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Domain Specific Beliefs about Writing: A Qualitative Inquiry on First-Year Pre-service English Teachers¹

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Abstract

Until higher education, students experience so much about learning and they can transmit their already shaped beliefs while building up their present ones. When possible ignorance of writing skill before higher education is concerned, it becomes valuable to discover practices and experiences formatting learner abilities, their mental looks as writers as well as their belief systems and main principles about writing as a discipline, as a learning process, and as a teaching point. Therefore, employing a qualitative research design, the current study aims to investigate 26 first-year pre-service English teachers' domain specific beliefs about EFL writing through a range of structured interviews. In these interviews, beliefs about good foreign language writing and writers, the nature of writing ability, and the elements shaping their beliefs about good writing have been questioned. The findings have revealed that first-year undergraduates approach foreign language writing with already shaped or adopted beliefs, truths and experiences. Furthermore, pre-service teachers interpret various writing components (e.g., good writing or good writer) with different sets of beliefs. Most essentially, the relationship between domain-specific beliefs about writing and writing performance in the literature has been supported by the current qualitative study. Therefore, evaluating the outcomes related to preservice teachers' beliefs about writing, writing instructors and teacher educators can modify coursework and writing practices. They can let the preservice teachers reshape their belief systems, and guide them about good writing practices and good writer characteristics.

Keywords: Beliefs about writing, EFL writing, writing performance, pre-service English teachers

¹ The research reported in this article is part of the master's thesis completed at Anadolu University (See Tanyer (2014)).

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Introduction

In each level of education, learners bring their past as an ingredient while building up their present. As asserted by Britzman (1986) and Lortie (1975), if the existent beliefs of learners continue to have been unexplored, all the new instructional approaches provided during writing classes may not adequately guide their beliefs and perspectives, and they may not be implemented to the future instructional environments. Graham, Schwartz & MacArthur (1993) also propose that “the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs that students hold about writing play an important part in determining how the composition process is carried out and what the eventual shape of the ... written product will be” (p. 246). For these reasons, a considerable need of promoting first-year ELT students to inspect their beliefs about writing may arise. Thus, they can build or rebuild their beliefs whose association with writing performance was also proved by a sample of recent studies (e.g., Perry, 2011; Sanders-Reio, 2010; Sanders-Reio, Alexander, Reio and Newman, 2014; Tanyer, 2014; White & Bruning, 2005). Following this perspective, domain specific beliefs about writing have been chosen as the target focus in this study which is defined as “students’ beliefs about what good writing is, what good writers do including the effectiveness of various writing strategies.” (Sanders-Reio, 2010; p. 5). In other words, this concept particularly refers to the “beliefs about writing tasks and skills” in addition to processes followed by students while “performing these tasks and skills well” (Sanders-Reio, 2010, p. 5).

Because of the scope of university entrance exams in Turkey and the recent reform at high schools in which a year of intensive English preparation has been abolished, most teacher candidates of English are not provided with enough opportunity to discover dimensions of writing skill until university. As they enroll in English Language Teaching Departments of Turkish universities, the first-year composition classes are generally the first time when they get exposed to some pedagogical approaches and practices for learning and teaching foreign language writing as a skill. The practices and experiences they would have in these composition classes will probably not only format their abilities and mental looks as writers but also their belief systems and main principles about writing as a discipline, as a learning process and as a teaching point. In other words, first-year writing classes would be the initial and critical platform for pre-service teachers to shape their values of and beliefs about foreign language writing. Moreover, because the writing skill has been observed as a challenge for first-year preservice English teachers, it would be worthy to discover what kinds of beliefs about writing are held by this specific group. These assumptions have motivated the researchers to explore quite a lot about this discipline and its first and earlier practices in undergraduate composition classes with the aim to suggest probable classroom interventions.

Theoretical Framework

According to the socio-cognitive theory of Bandura (1989; 1997; 2001), in which the concept of domain-specific writing beliefs can originate, beliefs (or self-beliefs) are considered to play a crucial role in successes and failures. This theory proposes that while determining a person’s behavior, both behaviorist and cognitive traditions interact with personal and motivational factors, which bring us to a triadic model including the person, the environment and the behavior. As these elements in Bandura’s theory are interrelated with

each other, a person is both the producer and the products of his environment. Nevertheless, the influence of these three elements does not occur concurrently, equally, or within a single line (Bandura, 1989).

The first element of social cognitive theory, environment, consists of various aspects such as “economic conditions, socioeconomic status, and educational and family structures” which influence behavior of an individual “largely through their impact on people’s aspirations, sense of efficacy, personal standards, affective states, and other self-regulatory influences, rather than directly” (Bandura, 1989, p. 15). As listed by Sanders-Reio (2010),

Environmental influences on writing include the nature of writing instruction, the nature and structure of the genres that we value and write, the writing strategies we have developed and passed down to others, our methods of assessing writing performance, and the rewards that we bestow on good writers as well as the sanctions we impose on weak writers (p. 23).

The second element, “person”, is not a passive “undergoer” in the theoretical framework of Bandura, instead, it is an effective operator of an action being under the influence of his affect, cognition, and biology (Bandura, 1989, p. 4). What influence the “behavior” of individuals are “their weighing of options, their appraisal of their own abilities”, their choices, “the self-regulatory mechanisms they use as they enact those choices” (Sanders-Rio, 2010, p.23). That is why people are both the products and producers of the environment they live in.

In Bandura’s social cognitive theory, feelings involving anxiety is related to affective aspects of an individual. Beyond the affective ones, cognitive aspects of an individual also embody self-reflection and beliefs, for example, self-efficacy beliefs. In addition to self-efficacy beliefs, under the dimensions of Bandura’s model, some other beliefs such as outcome expectancy beliefs emerging at the end of a practice, and beliefs about the probable consequences of the actions have also been examined (Bandura, 1997). Under the dimensions of social cognitive theory, the present study attempts to investigate one “another type of beliefs, beliefs about a task or domain of study, in this case writing” (Sander-Reio, 2010, p.25). The educational psychologist, Sanders-Reio (2010), emphasizes the distinction between two types of beliefs: writing self-efficacy beliefs and domain-specific beliefs about writing. She outlines that while writing self-efficacy beliefs refer to the writers’ beliefs about himself and his capability of writing, domain specific writing beliefs associate to the beliefs in writing discipline and writing process itself. The distinction is also justified by adding that these beliefs include views about good writing and good writer characteristics. In other words, the mentality of competent and incompetent writers, the abilities of successful writers, and the things they do to have better writing are all subjects for domain specific writing beliefs.

