

# The Effect Of Reflective Journal Writing On EFL Students' Self-Efficacy And Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

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**Abstract.** *The aim of this study is to measure the effect of reflective journal writing on students' self-efficacy and foreign language learning anxiety (FLLA). For this purpose, 39 students studying at an intensive English program were recruited for this quasi-experimental study. EFL-SEQ and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) were used to collect the quantitative data both for the pre-test and for the post-test. The experimental group of students participated in an 8-week reflective journal writing process. The post-test was checked against the pre-test for a statistically significant difference. At the same time, the reflective diaries of the students were content analyzed, and the factors affecting students' language learning anxiety and foreign language self-efficacy perceptions were examined. As a result, it was found that reflective journal writing does not have a statistically significant effect on students' self-efficacy and in-class FLLA. In addition, as a result of content analysis, it was revealed that test anxiety, the change of the instructor and the educational environment caused more foreign language anxiety than other factors, and the assessment of the student's own learning processes, past success and failures were found to be the most significant factors affecting their self-efficacy beliefs. Implications based on the obtained findings are presented.*

**Keywords:** *foreign language classroom anxiety, self-efficacy, reflective journal writing* Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION:

A reflective journal is a personal record of one's learning, a response given to a learning situation used to see a better reflection of mistakes, procedures, and one's learning adventure (Moon, 1999). The reflective journal is a student-centered activity promoting reflection. They are good indicators of students' progress. They can reflect the language demands of the students. As many studies (Yinger & Clark, 1981; Wilson & Mewborn, 2002; Cisero, 2006) have stated, prompts help students to connect their learning to real-life engagements and allow them to see a better picture of the mistakes they make in the learning process. Reflective journal entries can provide a detailed illustration of students' achievements and failures by giving a clear picture of the problems they encounter. According to researchers (Silcock, 1994; Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004; Redmond, 2017), reflective journals are actors of the link between action and thought. The purpose of writing reflective journals in a second language learning environment is to figure out the learning outcomes, procedures, and experiences of language learners.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

When studies on the effect of reflection enhancement activities on students are investigated, we see research proving the effects of diaries on students (Amodeo, 1996; Moffitt, 2000; Park, 2003; Schmidt, 2011). In one study, Mair (2010) has investigated the effects of reflective journals written on an electronic platform. This study has provided evidence that keeping reflective journals helps learners construct meaningful knowledge, solve problems and decrease stress level.

According to Kazu and Demiralp (2012), reflective journals enable learners to participate more actively in their learning, which leads to permanent learning (p. 131). People using reflective journals actively in their learning process make use of this active learning to solve the problems they face. Dart, Petheram, and Straw (1998) examined reflective journals written by 27 students and revealed that journals could help these students understand the process of their learning. Moreover, Myers (2001) found that writing a reflective journal has significant importance in developing awareness of students' learning styles. Myers (1987) assumed that reflective journal writing would be an alternative way of raising awareness in writing. Furthermore, Zulfikar and Mujiburrahman (2018) stated that reflective journals are significant in improving learners' instructional practices (p.5).

Some recent studies (e.g., Edwards-Leis, 2006; Bell & Mladenovic, 2015; Cengiz & Karataş, 2015) on the role of reflective journal writing in the teaching and learning processes indicate that journal writing

influences students' realization of their weaknesses and strengths. Numerous studies (e.g., Myers, 2001; Kim, 2013; Ruiz-Lopez, 2015) have been conducted on the effectiveness of reflective journal writing in second language learning and teaching, but these studies are generally based not on students' but on in-service or pre-service teachers' reflective journal writing. To address this gap, the current study tried to shed light on the idea that examining and attempting to resolve teaching or learning problems, realizing teachers' teaching beliefs and goals, getting learners to take responsibility for their development through continual writing are of significance.

By the same token, there exists a lack of research in EFL contexts on the role that reflective journal writing can play in helping students engage in classroom activities and learn more effectively. In this regard, research conducted in the field has shown that "journal writing can provide an opportunity for teachers to write reflectively about their teaching" (Ho & Richards, 1994, p.20). Correspondingly, reflective journals can be used as materials facilitating reflection and stimulating critical thinking of learners. Several teaching tools for the development of reflective skills in learners have emerged. Reflective journal writing is one of these tools used by educators to facilitate the evaluation of the learning adventure. Reflective journals integrate theory and practice, which allows learners to establish, discover, and understand the connections between what has already been learned. (Thornbury, 1991). They also examine and evaluate beliefs and concepts (Wodlinger, 1990). In this case, reflection plays a crucial role in the professional growth of learners. They are a kind of personal recordings of students' learning experiences, strengths, and weaknesses.

