



From Students' Perception: Negative Attitude and Students' writing self-efficacy

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من خلال إدراك وفهم الطالب: أثر الانطباع السلبي على ثقة الطالب في قدرته الكتابية

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the relationship between students' negative attitude and their writing self-efficacy towards learning argumentative academic essay. In order to detect students' negative attitude, the study primarily intends to discover what possible types of negative feelings – variables that stand as a learner's traits – can occur and force students to struggle this type of attitude. In order to explore the influence of these negative emotional variables on academic achievement in general as well as writing self-efficacy in particular, the current study merges a connection of the four fundamental working proposals stated by Grahame (2006), Grahame's et al., (2007) three tested models, and Culbertson's (1986) view that links between the psychologist view of attitude and the behaviorist view in learning. The present study utilizes a purely qualitative research design. Data were collected using group interview (unstructured interview). The participants are Libyan EFL university students. They were selected purposively. They all participated voluntarily. Data were analyzed using thematic and descriptive analysis method. The finding revealed that the majority of students face different types of negative feeling that force them to struggle negative attitude in learning and writing academic essay. Consequently, the results found a consistent link to Grahame's (2006) third working proposition that individual negative differences in motivation among the participants had predicted low writing performance. The findings also revealed a consistent alignment with Grahame's et al., (2007) first tested model that students' writing attitude influences writing achievement in unidirectional manner. Finally, findings indicated a significant agreement to Culbertson's (1968) view that there was a negative relationship between negative attitude and writing self-efficacy, making participants lose tendency towards learning and/ or involving in any future writing activities. Consequently, results had explored that being overwhelmed by such loss of tendency, it influenced most of their personal decision inappropriately, forcing them to give up and withdraw the entire learning act.

Keywords: attitude, self-efficacy, writing achievement, motivation.

المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف العلاقة بين الانطباعات السلبية لدى الطلاب وكفاءتهم الذاتية في كتابة المقالات الأكاديمية الجدلية. ولرصد هذه الاتجاهات السلبية، تسعى الدراسة في المقام الأول إلى تحديد أنواع المشاعر السلبية المحتملة - باعتبارها سمات شخصية للمتعلم - التي قد تنشأ وتدفع الطلاب لمواجهة هذا النوع من الانطباعات. وللاستكشاف تأثير هذه المتغيرات العاطفية السلبية على التحصيل الأكاديمي بشكل عام والكفاءة الذاتية في الكتابة بشكل خاص، تدمج الدراسة الحالية بين أربعة مقترحات عمل أساسية طرحها "غراهام" (Grahame, 2006)، والنماذج الثلاثة التي اختبرها "غراهام" وآخرون (2007)، ورؤية "كولبيرتسون" (Culbertson, 1986) التي تربط بين المنظور النفسي للاتجاهات والمنظور السلوكي في التعلم. تعتمد الدراسة تصميمًا بحثيًا نوعيًا بحثًا، حيث جمعت البيانات باستخدام المقابلات الجماعية (غير المهيكلة). وشملت عينة الدراسة طلاباً جامعيين ليبيين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)، وقد تم اختيارهم بطريقة قصدية وشاركوا جميعاً طواعية. جرى تحليل البيانات باستخدام أسلوب التحليل الموضوعي والوصفي. وأظهرت النتائج أن غالبية الطلاب يواجهون أنواعاً مختلفة من المشاعر السلبية التي تضل الاتجاه، الكفاءة الذاتية، التحصيل في الكتابة، الدافعية طرهم لمواجهة اتجاهات سلبية أثناء تعلم وكتابة المقالات الأكاديمية. وعليه، كشفت النتائج عن وجود رابط متسق مع مقترح العمل

الثالث لـ "غراهام" (2006)، والذي يشير إلى أن الفروق الفردية السلبية الدافعية لدى المشاركين كانت مؤشراً على تدني مستوى الأداء الكتابي. كما أظهرت النتائج توافقاً مع النموذج الأول الذي اختبره "غراهام" وآخرون (2007)، والذي يفيد بأن انطباعات الطلاب نحو الكتابة تؤثر في إنجازهم الكتابي بشكل أحادي الاتجاه. وأخيراً، أشارت النتائج إلى اتفاق كبير مع وجهة نظر "كولبيرتسون" (1968) القائلة بوجود علاقة عكسية بين الاتجاهات السلبية والكفاءة الذاتية في الكتابة، مما أفقد المشاركين الرغبة في التعلم أو الانخراط في أي أنشطة كتابية مستقبلية. ونتيجة لذلك، تبين أن هيمنة هذا الشعور بفقدان الرغبة قد أثرت سلباً على معظم قراراتهم الشخصية، ودفعتهم إلى الاستسلام والانسحاب تماماً من عملية التعلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة الذاتية، التحصيل في الكتابة، الدافعية، الانطباع السلبي، المشاعر التعليمية.