Literature Review

Research reported on domain specific beliefs about writing have followed two lines: quantitative and qualitative studies. The first line starts with a recent study of Sanders-Reio (2010). She stated that while investigation on the self-efficacy beliefs in writing and its relation to writing apprehension and writing performance had started to become accumulated,

the research area of domain specific beliefs about writing was limited. With reference to that scarcity, she examined the association between domain specific writing beliefs, self-efficacy in writing and writing apprehension, and their relations to writing performance. In this study, there were a total of 207 pre-service teachers studying in the College of Education as participants. The findings revealed that four beliefs about writing - Address Substantive Issues First, Expert Orientation, Mechanical Errors Are Shameful, Writing Supports Thinking – were adaptive. The reason was that these belief types were positively associated with writing scores or with other adaptive writing beliefs. Also, the belief, Expert Orientation, was positively associated with self-efficacy in writing and enjoyment for writing the last of which had the highest correlation with the belief of Writing Support Thinking. Some other beliefs about writing seemed to be maladaptive because of their negative correlation with writing scores, self-efficacy in writing and enjoyment for writing. In addition, according to hierarchical regression analysis, domain specific writing beliefs explained a significant proportion of variance in writing scores (i.e., 12%). Lastly, while apprehension about mechanical writing errors showed strong negative effect on writing scores, self-efficacy in writing weakly predicted writing performance after controlling for the domain specific writing beliefs.

A following study of Sanders-Reio et al. (2014) also examined a model to discover whether domain specific writing beliefs, self-efficacy in writing, and writing apprehension predicted writing performance or not. In order to predict the writing performance of 738 undergraduates, three research instruments (i.e., the Beliefs about Writing Survey, the Writing Self-Efficacy Index and the modified Writing Apprehension Test) were employed. The hierarchical regression revealed that beliefs about writing, writing self-efficacy and apprehension predicted some variance in writing scores. For example, the beliefs, Audience Orientation and Transmission, were the main positive and negative predictors of writing scores respectively. Also, it was found that self-efficacy in writing moderately and apprehension about grammar significantly and negatively predicted writing scores while the general concept of writing apprehension did not significantly predict writing performance. These findings can reinforce the possibility of beliefs about writing to be an effective factor for teaching writing.

The second line of beliefs about writing research has examined pre-service teachers' beliefs and experiences about writing domain and writing instruction from a qualitative perspective. The study of Norman and Spencer (2005) employed qualitative methods and utilized autobiographies to explore 59 pre-service teachers' beliefs and experiences about writing and writing instruction at a regional university in California. With a pre-writing activity in which participants read "A Writers' Story" (Cramer, 2001), it was aimed to remind them "the roles of writing" playing "in their lives, their personal writing development, and the influences on their development" (Norman & Spencer, 2005, p. 28). The pre-service teachers then produced their own autobiographies and submitted them a week later. As for the data analysis, grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was employed for category identification. As a result, four main themes emerged delineating various aspects of their beliefs about writing domain, developmental processes as writers and teaching writing which were: "1) personal/creative writing is the most interesting and meaningful type of writing, 2) teachers

have a powerful effect on writing identity, 3) encouraging writing development is different from teaching writing, and 4) beliefs about the nature of writing ability affect what it means to be a competent writer” (Norman & Spencer, 2005, p. 29-34).

One another study of Hall and Grisham–Brown (2011) investigated fourteen (14) preschool and elementary pre-service teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about writing and their intentions to teach writing at schools using focus group interviews. The participants were studying in the last semester of their teacher education program at a state university in Kentucky. A total of ten open-ended questions eight of which had been adopted from Street (2003)’s study were asked to the two different focus groups. The findings showed that a set of themes could be summarized under five main headings: “1) positive and negative writing experiences, 2) easy and hard aspects of writing, 3) personal uses of writing, 4) strengths and weaknesses as writing teachers, and 5) plans for using writing in the classroom” (Hall and Grisham-Brown, 2011, p.152).

The studies about beliefs in writing domain have certainly presented some insights. Although some recent ones (i.e., Sanders-Reio, 2010; Sanders-Reio et al., 2014) attempted to combine common themes of beliefs about writing literature and donated us with more information about the nature of these beliefs, resulting from their correlational design, they could not reflect the factors behind writing beliefs or the other probable beliefs the English preservice teachers can hold. Nevertheless, beliefs of this group may have a critical role in that they are the future foreign language writing teachers in addition to being writers of today and future. With these points in mind, the present study has two main purposes. Firstly, it aims at investigating first year undergraduates’ domain-specific beliefs about writing and writers. Secondly, by investigating their beliefs in depth, it intends to seek the factors affecting these beliefs in EFL writing. In line with these purposes, it has been assumed that this study would provide a profile of pre-service English teachers by reporting participants’ beliefs about what good writing is, what good writers do in addition to their beliefs about writing processes, writing tasks, writing skills, and the procedures these tasks and skills involve. The research questions guiding the study are as follows:

1. What kind of beliefs do first-year pre-service English teachers hold about foreign language writing and writers as well as the nature of writing?
2. Which factors affect and shape pre-service English teachers’ beliefs about foreign language writing?
3. Is there any association between beliefs about foreign language writing/writers and writing scores?

