



Writing approaches of student teachers of English

Selma Karabınar ^{a*}

^a Marmara University, Atatürk Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Education, Istanbul, 34722, Turkey

APA Citation:

Karabınar, S. (2014). Writing approaches of student teachers of English. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 10(2), 1-16.

Abstract

Complex and multifaceted nature of writing has led the study of writing to fall into wider frameworks of analysis. “The approaches to writing framework” (Biggs, 1988; Lavelle, 1993) presents a different perspective based on the notion that strategies used by the writers are determined by deep or surface level approaches. The aim of this study is to investigate students’ conception of writing within the writing approach framework as deep and surface processes. The research was conducted in a Turkish university with 78 final-year student teachers enrolled in English language teaching department. Students’ deep and surface level writing approaches were measured through the *Inventory of Processes in College Composition* (IPIC) developed by Lavelle (1993, 1997). 13 participants were interviewed to further investigate their experiences of writing and thus to check whether qualitative data would provide support for the deep and surface approach measured by the inventory. The study provided support for the cross cultural validity of the IPIC applied to a sample of Turkish learner population. The results of the study indicated that majority of the student teachers had deep writing approaches in English language. It was also found out that more female learners tended to have deep approach in their writing compared to male learners. The results of the study may help teachers and curriculum planners in the design of writing environment and development of writing practices. Diagnosing surface approach among learners as a weakness may help teachers to direct their learners’ attention to deep processes.

© 2014 JLLS and the Authors - Published by JLLS.

Keywords: Writing approaches; academic writing; deep approach; surface approach; student teachers of English

1. Introduction

Complex and multifaceted nature has led the study of writing to fall into wider frameworks of analysis. Those conceptual frameworks of writing can be classified into three broad categories that are principally concerned with texts, writers and readers. In text oriented research, writing has been viewed as textual products. From this view, writing is disembodied. In other words, context and personal experience of the writer is ignored because meaning can be encoded in texts and decoded by anyone who can focus exclusively on linguistic and rhetorical knowledge (Hyland, 2002).

Reader oriented research expands the concept of writing by drawing attention to semantic potential of a text. In such a view, writing is viewed as social interaction in which power and ideology are shaped by reader and writer through “negotiation in a textual space” (Nystrand, 1989, cited in Hyland, 2002, p. 35). Accordingly, a text makes sense within the community for which it is written because it reflects the

* Selma Karabınar. Tel.: +90-216-345-9090
E-mail address: skarabınar@marmara.edu.tr

sociocultural understandings of that community rather than individual choice of writers (Nystrand, Greene & Wiemelt, 1993).

On the other hand, writer oriented research addresses the personal creativity of the individual writer, cognitive processes of writing and writer's immediate context (Hyland, 2002). In writer oriented research, writing is mainly highlighted as personal expression and writing has been defined as a vehicle for self expression or in other words, "the externalization and remaking of thinking" (Applebee, 1984; Emig, 1977, cited in Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 373). In such a definition, writing has been considered as a reflective tool for making meaning since writers have their own intentions and beliefs which are reflected in their writing (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001). Interest in the writer's composing processes has been extended and developed by research which focuses on the cognitive aspects of writing. Borrowing the techniques and theories of cognitive psychology, it generated an enormous body of research. A number of cognitive models attempted to describe writing processes in terms of problem solving (Flower & Hayes, 1979), memory (McCutchen, 1996) and cognitive development (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). In line with those attempts, the approaches to writing model (Biggs, 1988; Lavelle, 1993) brought a different perspective to understanding how students engage in academic writing tasks by emphasizing the role of writers' beliefs and intentions related to writing processes. Basically, the model aimed to explain how students' beliefs affect their choices of strategies in academic writing and consequently learning outcomes.

1.1. Literature review

1.1.1. Approches to learning

Among the early researchers, Marton and Saljo (1976, cited in Christina, Kirby & Fabrina, 2003) used the term 'approach' in order to describe students' personal experiences of learning and concluded that students may adopt either deep or surface level processing depending on what they intend to get out of a learning task. When students have deep approach, they are able to relate their existing knowledge to new information by the help of specific learning strategies and to form opinions at the end. On the other hand, the surface approach requires students to focus on rote memorisation aiming at verbatim recall of the text with an extrinsic motivation generally originated from fear of failure. Biggs (1987) and Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) have expanded the notions of deep and surface approaches to learning incorporating motivational factors and study strategies. According to Entwistle (1988) deep approach is associated with intrinsic motivation that is driven by the learner's own desire to learn and the need for success whereas the surface approach is related to extrinsic motivation where the student's goal is just to complete the task.

The deep and surface paradigm has been researched through psychometric investigations (Biggs, 1988; Ramsden & Entwistle, 1981; Schmeck, Geisler-Brenstein & Cerey, 1991) and applied to studying (Schmeck, 1988), to academic reading (Marton & Saljo, 1976) and to writing (Biggs, 1988; Hounsell, 1997; Lavelle, 1993,1997).

Recently, Kırkgöz (2013) investigated the approach(es) to learning adopted by the first and final-year university students studying in the medium of English language. The results of the study revealed a tendency towards surface learning during their first-year and a mixture of surface and meaningful learning during the final-year. Senemoğlu (2011) compared learning approach of Turkish and American students studying at college of education. The results of the study revealed that majority of both Turkish and American pre-service teachers preferred deep and strategic approaches to learning, and as the school year increased, the use of deep approach increased.

