

# The Effect Of Anxiety In English Tests As A Foreign Language On Both Females And Males Students In Iraqi University

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## Abstract

The aim of the present study is the effect of anxiety in the tests of English as a foreign language on male and female students of the Iraqi University. The method of this research is semi-experimental with a pre-test-post-test design with a control group. The statistical population of the research includes male and female students of Iraq University who have been selectively tested. 50 students were randomly selected as a sample using the random cluster sampling method and randomly divided into two groups of 20 people, control and experimental. were placed So, first, a pre-test of anxiety was done for both groups. So, the students of the experimental group were exposed to the training of the correct methods of the test during 8 sessions of 80 minutes during 3 weeks, 2 days a week, the control groups did not receive any training in this regard. After the educational interventions on the correct methods of the test, a post-test was conducted again from the experimental and control groups, the results showed that the training of the correct methods of the test had an effect on reducing the anxiety of the exam (excitement and worry) of the female students and significantly reduced the anxiety. have given.

**Keywords:** exam, English language, student, Iraq, anxiety

## Introduction

Test anxiety is a special type of anxiety that is characterized by physical, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms when preparing for an exam and taking tests and exams, and it becomes a problem when a high level of this anxiety occurs when preparing for an exam. exam and taking the test interfere (Latas, Pantik et al., 2010). The presence of a little anxiety in a human being is both natural and necessary, but if it exceeds the limit, it will be problematic for him, so that he will not be able to get the necessary points with the knowledge and skills (Richardsorn, 2011). Test anxiety is an unpleasant emotional reaction to an assessment situation. This excitement is characterized by a mental feeling of tension,

encouragement and arousal of the automatic nervous system (Giuda, Ludlow, 2005).

One of the most important sources that people use to evaluate their abilities is their previous experiences in similar situations. When past experiences indicate that you do not perform well in exams, then you feel that you will fail this exam as well. This belief in weakness and inability causes you to experience severe anxiety. Among the unsuccessful experiences in the past, it is possible to mention failing the exam, missing the time, feeling bad during the exam session, and so on.

Researchers define test anxiety as a relatively stable trait related to threatening situations (Larson, 2010). Children in primary school age experience little anxiety about exams. Exam

anxiety is formed at the age of 18-24 and continues until adulthood and even university education. It seems that the level of exam anxiety increases with age and the importance of academic success (Craig, Dobson, 1995).

Meusej and Broad (1999) mentioned four components for test anxiety, which are: worry, excitability, interference and lack of self-confidence. Spielberger (1980) test anxiety has two components: the worry component and the excitability component. Anxiety refers to negative cognitions about performance and excitability to automatic arousal perceived by a person such as heart rate and muscle tension. Diagnosing anxiety and treating it in children and adolescents is very important because their personality is formed during this period. Many children get anxious when they are in new situations and show many reactions such as stuttering, hanging on their parents, being shy, and biting their nails, etc. The duty of the parents in this situation is to deal with him patiently and give him the necessary self-confidence to face that situation.

All performance anxiety, including exam anxiety, is basically caused by the fear of being evaluated by others. Those who are sensitive to other people's opinions about themselves or are overly influenced by judgment are more susceptible to this type of anxiety.

Encouraging parents is effective in communicating children with the environment outside the home and non-family members. Many parents are unaware of this feeling of their child until the day they face a problem (like the first day of school). One of the most rumored reasons for heartache and nausea seen in elementary school children is fear and anxiety. The worry of parents (about the child's entry into school, his academic status, etc.) causes it to be transmitted to the child and increases his anxiety. Common disorders in children include social anxiety, fear of school, and exam anxiety.

(Khosravi, Astvar, Azami, 2013).