Methodology

Participants

The participants were a total of 26 first-year pre-service teachers studying in the English Language Teaching Department of Faculty of Education at a Turkish university. Most of the participants were female with the proportion of 76.92% ($N=20$), while 23.07% of them were male ($N=6$). The average age of research participants whose pseudo names were accompanied with the results was found 19.39 ($SD= 1.21$). The reason for the selection of this

group of interest in this research is that they receive considerable amount of practice and instruction in writing for two semesters, so learning more about their beliefs about writing might facilitate the development of future instruction.

Data Collection

The participants were interviewed to determine first-year pre-service teachers' domain specific beliefs about writing and their own practices and experiences as writers. The interviewees were paired up and asked to indicate some detailed report on their beliefs about foreign language writing, the characteristics of good foreign language writing and writer, and lastly the factors shaping their beliefs about good foreign language writing by means of a set of open ended questions (See Appendix A and B). Some questions in the interview (i.e. the 2nd and 3rd questions, from Graham et al.'s (1993) research study) were modified and adapted to our research aims and research context. Three experienced writing instructors of ELT department evaluated all the interview questions for the face validity.

Structured interviews were utilized at the end of the 2013-2014 academic year. A total of 26 pre-service teachers were chosen and voluntarily interviewed on their domain specific beliefs about writing using L1. While answering open-ended questions during the interview, the participants were free to speak in their native language which is Turkish for the target group. It was assumed that they would feel more comfortable because of the linguistic flexibility provided by L1 while they were expressing their beliefs, experiences and practices about writing (Ferrell & Daniel, 1993). As reminded by Bell (1987), even in a small-scale study, it is essential to ensure a representative sample of the target group for interview. Also, the literature states that a relationship between domain specific beliefs about writing and writing performance can exist (e.g., Sanders-Reio, 2010). For those reasons, while deciding on the interviewees, the participants' first midterm exam scores were taken into consideration.

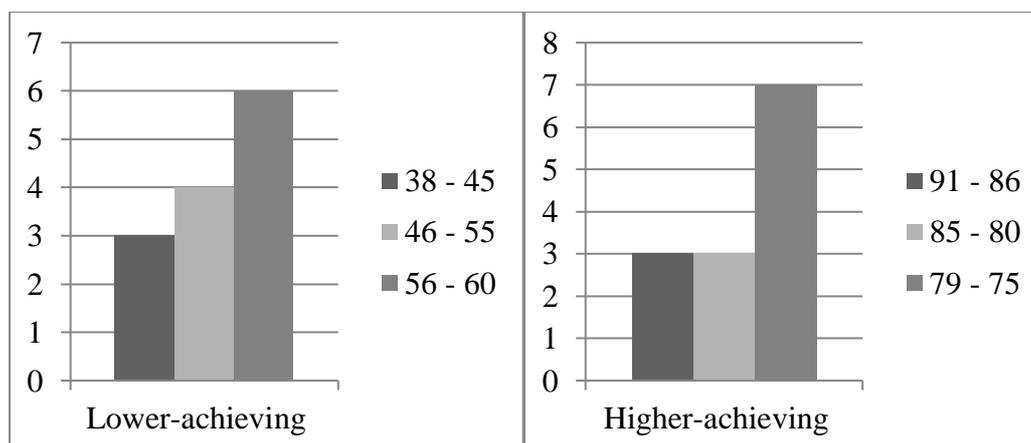


Figure 1

The Number of Interviewees with Their Writing Score Ranges

Among the eight sections of Academic Writing and Report Writing Course, three of them were randomly selected for the interviews. The group mean of the first midterm scores was 66.1 for those sections. By grouping the students whose writing scores were lower and upper than the group mean (i.e. 66.1), two groups of participants (13 students in each) were formed applying extreme case sampling methodology which is defined as “a form of

purposeful sampling in which ... an outlier case or one that displays extreme characteristics” are studied (Creswell 2011, p. 208). The writing scores of the lower-achieving subjects ranged from 38 to 60, while the scores of higher achieving students ranged from 75 to 91. The detailed profile of interview groups was summarized in Figure 1 above. During grouping the interviewees, the ones having lower scores were matched up with the other lower achievers while the ones with higher scores were brought together with the higher achievers. While making this combination, the aim was to prevent higher achievers from becoming dominant during the interviews.

Data Analysis

The answers to the RQ1 and RQ2 were provided via the analysis of the interviews held with the 26 pre-service teachers. To reach this aim, Constant Comparative Method (Glasser & Strauss, 1967) was conducted to analyze the qualitative data from the structured, free response (open-ended questions) interviews, which allowed the data to form into natural categories rather than pre-determined categories. The qualitative data analysis procedure began with transcribing interview records, and separation of the interview transcriptions into communication units (Langer & Applebee, 1987) followed it.

For categorization of the data and designating convenient titles for those categories, the subsequent steps were followed. Firstly, the two raters (one of them was the researcher and the other was a postgraduate research assistant at the ELT Department) examined some of the data together to determine the analysis process. Secondly, the data were analyzed independently. As the third step, the two raters’ individual analyses were compared. After arriving at an agreement on wording of communication units, 20% of the collected data were again analyzed by the researcher and the co-rater independently. Based on that analysis, the inter-rater reliability was calculated applying “point by point method”. According to this formula (as shown below), the number of agreements is divided by the number of agreements plus disagreements, and the result is multiplied by 100 (Tawney & Gast, 1984). Consequently, a high inter-rater reliability was found as about 89%.

$$\frac{\text{The number of agreements}}{\text{The number of agreements} + \text{disagreements}} \times 100$$

Results

Under different subheadings parallel to the interview questions directed, the categories obtained as a result of the analysis were tabulated and interpreted below in accompany with participants’ pseudo names.

Definition of Foreign Language Writing

The first question addressed to the interviewees examined what foreign language writing means to them. In the entire transcriptions, all 26 pre-service teachers particularly mentioned their perceptions of foreign language writing.

Foreign Language Writing: A Demanding and/or Challenging Discipline

When participants of the present study were asked to define foreign language writing, as seen in Table 1, all of them (100%) stated that foreign language writing was a demanding and/or challenging discipline.