1.1.2. Approaches to writing

Biggs (1988, 1999) reinterpreted and applied approach perspective to college writing when he described the interaction between the student and the environment of learning. In order to refine conceptualisation of the model in writing research, deep and surface level processes were distinguished in writing tasks. As Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) pointed out, in deep approach the focus is at a higher conceptual level and the intention of writers is a full engagement in the task with a need to know and it requires “seeing the task as a whole and proactive engagement in learning” (p. 374). On the other hand, in surface approach, writers’ “goal is just to comply with the task demands, the learning activity involves a low level cognitive engagement” and it requires only “reproduction of information and memorization” (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 374). In the composition research, similar to deep and surface dichotomy, various classifications were used for different age groups. For example, in the studies with children, the distinction was made between ‘*reactive and reflective*’ (Graves, 1973), ‘*symbolizers and socializers*’ (Dyson, 1987), ‘*knowledge telling and knowledge transforming*’ (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1982) and ‘*reflexive and extensive*’ (Emig, 1971). In studies with young adults, some other terms were used to distinguish between writers with deep and surface approach such as ‘*engineers and sculptors*’ (Torrence, Thomas & Robinson, 1994) and ‘*planners and revisers*’ (Biggs, Lai, Tang & Lavelle, 1999).

As one of the major proponents of the deep and surface approaches model in writing research, Lavelle (1993, 1997) developed the Inventory of Processes in College Composition (IPIC) and she conducted a number of studies to support the content, concurrent and predictive validity of the instrument. The results of the validity study conducted by Lavelle in 1993 revealed that the scales in the Inventory can be used as predictive measures of college student learning styles and composition grades. Another study conducted by Lavelle in 1997 supported the scale scores to be predictive of college students’ performance of narrative writing, complexity of essay outcome and writing apprehension. In addition to quantitative methods used in the previous studies, Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) used the interview technique with the students enrolled in two freshmen composition classes at a university in the United States to further validate the IPIC. Their study gave support for the five factor structure of deep and surface approaches. In another study, using a confirmatory factor analysis procedure Lavelle and Guarino (2003) proved the construct validity of the five-factor model of the IPIC, as well as second-order structure as deep and surface approaches.

The writing approaches of secondary students were investigated by Lavelle, Smith and O’Ryan in 2002 through IPISC (Inventory of Processes in Secondary Composition). This study revealed that the IPISC was three dimensional and only two of them were the same as the college model with five dimensions. More recently, the writing approaches of graduate students were also investigated through IPGW (Inventory of Processes in Graduate Writing) by Lavelle and Bushrow in 2007. This study revealed that there were seven factors in IPGW based on the writing-related beliefs and strategies of graduate students and only one of them ‘Intuitive’ was found to be predictive of the quality of writing.

1.1.3. Lavelle’s Inventory of Processes in College Composition (IPIC)

According to Lavelle’s (1993, 1997) theoretical model in the IPIC inventory, there are five factors shaping writing approaches; Elaborative, Reflective-Revision, Low Self-Efficacy, Spontaneous-Impulsive and Procedural. Of these five factors, Elaborative and Reflective-Revision strategies form deep approach. On the other hand, Low Self-Efficacy, Spontaneous-impulsive and Procedural strategies

form the surface approach. Core characteristics of writers with deep approach were as follows: (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001; Lavelle & Guarino 2003)

- being reflective, engaged, thesis driven, autonomous and teacher independent
- having high or alternating level of focus, hierarchical organization, audience concern, revision and coherence
- thinking about essay as an integrated whole
- concern for going beyond assignment, feeling of satisfaction, actively making meaning and transforming

On the other hand, core characteristics of writers with surface approach were summarised by Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) and Lavelle and Guarino (2003) as follows:

- being reproductive, detached, data-driven, rule-bound and teacher independent
- having focus on the local level, linear sequential structure, less audience concern
- seeing essay as an organized display
- concern for editing, cohesion, passive ordering of data and telling within the given context

On the basis of the core characteristics of deep and surface approach, different motives and strategies applied by the writers with deep and surface approach were also summarized by Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) and Lavelle and Guarino (2003) under the five main factors.

As the first factor of deep approach, ‘Elaborative’ strategy suggests a search for personal meaning and self investment. It requires the writer to view writing as symbolic, a deep personal investment and to employ tools such as visualization. It indicates manipulation of audience and voice, extending the work or going beyond the requirements of the task, self referencing and bringing oneself to the situation of writing. The motive for Elaborative writers is *to self express* and the common strategies are visualizing and concern for audience. Sample items in the inventory include statements such as: “Writing makes me feel good.” “I put a lot of myself in my writing.” “At times, my writing has given me a deep personal satisfaction.” “I imagine the reactions that my readers might have to my paper.” “I sometimes get sudden inspirations in writing” (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 387).