One of the problems that the educational system of our country is dealing with is the problem of academic failure and the lack of familiarity of students with the correct study methods and habits, which various factors are involved in creating this problem, which can be effective steps by teaching the correct study methods Solving this problem. The learning process is a complex and difficult process, if the study method or habit is not comprehensive, appropriate and correct, the amount of learning will decrease, but if the study method follows appropriate and correct principles, the power of learning will increase rapidly (Seif, 2013). Getting used to reading correctly is an acquired thing, that is, as a person learns to read and write, he can learn the methods of reading, which are the eight common methods of reading, the method after completion, the method of reading carefully, the method of reading without writing, the method of drawing lines. Below the important points, annotation method, summarization method, keying method, creativity method and brain network plan" are available as a result of researchers' experience and expertise to reduce the anxiety of girls' exams compared to their male peers. takes (Sif, 139 1). Perhaps exam anxiety is a natural reaction that originates from poor study and study skills for exams, and for this reason, the girls and boys of the Iraqi University were taught the correct method of studying to determine how effective study methods are in reducing anxiety. It will be their test. Considering the entrance of students to the university, which is a sensitive period both in terms of age and in terms of choosing a field of study and the degree of success, students experience more anxiety in the future, whether it be or not, and this anxiety affects exams, success, academic progress and grades. It has a significant effect on students, and by teaching study methods, exam anxiety will decrease and grades will increase, and study

methods, like doing any work, need to be taught the right way.

The correct way of studying increases the level of understanding and learning and as a result increases the interest in studying and information, using the correct and modern methods of studying is to develop the power of reasoning and thinking as well as the efficiency of one's abilities and talents. Based on this, our study should be in such a way that we can remember the most content in the shortest time and also easily and completely recall the read content (Babaei, 2018).

### **Research background**

Sabahi Far (2013) during the study of the effect of proper education of hope and study skills in reducing anxiety and procrastination of English language students of Iraqi University, reached the conclusion that teaching hope and study skills had an effect on reducing exam anxiety and academic procrastination and it significantly Saadatmand, Hasanpour, Mikaili (2013) conducted a study titled comparing the effectiveness of teaching memory skills and emotional self-regulation on reducing exam anxiety of male and female students. The results showed that teaching memory skills and emotional self-regulation have a positive and meaningful effect on reducing exam anxiety. Also, the post-test (LSD) showed that the effectiveness of emotional self-regulation training is more effective than memory skills in reducing exam anxiety. Overall, the findings of the research showed that although both methods of memory skills and emotional self-regulation in reducing Exam anxiety has been effective, but the method of emotional self-regulation is more effective than the method of teaching memory skills. Khosravi, Astvar, Azami (2013) during a research, distinguish between people with high exam anxiety according to the level of their study and exam taking skills, and deficiency in study and exam taking skills is one of the types of exam anxiety. The poor performance of this group of

people in the exam is due to their weak skills in acquiring (coding), organizing/practicing (study skills) and retrieving/using material during the exam. Another research titled comparing the effectiveness of regular desensitization treatment methods, study skills and the combined method in reducing exam anxiety was conducted by Mardpour (2013), the results showed that the effectiveness of regular desensitization groups, study skills and the combined method There is a significant difference with the control group in reducing exam anxiety. Also, in the combined method, the findings indicated that this method is more efficient in reducing exam anxiety.

Franson (2011) found that exam anxiety with inappropriate and insufficient study methods and attention deficits, trait anxiety, social fear, and also the existence of a high level of exam anxiety with more cognitive errors, more negative thoughts and low self-esteem and poor academic performance Accompanied. MacDonald (2007) in his studies show that many students feel anxious during the exam session. This anxiety may appear in different forms such as muscle tension, increased heart rate, sweating, nausea and tremors. A research by Spada, Nixivis, Giovanni and Irson (2006) titled the role of metacognition as a mediator on test anxiety and study approach and memory skills. The results showed that studying metacognitive mediation has an effect on exam anxiety.

Considering the high prevalence of exam anxiety, its importance in educational environments and its higher prevalence in girls than boys, it is necessary and important to study in this field. Therefore, the main goal of the present study is to investigate the effect of anxiety in the tests of English as a foreign language on male and female students of the Iraqi University.