Introduction

Learning writing is one of the most difficult learning tasks for EFL students especially for those who have low writing ability. To be a good writer, it requires EFL students, especially at the university level, need to master sufficient academic writing skills that enable them to be critical, intellectual, creative and inquisitive writers in order to present their ideas and thoughts convincingly to their audiences (Aldera 2016; Rubiaee, Darus & Abu Bakar 2019, Rubiaee 2025). Grasping all these skills, in fact, needs one prior condition on the part of students. They have to build a positive attitude towards learning writing (Jeffery & Wilcox, 2014). To do so, learning process should guarantee students an appropriate method in teaching writing and afford them a proper motivating learning environment that can foster a positive attitude among them. Since many classrooms in EFL learning context- including Libyan EFL learning context- is still heavily dependent on teacher-centered approach and product approach in learning writing up to date, the majority of students experience writing with lack of constructive input, lack of practice and negative feedback (Can 2009; Al Shahrani 2013; El-Jeadi, Benrabha & Rubiaee 2023; Rubiaee 2021; Rubiaee 2025) make students eventually come to realize that writing is tedium (Monks & Schmidt 2011; Ferris & Hedgcock 2013; Mufanti & Susilo 2017, Al Asmari 2013). More consequently, students face up-hill-battle as they attempt to get rid of negative attitude and foster positive motivation (Kear, Coffman, McKenna & Ambrosio 2000). Therefore, in order to get students motivated and enhance their attitude towards learning writing, Kear et al., (2000) believed that growing positive attitude among student can be won through integrating a mutual effort of engaging opportunities and effective teaching strategies to write successfully that can make real inroads in student perspectives. (Abidin et al. 2011; Strobl et al. 2019; Suwantarathip & Wichadee 2014; Woodrich & Fan 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Performing a writing task, particularly in EFL academic context, implies a great deal of cognitive energy. For majority of EFL students, success in carrying this task is considered a reliant cognitive experience that is subjected to an interrelating affective factors such as feeling displeasure, frustration, tedium, angst, dislike, annoyance, giving up, fear, avoidance, reluctance, procreate, or stress. Facing some or many of these factors can lead students to severely suffer an incongruous consumption in their cognitive energy, causing them a negative attitude. Being overwhelmed by such factors can directly destroy students' traits, moods and emotions (Anderman & wolter, 2006; Bandura, 1981; Graham, 2007, Kessler et al., 2002; Wellington, 2010) that might disrupt their motivation. This, consequently, could constrain students' imputes, acting as a cognitive and emotional barrier that destroys their writing self-efficacy in accomplishing the writing task which in turn force them either procrastinate or, in many cases, force them to face writing block which may be disruptive for writing and make them to give up. Although students' attitude towards literacy skills has been considered important for decades, the relationship between what type of learner's undesirable feelings that cause negative attitude and self-efficacy in writing achievement has received little attention in EFL learning literature (Graham et al. 2007). Therefore, exploring what types of negative attitudes students may experience and how attitudes can shed impact on their writing self-efficacy will help to draw a considerable attention to the nature of this relationship, bridging the gap of scant literature by exploring wide understanding towards this relationship. It also will help teachers to favour their students a shelter to inspire them to get recovered from the shortcomings of these disrupting traits and encourage them to reinforce their imputes for establishing good writing self-efficacy.

Research questions

- What types of negative attitude do Libyan EFL university students face in learning academic writing?
- What is the effect of these types of negative attitude on Libyan EFL university students' writing self-efficacy?

Literature review

Recent interest in EFL learning research has been oriented onto motivation within the area of individual learner differences as an effective factor in learning writing (Petric 2002). This orientation provided a bidirectional and reciprocal relationship between writing motivation and student achievement (Graham, Berninger & Fan 2007). This concept, in fact, builds upon the cognitive aspect of writing (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; National Research Council, Donovan & Bransford, 2005; Graham, 2018), the socio-cultural context of writing (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012; Ahmed & Myhill, 2016; Shukri, 2014), and metacognitive knowledge (Flavell, 1979; Anderson, 2002; Al Zahrani & Mahmoud, 2017), that deals with learner beliefs and its impact on learner strategy used and his/ her achievement (Lambert, 1955; Yang, 1999; Hong, 2006; Abedini, Rahimi & Zare-ee, 2011). Determining these three driving inputs to triangulate the concept of writing motivation establishes models used to uncover the factors that directly or indirectly might influence learner motivation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Graham, Berninger & Fan, 2007; Bower, 2019) including motivational variables (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, Cook & Artino 2016), attitude (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Graham, 2018; Larsen & Long, 1991) self-efficacy/ self-agency (Graham & Harris, 2006; Yusuf, 2011; Jeffery & Wilcox, 2014), beliefs (Diab, 2005; Wright, Hodges & McTigue, 2019; Graham, et al 2022;), behavior (Lalonde, & Gardner, 1984; Petric, 2002; Erkan & Saban, 2011) writing block (Rose, & Rose, 2009; Brand, 1987; Bulut, 2017) writing knowledge (Mansour, Abusaad, Dosuky, & Ibrahim, 2017; Rubiaee, Darus & Abu Bakar, 2019; Graham, Collins, & Ciullo, 2023; MacArthur & Graham, 1987), writing anxiety/ writing apprehension (Gliksman, 1982; Dornyei, 2013) topic interest (Proske & Kapp, 2013) topic background (Rubiaee, Darus & Abu Bakar, 2019; Rubiaee, 2025) connecting reading to writing (Jeffery, K. Wilcox, 2014). The common consensus among these researches has empirically provided a tested models of the fundamental relationship between attitude and self-efficacy from one stand and a direct impact of these traits on students' learning achievement. This concordance has also shown that attitude has a direct influence on learner's achievement and, further, is considered as a non-linguistic outcome of learning (Gardner & MacIntyre 1993). Adding more influential driving inputs to the concept of motivation in learning writing, Rubiaee (2025) suggested that instructional process designed for teaching writing, including the method of teaching writing is another motivational variable that could directly influence students' motivation towards learning writing.

The increasing evidence is consistent with the position that motivation is a fundamental variable in fostering academic learning process in general as well as writing in particular (Al Bulushi 2016; Proske & Kapp 2013; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000, Singer, Nielsen, & Schweingruber 2012). As a result of such consistency, Graham et al (2007) mentioned four fundamental working proposals stated by Grahame (2006) that significantly link between the motivational variables and students' achievement in learning academic writing: "(a) skilled writers are more motivated than less skilled writers, (b) developing writers become increasingly motivated with age and schooling, (c) individual differences in motivation predict writing performance, and (d) instructional procedures designed to improve motivation enhance writing performance." P.517. In addition to proposing these proposals, Graham et al (2007) stated that although the review of literature of the available evidence reinforced the claim that motivation outlines writing achievement, additional research is needed to investigate whether these four proposals will be supported for different aspects of writing motivation such as: interests, apprehension, self-efficacy, attitude (i.e. a spectrum that ranges from the two extremes of positive to negative affect towards writing), and their contribution for success.

Attitude?