Generally, writing a journal is required during or immediately after learning. Entries can be related to the course, course materials, contents used, exams, or personal opinions about what happened during the course and in the learning process. Journals have long been used in writing activities such as teacher reflections, but there are not enough descriptive studies on students' reflections. With this study, a clear explanation of the effect of writing reflective journals on EFL students' self-efficacy and language learning anxiety in their learning process will be provided.

As there are many studies (e.g., Horwitz & Cope 1986; Bandura, 1994; Horwitz; Pajares, 2002) that explore the relationship between foreign language learning anxiety (FLLA) and self-efficacy beliefs of foreign language (FL) learners, this study aims to provide new findings that may help teachers in teaching and understanding the mindsets and self-reflectivity levels of their students in order that they may improve the students' self-judgments on their learning experiences through reflective journal writing. One of the subsidiary goals of this research is to explore the difficulties, learning outcomes, situations worrying the students in the classroom environment and entertaining, stressing, and challenging events students face during the procedure. For these purposes, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. Are the pre-test FLLA scores of the experimental group (EG) and Control Group (CG) significantly different?
2. Are the post-test FLLA scores of the EG and CG significantly different?
3. Are the pre-test self-efficacy scores of the EG and the CG significantly different?
4. Are the post-test self-efficacy scores of the EG and the CG significantly different?
5. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test FLLA scores of the EG and CG?
6. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test self-efficacy scores of the EG and CG?
7. What are the contents/subcategories of the reflective diary logs written by the participants in the EG?

## **METHOD**

In this study, a mixed-methods research design was utilized. One of the benefits of this design is that the validity of the results can be strengthened through the triangulation of findings from different data sources (Frechting & Sharp, 1997). Therefore, this triangulation issue was confirmed by using different data collection instruments (scales for pre-test and post-test, reflective journals) in the present study. The quantitative part of the current study was conducted with a quasi-experimental research design to find out the effect of students' reflective journal writing activity on their self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety. We opted for this research design, since "experimental research is concerned with studying the effects of specified and controlled treatments given to subjects usually formed into groups" (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.136).

Figure 1 illustrates the quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design that the current study used.