Table 1

Pre-service Teachers' Definitions of Foreign Language Writing

Themes	f	%
1. A demanding and/or challenging discipline.	26	100%
1.a. Language Use / Vocabulary		
1.a.1. Crafting well-formed, meaningful and/or complex sentences	17	65%
1.a.2. Writing technically / Sophisticated and academic vocabulary	16	62%
1.b. Related to perceiving the target culture's values.	9	35%
1.c. Organization	8	31%
1.d. Topic		
1.d.1. Writing about assigned topics (prompts)	3	12%
1.d.2. Difficulties of expressing feelings	3	12%
1.e. Lack of writing practice (in L1 and/or foreign language)	6	23%
1.f. Issues about pre-writing and during writing		
1.f.1. Preliminary preparation (Goal setting/Planning/Research)	5	19%
1.f.2. Time limit	2	8%
1.f.3. More cognitive load	2	8%
1.g. Expectations of writing teachers	2	8%
2. A process of transmitting knowledge	1	4%
3. Means of expressing oneself better	1	4%
4. An area of practicing English rather than an area of specialization	1	4%
5. Not a need, instead an obligation, assignment	1	4%

Above and beyond characterizing foreign language writing as a difficult and effortful process, the underlying reasons of that belief were also detailed by the students. Majority of them (65%) stated that it was hard to craft well formed, meaningful and complex sentences, which resulted in the understatement of the meaning aimed to be conveyed and stating ideas in restrained terms. For example, Eda signified her inadequacy and struggle while expressing her ideas:

As long as I write in a foreign language, I do not feel at ease. When crafting sentences, I can only reflect fifty percent of what I have already meant to say

because of concentrating on the structure of sentences too much. In Turkish, you would use intervention to make it attractive; however, when you return to using English, you may not verbalize it within the same structure as in Turkish. It is certainly becoming harder...

The second source of challenges in foreign language writing was regarding vocabulary use (%62). Most of the students referred to the need and difficulty of using appropriate terminologies for specific fields such as literature, mathematics and science while writing. As pre-service teachers, they stated that specific terms of language teaching confronted them in the texts which they had read and studied on. One more point was that the students felt the necessity for using academic vocabulary instead of colloquial language in their essays. However, when it comes to foreign language writing, *writing technically and/or using sophisticated and academic vocabulary* become a challenge for first-year pre-service teachers as Simge's and Meltem's experiences have showed:

... English embodies impressive and attracting words or specific terms related to various fields just as literature, mathematics, or science... We are requested to write in different genres, and about diverse disciplines. I can succeed it in Turkish; however, in English, we mostly expose to the vocabulary related to language learning and teaching. But we do not know adequate terms identifying specific fields of study. We have trouble in this respect, as well.

And, in my opinion, the most important factor making foreign language difficult is the differences between spoken and written language, since we need to use much more academic and formal vocabulary while writing. But sometimes, we can be incapable of using these kinds of vocabulary items in an effective way. Thus, it results in producing vague and simple texts.

The second challenging aspect of foreign language writing was the relation of writing to perceiving target culture's values with a moderate proportion (35%). The student pointed to the lack of and need for awareness of the target culture by stating, "We have been learning the British culture; however, as we did not grow up in that culture, we experience some difficulty. We do not precisely know how to use the target words and idioms".

By 31% of the first-year writers, the organizational rules of essay writing such as patterns of organization, coherence and unity were classified as hard to accomplish and challenging. They also found it crucial to arrange sentences logically, to make them flow smoothly and to place thesis statement, topic sentence, major and minor details appropriately. Moreover, 23% of participants emphasized the challenging effect of prompts in essay writing in terms of two aspects. For instance, Mine referred to the issue of writing about assigned topics focusing on background knowledge, "The topic is so important. If you have some background knowledge about the topic, or have read about it beforehand, you can write more about it, you can develop your ideas much better". The other interviewee, Eda, also mentioned difficulties of expressing feelings and remarked, "I generally prefer logical topics while writing essays. Writing something emotional or personal/creative writing are not preferable for me".

There were some pre-service teachers (23%) establishing a relationship between writing in the mother tongue and writing in a foreign language. The difficulty was attributed to the lack of practice and ability in writing in both L1 and L2. Moreover, the three main issues about pre-writing and during writing were identified as challenging and demanding by some of the participants which were *preliminary preparation* (19%), *time limit* (8%) and *more cognitive load* (8%). The category, *preliminary preparation*, included the processes such as researching, planning and writing an outline. The second issue was about time limit. It was stated that remembering words or applying grammatical rules in the foreign language had become hard during limited time different from the mother tongue. The last issue (i.e. cognitive load) was related to during writing process and touched upon the cognitive load that foreign language writing had focusing on the differences between L1 and L2.

Lastly, a small portion of the participants (8%) found writing teachers' expectations high and addressed them as a source of difficulty in foreign language writing. One of participants (Gamze) indicated, "All in all, expectations are high if we take our courses and teachers into consideration".

Foreign Language Writing: The Rest of the Definitions

Beyond viewing writing as a demanding and challenging discipline, a few participants described their different perspectives of foreign language writing. A small percent of the participants (4%) mainly defined writing as "*a process of transmitting knowledge*" by drawing a parallelism between foreign language writing and writing in the general sense. Similarly, 4% of the respondents regarded foreign language writing as a means of expression referring to the positive influence of writing in English since they could write better and more easily in English. In other words, foreign language writing was a means of better self-expression for that group. The underlying reason may be that writing in a foreign language was a more rule-governed and learnable system in comparison to L1 writing. The last response of the participants about foreign language writing fell beyond characterizing writing as a means of expression. Instead, a very small proportion of the pre-service teachers (4%) responded that foreign language writing was an area to practice English rather than an area of specialization. İlber believed that they needed to write in English as they had been learning it. In other words, writing in a foreign language was a method of performing the target language. Lastly, quite a few of the participants (4%) interpreted foreign language writing as an obligation, an assignment instead of a need. Pinar, in her responses, questioned the place of foreign language writing both in her undergraduate degree program and in her future teaching plans and practices. That self-questioning resulted in the fact that Pinar attributed no purpose or necessity to learning foreign language writing.