The second factor of deep approach ‘Reflective-Revision’ suggests a more sophisticated way of revision in which one can rebuild his or her own thinking – logical reasoning. It requires “willingness to take charge in writing to make meaning for oneself and for the audience” (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 376). The level of focus is high and involves thematic and global concerns. “These students adopt the ‘sculptor’ rather than ‘engineer’ strategy (cf. Biggs et al., 1999). Writing and revision are intertwined in a dynamic process geared toward making meaning” (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 377). The motive for Reflective Revision writers is *to make meaning* and the common strategies are revision, reshaping and drafting. Sample items from the inventory include statements such as: “In my writing, I use some ideas to support other, larger ideas.” “I complete each sentence and revise it before going onto the next.” “I re-examine and restate my thoughts in revision.” “Revision is the process of finding the shape of my writing.” “It is important to me to like what I have written.” “The question dictates the type of essay called for” (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 388).

The first factor of surface approach ‘Low Self-Efficacy’ is based on a fearful approach considering writing as a painful task. These writers have poor writing self-concept with a high degree of learned helplessness and they do not use writing as a tool for self expression and meaning (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001). Their motive in writing is *to acquire the skill and to avoid pain* and their common strategies are studying grammar, collaborating and finding encouragement. Items referring to Low Self-Efficacy in the inventory include statements such as: “Studying grammar and punctuation would greatly improve my writing.” “Having my writing evaluated scares me.” “If the assignment calls for 1000 words, I try

to write just about it.” “I need special encouragement to do my best writing.” “I like to work in small groups to discuss ideas or to do revision in writing.” “I cannot revise my own writing because I cannot see my own mistakes” (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, pp. 387-388).

The second factor of surface approach ‘Spontaneous- Impulsive’ suggests an unplanned defensive approach with minimal involvement in writing. These writers view writing as a one-step procedure. The motive for Spontaneous-Impulsive writers is *to get done* and the common strategies are writing at the last minute, writing without planning or revision and writing just like talking. Therefore, in the inventory, Spontaneous-Impulsive writers are hypothesized to show strong agreement with the statements such as: “My writing ‘just happens’ with little planning or preparation.” “Often my first draft is my finished product.” “I never think about how I go about writing.” “I plan, write and revise all the same time.” “Revision is one time process at the end” (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 388).

The third factor of surface approach ‘Procedural’ suggests strict adherence to the rules and emphasis on ‘control’ in writing. Such writers try to please the teacher rather than to communicate or reflect. Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) comment that procedural emphasis on ‘control’ perhaps acts as a barrier for theme and voice to emerge in writing and take writers’ attention to the task under time limitations. The motive for Procedural writers is *to please the teacher* and the common strategies are observing rules, organizing and managing writing. Procedural scale of the IPIC Inventory includes statements such as: “When writing an essay, I stick to the rules.” “The teacher is the most important audience.” “I worry about how much time my essay or paper will take.” “The main reason for writing an essay or paper is to get a good grade on it.” “An essay is primarily a sequence of ideas, an orderly arrangement” (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001, p. 389).

The purpose of the present study was to investigate student teachers’ conception of writing within the writing approaches framework as deep and surface approaches. Students’ deep and surface level approaches were measured through the Inventory of Processes in College Composition (IPIC). Furthermore, a group of participants was interviewed about their experiences in academic writing tasks in order to examine whether their comments would provide further support for the deep and surface approaches identified by the IPIC. Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) applied the IPIC in combination with an interview procedure in the United States to a sample of Freshman students using English as a native or second language. On the other hand, the present research replicated the interview and analysis procedure of Lavelle and Zuercher’s (2001) study with a sample from Turkish university students enrolled in English language teaching department and using English as a foreign language. Therefore, the present research intended to compare the results gathered from two different countries and educational settings because “cross-cultural comparisons provide for researchers a valuable basis for testing the external validity and generalizability of their measures, theories and models” (Marsh, Hau & Kong, 2002, p.727).

1.2. Research questions

The study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What is the frequency of deep and surface writing approaches among student teachers?
2. Is gender a factor in deep and surface writing approaches?
3. Do student interviews about their writing experiences provide support for deep and surface approach determined by the inventory?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The participants of the study were 78 final-year student teachers from the Faculty of Education – Department of English Language Teaching at Marmara University. The average age was 21. Of the total, 55 were female while 23 were male. They learned English as a foreign language for about 9 years. In most of their courses, English is used as the medium of instruction. They were provided with compulsory writing courses in English in their freshman year to ensure high level of academic writing skills as they were trained to be English language teachers. They were all native speakers of Turkish language.

2.2. Instruments

The self-report Inventory (IPIC): The Inventory of Processes in College Composition (IPIC) developed by Lavelle (1993, 1997) is based on a 4 point Likert-type scale (from 4= strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree). Although the participants' language proficiency was high enough to understand the items written in English, Turkish translations were provided for a few of the items which were identified as difficult for their understanding during the piloting of the Inventory.

Interview protocol: The aim of the interviews was to investigate students' experience of writing and analyze their comments in relation to their writing approaches measured by the IPIC. Following the suggestions made by Lavelle and Zuercher (2001), four questions were used in the interview protocol. The questions were designed to elicit comments about student teachers' preferences and their self-concepts, feelings, attitude, strengths and shortcomings related to writing. The last question was intended for identifying surface approach through questioning learners' perception of 'time' as a factor in writing. Wordings of the first and second questions were exactly the same as the ones used by Lavelle and Zuercher (2001). However, the third and fourth questions were changed slightly keeping meaning the same (3. Describe your experience of writing. Does your thinking change in writing? Your interpretation of the task? 4. Are you concerned about how much time your writing task takes?)