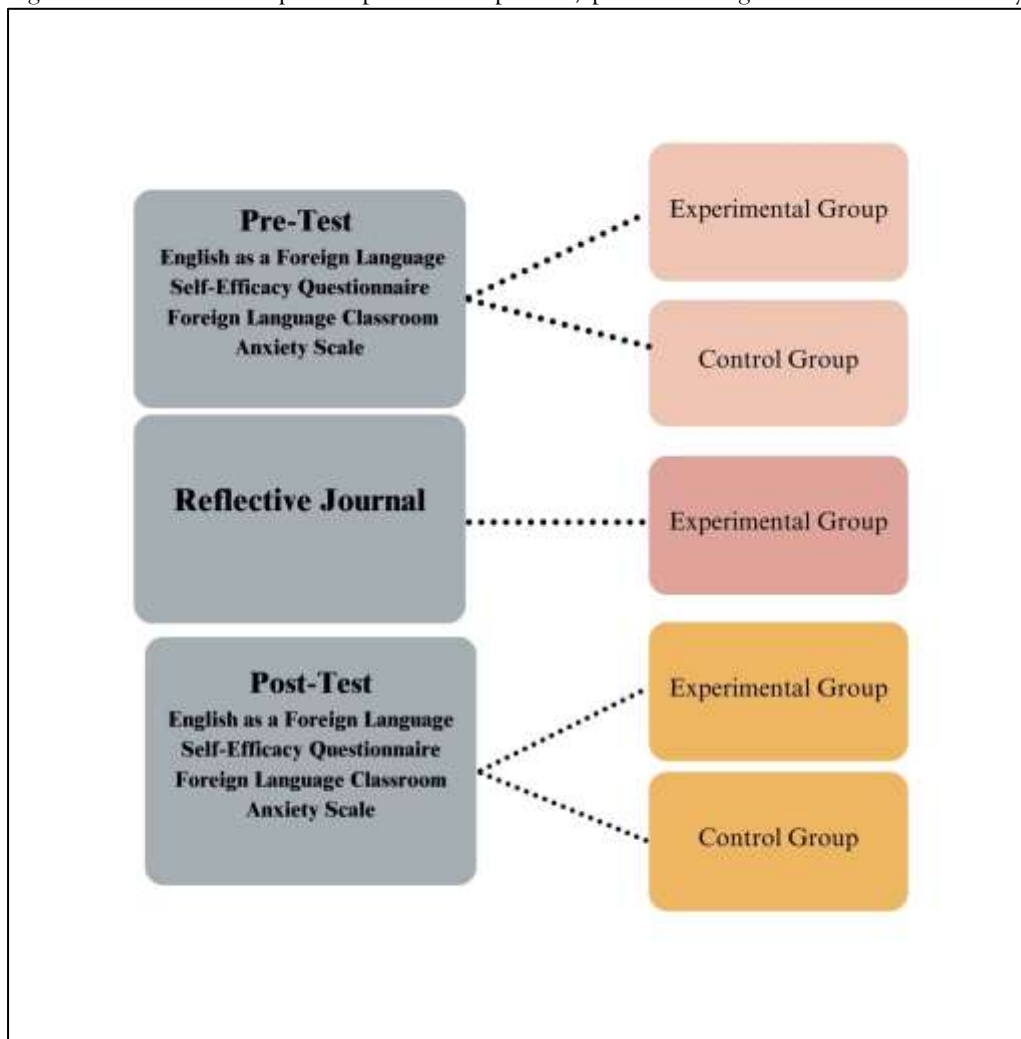


Figure 1: Scheme of the Study

It can be seen from the figure that the participants were divided into the CG and the EG. EFL-SEQ (English as Foreign Language Self-Efficacy Questionnaire) and FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) were given to both groups as pre-tests at the beginning of the experiment.

The experimental treatment (writing reflective journals) was applied to 19 EG participants. They were asked to write reflective journals for eight weeks. Both groups of students used the same instructional materials. In addition, they were taught with the same methodology and under the same curriculum. Furthermore, the students' learning hours in the CG and EG were equal. Both groups took 26 hours per week of general English instruction during the term. The only difference between the EG and the CG was the journal assignment for the EG. Having completed the experimental intervention, both groups took the same scales used in the pre-test as the post-test.

#### ***Participants***

Students were invited to participate in the study from Hasan Kalyoncu University for the current study.

Two groups of students took part in the implementation of the study; an EG and a CG. The participants were selected through convenience sampling. Writing reflective journal conditions was applied to 19 EG participants. They were asked to write reflective journals for eight weeks. Reflective journals were not applied to the 20 students in the CG. They were in the no-journal condition. They did not use reflective journals throughout the term. Both groups took 26 hours per week of general English instruction during the term.

### ***Instruments***

Three instruments were used for this research. Two instruments, EFL-SEQ and FLCAS, were used to measure participants' self-efficacy and anxiety levels before and after the intervention.

To measure self-efficacy, Mills (2004) carried out a study assessing self-efficacy in foreign language learning. An 8-point Likert-type scale was developed by Mills. Özyürek (2005) translated and validated this questionnaire for use in Turkish. For the elimination of the limitations, he made some arrangements and modifications in the EFL-SEQ.

To measure classroom anxiety, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale was used which was developed by Horwitz, is a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranges from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." It contains 33 items that were based on Horwitz et al.'s experiences with 'college students'. Horwitz (1991) defined the FLCAS as;

"Existing measures of anxiety do not test an individual's response to the specific stimulus of language learning. FLCAS has been developed to provide investigators with a standard instrument for this purpose" (p. 37).

Reflective journals were used as the third instrument to investigate the potential effect of journal writing on the EG students' self-efficacy and anxiety levels after the implementation of the experimental treatment. Participants were provided with leading questions, which was aimed to figure out the factors affecting the self-efficacy levels and FLLA of the participants after writing reflective journals.