Considering the most of the major literature on the concept of attitude, scholars diverged as to their conceptualization to give a unanimous definition of attitude. Such ramification is due to the fact that the term attitude has been used in different disciplines where each group of scholars provide their definition that arises from how they understand or conceptualize its concept based on their school of thought. This presents the concept of attitude probably as the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American social psychology (Allport, 1933; Allport, 1935; Gawronski, 2007, Schwarz & Bohnet, 2001;). Another key reason for such variation is that the term itself is elastic enough to apply either to the dispositions of single, isolated individuals or to broad patterns of culture (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Burr, 2015; Potter, 2024). Asserting the consequence of this key reason, Allport, (1933) early stated that scholars and scientists found it a meeting point for currying discussions particularly in social and psychological research. Thus, the concept has been so widely adopted that it has virtually established itself as the keystone in the edifice of social science research. Having the virtual of this conceptual variation at this level of value can help us consider that although scholars have experienced recurring debates regarding a proper definition of attitude, they have reached a common

denominator that attitude construct may combine both *instinct* and *habit* in any proportion, it avoids the extreme commitments of both the instinct-theory and environmentalism (Allport, 1933; Droba, 1933; Gawronski, 2007).

Through decades of debating and adding much concern to the issue, the concept of attitude, as any concept that has received decades of attention, has changed over the years. The initial definitions were broad and encompassed cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral components (Schwarz & Bohnner, 2001). For example, Allport (1935) provided an initiative definition for attitude. His definition builds upon linking individual's response to his/ her experience that results from the neurological and cognitive statues. Allport (1935), therefore, defined attitude as "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (cited in Schwarz & Bohnner, 2001, p. 810). A decade later, Krech & Crutchfield (1948) wrote that attitude can be defined as a continuance organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some effecting aspects of the individual's experience derived from his/ her world. These definitions emphasized the enduring nature of attitudes and their close relationship to individuals' behavior. The concept of attitude has also received attention from some senior sociologists like (Fuson, 1942), and psychologists like (Campbell, 1950) who has, to large extent, even provided a simple but establishing definition to attitudes which is expressed as a personal react that will reflect a specified behavior in a specified situation.

Such establishing definition provided by Fuson, (1942), and Campbell (1950) in fact were grounding bases that encouraged other scholars like Eagly & Chaiken, (1993) to define attitude as purely psychological trait where the learners' tendency can be evaluated or measured with some degree of favor or disfavor regarding particular learning experience. Later, Eagly and Chaiken, (2007) explained that this definition involves tendency, entity (or attitude object), and evaluation as three key features of attitudes. This conception of attitude distinguishes between the inner tendency, that is attitude, and the evaluative responses that express attitudes.

Other scholars like Ajzen, (2014) has pushed the discussion of attitude further, shedding more focus on the relationship between the attitude and behavior. Ajzen, (2014) believes that linking this concept to behavior has moved back into the focus of research in social psychology. This implies that ability to predict certain behavior from particular attitudes can lead to that strong attitude-behavior relations can be obtained under certain conditions. Ajzen, (2014) also proclaims that recently many social psychologists agree with the proposition that the effect of learners' attitude on his/ her behavior is depending on the act of other factors such as individual personality differences, the nature of the attitude, circumstances surrounding the performance of the behavior. These acts can play as a moderator or inhibitor of the attitude-behavior relation.

This point of concept is further clarified by Culbertson (1968), explaining that most people, including social psychologists and educators in EFL context, seem to agree that attitude involves at least three constructing components namely: a) an attitude object (that not necessary to be a physical trait), b) a set of beliefs made by the learner that the object is either good or bad (positive or negative perception on the part of the learner resulted from his /her experience toward the intended object), and c) a tendency to behave toward the object so as to keep or get rid of it (a personal decision made by the learner, welcoming to do the experience with that object again or to give up).

Summing up a common consensus for the current concept, attitude is a behavior, resulting from certain positive or negative feeling developed by learners' perception toward certain experience. Therefore, attitude is defined in general as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 6 as cited in Eysers, 1975). The concept of of attitude in this study was consistent with the perspective of previous researchers (Alexander and Filler, 1976, Kear et al., 2000, Graham et al., (2007). This concept can be aligned with a two-end spectrum where one extreme end represents the negative perception of this construct while the other extreme end operates as positive perception. Applying this definition in academic writing context, attitude as an affective disposition involves how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy Graham et al., (2007). Linking this two-end spectrum to Grahames' et al., (2007) tested models affords much comprehensive understanding to the nature of attitude. Base on this tested models, attitude is defined as a structural relationship between learner's writing achievement and their attitude towards writing. Therefore, Grahames' et al., (2007) defined attitude as an affective disposition concerning how the actual act of writing affects upon the author feeling, ranging from feeling of happy or being helpful to unhappy or being helpless. These three tested models of the structural relationship are: "(a) writing attitude influences writing achievement in a unidirectional manner, (b) writing achievement influences writing attitude in a unidirectional manner, and (c) the effects of writing attitude and achievement are bidirectional and reciprocal" (Grahames' et al., (2007) p.516.

Building the discussion on these two extreme ends, attitude is therefore considered an affective motivational state which is governed by identified three levels of affect. These levels of affect are known as traits (Roseburg, 1998 cited in Grahames' et al., 2007). They are: a) *personality-like trait* that are responsible for person's general temperament, b) *long lasting trait* that moderates the moods. This kind of trait is transitory, and c) *short-lived trait* that controls the individuals' emotions. This kind of trait is situationally specific affective states (Anderman & Wolters, 2006; Roseburg, 1998). In general, affective states usually represent the individual's perception or reflection that can take place as he/she anticipates to perform a particular learning task.

Research into Attitudes towards Writing in EFL

Research in EFL writing context has received a rapid development in the 1980s and 1990s, focusing primarily on exploring the writing process or writing strategies to provide an account of what writers do when writing and how such learning experience may influence their desire (attitude) towards writing. However, a scant of research deal with exploring these issues from the students' perception, attempting to discover what type of relationship that might do exist between the type of their attitudes and the degree of their self-efficacy towards various aspects of learning writing (Petric 2002). Many scholars, for example, Johns (1997), have agreed with to the importance of the students' perception, asserting the personal theory of writing regarding the influence of how academic literacies are taught and learnt. Other scholars, like Hyland, gave a further push, stressing that a major task of teaching is to address the students' perceptions derived from their personal experience in practicing writing. nevertheless, studies addressing the issue of students' perceptions towards the affective relationship between attitude and self-efficacy towards learning EFL writing are scant and need a more deep investigation.