Following questions were posed and some probing questions were added when needed during the interviews:

1. Who are you as a writer?
2. What type of writing tasks do you prefer? Why?
3. How do you write? Do you change what and how you write? Does your thinking change while writing?
4. Are you concerned about time when writing?

2.3. Data Collection and analysis

The IPIC was administered to 78 participants during their regular class period. After a brief instruction, students responded to the original 75 items. Mean completion time was 25 minutes. Data was analyzed through SPSS 20.0 software program. Descriptive statistics and chi square test for independence were used in the analysis of quantitative data.

In order to answer the first research question and to find out which approach, deep or surface, is more common among students, mean scores of deep and surface approach were calculated for each student first. Then, each student was identified as a writer having either deep or surface approach. The decision was made by comparing the mean scores of deep and surface approaches. Higher mean score determined

which approach each individual had. In order to answer the second research question which is about the effect of gender on deep and surface writing approaches, chi square test was applied.

Replicating the interview and analysis procedure of the study conducted by Lavelle and Zuercher (2001), 7 students from each approach with the highest scores were chosen to be interviewed. Interestingly one of the students scored highest on both deep and surface approach scales; therefore a total number of 13 students were interviewed individually. After a brief introduction and warm up, interviews were tape-recorded upon participants' agreement. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. Students were not informed about their scores in order not to cause them to be biased during the interviews. Although the participants were proficient users of English language as final-year student teachers of English, the interviews were conducted in students' mother tongue to provide them with as much comfort as possible and elicit as much information as possible. Interviews with each student took about 5-7 minutes in researcher's private office. During the analysis process, pseudonyms were given to interviewees.

Data was transcribed and analyzed through content analysis. Core characteristics in deep and surface approaches were the basis of content analysis. Pre-determined themes were identified in the qualitative data in terms of motives and strategies applied by the writers with deep and surface approach summarised in the related literature by Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) and Lavelle and Guarino (2003). Under the five main factors, the following themes were determined to be analyzed in the interview data:

Elaborative writers and *self expressing* (visualizing and concern for audience)

Reflective Revision writers and *making meaning* (revision, reshaping and drafting)

Writers with Low self-efficacy and *acquiring skill and avoiding pain* (studying grammar, collaborating and finding encouragement)

Spontaneous-Impulsive writers and *getting done* (writing at the last minute, writing without planning or revision and writing just like talking)

Procedural writers and *pleasing the teacher* (observing rules, organizing and managing writing)

3. Results

In order to provide an estimate of the internal consistency of the Inventory, reliability coefficients for each subscale namely deep and surface approaches were calculated.

Table 1. Reliability estimates of the inventory

	Mean	Range	SD	Alpha
Deep Approach	105	62-129	13.2	.88
Surface Approach	106	73-136	10.9	.82
Total	211	143-254	20.5	.88

As Table 1 demonstrates, coefficient alpha reliability values were .88 for deep approach and .82 for surface approach. The overall reliability of the Inventory was .88. Reliability analysis showed that coefficient values for both subscales (deep and surface) indicated acceptable level of internal consistency.

3.1. Frequency of deep and surface writing approaches

In order to find out which approach, deep or surface, is more common among student teachers, frequencies and percentages were calculated according to the highest score from each scale. The results of frequency were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency of deep and surface writing approach

	f	%
Deep Approach	57	73
Surface Approach	21	27

As Table 2 illustrates, of the total 78 participants, 57 (73 %) had deep approach while 21 (27 %) had surface approach. Therefore, it is concluded that the frequency of student teachers with deep approach is higher than the frequency of student teachers with surface approach.

3.2. Effect of gender on deep and surface writing approaches

In order to find out whether there is a significant relation between gender and writing approaches, a chi square test was conducted. Table 3 presents the number and percentages of learners who have deep and surface approach according to gender.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of writing approaches according to gender

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Deep Approach	44	56.4	13	16.7	57	73.1
Surface Approach	11	14.1	10	12.8	21	26.9
Total	55	70.5	23	29.5	78	100

The result of chi square test revealed that there is a significant relation between gender and writing approaches. More female learners have deep approach than male learners. In other words, proportion of female learners who have deep writing approach is significantly higher than that of male learners (chi square=4.544, df=1, p=.033).

3.3. Results of interviews

Table 4 presents means, standard deviations and range for the IPIC scale scores.

Table 4. Means, standard deviations and range for the IPIC scale scores

	Mean	SD	Range
Elaborative	68.9	11.2	30-88
Reflective-Revision	36.5	3.1	28-44
Low Self-efficacy	34.7	4.7	25-45
Spontaneous-Impulsive	37.1	5.1	22-50
Procedural	28.9	4.3	14-36

Table 5 presents individual students' scores. According to the highest scores received by the participants, 13 students were identified as representing students with deep or surface approach.

Table 5. Students with high scores on deep and surface approach

	Deep		Surface		Pr.
	Elab.	R.R.	L.S.E.	S.I.	