### **Statement of the Problem**

1-General target: male and female students of Iraqi University

2-Sub-objectives: The effect of anxiety in English as a foreign language tests on female and male Iraqi university students

Determining the effect of learning study methods on anxiety and worry in Iraqi male and female students

### **Methodology**

The method of this research was a semi-experimental type with a pre-test-post-test design with a control group. The statistical population of the research includes male and female students of Iraq University who have been selectively tested. 50 students were randomly selected as a sample using the random cluster sampling method and randomly divided into two groups of 20 people, control and experimental. So, first, a pre-test of anxiety was done for both groups. So, the students of the experimental group were exposed to the training of the correct methods of the test during 8 sessions of 80 minutes during 3 weeks, 2 days a week, the control groups did not receive any training in this regard.

### **Review of Literature**

The measurement tool included the standard exam anxiety questionnaire, Spielberger (1980). It has 20 items (11 items related to the anxiety component of worry and 9 items related to the emotional anxiety component) that describe the reaction before, during and after the exam. The exam anxiety questionnaire includes two subtests, worry and excitability, which measure individual differences in exam anxiety. Exam anxiety is a self-report instrument, and each test is based on a four-choice scale (almost never, sometimes, most of the time, and (almost always) answers to every material. These options are scored based on values of 4, 3, 2, 1, respectively, and getting a high score in the questionnaire indicates high exam anxiety. Also, the minimum and maximum score of a person in this test will be 20 and 80. To check the validity of the

questionnaire, face and content validity were used, which means that the questionnaire is approved and standardized in terms of content and appearance, and it is designed to measure students' exam anxiety. In order to determine the reliability coefficient of this test, Cronbach's alpha method, which emphasizes internal consistency, has been used. In order to collect information on the theoretical foundations and literature of the subject, library sources, articles, required booklets, and the Internet have been used. and to analyze the data obtained from the implementation of exam anxiety questionnaires, one-way statistical analysis of covariance (ANCOA) was used in SPSS20 software.

### **Results**

After obtaining the necessary permits and by informing the students about the purpose of the research, during the research process, a pre-test of anxiety was first performed on both the experimental and control groups, and also after the educational interventions on the correct study methods, a post-test was conducted.

The test was conducted from experimental and control groups, then they were compared. At the beginning of the course, a booklet made by the researcher, which contained eight study methods, was presented to the students to review and learn the mentioned methods in the environment outside the university. Summary The content of the meetings was as follows:

The first session: a general introduction of the study method and the effect of learning methods on exam anxiety, introduction of various study methods and explanation in connection with the first study method, the post-final method which includes the educational stages of pre-reading, reviewing, thinking, asking questions, Reading is memorizing, presented.

The second session: The second method of close reading was fully presented to the students and

includes the teaching of three techniques of organizing the material, the technique of marking the text, and the technique of summarizing.

The third session: Important points were taught about the two methods of reading without writing and underlining, and students' questions regarding the presented topics were resolved.

Fourth session: two methods of annotation and summarization were taught to the students.

The fifth session: The experiment group was taught the two methods of keying and creativity and the network design of the brain.

Sixth session: Eight methods of studying education were presented, reviewed, and it should be noted that the presented materials were summarized and the students' questions were answered.

findings

### **Descriptive indices of anxiety and worry**

The results of Table 1 show the descriptive indices of anxiety, worry and emotional anxiety by the study groups. As can be seen, the mean and standard deviation of the control group's pre-test

and 4.52 and 24.79 and 4.45, respectively, in the anxiety and worry of the post-test. Also, the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test of the experimental group are 23.76 and 4.96 respectively, and the post-test is 21.27 and 4.44 respectively. According to the comparison of the averages of the two groups, it can be seen that the average of the experimental group has decreased significantly compared to the control group. The number of students in the experimental group was 30 students (20 girls and 10 boys) and the average age in this group was 19.02 (standard deviation 0.45) and the number of people in the control group was 25 students (10 girls and 15 boys). This group was 28.32 (standard deviation 0.32).