The Turkish version of the FLCAS (Aydın, 2016) consists of two parts. The first part consists of some demographic questions aiming to find out the age, gender, and ELL backgrounds of the participants, while the second part consists of 33 questions measuring participants' FLLA levels. EFL-SEQ consists of 35 8-point Likert scale items inquiring participants' EFL-SE levels and five items about students' overall expectations regarding their achievement of preparatory school at the end of the academic year. These five items are scored from 0 (no chance) to 7 (completely certain). In these five questions, it is asked to students how confident they are in their capability to get a grade between 60-70, 70-80, 80-90, and 90-100 in their class.

### ***Procedures***

Data collection of the study was done in two stages: quantitative and qualitative data collection. The first stage of data collection was the administration of the FLCAS and EFL-SEQ to 39 students as the pre-test. These scales were given to the students again at the end of the study as the post-test to analyze whether any significant changes occurred in their levels of anxiety and self-efficacy as a result of reflective journal writing.

In the second stage of the data collection process, an 8-week reflective journal writing activity was conducted with the EG. Students were requested to answer the questions provided in their reflective journals. Besides, they were required to evaluate their weekly performance at the end of weekdays. They were supposed to write reflective journals in the following weekend, and there was no length limitation.

The qualitative data were collected using reflective journals written by the 19 students in the EG. Reflective journals were written by the students for eight weeks. They were told to include any changes, ideas, and activities affecting them and their learning process. In order to eliminate the ethical concerns, students were asked to write their journals after the class and hand them in to their teachers during the day. Also, continuous data collection and elongated engagement in the study were ensured by the researcher, who was also the course teacher as suggested by LeCompte & Preissle (1993). They were told to write their journals in Turkish to express their feelings, concerns, anxiety, and beliefs in a better way in their native language.

The data collected through the pre-test and post-test EFL-SEQ and FLCAS were transferred to SPSS. Also, demographic variables were obtained from the questionnaires' first part. The researcher used independent

samples t-tests to see if there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of self- efficacy and anxiety levels. Also, two paired-sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant differences within each group before and after the experimental treatment. The reflective journals that were collected were analyzed using inductive content analysis (Creswell, 2012). Analysis of the writings was done in a detailed way to uncover students' own personal perceptions and theories and their expressions of their feelings. They were mainly based on the questions given as guidance to identify their problems and learning. In the first stage, the data of the reflective journals were categorized into two parts, and the frequency of each occurrence was separated thoroughly. After gathering the data, textual data was analyzed in detail. Coding units were identified. Common codes, key phrases, and categories were discussed and determined by three experts in the field of English Language Teaching. The categorization of the themes was made based on the codes, and it was derived inductively from the data analyzed. Afterwards, general themes were described collaboratively by the three experts.

## RESULTS

### The change in FLL anxiety scores after the experimental treatment

**RQ #1. Are the pre-test FLL anxiety scores of the EG and CG significantly different?**

**RQ #2. Are the post-test FLL anxiety scores of the EG and CG significantly different?**

The first and second research questions of the study intended to determine whether the pre-test FLL scores of the EG and CG were significantly different from their post-test FLL scores. Independent sample t-tests analyses were conducted to identify whether there were statistically significant differences in the means of the pre-test and post-test FLL scores of the EG and CG. The results are given in Table 1;

Table 1. Independent samples t-test results for the pre-test and post-test FLL anxiety scores of the EG and CG

	Group	N	M	SD	df	T	p
FLLAS pre-test	Experimental	19	90.36	14.81	37	.593	.766
	Control	20	97.65	13.73			
FLLAS post-test	Experimental	19	93.94	16.94	37	.637	.432
	Control	20	97.05	13.31			

As it is seen in Table 1, the pre-test FLL anxiety scores of the EG (M = 90.36, SD = 14.81) and the CG (M = 97.65, SD = 13.73) were not statistically significantly different from each other ( $t(37) = .593, p > .05$ ). After the implementation of reflective journal writing, the post-test results did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the EG (M = 93.94, SD = 16.94) and the CG (M = 97.05, SD = 13.31), ( $t(37) = .637, p > .05$ ). These findings indicate that the experimental intervention of reflective journal writing did not create a significant difference between the EG and the CG concerning their anxiety levels.