Outside EFL context, an extensive amount of researches has discussed attitudes within social and cognitive psychology. For the purposes of discussion (Feldman & Lynch, 1988; Ajzen, Fishbein, Lohmann & Albarracín, 2018) considered that an attitude towards a certain behavior determines the relationships between attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. According to the outcomes of these researches, attitudes, as an effective response, are determined by learner's beliefs, which are basically cognitive. This explains that any person's attitude towards a particular behavior is determined by his/ her belief about the expected outcome of such behavior and the evaluation of that outcome. This concept is further explained by Petric, (2002), and other scholars like Ajzen, (2002) and Mohammed, Fethi & Djaoued, (2017) stating that for an individual, however, in order to act according to his/her attitudes, two other conditions are in fact need to be satisfied. The first underling condition is that the individual believes or he/ she completely dependent to seek others supportive reinforcement of such behavior (i.e. subjective norm), and, second, that the individual perceives herself/himself as having control over the behavior (termed perceived behavioral control). From Petric's (2002) point of view that theory underlines such concept might explain to a large extent why, from writing instructors' point of view, applying certain writing teaching method takes often a considerable amount of time, where in many other cases do not lead to achieve positive attitudes towards learning writing.

In general, such an extensive amount of researches within or outside the EFL learning context have shown that although attitudes determine behavior in a complex way, it also emerge as a non-linguistic outcome of language learning. They are emerged in an already underlying beliefs but also formed or changed as a result of new experience through which the learners undergo. That is why attitudes may influence the learning process in a significant way.

Theoretically, many studies have confirmed that attitude has a direct influence on writing ability through its impact on the degree of learner's cognitive engagement in the writing task. These studies found out that students with higher favorable attitude are likely to do more and better engagement in order to write more often and expend greater effort when composing a writing task comparing to those students who have low favorable attitude. As a result, these studies confirm that such variation can usually lead to individual differences in writing achievement (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995; Kear, Coffman, McKenna & Ambrosio, 2000; Ekholm, Zumbrunn & DeBusk-Lane 2018; Graham, Schwartz & MacArthur 1993). In addition, attitude has an effect on the types of strategies that students apply while performing the task of writing. Confirming this concept, studies like (Anderman & Wolters, 2006) For example, showed that a negative affect may trigger the use of fixed and less-adaptive strategies, while a positive affect has been associated with a trigger of more creative and a variety for adaptive forms of cognitive engagement (Ashby & Isen, 1999). Finally, Perkun (1992) argues that a negative affect of attitude requires more consuming up for cognitive resources than a positive one, leading to a drainage of that result in scant of resources available for students to complete their task. Therefore, Graham et al. (2007) affirm that 'a negative attitude towards writing may lead to less efficient processing during writing. This may be

particularly disruptive for writing, as it is a challenging task, requiring considerable effort and the effective management of a variety of cognitive resources' p.518.

Research into self-efficacy towards Writing in EFL context

The other face of the issue under investigation in this study is the self-efficacy where negative trait has an influence on students' belief in their capability in completing the required task (Bandura & Adams, 1977; Rubiaee 2021). This can lead to a strong reciprocal connection between the type of attitude that student has and the degree of his/her conceit of endeavor. This view is strongly supported by Bandura (1977) who mentioned that the type of attitude could affect the degree of students' self-efficacy in performing particular task. Self-efficacy, in fact, determines the powering beliefs that learner holds to face challenges competently and the ability to make decisions. A strong hold of self-efficacy, therefore, promotes the degree of learner's accomplishment as well as his/her personal preference to involve or not in particular learning experience again. Explaining such reciprocal relationship between attitude and self-efficacy is that when people, particularly students, get positive attitude, resulting from certain experience, it triggers positive self-efficacy where they can recover from failure faster. This is due to the fact that they configure threatening situations with a steady belief that they can control and manage them, linking to lower level of, for instance anxiety, stress, dislikes etc. and, most important, controlling and decreasing the degree of vulnerability to learning inhibitors like depression, avoidance, disappointment. In contrast, having negative attitude forces people to view difficult tasks resulting from their inability to master them as personal threats and are usually prefer to avoid these tasks as these people lack self-confidence and self-trust in their skills that in the end cause them to have low self-efficacy, if not completely losing it. This consequently force them to focus anxiously on the skills they lack rather than the skills they have. As a result, they will lose the needed motivating traits which they need to invest their abilities to achieve their goals as they believe that they will fail to do so. As a result of this shortcoming resulted from the reciprocal relationship between the negative attitude and the negative self-efficacy, it is usually found easy for them to lose faith in their abilities of mastering that learning task, forcing them to give up and hesitate to participate in any future learning experience.

In this study, focus is mainly directed to the effect of students' attitude on their self-efficacy towards writing as one aspect of motivation, to test one of the working proposals outlined by Graham (2006), Grahames' et al., (2007) first tested model and the second and third of Culbertson's (1968) propositions. Thus, this study investigates a linkage between the three hypothesises to explore how attitude towards writing affects with the type of learning experience (i.e. teaching method and learning environment) and how such affect may monitor students' self-efficacy in learning writing.

Material and methods

Sampling

The population of the present study was EFL 3rd-year university students at Al Asmarya University for Islamic Sciences in Libya. All of them were students in English language department, Faculty of Education in Zliten city . They were studying academic writing skills as part of the requirements for completing the academic writing course at this university. 13 female students participated participated in this study. Although this population is small, purposive small sample like this is recommended particularly in a case study when in-depth analysis and more homogeneity of the target population is aimed (Sarantakos 2012). This academic year was selected purposely because argumentative essay used in this study had been taught at this year. A predetermined selecting-criteria were applied to select the participants. All students participated voluntarily in this study after they had signed the permission letter for participants. This reflected their high motivation and interest to be involved in this study voluntarily and take in its all stages and various activities.