Beliefs about the Characteristics of Good Foreign Language Writing

When participants described the characteristics of good foreign language writing, their responses fell into three main categories: 1) organization, 2) content, and 3) language use.

Table 2

Beliefs about Characteristics of Good Foreign Language Writing

Themes	f	%
1. Organization		
1.a. Coherence, cohesion and unity in good writing	12	46%
1.b. Reflecting related genre characteristics	11	42%
1.c. Consisting of three main parts: introduction, body, conclusion	5	19%
2. Content		
2.a. Developing and transmitting good and creative ideas	15	58%
2.b. Conveying the message and ideas effectively	10	39%
2.c. Aiming to address and impress the audience	5	19%
2.d. Incorporating different opinions	2	8%
3. Language Use		
3.a. Advance grammar / Complex and correct sentences	15	58%
3.b. Appropriate, relevant and formal vocabulary	10	39%
3.c. Including synonyms to pretend repetitions	3	12%
3.d. Accompanied with punctuation rules	2	8%

As seen in Table 2, to write a well-organized essay, many of the pre-service teachers (46%) believed that writers firstly needed to pay attention to coherence, cohesion and unity. One participant, Müge, stated that the coherence between paragraphs and cohesion among sentences would provide a writer the opportunity to express oneself better:

There must be coherence in all paragraphs within an essay. If good transitions between ideas are provided, we can express better what we have meant to say. The coherence among and within the paragraphs is so important. I think if a text has both specific organization and coherence, then it can be regarded as a well-developed written work.

Another pre-service teacher, Nazen, focused on a specific concept that was principles of organization, such as chronological order, order of importance, logical order etc. to make the written products coherent: “Principles of organization... Organization of sentences, chronological order, order of importance... While developing an appropriate organization, it is required to emphasize the main idea”. In addition to coherence, Eser mentioned one more characteristics of good writing that was unity. Finding that quality so essential, he discussed the ways to manage unity in a written text such as telling about one main topic in each sentence, embodying no irrelevant sentence throughout the essay etc., “In my opinion, writing about the specific prompt within a unity... Paying attention to organization, embodying no irrelevant sentences, never jumping around different ideas... Unity is so essential”.

According to 42% of the participants, the second requirement to write a well-organized essay was its reflection of related genre characteristics. Mine shared her experience asserting that by allowing for genre rules and patterns of organization, one could avoid writing a puzzling essay:

To write something in English, I firstly attend to the pattern of organization. Without topic sentences, thesis statement and minor details or without carrying genre specific characteristics, a written text will primarily be puzzling. In my opinion, you need to obey the genre rules to voice your own ideas in a detailed way.

Lastly, it was made clear by 19% of participants that a well-organized essay required to be consisted of three main parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. For instance, some pre-service teachers (e.g., Hale) respectively gave their views on the positive effect of transmitting ideas within three main parts, “Transmitting those ideas within an appropriate order to the text such as introduction, development and conclusion. Deciding which ideas within scope should be narrowed down...”. As participants were questioned about their views on good foreign language writing, their answers were listed under a second category that was content. Over half of the pre-service teachers (58%) reported that developing and transmitting good and creative ideas would generate a good writing sample. Melda made her point related to content giving an advantage to generating creative ideas over grammar or vocabulary use:

Good writing brings new ideas; it does not highlight grammar rules or vocabulary. If you are creative, grammar rules lose its importance. For sure, they are substantial, without the rules we cannot craft sentences; nevertheless, ideas are more essential for me. Therefore, good writing means creativity and forming new ideas.

Similarly, Nazen equated good writing with the opportunity to get some idea when she read it. She supported her opinion not only as a pre-service teacher but also as a teacher of the near future. According to her, the better ideas a text conveys, the better it will become as a written product:

If I were a teacher, I would say, “You, class, do not only focus on grammatical rules. (Just) focus on what you think...” Opinion is the most important factor to me. I, myself, give weight to thinking while writing an essay. Once I read something, if I can understand ideas, then, this is good writing for me. While reading a newspaper, I do not evaluate it according to the words used. Instead, the better ideas a text conveys, the better it would become as a written product.

As well as developing and transmitting good and creative ideas, 39% of participants indicated that in good foreign language writing, the message and ideas were supposed to be conveyed effectively as well. In this sense, one of the interviewees, Deniz, constructed her views of good writing as stated in the following, “Good writing just means revealing yourself effectively, putting down on a paper what you have intended to say or the topic you would talk about in an organized way”. Also, Orhun added by reporting, “In my opinion, good writing is putting the idea in mind on paper in a sound way. You should choose the exact

sentences to express your opinions. The words, sentences, everything must include the thing that would hit the target of the idea.”

As a third criterion, 19% of participants said that audience adaptation was one source of good foreign language writing. One participant, Rüya, stated that writers were supposed to address a specific audience and aim to attract the target reader groups’ attention even in scientific texts. Another participant believing the necessity of audience adaptation suggested a specific method that the writer might follow. According to Müge, if a writer narrates his own experiences, he can influence and persuade the reader. Besides, Gamze stated similar views on the same issue and listed the ways to attract reader’s attention. She believed that an attractive sentence related to the writing prompt might fascinate the reader, “Especially, a well-developed topic sentence should be written. Those sentences should have a part in the conclusion or introduction. Some techniques that draw the attention of the readers should also be used.”

When asked to describe good foreign language writing, only 8% of pre-service teachers stated their beliefs about the positive role of incorporating different opinions while writing. As different ideas had a power to shape her own ideas, Zambak acknowledged that she was attentive to compare and combine her own opinions with the other scholars’. Lastly, one participant, İlber, had interpreted the notion of cooperation differently and mentioned the efficacy of getting peer feedback throughout the writing process, “Good writing is getting feedback after completing writing... In my opinion, good writing necessitates getting the others’ opinion, consulting, asking and questioning, as well.”.

