening insights into what students thought of themselves, how they evaluated their writing proficiency and how this was linked to their negative or positive feelings.
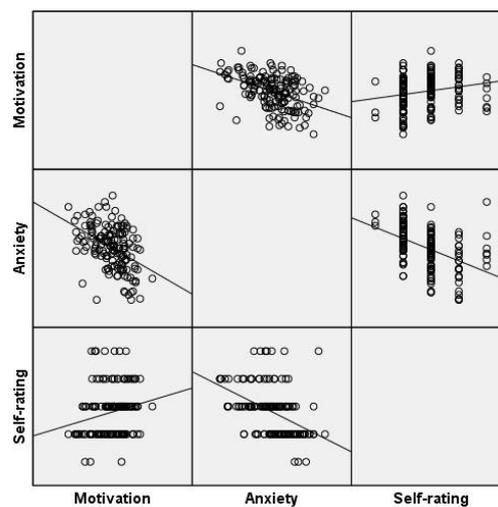
Figure 5: Scatterplot of second language (L2) writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and self-rating

			Motivation	Anxiety	Self-rating
Spearman's rho	Motivation	Correlation coefficient	1.000	−0.435[**]	0.224[**]
		Significance (two-tailed)	-	0.000	0.005
		N	157	157	157
	Anxiety	Correlation coefficient	−0.435[**]	1.000	−0.526[**]
		Significance (two-tailed)	0.000	-	0.000
		N	157	157	157
	Self-rating	Correlation coefficient	0.224[**]	−0.526[**]	1.000
		Significance (two-tailed)	0.005	0.000	-
		N	157	157	157

**The two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01

Table 17: Spearman's rho correlation of motivation, anxiety and self-rating

The Spearman's rho correlation analysis revealed that there was a strong negative correlation between self-rating and anxiety (−0.526) and a small positive correlation between self-rating and motivation (0.224). This means that students who expressed positive emotions tended to hold positive thoughts of themselves and rate themselves as proficient in L2 writing, whereas students who expressed strong feelings of L2 writing anxiety tended to rate their writing proficiency as low.

Moving on to the correlation between the four variables, the size classification of the correlation recommended by Plonsky and Oswald (2014) in Al-Hoorie's (2018, p.735) meta-analysis in the field of applied linguistics is small (0.25), medium (0.40) and large (0.60). The outcome of calculating the effect size for correlation was satisfactory and the data met the requirements for the parametric Spearman's rho correlation (see ***The* two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01

Table 18). The reason for choosing Spearman's rho is that the data did not have normal distribution for motivation. Therefore, a correlation coefficient was calculated. The Spearman's rho correlation was calculated between the four variables: motivation, anxiety, GT and self-rating (see **The** two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01

Table 18). For the correlation between motivation and anxiety, the effect size was *r* = −0.435 and p = 0.001, which is a medium effect size, indicating a negative moderate correlation between motivation and anxiety. P refers to the significance of the finding, and p < 0.05 was considered significant. Regarding the other two variables, GT and self-rating, motivation was moderately correlated with self-rating (*r* = 0.224) and had a smaller correlation with GT (*r* = 0.133*)*. Conversely, we can see that GT was negatively correlated with anxiety (*r* = −0.*232*) and anxiety was moderately negatively correlated with self-rating, and the correlation was strong (*r* = −0.526). Therefore, students who were highly anxious were likely to have both their actual achievement and their perception of their writing proficiency impacted in a negative manner.

Variables	Motivation	Anxiety	GT	Self-rating
Motivation	1			
Anxiety	−0.435**	1		
GT	0.133**	−0.232**	1	
Self-rating	0.224**	−0.526**	0.124	1

**The two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01

Table 18: Spearman's rho correlation between second language (L2) writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety, the grand total (GT) for the writing module and self-rating

Control variables	Motivation	GT
Anxiety/ Motivation	1	Correlation −0.015** Significance (two-tailed)

		0.849
GT	Correlation −0.015** Significance (two-tailed) 0.849	1

**The two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01

Table 19: Partial correlation between motivation and the grand total (GT) for the writing module

Research Question 5 can also be answered by applying a partial correlation between two variables and a controlling variable, namely one partial correlation between motivation and GT, controlling for anxiety, and another partial correlation between anxiety and GT, controlling for motivation. When looking into the correlation between motivation and GT (controlling for anxiety), we can see that the effect size is $r = -0.015$ and p = 0.849, which is an insignificant result. However, by running a partial correlation between anxiety and GT and controlling for motivation (see Table 16), we can see that the correlation is significant ($r = -0.218$, p = 0.006).

Control variables	**Anxiety**	**GT**
Motivation/Anxiety	1	Correlation −0.218 Significance (2-tailed) 0.006
GT	Correlation −0.218 Significance (2-tailed) 0.006	1

Table 20: Partial correlation between second language writing anxiety and the grand total (GT) for the writing module*.*

Once we removed the effect of motivation, there was a statically significant negative correlation between GT and anxiety. This means that the negative impact of anxiety on the students' achievement can be greater than the positive influence of motivation on achievement.

The final subsection of the analysis will look into the correlation relationships by level of study.

4.9 Non-Parametric Correlation Across Levels of Study

To explore the correlation between the variables in more detail, it is worth looking into the variables in a more granular fashion, i.e. consider the main three levels of study, Levels 1, 2 and 3, using non-parametric correlation. Non-parametric correlation allowed us to explore the correlation between all four variables in each level of study, which provided a holistic picture of all the variables across the levels of study.

First, looking at study Level 1 (N = 62; see Table 21), the data showed a moderate negative correlation between motivation and anxiety (−0.486), which is in line with global findings on the motivation–anxiety relationship. The biggest correlation was found between anxiety and self-rating, a negative correlation (−0.524). Motivation was positively correlated with both self-rating and GT but had a larger correlation with GT (0.342).

Control variables	Motivation	Self-rating	Anxiety	GT
Motivation	1			
Self-rating	0.233	1		
Anxiety	−0.486**	−0.524**	1	
GT	0.342**	0.057	−0.290*	1
N	62	62	62	62

** Two-tailed c*orrelation* was considered *significant at 0.01*

Table 21: Correlation of the four variables in Level 1.

Table 22 shows data from students who are in their second term of year 1 (Level 2, N = 34), and it shows that, similar to Level 1, the biggest correlation was between self-rating and

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anxiety (−0.596), followed by the negative correlation between anxiety and GT (−0.272). Correlations related to motivation were comparatively small; however, for the first time we saw a negative correlation between motivation and GT (−0.067). In short, the data from Level 2 indicated that the more anxious the students were, the lower their ratings of their writing proficiency.

Control variables	Motivation	Self-rating	Anxiety	GT
Motivation	1			
Self-rating	0.104	1		
Anxiety	−0.196	−0.596	1	
GT	−0.067	0.101	−0.272	1
N	34	34	34	34

Table 22: Correlation of the four variables in Level 2.

Finally, the pattern of a relatively strong and negative impact of anxiety discussed above continued to appear among students in year 2 (Level 3, N = 54). **The two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01

Table 23 shows that the biggest correlation was between self-rating and anxiety (−0.520), while motivation was second and was positively correlated with self-rating (0.487). In other words, motivated students saw themselves and their writing proficiency in a positive way, whereas nervous students may not have been confident enough to rate their writing proficiency as high.

Control variables	Motivation	Self-rating	Anxiety	GT
Motivation	1			
Self-rating	0.487**	1		
Anxiety	−0.488**	−0.520**	1	

| GT | 0.190 | 0.223 | −0.243 | 1 |
| N | 54 | 54 | 54 | 54 |

**The two-tailed correlation is considered significant at 0.01

Table 23: Correlations between the four variables in Level 3

Overall, after analysing the relationship between the four variables in each individual study level, we concluded that the impact of anxiety was stronger than that of any other variable and has an inherently negative impact. This was opposite to the positive impact of motivation, even though its correlation with other variables was not always significant. The following section sums up the main findings of this chapter.

4.10 Summary of the Quantitative Findings

The results of the analysis of the quantitative data obtained from reliable questionnaires suggested that female English majors had both positive and negative emotions that co-occured in an inter-relational way. The students had moderate levels of both L2 motivation towards writing and L2 writing anxiety, with an overall mean of 3.46 and 3.03, respectively. Looking closely at the level of study, the level of motivation towards L2 writing appeared to peak in the first level of university and then started to fade slowly as students moved into Levels 2 and 3. Of the three components of the L2 motivational self-system – ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and learning experience – the ideal L2 self was the most predictive construct for students' motivation, whereas learning experience was the least predictive. Students' internalised visions of their future self and their hopes and aspirations regarding their L2 writing played a crucial part in promoting their motivation, whereas aspects of their varied learning experiences (textbooks, teachers and colleagues) played a comparatively insignificant role in boosting students' motivation towards L2 English writing. Students also reported that their externalised visions of what they have to do or be to avoid possible negative impacts, such as passing exams, contributed moderately to their motivation.

Furthermore, students had a moderate level of L2 writing anxiety, and this anxiety seemed to increase among students in higher levels of study. Somatic anxiety and cognitive anxiety are the constructs of the SLWAI that occurred among these female English majors; avoidance

behaviour did exist but were less common than the other two constructs. Time constraints and negative evaluation were two of many common sources of L2 writing anxiety. A comparison of the general pattern of the two emotions reflected that the L2 motivation towards writing decreased as students moved into the higher study levels, whereas their L2 writing anxiety increased. Students in the first term of their university studies had more motivation than anxiety regarding L2 writing in English, whereas students in the second year were more anxious than motivated.

Correlation, partial correlation and nonparametric correlation were used as the main tests to explore the relationships between the four variables: L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety, achievement in L2 writing and students' self-rating of their L2 writing proficiency. The analysis revealed that there was a negative correlation between students' L2 motivation towards L2 writing and their L2 writing anxiety. Achievement had a small correlation with both types of emotion, but the positive emotion (motivation) affected the achievement in a positive way, whereas the negative emotion (anxiety) impacted the achievement negatively. Self-rating had a strong negative correlation with anxiety but had a smaller positive correlation with motivation than anxiety. Looking into the correlation between motivation, GT and self-rating presented above, it can be suggested that the students who are anxious tend to underestimate their writing proficiency (correlation between anxiety and self-rating), whereas motivated students tend to consider their writing good regardless of their actual achievement. Finally, anxiety is a negative emotion and correlated negatively with all the variables in the study: motivation, self-rating and achievement. Regarding motivation, all the analyses supported the findings of previous studies that the relationship between motivation and achievement is not a clear one; however, this study revealed that motivation does play an integral role in how students see themselves and their writing proficiency in a positive way.

Chapter 5. Presentation and Analysis of Qualitative Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative phase of the study. The chapter mainly aims to answer the third and fourth research questions:

RQ3: Is there a relationship between L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?

RQ4: What are the sources of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?

The qualitative part of the study involved semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 10 students (of various proficiencies and study levels) and four teachers who were teaching the writing module, supported by follow-up interviews with the students. The interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Word, then coded following suitable coding strategies, both manually and in Microsoft Word (see **Appendix E: Sample of Coding**). They were analysed using thematic analysis. Using Microsoft Word to transcribe qualitative interviews is appropriate for small- to medium-scale data. It is easy and straightforward to use, and, most importantly, it handles right-to-left input (Arabic language) very well, which is missing in most of the current transcription software programs. Using Microsoft Word saves time and effort, is free and does not require technical support; therefore, it is convenient for this purpose. Finally, the interviewees' accounts which are included in this chapter are primarily driven from the main interviews with the participants unless otherwise stated. Accounts which are driven from the follow-up interviews are going to be indicated clearly as such.

In thematic analysis, the researcher codes words, phrases or sentences that represent aspect(s) of data or capture the essence or feature(s) of data (Saldana, 2013). The coding process aims to achieve the following goals (Saldaña, 2013):

1. reducing data without losing meaning
2. capturing the significant ideas or issues
3. understanding the phenomenon
4. developing the construct: identifying the outstanding events or ideas and expressing them in general qualitative terms
5. developing theory

The coding process involves the different stages of coding, sorting, synthesising and theorising, in which data is organised under the umbrellas of codes, categories, themes and, eventually, theory if the study requires one.

In qualitative analysis, researchers themselves are instruments, and they need to recognise their influence and seek a reasonable amount of objectivity in the subjective, high-level mental process. During the stages of transcription and analysis of this study, the researcher employed analytic memos to record and reflect any interesting aspects of the data and the thoughts of participants in the research, documenting personal reflections and impressions during the data collection and analysis phases.

Saldaña (2013) identified more than 30 coding processes, which ultimately depend on the research questions. Ontological research questions attempt to capture the participants' realities. Thus, suitable coding methods may be attribute, emotion, in vivo, narrative, process, value, theming and focused coding. This study used the following coding methods:

- Emotion coding – this method of coding was used for identifying and describing the students' positive or negative feelings related to motivation or anxiety.
- Magnitude coding – this method involves assigning intensity, frequency, direction and presence to codes. In this study, for example, high/low motivation/anxiety were present/absent, changing/stable.
- Attribute coding was used to identify themes related to education, level and age.
- Value coding was widely used in this study to identify the values, attitudes and beliefs of the students.
- Narrative coding – this approach is mainly used in narrative research, but the researcher felt it could be appropriately used in the present study to look into some anecdotes of students' experiences.
- Evaluation coding was used for when the students were talking about the L2 writing module and their current and previous positive learning experiences (+) and negative learning experiences (−).

The initial stage of analysis includes assigning anchor codes (Bazeley, 2013). Anchor codes, or 'a priori codes', are a set of codes that are assigned deductively according to the research

questions and the main concepts of the research. They are labelled during the initial coding stage and prior to the generation of the final themes. After the transcription of the qualitative data and familiarisation with the dataset, the researcher categorises the various codes that are found in the data under their respective anchor codes. The researcher can also detect the frequency of the relevant codes and whether some anchor codes need to be divided into further, more detailed, subcategories. This will assist conducting a rigorous and systematic thematic analysis.

The fourth research question is 'What are the sources of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety?' It is comprised of two categories: sources of L2 writing motivation and sources of L2 writing anxiety. Accordingly, the two opposite concepts were incorporated into six distinctive anchor codes:

Anchor code 1 – the students' previous and current L2 learning experiences

Anchor code 2 – milieu and influence

Anchor code 3 – attitude towards L2 writing

Anchor code 4 – L2 practice outside the classroom

Anchor code 5 – sources of L2 motivation visions (ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self)

Anchor code 6 – sources of L2 writing anxiety

Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) suggested that after identifying the anchor codes, the themes can be presented by high-level themes, which are global themes that encompass subthemes or subheaders; research questions, i.e. the research questions constitute the subheaders, which are the umbrella of several subsequent themes; or the population or subgroups. First, one appropriate way to analyse interviews is by analysing while transcribing, or 'write as you read', as Bazeley (2013) called it. With the research questions and the anchor codes in mind, the researcher was able to relate, identify and link the codes of the interviews while transcribing them. Bazeley (2013) suggested recording 'analytic thoughts as they arise'. After each meaningful set of data, which could be an answer or part of an answer to the question, the researcher took the opportunity to 'process it all' by reflecting on that particular set, highlighting the codes using colour coding, commenting below the particular set of data

and recording the thoughts in an organised, analytic memo for further compilation of relevant themes and categories in subsequent analysis, without 'premature closure' (Bazeley, 2013). This process was followed for each transcript and the data were read and reread, adopting the various approaches of coding suggested by Saldaña (2013). The ideas and thoughts were discussed with the supervisor, which enriched the analysis. After that came the presentation of the themes; the data were presented utilising the first technique that was suggested by Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012), i.e. the high-level themes. The analytic memos, together with colour-coded categories and comments under each meaningful block of data, resulted in organised main themes and subthemes.

5.2 Characteristics and Profiles of the Student Participants

Table 24 below summarises the distribution of the student participants across the various Writing Module courses, the basis of the method used for selecting the participants has already been explained in 3.9.5

Module	Midterm high	Midterm medium	Midterm low
Writing 1	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 6	Interviewee 5
Writing 2	Interviewee 8	Interviewee 7	Interviewee 9
Writing 3 (academic writing)	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 1 Interviewee 10

Table 24: The distribution of the student participants across the three Writing Modules

The students' profiles are presented in more detail in Table 25. This information is important for several reasons. First, having several details about each participant will provide a sense of context that may enhance our understanding of the deeper contextual factors that can be related to the students' various experiences. Second, having information about the students' L2 motivation and L2 anxiety, together with the details of their achievement, study level and self-rating, will facilitate our understanding of the links that may be established between any of these categories in accordance with the students' reported accounts. Finally, this information will help in identifying not only the links between the students' views but also the

connection between the qualitative findings and the quantitative findings, which should help in gaining a more in-depth understanding and support the quantitative findings that were discussed earlier.

Name	Level of study and writing module level	Achievement	Self-rating	Motivation total score/ mean	Anxiety total score/ mean	Age
Interviewee 1	Studying L8 Academic writing 3	Mid-term (out of 40) = 31 GT = 72 Category = low	2 (intermediate)	4.17	3.36	24
Interviewee 2	Studying L3 Academic writing 3	Mid-term (out of 40) = 40 GT = 100 Category = high	2 (intermediate)	2.88	4.32	20
Interviewee 3	Studying L3 Academic writing 3	Mid-term (out of 40) = 35 GT = 90 Category = medium	4 (excellent)	3.07	1.14	23
Interviewee 4	Studying L1 Writing 1	Mid-term (out of 20) = 20 GT = 100 Category = high	3 (upper intermediate)	4.17	3.00	18
Interviewee 5	Studying L1 Writing 1	Mid-term (out of 20) = 10 GT = 73	3 (upper intermediate)	4.00	2.68	18

		Category = low				
Interviewee 6	Studying L1 Writing 1	Mid-term (out of 20) = 19

GT = 92

Category = high | 2 (intermediate) | 3.83 | 2.00 | 19 |
| Interviewee 7 | Studying L4 Writing 2 | Mid-term (out of 20) = 15.5

GT = 81

Category = medium | 2 (intermediate) | 4.05 | 3.68 | 21 |
| Interviewee 8 | Studying L2 Writing 2 | Mid-term (out of 20) = 19

GT = 82

Category = medium | 2 (intermediate) | 3.64 | 3.32 | 19 |
| Interviewee 9 | Studying L2 Writing 2 | Mid-term (out of 20) = 12.5

GT = 65

Category = low | 3 (upper intermediate) | 3.31 | 2.23 | 20 |
| Interviewee 10 | Studying L3 Academic Writing 3 | Mid-term (out of 40) = 33

GT = 80

Category = low | 2 (intermediate) | 3.04 | 3.20 | 21 |

Table 25: Participating students' profiles

5.3 Students' Previous and Current L2 Learning Experiences

This section focuses on investigating students' learning experiences, with a particular focus on their learning of L2 writing in English. This set of data highlights students' previous experiences during school learning compared with their current learning experiences at the university level of study. The investigation attempts to capture learning experiences from both in the classroom and outside the classroom. Students' accounts reflect a wide array of emotions that accompany these learning experiences, such as aspiration, unfavourable learning experiences or even despair. The aim of this section is to explore students' wide range of learning experiences and explain the nature of the difference between learning at school and learning at the university level. It is assumed that this plays a critical role in shaping the learners' emotions as well as in the learners experiencing feelings of motivation or anxiety or both at the same time in relation to acquiring a specific L2 skill (writing).

It is important to start by looking into students' overall learning experiences to gain an understanding of and explain their feelings in relation to L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety, which is discussed in the following sections. In the quantitative set of data, the learning experience is included as an essential part of the L2MSS questionnaire; however, it is restricted to certain classroom aspects, such as the textbook, teacher, classmates and enjoyment within the relevant L2 writing classroom. The interview data goes beyond the descriptions of agreement or disagreement with the statements and includes the experiences the students had before and during their university study, the nature of the difficulties they faced or are facing and, most importantly, how these experiences affected their emotions and vice versa.

5.3.1 Students' previous learning experiences (school)

Although interviewees reported mixed types of previous experiences, they mostly reflected a certain level of negativity in their previous learning experiences at the school level. Despite having excellent grades at school, students criticised how writing was taught in schools, stating that it was memory-based. This is how it was described by one of the high-achieving students: 'They used to give us a certain [text] to learn by heart and just rewrite it in the exam. There was no improvement, and they didn't tackle topics to help us improve our writing;

therefore, when I came to the university, I was not that good at writing' (**Interviewee 2**). This statement highlights several deficiencies in the school system; for example, the system adopted a monotonous method to teach writing, which is a creative skill, where students were restricted to memorising the passage and rewriting it in the exam, with little freedom offered to the learner. This was accompanied by a lack of confidence and feelings of fear at the start of their learning journey at the university. These feelings were ultimately caused by the overwhelming exam-based instruction adopted by teachers, which did not meet the need for enjoyment of L2 writing instruction and acquisition alike. This link between the unfavourable memorisation method of instruction and the grade-based system was further confirmed by the same interviewee: 'Marks are the most important thing' (**Interviewee 2**, stated with despair). An interviewee who expressed highly positive feelings about English and writing described their feelings of discomfort and anxiety when they knew that they had to write for the sake of grades (**Interviewee 4**): 'Teachers' negative or positive feedback influences me considerably'. This resulted in difficulty in transferring to the university, as even though students may have had perfect grammar, they tended to have other, deeper skill-related weaknesses, such as the inability to generate ideas. The school learning experience was also described as textbook-focused and grammar-based, which gave students limited opportunities to practise L2 English writing outside the classroom, as pointed out by **Interviewee 6** (main and follow-up interview).

Another form of unpleasant previous learning experiences is related to the essence of teaching writing as a skill in itself, even in L1. There are ongoing arguments in society about some of the new measures that have been implemented in the new era of the education system in Saudi Arabia being relatively relaxed in the teaching of the essential skills, which the older generation had mastered very well. For example, the traditional method of teaching used extensive and intensive reading and writing teaching methods, and members of the older generations are often praised for their skills and are more proficient in classic Arabic fluency than the younger generations. When I was introducing the quantitative questionnaire to the sample of students, I was surprised to learn that they had very little extended free writing during their school years, and they did not even know what I meant by the classic Arabic equivalent of 'composition' – 'Insha'a' – even though this term was related to a solid study

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subject throughout my years of study. This was sadly reflected in the account of one of the interviewees: 'They rarely let us write, not for any subject. Before university I never wrote, even for Arabic subjects. That's why, when I came to the university, I found out that it is something new' (**Interviewee 4**). They realised the differences in the amount and type of writing between the two levels of study, school and university, and linked the source of difficulty to this aspect. This was similar to the comment, 'Maybe the problem lies in the composition in Arabic. Maybe because I'm not so good in composition in Arabic this [makes] my writing in English a problem' (**Interviewee 2**). This highlighted a significant aspect: that the instruction learners receive in L1 writing could have an impact on L2 writing on various levels, including the emotional level. Overall, the experience of learning English at school was generally referred to by students as less favourable. It adopted a traditional grammar-based method, and students' opportunities to practise L2 English writing were limited. This was due to the exam-oriented mentality in combination with other deficiencies in the teaching methods that may even have affected the learning experience of L1 writing.

5.3.2 Students' current learning experiences (university)

Learning L2 writing at university can be very different to learning at school. This section captures students' thoughts about the university stage. Writing at university was described repeatedly as being extensive compared to writing at school. The university L2 writing learning experience will be discussed later in this chapter in relation to the L2MSS.

One of the interesting university learning experiences was what **Interviewee 3** experienced at two different higher education institutions, a previously attended private college and their current state university. Although both institutions are part of the higher education system, there are differences in L2 writing, with advantages and disadvantages to both systems. At the private college, the interviewee enjoyed a significant amount of individual attention, consideration for individual differences and a focus on improving the weaknesses of each individual student. 'The teacher paid attention, students [had] freedom of choice of topics, and their spelling mistakes [were] marginalised while coherence and fluency [were] the main focus' (**Interviewee 3**). In **Interviewee 3**'s opinion, this was notably lacking in the large classroom of the Department of English Language and Translation (the context of this study).

This was also noted by **Interviewee 10** when they stated that having large classes does have a negative impact on the quality of instruction, the attention students receive and, ultimately, their learning experience: 'The classes are too large … this certainly has an impact. [Teachers] do not focus on the essays and, eventually, I am affected just because of the large number of students'. In addition, different teaching methods, whether across various institutions or even within one institution, may have a negative effect on the students' efforts and their confidence. After experiencing the privileged attention in the private college, **Interviewee 3** came to the state university overly confident, and they admitted that they did not work hard enough in the new environment, which resulted in a low grade and pushed them to take the university work more seriously and to work harder. They described the experience: 'Last term, I was shocked by my grade. I had a D, which I'd never had before in my life. I thought I was good at writing, so why should I bother. Yes, I did write, but I did not work as hard as my colleagues. They worked harder than me, but I was confident in myself'. This was in line with the comments of **Interviewee 7** and **Interviewee 2**, who described the transition to university L2 writing as 'problematic'.

In a trend similar to that of the school learning negative experience, some students may face difficulties with university learning itself, which makes them think of their previous experiences (whether at school or in the very early stages of university) as comparatively more positive than their current learning experiences. Accordingly, some students reported that their learning experiences, and consequently their feelings, changed from positive to negative. This could be related to a previous failure in the L2 writing module at university and other difficulties they faced. A shocking example of this was the case of **Interviewee 1**, a student in their final term of study (Level 8), who was still studying the L2 writing module of Level 3 (year 2, term 1). They failed the module twice and were studying it for the third time at the time of the interview. They reported that their L2 writing proficiency, experience and emotions were declining and worsening due to the recurring failure of one writing module (academic writing for Level 3). This is how they described their writing proficiency and feelings: 'It used to be so good, so good. I did not have fears, [but] now I have anxiety about this. I am afraid that I will fail it for the third time, [and] that's why my level in the writing is declining'. They clearly linked their low achievement in the writing module to their worry about failing the module for the

third time. They moved on to describe the shift in their situation: 'I used to participate more, do my homework instantly, keep asking the teacher how correct my writing is … now I feel [lazy]. I'm done, I've had the feeling of failing twice, so if there's a third time, then let it go'. When the interviewer looked for further clarification by asking, 'Is it laziness or worry?', the interviewee replied, 'Both of them, indeed'. They also expressed feelings of being 'scared' to write and feeling 'shocked' because of the low marks.

One student described the learning experience of L2 writing at university as boring and causing demotivation and a lack of interest due to the lack of freedom to select topics that interest the student, comparing it to the more engaging learning at high school (**Interviewee 9, follow-up interview**). Several other participants also repeatedly reported dissatisfaction with university learning and said that it ultimately did not meet their needs. Therefore, they thought they needed further training: 'The college has not yet given me an excellent English [education], so I have to [get] further training at [other] institutions so that I learn and develop more' (**Interviewee 1**).

It was interesting to find that these negative feelings were only associated with L2 writing for study purposes and not with the use of L2 for non-study purposes outside the classroom. In an attempt to explore, in more detail, the validity of the emotional standpoint with participants, they were asked whether their feelings of L2 writing anxiety or demotivation regarding the writing module had impacted their motivation to write freely outside the classroom. The answer of most of the interviewees was negative. **Interviewee 1** said, 'No, all my fears are just with the module, just in the college. Outside this context, it is normal', which proved that their feelings of worry were related to classroom academic writing but not the use of L2 writing outside the classroom. In fact, this interviewee also described (in another part of the interview) their plans to learn L3 and L4 and attempt the writing skill in those languages. This lack of feelings of anxiety regarding L2 writing outside the classroom was also mentioned by medium-achieving students, such as **Interviewee 8** (follow-up interview).

In the quantitative data, it was found that **Interviewee 1** had a relatively high level of motivation and a moderate anxiety score, with a mean of 4.17 in motivation and a mean of 3.36 in anxiety. The co-occurrence of both negative experiences and aspiring views reflects

the complexity of the emotional dispositions towards L2 writing within a female English major. Furthermore, this participant self-rated their L2 writing proficiency as intermediate. On the scale of 'poor', 'intermediate', 'upper intermediate', 'excellent' or 'I don't know', they did not select 'poor', despite having difficulties and failures in the academic writing module. When asked for an explanation of their thoughts, they reiterated that they knew their actual level of English writing by looking at their performance in the other modules in general: 'They all include writing … they are all good except this module in particular' (referring to the academic writing module).

It was reported that the decline in the quality of the university learning experience was related to several factors. One of the main factors was the teacher of the writing module, who was described by students as 'very strict', 'unapproachable' and demanding with 'unreachable expectations', and students stated that they '[don't] negotiate'. This was reported by **Interviewee 7**, who said that they avoided enrolling in the module when news about how strict and scary this particular teacher was spread among the students. Avoidance is one form of L2 writing anxiety described by Cheng (2004). With a shift in their experience, **Interviewee 1** reported being happy with their new teacher and described them as 'welcoming, approachable and more relaxed'. However, when this teacher was interviewed, they reported their concerns about the extremely low levels of students' writing proficiency and stated that all the students want is good grades without exerting much effort. The teachers' detailed views will be presented in the sections on the analysis of the teacher interviews (see Section 5.11.1 and 5.11.2). Participants sometimes depicted the university learning experience as negative based on the teacher's role. For example, **Interviewee 9** stated that the schoolteacher was comparatively better than the university teacher and, thus, the school experience was favoured. Positive points here included the schoolteacher being 'friendly', 'more encouraging' and 'giving us a lot of leeway', unlike university learning where the interviewee felt 'restricted'.

Another source of negative feelings in the university learning experience was the assessment. Knowing that their writing would be assessed and that their ideas, spelling and mistakes would be the focus of assessment was reported as a primary source of fear. Conversely, having the freedom to write and self-correct in settings outside the classroom made the students relaxed

and encouraged to try L2 writing, as reported by **Interviewee 1**. 'At home, it is so [easy]. If I make a mistake, I can check on Google and rewrite it, so [easy]', which relates to the earlier point about the co-occurrence of motivation and anxiety within one person in two different contexts.

Furthermore, it was found that teacher feedback was another source of negative feelings triggered by the negative learning experience at university. It was reported that the teacher provided delayed feedback on the students' writing tasks (**Interviewees 1, 6, 7 and 9**), which was disadvantageous for the students for understandable reasons. **Interviewee 6** stated, 'Initially she rarely [gave] us feedback [on writing tasks]; she mainly explains the grammatical [points] … she explains thoroughly, but she does not give us a chance to work together or provides feedback. "[Take] homework", that's all [that] she says. And then, when we come back, she does not check it, [and] we do not do it together as a class. We could not be silent about that, and we discussed that this method is not helping us. If we do not know the correct form of writing, we will never know how to write well'. **Interviewee 7** (follow-up) described how the students felt about the delayed feedback. 'She only gives us feedback after a week of compiling writing tasks. By that time, we would start to feel indifferent towards her correction comments because we [have] already figured out how to correct ourselves'. The same student complained that this delayed feedback was an issue because the teachers also had very high expectations of the students' writing proficiency that were difficult to reach; this comment was also mentioned by others, such as **Interviewees 1, 3 and 10**.

In some cases, the delayed feedback may occur as much as a month after the time of submitting the assignment. **Interviewee 1** reported that the writing assignment was in the form of a written portfolio, and they received the feedback on their portfolios towards the end of the term. According to their words, some of the fellow students were dissatisfied with their low grades, a problem that could have been prevented if the students had received instant feedback on their writing. **Interviewee 7** stated: 'I do believe that we should have more open discussion on the teacher's feedback. Maybe some of my colleagues had the chance to meet [with] her and talk about that issue; me, I'd rather save myself from conflicting with a teacher'.