As can be seen, in emotional anxiety, the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test of the control group are 25.33 and 5.76, respectively, and the post-test is 24.73 and 5.65. Also, the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test of the experimental group are 24.50 and 4.63 respectively, and the post-test is 22.23 and 4.36 respectively. According to the comparison of the averages of the two groups, it can be seen that the average of the experimental group has decreased significantly compared to the control group.

**Table 1. Descriptive indicators of pre-test and post-test anxiety, worry and excitement in Dan Shajoyan**

) experimental groupn= 30 (				) control groupn= 30 (				Variable
pre-exam So Test				pre-exam So Test				
SD	x	SD	x	SD	x	SD	x	
44/4	21/27	4/96	73/23	45/4	24/79	4/52	25/07	anxiety worry
4/36	22/23	4/63	24/50	5/65	24/79	5/76	25/33	emotional anxiety

Determining the effect of learning study methods on anxiety and worry

In order to analyze the collected data and test the hypotheses, the covariance analysis method was

used. Based on this, first the assumptions of this method were examined, which are as follows:

Checking the normal distribution of the data: To check the normality of the data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov K-S test was used.

**Table 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine the normality of the distribution of variable values**

The level	significance	Test amount group	Variables
0.787	0.590	witness	anxiety worry before Test
0.878	0.653		anxiety worry So Test
0.881	0.587	the experiment	anxiety worry before Test
0.822	0.630		anxiety worry So Test

The results of Table 2, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test show that because the significance level of the variables is higher than 0.05, therefore, the data has a normal distribution, so it can be seen that this assumption is established.

Homogeneity of the slopes of the regression line: to check this assumption, the output of the slope graphs of the dependent variables in the studied groups was used, the results of which are presented in Figure 1:

graph 1. The slope of the regression line of anxiety and worry in the studied groups

The results of the slope of the regression line show that in the worry anxiety variable, the correlation of the pre-test and post-test scores in the studied groups is positive and due to the parallelism of the regression lines, the homogeneity of the slopes has been achieved.

Homogeneity of error variance: Lone test was used to check this assumption. The results of this test are presented in Table 4:

**Table 3. Lon's test for homogeneity of error variance**

Variable	F	df (2)	df (1)	level meaningful
anxiety worry	0.236	1	58	0.629

The findings of Table 3 show that the error variance of the dependent variable is homogeneous in the studied groups, because the F values calculated for the worry anxiety variable is equal to 0.236 and is not significant at the 0.05

level. Considering that the presuppositions of covariance analysis have been fulfilled, this method was used to analyze and test the research hypotheses. The results of this method are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Results of covariance analysis One side The effect of teaching study methods on students anxiety and worry**

squared	The significance level	F	mean square	Degrees of freedom	sum of squares	Test effect
0.96	0.000	1/61	3262/81	1	3262/81	pre-exam
0.15	0.002	10/36	250/23	1	250/23	group
			19/80	58	1148/83	error
				60	3347	Total

According to the contents of Table 4, it can be seen that by controlling the effects of the pre-test, the teaching of study methods has had a significant effect on reducing the anxiety and worry of the participating students because the calculated F value is significant at the  $P < 0.05$  level. Therefore, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Determining the effect of learning study methods on emotional anxiety

- Checking the normal distribution of the data: Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was used to check the normality of the data.

**Table 5. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine the normality of the distribution of variable values**

The significance level	Test amount	group	Variables
0.556	0.793	witness	emotional anxiety before Test
0.735	0.686		emotional anxiety So Test
0.202	1/07	the experiment	emotional anxiety before Test
0.895	0.576		emotional anxiety So Test

The results of table (5), the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test show that because the significance level of the variables is higher than 0.05, therefore, the data have a normal distribution, so it can be seen that this assumption is established.

Homogeneity of the slopes of the regression line: To check this assumption, the output of the slope graphs of the dependent variables in the studied groups was used, the results of which are presented in Figure 2: Diagram 2. The slope of

the regression line of emotional anxiety in the studied groups

The results of the slope of the regression line show that in the variable of emotional anxiety, the correlation of the pre-test and post-test scores in the studied groups is positive and due to the parallelism of the regression lines, the homogeneity of the slopes has been achieved.