The third main category about good foreign language writing characteristics was related to language use. Many pre-service teachers (58%) believed that while writing, advance grammar was required. Moreover, they stated that good writing included more complex and grammatically correct sentences. Ayfer, Eser, and Sevgi described the role of grammar respectively in writing a successful essay:

Proper grammar usage... The teacher has always mentioned as “advanced grammar”. It is essential to form complex sentences including noun clauses, relative clauses...

The essay must be grammatically well-written; grammar rules should be followed. It may change according to the genre of the text; nonetheless, it should not be simple.

I frequently fall into this error: crafting simple sentences... For instance, you make a sentence but it is in a simple structure. That sentence must be made more complex using noun clauses, relative clauses and transitions.

Participant responses about the effect of language use on good writing also addressed vocabulary use. 39% of the participants revealed that good foreign language writing demanded appropriate, relevant and formal vocabulary. One of the participants, Deniz, put emphasis on the use of formal language and stated, “The words chosen, your style: formal or informal... Ability to express formally, being careful about this usage without moving to the daily language...”. From a different point of view, two other participants, Eda and Hale,

suggested that good writing was the reflection of deep and rich vocabulary knowledge. Especially, in terms of meaning, good writing was associated with appropriate, useful and topic-related vocabulary as noted below:

You must develop your vocabulary knowledge. A word cannot be used everywhere; however, we just use it and pass over. We do not think whether it is appropriate to use it or not. For this reason, vocabulary knowledge is needed. This is the meaning of the word, yes, but we should be able to say that it is not used with that preposition or it is not appropriate to use it here with this meaning. At this point, we definitely need to have a certain level of vocabulary.

On behalf of putting the ideas on paper, one should know topic-related vocabulary items.

Under the same subheading, 12% of the participants identified good foreign language writing as a text which included different words with the same meaning. Ayfer and Sevgi described the role of synonyms in writing claiming that using them would prevent written works to become simple, “It is essential to make the text better using echoic words, synonyms, instead of repeating the same things over and over.”, and “At all times using same words makes the written work simple. It is necessary to avoid it.”.

Finally, only 8% of the respondents provided a role to punctuation in good writing. One participant, Orhun, attached importance to obeying punctuation rules because he thought that those rules would contribute to conveying his opinions effectively, “Punctuation is supposed to be essential since it is related to expressing ideas effectively. Yes, it is somehow prescriptive, but it is important to denote the ideas.”.

Factors and Individuals Shaping Beliefs about Good Foreign Language Writing

When pre-service English teachers were interviewed about the factors and individuals that had shaped their beliefs and truths about good foreign language writing throughout their personal and educational lives, their responses fell into three categories as seen in Table 3: 1) feedback and inspiration from teachers, 2) previous confrontations with good pieces of writing, and 3) personal experiences / background knowledge.

Table 3

Factors and Individuals Shaping the Beliefs about Writing

Themes	f	%
1. Feedback and inspiration from teachers	15	58%
2. Previous confrontations with good pieces of writing	10	39%
3. Personal experience / Background knowledge	3	12%

Over half of the participants (58%) acknowledged that feedback and inspiration from their teachers had played an important role in the construction of their beliefs about good writing. In the quotations below, Sezen, Baran and Müge mentioned the impact that their

university instructors had on them and described how oral or written feedback had shaped their written products and inspired them to write better, “Mostly, our instructor is very effective. We submit our paper to “Turn It In”, and then we get feedback; thus, we could see what good writing was and bad sides of our own writing”. Baran referred to positive effect of the assignments and specifically viewed the feedback that he got for those assignments as an effective factor, “The assignments have been very effective since our instructor gives feedback by marking the problematic points. So, we form some opinions about good writing and learn to what we need to pay attention while writing”. Especially Müge made a notice of her observable improvement from the first written product to the recent ones, and characterized teacher feedback as a guidance and motivating source:

When I started to attend the writing class, my first written product was not well-formed. In fact, the feedback I had got made me think like that. As I got feedback, I started to write by giving more specific examples. Realizing that I could write better, I was motivated and tried to sustain my motivation. In short, I started to love writing.

In addition to teacher feedback, many pre-service teachers (39%) approved that previous confrontations with good pieces of writing had shaped their beliefs and truths about good foreign language writing. One of the pre-service teachers, Mine, reported that reading an ideal and artistic piece of writing beforehand might inspire student writers, “If you see a beautiful, artistic and smooth writing, you will attempt to write like that”. Duygu separated the undergraduate degree program from the other previous confrontations. She stated that until university she had encountered with good writing samples just in books; however, in writing classes, the comparison between good and bad written texts taught her what good writing was. She remarked:

We had not known what good writing was beforehand. I think reading plays a critical role. At the university, I learned writing in the course. As our instructor presented good and bad writing samples to us by comparing them, we were also able to make comparison between them. This is the way I could learn the features of good writing.

Ayfer made a similar point when she commented about the writing samples that had been brought to the classroom by writing instructors, “She was always bringing good samples. They were the samples that would shape how we were supposed to write. I think they guided us”. Lastly, a small percent of the participants (12%) acknowledged that personal experiences and background knowledge had an indirect influence on their beliefs about good writing. Mine expressed her choice of the topic asked in the exams and said that previous experiences in writing shaped her beliefs about how a good text should be written. She stated:

In my opinion, previous experiences influence our writing a lot. In the exam, when we are assigned with three writing prompts, I choose the one in which I have more life experience, since I know that I can write about it better via my previous practices. You can generate more ideas about it.

Beliefs about the Characteristics of a Good Foreign Language Writer

Although this concept is closely linked to the former one which was good foreign language writing, they had been analyzed separately since pre-service teachers might assign different responsibilities to good writers than the qualifications they assigned to good writing samples. The pre-service teachers were firstly questioned about their beliefs about writing ability. It was found that 42% of them perceived writing both as an innate talent and a skill that can be improved with appropriate instruction, teacher feedback and student effort. In addition, 39% of participants characterized writing skill only as an innate gift, which means that it is almost impossible to become a good writer no matter how a novice writer puts effort to manage. Lastly, only 19% of the teacher candidates viewed writing as a skill that could be developed via enough training and student attempt.