On this issue of delayed feedback, it was clear that some of the students had potentially experienced negative learning experiences in the form of a vicious cycle: problem with L2 writing proficiency, teacher's high standards, teacher's delayed feedback, students' disagreement on feedback and lack of open discussion with the teacher (see Figure 6).
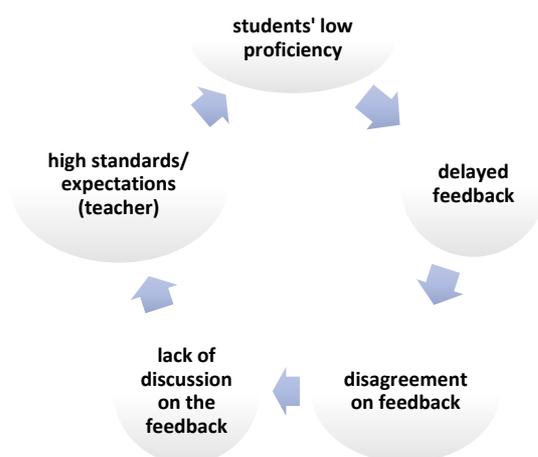
Figure 6: The vicious cycle of teachers' feedback on the students' writing according to the students' accounts

A further aspect to raise is that Interviewee 1's negative experience was found to be strongly related to the teacher's method of assessment and feedback since, even after having a new experience (with a new module teacher) that was described as positive, the fear still existed; thus, it had been transferred from being teacher-caused to being module-centred. This was in line with Alrabai's (2014) findings.

However, some learners realised the amount of development they had accomplished in writing for university studies when compared with their early learning experiences at school level, as indicated by **Interviewee 5**: 'My writing has become more extensive and more powerful', referring to the improvement at the university level. There was evidence of a shift in the feelings regarding the previous and current experiences of learning English in general as well as learning English writing. One interviewee described the current experience with excitement, saying, 'I like it', whereas when they talked about their previous experience of learning English at school, they used a different tone: 'It was just restricted to school learning, just as a curriculum, no further experiences' (**Interviewee 6**). Writing at university level was frequently described by students as extensive when compared with the limited opportunities

to practise writing during their school years. Some students found it difficult to cope with this, as mentioned by **Interviewee 7**, who described the curriculum as 'big' but 'not necessarily too difficult' (**Interviewee 7**, follow-up interview). Moreover, students were mature enough to realise the importance of what they were doing and the importance of working hard, with **Interviewee 4** stating that 'practice makes perfect', and that they had high aspirations, despite their worries. In addition, improvement in university learning was acknowledged and students were encouraged to use English outside the classroom, even if they did not necessarily excel at university. For example, **Interviewee 5** mentioned that they enjoyed using English outside the classroom to write about their feelings and life events. The importance of the amount of effort was highlighted, even if the transition to university was seen as problematic, as affirmed by **Interviewee 2**, who was keen to improve their L2 writing achievement, namely grades, despite having negative attitudes towards learning writing in general and L2 writing in particular.

In certain situations, a student may experience both negative and positive experiences at the same time. These experiences are not necessarily separable; rather, they are related to each other to a certain degree. A good example of this is one interviewee's experience of failure and success. A student in their last term at university (**Interviewee 10**) described their current, and rather mature, university learning experience as 'much more comfortable' and stated that they found the writing module 'easier' after failing it and having to study it again.

Another similar experience was found in the interesting and rich account of one of the participants who was in their final term of university but was still studying the writing module from Level 3 (year 2, term 1) due to two previous failures in this module (academic writing). They started by rating their level of writing proficiency as medium and then explained their views on the situation and how it relates to their L2 writing experience at university.

Regarding the marking schemes and grades, the participants generally appeared to be fully aware of the marking schemes of the writing modules throughout the different study levels (years). They had been made aware of the marking schemes at the start of the term as part of the syllabus, and they all reported that they were satisfied with them, with the exception of **Interviewee 9**, who reported their disagreement with the division of the marks, with 60 marks

dedicated to the final exam. They believed that this proportion was too large for one exam that occurs at the very end of the term. They said: 'It is the end of the year, we have unpleasant feelings, we could be frustrated, eager for the holiday, and we are shockingly working for 60 marks'. They suggested increasing the mark for the midterm exam so that it would be the same for the two exams. That comment raised an important issue regarding the dynamicity as a critical characteristic of L2 motivation, as they stated later: 'At the beginning, I am so motivated and can achieve well. Sometimes it is the final exam that impacts my grades'. Even though this issue was raised by a single participant, it may well be a common view among a wide range of students that were not included in this particular set of data. The change in students' motivation throughout the term can impact their experiences and grades; therefore, it should not be neglected.

Students' experiences at the university level are indeed varied, but overall, it can be seen that compared with school experiences, the learning experiences of L2 writing at university are new, more challenging and demanding. However, students are, of course, more mature, and they realise the challenges and attempt to overcome them by using a variety of methods. This shift in experiences and in mindset can indeed influence the emotional underpinning of learning writing in English at the university level in both the short term and the long term.

5.4 Milieu and Influence

One of the factors that was found to play a significant role in students' L2 writing learning experiences was the atmosphere. Students reported that family and social media were the two most influential factors that encouraged them to continue learning and practising L2 writing in English, whether inside or outside the classroom.

It was reported by students that family members were a critical source of encouragement to varying degrees. In some cases, the family members had little or no familiarity with English, yet they offered encouragement and support. In other cases, it appeared that motivation was contagious when a family member was acquainted with English and highly motivated to learn it and offer the student support. Interestingly, it was found that not all cases of family encouragement resulted in enhancing the students' motivation (either intrinsic or extrinsic), as will be seen below.

Family support can come in the form of encouraging the students to do better in education in general, and some learners were sensitive and resilient. **Interviewee 6** stated: 'My late father used to say that your education is the most important thing and language, language is very important these days' (referring to learning a second or FL). Interestingly, they added that they received further support from their husband, stating that 'he works in a college where most of the staff are foreigners [non-Arab], so he keeps learning and teaches me some new words and asks me about words that I have learnt'. This is immersive family encouragement, which highlights the significance of this factor in shaping the learning experience and thus the emotional underpinnings of students.

Three of the participants reported a lack of interest in writing (or even dislike), yet they continually received encouragement from their family members. **Interviewee 10** mentioned that members of their family did not speak English but that their mother was a good writer in Arabic (L1), and when they used to lazily ask their mother to do their composition homework, their mother would decline and encourage the student to do it. **Interviewee 7** stated that their father, a writer, hoped that their children would become writers too, which shows that they were eager to pass this skill on to their children.

Unfortunately, not all encouragement stories were fruitful. **Interviewee 7** added (referring to their father), 'But when he found out that we would not take up writing, he stopped talking about it'. The parent's encouragement was acknowledged by the children, yet this encouragement was not fruitful, so the father eventually gave up. This situation was similar to that of **Interviewee 10**, who amusingly concluded, 'Unfortunately, I never inherited that [the love of writing] from [my mother]', and **Interviewee 2** who stated, 'But honestly, I do not like [writing] that much', concluding with a shy laugh.

It was interesting to discover that it was acknowledged that family encouragement played an important role in supporting students; however, when this support was not sufficient, the student's motivation was not internalised. Even when the participants were exposed to parental encouragement, it was not sufficient for them to love and adopt the skill as a habit.

I conclude with stories from the opposite end. One participant who asserted that they had internalised motivation even though encouragement from family members was limited since

they 'do not know English' added that they sensed their sister's pride and admiration for their choice of English as their major: 'My family do not know English, so they give me little encouragement, but my sister, for instance, is encouraging me and proud, saying, "Your choice of English as a major is very good". I am the only one among them who knows'. They added, 'I have internal motivation' (**Interviewee 6**). Furthermore, there was evidence of a lack of support from family and even discouraging comments in the form of challenging and mocking the learner's ability, as reported by **Interviewee 1,** yet this had not impacted their internal motivation and resilience to try to develop L2 in all skills, including writing.

Other sources of influence that were mentioned by the participants included society, acknowledging English as a *lingua franca*, reflection on life experiences, TV, the internet and social media (this factor will be discussed in a separate subsection due to its high frequency-see section 5.6). These subthemes are discussed below.

It was found that TV helped with learning new vocabulary (**Interviewee 10**) and that it helped students to watch programmes in English without reading the subtitles (**Interviewee 6**) and to listen to English spoken by native speakers, encouraging the students to become as good as them (**Interviewee 2**). Furthermore, one participant mentioned the interesting point that their love of reflective writing about their own life experiences and emotions, sometimes even writing thank you notes to people in L2, played an integral role and encouraged them to try writing in English (**Interviewee 5**). It was also reported that the mindset of society was influential in the general experience of L2 learning, being open-minded and tolerant of the learners' language mistakes. As **Interviewee 3** stated, 'Now …society is …more and more open, nothing is considered wrong, [and] even if they laugh a little, it is like, okay, I can do it', which encouraged them to practise the L2 without being shy or afraid of making mistakes.

Internet resources were mentioned as a source of encouragement. 'One of the best ways that always encourages me is to read long articles from the internet, articles written by specialists, for instance' (**Interviewee 10**). The realisation of the importance of English as a *lingua franca* and watching or listening to native speakers made the learners focus on their language and aspire to be as fluent and proficient as them (**Interviewee 2**).

Finally, it was found that milieu was an important factor in shaping these learners' experiences and motivation to write in the L2, English. The sources of influence were varied, and their effect could also vary. It was found that family was a significant source of support for almost all the participants, even though the effect of this source may not always be as fruitful as was hoped. However, it should not be neglected that not all learners enjoyed the privilege of a supporting family and that family support may be of limited, if not contrasting, value. The participants also gained inspiration and support in various forms from across a wide range of channels, such as TV, the internet, social media and self-reflective writing, and even gained enthusiasm from society's views on the English language.

5.5 Attitude Towards L2 Writing

Even though English majors share a common interest in their university specialisation, they have varied attitudes towards L2 English writing, which is related to some extent to their emotional underpinnings. The data showed that most of the participants had a certain level of interest in writing, although that interest may not always develop into passion and, thus, motivation. Two participants expressed their dislike of writing as a skill in general and of L2 English writing in particular.

Although there were students who liked L2 writing in English, this positive attitude was dynamic; it changed according to different learning circumstances. **Interviewee 3** reported that they liked writing in English, but this feeling used to be stronger before they joined the university. The individual's attitude towards English writing was constantly affected by their learning experiences, which varied considerably across two different higher education institutions: previous experiences at a private college and current experiences at the government university. The individually tailored learning goals, the one-to-one or small-group instruction and the constant encouragement that the participant had previously enjoyed in the private college created more passion for writing than the stressful, highly competitive environment at the university. Although the participant still liked and enjoyed writing in English, they also had concerns due to the huge difference between the level of difficulty at the private college and the level in the university exam-oriented study.

Students could have complex feelings of liking L2 writing and even achieving high grades while also having a certain number of negative feelings. As **Interviewee 4** stated: 'I have been writing for a long time, ever since I was in the high school … I have fears and anxiety. I used to be so worried, especially when I was writing for grades. At that time, when the teacher gave compliments or said a positive thing, it affected me positively'. Although this interviewee liked learning English, they still had a fear of losing marks and were keen to make a good impression on teachers, which encouraged the student. This interviewee expressed their love of English, and although while interviewing them, I immediately sensed that they were affirmative, highly motivated and had a clear goal for their L2 writing, they openly expressed their mixed feelings of motivation and anxiety at the same time.

This student's positive attitude towards L2 writing was accompanied by the realisation of the progress they had made in their learning and the significance of effort and practice, as well as their aspiration to achieve further improvements in the future: 'I've noticed that I improved a lot, so I realise that practise makes perfect. My plan for the holiday is to write a lot and practise to reach my goal. I want my writing to be become excellent. I want to reach my goal'.

The social and communicative aspect of writing was highlighted by students. **Interviewee 6** expressed their developing interest in writing in English. This interest was only developed at the university level and did not exist during their school learning experience. This interest also fuelled their intrinsic motivation to practise English outside the classroom, communicate online with foreigners in English and be open to people's opinions and feedback about their writing in English.

In the same vein, a positive attitude towards L2 writing could be linked to other writing-related skills or hobbies a learner may have. For example, despite having a relatively low midterm grade, one participant (**Interviewee 5**) expressed their love of writing in English and linked it to their passion for free writing, expressing their own feelings in writing and writing stories or recording life events. There appeared to be a link between the attitude towards L2 writing and some of the personal characteristics of the participant. A hobby, skill or personal preference can enhance and maintain positive feelings about L2 and enhance the way a learner perceives

themself and their L2 writing (this learner rated themself as upper intermediate on the self-rating scale) despite their low achievement.

It was interesting that **Interviewee 4** (a very high-achieving student) and **Interviewee 5** (whose level of achievement in exams was low) selected scale three (upper intermediate) in the self-rating question in the quantitative set of data. This means that **Interviewee 4** (or any other low-achieving students) saw themself in the same way that high-achieving learners may see themselves, despite big differences in grades. The question remained: Since they both had positive attitudes towards L2 writing and a similar positive perception of their own L2 writing proficiency levels, and since they had relatively close levels of motivation and anxiety, what made their grades differ so significantly? The current study can, at least, rule out the emotional aspects; yet there are other variables that can be explored further in future studies. For example, future research may investigate whether this issue relates to the students' recognition that they are doing the best they can, their ambitions for achievement and their level of satisfaction and whether this could also relate to any differences in their learning abilities alongside other possible factors, such as their context and family.

Similar attitudes were held by **Interviewee 1**. Despite previous failures in and withdrawal from one of the writing modules, the participant believed that writing in English was not problematic, and they liked trying their hand at it; the only problem was that the student was worried about failing again. They maintained a positive tone when talking about their attitude: 'My experience in writing is good but not overall … I used to be good [in the writing module]. I had no fears or anything. Now, I have anxiety; I'm afraid of failing for the third time'. When asked, 'How do you rate yourself in writing in English?', she answered, 'Medium, not very high and not very low', despite being the lowest-achieving student among all the participants. In addition, the interviewee even expressed willingness to try and learn a third and fourth language: 'I want to try and learn other languages … Japanese and Spanish'. Interestingly, this reflects that even if a student is getting low grades in L2 writing, they may still have a positive attitude towards L2 writing. This attitude should be spotted by the teachers and nurtured for the good of the students to help them improve their achievement and move forward.

Conversely, can observe that there were medium-achieving or high-achieving students who lacked interest in or even had negative attitudes towards L2 writing in English. In most cases, the sole driver for these students to work hard and perform well was the grades. **Interviewee 2** stated frankly: 'I don't like writing. My learning experience is good, my grades are good … I don't like writing in general. In Arabic, I might write a bit, but I face more difficulty in English … grades are the most important thing'. This student had good learning experiences, both in school and at the university level and achieved and maintained high grades, yet their performance did not necessarily mirror their attitude towards L2 writing in English.

The like or dislike of writing in English may be related to the students' preference and talent in writing and not necessarily be related to a problem in acquiring a skill in an FL or L2. In this case, we should identify the weakness and its sources (for each specific learner) and help them to eliminate that weakness. For instance, the main reason **Interviewee 2** hated writing was that (according to their statement) they had difficulty forming ideas and putting them together, despite being good at grammar; this weakness was present in both their L1 and L2. In this case, there are some strategies that can be used by teachers to help the learner overcome their fear/dislike of the module. **Interviewee 2** mentioned (follow-up interview) 'preparation' as one these strategies. The student stated that by preparing before the class, they got to know what the topic was in advance and familiarised themself with it.

Based on the previous account of **Interviewee 2**, it can be stated that learners may perform very well and achieve high marks even if they do not show interest or engagement in the writing module or in writing as an acquired skill in general. Motivation for L2 writing does not necessarily mean liking/loving/having passion for the language, as this student (and probably many other students) did not like writing but still wanted to do well in the module and achieve a high grade. The level of difficulty of the module can be overcome by a willingness to succeed, which is a clear demonstration of external motivation being internalised. Students with this willingness have strategies to improve their grades even if they obtain low marks. As **Interviewee 2** frankly stated: 'Honestly, I just want to get good marks, even if I am not fully aware of the subject. I really want to learn the subject and want to learn writing, but I wish I could have been more proficient'. As an external motivational factor, grades can be adopted as a motive that drives a student to work hard, be successful and attain excellent results;

however, the student may have negative feelings about L2 writing, such as a dislike of the module, lack of willingness to write or dissatisfaction with the writing.

Attitudes towards L2 writing in English can be accompanied by complex feelings and views. As mentioned in section 5.4, although students realised the importance of the English language and the ability to use it in writing and may have had family support and role models, they believed that they were not as good as their parents, or could not be as good they are, and therefore they had little interest in writing in English (**Interviewees 7** and **10**). **Interviewee 7** stated in relation to their complex feelings to try and love writing English, 'It's a gift, and everyone is different'; however, this student still found the skill difficult to master and was therefore not highly motivated or positive about it. Sometimes change in the learning experiences demotivated a student and caused them to have a negative attitude towards writing in English (**Interviewee 9**).

It was reported by students that their lack of interest, or even dislike, was related to very specific aspects, such as personality, learning experience or linguistic difficulty. For example, **Interviewee 10** admitted that they were 'not a writer by nature'. Moreover, **Interviewee 7** stated that they were a good reader in Arabic but, no matter how hard they tried, they still had linguistic difficulties when writing in English. Part of that student's negative attitude was seen to be related to their learning experiences, as they expressed the unsatisfactory, little practise in writing they had at school when compared with the high-level, extensive writing at university, which made the transition to university difficult. A similar situation of a problematic transition to university was indirectly mentioned by **Interviewee 9** as they compared the learning situations and the teachers at school and university.

Even though these participants were in the English major programme, they had different attitudes towards L2 writing in English. It can be concluded that the link between L2 writing achievement and L2 attitude is not a straightforward one. High achievement in L2 writing does not necessarily mean a positive attitude towards L2 writing, and low-achieving learners can still have and maintain positive feelings about L2 writing. There appear to be high-achieving students who enjoy writing and aspire to improve, while other high-achieving students are only driven by grades and lack an interest in or even hate L2 writing. The lack of interest in L2

writing, or even disliking it, can be related to a complex range of feelings, beliefs, personal traits, learning experiences or linguistic difficulties.

5.6 L2 Writing Practice Outside the Classroom (Online and Offline)

Learners' willingness to practise or use a linguistic skill outside the classroom may tell us about their motivation to learn a language in non-formal, everyday life settings while not feeling obligated to perform compulsory tasks, such as those in the university study requirements.

Although the data revealed variations in the participants' levels of motivation to use or practise L2 writing outside the classroom, the students reported a common interest, which was using or practising writing in English on social media platforms. The participants reported that they enjoyed writing in English on WhatsApp by exchanging brief messages with their friends, using short sentences or quotes in English in Snapchat posts and, above all, practising writing on Twitter. It has not yet been determined whether the learners' L2 motivation and L2 anxiety in terms of L2 writing differed significantly across the two different contexts – writing lengthily for academic purposes and writing briefly for instant social media interactions. Nevertheless, the aspect of practising writing in such online communities, and its wide popularity among young people, cannot be neglected. Thus, this issue will be elaborated on in this section.

The theme of social media emerged as an answer to questions about two different issues: the amount of English used outside the university work and the factors that influenced students' motivation to write in English. In other words, when the participants were asked, 'Do you use writing in English outside university work?', which was intended to investigate one aspect of the learning experience, the answer led to social media. The same matter appeared when they were asked, 'What are the factors that influence your learning or your motivation to learn writing in English?', which was directed towards the motivating factors. This showed that social media is a two-sided factor: It offers an enjoyable platform for students to practise writing away from university requirements, and it simultaneously helps to shape, maintain and increase their motivation to write.

Twitter was repeatedly mentioned as one of the useful platforms to enhance L2 English writing. Using Twitter helped students reach out to people who do not speak Arabic, establish

connections with them, practise writing in English and exchange useful advice. The main reason behind seeking a non-Arab audience was to be able to communicate with them in English as a commonly understandable language, whereas if the audience were Arab, they would eventually opt to explain and discuss in Arabic as their common language.

The use of Twitter was linked to students' motivation to write. **Interviewee 4** mentioned that they used Twitter to practise writing and maintain their motivation to write. The participant stated: 'I write about what I hear when I hear an interesting saying in a film, for instance, especially when they are motivating things'. Here, the learner was advancing their knowledge of the L2 by not stopping after one step (watching an interesting film) but going further and applying this interest to a different skill (writing) on a platform that was appealing to them. Furthermore, in their account, the student reported that this practice was enjoyable for them, even though they did not necessarily receive considerable interaction from large audiences (other followers and users). When asked about people's interaction with their writing, they replied: 'There's not that much interaction. I just write about my feelings and the like, nothing big'. Moreover, **Interviewee 6** confirmed that this learner's experience reflects that using Twitter to practise writing can be beneficial in several ways: to practise, to motivate others and to maintain self-motivation. This was in line with **Interviewee 5**'s view. When they were asked, 'Does this motivate you?' (referring to writing in English on Twitter), they affirmed, 'Very much, it benefitted me a great deal in my English', and they added that they enjoyed trying to develop their English writing through social media, 'Particularly Twitter. It was originally designed for writing, exchanging feelings, events and the like. It is also a good opportunity to find foreigners and exchange tweets with them in English [i.e. people who do not speak Arabic]'. **Interviewee 6** said that the main goal of their use of Twitter was to 'develop my language and improve my writing', implying that the use of Twitter as a medium to practise English writing was actually planned, enjoyed and beneficial in the long term.

An important aspect in students' use of Twitter was that even though using a FL to write on an open platform may be a potentially embarrassing act, the learner would still do it, enjoy it and even make the best use of it (**Interviewees 4** and **6**). Furthermore, when **Interviewee 5** was asked whether they would ever feel embarrassed about trying to write in a FL on Twitter,

the student stated that they used Twitter anonymously, so there was no need to be embarrassed.

Regarding the difference between writing for university and writing on social media, **Interviewee 1** stated: 'The difference is that they require us to do certain points in a certain order, such as the introduction, then the body and then the conclusion [referring to academic writing]. But here I write generally, with no specific points required. I write however I want to [referring to her writing on social media]'. It can be seen that one reason for the learners' enjoyment of writing on social media was the amount of freedom it allowed them when compared with writing for university studies. To further investigate the learners' emotional states in these two distinctive contexts, I asked about whether their emotions changed accordingly, as they realised the difference between the two contexts of academic writing and writing for social media. The participant's answer confirmed this: 'Of course [they differ]. When I write by myself, no one is going to inspect my writing. It is different from when the teacher reads letter by letter, which scares me. I don't know what she will think of me, whether she is going to like it or not'. It can be posited that students realise the differences between writing for social media and writing for academic studies. Most importantly, their feelings about each medium differ: they are more anxious when writing for homework than when writing on social media. The freedom that is offered by social media may make the L2 learner willing to try and make them motivated, confident or, at least, less anxious when compared with writing for academic studies, which evokes feelings of anxiety and fear of evaluation.

To explore the aspect of emotional states regarding writing in the two different contexts in more detail, I expanded the discussion to explore the possibility that these emotions are transferrable from one context to another, asking 'Does this anxiety differ according to the context?' Fortunately, several interviewees reported that their negative feelings about writing in English were only associated with writing for study purposes and did not affect their willingness to use English outside the classroom or participate online using English writing. For instance, **Interviewee 1** stated: 'My fear is just for the module, for university, but outside, no, [it's] normal'. It was interesting that this student's feelings of worry (which were evident in the writing module) were not transferred to the use of L2 writing outside the classroom.

Interviewee 3, a student who used English writing offline, namely in their journals, agreed, stating, 'Of course, I prefer the non-academic writing because it is easier, there are no rules, but I believe that academic writing is more important than non-academic writing'.

Self-correction may be a pivotal aspect of the self-initiated practice of writing outside the classroom in general or on social media. As **Interviewee 1** commented, 'How the teacher evaluates my writing, my ideas, spellings and mistakes … this evaluation is what scares me. But at home on social media, it is okay. If I make mistakes, I can check on Google, correct and rewrite, which is not like the stressful, timed writing tasks in the classroom or during exams'. It can be summarised that in terms of language learning motivation, Twitter has three main properties that encourage L2 learners to write in the L2: opportunity to practise self-correction, user anonymity and the ability to reach a wide audience who can interact in the L2 (particularly a non-Arab audience in this case).
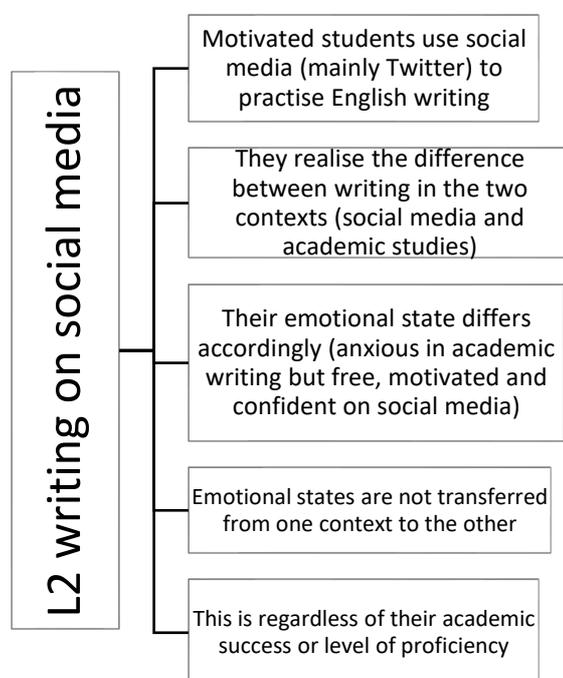
Figure 7: Characteristics of the students' use of L2 writing on social media

Other resources that had been deployed by the students to use (or enhance) their L2 writing in English were the online resources (other than social media). One participant (**Interviewee 4**) mentioned their plan for the holiday was to use one of the language learning applications

to improve their English. This piece of data was checked in the follow-up interview with this participant.

Writing diaries was mentioned by students as a way to practise L2 English writing in daily life. **Interviewee 3** stated: 'I write my diaries sometimes'. When the interviewer tried to explore this student's feelings about writing for non-study purposes in more detail and whether they saw writing diaries as a burden, they said, 'No, no, it is easy. Even when I feel a word is difficult, I just try to find an easy alternative'. This showed that the student's feelings of L2 writing anxiety (that were explored in the interview) had not impacted their choice to write diaries as a form of intentional effort to use L2 writing for personal enjoyment and non-study purposes. Another interesting aspect was the coping strategy that was used to overcome linguistic difficulties, which was in line with the previously highlighted strategy of self-correction used by **Interviewee 1**.

In a similar vein, a learner may use English writing both online and offline but not extensively. One participant (**Interviewee 5)** reported that they chose to write in English when expressing their feelings to their friends in notes: 'When a friend gives me a gift, I thank her and express my feelings'. This type of writing can be brief, borrowed from existing resources or even include errors, and its benefit as a method of communicating in L2 by choice and not by pressure cannot be neglected. In addition, this participant wrote on Twitter: 'It is essentially for writing, communicating feelings, events and so forth. It is a good opportunity to find non-Arab people'. It should be noted that although this participant was categorised as low achieving, they attempted to practise writing in English outside the university study context. When asked about their feelings and whether they would feel embarrassed if they made errors in their Tweets, the participant replied, 'No because I'm anonymous after all'. It seems that one of the advantages of social media platforms is that they provide a sense of openness and security at the same time.

It is important to mention that a minimal link was found between the students' willingness and motivation to improve their L2 writing outside the classroom and beyond university study work and their level of achievement in the writing module. In other words, among the students who enjoyed practising English writing outside the classroom, whether online or

offline, there was wide variation in their levels of achievement, bearing in mind that the variable of achievement was primarily measured quantitatively by midterm exam grades and the GT of the writing module. Furthermore, the qualitative interviews revealed that some high-achieving students were not eager to improve their English writing through practise beyond university homework and classwork. They lacked the willingness to seek and find opportunities to practise L2 writing in English for non-study purposes. Despite being an excellent student, **Interviewee 2** did not attempt to use writing in English outside university work. This student stated that their practice of writing in English was restricted to homework and exams and was unwilling to use it for other purposes. They said, 'Honestly, if I hadn't had the writing module as a mandatory module, I wouldn't practise writing'. By discussing this further, it was found that this was related to two main aspects: their attitude towards writing (both in L1 and in L2) and the linguistic difficulties they faced. This is elaborated upon later in this chapter. Nevertheless, this student did emphasise working hard on the module to maintain their excellent level of academic achievement despite their attitude towards the module and the skill of writing in general.

It may be useful indicate which students tended to use English outside the classroom for the purpose of practising and improving their English writing. The following list summarises the students' level of achievement and their orientations in terms of willingness to use or improve their English writing beyond the university study work.

Interviewee 1 was a low-achieving student who enjoyed writing on Twitter in English as a means to improve their English writing. The student believed that self-correction was feasible in online platforms outside the classroom.

Interviewee 2 was a high-achieving student who was unwilling to use English writing outside the classroom and beyond homework (both online and offline) and was only keen to maintain their high grades by working hard on the module.

Interviewee 3 was a medium-achieving student who enjoyed writing their diaries in English. Despite expressing anxiety when doing academic writing, this student was the only participant who rated themselves as 'excellent' in L2 writing, reflecting their very positive vision of their L2 writing motivation and writing ability.

Interviewee 4 was a high-achieving student who enjoyed using Twitter to practise English writing, maintain their motivation, write in L2 and motivate others, despite the lack of interaction from others.

Interviewee 5 loved trying to improve their English through social media as well as university study. They used Twitter as a platform for writing to exchange feelings and events, particularly with 'foreigners' (non-Arab people). This student also enjoyed expressing their emotions in written English (diaries).

Interviewee 6 was a high-achieving student who enjoyed writing often on social media, especially on Twitter. The student connected with a group of fellow learners of various levels, and they exchanged feedback.

Interviewee 7 was a medium-ability student who, despite having negative experiences in early learning and acquiring the writing skill (L1 and L2), attempted to write on Twitter and exchanged ideas and feedback with non-Arab people.

Interviewee 8 enjoyed writing briefly on social media (Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat). This student felt excited about writing in a language that was not their mother tongue and expected to continue writing in English after graduation to continue improving.

Interviewee 9 was a low-achieving student who enjoyed writing in L1 and tried to write in L2; however, they had a negative attitude towards homework, as they felt 'restricted'. They also enjoyed writing on Twitter in English.

Interviewee 10 was a low-achieving student who did not like to do any writing other than homework. On rare occasions, they attempted to write on Twitter in English.

Several findings can be elicited from the above discussion. Despite being English majors, the students varied in their willingness to use L2 outside the classroom, particularly in terms of writing in English. Some students enjoyed writing for non-study purposes, whereas others did not like to practise writing in English other than for compulsory homework, regardless of their level of achievement in L2 writing. How good a student's achievement is may be related to the level of their effort and proficiency; however, high achievement does not necessarily indicate that the student enjoys the writing or is willing to use, practise or improve their L2

writing beyond university work. High achievement does not necessarily motivate the learner to seriously seek opportunities to improve by practising L2 writing other than for homework. Social media stands out as a popular online platform to use for writing in English, despite the differences between academic writing and the brief, and somewhat informal, writing on social media.

5.7 Visions of the Ideal L2 Self as a Source of L2 Writing Motivation

The specific sources of L2 motivation (as a part of RQ4: What are the sources of L2 writing motivation?) were explored through the lens of the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2010). The ideal self and ought-to self are two main components of the theory. The ideal self includes learners' vision(s) of what they wish and aspire to do or become in the future; the ought-to self includes their thoughts about what they feel they are obligated to do and the outcome that they feel they have to reach to achieve certain goals or avoid possible negative outcomes. According to the interview data, a learner may have multiple sources of motivation and not one single exclusive source. In addition, these sources can be of various types, e.g. a learner may have visions of both the ideal self and the ought-to self that together shape their overall L2 writing motivation. For example, a student may wish to achieve good grades (source of L2 writing motivation from the ought-to self) in addition to aspiring to have a dream job in the future or fulfilling a dream (source of L2 writing motivation from the ideal self).

The interviews with the students revealed a strong presence of their visions of their ideal L2 selves and the contribution of these visions to enhancing their motivation to improve their English L2 writing skills. Those visions may relate specifically to a better self in English language proficiency, including writing fluency, or they might relate to a more general dream, such as aspiring to have a prestigious job in which mastery of English writing is essential. Although visions of the ideal self L2 motivation in writing were described by several participants, only the accounts of **Interviewees 3 and 4** will be included here as examples due to the depth of their accounts.