### The change in self-efficacy scores after the experimental treatment

**RQ #3. Are the pre-test self-efficacy scores of the EG and the CG significantly different?**

**RQ #4. Are the post-test self-efficacy scores of the EG and the CG significantly different?**

The third and fourth research questions of the study intended to determine whether pre-test English as a FLSEQ scores of the EG and the CG were significantly different from their post-test English as a FLSE scores. Independent sample t-tests analyses were conducted to identify whether there were statistically significant differences in the means of the pre-test and post-test EFL-SES of the EG and CG. The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Independent samples t-test results for pre-test and post-test EFL-SES of the EG and CG

	Group	N	M	SD	df	t	p

(EFL-SES) pre-test	Experimental	19	150	33.83	37	.429	.354
	Control	20	155	44.50			
(EFL-SES) post-test	Experimental	19	160.73	26.69	37	.030	.059
	Control	20	161.10	45.49			

As it is seen in Table 2, the pre-test EFL-SE scores of the experimental ( $M = 150$ ,  $SD = 33.83$ ) and the control ( $M = 155$ ,  $SD = 44.50$ ) groups were not statistically significantly different from each other ( $t(37) = .429$ ,  $p = .354$ ). After the implementation of reflective journal writing, the post-test results did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the experimental ( $M = 160.73$ ,  $SD = 26.69$ ) and the CGs ( $M = 161.10$ ,  $SD = 45.49$ ) groups ( $t(37) = .30$ ,  $p = .059$ ). These findings indicate that the experimental intervention of reflective journal writing did not create a significant change between the experimental and the CGs' self-efficacy levels.

**The change in pre-test and post-test results**

**RQ #5. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test FLCA scores of the EG and CG?**

**RQ #6. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test self-efficacy scores of the EG and CG?**

These research questions aimed to investigate any possible difference between the pre-test and post-test EFL-SE and FLCA scores within the experimental and CGs. Two paired-sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference within each group after the experimental treatment. FLCA scores are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Paired samples t-test results for pre-test and post-test FLCA scores of EGs and CGs.

	Group	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Experimental	Pre-Test	19	90.36	14.81	18	.876	.392
	Post-Test	19	93.94	16.95	18		
Control	Pre-test	20	97.65	13.73	19	.394	.862
	Post-Test	20	97.05	13.31	19		

As illustrated in Table 3, there were no statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test FLCA levels of either group. The t-test utilized to see the anxiety level of the EG demonstrates that the mean scores in the pre-test ( $M = 90.36$ ,  $SD = 14.81$ ) did not statistically significantly decreased in the post-test ( $M = 93.94$ ,  $SD = 16.95$ ) FLCA scores of the EG ( $t(18) = .392$ ,  $p > .05$ ). In the other part of the answer to this research question, the means of pre-test and post-test scores of the CG on the FLCA were compared using a second paired-sample t-test, as illustrated in Table 3. The results of this test shows that there was not a statistically significant difference between the mean pre-test ( $M = 97.65$ ,  $SD = 13.73$ ) and post-test ( $M = 97.05$ ,  $SD = 13.31$ ) FLCA scores of the CG ( $t(18) = .862$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

Table 4 presents the results of paired samples t-tests for the pre-test and post-test EFL-SE scores.

Table 4. Paired samples t-test results for pre-test and post-test EFL-SE scores of EGs and CGs

	Group	N	M	SD	df	T	p
Experimental	Pre-Test	19	150	33.83	18	-1.508	.149
	Post-Test	19	161	26.69	18		
Control	Pre-test	20	155.45	44.50	19	.394	.698

	Post-Test	20	161.10	45.49	19		
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As Table 4 shows, the results of the paired samples t-tests do not indicate statistically significant differences in the pre-test and post-test scores of either group. The first t-test which was conducted to see the improvement of the EG after the treatment shows that the mean scores in the pre-test ( $M = 150$ ,  $SD = 33.83$ ) did not statistically significantly improved in the post-test ( $M = 161$ ,  $SD = 26.69$ ), ( $t(18) = -1.508$ ,  $p > .05$ ). The t-test employed to see the improvement of the CG did not yield a statistically significant difference between pre-test ( $M = 155.45$ ,  $SD = 44.50$ ) and post-test ( $M = 161.10$ ,  $SD = 45.50$ ) scores of the participants ( $t(18) = .394$ ,  $p > .05$ ). These findings show that both groups did not make considerable progress in their self-efficacy levels.