Table 4

Beliefs about Writing Ability

Themes	f	%
1. Both an innate gift and improvable skill	11	42%
2. An innate gift	10	39%
3. An improvable skill	5	19%

Secondly, when the pre-service teachers were asked about the characteristics of good foreign language writer, their responses fit into two main categories: 1) characteristics related to writing process, and 2) writers' personal characteristics. As a result of the analysis, eight different writing related features were remarked, the first of which was awareness of the audience.

Table 5

Beliefs about Characteristics of Good Foreign Language Writer

Themes	f	%
1. Characteristics related to writing process		
1.a. Aware of audience	12	46%
1.b. An effective conveyer of ideas	11	42%
1.c. Researcher for information generation	10	39%
1.d. Goal setter, planner, organizer	7	27%
1.e. Producer of knowledgeable and convincing essays	7	27%
1.f. Evaluator, reviewer, reviser	6	23%
1.g. Applying genre rules and essay patterns	4	15%
1.h. A successful time manager	3	12%

2. Writers' personal characteristics		
2.a. Cultured and open to new learning	10	39%
2.b. Competent language user	9	35%
2.c. Enjoying and valuing writing	8	31%
2.d. A good observer and listener	3	12%

Many of the pre-service teachers (46%) believed that a good foreign language writer was firstly aware of his audience. Writers should take different kinds of reader characteristics into consideration such as their age, educational level and cultural background etc. Almost half of the participants claimed that foreign language writers should determine their language and examples according to their potential audience. In this sense, Müge and İlber told:

It needs to be considered beforehand to whom you would write, and you should choose your language accordingly. For instance, if the audience is an academician, more serious, different and scientific examples might be given. If it would be for teenagers or children, an appropriate language is supposed to be used accordingly. In short, a different style is required to be used in each written text, considering the reader, and this must be managed by having the command of that language.

A specific tone would be utilized by taking the reader's educational level, age, cultural background, and depth of knowledge into consideration.

The second writing related characteristic of a good foreign language writer was described as being an effective conveyer of ideas by a high percent of interviewees (42%). To manage this, the pre-service teachers suggested some strategies. For instance, readers should not be bored with unnecessary details, and writers should be fluent, use the words appropriately as a wordsmith and organize their ideas appropriately as remarked by Aydın and Eda:

He should not bore the reader with unnecessary details, and should not use redundant words to make longer sentences.

It is about ability; however, while conveying opinions, it is required to be fluent. Being fluent is something spontaneous, I guess, or it is related to having a good mastery of the target language. Knowing that language is just one step of it. Using the words appropriately, organizing the ideas... He should be a wordsmith.

Similarly, Nazen noted one of the responsibilities of foreign language writer as being an effective conveyer of ideas: writers should know their limits while crafting complex sentences and should not use colloquial language as detailed below:

The way of explaining ideas is so important. It should not be written unprofessionally. Colloquial language should not be used. Writers generally craft very complex sentences. The ones who are qualified writers succeed in it

very well; however, the ones incapable of doing it, non-experts, disrupt the written work. Therefore, a writer must know his limits. He is required to write by taking his own capacity into consideration without exaggerating himself, choosing appropriate words. There can be such writers who can produce fluent and complex sentences. These paragraphs are grasped by the readers.

According to 39% of participants, good foreign language writers were supposed to become researchers for transmitting information. For instance, as expressed by Sevgi and Nazen, good writers do research and collect data via surveys, and thus they master in their topics:

He does research, collects information from different sources and people. Especially, if it should be an academic text, he collects data from other sources. He can gather data through surveys to support their ideas.

In my opinion, a good writer must primarily be an expert in his subject. A subject may require an hour for research, another one requires perhaps one month. When I read a text, I firstly need to understand whether the writer is a well-versed writer on his topic or not. In a written text, I must be satisfied with the information I learned.

One of the characteristics of a good writer was also defined as being a good goal setter, planner and organizer before and during writing by 27% of pre-service teachers. Hale remarked that a good writer could organize one's observations, experiences and research results based on their target topics, "I think a writer must have a power of organization. A writer should be able to organize his observations, research, experiences according to the topic". From a different point of view, another participant, Sevgi, referred to planning stage before writing while assigning organization tasks to good writers, "Firstly, he thinks what he is supposed to do: "What can I do? How can I express my opinions in a text? For instance, if he is writing a cause & effect essay, he thinks about the details, namely causal links. He can associate them with real situations". As listed above, there was much variability in what pre-service English teachers believed about being a good writer.

The next characteristic of a good foreign language writer was labeled as being producer of knowledgeable and convincing essays by 27% of pre-service teachers. One participant, Orhun, laid greater stress on convincing readers in academic writing and suggested the sources that would be used while writing an academic text:

In academic writing, he must be a persuader if he is writing to prove his claim. He needs to use statistics. He should share the information from valid and reliable sources; not from nonacademic journals. Otherwise, that writing would not be sound. In short, he must convince me. He will write in such a way that he will be able to answer the questions in my mind thinking about them beforehand. He is required to refute my possible arguments.

From a different angle, Gamze also expressed her opinion about good foreign language writer. She told that readers were to be informed about a specific topic that they read on; in other words, good writers could produce informative and knowledgeable essays.

Moreover, good writers were to be able to prove her claim within a well-organized text. Gamze remarked:

The important factor to me is how that man has written, can I be informed? If he mentions something precisely, he refutes some arguments or develops a thesis, he must prove his claim; however, an in-text citation at the end of each sentence may not be nice. It needs a good organization.

In addition to Gamze, Zambak made the same point about writing knowledgeable and informative essays as described below:

The criterion of being a good writer is plating some ideas in the reader's mind. When he reads the written work, he must learn something new. I place emphasis on that point. The text must include a type of information the reader needs to get. A good writer gives that piece of information.