When **Interviewee 4** was asked to rate their level of L2 writing motivation as low, high or fluctuating, they promptly confirmed that it was 'high'. The student described their vision of their level of L2 writing motivation clearly and positively, stating, 'I want to have an excellent

level of writing (in English) and be able to show it to people'. When asked if they expected that their English writing level would, someday, approximate the writing level of a native speaker, they confidently answered, 'Yes, God willing'. In further discussion about their vision, the student mentioned that their future job requires being excellent at English writing: 'Since I love English, I certainly want to perfect my skills, and my future job requires that … I want to be a professor in English'. This indicated several things, the first of which was that the learner had a high level of motivation. They also had a positive attitude towards the language, which was more like a passion, and they had a clear goal for the future. It should be noted that in other parts of the interview, this interviewee stated that they experienced L2 writing anxiety; however, their motivation appeared to be well maintained, and they were able to overcome the negative emotions they experienced in certain situations.

Learners' visions may be goals that were seriously set and being worked towards, or they may be no more than sheer fantasies or hopes. What distinguishes these two types of visions is the amount of effort and the seriousness of the steps that are taken and plans that are made to achieve those aims and attain the aspired visions. **Interviewee 4** described their plan for achieving their goal: 'One of my plans for the holiday is to write a lot and to keep practising to reach my future goal. I want my writing to be of an excellent level, I mean, I want to reach a goal'. The student continued positively: 'I believe that I will get [what] I … want, which I am working on right now'. The researcher attempted to test the solidity of the student's vision by asking questions that included negative scenarios, such as 'What if, at some point, your grades decline, or you receive criticism about your writing?'. The interviewee's answer reflected their resilience: 'If I receive criticism, surely it will upset me a little, but on the other hand, it will push me further to learn more'. Later in their interview they mentioned their plan to improve their L2 by joining one of the online learning applications: 'I am [now] too busy with the university, but for the holiday, I have plans. I may work on my Cambly application. I can practise writing there [in English] because there are tutors who can show me my mistakes or anything I want from them' (Cambly is an online English learning platform based on live interactions between learners and teachers). This reflects how serious their vision was. The vividness of the participant's vision, the serious plans that were made to reach the goal(s) and

the resilience and commitment that enabled the learner to overcome negativity and move on were effective ingredients for strong, long-term L2 writing motivation.

The follow-up interview with **Interviewee 4** enabled the researcher to check the validity of their statement. More than a year after the first interview, I had the opportunity to speak to the interviewee again and obtained updates on their emotions, vision and plans. The first thing that struck the researcher was the interviewee's choice to speak English during the interview, and as we started talking, their confident, fluent American accent was astounding. Although the interview language was chosen by participants, it should be noted that none of the other participating students used English in their interviews, even though they were English majors. The researcher had indicated prior to the interviews that the participants could choose to speak in Arabic (L1) or in English; however, they all seemed reluctant to speak in English at length and preferred to speak in Arabic, only using code-switching with a few phrases in English here and there. This reluctance to use the L2 in their interviews was probably due to their lack of confidence to engage in a lengthy interaction in which they had to use a variety of expressions. This was confirmed by the students themselves, as they timidly informed the researcher prior to their interview that the reasons they were opting to speak in Arabic were, 'I feel more comfortable' speaking in Arabic, 'it feels easier' to speak in Arabic or 'I'm worried that I won't be able to express myself well in English'. What may appear to be a simple technical procedure (the language of the interview) can tell the researcher about the participants' feelings, motivation, worries or confidence.

The follow-up interview with **Interviewee 4** confirmed the findings of the first interview regarding their motivational vision. Regarding the level of their L2 writing motivation, the student stated, 'It's high'. In terms of their level of achievement, they said, 'I got good grades, and the teachers liked my writing', explaining that even after completing the three mandatory writing modules, they enjoyed writing 'freely'. Furthermore, the researcher checked the validity of the learner's previously expressed professional goal and its role as a source of their vision of the ideal L2 self by asking what encouraged them and maintained their motivation. The answer confirmed the original findings: 'When I remember that my writing will help me a lot in my education and my career'. Moreover, it was found that what had been referred to as a plan in the first interview with them had become a reality, namely, they had succeeded

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in joining Cambly and positively reported that they had been enjoying practising writing in English and had benefitted a great deal.

Discussing L2 writing motivation and its sources with **Interviewee 3** also presented a positive picture, similar to that of **Interviewee 4**. After talking about the role of family (discussed in Section **5.4**) in encouraging them, the discussion moved to their vision of an ideal job. This student stated, 'I do believe that writing (in English) is very important; it is important for my future job. I am going to write and read reports, or I might edit them. My CV must be written in English, so my writing has to be very good for me to be able to present my CV to any government or private sector'. When asked about the things that influenced their motivation, they promptly answered: 'I believe I will work in a place where I have to write reports in English, God willing. I am very confident that I will work in an embassy or in an international university'. It was clear from the statement that they linked L2 English writing with having a prestigious job in the future and that this shaped her L2 writing motivation. This clear vision of the ideal self in the future, which was revealed in an answer about the motivating sources, suggested that this interviewee had a strong vision of the ideal self that was related to their motivation for L2 writing. The participant thought about their future job, its routine tasks and what they had to obtain and do to achieve this goal, including the practicalities of the job application and work tasks. In this case, the learner did receive support from family, which positively influenced her L2 learning, yet what seemed to be driving them the most was their vision of the ideal self in the future. That vision was related to a demanding high-status position in an important sector, which was something that could not be obtained in the very near future, yet this vision was sufficiently vivid and strong to the point that it contributed significantly to their motivation regarding the most unnatural skill in L2 learning, namely writing.

The ideal L2 self is, however, not necessarily restricted to a future career; it can be related to a better self in terms of the global aim of L2 proficiency. **Interviewee 6** reported their eagerness to improve their writing since they wanted to be 'very good at it' and confirmed, 'I do have internal motivation'. Internal motivation is one of the main characteristics that distinguish ideal L2 self-motivation from ought-to self-motivation, in which the learners' L2 motivation is largely shaped by significant others (e.g. family) or external drives (having to

pass an exam). After meeting this participant more than a year after the first interview, this internal motivation did not appear to have been impacted. Rather, it had developed into a clearer vision – 'I am thinking of pursuing higher studies, getting an MA' – despite having mentioned the time pressure and workload of the university study. Although this participant was high achieving, they confirmed that grades were not their main drive; instead, it was their eagerness to improve their L2 writing: 'I'm very keen to improve my writing skills, regardless of the grades'. Nevertheless, they emphasised the importance of grades and their desire for higher achievement, stating, 'I am really not satisfied with it', and referring to their 4.49/5 GPA, 'I'm still fighting for it. Yes, it is high but the number after the decimal point means a lot to me'.

Dynamicity is a natural thing in motivation, even if it is internal. **Interviewee 6** described their motivation as 'fluctuating but mostly high'. There could be various reasons for the fluctuation in L2 writing motivation. **Interviewee 6** stated (follow-up interview) that it was mainly caused by two things: workload and negative feedback. Motivation may be higher at the start of the term when students make a fresh start, but by the middle and end of the term, they may experience a dip in their motivation due to time pressure and workload. **Interviewee 3** agreed with **Interviewee 6** in terms of the negative feedback and how it impacted their motivation in a negative way. Both learners reported that they cared about the teacher's opinion of their writing and felt a little discouraged when their teacher gave negative feedback. Conversely, they were happy, content, confident and encouraged to write more when the teacher complimented them on their writing.

All the participants discussed in this section had one thing in common: strong ideal L2 writing motivation. By looking at the other characteristics of these participants to identify links between the L2MSS and the other variables (see Table 26), it can be observed that these students varied in terms of both the objective variable (achievement) and the subjective variable (self-rating).

Participant	Level of study and writing module level	Achievement	Self-rating	Motivation mean
Interviewee 3	Studying L3 Academic Writing 3	Mid-term (out of 40) = 35 Category = medium GT = 90	4 (Excellent)	3.07
Interviewee 4	Studying L1 Writing 1	Mid-term (out of 20) = 20 Category = high GT = 100	3 (upper intermediate)	4.17
Interviewee 6	Studying L1 Writing 1	Mid-term (out of 20) = 19 Category = medium GT = 92	2 (intermediate)	3.83

Table 26: Characteristics of participants with an ideal-self vision of L2 writing motivation

In Table 26, the level of study refers to the year and term the learner was in, and the writing module level refers to which writing module the learner was taking. All three learners in this section followed the programme plan, which means there had been no withdrawals from the writing module or previous failure. The achievement of the participants is classified as high, medium and low, and it can be seen that none of the participants who had expressed strong ideal L2 motivation were low achieving, as their level of achievement was either high (**Interviewee 4**) or medium (**Interviewees 3** and **6**). Finally, their self-perception of their L2 writing proficiency varied. The high-achieving student rated their L2 writing proficiency as 'upper intermediate', which was lower than their medium-achieving colleague, **Interviewee**

3, who rated her L2 writing proficiency as 'excellent'. However, looking at the level of study, it can be seen that **Interviewee 3** was a year ahead of **Interviewee 4**, which may mean that maturity and study year may have contributed to this variation. The next section will explore the other types of vision that shape the students' L2 writing motivational self. The participants' accounts of their strong vision of the ideal L2 self explain the quantitative findings (see **Chapter 4**) related to the variable of the ideal L2 self, being the most predictive variable of the overall L2 writing motivation (out of the three components, i.e. the ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and learning experience).

5.8 Visions of the Ought-to Self as a Source of L2 Writing Motivation

The second category of the L2MSS is ought-to self-motivation, in which the learners expressed their visions of what they had to be or what they were supposed to obtain. These sources of L2 writing motivation are not internalised within the learner and are largely shaped by external effects.

It was found that grades were one of the main factors that drove the students in terms of the ought-to self L2 writing motivation. **Interviewee 2**, a high-achieving student, clearly stated that 'grades are the most important thing'. After explaining their negative attitude towards L2 writing (see Section **5.5 Attitude Towards L2 Writing**), they stated, 'Honestly, I just want to get good marks, even if I am not fully aware of the subject'. They explained that getting used to being an excellent student makes a student want to do anything to maintain their high academic achievement, regardless of their attitude towards the subject or how difficult the subject is. This participant also reported that family and native speakers were influences that shaped their external motivation. Their family supported them, their mother encouraged them to write and 'seeing native speakers and proficient people and their accent … makes me want to be proficient like them'. However, the student added that since these influences did not stem from an internal passion and motivation to write, they were not sufficient to make them love L2 writing, stating, 'I don't like writing'. This was explained earlier. Eagerness to obtain good grades helped this participant gain high marks, despite their negative attitude towards L1 and L2 writing and the difficulties they faced when writing.

It can be observed that if a learner lacked a vision of the ideal L2 self-motivation, they pursued certain goals that were largely institutional (related to having to achieve academic success instead of an internal willingness to practise writing). In fact, the mean scores of **Interviewee 2** for L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety (see Table 27) show that the student scored higher in L2 writing anxiety than in motivation and that their motivation was close to the low end of the moderate range, i.e. 2–4 on the Likert scale. This suggests that some learners have a complicated combination of ought-to and ideal visions. For example, this learner (Interviewee 2) had an overall ideal L2 motivational self that was related to obtaining academic success; however, with respect to the specific domain of writing in L2, their vision was entirely related to an ought-to perception of having to pass the writing module with high grades in order to maintain their overall academic excellence. Clearly, learners with such a complex emotional disposition will find themselves having to achieve certain goals and trying to avoid possible negative outcomes, and this can trigger anxiety, as can be seen in this interviewee.

Although the quantitative findings showed a significant positive relationship between motivation and achievement, the qualitative data found examples of different cases. According to the qualitative interviews, there were cases of high-achieving students not being highly motivated. In fact, their level of anxiety was higher than their level of motivation. Based on this finding, one can say that high achievement is not necessarily always driven by a motivated attitude, and high grades may be accompanied by feelings of anxiety. It is clear that in such cases, the relationship between motivation, anxiety and achievement is not necessarily one of cause and effect, and that not all students who achieve well in the writing module are necessarily motivated. We should bear in mind that there may be cases of anxious students among the high-achieving students. This would lead to various educational/instructional as well as psycholinguistic implications that should be considered by researchers and practitioners.

Furthermore, it was found that ought-to self-motivation fluctuated, rather than being a stable aspect. Its level or its density was usually impacted by external factors. **Interviewee 2** stated that their motivation 'keeps changing' and what influences it is, 'When I write an essay, complete it and get it corrected and I find out that I [got] a good mark, then I feel motivated

to write'. When they were asked what would happen if they did not obtain the anticipated good mark, they answered: 'It [would] definitely make me frustrated, but I [would] have to try and make it up to get a better grade'. This clearly shows that the student's motivation was related to how satisfying the reward (grade) was.

Participant	Level of study and writing module level	Achievement	Self-rating	Mean of motivation	Mean of anxiety
Interviewee 2	Studying L3 Academic writing 3	Mid-term (out of 40) = 40 Category = high GT = 100	2 (intermediate)	2.88	4.32
Interviewee 7	Studying L4 Writing 2	Mid-term (out of 20) = 15.5 Category= medium GT = 81	2 (intermediate)	4.05	3.68

Table 27: Characteristics of participants with a vision of the ought-to self of L2 writing motivation

Interviewee 7 was a medium-achieving student (see Table 27). This learner described their motivation for L2 writing as fluctuating and not internalised; rather, it was largely shaped by their learning experiences and related to classroom practices. They had little motivation at the start of the term, but it gradually increased as they experienced L2 writing and got used to it. She stated (in her follow-up interview), 'It is fluctuating. At the beginning of the term, I did not want to write at all, but now [it] is getting easier and more comfortable'. This contrasted with the view of **Interviewee 6**, who had a vision of the ideal self and had a higher

level of motivation at the start of the term, which seemed to slowly decline as study responsibilities exerted more pressure during the middle and towards the end of the term.

When **Interviewee 7** talked about what shaped their motivation, they referred to two main aspects: the teacher and the curriculum. Regarding the teacher, the student reported different experiences, as they experienced different types of emotions with two different teachers. The first teacher evoked negative feelings: 'She used to mock us a lot. When anyone wrote a sentence, she would criticise it harshly. She [took] things as a conflict. She used to say to us, "You do not know how to write" [and], "No one is going to pass it". It was too hard, so I had to withdraw from the module'. This was very different from the way they described their current teacher, after re-enrolling in the module: 'The teacher who is teaching us now is very easy to understand. She makes writing easy for us … she explains [in detail], and she taught us brainstorming, which is very helpful. She simplifies things and was not very strict right from the beginning … she makes us feel comfortable'. This participant provided a lengthy positive description of their current teacher that reflected their feelings about this teacher and the extent to which this shift in experience shaped her emotions.

Regarding the curriculum, **Interviewee 7** stated (in the follow-up interview) that the curriculum was 'generally easy' but that what caused their motivation to write to change was the topic of the writing task. They said, 'If the writing topic is about something I love or something that I am knowledgeable about, I am encouraged to write, and I have connected ideas'. When asked to give an example of interesting topics to write about, they said, 'Technology. I love it. The books have some topics about technology, so I used to write about that a lot'. Later in the interview, this participant was asked about feelings of anxiety and what provokes them. They mentioned the topic of writing again; however, this time they stated that it played a role in triggering anxiety if it was difficult or something that was not of interest, as will be seen later in this chapter.

Looking back at the learning experiences of this learner and their attitude towards L2 writing, it is evident that they had a somewhat negative attitude towards writing in general, as they described it as 'a gift, and everyone is different', indicating that the learner has little control over it. Although they had parental encouragement, the student admitted that it was not

sufficient to make them love writing. Furthermore, they did not mention the significance of grades in motivating them; instead, their motivation was shaped by their learning experiences, primarily the aspects related to the teacher and the curriculum.

These two examples described learners who were driven mainly by their views of the ought-to self of L2 writing motivation. Table 27 shows that these two learners' ratings in self-perception of their writing proficiency were the same, despite the vast difference in their level of achievement. They both rated themselves as 'intermediate' in their L2 writing proficiency self-rating, yet one is an excellent student (GT = 100), and the other is at the low end of the medium level (GT = 81). This suggests that high achievers might see themselves as having the same level of L2 writing proficiency as those who have a far lower level of proficiency. Self-perception may be related to affective factors, i.e. the learners see themselves as less motivated or their motivation is restricted by external factors, rather than having a strong vision of the ought-to self. Self-rating can also be linked to negative emotions, as will be seen in the following section about sources of L2 writing anxiety.

5.9 Sources of L2 Writing Anxiety

This section highlights the main sources of L2 writing anxiety from the students' perspectives (see Figure 8). After analysing the interviews and reviewing the main sources that were repeatedly mentioned as evoking the students' feelings of anxiety, it can be suggested that the sources of L2 writing anxiety may be grouped in three main categories: skill-related sources, instruction-related sources and learners' personality-related sources. Skill-related sources are factors that were elicited in relation to the students' linguistic ability in acquiring writing as a skill in addition to their attitude towards writing in general, whether in L2 or even L1. Proficiency in L2 and language difficulties in L2 can also be included in this category. Instruction-related sources include factors that are related to classroom instruction components, including the types of writing tasks, the topic of the writing, the assessment and grades. Time pressure and test anxiety can also be included in this category. State anxiety can fall into either of the previous sources, as students might have state anxiety because of linguistic difficulties (skill-related) or experience anxiety as a result of performing a certain type of writing task (which belongs to the instruction-related source of anxiety). Finally,

learners' personality-related sources are the anxiety stimulants that stem from the learners' personality characteristics and self-conception, such as their lack of confidence or their perfectionist tendencies. This category can be relevant to the idea of anxiety being a trait rather than a state anxiety. Figure 8 summarises the three main categories of L2 writing anxiety sources elicited from the students' interviews.
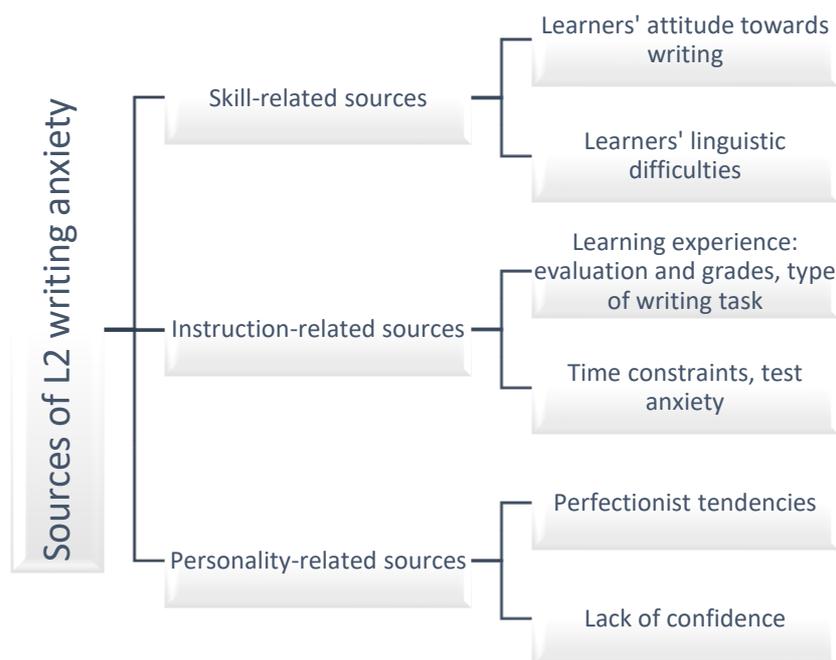
Figure 8: Sources of L2 writing anxiety

Skill-related sources of L2 writing anxiety are sources that are related to writing as an acquired skill, students' attitude towards its and the linguistic difficulties that they face in acquiring this skill. Participants reported a group of factors that contributed to their L2 writing anxiety and were related to writing as a skill. These included a variety of factors that were related to their negative attitudes towards the skill of writing in general, whether in L2 or even in their mother tongue, in addition to factors that were related to the students' linguistic ability, or lack of ability, in L2 writing.

Among the linguistic difficulties that students reported as a source of skill-specific anxiety were grammar, spelling and generating ideas. Some students had more than one of these difficulties, whereas others had a single source of difficulty that contributed to their L2 writing anxiety. For example, **Interviewee 10** described their complex worries about spelling and their

fear of making mistakes, stating, 'I have no problem generating ideas, but what really scares me is spelling mistakes, especially when trying to work fast. Sometimes there are accidental errors that I repeat again and again, so I can identify my mistakes and correct them'. **Interviewee 5** expressed their worries regarding grammar, stating, 'Grammar is my biggest fear. I have a certain idea, but I can't form it in the correct way grammatically, be accurate in grammar'. **Interviewee 2** said: 'Generating ideas and organising them is what is troubling me. I face difficulty in this, and even if I generate the ideas, I am faced with organising them'. **Interviewee 3** mentioned that their fears stemmed from a combination of factors, such as 'spelling mistakes' and the worry of making mistakes in addition to 'not being able to express [myself] properly and that my writing might be misunderstood due to the wrong choice, and not being able to deliver the meaning clearly, comprehensively and briefly'. Another source of linguistic difficulty that was mentioned was unfamiliar language content. For example, **Interviewee 8** said: 'I feel anxious when I am faced with a lot of new words or when the teacher asks us to use new words. I get frustrated'.

Examples of instruction-related sources of L2 writing anxiety are the topic and the type of writing task. Certain types of writing tasks can cause anxiety or demotivation. The students reported that there were certain types of writing tasks that made them worried or demotivated to write. These feelings could be related to the length of the task, the topic being boring and the type of the question causing confusion. The discussion with **Interviewee 10** around the linguistic difficulties as a skill-related source of anxiety naturally led to the interviewer asking whether there were any particular types of writing tasks (instruction-related sources) that demotivated her or made her worry. She replied that, 'the length of the essay' might 'distract' the learner and 'the longer the essay, the more demotivated I get'. This makes her 'more prone to making mistakes, and one might run out of ideas'. This was compared with writing on Twitter or social media, which was mentioned as 'brief and simple' and 'not going to be evaluated with grades'. The topic of the writing could also be a source of anxiety. Examples of this were the topic being boring or repeated, 'it demotivates me to work hard' (**Interviewee 10**), or the topic being irrelevant from the learner's perspective. **Interviewee 4** said: 'When I have to write about something that is supposed to have happened to me in the past or a challenge, because sometimes these suggested topics have never really

happened to me, [and] I have to imagine and create a plot that I did not really experience'. This student also mentioned descriptive writing: 'When they ask us to describe something, I feel it is too complicated [because] they want me to write a lot to describe one simple thing'. **Interviewee 7** stated (follow-up interview): 'What makes me anxious is when I am required to write about difficult topics, like political, scientific or medical topics. I am not a medical student who is able to talk about them, so it is very difficult for me'.

Assessment, academic evaluation (exams and quizzes) and grades were significant sources related to instructional factors of L2 writing anxiety. **Interviewee 2**, who was an excellent student, said: 'Losing marks is my main source of anxiety. When someone evaluates my writing, I feel frustrated'. Constantly aiming for correctness was also mentioned, as stated by **Interviewee 3:** 'I worry because there are marks, and I want to write correct sentences, correct words'. **Interviewees 5** and **6** reported their feelings of test anxiety. **Interviewee 6** said: 'When I am at home, I'm organised and can manage my time and arrange my ideas. I also have the dictionary to check my spelling. But in exams, I certainly feel more anxious. I am restricted to a limited time, which I hate. Even if there's a long time. [Sometimes] I do have the ideas, but I just freeze because I feel I don't have time, [and] thinking takes time. That's what always ruins my exam results'. This source of anxiety might be associated with a strong vision of ought-to self-motivation.

This factor revealed how feelings of anxiety can be contextual. Participants reported that those negative feelings can be related to university requirements and the academic writing and may be less prevalent in situations outside the context of university study purposes. This was confirmed by all the participants. For example, **Interviewee 2** explained, 'Yes, definitely, research and academic writing has to be very accurate and has to adhere to certain rules. It's more difficult. When I am writing freely, I don't feel anxious'.

Personality characteristics sources include personality traits that are part of the learner's overall persona and related to the learner's feelings of anxiety, fear, worries, lack of confidence, low self-esteem and perfectionist tendencies. These sources are complex, as some of these personality characteristics are general traits that are part of the learner's overall anxious persona, whereas other learners only experience these negative feelings in situations

of L2 writing learning. The former is related to the student's trait anxiety, whereas the latter can be related more to state anxiety, when the anxiety is not a general trend within the student but is only evoked in certain learning situations. When they were asked about their emotions, **Interviewee 1** reported that their L2 writing anxiety stemmed from their lack of confidence in L2 academic writing and that this posed a challenge to their learning. They said: 'I am not confident when it comes to the writing module … I am afraid … I am even afraid to participate in the class. I am afraid that if I say something, it will turn out to be wrong and then I will start blaming myself, asking myself why I would make mistakes. I am in level 8, so I should not make mistakes'. Since this student is in the final year at the university, they reported having an unpleasant mixture of feelings that included being excited to graduate and still having anxiety and fears. The student suggested that these feelings might be caused by their previous failure in the module. This statement provides evidence of the complexity of the emotional dispositions in which components of personal characteristics are linked to factors from the learning experience.

Anxiety might be triggered by a lack of confidence, even if the learner is motivated and high achieving (Figure 9). **Interviewee 4** was an excellent student with a clear vision of ideal self-motivation, yet they expressed feelings of English writing anxiety due to their lack of self-confidence: 'I lack confidence in my writing. I am worried that my writing is of a low level or even childish [stated with a shy laugh] … or due to my inability to deliver the meaning as I want to'. This lack of confidence was sometimes accompanied by comparisons with others. **Interviewee 4** stated: 'There are many others who write far better than me on Twitter and everywhere'. It is worth noting that this participant had mentioned earlier that they voluntarily used Twitter as a platform to practise English writing and to learn from other people's quotes and that they might get minimal interaction from the audience. This illustrates the complexity of the interaction between sources of positive and negative emotions. It also shows the interconnectedness of the various sources of anxiety, as a lack of confidence is sometimes linked to communicative ability, which is essentially part of language proficiency. This might lead to the learner being in a vicious cycle of emotional distress and communication difficulty (see Figure 9).
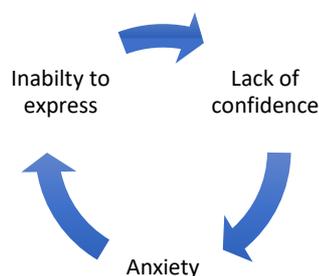
Figure 9: The vicious cycle of communication difficulty and emotional distress

An interesting thing to mention is that none of the participants expressed fear of being judged or evaluated by their fellow learners and peers, which was found in the literature (e.g. Aloraidhi, 2019). Instead, all the participants expressed their openness to and confidence in friends' or social media audiences' comments. They did not mind writing on social media in English and were not worried about making mistakes in those writings or about people commenting on their writing. When the participants were asked whether they compared themselves with their colleagues in class, none of them answered positively. This can be interpreted in two ways; it could be that they were unaware that they comparing themselves with colleagues, or it may be that they did not want to acknowledge it to the researcher. However, it could mean that the maturity of the students' personality was at a level that enabled them to recognise that comparison with colleagues is not useful and that they are all in the same boat, as stated by **Interviewee 3**: 'Everyone makes mistakes, we are in this thing together'. This may also be related to the aspect of writing proficiency self-rating, as it was found that excellent students did not rate themselves as 'excellent' in the self-rating question but chose 'intermediate' or 'upper intermediate', which was where low-achieving students also saw themselves in the writing proficiency level.

Analysis of these factors suggests that students need techniques to enhance their mindfulness. Throughout the teaching and learning process, a learner could be advised to reflect on their situation and feelings and be encouraged to acknowledge their feelings and their particular areas of strengths and weaknesses and how to deal with them.

5.10 How do Feelings Alternate Between Motivation and Anxiety in L2 Writing?

One of the aims of this study is to determine how feelings of motivation and anxiety interact in learners in relation to L2 writing. All the above findings, in addition to the quantitative findings of the questionnaires, revealed that there was indeed co-occurrence of motivation and anxiety related to writing in English. But what did learners say about this co-occurrence?

Learners' feelings shifted back and forth between L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety, and each feeling had an effect on the learners' emotions and behaviour. **Interviewee 3**, the only participant who rated their writing proficiency as 'excellent' in the self-rating question, admitted to having fears and that those fears interacted with their L2 writing motivation. When asked how feeling worried about writing related to their motivation, they replied: 'It motivates me; it does motivate me to work hard. I am very keen to get good grades, so it makes me care more to get the grades, and at the same time it is certainly useful for later'. Worrying about writing might have motivated the learner to work harder, especially in an exam-driven system where students are mostly keen to get good grades. Since this student had a strong vision of the ideal L2 self, they stated that worrying about L2 writing and being keen to get good grades were beneficial for their future, not just for grades. They also confirmed that their feelings alternated between motivation and anxiety and that there were times when they faced significant time pressure before submitting an assignment, they had co-occurrence of the feelings that eventually left them feeling helpless: 'I reach a point [where], good God, there's nothing I can do. I did what I did, and I do not care'. These feelings could also be associated with self-blame: 'It serves me right; now my GPA is going down and it's all because of me for not working hard enough'.

Aftermath reaction might include acknowledging the situation the learner went through and making a crucial decision for the following steps. **Interviewee 3** explained: 'I then worked harder in writing, and I did my best to give the writing the effort that it required. Previously, I would say it is okay, I can write whatever thoughts I have in my mind, but now I don't. I focus on the topic that I want to talk about in length, I search more, and I listen to the teacher and what exactly she wants'. This account was a detailed reflection on this learner's experience in which feelings of motivation and anxiety co-occur. The learner had conflicting thoughts and

feelings with an internal blaming voice, which led to a moment of mindfulness that changed the learner's behaviour for the rest of their learning journey.

Interviewee 10 described their complex feelings, saying: 'It frustrates me a lot, there are so many things that frustrate me'. She was referring to her negative feelings about the teacher, the topics of the writing tasks and even the distribution of lecture hours, with which they did not agree. However, after reflecting on their learning journey, the student agreed that worries might turn into motives, saying, 'Yes, it is very likely, and that's what I feel right now. I realise that I do not want to be like I was before. I really want to write better', reflecting on their previous failure in the subject. The student reported that with their long experience at the university (being in the final term before graduating), they now had sufficient linguistic knowledge: 'Now I [know] more vocabulary and [have] more experience in writing'. When learners had a sense of maturity in their experience, it made them realise their level of L2 writing proficiency and helped in eliminating their fears and boosting their L2 writing motivation.

Interviewee 9 reported that despite not frequently worrying, when they did worry about something, it left them feeling frustrated rather than motivated. She commented: 'It varies from time to time [referring to changes in emotions], but it mostly leaves me feeling more and more frustrated. Sometimes I ask myself why I am so frustrated because of something like writing. I feel too frustrated, and I don't know why'. This example showed that even for students who had less anxiety than motivation, the negative impact of the anxiety can cause a significant negative feeling. This is an example of not being able to overcome the negative feeling so that it creates a feeling of frustration. The learner tried to cope with this frustration by internalising a self-dialogue that hopefully helped them to see things in perspective.

Even for a student with more anxiety than motivation (**Interviewee 2**), it appears that the negative feeling of anxiety can change into motivation. Interviewee 2 was a high-achieving student who was found to be driven primarily by feelings of anxiety and visions of the ought-to self that largely related to maintaining high grades, despite having a negative attitude towards writing. When we discussed the aspect of feelings changing between motivation and anxiety when receiving negative feedback on their writing, they stated that the first reactions

were 'shock' and 'frustration' but that these feelings then slowly changed into motivation to change and improve. The student said: 'I [need to] know what mistakes I have made so I can [correct] them, whether it is grammar or ideas. Of course I feel sad, but then I turn this into motivation so I won't make mistakes again'. **Interviewee 8**, who was a medium-achieving student, said (follow-up interview): 'Although I feel frustration for a while, I come back to my study and try to encourage myself. After all, the grades do not necessarily define one's real level, as one might be feeling unwell or […] the questions are awkward'. This reflects that a learner who is going through the transition process from the negative feeling (anxiety) to the positive feeling (motivation) tries to cope with these mixed feelings by reflecting on their experience, looking at it from various perspectives and trying to find rational explanations for what has happened.

Feelings related to L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety were not stable. They co-occurred, and they changed and overlapped. Participants referred to various experiences and situations when they had mixed emotions of anxiety and motivation related to their English L2 writing. Whether the student rarely felt anxiety or whether they were usually anxious, the L2 writing anxiety had a negative impact, at least for a time. Most experiences involved the students' feelings changing from anxiety and frustration to motivation. This process of transition from anxiety to motivation occurred with a remarkable technique of reflection, internal dialogue and trying to reconsider the situation from a different perspective. It was found that this set of coping strategies helped the participants to evaluate the situation and move on with encouragement and less emotional distress.