Homogeneity of error variance: Lone test was used to check this assumption. The results of this test are presented in Table 6:

**Table 6. Lon's test for homogeneity of error variance**

Variable	F	df (2)	df (1)	The significance level
Emotional anxiety	2.10	1	58	0.152

The findings of Table 6 show that the error variance of the dependent variable is homogeneous in the studied groups, because the F values calculated for the emotional anxiety variable is 2.10 and is not significant at the 0.05

level. Considering that the presuppositions of covariance analysis have been fulfilled, this method was used to analyze and test the research hypotheses. The results of this method are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Results of covariance analysis One way The effect of teaching study methods on students emotional anxiety**

Eta squared	The significance level	F	mean square	Degrees of freedom	sum of squares	Test effect
0.958	0.000	1/30	33417/60	1	33417/60	<b>pre-exam</b>
0.070	0.041	4/39	112/06	1	112/06	<b>group</b>
			25/52	85	1480/33	<b>error</b>
				60	1592/40	<b>Total</b>

According to the contents of Table 7, it can be seen that by controlling the effects of the pre-test, the study methods training had a significant effect on reducing the emotional anxiety of the participating students because the calculated F value is significant at the  $P < 0.05$  level. Therefore, the second hypothesis is confirmed.

Determining the effect of teaching study methods on exam anxiety (worry and emotion)

Multivariate covariance analysis method was used to analyze the data related to this hypothesis. Considering that other presuppositions are in place, therefore, only the presupposition of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices has been investigated, which is as follows. Presumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices: M-box test was used to check this presumption. The results of this test are presented in Table 8:

**Table 8. Test Mbox To homogeneity matrices Variance - covariance**

Indicators	the amount of
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	4/304	M box	
	1/381	F	
	3	Df <sub>1</sub>	
	605/55	Df <sub>2</sub>	
	0.246	The significance level	

The results of Table 8 show that the assumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices in the studied groups has been fulfilled, because the calculated F value (1.38) is not significant (0.246) at the 0.05 level ( $<0.05$ ). P).

Considering that the presuppositions of multivariate covariance analysis have been fulfilled, this method was used to analyze and test the main research hypothesis. The results of this method are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9: Multivariate covariance analysis of the effects of teaching study methods on Exam anxiety anxiety and excitement in students**

Eta coefficient	The significance level	Df <sub>2</sub>	Df <sub>1</sub>	F	Effect size	Covariance
0.599	0.001	55	2	41/115	0.599	<b>Wilks Lambda</b>

The findings of Table 9 show that teaching study methods has a significant effect in reducing the combination of dependent variables (anxiety, worry and emotional anxiety) because the calculated F value (41.11) is significant at the  $P<0.05$  level and this significance indicates It is because at least in one of the dependent variables, the effects of teaching study methods to reduce students' anxiety are significant.

### Discussion and conclusion

This research was conducted with the aim of the effect of anxiety in English as a foreign language tests on male and female students of Iraqi University. The findings of the research showed that the teaching of correct study methods had an effect on the reduction of exam anxiety (excitement and worry) of female students and significantly reduced the anxiety. Each of the

eight study methods has a different effectiveness, and most students are eager to learn the method of close reading because it can be used for most subjects. In spite of this training, the correct methods of studying bring order to the mind and the type of study of people, how to plan for studying and increase self-confidence before, during and after the exam, the sense of responsibility and efficiency of students with exam anxiety, enabled them to Master your learning and study process and plan for it. Therefore, teaching how to study correctly is more effective than other treatments in students' exam anxiety. Positive thinking about the future, expecting desirable events and outcomes, behaving in a way that they believe will increase the likelihood of their occurrence, and feeling confident that all of this will happen as a result of appropriate efforts, hope and happiness, and

increase It will bring self-confidence and cause purposeful actions. Therefore, teaching study methods has created and expanded these situations and reduced students' exam anxiety.

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