**contents of reflective diary logs**

**RQ #7** *What are the contents/ subcategories of reflective diary logs prepared by the participants in the EG?*

As illustrated in Table 5, the contents of the reflective journals were collected under the themes of course process, long-term effects of learning, emotion-attitude, self-evaluation, and learning.

Table 5. *Contents of the journals*

Themes	Codes	f
	Negative emotions/ attitude	38
	Expectation/ suggestion	29
	Problems	21
	Background knowledge- readiness	12
	Effectiveness of teaching method	10
Course Process	Teaching materials	8
	Teacher attitude	6
	Issues about methods/ approaches	5
	Classroom issues	2
Long-term effects of learning	Awareness/ learning outcome	9
Emotion-Attitude	Positive emotions/ attitude	22
	Incompetence/ lack of course components	21
Self-evaluation	Success in class	13
Learning	Gaining knowledge	15

The collected codes within the course process theme reveal nuanced insights into the participants' perspectives and experiences. Among these codes, background knowledge-readiness ( $f=12$ ) indicates a moderate degree of consideration. Following closely, the effectiveness of teaching method ( $f=10$ ) reflects a substantial interest in evaluating instructional methodologies. Meanwhile, the teacher attitude ( $f=6$ ) suggests a notable focus on instructors' demeanor and approach. Teaching materials ( $f=8$ ) position among the less frequently cited aspects. Similarly, classroom issues ( $f=2$ ) suggest a relatively minor concern within the dataset. On the other hand, problems emerge as the second most prominently discussed issue ( $f=21$ )

after negative emotions/attitude (f=38). Lastly, issues about methods/approaches (f=5) indicate a moderate level of engagement with evaluating pedagogical strategies within the course context.

Excerpt 1: "This week, there was not a subject that forced me because I was familiar with this topic before. I was good at grammar structures, which helped me in my exams." P13

Besides, awareness/ learning outcome (f = 9) and expectation/ suggestion (f = 29) are given place under the theme of the long-term effects of learning stated by the students.

Excerpt 2: "Packs and book activities can be much more. Such exam-oriented activities are better. Also, more homework should be given to the students. The pack and worksheets help a lot before the exam." P6

Other noticeable codes reported by the students are positive emotions/attitude (f = 22), and the most repetitive one under the theme of emotion-attitude of the students is negative emotions/attitude (f = 38) of them. As participants highlighted, their negative emotions/ attitude and negative comments detained them from the lessons by creating unwillingness towards the course content, participation, and concentration problem.

Excerpt 3: "There is an exam which makes me anxious. This week changes in classes make difficulty for me. I did not even enjoy the classes. I did not want to participate in the classes. Even if I did, I could not understand the lessons because I had some problems." P14

## DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study was to ascertain the effect of writing reflective journals on participants' self-efficacy and FLLA levels. Reflective journal writing was implemented over eight weeks. The findings were discussed under three subheadings: the relationship between self-efficacy and writing reflective journals, FLLA and writing reflective journals, and reflective journal entries.

The results of this study indicate that there is no effect of the intervention of reflective writing on the self-efficacy levels of the participants. Contrary to the present study, Yost (2006) emphasized the importance of keeping journals in promoting the self-efficacy levels of pre-service teachers. Likewise, Lee (2008) asserted the notable contribution of reflective journal writing to not only the development of reflective thinking skills but also the positive change in the teaching behavior of pre-service teachers.

Previous findings (Bouffard-Bouchard, 1990; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990) are consistent with the results in terms of achievers' self-efficacy levels and FLLA levels. "High achievers tend to have high self-efficacy and low foreign language anxiety" (Chen & Yun, 2009, p. 426). Consistently, students with lower achievement in Turkey may tend to have high FLLA and low self-efficacy levels.