5.11 Interviews with Teachers

This section presents the teachers' views on their students' L2 writing motivation and anxiety. The aim of interviewing teachers was to investigate several key aspects: levels of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety among the students, any interaction between the two emotions, any possible link between the two concepts and achievement, how teachers deal with these feelings and, finally, any suggestions of solutions to overcome difficulties in those areas. The researcher endeavoured to maintain utmost objectivity throughout the interviews. However, there were instances when the interviewees either misunderstood questions or

needed to think more deeply; therefore, the researcher had to prompt them with further explanations or examples.

Although English was the main language of the survey, there were a few situations when the Arabic language was used (by and with one Arabic teacher) to ensure mutual understanding. The researcher also endeavoured to maintain consistency throughout the interview transcriptions; however, there were instances when the researcher's role had to appear. For example, one of the interviews included some language inaccuracies used by the interviewee. The researcher has not provided the incorrect forms but has provided the correct brief version in brackets to highlight that the mistake was originally made by the speaker (the interviewee).

The coding approaches that were used with the teacher interviews were magnitude, attribute, value, narrative and evaluation coding methods, as explained in Section 5.1.

5.11.1 Teachers' views on their students' levels of motivation and anxiety

This section presents the teachers' varied views on their students' levels of motivation and anxiety in relation to English L2 writing. Despite the claim in the L2 motivation literature that female learners generally have higher motivation than male learners, data from the teachers' interviews revealed the opposite outcome.

Regarding the L2 writing motivation levels among the students, the teachers asserted that the students were not highly motivated. **Teacher 1** confirmed that students were not highly motivated in L2 writing, stating, 'Most of the time, they are not really motivated … most of them are not really that keen. They just want to pass'. **Teacher 2** clarified that among 50 students in the class, there were around 20 students who were 'feeling down … They don't feel like responding or writing. I have to ask them again and again'. Regarding their motivation, they added, 'I can say this is medium, not high, not low, but medium', which was in line with the views of **Teachers 4** and **5**. The statement that the students' level of motivation was generally moderate was in line with the findings of the quantitative data, where the mean of L2 writing motivation among students was found to be medium.

One teacher stated that the students' motivation and anxiety in relation to writing in English fluctuated during the term. Despite being English majors, the students were reported by their

teachers to suffer from L2 writing anxiety. The start of the term was reported to be the prime time for students' L2 writing anxiety. **Teacher 1** said: 'Of course, it varies from person to person, and it varies during the term. But the beginning is the toughest time for them'. The teacher then explained that at the start of the term, the students' level of anxiety is generally high, followed by a comfortable period in the middle of the term. Then, students' anxiety increases towards exam time. She added that a certain level of anxiety during exams is natural (facilitating effect) but should not exert a negative impact.

Other teachers agreed that the start of the term was the most difficult in terms of the students' motivation and anxiety. **Teacher 4** agreed and noted that some students managed to overcome anxiety and became more 'confident … more active … as they [handed] their assignments in on time', compared with the start of the term. The students' moods and behaviours during the term reflected the dynamicity of motivation and anxiety. **Teacher 4** mentioned that the behaviour and demeanour of the students changed constantly from one lecture to another, and they illustrated this with a list of behaviour: sometimes the student was 'really down' or 'was late for the class' or even '… absent', whereas in the following few lectures they were 'very enthusiastic' and 'very active'. A student might also be feeling 'what if there's some mistake' and some students 'feel shy', and therefore reluctant to even submit their assignment paper in the class and 'come to my office to submit it'.

Teachers reported that L2 writing anxiety occurred and could be recognised even among students who were motivated to write in L2. **Teacher 1** confirmed this, stating, 'Yes, but they're anxious because they want to maintain their grades. And if they've already got an A, they strive for an A+'. This statement suggests that co-occurrence of the two emotions exists and that grades are one of the main reasons for this. Relating the co-occurrence of motivation and anxiety to the sources of obtaining grades and maintaining high achievement was in line with what was found in the students' interviews. Sections **5.8** and **5.9** discuss grades and assessment as common factors in both motivation and anxiety in students. Grades were a major source of the vision of the ought-to self of L2 writing motivation, as students reported that their main motivation in L2 writing was to maintain their high grades (Section **5.8**). Grades and assessment also appeared as a form of what has been called an 'instruction-related' source of anxiety (Section **5.9**).

5.11.2 What the teachers think are the main sources of the students' L2 writing anxiety or lack of motivation

The teachers mentioned several factors that could cause L2 writing anxiety among the students. Exams and grades were seen as major sources that eventually lead to feelings of motivation and anxiety. Some teachers believed that the occurrence of exam anxiety as part of the overall writing anxiety was inevitable and unavoidable. **Teacher 1** highlighted the facilitating function of anxiety: 'Anxiety in exams is very natural, but it should remain at the level where we could call it positive anxiety, and you know, that makes them work hard'.

On a positive note, the students' L2 writing motivation improved when they obtained good grades and received positive feedback. **Teacher 4** described their students' feelings after receiving encouraging feedback and obtaining surprisingly good results for the mid-term: 'I think the feedback the teacher gives them, and the mid-term exam results, that worked [wonders] for them'. This indicates how the assessment, grades and feedback can be a two-edged sword: a tool to encourage the student to continue the good work or a tool to shatter their confidence and provoke feelings of anxiety.

Students' significant focus on grades is both a cause and an effect. It is a cause because students' sole focus on getting good grades and maintaining them at a high level is what leads to them being selective in their learning goals. Unfortunately, they only focus on goals that are related to exams, such as studying certain content because it is relevant to their exam while neglecting the content that is less likely to appear in the test. This takes their attention away from the main goal of learning, which is to acquire new knowledge, apply it to their writing and ultimately improve their writing level.

At the same time, this issue is an effect, as it results from the largely dominant mentality that they learn, actually study, to obtain grades, a GPA and a university qualification. Sometimes, focusing too much on that makes students unable to see the big picture – learning something new and getting better at a certain skill – which in itself should eventually contribute significantly to their qualification. Instead, students tend to think only about exams and how to pass them, and therefore they become selective in their learning content and goals. As **Teacher 4** said: 'I feel that they are not concerned about improving their skills; they are

concerned about their grades, that is more important for them. For example, if they have one chapter, there might be something very important from a grammatical point of view, but if they think it is not going to be on the exam, they will not revise it. They will revise only the topics with content that is going to be on the exam'.

Low language proficiency among the students was reported as a factor that results in low levels of motivation. **Teacher 1** commented on why the students' levels of motivation are not high: 'They find it difficult in a foreign language, I think, but it's natural to be a bit upset about how to write in a foreign language … by the time they come to the college, their level of writing is actually, you know, not really high'. The teacher related this weakness to two main factors: the inadequacy of teaching and learning English in the primary stages of education and the lack of reading.

Teacher 1 explained that in their university work, students' writing was weak; they were only capable of writing 'short paragraphs' and 'very simple structure', and they are unable to show a sufficient grasp of complex structure, present complex ideas or use connectors properly. The other teachers tended to agree with this. **Teacher 4** said: 'When it comes to writing, they don't even want to write complete sentences'. This teacher complained that the students just write short answers to questions and that around 90% of the students 'ignore' spelling, punctuation and grammar, which are essential to L2 writing. The teachers believe that the weakness in the students' writing proficiency has impacted their L2 writing motivation. This idea that the low language proficiency is a result of generally insufficient language learning in the primary education is related to what the students mentioned. The students described how they had faced difficulty in the transition to university and the gap in knowledge and skill they realised they had after moving from high school education to university education. The teacher noted that from year 5 in school up to university, students still find it difficult to write in English, and they come to the university with very basic knowledge of writing in English (i.e. simple structure, short paragraphs). Students do not lack ideas, but they cannot communicate them effectively in L2 writing due to this problem.

In addition to this low proficiency dilemma, the teachers claimed that students clearly lack reading habits. **Teacher 1** said: 'One main reason that I would say is, they don't have the habit

of reading'. This lack of reading habits results in the students' inability to communicate their ideas effectively in L2 writing. **Teacher 1** explained that the reason the students cannot communicate their ideas effectively is not that they lack ideas but that they think in Arabic (L1). They said: 'They are in the habit of thinking in Arabic' and try to render that in the L2 written product, 'and then they try to translate when they are writing in English'. To resolve this issue, students need to learn to think in the L2 and be able to turn their ideas into a proficiently written product in the L2. It was suggested that poor reading habits has resulted in low English language proficiency, which, in turn, has impacted the students' motivation to write in L2.

5.11.3 Strategies the teachers suggest for dealing with the students' L2 writing motivation and anxiety

As the teachers recognised that students' level of L2 proficiency was low, particularly in the writing skill, they suggested that a good strategy to improve students' proficiency would be to encourage them to 'read as much as possible' (**Teacher 1**), which should ultimately enhance the students' motivation to write. The teachers took the practical step of establishing a reading club to promote reading in English among the students. However, this initiative faced challenges, such as the unavailability of adequate facilities and the poor response from students. The teachers reported the need for a broad selection of English books in the university library. **Teacher 1** stated: 'We don't have much stuff of the [shelves for] them in the library … There should be simplified versions, updated versions and story books, so that the students can withdraw them and read at home'. In addition, **Teacher 1** mentioned 'the poor response from the students to the reading club', adding that unfortunately, although this initiative targeted the weak students, 'we didn't get the response that we were expecting', as only students who were comparatively better and were already motivated responded positively to the club and showed interest.

Despite the challenges the reading club initiative faced, the teachers also mentioned its positive outcome. They had noticed considerable improvement in the levels of reading and writing skills among the students who were already good, and there was even a noticeable

positive difference in the writing of the small number of weak students who joined the club (**Teacher 1**).

Teacher 4 suggested another method to deal with the students' low proficiency and lack of motivation: early emphasis on the significance of the writing skill at the preparatory level of the university study. The teaching should emphasise the significance of this skill from the start of the Intensive Course. The Intensive Course is a term-length course in essential skills and language foundations to prepare students for the English Language BA programme. At the end of this course, there is a Qassim University standardised test of all the modules, and the outcome of the test determines the students' acceptance to, or rejection from, the BA programme. **Teacher 4** suggested that the students must realise the significance of L2 writing, not only as a module but also as an essential skill for all the other subjects. They said: 'I think for every subject, we need to focus on their writing skills … we should give them more exposure to writing'.

One of the useful strategies that the teachers suggested to support the students' motivation and reduce their anxiety was improving some of the classroom practices of the writing courses. Some teachers tried to encourage the students to prepare for the writing class in advance. **Teacher 3** said: 'Try to give them the topics in advance, you know. Okay, this is the topic that I would like you to read about as much as you can, and then one day, I'll ask you to write about this topic'. Other teachers preferred simplifying the writing tasks. **Teacher 3** stated: 'I think a good way to increase their motivation is to try to simplify the task for them', suggesting that simplifying the writing tasks during the lectures and for homework would result in the students being encouraged to write and boost their confidence. Some teachers adopted a gradual method of moving from the easy to the more challenging, whereas others encouraged free writing in an attempt to reduce anxiety that could result from the students' fear of making mistakes, allowing them 'to write freely, without worrying too much about grammar, punctuation or mistakes' (**Teacher 4**). The final suggestion that was found to be useful was to engage the students in an active role during the lecture: 'To make them more active, make the class more attractive … plan a lesson that should make them an active participant in the class' (**Teacher 4**).

Moreover, teachers suggested creating a friendly learning ambience in the classroom, where both the teachers and the students feel free and comfortable to talk and to relate their personal stories and experiences. **Teacher 2** highlighted the benefit of being friendly with the students and going down to their level by referring to the students' L1 and talking about Arabic being a FL for them (the teacher) and their efforts to learn Arabic just like the students were learning English: 'Sometimes I ask them the Arabic words to show them that I'm also a learner'. It was also considered vital for the students to feel comfortable and be able to speak and share their personal experience to enhance their motivation to write in L2 and reduce their anxiety. **Teacher 4** said: 'I ask them to discuss their personal experiences. They love to share these, and they love to listen to each other, and when they write, we do the same thing. When I ask them to write on a topic, we first have a general discussion about it. For example, if they have to write about comparison and contrast, we first discuss some topics in the class. If they have to describe anything in a descriptive essay, for example, … a fruit, we discuss the description of vegetables and other things around us. Then it becomes easy for them because they feel that they know about it; they can do it. They know the idea and then they write easily, so it is a general strategy that I apply in the class. I give them the idea, we discuss it, and then they start writing'.

Relating L2 writing to the students' motives and goals was mentioned as a way to motivate the students. **Teacher 2** stated: 'After doing some [of] these courses, they'll get good jobs or some other motivational incentive'. This strategy to motivate the students relies on the students' visions of their future ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self. **Teacher 2** explained that one way to motivate the students is to highlight the importance of L2 writing in communication and how that would enable them to have better opportunities to get jobs, travel or 'apply for anything'.

However, when adopting this strategy for motivation, it should be noted that learners have different types of incentives and can have a variety of drives and motivations; what suits one student as motivation might not be suitable for another. Another factor that has to be considered is that with university study obligations, students who have certain visions of their future goals might lose focus on the goals, and then the consistent and continued motivation would be sacrificed. The students reported that they start the term in good spirits and with

high aspirations but that their motivation tends to slowly decline. The routine pressures of the educational system, such as timetables, lectures times, exams and the large number of students, could easily impact the students' visions of their future goals (ideal or ought-to) and affect their overall motivation. In fact, teachers and students alike might be overwhelmed by the stressors, and they might forget to go back to their inner feelings and reflect on them, offer motivational support, review goals and boost emotional feelings and aspirations, which is highly important.

Overall, the interviews with teachers confirmed previous findings related to the moderate and fluctuating level of L2 writing motivation among the students. Furthermore, the teachers confirmed the existence of L2 writing anxiety among the students and described how it interferes with the feelings of motivation. The teachers reported on a variety of factors that were seen to have an impact on the students' motivation and anxiety.

5.12 A Possible Solution

The interviews with students and teachers raised an important issue regarding the training opportunities for the students. The interviews revealed that none of the participating students received any training or support in English writing in addition to the writing module lecture hours. This was the case for all the students. All the participating students and teachers agreed that the lectures on the writing module were not sufficient to support the students in their writing; therefore, the students needed further assistance and training. A motivated student (**Interviewee 6**) pointed out that 'the module itself is not enough. I feel that it is only giving me the basics and that I should go further and try to find other ways to help me improve my writing. For example, I watch some YouTube videos, and I find them really helpful'.

In the interviews, I proposed the possible solution of establishing a writing centre that would offer students support in their writing. The participants supported this step. **Interviewee 6** commented 'the department did hold a few workshops, but they were related to some general topics, not the writing skill. I wish that they would do more focused workshops and, of course, something like a writing centre should be really useful and helpful'. **Interviewee 1** highlighted 'Unfortunately, the college has never offered any training in this matter. It is even hard to find training outside the university, I mean like a training institution. If we ever get a

writing centre, as you are suggesting, I will certainly use its service'. **Interviewee 2** stated, 'I always said that the lectures are not enough. We need something more; something that can really help us to be confident in writing, like workshops maybe … Whenever I have problems with writing in English, I would definitely seek help from something like a writing centre, as you suggest'. One student expressed that a writing centre might contribute to their emotional well-being towards writing in L2. 'It [the proposed writing centre] might contribute to improving my writing without having to worry about the written assessment tasks' (**Interviewee 10**). Another student commented that a writing centre would not just help them correct their errors but would also offer useful explanations, 'to have the opportunity of not just knowing my errors, but also [learning] why they are incorrect, why a certain expression is better than another' (**Interviewee 4**).

The interviews also obtained information about what would be expected from this proposed writing centre from both the teachers' and the students' points of view. Some interviewees (**5, 10, 7**) suggested that the workshops that would be offered by the writing centre should have 'a limited number of students in a session'. It was evident that this expectation stemmed from the dissatisfaction with the large number of students in the lecture classes. Other interviewees (**4, 8, 9**) focused on the need for the content of the workshops and tutorials to be varied, comprehensive and on a wide range of essay types and lengths. **Interviewees 2** and **3** emphasised the importance of focusing on the students' weaknesses in addition to helping them with the basics of writing, 'building up for ideas' and 'organising them' and enhancing the students understanding with 'varied examples'.

In terms of the preferred medium for the support, views were varied. Some of the participants preferred the proposed service to be online, which might be more convenient than face to face due to the overwhelming workload of the students, stating, 'as you know, we don't have much spare time in our university timetable' (**Interviewees 3**) and 'this is to save time' (**Interviewee 7**). Other participants preferred face-to-face meetings. For example, **Interviewee 6** stated, 'I can ask as many questions as I need as we are discussing the writing'. Most of the participants emphasised the importance of having tailored, one-to-one opportunities for consultations, which is something they missed in the lectures. They commented that having one-to-one sessions would help them know their weaknesses and

how to overcome them, 'so I get to know my personal weak points, and they help me work on them' (**Interviewee 1**).

The teachers' interview data supported the suggestion of a writing centre. All the teachers agreed that the module lectures were insufficient and that the students needed further training and support. The teachers agreed that a writing centre, which would offer support and advice to the students, would be an effective step. They reinforced that the students were to be familiarised with the service and be encouraged to seek advice. Some of the teachers expressed their willingness to be part of a consultation team as long as it would not impact their workload.

5.13 Conclusion of Qualitative Interview Findings

Analysis of the qualitative data revealed the findings of semi-structured interviews with students and teachers on the students' L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety. In addition to these two global emotions, the investigation shed light on the vital factors that influenced these two types of emotions and various other factors included in the findings of the quantitative parts of the study, such as students' achievement, self-rating and level of study in the university. When looking at the emotions of motivation and anxiety in L2 writing in an integrated manner, it was found that learning experiences, attitude towards L2 writing and milieu and influence were somewhat independent yet inter-related categories that influenced the students' emotions in relation to L2 writing in either a positive or a negative manner. Seeing how motivation and anxiety related and interacted with a wide range of contextual and non-contextual factors provided a better understanding of how students feel and how these feelings change and interact when acquiring and improving an unnatural skill in an FL.

Regarding L2 writing motivation, it was found that the ideal self and the ought-to self, which are two main components of Dörnyei's L2MSS (2005; 2010), played an integral role in promoting the students' L2 motivation to write in a distinct manner from each other. The explanatory and exploratory interviews with students and teachers on the students' motivational orientation revealed that feelings about L2 writing motivation were dynamic; they did not remain the same throughout the term. Some students had higher motivation at

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the start of the term that appeared to decline as the term went on due to the various pressures the students faced. Conversely, for some students, the middle of the term was the most comfortable period and they gained confidence, as they had started the term with worried anticipation and a lack of confidence.

Several of the female English majors in Saudi Arabia had ideal visions of themselves in the future that were primarily related to an anticipated prestigious job or academic status. The learners who were primarily driven by their views of an ideal self in the future had a clear image of their future goal and the practicalities required to achieve it. For example, if they aspired to have a job with status, they imagined the detailed routine tasks of this job (writing reports in English or presenting a CV in English). Therefore, they were motivated to work hard on their L2 writing to be able to gain the necessary skills that would facilitate achieving that ultimate goal. In addition, learners not only had aspirations but also developed plans to achieve their goals, an integral aspect of which was distinguishing between serious goals and fantasies. After more than a year, follow-up interviews with the participants revealed that those learners were still committed to their goals and plans and continued to work hard with resilience.

Some learners did not have the same high and internal level of motivation; they were driven by an ought-to type of motivation. Grades were the number one source of ought-to motivation. Some high-achieving learners were not necessarily driven by internal motivation to write in L2; rather, they were likely to be eager to improve their academic achievement and afraid to lose marks. The motivation of learners who did not have internal ideal motivation to write in L2 was influenced by external factors related to instructional factors, such as the teacher (nice and approachable or not) or the writing task demands and their ability to meet these demands.

The self-rating of the students' L2 writing proficiency did not appear to be related to their achievement. How students saw themselves and their L2 writing proficiency was not related to their academic achievement. The self-rating of an excellent student, aware of their high achievement level, might be similar to that of a medium-achieving or even a low-achieving student. The excellent students explained that they always aimed high, were never satisfied

with their level of proficiency and worried significantly about grades, whereas lower-achieving participants explained that their proficiency was not 'that bad' (**Interviewee 1**). Some students blamed their learning experiences for their low achievement (**Interviewees 7** and **9**), but they were motivated to improve their overall L2 proficiency, particularly their L2 writing proficiency.

Among female Saudi learners at the university, L2 writing anxiety was found to be due to three global types: skill-related sources, instruction-related sources and sources related to the learner's personality. Each of these categories was divided into further sources that detailed the specific origin of the L2 writing anxiety according to the students' experiences. Skill-related sources of L2 writing anxiety were the primary triggers of L2 writing anxiety. They were related to the writing as an acquired skill, the students' attitudes towards it and the linguistic difficulties that the students faced while learning this skill. Instruction-related sources were mainly found in classroom practices and the writing tasks. Finally, the students' lack of confidence was found to be a major source of L2 writing anxiety, which was related to the learners' personality characteristics.

Social media was mentioned repeatedly by the participants in various examples. The platform appears to be a useful tool to improve learning of English writing, as it motivated learners to interact and engage with each other using English writing. It might also be a possible source of comparing oneself to others, which could have a negative impact on the learner's self-conception. It can be stated that the use of social media to learn, practise and use L2 writing can work as a two-edged sword: the social media platform can be a source of both motivation and anxiety at the same time.

Of the various affective factors involved in the learning and use of L2 writing, grades appeared to be a prominent source of both positive and negative emotions among students of various achievement and proficiency levels.

Teachers reported that the students varied in terms of their levels of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety; however, they were generally not very motivated and showed signs of anxiety that co-occurred with their motivation. Grades and assessments, low-level L2 proficiency that is insufficient for the university level of study and the lack of reading habits in

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L2 were identified as significant factors that can trigger mixed emotions of motivation and anxiety simultaneously. The teachers reported on their use of practical strategies in an attempt to enhance the students' level of L2 proficiency, eliminate the unwanted emotions and encourage motivation among the students.

Second language English majors experience a complex combination of positive and negative emotions related to their L2 English writing. Although the sources of L2 writing motivation and the sources of L2 writing anxiety might have little in common, they are not entirely separable, as there can be an overlap between some influences. A factor can be present in L2 writing anxiety as well as in L2 writing motivation. This means that it is vital to be cautious when investigating a certain factor as a trigger of both positive and negative emotions at the same time, particularly when looking closely at the skill acquisition level and when considering how to use motivational strategies to help students learn that particular skill. Looking into the wide array of factors that were found to interact and influence the students' L2 writing emotions is useful for developing a model that illustrates how these factors relate to both positive and negative emotions, which will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 6. Discussion Chapter

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study in light of the research questions, the main theories of the study and previous literature from the fields of language learning motivation and language learning anxiety, paying particular attention to the writing skill. First, the chapter will discuss how this study's findings provide further validation of the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2005; 2010) and the SLWAI (Cheng, 2004) within a Saudi Arabian context. Second and third, the chapter will discuss the levels of both L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety among female English language learners and compare them with findings from the extant literature in both domains (language learning motivation and anxiety). This will allow an appreciation for the differences and the disparities that can be detected in various types of learners and in various world contexts.

After that, the chapter will explain how the positive and negative emotions (motivation and anxiety) relate to each other when learning how to write in English, as explained by the participants' views, and how that enables a perception of the interaction between these two types of emotions. Then, the chapter will discuss the links found between the students' L2WMSS, L2 writing anxiety and their actual achievement in L2 writing. The chapter then moves on to discuss the role of the learning experiences as an integral aspect shaping both types of emotions. This will be followed by a detailed discussion of the role of the two constructs of ideal self and ought-to self in L2 writing. The chapter also discusses the learners' tendency to use English and their willingness to practise writing in English in everyday life contexts and review its association with online informal learning of English (OILE; Sockett, 2014). After that, the chapter will explain the role of the teachers and their strategy use with regard to their students' emotions towards L2 writing. Finally, the chapter will conclude by proposing a model that demonstrates sources of both motivation and anxiety in a uniform manner.

6.2 Validation of the L2 Writing Motivational Self System (L2WMSS)

Clear hesitation among female English majors at Qassim University to complete writing tasks or answer essay-type questions, together with a lack of motivation to undertake specialised, academic writing or try writing as a leisure activity, have been central to discussions at many departmental committee meetings. Rather than dwelling in detail on the linguistic issues behind students' writing development or performance (although they are essential aspects to consider), I elected to look into the problem from a psycholinguistic point of view. I chose to ask the 'what and 'why' questions because I believe they are important; in fact, they are of no-less significance than testing the students' writing performance abilities or their linguistic proficiency, especially since we know that these students are English majors who willingly chose to join an English language BA programme and have supposedly obtained satisfactory qualifications to enable them to pursue a four-year university programme with English instruction.

The increasing popularity of the L2MSS (Csizér, 2019; Dörnyei, 2005; 2010) in the rapidly growing field of L2 motivation research, and the verification of its three main constructs' ability to measure learners' language learning motivation across a wide range of world contexts (Al-Hoorie, 2018), made it a suitable theory with which to investigate the motivational dispositions of the target sample used by the current study and a solid framework upon which to offer some insightful answers to the phenomenon under investigation.

There has been widespread use of this theory in various contexts and with a vast number of language learners at various educational levels; I found that it has most often been used to measure language learning motivation in a general manner. Previous studies have drawn on this theory (mostly statistically) when measuring the levels or the sources of motivation while learning a FL in general, linking this tripartite theory to other variables, such as intended effort, motivated behaviour and attitude. The theory is mainly composed of three constructs: the ideal self, the ought-to self and the learning experience (see Chapters 2, 4 and 5).

Previous studies only investigated the L2MSS with reference to L2 in general (mostly English L2); they did not draw on the theory's three constructs in relation to a specified language-

acquisition domain nor did they use a skill-tailored questionnaire for this purpose. This is unlike the research into language learning anxiety, in which we see several studies that are skill focused (i.e. that investigate anxiety prompted by speaking, writing or even reading). The application of the L2MSS to my sample (female English majors) means that I considered two issues: the characteristics of this sample – *female* and *English majors* – and the main goal of the study (motivation, anxiety and writing skill). Accordingly, the L2MSS part of the questionnaire was adapted to take two considerations into account: the relevance of the visionary (ideal, ought-to) statements to the intended sample and the narrow focus of a specific skill (writing). This needed to be done without sacrificing the reliability that the original questionnaire has retained for so long.

Almost all the statements of the original L2MSS were carefully reviewed to ensure that they were consistent with the purposes mentioned above; for example, that the adapted, and translated, version of the L2WMSS produced a good Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.85$, Chapter 4). The fact that the three constructs of the L2WMSS (the ideal L2 self, the ought-to self and the learning experience) are all found to have good reliability in the context of this study (Chapter 4) reflects that the modified version of each construct is robust and lends further support to the original version of the theory. Future investigations could benefit from this adjustment to the wording of the construct statements, making them skill specific. This will enhance future research into language learning motivation, sharpening the focus on specific language features or skills; for example, research on motivation towards writing or reading or the motivation to use new vocabulary, especially when the idea of referring to L2 or LX language in its broadest sense might not be consistent with the purpose of the research. For example, several studies looked into the motivation to learn English among English language majors; this, I believe, is impractical and might lack suitable intellectual focus, as examining this type of sample (students who are already majoring in the English language) by looking into their global motivation to study the language might not tell us much more than that they are motivated and that their motivation is moderate. However, if we opt for very specific areas of language learning, taking into consideration the type and level of the language learners that are being investigated, the outcome would be more enlightening to further language learning

motivation research and more useful to practitioners in the teaching field who need more information and wish to obtain practical advice.

Utilising a skill-specific version of the L2MSS might also allow a comparison of learners' levels of motivation across various skills, which is still lacking in the field of language learning motivation research. For example, it could be beneficial to know whether learners' motivational orientations are different for different skills. What if a learner has an idealised vision of themselves speaking a certain language but can only see writing (in that same language) as an obligatory matter (ought-to)? This type of cross-sectional investigation would advance research into language learning motivation a great deal.

6.3 Levels of L2 writing motivation

One of the main goals of this study is to find out about the levels of both L2 motivation and L2 anxiety in the specific skill of writing among female Saudi English majors.

RQ1: What are the levels of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety among female Saudi English majors?

The reason for setting up this goal was two-fold. First, to discover whether the complaint that the students are 'unwilling' to write in English or that they try to avoid the writing tasks set (which had frequently been put forward by many university teachers in Saudi Arabia) was accurate. By investigating the students' L2WMSS we gathered scientific evidence that can tell us about their motivation to write, and we were able to compare this evidence to findings from previous global and national Arabian studies. Second, and probably most important, was to consider L2 writing motivation in an integrated manner since, despite being a positive affective variable, it was never found operating solo in the learning process. Instead, it interferes in a complex manner with many learners' variables, whether internal and affective or external and contextual (Dörnyei, 2020). Various studies reported on language learners' levels of motivation using a wide range of measuring tools, for example, the AMTB (MacIntyre et al., 2019) and a wide range of learner characteristics and educational levels. This study relates specifically to students studying in an Arab context.

According to the mixed method findings of the L2WMSS, statistically speaking, the female Saudi English majors have a moderate level of L2 writing motivation (M = 3.47), with a high ideal L2 self (M = 4.22), a moderate level of ought-to self (M = 3.49) and a moderate level of learning experience (M = 2.78), which can be seen as the lowest of the three constructs. This means that the students' vision of their future ideal L2 self is the strongest contributing component out of the three components that determine their overall L2 writing motivation. These findings resonate with those of Al-Hoorie (2019) and with findings by Alshahrani (2016), who in their sample of male Saudi undergraduates learning EFL at university found that both ideal and L2 self were high (with means of 4.5 and 4.2, respectively). Although Alshahrani's sample was not restricted to English majors (rather, it covered male students from various disciplines), their ought-to motivation appears to be higher than that found in the female sample used in the current study; the average mean for ought-to is 4.2 in Alshahrani (2016) but 3.49 in the current study. This is despite the fact that the sample used by the current study consisted of English majors, whereas his sample students came from mixed disciplines. This may suggest some gender differences as well as some distinctions related to the field of study with regard to the levels of ideal and ought-to self. These issues could be revealed by a further investigation that recruits a mixed-gender sample in order to clearly examine the differences. However, Alshahrani's investigation did not examine the 'learning experience' as a vital component of Dörnyei's L2MSS (2010); this may, again, raise questions as to whether the learning experiences that the students have in the different male and female university departments have something to do with these disparities.

In a more recent study, Altalib (2020) put forward some insightful views that might bridge the gap found in Alshahrani (2016), above. Altalib examined the question of whether there are any statistical differences in motivation (L2MSS) among undergraduates in their foundation year who take the courses English for General Purposes (EGP) or English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Students in ESP courses were found to have a higher level of ideal L2 self and highly positive attitudes towards the learning experience, compared to students who took EGP courses. Altalib (2020) examined overall L2 motivation and not a specific aspect of L2 learning and acquisition, as the current study does. His findings, together with the findings from the current study, inspire interesting questions concerning: (1) the possible differences between

majors and non-majors in terms of their emotional dispositions towards various aspects of language acquisition and skills; (2) the possible factors that can be related to the learning experiences of English majors and non-majors that might eventually shape and impact their emotions towards learning English as an L2; and (3) since the current study discovered that L2 writing motivation declines among the English majors in the first three levels of study, it is worth investigating whether this pattern, or any other possible patterns, also exists among non-majors. It is also important to explore possible relevant factors that contribute to shaping any patterns.

The high level of the ideal L2 self (M = 4.22) and the moderate level of the ought-to self (M = 3.49) that were found among female English majors resonate with findings by Martinović (2018). The study found that these two constructs differ according to the participants' field of university study. The ideal L2 self was found to be high in the humanities and in social sciences (M = 4.57 in both fields) but comparatively weak in the field of biotechnical science (M = 3.65). The same pattern applies to the ought-to, as both the humanities and social sciences students had higher ought-to average mean levels (M = 2.75 and 2.92, respectively). Biotechnical science students (M = 2.54) remain in the moderate domain. The study did not look into the third L2MSS construct, the learning experience, and whether it has an effect on the two visions of the self. If we combine Martinovic's (2018), Alshahrani's (2016) and the current study's findings, we might have to question whether differences exist in students' EFL learning experiences (on both male and female campuses in Saudi Arabia and among students from various disciplines) and, above all, whether these differences impact students' overall L2 motivation, particularly in the controversy-provoking aspect of English L2 writing.