Instrumentations

Interview was the primary source of data collection used to answer research questions. Interview is the most common used instrument for data collection in qualitative research. It is utilized to discover the interchange of views between the interviewer and the interviewees on a topic of mutual interest to explore the widespread knowledge-producing practices across the human and social sciences among other instruments (Brinkmann, 2014; Kvale, 1996). As such, interviews enable participants (i.e. interviewers and/or interviewees) to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their own perspectives. (Brinkmann 2014) also argues that interview is concerned with gathering data about life where human involvement is inescapable. Therefore, interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels such as spoken, heard and verbal senses to be used (Brinkmann 2007; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; Kvale 1996). It is a powerful instrument used to seek answers for questions about concrete episodes of participants' experiences for the purpose of collecting valid and reliable information relevant to a considerably complex social issue (Brinkmann 2007; Kvale 1996; (Brinkmann 2007; Fontana & Frey 1994; Kvale 1996). Among these interview types, semi-structured interviews were used in this study. They are widely

employed by many social researchers in their qualitative studies because they are considered the most significant and richest information type of interviewing (Brinkmann 2014).

Results and discussion

Findings for RQ1

This part of the article discusses the effect of the difficulties that Libyan EFL university students face on their ability in constructing academic writing. It looks closely at the students' views regarding what type of impact of these difficulties on their attitude and how these difficulties defect their self-efficacy towards learning academic essay writing. Therefore, this part of the article is a discussion of

the findings to address the following research question:

What type of negative attitudes do Libyan EFL university students face in learning academic writing?

When the students were asked about the grade points obtained in writing subject either at secondary school or at the university before involving in this study, most students stated that they had obtained upper-intermediate or high grades. Only four students stated that they had graduated with low grades from secondary school and had low grade at university level in writing subject. Although the obtained grade-level indicates a satisfactory antecedent impression, all students mentioned that they had faced many hindering difficulties, including those with high grades, that lead them to face low writing abilities and negative attitude towards learning writing subject. This serious mismatching between the grades the participants had achieved and the writing problems they had suffer from in fact might reveal either inadequacy in the teaching method being used or in appropriate learning-assessment method used at Libyan secondary or university level including Al Asmarya University.

Based on data elicited from participants' responses, it was revealed that Libyan EFL university students face many hindering difficulties in constructing academic essay before they had participated in this study and after they had taken the academic writing subject. Consequently. It was found that these difficulties not only lowered their writing ability, but also have negatively influenced their attitude towards learning writing. Below are the responses given by the students when they were asked to give their views about *how they feel about learning and/or writing argumentative academic essay*. Regarding, all responses given by the interviewees in this study are presented in unedited narrow transcripts.

Students' views revealed that such difficulties had grown a variety of *frustrating feelings* towards learning writing and/or writing academic essay. Such feeling, in fact, was found to result from their negative attitude towards learning writing because they feel that learning academic writing is a difficult task because of their inability to start up the writing task as the case with S1 “**S1,L 6-8** “aaa (...) *I feel that it is difficult particularly when I start up writing.*”. The inability to understand the steps of performing the writing task and how they should go through these steps, as the case with S2 “**S2,L8-9** “*it's difficult because it has to go through a certain process.*” is another difficulty that charged them to have a negative attitude. *Linking how these difficulties came into the stream was when* other students, for example S3, declared another type of difficulty that, in fact, is considered for them, as for many EFL university students, the constituting core of many hindering problems, that is the inappropriate techniques used in teaching students in how to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned about how to write an academic writing task into practice. **S3,L17-19** “*This technique of learning gives me the feeling that writing is hard to learn. This is because we did not apply what we learned*”. Participants viewed that such frustrating feelings had a direct and major drawback impacts that did not allow them to achieve any progressive enhancements on their writing abilities.

In anticipated negative attitude towards learning writing in general or performing any academic writing task successfully was not only resulted from how much difficulty they feel of writing but because of another inter-coming and influencing factor; writing is a *confusing task* to master. Indicating this matter, many participants disclosed that they have a negative attitude towards learning writing because they *feel confused* when they learn academic writing subject. They also added that this feeling becomes more inhibitive when they are asked to write an academic essay. Regarding this matter, a response from S5 in the following excerpt illustrates the influencing degree of such feeling and how it can inhibit their ability to arrange and prepare their thoughts which are expected later on to be casted in in forms of ideas expressed coherently and fluently in the writing text. For explaining feeling, S5 stated that “**S5,L18-21** “*This Causes me aaa (...)sometimes aaa, thought-confusion. I mean, I feel that my thoughts disappear or mix up in an unorganized way in some way that confuses me and feel I lose control on my thought.*”

Viewing writing as a confusing feeling has grown another serious type of difficulties that might Cause a severe and steady negative attitude that, unfortunately, lead to a constant reluctance among students for anticipating in any future learning activities particularly those are pertaining to writing. Expressing this serious type, respondents' responses revealed that they have a negative attitude towards learning writing because they *feel worried* when they learn academic writing subject and/or participate in performing an academic essay. The Respondents' response regarding this issue was presented in an excerpt from **S13** in the following excerpts as she said: **Rec13/S13,L7-11** *"I mean, when I have difficulties in writing, it affects me and I get worried about it and I think about it constantly. I mean, I love writing, but the difficulties limit my ability to perform it properly."*

Feeling worry of learning writing has led to another upgrading negative attitude among students. It was found to have further distress that not only harms their emotional traits, but to hurt their psychological status too, turning them to feel tense. **Rec1/S1,L11** *"I feel tense and worried sometimes."* Such intensive and severe disposition was in fact a consequential trigger for another set of undesirable constrain that exceeded their psychological blemish far beyond threatening. students' views, in explaining such psychological blemish, are indeed unreserved and direct, speaking the truth that learning writing, for them, has become a dread that often agitates a flaring apprehension because, as they expressed in extraction **Re6/S6,L2-22** and **Re12/S12,L2-9** below, the entire concept of learning writing itself has become a scaring matter of learning.