Ayse	88			
Ece		41		
Fatma	86			
Tuba		40		
Gul	83			
Can	84			
Ada		40	49	
Hakan				36
Tamer			50	
Seda				34
Ebru			47	
Dilek				34
Nur		38	41	35

Elab: Elaborative, R.R: Reflective-Revision, L.S.E: Low Self Efficacy
S.I: Spontaneous-Impulsive, Pr: Procedural

Among the participants with deep approach, there were 4 Elaborative and 2 Reflective Revision writers. Among surface approach participants, there were 3 Procedural and 2 Spontaneous-Impulsive writers. Other 2 participants scored high on more than one scale. One of them, Ada, had high scores on two different surface approach scales but the other student, Nur, interestingly scored high on both surface and deep approach scales.

Ayse Elaborative

Ece Reflective-Revision

Fatma Elaborative

Tuba Reflective-Revision

Gul Elaborative

Can Elaborative

Ada Low Self-Efficacy/Spontaneous-Impulsive

Hakan Procedural

Tamer Spontaneous-Impulsive

Seda Procedural

Ebru Spontaneous-Impulsive

Dilek Procedural

Nur Reflective-Revision/ Low Self-Efficacy/ Procedural

3.3.1. Interview results of students with deep approach

Interview data of students with deep approach was analyzed according to the two main themes derived from the motives and strategies of deep approach writers. When the data was analyzed, it was observed that there was no clear cut distinction between Elaborative and Reflective-Revision writers in terms of the themes emerged in their comments about their writing experiences because similar themes were identified in their data. Therefore, both Elaborative and Reflective-Revision writers included in the following two themes ‘*self expressing*’ and ‘*making meaning*’ which were originally intended to be for Elaborative and Reflective Revision writers respectively.

3.3.1.1. Self expressing (visualizing and concern for audience)

Students who had deep approach (scored high on Elaborative or Reflective-Revision scales) described writing as a way of expressing themselves. Writing gives them a feeling of satisfaction. They also frequently expressed emotional connection to writing. Ayşe whose approach was Elaborative stated “I have a style. I follow some grammar rules and some other conventions according to the type of writing; however I always try to add something from me. “

Another “Elaborative “ Fatma said:

I like to write things in which I can express myself such as journals or book reviewswhen you finished writing and see the outcome you say ‘vow! I wrote this’. You do not know what will come out. And what you produced makes you feel happy at the end.

Ece who scored high on Reflective-Revision reported:

In my academic writing, for example when I write term papers, I collect information and then I wait a couple of days. I wait till I can find something different and original. It is like problem solving and I try to find out an answer to this problem as a writer.... I try to write things which are not written before and totally belong to me.

Gul who had an Elaborative approach reported her positive feelings about writing by saying “I can express what I know better in writing ... I like the way of planning and writing according to that plan. That’s why I enjoy academic writing. “ Tuba (Reflective-Revision) as another deep approach learner stated that “I remember that once we commented on an article and I liked such type of writing in which I can add my own thoughts. “

3.3.1.2. Making meaning (revision, reshaping and drafting)

Elaborative writers reported concern about audience and manipulation of voice. For example, Gul stated “I make a lot of changes. Of course, I plan my writing but I continuously think about my writing in terms of what needs to be changed and what was not really good.” Another Elaborative Fatma stated “The first thing that I produced never satisfies me. I do change the outline I made. I never keep the outline as it is.” Similarly Ayse (Elaborative) commented “As we learned drafting in our writing class, I write my first draft and check it myself and get it checked by some others then I rewrite it.”

The students who scored high on Reflective-Revision scale reported a sophisticated understanding of revision. For example, Ece who scored high on Reflective-Revision reported “I make frequent changes in my writing because I go on thinking while writing and generate new things in the flow of ideas. “ Along the same line, the students with Reflective-Revision approach reported a more thematic and global concerns. For example Tuba said:

Writing is not so easy for me. The topic or the subject of writing should be interesting first. I need to have background information on the topic then I need to edit my thoughts. Starting is the most difficult. After I start, I can go on and succeed to finish.

Nur who was both Reflective and Procedural with Low Self-Efficacy sounded Reflective when saying “I am able to express myself well when writing. ... and I like literary styles. “

Among deep approach learners, there was only one exception, Can who interestingly scored high on Elaborative scale did not reflect any signs of deep approach characteristics. He sounded more like ‘Spontaneous Impulsive’ in his comments during the interview. He used the following sentences when talking about his writing experiences at university:

I am not the person of rules. I do not like the things that limit me. Academic writing is difficult in that sense... My writing changes a lot from beginning till the end. I do not think much

while writing. I can spend a day for a page full of writing. I can have a plan neither in my writing nor in my life.

3.3.2. Interview results of students with surface approach

Interview data of students with surface approach was analyzed according to three main themes: ‘Acquiring skill and avoiding pain’, ‘pleasing the teacher’ and ‘getting done’. These themes were derived from the motives and strategies adopted by writers with surface approach.

3.3.2.1. Acquiring skill and avoiding pain (studying grammar, collaborating and finding encouragement)

The students who scored high on the three surface scales confirmed their approach identified by the IPIC during the interviews. Ada who was identified as a person scoring high on Low Self Efficacy scale and also Spontaneous-Impulsive scale showed her unwillingness and said “Academic writing is something we have to do ... I think a little bit of my writing but it does not take too long.” She tried to just write and comply with task demands. There was no sense of involvement as she reflected it by saying: “I never overestimate writing and never get stuck...”

Although Nur scored high on both deep and surface scales, her comments did not reflect much sign of Low Self Efficacy. The only clue about her lack of self efficacy was observed when she said: “I felt worried before writing exams and assignments.”