Kim (2012) conducted one of the few studies that investigated L2MSS across different grades, focusing on Korean learners in primary education (Grades 3 to 12). Their findings are in line with some aspects of the current study but do not fully agree with other aspects. Kim's study agrees with the current study in terms of the steady decline in L2 motivation as students go up in the levels of study. However, the calculated means of the separate constructs do not fully agree. The highest mean across these levels is that of the ideal L2 self, which was found in elementary school students at a moderate level (M = 3.38), while the highest mean of ought-to in elementary school students, while relatively smaller than the ideal L2 self, was

also at a moderate level (M = 2.88). If we take the figures of the high school students (being the closest level of study to that of the university students), it can be observed that both ideal and ought-to levels remain moderate, with the ought-to self being weaker than the ideal (M = 2.80 and 3.22, respectively). The current study highlights the gradual decrease in the overall level of motivation in the first three terms of university studies (M = 3.70, 3.43 and 3.19 in Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the university study, respectively), which resonates with the declining pattern in motivation found by Kim (2012), taking into account differences in the context, age and level of education of the learners.

L2MSS in English majors has also been examined in a Turkish context, using a sample of teacher-training English students (which is a common ultimate goal among the female Saudi sample in this study). Here, the ideal and ought-to self constructs were measured in correlation with intercultural communicative competence (Gelisli and Kazykhankyzy, 2019). The findings were found to be in line with this study's findings, as the ideal L2 self when learning English was high (M = 4.09), and the ought-to self scored lower (M = 3.08). However, none of the studies mentioned (as is the case in a lot of L2MSS-related research) considered adapting the theory to be skill-specific; hence, they are not able to answer questions about the students' L2 levels of motivation related to, for example, their writing skill.

The studies that investigated EFL motivation largely drew from samples of students in higher education, including this current study. This evokes the question of whether the general trend of a lack of motivation, and the noticeable decline in L2 writing motivation during the first three levels, is specific to university adult learners or whether it can be traced back to the early stages of learning English, especially as Saudi educational policy has implemented a plan to introduce English to primary school children (Alrashidi and Phan, 2015). Do primary and intermediate school children experience a lack of motivation towards L2 writing? Does this then continue as a trend throughout higher levels of education in secondary and university studies? This question requires large-scale research that thoroughly explores the various relevant variables and covers a wide range of educational levels. By doing so, it could draw comparisons between the lower and higher stages of education with regards to L2 writing motivation and examine any patterns that are found.

From the discussion above, we can say that female English majors in Saudi Arabia are moderately motivated towards English L2 writing. In comparison with other learners (in both local and global contexts) their ideal L2 is generally higher than their ought-to, which is a trend found in many local and global contexts. This validates the power of the learners' own desires, wishes and aspirations for the future. Female English majors have moderate ought-to visions of the self, but their ought-to beliefs are seen as less effective than those of their male Saudi Arabian counterparts. The trend of falling levels of L2 writing motivation seen in this study has also been found in primary education in other global contexts.

Dörnyei (2020) observed that one of the first scholars to highlight the issue of motivational change was Ushioda (1996), who argued that, even within the duration of a single L2 course, most learners will experience a fluctuation in their enthusiasm/commitment, sometimes on a daily basis: 'within the context of institutionalised learning especially, the common experience would seem to be motivational flux rather than stability' (1996, p.240).

6.4 Levels of L2 Writing Anxiety

Research in language learning anxiety lends itself to specific scopes of investigation, examining certain skills rather than tackling the overall domain of language learning, as is the case with the L2MSS theory and many classic motivation theories. The current study utilised Cheng's SLWAI to measure the students' levels of L2 writing anxiety (see Chapters 2 and 3). The statistical analysis (Table 5 in Chapter 4) showed that female Saudi English majors express an overall moderate level of L2 writing anxiety (M = 3.037) and that this anxiety increases in the first three levels of study (anxiety levels are lowest in level 1 students (M = 2.78) and higher at levels 2 and 3 (M = 2.96 and 3.31), respectively).

In the context of Saudi Arabia, Alrabai (2014) highlighted some interesting findings. Alrabai (2014) used FLCAS to look into L2 anxiety among students from both school and university levels. Using a five-category percentile scale ranging from 'very low anxiety' to 'high anxiety', Alrabai found that the majority of the participants suffered from FLA (M = 99.70).

The increase in L2 writing anxiety among English majors that the current study found could be related to an overall general pattern of increasing FLA that can be traced back to as early as intermediate school, where the English language is taught (see Table 28). There is a wide range

of possible reasons for the widespread FLA and its dramatic increase; these shall be discussed later in this chapter (see Section 6.7). In all three studies, the percentage of anxious EFL learners jumps in the transition from intermediate to high school and further increases at university level.

Level of study	Percentage in study 1	Percentage in study 2	Percentage in study 3
Intermediate school	17.30	15.57	14.87
High school	40.36	40.51	41
University	42.34	43.92	44.13

Table 28: Foreign language anxiety at three different levels of study (Alrabai, 2014)

The current study's findings concur with those from an Indonesian context. In Aunurrahman (2019), instances of low and high anxiety among English majors were close to each other; the percentage of students with low levels of anxiety was slightly higher than the percentage of highly anxious students (46.74% high and 53.26% low). A more recent study (Arindra and Ardi, 2020) found that English majors were moderately anxious, which is in line with the present study's findings. Arinda and Ardi (2020) and the present study both utilised the SLWAI and categorised the results as high, moderate or low; whereas Aunurrahman (2019) drew upon Daly and Miller (1975), which employed a somewhat less sophisticated categorisation of L2 writing anxiety components, constructed from three basic categories: evaluation, stress and product, using the SLWAI. It can be suggested that English majors experience L2 writing anxiety at a moderate level in both contexts.

The Indonesian studies reported on several factors that evoked FLA, such as fear of making mistakes, teachers' high expectations and writing under time constraints, to mention but a few. These sources can be seen as common in the Saudi sample, according to the qualitative interviews detailed in the previous chapter, and will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

Of the studies that considered the distinctions among the different levels of study, the present study's findings tie in with previous studies in the Turkish context. Ekmekçi (2018) used the SLWAI on prospective teachers of English at different levels of study (freshman and seniors)

and noted that around 60% of the sample had experienced moderate L2 writing anxiety. Most importantly, the study recognised a statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of their general anxiety level and somatic symptoms but detected no significant difference relating to avoidance and cognitive symptoms, as both groups seemed to experience these two types of anxiety in a similar manner. According to the study, freshman students were more anxious than senior students in terms of FL writing, which contradicts the present study's findings, in which the level of L2 writing anxiety was found to be lower at Level 1 and increased at Levels 2 and 3. In other words, sophomores were found to experience L2 writing anxiety to a greater extent than freshmen.

The Turkish study noted that this decreasing pattern can be attributed to two reasons: first, senior students have had a sufficient amount of practice on writing tasks, projects, exams and the like over a stretch of four years; and second, senior students have been studying for a longer period and are probably more proficient in English. However, neither of these reasons can be confidently applied to the Saudi sample because the increasing pattern found in the quantitative analysis was later explained in the interviews, providing opposing evidence to that shown in the Turkish study. The interviews reported numerous factors affecting L2 writing anxiety; probably the most relevant one to mention is the students' fear of poor grades and their GPA being affected. The GPA is critical to their academic success and their ability to find a good job after graduation using their university qualifications (See Chapter 5, Figure 8: Sources of L2 writing anxiety).

Finally, the co-occurrence of positive and negative emotions was examined in a similar pattern but with different types of emotion: anxiety and enjoyment when learning a FL. When examining the co-occurrence of FLCA and foreign language enjoyment (FLE), statistically significant differences were found between genders. In a study by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), females scored higher in both anxiety and enjoyment than their male counterparts. A later study (Dewaele et al., 2016) confirmed that significant differences across the genders exist, but it tends to portray the female learners' affects towards the EFL classroom in an idealised way. The study claimed that female learners have more 'fun, pride, enjoyment, excitement, and interest' in their FL classroom than male learners. At the same time, female learners were found to have experienced FLA in a similar manner to males. We should practise

caution when comparing male and female learners' emotions, as the outcome might be misleading. When compared with male learners, females appear to be enjoying the EFL classroom more; however, this enjoyment should not be taken in its absolute sense, as further investigation (specifically, with a narrower scope) is likely to reveal different and more accurate patterns in the learners' specific sentiments associated with particular language learning domains or contexts lying beneath a substantially general claim.

The current data also showed that students experienced different degrees of L2 writing anxiety in different years of study (widely known as 'Levels' in the context of Saudi universities). A statistical analysis of the responses to the first three levels of teaching the L2 writing module show an increasing trend in L2 writing anxiety as the level of study increases (Table 10 in Chapter 4). Thus, the general pattern of mixed emotions associated with L2 writing is that as the level of study increases, L2 writing motivation decreases and L2 writing anxiety increases. Hongxia Zhang (2011) found that sophomores experienced a relatively higher level of anxiety towards English L2 writing than freshman students. They also uncovered a negative correlation between ESL writing anxiety on the one hand and performance on the other.

6.5 The Co-Existence of Motivation and Anxiety

One of the main goals of this study is to look into the interaction between feelings of motivation and anxiety in L2 writing among the students and to steer away from a monolithic investigative method, as I believe that students internalise a complex juxtaposition of positive and negative feelings as they pursue their learning journey. The mixed methods findings confirmed that there is a co-occurrence of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety among students at various levels of proficiency, academic achievement and university study. Studies that examine language learning psychology in a collective manner, combining positive and negative emotions, are scarce.

Of the few studies that adopted a holistic view of two polar affects is one by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). They reported on the co-existence of positive and negative emotions in language learning, enjoyment and anxiety. According to their study, learners experience more enjoyment in an FL classroom than they do anxiety. It furthermore posited that FLE correlates

negatively with FLA ($r = -0.36$). These findings agree with the ones that say positive and negative emotions have a negative correlation with each other, and they are line with the idea that positive emotions are experienced at a higher level than negative emotion (see Table 29).

	Positive emotion	**Negative emotion**
This study	L2 writing motivation *M* = 3.47.	L2 writing anxiety *M* = 3.037
Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014)	FLE *M* = 3.82	FLCA *M* = 2.75

FLE = foreign language enjoyment, FLCA= foreign language classroom anxiety

Table 29: Comparisons of positive and negative emotions found in two studies

Despite being on a large scale, only 5% of the participants in the study by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) were from an Arab country, which suggests that their claims cannot be confidently applied to an Arab context. Furthermore, while the study's sample consisted of well-educated participants, no information on their university majors was given.

In the present study, L2 writing motivation is M = 3.47 and decreases as we go up the levels of study. L2 writing anxiety is M = 3.037 and decreases – which indicates a worrying pattern in which the students reach a point at which the L2 writing anxiety is more dominant than the L2 writing motivation (see Table 30).

Level of study	**Mean of motivation**	**Mean of anxiety**	**N**
1	3.70	2.78	62
2	3.43	2.96	34
3	3.19	3.31	54

Table 30: The pattern shown by anxiety and motivation in the first three levels of study

The learners reported that their feelings towards L2 writing shift back and forth between motivation and anxiety; each feeling shaped the learners' behaviour and impacted their effort in different ways (See 5.10). Even participants who perceived their L2 writing proficiency to be high, and who had an ideal L2 vision of the self, noted that they have experienced fears, worries and a sense of helplessness or self-blame related to their L2 writing. However, these negative feelings were not discrete: they interacted frequently with the learner's motivation as it applies to L2 writing. The mixed methods findings indicate that those students with an ideal L2 vision of the self in terms of their motivation are able to regulate the feelings surrounding L2 writing anxiety and overcome them, whereas learners who are mainly driven by an ought-to sense of motivation are more prone to experiencing higher anxiety than motivation and are therefore less likely to draw on coping mechanisms and less able to sustain their motivation in the long run. These findings corroborate with those of a study by Papi (2010), which posited that the ideal L2 vision of the self as it applies to motivation and to the learning experience (two components of the L2MSS) could lower anxiety levels among learners, whereas the ought-to sense of self works as an anxiety trigger and can increase feelings of anxiety. This can be explained by comparing the effective power of the ideal L2 self with the ought-to sense of self in terms of its ability to predict and sustain the learners' global levels of motivation (see Sections 6.3. and 6.8).

Sometimes L2 writing anxiety has a facilitating effect on learners (MacIntyre, 2017). According to the students' interview responses, facilitating anxiety makes the learners 'care more' about obtaining good course grades, work harder to maintain a high GPA and, in those cases where the ideal L2 self is dominant, students see that these mixed feelings of anxiety and motivation are beneficial, as they sustain their visions of achieving their ultimate future goals. Students expressed that they felt shocked and frustrated when they achieved negative feedback, but then they slowly overcame these feelings and regained their motivation to write. A few students who had experienced previous failures in their writing modules (see Section 5.10) stated that being aware of some of the shortcomings in their learning experiences and having some worries related to their experience have contributed to making them more mature and resilient. This, according to the students' interview accounts, helped them overcome their failure and become keen to succeed later (for example, Interviewees 3 and 8 in 5.10). In

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comparison, a few students noted that, even though they had a low profile of L2 writing anxiety in general, once the anxiety feelings were triggered, they seemed to impact their performance significantly and leave them frustrated, helpless and unable to overcome these feelings. Overall, the general trend is that the students transform anxiety and frustration in L2 writing into motivation. This transition is helped by the learners' integrated life narratives, as will be discussed in Section 6.8. Students reflected on their feelings and tried to reconsider their problems from different angles; these strategies were reported to have helped the students regulate their emotions and overcome difficult situations with the fewest losses.

6.6 How L2WMSS and L2 Writing Anxiety Relate to Achievement

Achievement was one of the main variables in the present study; the grand total (GT) for the writing module was used as an indicator of the students' achievement in L2 writing. The GT is comprised of 60 marks for the final exam and 40 marks for the term work (including quizzes, midterm, projects and participation, the exact nature of which may vary at each level of study). A partial analysis of L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety and achievement revealed an unexpected finding; both motivation and anxiety correlated negatively with achievement, although its relationship with anxiety had a greater statistical significance (Motivation/Achievement $r = −015$, $p = 0.849$, Anxiety/ Achievement $r = −o.218$, $p = 0.006$). Despite the small size of the correlation found between motivation and achievement, this negative pattern is worth commenting on. For the anxiety to correlate negatively with achievement is understandable, as some anxious students can be prone to emotional stress that might cripple their achievements, being a natural debilitating effect of anxiety (Horwitz, 2010). However, motivation's negative correlation with achievement is less likely to happen (See also the data in Table 25, Chapter 5, particularly Interviewees 1, 5, 9 and 10). This is another evidence that adds to the unique and obscure relationship between feelings of motivation towards language learning and not seeing that motivation reflected in the student's achievement and performance (Papi, 2010).

The motivation–anxiety negative correlation can be interpreted by drawing on previous findings in the literature regarding the relationship between motivation and another factor: self-efficacy. Motivation has been found to have a negative correlation with self-efficacy in

some studies (Ersanli, 2015) but a positive correlation in others (Soleimani, 2020). Ersanli (2015) explained that the negative correlation found between motivation and self-efficacy can be related to the notion of 'outcome expectation' (Bandura, 1986), which influences the predicted behaviour of the students. The negative correlation between motivation and achievement in the present study might be explained by the same notion. English majors have high L2 motivation compared to other types of learners and can relate to their own self-efficacy in the sense that they feel they might get high scores but, when their views of the outcome expectations interfere, they may think that undertaking L2 writing exercises and tasks may not be very rewarding. In such a situation, they may not exert enough effort, which eventually leads to lower levels of achievement. The negative correlation between motivation and achievement that was found in this study adds to the literature on the peculiar and inconclusive findings concerning the motivation–achievement relationship.

The qualitative data supports this argument: evidence was found in the student interviews that a student who is generally motivated towards L2 experiences situations in which they feel less motivated towards certain aspects of the course. For example, if the topic of the writing is not encouraging, the student feels less interested and does not put enough effort in the homework task, leading to a lower achievement. In **Interviewee 9**'s words:

> I generally love writing in English, but when the topic is not that interesting to me, I do really lack interest and do not put in a lot of effort. I know that is why I sometimes have a low grade on my homework.

Another possible explanation relates to the effect of ought-to goals on learners. In their meta-analysis of studies on the various variables associated with the motivation–achievement link, Johnson et al. (2014) concluded that one of the reasons why achievement cannot be seen to have a direct positive link with motivation is the goals being imposed on learners by an external authority, which affects the learner's motivational disposition:

> Learning to read at age 6, for example, is not something that first graders choose; it is something that school and society imposes on them. Many organizational members may never be intrinsically motivated to achieve these imposed goals, thus explaining the modest relationship between motivation and achievement (Johnson et al., 2014, p.630).

When linking this idea with the component of the ought-to self from the L2MSS, they configure with each other. The ought-to self is based on the idea that learners derive their motivation primarily from the visions or goals that they feel they have to pursue, either to impress a significant other, gain an obligatory outcome or avoid possible negative outcomes (e.g. failing a course or losing marks). Qualitative data supports this argument, as several students reported that they 'have to' study the writing module because it is a compulsory module, and they 'have to' work hard because they do not want to fail or for their GPAs to be impacted and fall. Thus, the low negative correlation between the students' L2 writing motivation and their achievements in the writing module might be due to the effect of the ought-to vision combined with the smaller effort that is exerted when completing the writing module.

Further support for these findings is found in Khan (2015). The L2MSS measured among the foundation-year students focused on only the ideal and ought-to selves. It found a strong ideal L2 self, which correlated strongly with the students' formal achievements in their exams. The ought-to self, in contrast, might influence the students' intended efforts in their L2 learning but had an insignificant association with their course grades. These views tie in well with the results of the present study, as the ideal L2 self was found to be higher than the moderate level of the ought-to self.

In the Saudi context, Moskovsky et al. (2016) reported on the learners' general sense of motivation regarding the L2. The study utilised a mixed-gender sample of Saudi English majors, using the three constructs of the ideal L2 self, ought-to self and learning experience as well as the outcome of a reading and writing proficiency test that was administered to the learners in a class session. The analysis of the study's findings does not report on the overall level of language learning motivation, but it has other findings that correspond with those of the present study. Regarding all the three constructs and the criterion measures (achievement and intended effort), the findings suggest that the three constructs of the L2MSS are consistent with the intended efforts made by the learners but that they do not correlate consistently with their L2 achievements. Moskovsky et al. (2016) conducted one of the few studies to consider achievement as an objective criterion measure (Al-Hoorie, 2018) to be examined with the constructs of the L2MSS. However, their method of measuring

achievement could be seen as controversial, since they only measured achievement through reading and writing tests undertaken in one class session, containing nine marks each.

The quantitative data indicates that achievement correlates negatively with anxiety (Table 15, Chapter 4), i.e. the more anxious the student, the less likely it is that they will achieve high academic grades. This finding contradicts Jee's (2014) results from a study of Korean foreign-language learning, where course grades are found to correlate positively with FLCAS levels. Those findings concur with some early research into language anxiety and achievement (Samimy and Tabuse, 1992); however, Jee's (2014) findings presented a useful predictive pattern, since their study found that students who had low achievements in semester 1 had low anxiety in the following semester. Their claim that it is not always necessary for FLA to have a negative impact on the achievement contradicts the present study's findings. This might also raise doubts about the effect of the L2 being distinct, as someone who is driven to learn Korean as an FL would have different drivers than someone who wishes to learn English, a widely used global language (Mendoza and Phung, 2019).

The present findings agree with recent research indicating that achievement correlates negatively with FLA in general (Teimouri et al., 2019) and with FLCA specifically (Botes, Dewaele and Greiff, 2020; Horwitz, 2001); the overall size of the correlation is found to be similar in both studies ($r = -36$) despite the difference in the width of the scope, with achievement in writing skill showing a large negative correlation with FLCA ($r = -0.44$), which is higher than the correlation effect found in this study due to the large sample of the meta-analysis.

The qualitative interviews, however, raised intriguing questions about the figures; indeed, they clarify some cases that can frequently be seen in the context of Saudi higher education. It is not unusual to have interviews with students, including with excellent students who have a higher average mean in anxiety than in motivation (Interviewees 2, 8, and 10, in Table 25, Chapter 5). These interviews showed that there are cases where a high-achieving student still has a high level of anxiety compared to their motivation to undertake English L2 writing tasks. The reason for this disparity can possibly be answered by looking closely at the students' motivational self system, together with the other learners' variables. When we look at the

issue holistically, we can see that, although the learner professes low levels of motivation compared to their anxiety levels, they do in fact maintain an overall satisfactory level of motivation, allowing them to succeed in their studies. The source of motivation that drives them to achieve high grades is their ought-to vision. The student wants to succeed; they want to achieve and maintain high grades/a high GPA (See **5.8 Visions of the Ought-to Self as a Source of L2 Writing Motivation**).

In this case, the anxiety projected towards English L2 writing can be mitigated by the learners' ought-to vision, which keeps the learner motivated to succeed academically and achieve high grades. As mentioned before, this type of motivation might be beneficial in the short term and will enable the learner to pass the module, avoid failing and/or maintain their high GPA; however, this vision is not sufficient to sustain the student's motivation towards L2 writing in the long run. This was expressed openly by one of the excellent students: 'I never want to write; if we didn't have a writing module, I would not try to write' (**Interviewee 2)**. This appears to be a strange thought, as one of the essential skills when learning and achieving academic success is the ability to present knowledge and thought in a written product. It reflects that, in the context of the Saudi educational system, memorisation is a vital skill. This is explained by Bakry and Alsamadani (2015) and Mohammad and Hazarika (2016), all of whom indicated that audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods are widely employed in English language lessons in Saudi Arabia. The learners memorise the texts, reproduce them in the exams and receive the marks that allow them to succeed.

Memorisation is a basic brain skill, yet it is given priority in both primary and university education in Saudi Arabia, whether we like it or not. From a very early stage, children are encouraged to memorise; they memorise everything from religious scripts, poems, historical and geographical facts and even scientific rules. Their success in the various subjects, and their progress from one year to another, is based on their ability to recall this information and answer written tests in exams and quizzes. It is not uncommon for a learner to lose marks because their answer, which they had memorised, did not accurately replicate the original sentence in the textbook.

Memorisation is a useful skill to have; however, if the learner relies on it and their success is tied to this skill rather than to their creativity and/or ability to express thoughts in their own words, then a creative skill such as writing becomes very difficult. When writing, the learner needs to do far more than simply memorise and reproduce information; learners who rely solely on memory would find themselves in dire need of critical thinking, reading and writing skills, as well as the need to research, evaluate and argue. A learner facing such a situation, where they are not armed with the essential skills right from the very early stages of their learning journey, would not be able to cope with the requirements of a high academic level such as university and might have a negative attitude to their studies or experience anxiety. Such a learner may think 'writing is not my thing' (**Interviewee 7**).

6.7 The Role Played by the Learning Experiences

6.7.1 L1 and L2 writing

The interview responses by both the teachers and the students highlight how the teaching of English L2 writing (as well as the teaching of L1) have impacted their learning experience in both their school and university education (see 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, respectively). They also illustrate the impact this teaching has on their feelings of motivation or anxiety in connection with English writing. The teachers mentioned that when the students write, they tend to 'think in Arabic', then translate their ideas into English; this results in incoherent sentence structures in their English compositions. Furthermore, the students reported that teaching of English L2 writing at school (and at university to some extent) is traditionally memory- and grammar-based. Students write with little freedom on topic choice, have limited opportunities to practise and are often challenged by the exam-oriented mindset. The students and teachers believe that these challenges also feature in the teaching of Arabic writing in the early stages of learning Arabic composition at school.

The above findings tie in with a study by Weijen et al. (2009), who observed that Dutch learners of English tend to draw on L1 (Dutch) while writing in English. They found that the use of L1 when writing in English (L2) negatively impacts the quality of the L2 text, whereas using L2 right from the beginning of the conceptual activities that precede the writing stage (such as goal setting, generating ideas and structuring) enhances the L2 text's quality. By

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comparing the students' weaknesses in their writing in both Arabic and English, Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000) indicated that the students' performance was weak in both Arabic and English. They noted weaknesses in cohesion and coherence, paragraph unity, the use of tenses and the verb–subject agreement. They commented that the problem of low L2 writing proficiency is rooted in the learning of writing in the L1. Mohamed-Sayidina's (2010) investigation, despite being conducted on Arabs who were near-native speakers of English, found that the respondents' English L2 texts were more like native Arabic texts than like native English, particularly in the use of rhetoric features and the repetition of lexemes and sentences. They concluded that this outcome was due to two factors: the influence of poetry and religious books and the teaching methods used, which still depend on memorisation and rote learning. These outcomes were validated by a later investigation that gave a comprehensive overview of the various facets impacting Arab writers (Gherwash, 2015). In a very recent overview, Alshammari (2020) observed that the teaching of writing in Saudi Arabia was still largely conducted through the traditional grammar–translation method and that the teaching was more concerned with 'the linguistic structure than the overall development of the ideas' (2020, p.5).

The reasons discussed above are in line with the present study's findings. The main themes that emerged in the students' interviews, as well as in the teachers' interviews point to the teaching and learning of both L1 and L2 at the primary education stages. The students highlighted the shortcomings of the educational system, which impacted their learning experiences (as an integral construct of the L2MSS) and their attitude towards L2 and L1 writing and, therefore, created the feelings of motivation and anxiety they experienced when writing in English at university level.

6.7.2 Transition to university

The students' interviews show that they considered the transition from school to university to be 'difficult' and 'problematic', particularly with regard to English L2 writing see *5.3.2 Students' current learning experiences*). This is the main reason why the present study considered the learning experience in a temporal manner (i.e. it considered both previous and present learning experiences). As such, it assumed two aspects (building on the interview

findings): First, there is a distinction between university and high school instruction that makes the students feel that the transition to university is difficult and problematic, and second, the difficulties the students face when transferring from the school learning experience to university learning impacts them emotionally – particularly, in relation to our research problem, in terms of English L2 writing. It follows that the difficulties in English L2 writing the students described should be viewed in a holistic manner. The issue should not be related solely to linguistic aspects, as it occurs in response to a contextual, educational and institutional set of factors that should be taken into consideration when investigating the difficulties the students face when writing English at a university level.

The learning experience is still an under-theorised aspect of Dörnyei's (2010) tripartite motivation theory (compared to its parallel concepts of the ideal L2 self and the ought-to self) (Csizér, 2019). One way to enrich this component could be to consider the temporal aspect of the students' learning experience and to look at aspects of transition (from one stage to another) as critical factors that could impact the learning experience and hence influence the learners' affection for the activity. Thus, looking into the learning experience, the L2 writing motivation and the L2 writing anxiety should be considered in light of two temporal stages: the past learning experiences and present learning experiences. University students' past learning experiences consist of their high school education and learning, while their present learning experiences are their university learning; how these two stages relate to each other, how the previous experience influences the current experience and how the learners cope with the drastic everyday differences as their university experience unfolds are issues that should be considered.

The students pointed out several significant differences between high school and university. High school teaching was criticised for the following reasons: (1) its heavy reliance on memorisation, (2) its monotonous methods of instruction when teaching a skill that requires a good amount of creativity, (3) its highly exam oriented focus, (4) the minimal leeway and freedom of choice being offered to the students, which eventually restricts their learner autonomy and (5) its textbook-focused and grammar-based nature. Becoming accustomed to all the restrictions above and then moving on to university results in the students finding themselves facing (1) an extensive writing curriculum when compared with high school

requirements, (2) a highly competitive environment due to the nature of university study, considering that all the students have come a long way to be accepted to a BA English major, (3) large class sizes compared to those in high school, which means less individual attention is paid to each student and (4) the inherent differences in the teaching methods between small high school lessons and large university lectures.

The university study programme requires, in addition to proficiency requirements, a good level of learner independence, skills related to critical reading and critical thinking, time management skills and a significant amount of learner autonomy; as a result, the learners described feeling unconfident and sometimes anxious. It is not, however, an all-gloomy picture, as the students did recognise the differences between these two educational stages. Some students preferred what the high school offered them (for example, a 'nice teacher', a paced learning process and more individual attention in small classes). Other students found the university experience to be more favourable due to the relatively greater freedom of choice, the better standards of teaching and the better teacher–student rapport they managed to build at the university (as presented in **5.3 Students' previous and Current L2 Learning Experiences**). In addition, university students usually had visions of their future goals, which helped to inspire their self-efficacy and self-discrepancy, despite describing the experience (university studies) overall as 'challenging'.

Busse (2013) and Busse and Walter (2013) observed the decrease in intrinsic motivation among first-year German language university students by conducting a longitudinal exploration of the students' experiences. Their findings aligned with much of what the present study has explored so far, particularly with regard to L2 writing. Al-Hoorie (2019) conducted perhaps the only investigation so far to refer explicitly to the motivation dilemma in higher education as it relates to L2 motivation; they stated clearly that this is a gap in the field. The longitudinal studies' findings noted a remarkable decrease in the students' motivation in the second semester when compared with the first semester (which resonates with findings concerning levels of motivation that have been described above). The present discussion agrees with Al-Hoorie's possible explanations for this decrease, which do not assume an entirely pessimistic picture. Al-Hoorie also offered useful pedagogical analyses of three factors: First, the teachers need to have realistic expectations of their students' levels of

motivation (and, hence, their efforts, which change as part of the natural evolution of their motivation), second, the motivating strategies need to be appropriate according to shifts in the students' levels of motivation and third, universities should 'stream teachers according to their motivational skills' (2019, p.259).

Busse (2013) called for a consideration of the challenges that could be faced in higher education degree courses that could influence attrition and retention rates in those institutions. This is a subject that, I surmise, remains untouched by extant L2 motivation research. Second language motivation research has engaged with motivation processes, including how motivated students behave, e.g. directed motivational currents (Dörnyei, Henry and Muir, 2016), and has even looked through the microlens of motivational dynamics and investigated motivation per second in task-performance activities (MacIntyre and Serroul, 2015). However, it has not yet sufficiently addressed the subject of transition, particularly in higher education, even though it draws on university students (both graduates and undergraduates) and the context of higher education (university) in many research questions.

6.7.3 Language proficiency

The fifth research question revolves around the students' self-rating of their L2 writing proficiency and its relationship to L2 writing motivation and anxiety. It uses a scale that goes from 'poor' to 'excellent'. Overall, the students saw themselves as either intermediate or upper-intermediate in English L2 writing (Table 16, Chapter 4). The teachers, on the other hand, commented repeatedly in the interviews on the 'very low' language proficiency, stating that students lacked the required competence in English L2 writing at university level and had little confidence (**5.11 Interviews with Teachers)**. The students noted that some of their linguistic weaknesses in spelling and grammar, as well as their limited vocabulary knowledge and inability to generate ideas, meant that they found writing in English difficult. This demotivated them and could evoke L2 writing anxiety.

These findings confirm the unpromising findings by previous studies on this topic in a Saudi context. Grami (2010) referred to the low writing scores achieved by Saudi candidates in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) when compared with their scores in the rest of the components (speaking, reading and listening). The teachers in the present

study commented on the students' limited proficiency (reflected in their inability to progress to writing complex sentences – that is, they only wrote short, simple sentences and short paragraphs). This resonates with several studies, such as those by Al-Khairy (2013) and Almuhailib (2016), who observed that Saudi English majors had serious problems at both micro and macro levels. Such problems included using basic sentence structures, writing short paragraphs, making a lot of mistakes, not being able to use appropriate vocabulary and articles, poor spelling, lacking interest in trying to familiarise themselves with a variety of genres and few formal writing skills.

From a global affective angle, Young (1991) noted that feelings of L2 anxiety can be triggered by low proficiency levels in L2. Locally, Al-Qahtani (2020) highlighted the association between L2MSS and vocabulary knowledge and determined that the ideal L2 motivation correlates positively with vocabulary size. Al Asmari (2013) noted that students with low writing anxiety were more likely to utilise a variety of writing strategies and less likely to face writing apprehension than their anxious peers.