"I feel scared. I am scared of writing because sometimes I do not have the vocabulary that expresses my thoughts or opinions on the subject I want to write about...This is the reason for feeling scared.....I am afraid of writing subject so much and did not benefit explicitly from studying academic writing course at the university. This increased my fear of writing." **Re6/S6,L2-22**

S12: *There is a great scare toward it...//*

R: ...↑//great Scare ↩...//

S12: ...↑//It is certainly a great scare because writing is not easy. This is probably because I have no ideas on the subject or time is not enough to learn all about writing subject or to accomplish the given writing task." **Re12/S12,L2-9**

"Because I try, try and try to complete the article but unfortunately I cannot, thus I stop. I mean that this causes me a high tension although I have a desire to learn to write." **Re1/S1,L22-25**

Adding more interrelated factors to the issue, other students' views revealed that there were another type of difficulties that had grown a variety of *frustrating feelings* towards learning writing and/or writing academic essay. This feeling, in fact, was found to result from their negative attitude too. Pointing out this difficulty, students, for example **S4**, in this study stated that they have negative attitude because learning writing made them feel tough. This was clearly declared in the following excerpts: *"It's a tough feeling. This is because we learn writing subject is still dependent on TRADITIONAL methods only."* /**Re4/S4,L11-12**. **S4** also added that they face this type feeling because of the drawbacks of the implemented teaching method on the base of their instructors in teaching academic writing subject that they described as traditional and inappropriate method

4.2 Findings for RQ2

This part of the article discusses how these negative attitudes that Libyan EFL university students face on their ability in constructing academic argumentative essay defect their self-efficacy towards learning academic essay writing. Therefore, this part of the article is a discussion of the findings to address the following research question:

What is the effect of these types of negative attitude on Libyan EFL university students' writing self-efficacy?

Students' views revealed that negative attitude had a direct impact on their self-efficacy. They described that such defecting impact convulsed their self-belief about their aptitude in performing any learning activity about writing. Further, they added that experience this disappointing impact made them to become bereaved and consequently lost desire towards learning academic writing subject and/or writing an academic essay. The Respondents' responses regarding are presented in the following excerpts:

Re1/S1,L22-25

"Because I try, try and try to complete the essay but unfortunately I cannot, thus I stop.....This will let me lose desire to write."

Re6/S6,L6-7

"I do not like to write a lot because I often feel bored. I prefer to express my ideas verbally instead of writing."

Re4/S4,L1-3

"Frankly, I'm not that kind of person who likes to write or(...) aaa writing"

Furthermore, participants' responses revealed that their self-efficacy toward learning academic writing subject and/or writing an academic essay had to a large extent faded because they feel *losing self-confidence* in their writing ability in completing any writing tasks competitively and successfully. The Respondents' responses regarding are illustrated in the following excerpts:

Rec5/S5,L9-13

"It causes me to feel a lack of self-confidence that I am able to succeed in acquiring English language. Even if I have other language skills, but in terms of writing skills (...) I feel weak and my skills are low in writing an integrated essay."

Rec13/S13,L5-7

"Although it is enjoyable, it has many difficulties. These difficulties reduce the sense of self-confidence because of my inability to write what I want."

More seriously, Students' views revealed that these negative attitudes had caused them to *give up* learning academic writing subject and/or writing an academic essay. The Students' views regarding are illustrated in the following excerpts:

Re1/S1,L22-23

"Because I try, try and try to complete the article but unfortunately I cannot, thus I stop."

Rec1/S1,L20

"Sometimes I stop and do not continue writingg"

Rec12/S12,L10-11

***R:** Well. *What does this feeling of fear cause to you?*

S12: *I became unable to write and decided to give up participating in any future writing activities."*

Discussion**Discovering types of negative attitude**

The results of the current study are in an alignment with the findings of previous studies. A considerable amount of research has established a significant connection between the type of negative attitude which students might experience and its lowering effect on their self-efficacy in achieving high EFL learning writing levels (Brown & Park, 2002; Chen, Zhang & Li, 2024; Huerta, Beigi & Chlup, 2016; Goroshit & Hen, 2021; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Lalonde & Gardner, 1984). These findings have produced a further revealing results, showing that academic writing is not just a cognitive challenge, but, more important, an intensely emotional process that affective states such as emotions, feeling and mood serve as either primary prompting or deterring sources of self-efficacy (Sabti, Md Rashid, Nimehchisalem & Darmi, 2019). Explaining this point, Heslin & Klehe, (2006) state that self-efficacy is an important skill in order to sustain a considerable effort needed to master a certain task successfully, explaining that "When learning complex tasks, high self-efficacy causes people to strive to improve their assumptions and strategies, rather than look for excuses. In contrast, low self-efficacy can lead to erratic analytic thinking that undermines the quality of problem solving" p.705. Consequently, a student's negative emotions heavily influence their self-confidence in their writing capabilities.

Exploring what are the possible types of negative attitude that students may face during the course of learning or performing the writing task, this study has discovered a bundle of the inhibiting feelings. This discover has a significant agreement with the previous literature. One of the emotional/ physiological inhibiting feelings that influences self-efficacy is stress. The Link between the inhibiting role of stress and self-efficacy has been investigated in many studies (Chemers, Hu & Garcia, 2001; Hackett et al., 1992; Klassen, 2002; Oberst, Hedderich & Miguel Molina, 2022; Bijl & Shortridge-Baggett, 2002; Pajares, 1996; Zajacova, Lynch & Espenshade, 2005).

These studies suggested that there is a connection between the stress and negative attitude that may lead to a depression of students' self-efficacy evaluations. These studies explained that this is highly expected to occur because learners often use information about their current feelings and well-being to estimate their capability to accomplish a learning task. Consequently, this findings strongly assert that if students feel stressed, they have fewer beliefs in their efficacy. On the other hand, the findings of these studies, therefore, expect that students who experience face low stressors are expected to be more successful. These findings are strongly correlates with Klassen's (2002) review of the findings of 16 studies that examined writing self-efficacy among early learners. Throughout this review, Klassen, (2002) found that many studies indicated a negative relationship between writing anxiety (learners' negative feelings) and self-efficacy. These studies have concluded that when learners' negative feelings increases, the physiological reaction from the stress of writing reduces students' confidence in their writing ability.