3.3.2.2. Getting done (writing at the last minute, writing without planning or revision and writing just like talking)

Tamer as a Spontaneous-Impulsive writer showed his unplanned approach by saying: “Academic writing does not suit my personality because as I said before it requires a lot of search for relevant information.” He also summarized how he applied ‘getting done’ strategy in his following sentences: “If I can concentrate, I can write and I do not make any changes. When I finish my writing, it means I wrote what I wanted.”

Ebru, another Spontaneous-Impulsive responded: “Academic writing is difficult for me I do change my sentences a lot. Sometimes writing a sentence may take a lot.” She added that she preferred spontaneous styles: “I keep a diary and write about my own memories etc.”

Ada who was also identified as a Spontaneous-Impulsive writer commented that:

I start with a general idea then go into minor details ... I do not plan much about what I will write in paragraphs. I think about my writing for a while but it never takes too much. ... and I never get stuck while writing since I do not overestimate what I write.

3.3.2.3. Pleasing the teacher (observing rules, organizing and managing writing)

Hakan who had a Procedural approach showed how rule bound he was by saying “I have an outline I try not to go beyond that outline. If it is really necessary to change my outline I do, but I do not prefer it.”

Similarly, Seda as another Procedural stated “I do not write as long as there is no such strict requirement.... It depends on my mood but I change things a lot I do not think much and do not plan much. It comes naturally while I go about writing.”

Furthermore, Dilek who had a Procedural approach said:

Writing is the most difficult way of expressing yourself ... I never prefer writing over speaking ... I have a problem of organizing my ideas. I try to start as early as possible since I am worried about time.

Nur who was both Reflective and Procedural with Low Self-Efficacy gave clues about her Procedural approach by saying “I like writing ... There needs to be an outline to follow. And I do not make much change in my writing. “

Although there are 4, only 2 writers who were identified as having Procedural approach commented on their concern about time. For example Dilek said: “Although I start quite early to write, I may not be able to put things together in my writing and have problem with time management. “ In the same way, Hakan said: “If there is a deadline for an assignment, it worries me because I may not finish on time.”

4. Discussion and conclusion

The current study indicated that most of the student teachers had deep writing approach in writing in English language. This was not surprising since the participants were proficient users of the English language as student teachers of English language. Secondly, they were at their last year of university education and up to that year they had taken academic writing courses and some other reading and literature courses in which they practiced different writing tasks related to negotiation of meaning and self-reflection. Although the context was writing approaches in the present study, this result was in line with two other studies conducted with Turkish university students in the context of learning approaches. The first study which had a similar result was conducted by Senemoğlu (2011) who found that both Turkish and American students studying at college of education preferred deep approach to learning. In the second study with similar results, Kırkgöz (2013) compared first and final-year university students studying in the medium of English language at different departments and she found out that final-year students had a tendency towards deep approach and more meaningful learning during the final-year.

Regarding the gender differences, the results of the study partly provided support for the study conducted by Lavelle and Bushrow (2007). In their study, the participants were graduate students and the instrument was IGWP (Inventory of Graduate Writing Processes) which was comprised of deep and surface approaches. Their results revealed no significant difference based on gender. However, in the current study while there was a statistically significant difference between female and male learners in deep approach, there was not any significant difference in surface approach. Female learners may tend to be more elaborative and self-reflective compared to male learners in their writing.

In general, the present study confirmed the findings of Lavelle and Zeurcher’s (2001) study in which the student interviews gave additional support to the validity of deep and surface approaches measured by the IPIC. Similarly, in the current study, all students’ interview comments matched with how they scored on the inventory except one student, Can. He scored high on the Elaborative subscale. On the other hand, he sounded more like an Impulsive Spontaneous writer in his interview. This may be a result of his careless and superficial way of reading items in the inventory and he might have used ‘getting done’ strategy while responding to the inventory.

When the subscales of deep approach were analyzed, in contrast to Lavelle and Zeurcher’s (2001) findings, there was not much difference observed between Elaborative and Reflective-Revision writers in the present study. Lavelle and Zeurcher (2001) found a basic distinction between Reflective-Revision and Elaborative approaches. They concluded that while Elaborative writers referred more about their feelings (interviews were longer and in-depth) Reflective-Revision approach writers did not report much about personal expression. In the present research, both Elaborative writers and Reflective-Revision approach writers expressed their self-referencing and referred to their feelings about writing.

Interviews confirmed the validity of three surface scales namely, Low Self-Efficacy, Procedural and Spontaneous-Impulsive. Similar to Lavelle and Zeurcher's (2001) findings, none of the surface approach writers commented on self expression and high level of focus and revision but instead they expressed their dislike and lack of full engagement with writing tasks. On the other hand, participants did not mention much concern about time. This might be because they were not given timed writing tasks in the classroom but they were assigned more long-term projects submitted to teachers as written reports at the end of the courses.

From an instructional perspective, psychometric measures may present an alternative to identify learners' approaches as an additional tool to teachers' informal observation. Diagnosing surface approach among learners as a weakness may help teachers to direct their learners' attention to deep processes. As Lavelle and Guarino (2003) suggested, it is important to consider writing as a recursive process involving a global focus with bird's eye view rather than discrete, isolated micro skills. When writing was considered as a tool for reshaping thinking, writers will take an agentic position and there will be personal involvement and self-referencing during the drafting and revision of writing. Attention to theme, genre, voice and audience can be keys to teaching writing.