Furthermore, by comparing findings concerning the students' self-rating of their perceived L2 writing proficiency level, their actual academic achievement in L2 writing and their levels of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety (Table 18, Chapter 4), the analysis in the present study revealed that the self-rating of the proficient students was sometimes similar to that of the less-proficient students. Highly proficient students and less-proficient students both rated themselves as intermediate, for example, in their L2 writing proficiency self-rating. In other words, less-proficient students overestimated their L2 writing proficiency level, whereas proficient students may have underestimated their L2 writing proficiency. The critical variable in this discrepancy was the existence or absence of L2 writing anxiety. These findings corroborate the findings of MacIntye, Noels and Clement (1997) regarding the perception of proficiency and the actual proficiency levels in French L2 language; they showed that students with a higher level of anxiety tended to underestimate their proficiency, unlike the self-evaluation of their less anxious peers.

The mixed methods findings in the present study, particularly the interrelated views of both teachers and students, suggest that students' English writing proficiency interferes with their emotions in two ways. First, the widely professed low proficiency in English among Saudi

English majors cripples their English writing competence even at high levels in university. Second, the integral role played by both the perceived L2 writing proficiency (as a reflection of how the students see themselves) and their actual L2 writing proficiency reflects the existence of feelings of anxiety and lack of confidence, even when students are achieving well in their L2 writing.

This dilemma was, admittedly, agreed on by both the teachers and the students, and some possible remedial solutions were discussed. To improve English language proficiency among the students, students and teachers alike suggested that the habit of reading in English may contribute to improving English L2 writing proficiency. Some students admitted that they were not motivated to read extensively in English (for many reasons that go beyond the limited space here), which they observed influenced their fluency and writing competence. The teachers confirmed that the students lacked the habit of reading. These views were confirmed by Al-Hoorie's (2019) who revealed that Saudi English learners have 'little inclination to practise the reading skill' (p. 249). This issue will be elaborated on in Section 6.10 The Role of the Teacher and Their Strategies.

6.7.4 Teachers' feedback

The teachers' feedback emerged as an important theme in the qualitative interviews (see Figure 6 in Chapter 5). The interviews revealed conflicting viewpoints between the teachers and the students relating to the effect of teachers' written feedback (on the students' written products) on the students' emotions (motivation and anxiety). Referring to examples of negative learning experiences that impact the students' feelings towards L2 writing, the students highlighted that the teachers mostly utilised delayed corrective feedback; the students were then dissatisfied with the teachers' method of correction and marking, which caused disagreement on both sides. If we add the students' low proficiency level (according to the teachers' statements) and the teachers' high expectations (according to the students' statements) to this situation, then the students and teachers seem to be operating in a vicious cycle, which was highlighted in Chapter 5.

Previous studies highlighted the emotional impact of the type of feedback given by teachers on the students' writing. Zarrinabadi and Rezazadeh (2020) tested the impact of three types

of feedback on students' self-efficacy, motivation and anxiety in L2 writing, namely, corrective feedback (the dominant type of feedback in educational settings in Saudi Arabia), feed up (where the teachers' comments relate to the students' goals and how successful the student is at reaching these goals) and feed forward (where the teacher's comment focuses on the next learning step in the semester). The researchers reached several interesting conclusions that are worth summarising, as they relate to our case in the present study.

First, corrective feedback alone does not enhance the students' L2 writing motivation because the teacher focuses on highlighting the linguistic errors without recognising the students' efforts or pointing out the progress they have made from one task to another. In addition, the students are not informed of the specific goals of the course and future tasks, meaning that they cannot track their success and progression. Second, feed up enhances the students' motivation, as it relates to the students' goals and thereby enables them to value the writing tasks in light of their assigned goals. Third, feed forward is effective in promoting the students' motivation because the teacher comments on the learners' efforts and stamina when undertaking the writing tasks; this enhances the students' self-perception. Fourth, combinations of treatment conditions, where more than one technique is used, enhances the students' L2 writing motivation. Fifth, the impact of these treatments on anxiety is not clear, as the figures were inconsistent in this regard. Last, all the treatments lower the anxiety experienced, except for feedback only and feed up only. In feed up, the teacher's comments highlight the importance of the goals and expectations but do not refer to the students' efforts or accomplishments nor to the quality of the written product; this may evoke anxiety among the students.

Self-correction should be implemented to a greater extent, as it enables the students to see their mistakes for themselves and correct them. Because 'self-correction' was found to be one of the characteristics that makes social media appealing to write on, perhaps the students should be given more opportunities to review their written tasks by themselves. This would serve several purposes: (1) give the students more control and a sense of autonomy when undertaking their written tasks, (2) reduce the anxiety that stems from a fear of assessment and evaluation and (3) continued practice in self-correction, which would enable the learners

to see their weaknesses and strengths and enhance the good and improve on the weak aspects of their work.

In summary, as teacher feedback was raised as one of the aspects that impacted the students' confidence, resilience, motivation and anxiety towards English writing, considering a shift in the ways teachers provide feedback on the students' writing may contribute to solving this disagreement between students and teachers on the feedback process that is currently employed by the university and should help to eradicate the students' anxiety connected to the teachers' feedback and marking methods.

6.8 The Role of the Ideal and Ought-to Selves in the L2 Writing Motivational Self System

As mentioned above, quantitative analysis indicated the existence of all three components of the L2WMSS, all of which have different means. Of the three components of the theory, the ideal L2 self in writing displayed a significantly high mean (4.22), followed by the ought-to with a moderate mean (3.49). These results are in line with some other findings but contradict a study in which the ought-to self was found to be higher than the ideal L2 self among secondary school students in Turkey (Yektin and Ekin, 2018). Furthermore, out of the 10 highly ranked items on the L2WMSS questionnaire, eight belonged to the ideal self L2 construct, while only two belonged to the ought-to self construct. The qualitative interview findings supported the figures and provided explanatory evidence for the occurrence of both types of motivation among the students at varying densities.

6.8.1 The role of the ideal L2 self

The dominant source of the students' global feelings of motivation towards English L2 writing was their ideal views of themselves in the future. According to the interview data (Interviewees 3, 4 and 6 in 5.7), the students who operated within ideal L2 self views expressed an overall high level of L2 writing motivation. In other words, those students who had powerful personalised visions of their desired future goals and were willing to expend effort to reach those goals enjoyed a high level of motivation towards L2 writing. These ideal beliefs gave the learner a sense of accomplishment and allowed them to reduce the discrepancy between their actual, present situation and their future aspired state.

For the ideal L2 self to be effective at activating learner motivation, it has to meet certain criteria: the learner should possess a lucid self-image of what they want to be (or gain) in the future; this image should be plausible (possible to reach); where the learner's ideal L2 self goals are tied to other goals, these should be related to the ought-to self (obligatory aspects); the learner should be able to operate harmoniously between the two facets (the ideal and the ought-to); the learner should act strategically upon this ideal self; and, finally, the ideal self should be distinct from and an opponent to the feared self (Csizér, 2019).

The students' descriptions of their ideal L2 writing motivation met the criteria above. When talking about the main source of their motivation as it relates to English writing, the participants referred to their future goals and their vision of the ideal self in the future. The students had various goals for the future and linked these goals to their motivation and keenness to learn and to improve their L2 writing in English. Some of these goals were related to having a prestigious career in the future (e.g. 'in the diplomatic service' and 'English language professor') or to further higher study goals ('pursuing a master's degree in English').

The students not only stated that they had career goals but also envisaged the practical chores of these jobs. They could depict themselves in their future careers: writing reports in English, speaking to people and/or interacting with colleagues from multicultural backgrounds in the workplace. Furthermore, they thought about the means of reaching these goals and the skills they would need. They had already considered arming themselves with the required skills (such as high level of English language communication), kept an eye on available sponsorship programmes and their updated conditions, enhanced a strong CV and maintained a high GPA. All these views were internalised within the students (that is, they were their own desired goals and plans); they were not imposed on them by family, institutions, etc. (the ought-to self) and did not stem from fears of possible negative outcomes (the feared self). At the same time, these ideal self views were imaginable and achievable. Follow-up interviews with the students validated the viability of the plans they had previously described, many of which were already being implemented. For example, a student described how their plan for the holiday was to join an online English learning course; in the follow-up interview they stated that they accomplished this, they had taken the course, and the researcher could already see a remarkable improvement in the student's fluency and confidence. Another student

mentioned that their goal was to pursue higher education (and, therefore, that they required a high GPA) and, a year later, was found to have obtained that high GPA. This student described their resilience in doing so in spite of the difficult nature of university education.

Students with an ideal L2 self were keen to take every opportunity to improve their L2 writing skills and, hence, were found to be willing to try writing in English in other contexts (beyond homework and exam requirements). Those students with a dominant ideal L2 self in writing were the ones who also stated that they enjoyed writing their personal diaries in English, took extra writing practice in online courses and enjoyed writing and interacting in English on social media. This shows the powerful impact of their ideal L2 self in writing on their willingness to communicate in English outside the classroom and adds to previous evidence of the relationship between the ideal L2 self and the willingness to communicate inside the classroom: BursalI and Öz (2017) found a significant positive correlation between the ideal L2 self and the willingness to communicate in the classroom, particularly in the writing skill.

Those students who expressed the ideal L2 self facet were found to have certain personality characteristics. They showed confidence, resilience, openness to criticism and flexibility in adapting to difficult situations during their learning experience. They were confident that they were going to achieve the goals they had set for their idealised future self. They stated that when they received corrective feedback that pointed out a lot of mistakes in their work, they may feel upset but resiliently moved on and tried again. They indicated that whatever media they shared their written works in English in, they were open to criticism or feedback from colleagues and audiences because they were learning and wanted to use those comments for good instead of letting them get the better of them. These students also had autonomy and self-efficacy, which is in line with findings of Ueki and Takeuchi (2013) in a Japanese context.

This group of students were by no means anxiety-free; they reported the co-occurrence of L2 writing anxiety in several situations: in exams, when faced with a difficult topic to write about, when having to generate ideas (which they found difficult) or when working on a project with a high number of marks at stake. However, their personality characteristics, as mentioned above, enabled them to cope with their anxiety and to instinctively look for ways to cope. Their ideal L2 self-belief sustained their general L2 motivation in the long run and allowed

them to cope with any negative feelings and overcome such feelings' emotional consequences. When they were faced with any of the difficult situations above, they found ways to resolve any anxiety triggers. During exams, they organised themselves and made sure they were well-prepared, and they tried hard to be on track for both the midterms and final exams. When faced with a difficult topic, they read, learned and brainstormed to overcome this difficulty. When they were worried about the marks attached to a project, they made sure they understood the requirements and kept in communication with the teachers for clarification and guidance.

A lot of these coping strategies were accompanied by a form of self-reflection, which can be relevant to what McAdams called 'self-narrative' in their New Big Five model, as explained below (McAdams and Pals, 2006; Dörnyei 2020). The data revealed that some students instinctively spoke to themselves in a reflective manner. The students reported that when they were faced with a difficult situation related to their L2 writing, they spoke to themselves, evaluated the situation and rationalised why they felt the way they did; they decided to act upon it and sometimes blamed themselves for not expending as much effort as they should. For example, when receiving an extremely low grade in a writing assignment or exam, one such student would be shocked at the beginning and feel disappointed; however, their ideal L2 belief would inspire and empower them to act. They may blame themself for not working hard enough, but then would plan to make up for it in the next step and prepare with more enthusiasm and resilience. Another example is when the student had to submit a portfolio and needed to obtain a high grade but was worried of falling below their expectations. The student internalised a dialogue: 'Why am I worried? I did my best'. They would think of alternatives in case their planned project went wrong. This is clear evidence that a learner is not only capable of visualising their ideal self but also of establishing an internal dialogue, using this technique to help them evaluate their mixed feelings of motivation and anxiety and to regulate these feelings, cope with them and, eventually, be able to progress and thrive with the fewest (emotional) losses. This sustained their motivation in the long run.

The concept of self-narrative was examined in the New Big Five model (McAdams, 2006; McAdams and Pals, 2006). This conceptual framework positions itself harmoniously in the research fields of both motivation (Dörnyei, 2020) and anxiety (Simsek and Dörnyei, 2017).

The New Big Five model is a renowned theory that explains the main characteristics of human personality in five distinct layers: integrative life narratives are 'the real innovation of the model' (Dörnyei, 2020, p.6) and the most relevant component of the theory to the present discussion. Integrative life narratives (or narrative identity, as in Simsek and Dörnyei, 2017) can be summed up as follows:

- internalised and evolving life stories that reconstruct the past and imagine the future to provide a person's life with identity (unity, purpose and meaning)

- broadly speaking, a personal story or account that people develop for themselves on the basis of their unique idiosyncratic experiences in order to help them to make sense of their lives

- The personal narratives that people form for themselves can offer a coherent framework to organise and manage the multiple pulls and pushes that they encounter in their daily lives.

- Clarity and coherence of a personal narrative is closely associated with the pursuit of self-relevant goals (Wong and Vallacher, 2018), which implies that by improving their self-narratives, people can enhance their motivation.

- viewing the way learners form cohesive verbal accounts of their relevant experiences as an integral part of the overall holistic anxiety construct (Dörnyei, 2020).

The qualitative data revealed that the above descriptions of the ideal L2 self took place among the students regardless of their academic achievement (for example, Interviewee 1 in 5.3.2, Interviewee 10 in 5.10, and Interviewee 3, in 5.7). In other words, the personality characteristics, as well as the coping mechanism and self-dialogue, were seen among both high-achieving and low-achieving students. It must be noted that the current study did not originally utilise self-narrative in its methodology and only through the interviews did such examples of reflection and internal dialogue get detected. Thus, exploring (in depth) the students' self-narrative in the light of the New Big Five model (McAdams, 2020) requires further investigation.

One may expect that these traits would only be present in excellent students, however, the qualitative interviews with the students revealed that even mediocre (and, to a lesser extent, low-achieving) students expressed these personality characteristics and the strategies described. Their low achievements could be impacted by other external factors but not by their own L2 self. Alternatively, it could be argued that the effectiveness of their ideal L2 self was not necessarily reflected in their current academic achievements yet but will be seen later, in a future setting in which they thrive. For instance, one student who was low achieving despite possessing all the admirable traits above had an ideal L2 self, related to a successful business tutoring primary school kids in English (a common aim of university graduates in Saudi Arabia). In their case, the ideal L2 self was not unreachable, taking into consideration their current academic status. As long as they sustain their L2 motivation, confidence and resilience, their ideal L2 self will remain effective.

6.8.2 The role of the ought-to self

The ought-to self in writing motivation was also found among the students; however, it was less dominant than the ideal L2 self. This component relates to the less-internalised motivation or the motivational drivers that stem from external sources (such as being imposed by family, significant others and/or by any institutional or authoritative sources). The learner is then not pursuing goals based on their pleasure or desire; rather, they have a sense of being obligated to accomplish certain goals or (at least) having to avoid possible negative outcomes.

The major source of this type of motivation was course grades (see interviews in 5.8). This is contrary to many findings in the Asian context, where the family effect was found to be one of the main sources of the ought-to drive (for example, Azarnoosh (2014) in the Iranian context and Magid (2011) in the Chinese context). In the present study, family encouragement was found to be a vital part of the milieu but not a critical source of shaping the motivation; this is why the family was included in the milieu but not as a source of the ought-to (or ideal) self, as was found in several previous studies. One possible explanation that could be relevant to this outcome suggested by Teimouri (2017) and Papi et al. (2018) is that there is a distinction between two latent categories of the ought-to self (ought-to self–own and ought-to self–others). The students explained that their families did encourage them in their L2

learning, however, further exploration revealed two elements related to this factor (the family): family encouragement was not always effective at making the student feel motivated nor at influencing the student's attitudes towards English L2 writing, and family encouragement did not emerge as a source of motivation (rather, it was more relevant to the milieu factor). Accordingly, and since the theme of 'grades' repeatedly and consistently emerged as a source of L2 writing motivation, one can argue three things: first, the students had 'grades' as the source of their ought-to-self motivation; second, this ought-to self-motivation did not belong to an external factor (family or teacher); and thus, third, this ought-to source of motivation (the grades) was primarily an ought-to self–own (not ought-to self–others) motivation. A question can be raised here as to whether the students' age, and hence their level of maturity, played a role in this aspect, i.e. whether the university students had reached a level of maturity that allowed them to distinguish between what they intrinsically want (the ideal self), what they think they have to do for the sake of others (the ought-to self–others) and what they realise as an obligation placed on them that they are pursuing for the sake of their own goals (ought-to self–own).

Students at various levels of achievement had grades as the main driver. Grades evoked their motivation to study hard and maintain academic achievement, not only for the writing module but for various modules in the programme. The qualitative data revealed that there were high-achieving students who were mainly driven by grades. Their excellent grades in the writing module did not reflect a positive attitude towards English writing; rather, they were merely a reflection of the students' eagerness to maintain their excellent achievement and avoid having a lower GPA. In fact, the students explained that they did indeed have negative attitudes towards writing in general and English L2 writing in particular. Some students clearly stated that 'writing is not my thing' and that they 'hate' writing. They highlighted their lack of writing skills, mainly the ability to generate ideas and organise them. Such students carried the belief that writing is a gift or talent and, therefore, that people's abilities are intrinsically different.

Students who were driven primarily by their ought-to goals (grades in our present study) were found to be unable to sustain long-term motivation towards L2 writing. Some of them clearly indicated that if they did not have the writing module, they would not attempt to practise English writing; if the writing module were not a compulsory module, they would not have

joined it; or if the writing was a training course without assessment or grades, they would not bother to join it. They also stated that they did not plan to work on improving their English writing beyond Level 3, which is the last level at which a writing module is delivered. Unlike their ideal-L2 self peers, they expressed little or no interest in practising English writing outside the classroom for non-homework activities. Even social media, found to be an appealing platform for the internally motivated students in this study, did not appear to be appealing enough for those students with an ought-to self motivation. This provides further evidence in support of Dörnyei's (2020) concept of the sustainability of L2 motivation, which requires activating a learner's self-vision and self-concordances (see Chapter 6), found to clearly be lacking in those students who are driven solely by a sense of obligation (ought-to-self motivation).

These findings corroborate Wang's (2009) study of the association between motivation and achievement as ought-to-self motivation in light of the self-determination theory. Wang explained that autonomous extrinsic motivation correlates positively with intrinsic motivation and achievement, whereas controlled extrinsic motivation correlates negatively. Accordingly, the findings in the present study ring an alarm bell and suggest that we should practise caution when looking into previous findings, such as Alrabai and Moskovsky (2016), whose figures indicated that of the five variables – motivation, attitudes, anxiety, self-esteem and autonomy – motivation is the strongest predictor of L2 achievement. One should not consider motivation only in its broadest sense, as we now know that the specific constructs of the L2MSS have different motivational impacts and that, according to the mixed method findings, it can be claimed that overall L2 writing motivation does correlate positively with achievement. At the same time, however, there are high-achieving students who have more anxiety than motivation.

This investigation indicated that this lack of interest in L2 writing and a sense of obligation do not necessarily correspond with general feelings about other modules or skills. Students stated that these feelings were only associated with the writing module and that they felt comfortable and more encouraged by their performance in other modules. This explains why they tended to think of writing and writing skills as a gift or natural talent.

The above description is relevant to numerous students, including high-achieving ones. It may be surprising that a student can achieve high grades while carrying such a negative attitude towards and lack of interest in L2 writing. One of the explanations that was given by the students was that they were 'used to' obtaining high grades and were willing to expend effort to maintain that level of success, regardless of their attitude towards writing, their motivation or even their knowledge of the subject being written about. Furthermore, the habit of memorisation seems to contribute to students' ability to succeed. As mentioned previously, this was highlighted by some of the motivated students when asked the intriguing question, 'Can a student achieve high grades even if they are not really motivated?' The answer usually affirmed that a student could succeed, as all they would need to do is memorise. In the writing module at university, memorisation can be used for the grammar section as well as for the written compositions, which ask students to memorise a whole passage and rewrite it in the exam. This is not uncommon to see in many education institutions in Saudi Arabia, where (as previously mentioned) memorisation is a dominant learning strategy (Rugh, 2002; Alrashidi and Phan, 2015).

6.9 Willingness to Use English L2 Writing Outside the Classroom

Qualitative data was used to try to investigate some language learners' practices that may unveil the extent of their L2 writing motivation and anxiety by exploring their willingness to use English L2 writing outside the classroom and beyond university-related assignments and requirements. The willingness to use L2 writing outside the classroom and to take the opportunity to interact with others in written English (including with native speakers) plays an integral role in enhancing the learners' accuracy (Storch and Hill, 2008; Alshammari, 2020). The qualitative interviews with the students portrayed an interesting picture of this kind of motivated behaviour among some of the learners and a lack of willingness to communicate in English writing among those students who experienced more anxiety and less motivation. Based on the mixed method findings (Table 8 in Chapter 4, and Figure 7 in Chapter 5), the willingness to use English L2 writing outside the classroom among English majors had the following characteristics:

1. Most of the interviewees reported using L2 writing online, especially on social media, with Twitter being the most popular platform.

2. The students interacted with both native speakers and fellow learners.

3. The students wrote about general events or some of their favourite sayings and quotes.

4. The students continued using Twitter even if there was a lack of interaction with their audiences.

5. The students exchanged written feedback on their mistakes and stated that they were open to others' feedback, as it helped them improve their writing.

6. Demotivated, highly anxious learners or those who had negative attitudes towards L2 writing were not willing to try writing in English on social media even if their academic achievement was found to be high, whereas low-achieving students could be willing to use English on social media. In other words, writing in English on social media was associated more with motivation, attitudes towards the L2 in general and L2 writing in particular and a lack of anxiety associated with academic achievement.

7. A few learners reported using L2 writing offline, in their personal diaries.

8. A limited number of students reported engaging in online English language courses to improve their speaking and writing via live interaction with native English speakers from around the world.

9. According to the students' interview statements, FLCA related to writing skills was not necessarily transferable to outside classroom contexts, where the learners practised English writing voluntarily through online or offline media.

10. The main reasons why L2 writing anxiety did not transfer to out-of-class contexts were related to teachers' evaluations and assessments of the written product in classroom-related work, freedom of choice in the writing topic and the facilitation of self-correction in outside-classroom contexts (unlike writing in quizzes and exams).

According to the latest figures from the Ministry of Communications and Information Technologies in Saudi Arabia, Twitter users make up 41% of the online population in the country. This is the highest percentage found globally, and Twitter's management expects further rapid growth in several countries, including Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, I have to

concur with Allam et al. (2017) that the use of Twitter by Saudi citizens is still under-researched, particularly the aspects of language use and English language teaching and learning. Not only is this aspect missing, but research on language learning motivation has 'shied away' from investigating the link between motivation and the domain of online language learning and use, and what research there is lacks empirical evidence (Henry and Lamb, 2020, p.613). The data found by the present study provides evidence for an association between L2WMSS, L2 writing anxiety and OILE, a term coined by Sockett (2014).

In the interviews, students reported on their frequent use of Twitter to practise English writing, which can be seen as a form of the students' willingness and motivation to use English writing online. The participants reported that their use of Twitter was voluntary and not in response to any external pressures. This reflects the idea that learners do take opportunities and respond positively to chances to use digital platforms to improve their L2 writing skills (Macaro, Handley and Walter, 2012). The students' descriptions of their experiences and engagement with Twitter reflect that Twitter provides a platform that encourages their personalised decision making and innovative opportunities to interact with others in an enjoyable and meaningful way, as well as maintaining intrinsic levels of motivation and satisfaction (Henry and Lamb, 2020).

After the enjoyable task of delving into the students' accounts of their experiences of Twitter as a platform upon which to practise their writing skills, I do concur with Henry and Lamb's (2020) profound argument regarding the association between the learner's motivational vision(s) and their use of digital and online platforms when learning a language. In the present study, those students who had visions of themselves in the future (either regarding what they aspired to be in the future or related to their anticipated level of writing proficiency as part of their ideal image of themselves) used Twitter as a platform for practising writing, for sharpening their writing skills and for establishing rapport with an anonymous audience with the common goal of improving their L2 writing proficiency on this platform.

In a similar vein, the present findings corroborate Henry and Lamb's (2020) suggestion of a link between OILE and SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1985), as SDT has the capability to holistically explain language learning motivation and its link to the use of online sources and platforms.

Self Determination Theory explains the three vital qualities that characterise any form of activity pursued for enjoyment and not in response to obligation: the activity fosters feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness. The fact that students took the opportunity to use Twitter to write in English and expressed enjoying a sense of control over the whole process fostered a sense of learner autonomy. Evidence of competence could be found in the students' expressions of their sense of self-efficacy, satisfaction and confidence to manage their interaction on Twitter while writing in the L2. Finally, relatedness was shown by the students' statements that they enjoyed exchanging Tweets with an audience from various cultural backgrounds, including native speakers of English and non-native Arabs, with English as the common language in the interaction.

Even though one might think the act of posting Tweets in English could pose an embarrassing situation for students at a low proficiency level, the students' interviews indicated that this aspect was indeed overcome by the learners by the anonymity permitted by the platform, which means they did not worry about others' impressions of their mistakes. This is in contrast with writing assignments or classroom tasks in which their mistakes can be exposed by their teachers or their peers. It was also one of the reasons why L2 writing anxiety that is related to classroom activities and assignments diminished when students wrote online.

6.10 The Role of the Teacher and Their Strategies

Findings from the teacher interviews are in line with extant statistical findings, confirming that levels of motivation among students constantly fluctuate and are not as high as may be expected from English majors. This is in addition to the coexistence of L2 writing anxiety and motivation.

The teachers in the present study reported several strategies they employed in an attempt to enhance the students' motivation and lower their feelings of anxiety towards L2 writing (see the teachers' accounts in 5.11.3). Among these strategies was their attempt to encourage reading. The teachers complained that students lacked the habit of reading, which they believed to be one of the main reasons behind the students' low proficiency and lack of writing skills in English. This opinion concurs with a wide body of research on this topic (Al-Qahtani, 2016; Attyat, 2019). The teachers suggested encouraging the students to read for pleasure as

a means to develop their L2 fluency and writing proficiency; this, in turn, would have a positive impact on the L2 students' motivation and writing skills. Attyat (2019) posited that reading for pleasure influences writing achievements and reading comprehension in a positive way by improving thinking skills and literacy levels and sharpening the learners' visions of their future goals and current interests.

Encouraging reading in the L2 as a motivating strategy to improve L2 writing requires collective efforts from the various teachers and decision makers who are involved in the teaching and training of the students. Furthermore, the strategy requires the provision of a 'reading-friendly environment' (Al-Qahtani, 2016, p.12) with better facilities, as the teachers complained of insufficient book collections or libraries, which are sometimes lacking in Saudi universities, particularly in small branches or in departments located in the suburbs. Finally, a reading habit should be inculcated, not only in the target language but also in the students' L1 (Arabic), as reading proficiency in Arabic, even among university students, is often still found to be below the expected standards.

One of the strategies that the teachers recalled as having an influence on students' participation in the classroom, and on their confidence, was to guide the students to prepare for the class by informing them of the writing topics in advance. This enabled the students to familiarise themselves with the topic and read about it prior to the class. This relates somewhat to the 'flipped classroom' strategy, which Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016) discovered is useful when teaching grammar in high school. The strategy requires preparation, and, once in the class, the students apply their knowledge of practical tasks with clarification and guidance from the teacher if and when required. Students responded positively to this strategy. In L2 writing instruction, it was found that students who were exposed to the flipped classroom strategy outperformed their peers who received traditional instruction in English writing (Abedi, Keshmirshekan and Namaziandost, 2019).

One of the main strategies that the teachers tried to implement in the L2 writing classroom was improving the classroom atmosphere. The teachers mentioned their attempts to create a friendly atmosphere in which the students would feel confident to speak. This was done by encouraging them to express their ideas and relate them to their personal experiences and to

be open to share their stories. One of the non-Arab teachers reported going to the students' level and referring to their lack of understanding Arabic as a means of showing that they are also learning and mitigating any sense of embarrassment or shyness. The students were also encouraged to speak and listen to each other in a collaborate environment; they were given opportunities to be active participants in the class rather than simply being passive recipients of information. All these practices, and a lot more, were found in the literature to have a profound positive impact on the classroom atmosphere, which, in turn, influenced the students' attitudes and emotions.

Amurdawati (2019) determined that the classroom atmosphere has a significant impact on students' attitudes towards the class. There are three different dimensions of the atmosphere that can be enhanced: the relationship dimension (teacher–student and student–student relationships), the self-development dimension (which considers the students' improved abilities as a result of the learning process) and finally, maintenance (which regulates the students' abilities to harmoniously adapt to changes in the classroom environment).

Teachers also reported that referring to the students' goals (both near or further into the future) worked as a strategy to motivate them and to reduce their feelings of anxiety towards L2 writing. The teachers noted that they reminded the students of the importance of L2 writing in terms of its influence on academic success, providing good opportunities for getting a job and professional success, and even on more pleasurable activities, such as travelling. These goals were in line with the motivated students' descriptions of their visions of future goals and their anticipated ideal selves. Motivated students presented clear images of their goals, aspirations and plans for the future. Some of the motivated students had thought about their anticipated dream jobs and what those jobs require; they had already visualised themselves doing the essential tasks of that job (writing reports), and they associated that future, ultimate goal with their current motivation to improve their writing in English.

The teachers, spontaneously, drew upon this motivational technique, which tied in well with the students' reports of visions for themselves and future goals. The examples above offer additional scientific proof of the relevance of the concept of vision as well as the recently introduced proposition of episodic future thinking (D'Argembeau, 2016; 2020) and its

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association with possible selves and goals (Henry, 2020). Episodic thinking involves creating mental images and scenarios that represent the individual's goals and visualising the detailed process of achieving those goals and the challenges that may be faced along the way. It directs the individual's behaviour, making it consistent with the desired goal. This notion is particularly relevant to Dörnyei's (2010) ideal self, where the L2 learner has a strong idea of what they want to be or get in the future and vivid mental images of themselves approaching that ultimate goal. Accordingly, the teaching of English L2 writing in Saudi universities could benefit from the application of vision-based training programmes that use techniques inspired by Henry's suggestion to link episodic thinking about future goals to L2 learning motivation, particularly to the students' possible selves. Furthermore, it represents a fertile environment for future investigation into the effectiveness of vision and episodic thinking as two possible means of furthering L2 motivation research in a more empirical research direction.

6.11 Contribution: A Proposed Model of Affective Factors Impacting on L2 Writing

The current study is important because it sets out to clarify the relationship between L2 motivation, L2 anxiety, the internal processes of linguistic development and language acquisition in L2 writing and the developmental aspects of this specific skill (Ushioda, 2016). This is beneficial to gain a grounded understanding of the interplay between the various variables of L2 writing motivation, L2 writing anxiety, academic achievement in L2 writing and self-rating of the L2 writing proficiency. Furthermore, it attempts to explore possible remedial strategies for the problems that are related to L2 writing motivation and anxiety.

In light of the previous discussion of the mixed method findings, a model of L2 writing affects can be proposed. Figure 10 represents a model of the various facets involved in shaping and impacting the positive and negative affects related to L2 writing, i.e. facets that impact L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety.
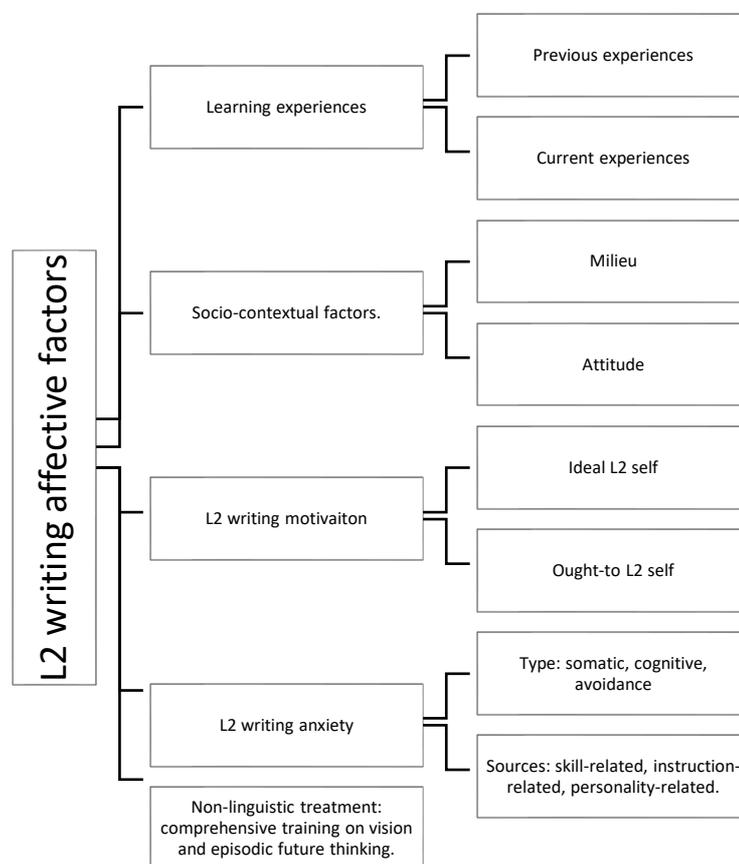
Figure 10: A proposed model of affective factors impacting on L2 writing.