In addition, a considerable amount of past studies from different learning contexts are also consistent with the results of the current study. From this perspective, studies in non EFL educational setting showed a moderate to strong negative correlation between self-efficacy and stress among college students (Hackett et al., 1992; Solberg & Villarreal, 1997). In these non-educational settings, self-efficacy is also named as a personal coping resource factor that has received an effecting influence resulted mainly from stress as a negative attitude (Schwarzer et al., 2005). In medical setting, For instance, among medical and dental tertiary students in Saudi Arabia, Mohsen, (2017) carried out a cross-sectional study of Saudi psychology students in order to investigate the impact of self-esteem, academic self-efficacy and perceived stress on their academic performance. The results of this study showed aspects of grade achievement are associated with self-esteem, academic self-efficacy and perceived stress. The study also revealed a high prevalence of stress among the units. The results indicated that 71% of the sample expressed stress as an hindering factor that could influence their self-esteem. Stress as a type of negative attitude and its hindering effect on students learning self-efficacy was also indicated by other studies (Hayat, Shateri, Amini & Shokrpour, 2020; Schwarzer et al., 2005). Other studies had investigated stress as constituting factor leading directly to negative attitude found a negative association between stress and academic achievement (Khan, Altaf, & Kausar, 2013; Sohail, 2013)

Moreover, the current findings are in alignment with many findings from vocational and occupational domain for instance, in a cross-lagged study using two-wave data of N = 581 employees from Germany, Rigotti, Korek & Otto, (2020) explored the role of career stress on employees' beliefs toward their self-efficacy as a main cause of subjective career. Results revealed an exceeding demands and emotional including stress strain negatively affecting career-related self-efficacy.

Linking the effect of different types of negative attitude to self-efficacy

Extensive empirical research demonstrates a **negative relationship** between negative attitude that arises from negative learners' emotional states, such as anxiety, worries, difficult, confuse and fear of evaluation, and a student's writing self-efficacy. This negative relationship has a strong theoretical foundation that build upon Albert Bandura's social cognitive framework, establishing that physiological and affective states serve as one of the four foundational sources of self-efficacy. This means that it plays a somatic role of distress which is interpreted by students as a sign of vulnerability or lack of competency (Almutairy, 2024; Cheng, 2004; Huerta et al., 2017).

Based on this theoretical foundation, Negative attitude as a stirring factor could lead to many procrastinating acts in learning process. It has drawn researchers' attention to carry further investigation specially in EFL context (Brown & Park, 2002). As a result, a considerable amount of previous literature, therefore, has confirmed that negative attitude and its consequential impacts on university students' writing self-efficacy are becoming more voicing (Bandura, 1977; Graham, Berninger & Fan 2007; Sarkhoush, 2013; Nga, 2022; Chen, Zhang & Li, 2024). Issues such as declining academic performance, decreased self-confidence and lower self-esteem, impaired critical thinking, and minor satisfaction resulting from the delay or poor-ability for completing an academic tasks have raised widespread concern (Goroshit & Hen, 2021). A common voicing consensus among these studies confirms that many university students, in their pursuit of academic success, have experienced the challenges of procrastination.

The result of such consequential impact was also confirmed by Cheng, (2004) who found that students face somatic anxiety or physiological reactions to negative attitude resulted from internal hindering factors such as unpleasant feelings, nervousness, and tension. In addition, Cheng, (2004) found that negative attitude as a stirring factor can also result from external factors like teachers' negative expectations, worry with their writing ability, and concern for others' perceptions of their writing. Adding more stirring factors to the issue, Cheng, (2004) pointed out, based on his results, that some students articulate this stirring factor into behavioural negative attitude through avoidance, withdrawal/ giving up, and Giving up, Losing desire that consequently lead students to Losing their self-confidence in completing their writing assignments.

This issue is even more prominent among Arab EFL university students, including Libyan university students, where emotional pressure intensifies the interaction between low of writing self-efficacy and other psychological factors (Abd Rahim, Jaganathan & Mahadi, 2016; Abuqudairi, Awwad & Ta'amneh, 2025; Alfarwan, 2022; Almutairy, 2024; Salam & Al Dyar, 2014; Sabti, Md Rashid, Nimehchisalem & Darmi, 2019). Although these studies found out that intensified interaction is a long-term regulated factor through an excessive enhancing efforts of teacher-student interaction, curriculum development, learning environment and other beyond classroom factors, including social factors, its immediate impact causes students much cognitive drainage lading, in many cases, to many learning obstacles that might influence their writing efficacy negatively.

Losing desire to learn has become one of the most common learning obstacles, preventing Libyan EFL university students. Regarding, studies confirm that majority of Libyan EFL students specially at the university level experience a highly specific intersection of affective and environmental pressures (Alashouri, 2023; Alrabai, 2018; Halali, 2026). These studies also confirmed that while academic writing is characterized as the most anxiety-inducing skill and, as a result, lowest-scoring for Libyan EFL learners, a loss of desire in learning, including either losing motivation entirely or loss of intrinsic motivation, acts as a hindering force that heavily degrades their writing self-efficacy. Hence, once the desire to learn become extinct, students retreat entirely into the local linguistic environment. Consequently, performing writing tasks suddenly charge students with feeling of abstract and forced. Lacking the desire to get rid of such obstacles, student's perception toward learning EFL writing often shifts from a tool of communication to an undefeatable academic barrier, causing writing self-efficacy to drop (Ozfidan, El-Dakhs & Ibrahim, 2026).