In terms of educational implications, to promote a deep conception of writing, instructors might encourage authentic tasks such as e-mail exchange, web-based activities and journal writing. Those tasks with collaborative opportunities would help students find relevance and use deep approach strategies such as high level of focus, getting involved in meaning and autonomy. As many researchers pointed out, self-regulation has been a critical factor affecting motivation and academic learning, managing writing processes, managing constraints, and audience (Graham & Harris, 1997; Graham & Harris, 2000; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1999). Thus, self-regulatory activities over long periods of time such as self-scheduling, reflective engagement with ideas, and creative effort can have priority in the design of instructional plans.

Deep processes such as synthesizing, being critical and evaluating differing perspectives may need to be modeled and practiced prior to writing. As addressed by Smith, Campbell and Brooker (1999), feedback from critical readers with a more sophisticated analysis of the essays contributes a lot to students' ability in critical thinking, writing and evaluating.

As Lavelle, Smith and O'Ryan (2002) stated writing approaches are linked to 'students' reactions to the instructional situations. Instruction should involve more sophisticated strategies such as autonomy and reflection rather than prescriptive writing tasks in which learners engage in surface features of writing such as mastery of grammar through the tasks of fill- in- the blanks.

A number of studies have been conducted to highlight the role of self-efficacy in writing (Meier, McCarthy & Schmeck, 1984; Pajares and Johnson, 1996). A positive correlation was found between self-efficacy in writing and deep approach to studying by Prat-Sala and Redford (2010). Similarly low self-efficacy in writing was hypothesized as closely linked to surface approach in Lavelle's (1993, 1997) inventory. In the current study, the interviews with the participants who were identified as holding surface approach supported this hypothesis. The comments made by those students during the interviews clearly revealed their low self efficacy in writing. As suggested by Lavelle and Bushrow (2007), providing collaborative opportunities such as supportive group work and peer reviews may foster higher level of writing self-efficacy in students.

As Howie and Bagnall (2013) claim in their critique, despite the model being underdeveloped, the model of deep and surface approaches to learning has had many positive impacts on teachers, teacher training and teaching institutions. It may lead to a surge in critical reflection on teacher training, rethinking of teaching practices, assessment and evaluation processes, and curriculum and syllabus designs.

In summary, the present research gave support for deep and surface dimensions of the IPIC by measuring student teachers' writing approaches in English. Measuring writing approaches might hopefully help teachers to understand what students do and which strategies they apply while writing. It may also help teachers to decide about learners' need and to design writing tasks and instructions accordingly.

Note: This study was supported by Marmara University BAPKO (Scientific Research Project Commission) – (Project Number EGT-D-130612-0255).

References

- Biggs, J. B. (1987). *Student approaches to learning and studying*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Biggs, J. B. (1988). Approaches to learning and essay writing. In R. R. Schmeck (Ed.), *Learning strategies and learning styles* (pp. 185-228). New York: Plenum.
- Biggs, J. B. (1999). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. Balmoor Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Biggs, J.B., Lai, P., Tang, C., & Lavelle, E. (1999). The effect of graduate workshop on graduate students writing in English as a second language. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 69, 293-306.
- Bereiter, C., & Scardamalia, M. (1987). *The psychology of written composition*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dyson, A. H. (1987). Individual differences I beginning composing. *Written Communication*, 4, 414-442.
- Christina, J. E., Kirby, J. R. & Fabrina, L. R. (2003). Approaches to learning, need for cognition, and strategic flexibility among university students. *British Educational Psychology*, 73, 507-528.
- Emig, J. (1971). *The composing processes of twelfth graders*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Entwistle, N. J. (1988). Motivational factors in students' approaches to learning. In R.R. Schmeck (Ed.), *Learning strategies and learning styles* (pp. 21–51). New York: Plenum Press.
- Entwistle, N. J., & Ramsden, P. (1983). *Understanding student learning*. New York: Nichols Publishing.
- Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1979). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 37, 365-377.
- Fitzgerald, J., & Shanahan, T. (2000). Reading and writing relations and their development. *Educational Psychologist*, 35, 39-50.
- Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (1997). Self regulation and writing: Where do we go from here? *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 22, 102-114.
- Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (2000). The role of self regulation and transcription skills in writing and writing development. *Educational Psychologist*, 35, 3-12.
- Graves, D. (1973). An examination of the writing processes of seven year-old children. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 9, 227-241.