The first two components in this model are the learning experiences and the sociocontextual factors. These are components that are independent from, but integral to, the other two major components: L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety. The learning experiences component relates mainly to learning experiences in the classroom, the educational setting and the learning settings that exist outside the classroom (if there are any). These are the teacher, the textbook, the learning resources, the classroom practices, the learning resources outside classroom, etc. As elicited from the analysis of the interviews and the discussion above, the learning experiences component should be considered in two different ways: what the learning experiences were in the past and what the main issues in the learning experiences are at the present time. This distinction is important because the previous experiences cannot be neglected: Both positive and negative learning experiences impact the student's current experience and influence the learners' emotions. Thus, to have a holistic view of the learning experience, it should be considered in two different, but relevant, temporal phases.

The same notion applies to the components of attitude and milieu. Learners can have positive attitudes towards L2 writing and therefore develop feelings of motivation to write and to continue improving their writing skill in the L2; alternatively, they may hold negative attitudes towards writing in the L2 and hence develop feelings of L2 writing anxiety (or, at least, demotivation) at some time in their learning journey. Milieu is embedded in this component, as the surrounding influential factors of family, society, friends, etc. can act in the same way as the learners' own attitudes. In fact, milieu can ultimately shape a learner's attitude towards L2 writing. It must be mentioned that although the theoretical framework on which this study is built (the L2MSS) includes the learning experience as a third component in addition to the ideal L2 self and ought-to self, it is not embedded in the current proposed model in the motivation element but acts as an independent component for the reasons explained above.

The third component of this model is the L2MSS. Here, the main modification to Dörnyei's (2010) L2MSS is two-fold: First, this study extracts the learning experience from the traditional L2MSS and makes it an independent component that can interact independently with both motivation and anxiety. Second, it modifies the constructs of the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self to make them skill specific (that is, it narrows their scopes from being related to L2 motivation in general to focusing on a specific aspect of L2 acquisition).

The fourth component is L2 writing anxiety, which takes the tripartite SLWAI model (Chen, 2004) as its basis. This category includes the three constructs of (1) somatic anxiety (which includes the physiological symptoms of anxiety that learners may experience when writing or thinking about writing in L2), (2) cognitive anxiety (the emotional and mental distress that occurs as a result of thinking about L2 writing) and (3) avoidance (which represents a set of behavioural facets that the learners tend to draw on in an effort to avoid writing in an L2 as a way of saving themselves from the negative feelings L2 writing may trigger).

Finally, the model suggests two treatment methods that have been suggested in the literature: enhancing the learners' visions and supporting episodic future thinking. There have been a few training programmes on the vision aspect; however, this technique still needs to be replicated and widely implemented in order to explore it further. Episodic thinking is a more recent technique than vision, and it is based on envisaging future goals in detailed

imagery, as has been described above. I believe that the main reason these two techniques may help to enhance the learners' L2 writing motivation and eliminate L2 writing anxiety is the obvious existence of the internal identity dialogue, which the participants reported as a technique they instinctively drew upon as a means to regulate their feelings, reflect on their experiences, enhance their motivation and reduce any negative effect of unpleasant feelings.

The major contribution of this model is its attempt to examine both positive and negative emotions in a holistic manner. It views L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety jointly, surrounded by the influences of both past and present learning experiences as well as the sociocontextual factors affecting the learner. Enhancing the learner's vision and supporting their episodic thinking are two non-linguistic treatment methods suggested as a solution to the lack of L2 writing motivation or to a significant increase in L2 writing anxiety. This model needs to be tested for further validity; it also needs to be applied to various world contexts – in different Arab and non-Arab countries – to different genders, to different L1 and L2 languages and at different educational levels.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This is the concluding chapter of the thesis, and it includes several subsections. First, the chapter discusses some of the potential limitations of the present study; discussing these limitations may help in interpreting the findings of the study. Second, the chapter draws upon some of the theoretical implications and aspects in view of the findings. Third, the chapter discusses various practical implications and proposes several recommendations that may be useful for practitioners, teachers, researchers and decision makers when considering English L2 writing for Saudi English language majors from a psycholinguistic point of view. Finally, the chapter ends with a concluding summary of the thesis.

7.1 Limitations of the Study

Sample-wise, the present study focused on a single gender, female, and chose to exclude their male counterparts. The main reason for this decision was actually driven by some of the claims in the L2 motivation research, which highlighted that female learners were relatively more motivated language learners than males (Pappamihiel, 2001; Cheng, 2002; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Gerencheal and Horwitz, 2016). Similarly, a few studies in L2 anxiety pointed out the possible gender-related distinctions in L2 anxiety and highlighted that female learners can be more anxious than male learners (Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014). Personal experience in teaching female English major students provided a picture that somewhat conflicted with the one presented in the previous literature in L2 motivation research, particularly when the focus of the investigation was narrowed down to more specific aspects, such as looking into a particular domain of language learning (i.e. the writing skill in this case) or the fact that the learners had specific characteristics that made them distinct from other types of L2 learners, for example, being university English students who were specialising in English. University English majors can be seen as learning IN English instead of learning English, which makes a difference. Therefore, although the single-gender focus can be seen as a limitation to this study, it actually served as a controlling aspect of the sample in order to seek in-depth answers for a specific phenomenon and enabled comparisons of the findings of the present study with those of the extant L2 motivation literature. Nevertheless, future research in L2 writing

emotional dispositions, particularly in the context of Saudi higher education, may consider a wider population sample, including both male and female university students, to investigate if there are any subtle differences in their self-perceptions that may be related to their L2WMSS. Considering a juxtaposition of both positive and negative emotions (motivation and anxiety), one can see where there may be distinctions across genders or how these emotions come into play within learners of both genders.

Another possible limitation is the fact that the present study focused on the writing module instead of looking into academic writing in general, which resulted in obtaining data from the first two years of university study in which the writing module is introduced to the students. Future studies may want to widen the scope of investigation and obtain data from university students from the various years to be able to look into academic writing in general. However, adopting this approach would require practising caution in several aspects, including the questionnaire design, the objective variables (e.g. the academic achievement variable) and considerations related to the L2 learning experience as a critical component of the L2 writing affective factors model (see Chapter 6). Relating to the learning experience in the present study, the researcher was able to discuss the various aspects of the L2 writing learning experience with specific reference to the writing module, i.e. the atmosphere of the writing module class, the writing module teacher, the writing module textbook, etc. This even facilitated a comparison of the writing modules at the university level with the English writing lessons in the previous stages of education with comprehensive details. However, if future research were to opt to look into academic writing in general, it would have to craft the research instruments in a fashion that can accommodate the wide range of aspects related to academic writing in general and not to a specific module for specific university levels.

Finally, the current study did not explore the wider scope of the students' motivation to learn English in general; rather, it concerned itself with the very specific domain of L2 writing motivation and anxiety. The reason for this was two-fold. First, narrowing the scope of investigation to the L2 writing skill was a response to a problem and, hence, needed to thoroughly investigate a specific problematic acquisition area (the writing skill) rather than the students' overall motivation. Second, the sample of the study included English majors, and one would presume that English majors would be already interested and relatively motivated

language learners/users, otherwise they would not have chosen to major in English Language and Translation. Nevertheless, it could be useful if future research in the field were to consider investigating both the learners' motivation in a broad sense alongside their motivation in specific domains of acquisition. This may yield some useful findings on whether there are any discrepancies between the two domains: general motivation and skill-specific motivation.

7.2 Theoretical Implications of the Study

7.2.1 Skill-specific L2 Motivational Self System

The present study utilised a modified version of Dörnyei's L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2005; 2009). A major modification made it skill-specific, in other words, focused it specifically on one aspect of L2 acquisition (the writing skill) instead of tackling L2 motivation to learn English in its broad aspect. The various studies that drew on Dörnyei's model used the original questionnaire suggested by Dörnyei and used by many scholars, and any modifications they applied were made to slightly change the scenarios that depicted situations for the ideal L2 self constructs or the ought-to constructs. For example, a questionnaire item on the ideal L2 self would be 'I can imagine myself …', and the rest of the statement would depict a scenario that related to a future situation in which the learner would draw on the L2. Looking closely at most of the ideal L2 self statements, one can see the association of L2 motivational self with the broad domain of L2 learning or its frequent association with speaking the L2 language as the main mean of communication with the L2 community or with foreigners who do not share the same L1, so both interlocutors could draw on speaking in English. Although this is a valid reason, as it is a common situation that L2 learners are likely to face, it is not the only situation, and we (researchers) should move beyond tackling the L2 motivation self system in this broad sense. The problem that the present study was concerned with, L2 writing motivation and anxiety, required a modification to the model that went beyond adjusting scenarios. The problem was not related to L2 learning in general; the sample were English majors who chose to join the English Language BA programme and had already obtained a certain level of English language qualification and met the conditions of acceptance into this programme, so questioning their L2 motivation would offer very little intellectual insight into the problem under investigation (their reluctance towards English L2 writing). Hence, modifications to Dörnyei's model were

not on the level of descriptive scenarios of the imagined selves but on the main subject matter of the questionnaire – L2 writing *and* motivation. The questionnaire in the present study changed phrases like 'learning English', 'speaking in English', 'studying English' and 'English class' into, for example, 'able to write proficiently in English', 'of my writing class', 'my writing skills', ' to write in English as if I were a native speaker', ' writing lengthy essays', ' writing emails' and '… sharing my thoughts on social media in written English', to mention but a few. The former statements are from the original L2MSS questionnaire and are widely used in the L2MSS research, but they were found to be inconsistent with the purpose of this study in both the specific L2 acquisition area (writing) and the type of sample (English majors). The modified version of the questionnaire (called the L2WMSS in this study) showed good reliability. Furthermore, it included new statements that, from the researcher's perspective, were expected to be of relevance to the sample of the present study, for example, statements on the GPA, writing long essays and writing on social media; all these topics emerged in the qualitative data in the students interviews as critical aspects associated with the students' L2 motivation in writing. This adds to the validity and reliability of the modified questionnaire and encourages the adoption of this method in the future. Considering these mixed method findings, one can suggest implementing a skill-specific version of the L2MSS.

The skill-specific scope of investigation in the present study served several purposes, outlined below.

1. The skill-specific focus made the tool of investigation (the questionnaire) appropriate for the problem being investigated, which required a sharper focus than the previously widely used L2MSS questionnaire. It helped extract data from the students' responses on L2 writing motivation, rather than on L2 motivation in general.

2. It also suited the sample of the study, i.e. English majors, by going beyond the generality of whether they were motivated to learn English. We needed to focus on specific characteristics of these students and tackle their implications, which would be specific to them and not applicable to other types of learners, for example, non-English majors or high school students. These learners were obviously more mature than students in primary education, and the learning experiences they encountered in higher education were different from those in

previous educational stages. Visions of future goals and planning for a job are more likely to crystalise at this level of education than at the intermediate or high school level.

3. The skill-specific scope opened new doors to other comparative research on L2 motivation across the various L2 skills or acquisition areas, e.g. comparing motivation to speak in English with the motivation to write in English or with motivation to improve vocabulary and illuminating whether these motivations are related to the learners' visions of their ideal selves and ought-to selves or shaped by their learning experiences.

7.2.2 The prominence of the language learning experience in L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety.

One of the main theoretical implications of the current study is to reconsider the status of the learning experience as an integral factor impacting both types of emotions (motivation and anxiety). When looking holistically at the coexistence of both emotions, the learning experience appeared to be operating in a different manner from how it is currently depicted in Dörnyei's L2MSS. Thus, the contribution of this study revolves around a model of the affective factors impacting on the L2 writing (see Figure 10). The mixed methods findings revealed significant aspects regarding the learners' L2 learning experiences and their impact on L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety. The quantitative questionnaire obtained information on the atmosphere of the lectures of the writing module, peers (comparing self to peers as well as having friendly peers in the writing module), students' enjoyment of studying writing, teachers' teaching styles, textbooks and the teachers themselves. The qualitative data confirmed that the teaching of English writing at school level and university level were considered to be teacher-centred, textbook based and grammar based, with limited support given to the skill of generating ideas, with a strong emphasis on grades and assessments, very large classes that may hinder the chances of individual attention and classroom interaction, a highly competitive atmosphere in university and a lack of learners' freedom and autonomy.

Based on the above, the factor of the learning experience was found to be relevant to the two emotions of motivation and anxiety; thus, it was worth considering the learning experience as an independent factor that stands side by side the two types of emotions, not embedded in

one of them as is the case in Dörnyei's (2010) L2MSS. In fact, Dörnyei (2019) highlighted the significance of this construct and that the previous research had predominantly focused on the two constructs of the ideal and ought-to self, paying relatively little attention to the learning experience component. They also proposed further theorisation of this concept.

In addition, the findings of the present study showed two main aspects to be critical when investigating the language learning experience and its association with L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety: the aspect of transferability of emotions from classroom contexts to out-of-classroom contexts and vice versa (see **6.9 Willingness to Use English L2 Writing Outside the Classroom**), and the transition stages or milestones in the learners' education, the different language learning experiences that they encountered and their impact on feelings toward L2 writing (see **6.7.2 Transition to university**). Regarding the former aspect, the present study observed that the learners had distinct learning experiences in the two different contexts of in-classroom and out-of-classroom learning, and therefore their emotions differed according to the context. It was interesting to discover that these emotions are transferable in some situations and not transferable in others.

At the same time, if the learner was generally motivated towards L2 writing, particularly in out-of-classroom contexts, but faced some negative learning experiences, they seemed to draw on their reservoir of motivation to cope with the negative feelings, even though the negative learning experience would sometimes cause anxiety, according to the students' statements. The students showed resilience in dealing with unfavourable experiences, and they seemed to relate to their ultimate goals of learning, especially their ideal L2 self beliefs. This aspect of the distinction between the two learning experiences' contexts and the transferability of emotions between them remains under-investigated; thus, its inclusion here is valuable.

The second significant aspect related to the L2 writing learning experience were the distinctions between previous and present learning experiences. Discussing the findings of the present study revealed an important aspect of the students having learning experiences from their school stage that were different from the learning experiences they encountered at the university stage. The students, after having been restricted by the grammar translation

method and inadequate teaching styles (discussed in the previous chapter) for many years at the school level, found the transition to the new system and its extensive demands on L2 academic writing challenging and difficult to cope with. It is important to note that the literature on L2 motivation and L2 anxiety seems to have underestimated this aspect. Future investigation may consider including questions regarding how the previous language learning experiences differ from what the learners experience at the present stage, whether their emotions are shaped differently according to these stages and whether there is any negative impact of the past learning experiences on their L2 writing emotions at their present stage.

7.2.3 Direction for future research, proposing using the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory when merging L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety research

Researching L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety led to some intriguing encounters with the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST; Sampson and Pinner, 2021). The basic definition of complexity systems refers to the interaction of various elements or agents in multiple dynamic manners (Cameron and Larsen-Freeman, 2007). From a complexity perspective (Larsen-Freeman, 2017), it can be proposed that the CDST can be used as a theoretical framework and methodological design to investigate the complex relationships between the various variables of motivation and anxiety and their association with a wide range of criterion measures, such as students' academic achievement or their self-rating of L2 writing proficiency.

Dörnyei et al. (2015) considered the complexity theory in establishing their theoretical framework of Directed Motivational Currents. Dörnyei et al. (2015) highlighted the capacity of the CDST's concepts to account for various factors involved in the motivational surges that are experienced by highly motivated learners and that enable them to regulate their emotions and overcome obstacles. The coexistence of positive emotions (L2 writing motivation) and negative emotions (L2 writing anxiety) related to the aspects of second language acquisition reflects the inherent complexity of overlapping emotions in FL learning. Language learning is a complex process that involves processing a complicated structure of the learners' internal variables within a complex nest of social and educational interactional contexts; this can be seen as part of the undeniably complex world (Larsen-Freeman, 2017).

The mixed methods design of the present study provided a holistic overview of the phenomenon. It enabled us to observe the complex structures that underlie the coexistence of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety in a specific aspect of language acquisition. The qualitative data, in particular, revealed the constantly interacting dynamic factors of motivational selves and worries relating to certain aspects in English writing in addition to aspirations for achieving certain goals, all of which can be associated with various variables pertaining to academic achievement. This can be seen as an example of the complex systems within the language learning process and suggests that the CDST can be useful as both a theoretical framework and as research design.

Although further reading midway through this study revealed the usefulness of the CDST in general, the present study, nonetheless, did not opt for the CDST simply because it had not initially been designed in accordance with the concepts of that theory, particularly in terms of the research questions as well as the timescale and measuring the variables at various time points with density of data. Adopting a CDST perspective when looking into a phenomenon should be considered in the very early stages of designing a study, as drawing upon the CDST halfway through the analysis could put the quality of the study at risk.

> There is a danger that researchers might use the conceptual framework of CDST as a meta-theory to seek to explain data without the appropriate design to support it. As CDST becomes more widely known as a research approach, there is a risk that it becomes merely a nod to the methodological fashion of the moment. We should caution against dressing a traditional study in CDST clothing because it is something new or different. A gratuitous mention of CDST is not appropriate or even relevant unless a CDST perspective has been applied throughout the design of the study, data collection and analysis process (MacIntyre, Mercer and Gregersen (2021, p.47).

MacIntyre, Mercer and Gresersen (2021) stated that, rather than dwelling on details of quantitative versus qualitative research designs, research should emphasise the significance of the methods of collecting and analysing data and look closely into the dynamicity of factors and the change that they undergo.

7.2.4 The inclusion of subjective and objective criterion measures

Aside from the independent variables of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety, the present study utilised two types of variables: the subjective variable of self-rating of the L2 writing proficiency level and the objective variable of the GT scores of the writing modules as an indicator of the academic achievement in L2 writing. The present study supports Al-Hoorie's (2018) call for future studies to adopt both types of criterion measures. Future studies should continue to widen the scope of the L2 motivation research by including a variety of criterion measures to investigate the association of L2 motivation with the achievement, rather than relying heavily on the subjectivity of the intended effort. The objective measures can be course or school grades or any recognised proficiency test. This will contribute to a clear picture of the relationships between the motivational constructs, the anxiety constructs and the end-state of achievement, which is the real test of the theory.

7.3 Practical Implications and Recommendations of the Study

After discussing a wide range of aspects related to the teaching and learning of English L2 writing in universities in Saudi Arabia and the association of L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety, several practical implications may be considered as possible means to overcome obstacles related to L2 writing motivation and anxiety.

1. Close observation of the general attitudes of both the teachers and the students revealed that the students were focused on grades (and worrying about results), creating a vicious cycle, and the teachers were keen on the learning outcome and the writing standards. It also revealed that the entire educational system is exam oriented. In addition, the students' low level of L2 proficiency was raised as a concerning issue. It can be suggested that one way to mitigate the situation is by raising the standard of the English L2 writing instruction as well as encouraging awareness of the learning goals in lectures and practise tasks but, at the same time, simplifying the tests and the exams. Some teachers mentioned that one strategy they had used to reduce the students' anxiety in the class was simplifying the tasks for the students, i.e. breaking a tricky writing task into steps, starting with easy steps and gradually going into the more complex processes, linking the topics to the students' personal experiences and giving them the opportunity to draw on their prior knowledge of the topic or their life

experiences in order to familiarise the students with the topic at hand. This strategy can also be enhanced by raising awareness of the short- and long-term goals of learning L2 writing, be they related to the course objectives in general or to the students own personal goals. However, this technique does not imply that the level of the tasks remains below the students' abilities and expected standards at the relevant level of university study. Both the students and the teachers should aim high in terms of raising the writing proficiency level and accuracy. The teacher should make it clear at the beginning what the learner is required to do and which skills the student should focus on and improve. The teacher could inform the students of the level and type of the writing, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, etc. that the students should be aware of. At the same time, students should focus their attention on improving the level of their writing instead of studying for an exam. On the other hand, the exams should not be seen as a means to challenge the students' ability; their levels of difficulty as well as their impact have to be reconsidered. The questions on the exams may be simplified while, at the same time, taking individual differences into consideration, which is also a quality standard of any exam paper. Following this procedure may contribute to lowering students' anxiety, encouraging them to write with confidence and minimising their worry about exams and grades.

2. Regarding the writing modules at Qassim University, the data revealed that homework essays are still presented in handwritten format. This is also the case in many other Saudi universities. Using handwriting for tasks and essays should be reconsidered, as the data also revealed that grammatical and spelling errors are two possible sources of demotivation and anxiety. With the widespread use of technology and computer text processors nowadays, the habit of handwriting is slowly diminishing. It is integral to explore the students' and teachers' views on the effectiveness of the handwriting method, as text processors can be useful tools for improving the students' grammar, spelling and text organisation. The benefits and disadvantages of continuing to use the traditional handwriting method need to be investigated in this context, and both the teachers and the students could be encouraged to use electronic text processors. Some teachers may argue that by continuing to write homework essays by hand, the students will develop the skill of neat handwriting and jotting down their ideas on paper, which may be useful for thinking and brainstorming. However,

using various ranges of the available text processing software could enhance students' writing structures and processes, enable them to reflect on their highlighted errors and raise their awareness of the tone of the written piece, which may ultimately contribute to lowering the students' anxiety. The students should be made aware of the availability of the software as part of the free learning resources offered by the universities. They could also be offered training on the software, according to their needs. For academic research essays, the students should be familiarised with referencing software to be able to employ them appropriately.

3. Since the data yielded significant findings regarding the students' use of online social media platforms as a means to practise writing, learn from others, learn from online resources and even to quote their favourite online writer role models, the curriculum design in Saudi universities should be reconsidered in a way that incorporates online resources instead of restricting the teaching material to textbooks. Students can be encouraged to have their own writing space online and to continue to write and interact online using suitable platforms, including Twitter and blogs. Scientific evidence of the effectiveness of social media in L2 learning is continuously being added to, but the reality reflects a lack of use of these media in university teaching. Faizi, El Afia and Chiheb (2013) posited that social media is useful in educational settings because it fosters student–student as well as teacher–student communication and increases engagements, and in their 2014 review, they highlighted the potential of using social media in the L2 teaching and learning of the four skills. Aljumah (2012) explored the effect of blogs in teaching and learning English writing to English language majors in Saudi Arabia. Their study yielded promising findings regarding the usefulness of online blogs in learners' engagement, motivation to write in English and learners' positive response to teachers' and peers' feedback. The Saudi university students who participated in Sharma's (2019) experimental investigation on using social media for EFL in Saudi Arabia indicated that they had positive attitudes and expressed more confidence, less anxiety and more willingness to communicate in English. Yet the reality is that university instruction in Saudi Arabia continues to lag in the application of these media and incorporating them as an integral part of teaching and learning, despite widespread internet connection and the popularity of personal mobile devices, laptops and tablets. Some practitioners may be concerned about the possibility that these media are a double-edged sword that may distract the students and

affect their performance. In this regard, Alwagait, Shahzad and Alim (2014) found no linear relationship between the weekly use of social media and students' GPA scores. They also highlighted the significance of time management, suggesting balancing leisure use and information-related use when planning for the implementation of social media for educational purposes. Sharma (2019) proposed incorporating social media in the EFL curriculum in Saudi universities and carefully designing learning tasks, projects and workshops to obtain the ultimate benefit of this media.

To further enhance the teaching of English L2 writing, and in addition to deploying Twitter, which is already a popular platform among Saudis, practitioners can borrow from the experience of the task-based project developed by Péron (2019), *Don't write on walls!*, which was essentially created for an advanced L1 French writing course. This project is in line with James and Brookfield's (2014) suggestions of enhancing the students' deep understanding of the subject matter of the writing through the use of audio–visual, kinaesthetic and written modalities in the teaching resources. Although this project is not specifically aimed at writing from an SLA perspective, the feedback from both the tutor and the students encourages copying this experience into L2 writing advances. This project is an example of a teaching method that promotes creativity and playfulness among the learners in higher education. The project is worth considering, mimicking and modifying to our Saudi students' needs in L2 writing proficiency and affects and may be useful in reducing their L2 writing anxiety and enhancing their L2 writing motivation and engagement.

4. The qualitative data revealed that evaluations and grades were two critical, instruction-related sources of anxiety (see Figure 8,). In addition, the keenness on grades and the GPA were highlighted as a form of ought-to self motivation towards writing. Many students expressed their dissatisfaction with the grades' distribution of the writing modules. Allotting significant marks to the final exam escalated the students' worries about losing grades and impacting their GPA. This issue should be addressed by policy makers.

5. Regarding the teachers' feedback on the students writing, the students and the teachers should adopt a culture of openness towards feedback. Teachers should provide fair, constructive and varied forms of feedback (see Chapter 6), and the students should be open

to their teachers' comments and be motivated to apply them to their work in order to develop and thrive. If a misunderstanding arises, the teacher and the student should try to find a meeting point where they can resolve the disagreement. There should be efforts to assure the students that the teachers' comments are not to ruin their grades and results but are offered with the intention of helping them improve. At the same time, the teachers are advised to welcome discussion on the feedback and to listen to the students' worries with the utmost transparency and confidentiality.

6. Most of the universities in Saudi Arabia do not have specific centres that specialise in offering advice and support to university students in their academic writing, neither in Arabic (L1) nor in English (for English majors and students in other programmes that are taught in English). Therefore, it is advisable that the policy makers consider establishing a writing support centre (**see 5.12 A Possible Solution**) that offers advice, guidance and support to the students regarding their academic written requirements, such as assignments, projects, reports and even their extracurricular writing activities. Above all, the students should be made aware of the availability of this service, and there should be continuous advertisement and encouragement to raise awareness of this service and its use whenever needed. In addition, the duty of working at the support centre should not be given to the lecturers to add to their workload; instead, this centre should work independently from any department, and there should be a team of specialised staff who are dedicated to this job.

7. The study suggests that (according to the teachers' views) the creation of a department magazine is an important step to give the students an opportunity to practise writing outside study tasks or homework. Students may feel encouraged to write, edit and interact through the magazine's content. Such a magazine should also familiarise students with non-academic writing styles and offer a good opportunity to practise creative writing, which is an area that remains poorly covered in the current writing syllabus. This may ultimately motivate the students to improve their writing skills. In addition, a well-equipped library with English language resources and books should be made available to a wide variety of the students at various university campuses, particularly those that belong to the new generation of public universities.

8. As has been discussed before, this study suggests a model that combines the emotional dispositions towards L2 writing with possible factors and solutions in a holistic manner (see Figure 10 and Section **6.11 Contribution: A Proposed Model of Affective Factors Impacting on L2 Writing**). This model may be utilised by both practitioners and students. It can be suggested that the teachers introduce their students to this model as a way of self-reflection. The students should be aware of its various components and adopt it to reflect on their visions, goals, emotions and experiences as they go through their learning journey. Yet, this suggested model needs further validation in future research. In addition, the teachers and the students need to be offered training in order to make the best use of the proposed model.

7.4 Summary and Conclusion of the Study

The aims of the study were to investigate the coexistence of motivation and anxiety towards English L2 writing, the levels and sources of both emotions and their relationship with the academic achievement and self-rating of L2 writing proficiency among a sample of female Saudi English language learners. The study modified Dörnyei's L2MSS into a skill-specific framework called the L2WMSS by also using the SLWAI (Cheng, 2004). From the findings, it can be concluded that Saudi female English majors have moderate levels of both motivation and anxiety towards writing that coexist in a complicated manner (see research questions 1,2 and 3).

The coexistence of both positive and negative emotions (motivation and anxiety) was the central aspect of the third research question. In fact, there was a co-occurrence of both motivation and anxiety towards L2 writing among the students. Second language writing motivation was found to have a negative correlation with L2 writing anxiety, i.e. if one affect increases, the second, polar affect decreases. A noteworthy pattern was found among the students, particularly in the first three levels of study, as the students began their university studies with a relatively good level of motivation and low level of anxiety, but unfortunately, this pattern did not last long, and the students began to experience more anxiety and less motivation as they progressed to the higher study levels. By the time they reached the third level, they had more anxiety than motivation towards L2 writing, which is an alarming sign.

The fifth research question was aimed at exploring the relationship between both emotions (L2 writing motivation and L2 writing anxiety) and (a) academic achievement and (b) self-rating of L2 writing proficiency. Generally speaking, the students' academic achievement in L2 writing was positively correlated with the students' motivation, whereas anxiety was negatively correlated with achievement. A similar pattern was found with regard to self-rating, as it was found to be positively correlated with motivation and negatively with anxiety. In other words, anxious students tend to underrate their L2 writing proficiency, regardless of their actual academic achievement. This was confirmed in the qualitative interviews with the students.

The fourth research question dealt with the sources of both emotions. The study uncovered a wide range of overlapping sources that were associated with triggering feelings of motivation and/or anxiety in L2 writing.

Finally, the main contribution of the study is The Affective Factors Impacting on L2 Writing as a comprehensive way of looking into the phenomenon. The components of the model were inspired by the findings elicited from the mixed methods analysis of the data (see Figure 10). The model primarily suggests merging the positive and negative emotions (motivation and anxiety) when looking into a specific aspect of acquisition (Ushioda, 2016; Dörnyei, 2020), thus providing a holistic view of the phenomenon when investigating it from a psycholinguistic point of view. In this case, the factor of the learning experience operates independently from emotions, yet it can impact either of them. In addition, the sociocontextual factors were presented as another independent factor that contributes to shaping, sustaining or hindering emotions towards writing. The motivation towards writing can then be envisaged through the lens of the L2WMSS, with the two components of the ideal and ought-to selves, while anxiety can be seen through its types (according to the SLWAI; Cheng, 2004) and sources (which can be either instruction-related or personality-related sources). Finally, in the unfortunate case where a student is found to have the complex phenomenon of contradicting feelings towards L2 writing (or any other skill), there are two possible procedures that can be offered as non-linguistic treatments: comprehensive training on vision and episodic future thinking. The two forms of treatment are both under-investigated and as such, future empirical, experimental or interventional studies may consider further investigation of the effectiveness of these

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treatments and their orientation within the overall model of the Affective Factors Impacting on the L2 Writing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire Items

Ideal self (13 Items):

1. I imagine myself as someone who is able to write proficiently in English.

4. I can imagine myself living abroad and being able to write in English proficiently.

8. I can imagine myself being able to write in English as if I were a native speaker.

10. Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself being able to write proficiently in English.

13. The job I imagine having in the future requires that I write well in English.

16. I can imagine myself writing lengthy essays using a proficient level of English.

21. I can imagine myself writing emails fluently in English.

30. If my dreams come true, I will write proficiently in English in the future.

35. I can imagine myself sharing my thoughts on social media in written English (for example tweeting on Twitter, or blogging in English).