In a study by Huang and Gillan (2014), exploring the general self-efficacy and the robotic self-efficacy levels of 17 college students during 16 weeks of reflective journal writing, they found no significant difference in the results of the general self-efficacy survey. This result is also consistent with the study of Fritson (2008). The results indicated that there was no significant difference in the self-efficacy levels of the participants when they are compared with the mid-term and the end of the term. Similarly, the current study in assessing the degree of self-efficacy influencing functional independence among neurological patients concludes that as functional capacity improves, self-efficacy measures at times are unable to reflect significant trends over time consistent with other research by Huang and Gillan (2014) and Fritson (2008).

### ***The relationship between FLLA and reflective journal writing***

Despite the experiences of students, teachers, and administrators, many studies have been "unable to establish a clear picture of how anxiety affects language learning and performance" (Horwitz & Young, 1991, p. 13). In the quantitative part of the present study, the anxiety levels of the participants did not change as a result of the intervention, as evidenced by the pre-test and post-test. On the other hand, in the qualitative part, the participants focused on the factors affecting their anxiety levels in learning a foreign language. Most frequently, the participants emphasized changes in the classroom setting and in their interactions with instructors. Additionally, the students did not mention any differences or changes in the instructors' behaviors towards them. Consistent with the present study, Aydın (1999) found that participants in her study experienced foreign language anxiety due to teachers' demeanor, participant concerns, and teaching procedures. For instance, students' poor performance in exams led to an increase

in their anxiety levels. It can be concluded that, as exams were conducted every two weeks in the experimental setting, the students' anxiety levels stemming from test anxiety did not change in Aydın's (1999) study. Their experience of English language anxiety remained consistent, resulting in poor performance in English language tests. The study concluded that the geographic regions in which students were raised, such as the Anatolian side of Turkey, may have played a role in shaping their characteristics. Students' shyness to speak in public due to fear of making mistakes, and feeling embarrassed about mispronunciation, may have affected their overall performance in the English language learning process. The justifications and comments of the participants in our study showed that classroom activities, self-assessment by learners, and instructor-learner interaction play crucial roles in determining anxiety. Most participants vividly described reasons for their anxiety, such as fear of speaking and beliefs about making mistakes. However, during reflective journal writing, no intention towards coping with their anxiety was observed. These results are supported by Liu's study (2006), which found that at least one-third of the participants experienced foreign language anxiety regardless of their proficiency levels. Additionally, students' motivation to speak English, interactive activities, and a relaxed and supportive classroom setting would help students overcome FLLA.

### ***Reflective Journal Entries***

Reflective journal entries reveal opinions and suggestions for possible solutions to the problems the students face in the educational system. The students concretely define the real problem. In their logs, they seek ways of defining the problems that they generally observe arising from the teachers' way of teaching and the system of the university's preparatory school. To some extent, they describe their lack of language learning, and they claim that they do not know how to effectively study for an exam. After they reflect on their learning experiences, it can be seen in the journals that they do not reach the level of problem-solving. Also, no suitable solution is sought by the students.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study was conducted in the south-east region of Turkey at Hasan Kalyoncu University during the academic year 2018-2019. According to the results, EG students' low-level reflection skills were considered a crucial factor in the effectiveness of reflective journal writing. We found that the experimental intervention of reflective journal writing did not create a significant difference between the EG and the CG. The quantitative part of the study revealed that neither group made considerable progress in their self-efficacy and FLLA levels, which cannot be attributed to the effect of the experimental treatment.

These findings indicated that the experimental intervention of reflective journal writing did not create a significant difference between the EG and the CG concerning their anxiety and self-efficacy levels. Moreover, these findings showed that neither group made considerable progress in their self-efficacy and FLLA levels when it is analyzed both within and between groups. No significant relationship was determined to exist between the EFL students' FLLA, self-efficacy, and reflective journal writing.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

In the light of the results, some recommendations can be made for further studies.

First, considerably more work needs to be done to determine the reflectivity level of the journals. A high level of reflectivity can increase awareness, causing the process to yield different results.

Second, the participants were from a private university, and the study was conducted in a southern region of Turkey. To reach a more scoped result, a further study can be conducted in a state university and other regions of Turkey.

Before the implementation of the study, it should be noted that training can be given to the participants on critical thinking for developing metacognitive awareness toward reflective journal writing. More research is required to determine the efficacy of writing reflective journals in certain cases.

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