- Hounsell, D. (1997). Learning and essay writing. In F. Marton, D. Hounsell, & N. Entwistle (Eds.), *The experience of learning* (pp. 103-123). Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Howie, P. & Bagnall, R. (2013). A critique of the deep and surface approaches to learning model. *Teaching in Higher Education, 18*(4), 389-400.
- Hyland, K. (2002). *Teaching and researching writing*. London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Kırkgöz , Y. (2013). Students' approaches to learning in an English-medium higher education. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, 2*, 30-39.
- Lavelle, E. (1993). Development and validation of an inventory to assess processes in college composition. *British journal of Educational Psychology, 63*, 489-499.
- Lavelle, E. (1997). Writing style and narrative essay. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 67*, 475-482.
- Lavelle, E., & Bushrow, K. (2007). Writing approaches of graduate students. *Educational Psychology, 27*(6), 807-822.
- Lavelle, E., & Guarino, A. J. (2003). A multidimensional approach to understanding college writing processes. *Educational Psychology, 23*(3), 295-305.
- Lavelle, E., Smith, J., & O’Ryan, L. (2002). The writing approaches of secondary students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 72*, 399-418.
- Lavelle, E., & Zuercher, N. (2001). Writing approaches of university students. *Higher Education, 40*, 373-391.
- Marton, F. & Saljo, R. (1976). On qualitative differences in learning. II: Outcome as a function of the learners' conception of the task. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 46*, 115-127.
- McCutchen, D. (1996). A capacity theory of writing: Working memory in composition. *Educational Psychology Review, 8*, 299-325.
- Marsh, H. W., Hau, K.T., & Kong, C. K. (2002). Multilevel causal ordering of academic self-concept and achievement: Influence of language and instruction (English compared with Chinese) for Hong Kong students. *American Educational Research Journal, 39*(3), 727-763.
- Meier, S., McCarthy, P., & Schmeck, R. R. (1984). Validity of self efficacy as a predictor of writing performance. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 8*, 107-120.
- Nystrand, M., Greene, S. & Wiemelt, J. (1993). Where did composition studies come from? An intellectual history. *Written Communication, 10*, 267-333.
- Pajares, F., & Johnson, M. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs and the writing performance of entering high school students. *Psychology in the Schools, 33*, 163-175.
- Prat-Sala, M., & Redford, P. (2010). The interplay between motivation, self-efficacy, and approaches to studying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 80*, 283-305.
- Ramsden P., Entwistle, N. J. (1981). Effects of academic departments on students' approaches to studying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 51*, 383-386.
- Scardamalia, M., & Bereiter, C. (1982). Assimilated process in composition planning. *Educational Psychologist, 17*, 10-24.
- Schmeck, R. R. (1988). *Learning strategies and learning styles*. New York: Plenum.
- Schmeck, R. R., Geisler-Brenstein, E., & Cercy, S. P. (1991). Self-concept and learning: The revised inventory of learning processes. *Educational Psychology, 11*, 343-362.

- Senemoğlu, N. (2011). College of education students' approaches to learning and study skills. *Education and Science*, 36(160), 65-80.
- Smith, D., Campbell, J., & Brooker, R. (1999). The impact of students' approaches to essay writing on the quality of their essays. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 24(3), 327-338.
- Torrence, M., Thomas, G. V., & Robinson, E., J. (1994). The writing strategies of graduate research students in the social sciences. *Higher Education*, 27, 379-392.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Bandura, A. (1994). Impact of self-regulatory influences on writing course attainment. *American Educational Research Journal*, 31, 845-862.
- Zimmerman, B., & Kitsantas, S. (1999). Acquiring writing revision skills: Shifting from process to outcome self-regulatory goals. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91, 241-250.

İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının yazma ile ilgili yaklaşımları

Öz

Karmaşık ve çok yönlü yapısı nedeni ile akademik yazma süreci birçok değişik açıdan analiz edilmiştir. “Yazma yaklaşımları modeli” (Biggs, 1988; Lavelle, 1993) yazma süreci sırasında kullanılan stratejilerin derin ve yüzeysel yaklaşımlara göre belirlendiği görüşünden yola çıkan farklı bir bakış açısı sağlamaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı öğrencilerin derin ve yüzeysel olmak üzere yazma ile ilgili yaklaşımlarını araştırmaktır. Araştırma Türkiye’de bir üniversitede İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümünde son sınıf öğrencisi olan 78 öğretmen adayı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Öğrencilerin yazma yaklaşımlarını ölçmek için Lavelle (1993, 1997) tarafından geliştirilen IPIC envanteri kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca öğrencilerin akademik yazma ile ilgili görüşlerini daha iyi irdeleyebilmek ve envanterin ölçtüğü derin ve yüzeysel yaklaşımları ne kadar yansıtacaklarını görmek amacı ile 13 öğrenci ile yüz yüze görüşme yapılarak nitel veriler toplanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları öğrencilerin çoğunluğunun derin yazma yaklaşımlarına sahip olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Erkek öğrencilere göre kız öğrenciler arasında derin yazma yaklaşımları daha yaygındır. Yüz yüze görüşmelerde, öğrencilerin yaptığı yorumlar envanter sonucu ortaya çıkan yüzeysel ve derin yaklaşımların geçerliliğini destekler mahiyettedir. Öğrencilerin yazma yaklaşımlarının irdelenmesi öğretmenlerin ve ders programı yapan eğitimcilerin yazma derslerini planlamasına yardımcı olacak ve yüzeysel yaklaşımların tespit edilmesi durumunda derin yaklaşımları ortaya çıkaracak eğitim faaliyetleri düzenlemeye teşvik edecektir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Yazma yaklaşımları; akademik yazma; derin yaklaşım; yüzeysel yaklaşım; İngilizce öğretmen adayları

AUTHOR BIODATA

Selma Karabınar is an assistant professor at Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Languages, Marmara University. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses such as research methods, teaching language skills and testing and evaluation in ELT. Her main research interests include academic writing, psychometric measures, assessment and EFL teacher education.