36. Whatever I do in the future, I think I will be needing writing in English.

38. I can imagine myself writing in English to international friends or colleagues.

40. The things I want to do in the future require me to be a good writer of English.

42. I can imagine a time when I can write in English to native speakers.

Ought-to self (14 items):

2. Improving my writing skill in English is necessary because people around me expect me to do so.

7. Without learning writing in English, it would be difficult to travel to/and live in English speaking countries.

12. It will have a negative impact on my life if I do not improve my writing in English.

15. I have to study for the writing module because I don't want to get bad marks in it.

18. I took the writing module because I don't like to be considered a weak student.

20. Studying the writing module is important for me because without it I will have a low GPA.

24. Some people in my life feel it is very important for me to learn English writing.

25. Without learning writing it will be very difficult for me to use computers effectively.

27. Being able to write in English will add to my social status.

28. Saudi society expects me to learn writing in English so that I can explain the Saudi culture to others.

29. Without learning English writing it will be very difficult to use the internet effectively.

32. I am expected to learn writing in English so that I can introduce my culture/religion to people.

37. Everyone should be able to write in English.

39. Without learning writing in English it will be difficult to find an excellent job in the future.

L2 learning experience (15 items):

3. I like the overall atmosphere of my writing class.

5. I am sometimes worried that the other students in class will laugh at my writing (R).

6. The lecturer of the writing class is better than the other subjects' lecturers.

9. I really enjoying studying Writing.

11. I think the writing class is boring (R).

14. I would rather spend more time in my writing class and less in other classes.

17. I enjoy the activities of our writing class much more than those of my other classes.

19. My writing lecturer have interesting teaching styles.

22. To be honest, I really have little interest in my writing class (R).

23. I find the writing textbook/s, that we are studying, really useful.

26. I am losing any desire I ever had to study writing (R).

31. My writing lecturer does not teach in an interesting way (R).

33. The writing textbook/s that we use are really boring (R).

34. It worries me that other students in my writing class seem to write better than I do.

41. I find students at my writing class really friendly.

Cognitive Anxiety (8 items)

1. writing in English, I am not nervous at all (R).

3. While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.

7. I don't worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others (R).

9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.

14. I am afraid that other students would deride my English composition if they read it.

17. I don't worry at all about what other people would think of my English composition (R).

20. I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.

21. I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor (R).

Somatic Anxiety (7 items)

2. I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraints.

6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.

8. I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressures.

11. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraints.

13. I often feel panic when I write compositions under time constraints.

15. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.

19. I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.

Avoidance (7 items)

4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English (R).

5. I usually try to avoid writing English compositions.

10. I try to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.

12. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions.

16. I try to excuse myself if asked to write in English.

18. I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class (R).

22. Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions (R).

Appendix B: Student Interview Guide.

Student Interview questions:

A. Experience in L2 writing in general, regardless of the context: The introduction of the interview will be aimed at having an overall view about the respondent's experiences in L2 writing in general without leading them to certain directions in answers.

1. Tell me about your experience in writing in English in general? How do you like writing in English.

    - Past experiences/ present experiences

    - At school/university as well as in everyday life.

    - Expectations for future.

    - Influences (family motivation, TV, society, etc)

    - Challenges that writing in English poses for you.

2. In academic writing, are you fully aware of the marking scheme?

3. What do you think about it?

B. L2 Motivation in Writing: This section will focus on the levels and sources of motivation and its correlation with achievement.

4. How often and when do you choose to write in English? [homework, exams, journals, social media, etc]

5. How do you describe your motivation towards writing in English now: high, low, fluctuated? [levels of motivation as in RQ 1]

6. what are the things that influence your motivation to write? [sources of motivation]

7. If you were to describe your feelings when it comes to the English language writing course, how do you feel and why? (elaborate into that: the content of the syllabus, the reference book, the teacher, the evaluation, etc).

C. Writing anxiety.

8. Do you worry about writing in English at all?

9. What is it about writing that makes you worried? (sources of anxiety)

10. Does this anxiety differ according to the context (academic/ non-academic)?

11. Are there particular types of writing tasks that demotivate/worry you?

12. If you worry about writing, does this motivate you to work harder, or does it demotivate you?

13. Do you prefer working on writing tasks in groups or individually? Why?

14. Do feelings alternate between motivation then anxiety or vice versa? Elaborate.

15. If you get a low mark in a writing task, how exactly do you feel? And how do you react later on?

D. Proposing a Writing centre as one of the solutions.

16. What do you suggest as solutions to reduce anxiety and increase motivation in writing in English?

17. Do you have any training in academic writing outside lecture times?

18. If a Writing Centre is to be established, would you use its services and seek help?

19. What do expect a Writing Centre to offer you?

20. How often do you think you seek help from a writing centre?

21. How would you prefer to communicate with the centre and use its services? (online, personal attendance, individual tutoring, or group workshops).

Note: Some of the questions are closed questions, and these are for introductory purposes. I would elaborate and ask more questions and encourage the interviewee to speak more and give more comprehensive answers, even if the main question was originally a closed question.

Appendix C: Teachers Interview Guide.

Teacher Interview Questions:

1- What levels of motivation do your students have to write in English?

2- Why?

3- What do you think would be a good way to increase motivation? Have you applied that during the course?

4- Do you spot writing anxiety among students?

5- If so, how?

6- Do their anxiety and motivation remain the same throughout the term, or do they alternate and fluctuate?

7- What do you suggest as a proper solution to reduce students' writing anxiety?

8- Do you think motivation is related to achievement? How?

9- Do you think anxiety is related to achievement? How?

10- Do you take any measures to reassure students and reduce their anxiety in general?

11- Have you made your students aware of marking criteria for writing?

12- Do you give them the chance to discuss their marks and provide them with feedback?

13- Do you think new changes in the programme design have impacted students' writing? In what way?

14- Do you think the writing course is enough to empower students' with the necessary skills for academic writing in university?

15- Do you think they need further training in academic writing outside lecture hours? In what way?

16- If a Writing Centre is to be established, what would you expect of it?

17- Will you be willing to volunteer in the Writing Centre?

Note: Some of the questions are closed questions, and these are for introductory purposes. I would elaborate and ask more questions and encourage the interviewee to speak more and give more comprehensive answers, even if the main question was originally a closed question.

Appendix D: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Language Learning Motivation and L2 Writing Anxiety among Female English Majors in Saudi Arabia.

Information sheet

You are being asked to consent to participate in an interview. This information sheet tells you about how the data collection will be carried out, and how the acquired data will be used and stored.

This investigation is part of a doctorate project supervised by Dr Peter Sercombe and Dr Elaine Lopez, and conducted by Ahlam Alhayek, a PhD candidate in the IPhD in Educational and Applied Linguistics programme, Newcastle University. The data will be employed in the doctorate project in Applied Linguistics in the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences. The purpose of the project is to learn about L2 self, motivation and anxiety in L2 writing. All participants in the study are asked to fill in and sign a consent form, as provided.

The records in the interviews are confidential and participation is voluntary; however, participants are required to provide their names or initials for the purpose of controlling the reliability of the analysis outcomes. All data will be confidential and stored securely. This means that in subsequent use of the acquired material, your name and personal information will not be used. At any time, you are free to change your mind or withdraw your consent. In such a case, please contact Ahlam, Peter or Elaine and they will remove your data immediately.

The responses will be archived and transcribed. Following this, the research project members will use them only for training and research purposes and

subsequent publication. With your permission, excerpts and answers may be shown to other researchers (e.g. at workshops or conferences), and anonymised written and audio samples may be used in publications.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Peter, Elaine or Ahlam:

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Thank you,

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Consent form

Material gathered during this research will be treated as confidential and stored securely. In subsequent publications or use of this data, your name will be removed where used and your comments made unattributable.

By signing this consent form, you agree to the activities you participate in for research purposes (in accordance with the conditions outlined above). You also agree to the written responses, audio files and transcripts of the recordings being archived and used for research purposes by the named researchers at Newcastle University.

1. I have received the information sheet   YES ☐   NO ☐

2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about   YES ☐   NO ☐

the study

3. I understand that I can withdraw my consent for the use of

                                      YES ☐   NO ☐

the written responses and recordings at any time without

4. I agree to anonymised extracts of the written responses,

audio files and transcripts (in accordance with the conditions

                                      YES ☐   NO ☐

outlined above) being shown to other researchers (e.g. at

5. I agree to anonymised written and recorded files (in

accordance with the conditions outlined above) being

                                      YES ☐   NO ☐

reproduced in scholarly publications.

Please answer each statement concerning the collection and use of the

research data.

Appendix E: Sample of Coding

Appendix E: Sample Coding.

Transcript3-REC007

No***_an (Interviewee 3)

Level 3.

GT=90

Motivation= 3.07.

Anxiety= 1.14.

Self-rating= 4 (Excellent)

Age= 23

Taken Diploma programme in a private college.

And came to the BA course at Qassim Uni.

Q1: Let's talk about your experience in writing in English in general, how do you like writing in English in the past as compare to now?

A1: I prefer writing in English, I prefer it before coming here, it was easier for me, I was studying in Attamayoz Colleges, and they encourage us to write in English as many as we could but here there is specific rules because it is academic writing, I think I prefer it there more than here

Ahlam Alhayek (PGR)
Attitude towards L2 writing

Ahlam Alhayek (PGR)
Learning experience (from positive to negative)

س: قد إيش قعدتي في التميز؟

ج: سنتين.

س: إيش الي كانوا يسوونه بالضبط وهنا إيش الي تختلف؟

ج: أول شيء كانت التبتش تجلس مع كل طالبة لحال تشوف إيش نقاط الضعف عند كل طالبة وتحاول انه تساعده، يعني انا مثلا انا كنت أقول ليها . تسأل الطالبة أنت وش تحسين نفسك ضعيفة فيه ال سبلنق؟!، اوك الأسبوع هذا راح نركز لك

Ahlam Alhayek (PGR)
Learning experience (previous, positive)

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راح اساعدك فيه . فكانت structure of the sentence well, ع ال سبلنق، تحسين انت ماتقدرين تحطين ال

يعني معهم. B1تساعدنا ع شوي شوي. بدينا من الصفر حتى وصلت لفل.

Individual attention, 1to1, beginning by knowing weaknesses of each learner and working on

them.

س: طيب كان فيه عدد طالبات كثار؟

Ahlam Alhayek (PGR)
Learning experience (previous, positive)

ج: ايه كثير حول 200 طالبة ، بس كانوا مقسمين الكلاسات على ال لفل، انا ال لفل حقي كان بس 7 بنات، وكنا حنا اعلى

لفل بالكلية، مرة كانوا مركزين علينا، ومن البداية يجهزوننا للاختبار ، نهاية السنه كان فيه اختبار اسمه ال بت، بت اكزام،

كانوا يجهزوننا له ، فكرة الاختبار انه ال 4 ال writing, speaking, listening, reading، كنا نختبرهم in details،

كل سبجكت كانوا مرة يدققون علينا فيه يعني، ال رايتينق نكتب برقراف من 35 كلمة، والبرقراف الثاني يعطوننا عنوانين

نختار واحد منهم، ونكتب 100 كلمة، ماكانوا يقيموننا على ال سبلنق الخطأ قد ما انا كيف اسرد القصة ، اسرد الموضوع

الي قاعدة أتكلم فيه، الي اخترت أتكلم فيه.

classifying according to ability, dividing large groups into small groups according to abilities.

Early preparation for an assessment. Availability of self-preferences (choose a topic) in the

exam. Feeling lots of attention.

س: ايش الشي الي لما جيتي هنا انصدمتي، قلتي وين كنت في التميز وهنا صرت؟!

Ahlam Alhayek (PGR)
Learning experience (Current, negative, classroom size)

ج: طريقة التدريس، صعبة انه تمسكين كل بنت هنا ، العدد كبير تمسكين كل بنت وتشوفين نقاط الضعف ونقاط القوة

صعب، بس هناك كانوا مرة مهتمين، لاحظت التبتشرز الي هناك بعضهم افضل من هنا، استفدت منهم كثير هناك.

Q: let's talk about your writing experience at school or university as compared to everyday

life.

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A: In college, obviously, I write every day in English because it's my major but at home I

didn't use English so much I use it sometimes with my husband but not all the time.

س: هل تمارسين الكتابة بشكل عام بحياتك اليومية؟

ج: اكتب | my diaries sometimes,

practising writing in everyday life.

س: ايش توقعاتك؟

ج: توقعاتي لنفسي بالرايتينق؟!! انا الحمد لله بالاكادمك رايتينق قاعدة اتحسن، لأن الترم الي فات انصدمت بدرجتي، كنت

اخذه | D انا ماكنت اخذه الدرجة هذي بحياتي ابد.

س: مع مام (م***ز)؟

ج: ايه

س: فمرة مرة انصدمت بدرجتي ماتوقعت صراحة، فالترم هذا مررة شادة حيلي مع الدكتورة (ح***ة) ، واحاول قد مااقدر

اني ابذل قد مااقدر، الترم الي فات قلت: "انا شاطرة بالرايتينق، ليش اتعب نفسي!"، صح كنت اكتب بس ما كنت اكتب زي

تعب my colleagues، كانوا مرة يتعبون اكثر مني، كنت واثقة من نفسي.

A previous shock from a bad grade might contribute to learners' aspirations for higher

achievements and to work harder. Feeling over-confident of one's ability (false confident)

might lead to not working hard and hence to presenting poor work and achieving low.

س: ايش ال influences سواء تحفيزك للرايتينق او اللغة بشكل عام؟ بالنسبة للعائلة؟ بالنسبة للمجتمع ككل؟

ج: بالنسبة للعائلة، ابوي الله يرحمه كان يقول لي تعليمك اهم شي، واللغة، اللغة مهمة مررررة بهالوقت ، فكان مررة شاد علينا من ناحية الدراسة، سواء انا او اي احد من اخواني. من ناحية المجتمع كنت بالبداية مرة خجولة من استخدام اللغة، صرت لا، اكثر، المجتمع خلاص متفتح، مافي شي اسمه غلط يعني اني أقول الكلمة غلط، حتى لو ضحكوا شوي، it's OK, I can do it، زوجي يشتغل بكلية اغلب ال staff الي فيه اجنبي فهو قاعد يتعلم ويعلمني بعض الكلمات الي يتعلمها ويسألني عن الكلمات الي انا تعلمتها.

Various sources of support and encouragement.

س: فيه تشجيع فيه encouragement

ج: ايه.

س: هذا التشجيع له علاقة حتى في الرايتنق؟

ج: اكثر شي انه to speak in English، بس ال رايتنق انا مررة مؤمنه انه مهم، مهم بمجال عملي بعدين، انا راح اكتب تقرير ، انا راح اقرا تقرير وممكن اعدل عليه أشياء. ال CV حقي لازم اقدمه بالانقلش، يعني لازم يكون الرايتنق حقي very well, عشان اقدر اقدم هذا ال سيفي لأي جهة سواء حكومية او غير حكومية

A learners' own belief and perception of the importance of writing in the L2 plays an important role in their efforts and motivation. Role of ideal-self and ought-to self in maintaining motivation. Clear vision of goals and tasks that might have to require L2 in the future job.

س: طيب إيش الصعوبات الي تواجهينها في الرايتنق؟

ج: ال سبلنق، it will always be the spelling

In academic writing, are you fully aware of the marking scheme?

Transcript4- REC008

Interviewee 4= Barbara Abbott.

Level=1. Writing 1.

Achievement=High achievement (Mid-term= 20 out of 20. GT=100)

Self-rating= 3 upper intermediate.

Motivation= 175= 4.17.

Anxiety= 66= 3.

Age=18.

Q: First of all, lets talk about your experience in writing in English in general? How do you like writing in English?

ج: انا من زمان كنت أكتب من يوم أنا كنت بالثانوي، لكن كتابتي كانت تنقصها اساسيات فما كانت جيدة، كان عندي خوف وقلق ، كنت اشيل هم ، خصوصا اذا كنت ملزومة إني أكتب تعبير عليه درجات أو شي زي كذا، ذاك الوقت اذا الأستاذة ذكرت النقطة الايجابية او مدحت كان هالشي ياثر فيني إيجابيا، والعكس كان صحيح، ماكنت امارس الاكاديمية خارج المدرسة، بس كنت امارسها بوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، لكن بعد ما دخلت الجامعه صرت اكتب كثير تقريبا أسبوعيا ، فيه شي اغلبه كان للجامعه، تعلمت اساسيات للكتابة كثيرة، ولاحظت من خلالها اني تطورت ، فأيقنت إن الممارسة هي الي تصنع الفرق، ومن خططي إن شاء الله للاجازة اني راح اكتب كثير وراح اتدرب ، عشان أوصل لهدفي في المستقبل، ان كتابتي تكون راقية يعني. ابغى أوصل لهدف.

Previous interest in writing.

It's clear how this interviewee prepared well for the interview, she's read the interview guide and her answer seemed well-prepared, inclusive, and clear.

س: ماشاء الله عليك الله يفتح عليك، طيب بالنسبة لتوقعاتك في المستقبل ؟

ج: توقعاتي ان شاء الله اني راح أوصل للشي الي انا ابغاه والي قاعده اشتغل عليه الحين.

س: الي هو ايش؟

ج: انو تكون كتابتي راقية اقدر اعرضها للناس لكافة الناس.

س: تتوقعين انك بيوم من الايام بتقدرين تكتبين زي ال native speakers?

ج: ان شاء الله.

This learner is affirmative, highly motivated and have a clear goal in terms of her L2 writing. In spite of this she expresses feelings of L2 Writing anxiety.

س: ماشاء الله، طيب ايش تأثير ال other sources of influence like family motivation, or maybe TV

ج: وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي هي الي حفزتني أو أثرت علي، لأنها تربطني بالشعوب الأخرى، يمديني أفهم كلامهم وبنفس الوقت أشاركهم آرائي، وأقنعهم فيها، وبرضو أدافع عن ديني وممكن أنشر الإسلام بطريقة واضحة ومفهومة وبنفس الوقت مهذبة.

س: ماشاء الله ، يعني هذا كان حافز لك؟

ج: ايه ان شاء الله.

Here's a fairly novel source of L2 writing motivation that might not have been accounted for before due to its recent introduction.

س: طيب ايش ال challenges that writing in English poses for you?

ج: التحديات ممكن التظيم في المقالة والتعبير ، تنظيم الأفكار وترتيبه ، لانه يختلف تنظيمه من نوع لاخر ، برضو طريقة عرضي او صياغتي للكلام ، ممكن اني اكتبه بطريقة والقارئ يفهمه فهم ثاني، لأن تختلف بعض الصياغة أو شي زي كذا.

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س: ايوه lets talk about Academic Writing in focus are you fully aware of the marking scheme?

ج: نعم

س: طيب ايش رايك فيه؟

ج: أمم، حلو، عادل على كل الأشياء الي حنا ندرسها وناخذها يعني مثلا capitalization, grammer, أشياء كلها ندرسها ودايما تكررها الأستاذة،

س: طيب وتقسيم الدرجات بين المدتيرم والفاينل والاشياء هذي؟

ج: ايوه عادل، الأستاذة طلبت منا نكتب 5 برقرافات، وبالاختبار فيه ميد تيرم وفيه فاينل، واحس عادل، وعلمتنا يعني تقول ماراح يطلع من الكتاب المرجعي.

Aware of the writing scheme and thinks its "fair" and "inclusive"

س: now lets see how often do you choose to write in English

ج: اكتب للاختبارات والواجبات، وبرضو اكتب في ال سوشيال ميديا ، خصوصا في تويتر ، احب اكتب في تويتر،كثير اكتب من الأشياء الي أسمعها يعني لما اسمع شي بفلم مقولة، خصوصا مقولات تحفيزية اكتبها.

س: وكيف ردود الناس؟ يجيك ردود

ج: مو مرة لا، لانو اكتب عن مشاعري وكذا مب كتابة مرة

س: المهم شي لك انت؟

ج: ايه

Using Twitter to practice writing, and maintaining her motivation to do so despite the lack of interaction (out-there).

س: تمام how do you describe your motivation towards writing in English now, is it high, low, or fluctuating?

ج: عالية

س: ماشاء الله، what are the things that influence your motivation to write

ج: اني انا احب اللغة الإنجليزية ، وبما اني احب اللغة الإنجليزية اكيد ابغى انو كل المهارات اتقنها وبرضو مهنتي المستقبلية تتطلب هالشئ.

س: ايش مهنتك المستقبلية؟

ج: اني أكون بروفيسور ان انقلش.

س: ما شاء الله تبارك الله بتغطين علينا يا *

Describes her motivation to be high due to two reasons: passionate about English language, and her vision about future job to be a professor in English language. A learner's feeling around the L2 will impact their motivation; here, the learner likes English language so she maintained her motivation despite some negative feeling (as anxiety) that might occur along the way.

س: مشاعرك قبل تدخلين القسم، هل تغيرت؟

ج: أحس ارتحت أكثر يعني، حسيت انو هذا الشي الي احبه يعني ، دخلت شي صدق انا كنت منتظرته من زمان.ideal self

س: هذا ان جنرال، طيب أحاسيسك تجاه الكتابة، قبل والان ؟

ج: قبل يمكن كنت مو واثقة مرة من كتابتي ، الحين وثقت أكثر وعرفت إنو مع الممارسة راح تتطور.

س: حتى لو اخذت مثلا درجات / نقصتي ، أو جاك نقد ع كتابتك؟

ج: اذا جاني نقد اكيد بيحبطني شوي هالشي ، لكن بالعكس يمكن يدفعني زيادة اني اتعلم.

Q: if you were to describe your feelings when it comes to the English language writing course itself? How do you feel and why?

ج: الحمد لله احس مرتاحة من ناحيته لانو واضح ومفهوم ، وماشي معنا بالخطوات الأساسية وعلى مستوانا وتدربنا كثير ع كل نوع حنا ناخذ أنواع يعني زي opinion paragraph, process paragraph. وتدربنا ع كل نوع وفي الاختبار مار راح يخلو من هالانواع ولا راح يخلو من الكتاب المرجعي والاستاذة برضو تعلمنا اخطائنا عشان ما نقع فيها مرة أخرى.

س: اذا علمتكم استاذتك اخطاءكم تزعلون؟

ج: لا لا.

Feeling comfortable about the writing module (positive feelings) and describes it to be: clear, easy to understand, step-by-step progress, tackling the essentials, suitable for our levels. No bad feelings about teacher's feedback.

س: طيب ايش رايك بالمرجع؟

ج: حلو وواضح ، واسلوبه واضح ، ويعطي تمارين كثيرة، ويعطي examples

س: طيب طريقة الكتاب هذا لو تجيك مثله بالمستوى الثاني. يعني عندك مادة رايتنق وجا الكتاب حق ثاني قريب جدا من حق مستوى واحد ايش شعورك؟

ج: اكيد ابغى شي أحسن عشان اتطور لانه ماراح يفيدني اذا صار نفس المستوى.

س: هذا الي لمسته من انطباع بنات مستوى ثالث، قالوا احنا ثلاث مستويات ندرس نفس الكلام.

This question was inspired by the views of a student in one of the previous interviews when she stated that there is a lot of repetition occur over the various terms when they come across similar ideas repeatedly which can result in boring them and losing interest in the module. This student's views are in line with the previous finding, she states that she would definitely want something more advanced than what she is studying at the moment and that will help her improve.

س: طيب lets talk a little bit about anxiety, do you worry about writing in English at all

ج: نعم، اكيد.

A learner might experience feelings of L2 writing anxiety in spite of maintaining high levels of motivation as well as clear vision of their ideal or ought-to selves.

س: ايش الي يقلقك؟

ج: يمكن عدم ثقة بكتابتي، أخاف ان كتابتي نازلة، او انه زي كتابة الأطفال (ابتسامة).

Source of anxiety: lack of confidence, afraid that her writing is of a low level, childish.

س: ليش يجيك هالاحساس؟

ج: مادري، ماائق مرة بكتابتي، فيه ناس يكتبون صدق احسن مني، ماوصلت للشي الي انا ابيه.

س: طالبات الي يكتبون احسن منك؟

ج: عموما الناس الي اشوفهم بتويتر مثلا، او باماكن مثلا.

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س: يعني انت تقارنين نفسك بناس ثانين وهالشي ذا يحسسك بشوي ..

ج: ايوه ايه.

Reasons for that feeling: I don't have trust on my ability to write, there are others who are far better than me, I didn't get to what I want. So, here, it is obvious that the learner has set certain expectations of herself that could be hard to meet, at least at the moment; and she is COMPARING herself to others which can indeed lead to shaking one's confidence. The OTHERS who she compares herself to can be people on Twitter. She mentioned above that she likes to practise writing on social media (Twitter) and that she writes about anything, including writing about her feelings or she quotes something she heard previously and liked. She also mentioned that she gets very minimal interaction on that platform but she keeps doing it because she likes it. However, here, one of the things that make her feel bad about her writing was COMPARING herself to others who write very well on Twitter. SO here is an important thing to notice, the media that she utilised to practice her "free writing/non-academic writing" can be a two edged sword: a source of both motivation and a source of anxiety at the same time.

س: what is it about writing that makes you worried

ج: هو نفسه، ماوثقت مرة بكتابتي، وعدم قدرتي على توصيل المعنى بالطريقة الي ابغاها.

س: ممكن تذكرين لي موقف صار فيه صعوبة بتوصيل المعنى؟

ج: ماذكر.

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Lack of confidence, and inability to express about the ideas in the way that I want. When she is asked to give an example of a situation when she found a difficulty in expressing she said 'I can't remember', I (the researcher) think gives us a hint that this learners lack of confidence triggers her anxiety and make her feel that she can't express right, while indeed this is only an emotional thing, L2 WRITING ANXIETY IS OF A DEBILTATING EFFECT here, and can put her in vicious circle: Lack of confidence> Anxiety > inability to express. A learner might not be aware of this, especially at the long term effect. As we will see down below in the question about the effect of anxiety on her motivation.
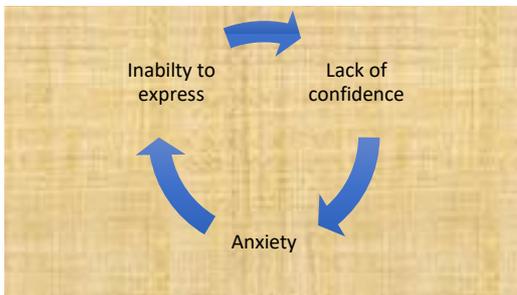
Q: Are there any particular types of writing that demotivate you or worry you?

ج: ايه لما تكون الكتابة عن شي في الماضي او حدث صار لي في الماضي ، لانو أوقات مايصير فيه، او challenge يعني ، أوقات مايصير فيه حدث صار، فاضطر اني لازم اتخيل و اجيب قصة خيالية يعني وهي ماصارت.

س: يعني تقريبا الشي الي فيه خيال صعب عليك؟

ج: ايه يعني مفروض انه شي صار لي بس هو ماصار فيصير لازم اتخيل.

Topics about experiences of the past that she didn't actually experienced in reality, in this case she would have to use imagination and imagine as if she actually had.

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س: طيب انت جربتي اكاديميك رايتنق؟

ج: الكتاب مكتوب اكاديميك رايتنق بس مو متاكدة اذا هو اكاديميك.

س: ايش المواضيع الي تكلمتوا عنها؟

ج: كله تكلمنا عن أنواع البرقرافس opinion paragraphs, descriptive paragraph, etc. وكل نوع له طريقة.

س: بس تكتبون برقراف؟

ج: ايه

س: ماتكتبون ايساي؟

ج: لا.

If you worry about writing, does this motivate you to work harder or does this demotivate :س

you?

ج: لا اكيد يحفزني، أمم اكيد يحفزني عشان اطور من نفسي واتخلص من القلق.

Here she mentioned that worrying about writing will motivate her to improve and eventually she will get rid of anxiety. Here is a good point to reflect on more in light of the vicious circle I suggested above.

Q: Do you prefer working on tasks in groups or individually?

ج: فردي، لانه هو يعتمد ع الأفكار فممكن يصير فيه نزاع ع الفكرة، لو اضطريت اني اكتب فكرة انا ماقتنعت به انا ماراح ابدع ماراح اكتب بطريقتي الي انا احب ، وبرضو كل واحد وله طريقة بعرض الأفكار، بس.

Emphasis on individualism, because writing is all about the thoughts and ideas and these vary among various individuals, there might be disagreement on groups member, "if I'm forced to include an idea with which I'm not satisfied, I won't be able to write creatively, the way I like".

Q: Do your feelings alternate between motivation and anxiety or vice versa?

ج: لا العكس، من القلق الى الدافع ، لان اذا صار عندي قلق ممكن هالشي يخلق عندي دافع، عشان اتخلص منه يعني.

س: ماتحسين انه، انا مليت من كثر ماني قلقة من الكتابة؟

ج: اممم لا، مو دايم يختلف يعني القلق يمكن اذا صار فيه اختبار يصير قلق اما لا صار كذا عادي واجب مايصير دايم قلق.

س: لان انا يا*** مليت انا، انا عن نفسي مليت من القلق (ابتسامة).

Here is an evidence that motivation and anxiety can co-occur and we should not neglect the impact of one on the other. However, the learner here states that anxiety motivates her (Facilitating effect of anxiety). When she is asked if she ever gets sick and tired of feeling anxious of writing she mentioned that not always "when it is exams it becomes anxiety but when it is normal homework it is not constant anxiety". I think here we should pay attention to some important points:

1. there is indeed some co-occurance between motivation and anxiety,

2. the impact of one on each other can't be neglected, I

3. anxiety can impact motivation at certain situations/ levels (anxiety during exams vs anxiety during homework) those situations trigger different levels of anxiety (varied levels of anxiety intensity), and hence they will vary on their impact on motivation. In addition, I can add the time factor, I would claim that anxiety that lasts for long would impact motivation (e.g. a learner being anxious throughout the term because she has negative feelings about L2 writing), whereas a momentum anxiety, or anxiety for shorter periods of time (such as that related to exam period) would have little

س: If you get a low mark in tasks, how exactly do you feel

ج: اكيد راح احس بخيبة امل شوي، لكن ماراح أيأس للأبد لا ، راح امارس عشان اطور من نفسي.

"Of course I would feel a little disappointed, but I won't be desperate forever, I will keep practicing in order to improve" 3 aspects can be seen here: 1. First negative impression, 2. Then, mindfulness that those negative feelings won't last and are temporary. 3. The use of those negative feelings as an incentive to push forward, move on, and actually improving.

Q: Do you have any training on academic writing outside lecture times?

ج: الحين لا، لاني مشغولة بالجامعة بس عندي خطط بالاجازة، يمكن اشتغل ع تطبيق كامبلي، اقدر امارس الكتابة هناك لانه فيه توترز يعلموني عن الأخطاء اواي شي انا ابيه منهم.

س: برافو عليك ماشاء الله، what do you suggest as a solution for anyone having difficulty in writing

ج: الممارسة، القراءة برضو، والاستماع الجيد يعني.

Practicing , reading and careful listening.

س: تمام ماشا الله if a writing center is to be established would you use its services and seek help

ج: ايهof course

Q: What do you expect from a writing centre.

ج: انهم يعملون دروس ممارسة وتمارين لان الممارسة و التمارين تخلين استفيد اكثر من اني بس اسمع دروس شروح لاني ماطبقت ولا شفت ولا جربت بنفسي

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س: انتم ماجربتوا تكتبون في المحاضرات؟

ج: لا يصير واجب في البيت بعدين اسلمه للأستاذة.

س: يعني ما تشتغلون مع بعض رايتنق اثناء الكلاس؟

ج: لا، الا اذا كان اوتلاين، يصير شي بسيط.

They need practice, in class they don't practice writing, they have writing as a homework and then it is submitted.

So far, in my interviews, all the students expressed that they would love to have the chance of doing writing in the class instead of using lecture hours exclusively in doing exercises or merely drawing an outline of their topic and doing writing as a homework. Perhaps we should investigate into how the time of the writing lecture is utilised/ structured what type of activities is being used the most, and are learners satisfied with it, are they getting the utmost effectiveness from this structure. Things like writing camps/ sessions when learners gather just to write might be something worth consideration to promote students' motivation and enhance outcome.

Q: How often do you think you will seek help from a writing centre?

ج: أسبوعيا يمكن يصير هالشي

س: كل أسبوع وانت رايحة لمهم.

ج: ايه (ابتسامة)

Weekly. Again so far in my interviews students show interest in seeking advice from a writing support centre, and they are willing to do so as frequent as possible.

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Q: how would you prefer to communicate with the writing centre?

Individual tutoring. عشان يكون عارفين مستواي وعارفين نقاط الضعف عندي فيحاولون يطوروني من هالناحية.

س: طيب اونلاين ما تحسين انه شوي مناسب؟

ج: اونلاين مناسب بس يمكن مااقدر اسال كثير او كذا.

Preference of individual f2f sessions; they will be aware of my level, my weaknesses and try to improve me. Online sessions might not be convenient due to limited or restricted interaction "I might not be able to ask a lot".

س: صحيح، فيه شي حابة تضيفينه؟

ج: لا بس شكرا.

س: شكرا، الف شكر لوقتك.