In addition, association between negative attitude -that arises from negative learners' emotional states- and a student's writing self-efficacy leads to another learning obstacles; it is feeling of giving up. Attaining such feeling is, in fact, the consequential result that heavily lead students a direct and prominent damages to trust of their **writing self-efficacy**, establishing a destructive psychological cycle that triggers them into pessimists learners and reduces writing performance. This perception has a significant theoretical ground to Seligman's (2002) research that has shown that pessimists people are considered to experience much more disposition to giving up as they face any difficulty, and, therefore, distrust can be correlated to an even more severe state of learned helplessness in which people feel there is nothing they can do to regulate future outcomes. Therefore, McLeod, (1987) stated that "Some students who fail continually on a task learn to be helpless at that task and to see failure as inevitable on similar tasks—in many cases giving up before they have even begun" p. 431. Linking McLeod's, (1987) statement and Seligman's (2002) theoretical base to empirical research, Camfield, (2016) assessed 131 college freshmen college students, building on previous studies of college students' writing self-efficacy beliefs. Students were evaluated holistically using grounded theory methodology. The findings of this research showed that the nature of students' initial pessimism about themselves as writers and sense of learned helplessness severely influenced their writing self-efficacy.

Linking the issue to the Arab EFL learning context, studies consistently showed that **self-regulation**, including the ability to plan, monitor, and structurally persist through writing giving up/ writing blocks, scores the lowest among all self-efficacy dimensions (Tsao, 2021). These findings of these studies were in consistent alignment with the results of the present study and in a significance connection to Seligman's (2002) theoretical base too. These studies revealed that when the feeling of giving up sets in, students display distinct demotivation symptoms: extreme procrastination, skipping essay assignments entirely, and experiencing immediate writing giving up/ writing blocks. Because self-regulation is the single biggest predictor of how students engage with corrective feedback, giving up paralyzes their capacity to revise or learn from mistakes. (Abdel Latif, Alghizzi, & Alshahrani, 2025; Bensalem, 2018; Sabti, Md Rashid, Nimehchisalem, & Darmi, 2019)

The review of the past literature discussed in this study has confirmed that the relationship between negative attitude, arising from students' negative emotional states from one hand and its effect on students' writing self-efficacy on the other hand is reciprocal relationship. When writing self-efficacy drops, students lower their goals, decrease their study endurance, and reduce actual writing effort. This reduced engagement, in fact, results predictably in lower-quality text and poor academic achievement. Experiencing poor performance confirms the student's initial negative preference, intensifying the urge to give up and or withdraw from subsequent writing activities. Breaking this cycle requires deep and comprehensive understanding first to what are the possible personal traits that might take place during the learning course action and how they might influence students' writing self-efficacy. Then comes the second stage; the therapeutic invention. Here, and at this stage, strategic interventions, including: integrating collaborative activities, explicit instruction in the mechanics of academic writing, and linking constructive feedback from the instructors to redirect students on how to perform a writing task for the purpose of regulating the effect of their students negative attitude on their self-efficacy are applicable to actively pivot student attitudes from helplessness back to optimism.

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Conclusion

To sum up findings from interview one, Table 1 illustrates that students have a variety of negative attitudes toward learning and/or writing academic essay before they had participated in this study. These negative attitudes were found to result from the difficulties that students face in learning/writing academic essay. Such difficulties do not only were found to lower students' ability in composing the academic essay but, more worse, overwhelm them with a punch of negative feelings that obstruct equally both the flow of successful learning and hinder their abilities in achieving any further developments in their writing skills.

Table 1: The effect of types of negative attitude on students' writing self-efficacy

Types of feelings causing negative attitude derived from students' writing experience	No. students sharing each feeling
I have negative attitude because I feel that learning academic writing is: • Feeling difficult • Feeling confused • Feeling worried • Feeling fear • Feeling tough • Having high stress	5 of 10 1 of 10 2 of 10 4 of 10 1 of 10 2 of 10
The effect of these feelings on students writing self-efficacy	No. Students sharing each effect
This feeling caused me low writing self-efficacy because I: • Lost desire to write • Have high tension • Lost self-confidence in my writing • Have Decided to give up any future writing tasks	2 of 10 2 of 10 2 of 10 3 of 10

Undesirable Feelings resulted from difficulties in learning/ writing academic essay turned students severely to have negative attitudes. Ten out of thirteen students were found to share these destructive attitudes. These negative attitudes were found to defect students feeling undesirably. They turned students to have five split-out negative feelings namely: *feeling difficult*, *feeling confused*, *feeling worried*, *feeling fear* and *feeling tough*. Accordingly, the first sub-negative attitudes among these five split-out defected feelings is the *feeling difficult*. Regarding, among the ten students who viewed that they have a negative attitude towards learning and/or writing academic essay because of the difficulties that they face in doing so, five of them viewed that they deeply acquired the *feeling of difficulty* towards it. Besides, one students mentioned that she had a *feeling of confusion* towards learning and/or writing academic essay. Other two students stated that they had a *feeling of worry* towards learning and/or writing academic essay. More seriously, four of these ten students viewed that they *feel fear* towards learning and/or writing academic essay. Another students showed that she had faced a hindering feeling towards learning and/or writing academic essay. She stated that she *felt tough* towards it.

Moreover, two of the respondents mentioned that the encountered difficulties in learning writing and/or writing an academic essay not only affected their feelings towards it but ,further, they harmed their psychological status too. These students' responses revealed that because they had had a negative attitude towards learning and/or writing academic essay because of the difficulties that they face in doing so, it had forced them to have *high tension* that defected their ability in achieving any further successful progression. Further defecting, responses reveled that difficulties encountered by students also defected inappropriately their desire towards learning and/or writing academic essay. These responses showed that because of such difficulties, three responses viewed that they *lost the desire* of learning and/or writing any academic essay. More seriously, responses derived from interview one also revealed that two students were found to have a *losing of self-confidence*. Accordingly, two students' views detected that their writing difficulties caused them to lose their trust in their abilities in

achieving any further successful development in learning and/or performing academic essay, turning them to struggle low writing self-efficacy.

Further seriously, responses were derived from interview revealed that difficulties encountered by students in constructing academic essay also have another serious effect on their decision-making. Regarding, students' responses viewed that such serious effect led them to make a risky decision that is to *give up* learning about and/or writing any academic essay activities whether these activities were home works or topics assigned in the exam.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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