As claimed by 23% of participants, good writers were also good evaluators, reviewers and revisers throughout writing process. Ayfer revealed that good writers checked their written products' grammar and vocabulary repeatedly during revising and editing:

Firstly, I write the first draft, later, I turn back, check the grammar and vocabulary. They are the steps followed by good writers. Especially, skimming over the text for errors, checking it over and over again must be the most essential characteristics of a good writer.

The other pre-service teacher, Eda, noted the positive effect of revision focusing on content of the written text and messages conveyed:

He must review the written text: the content in general, vocabulary, sentence structures... How can the words verbalize your ideas more effectively? The vocabulary should be reviewed. If needed, extra sentences must be formed. The writer must be aware of these issues and keep his writing under control.

15% of pre-service teachers identified the good foreign language writer as the one applying genre rules and essay patterns while writing. Mine and Melda reported that applying the target genre's rules would make student writers score higher in addition to making written products more effective, productive and striking. According to 12% of pre-service teachers, the last writing related characteristic of a good foreign language writer was being successful time managers. The interviewees attributed that qualification to good writers considering in-class writing exams. One student, Ayfer, suggested a strategy to become a good writer even in a limited time and stated, "A good writer is a good time manager. We know that we have time limit during in-class exams. Therefore, while doing homework, I write in a limited time". Similarly, Duygu attributed a critical role to the ability of time management claiming that even if a student was a good writer, if he could not think and produce immediately in a limited time, he might come up with vague texts, as a result, "... In a limited time in the exam, the idea may not pop into the student's mind who is actually a good writer, and he may produce a bad essay. Therefore, the characteristics of a good writer are the ability to think and produce immediately".

When asked about the qualifications of good foreign language writers, pre-service teachers listed some personal characteristics of good writers which were: 1) cultured and open to new learning, 2) competent language user, 3) enjoying and valuing writing, and 4) a good observer and listener. Firstly, 39% of participants believed that good foreign language writers were also cultured and open to new learning, which means that good writers are also good readers as stated by Simge, “Good writer does not only concern about writing. As long as he reads, he starts to write better since he discovers different patterns, idioms, or he improves his knowledge”. Likewise, one another pre-service teacher, Baran, referred to the world knowledge of a writer and remarked, “Becoming a person of culture is also necessary. While talking about a topic - suppose that you will mention a different culture - you would need to have some ideas about it”.

An important percentage of participants (35%) associated good foreign language writer with being a competent language user. Baran and Yankı acknowledged that writers were required to have good vocabulary and grammar knowledge of the target language in which they wrote. Especially, Baran put emphasis on differentiating between academic and colloquial features of the language based on genres. Similarly, Yankı addressed the same issue of language competence.

The writer must have good vocabulary knowledge in that his need will change based on the essay type. Sometimes, he may give weight to daily language. If he writes an academic essay, he uses academic vocabulary, makes more complex sentences. In this sense, a writer must be versatile.

In my opinion, a good writer has an ability to use the target language efficiently. He must know vocabulary and grammar to express his ideas. Only if he has enough knowledge about the target language, he can write well.

Interestingly, 31% of participants referred to the significance of affective engagement with foreign language writing. According to this group, good writers were also the ones who enjoyed and valued writing. As stated by Mine, good writers did not view writing as a waste of time and spread an effort to produce better-written products:

A good writer should primarily love writing. If the writer sees writing as waste of time, I think, he cannot write well. He is also supposed to love putting time in writing. He should strive to develop his written product in terms of vocabulary or he should read more for better texts.

Addressing the potential relationship between reader and writer, Melda commented that loving writing would provide writers an opportunity to express themselves effectively. Thus, the readers would be able to enjoy that fondly written work, “For sure, it is required to love writing. When you do not love writing and see it a waste of time, you will not reflect yourself well and the reader will not enjoy it”. Ultimately, by 12% of pre-service teachers, good foreign language writer was characterized as a good observer and listener. According to Duygu, the underlying reason of this necessity was the influential role of using personal and other individuals’ experiences while writing. She said, “As far as I am concerned, a good writer is a good observer and listener, since he will use his own experiences in writing... I

think that observation is very important.”. Melda supported his friend about the observation and listening ability and remarked, “The writer should be a good observer. I think that the more he observes life and the more he learns from life, the better he writes.”.

Discussion

This study investigated beliefs about good foreign language writing/writers and the nature of writing ability as well as to discover the factors and individuals affecting their beliefs about writing. When participants were asked about good writing characteristics, 19% of them stated that good writing aimed to address and impress the audience, and 80% of those participants were high achieving students. This proposed that those who put emphasis on audience-orientation were more probable to receive higher grades on their written work. Also, almost half of the respondents (46%) said that good writers were “aware of their audience”, 67% of whom had high scores on their writing exams. Thus, interview results may confirm the positive relationship between audience-orientation and writing scores which has also been found by Sanders-Reio (2010), Sanders-Reio et al. (2014) and Tanyer (2014). Following that, 58% of the interviewees claimed that “good and creative ideas were developed and transmitted” in good foreign language writing, and 69 % of those participants were high-achieving students. Moreover, by 28% of respondents, good foreign language writers were viewed as the “producer of knowledgeable and convincing essays”, and 71% of those participants had higher scores on their writing exams. As a result, the high proportion of successful students in these two belief categories strengthens the adaptive nature of the belief that is “Development is Important” as found in Sanders-Reio (2010), Sanders-Reio et al. (2014) and Tanyer (2014). In other words, these findings indicated that the students subscribing to the beliefs held by expert writers such as audience-orientation, effective essay development as well as the ones viewing writing as a process of reviewing were prone to have higher scores on their papers.

Although 23% of participants characterized good foreign language writer as an “evaluator, reviewer, reviser” in the interviews, only 33% of those respondents were highly achieving students. However, when 26 participants were asked whether they revised and/or edited their papers before submitting, all those participants approved that they either revised or edited their homework (Tanyer, 2014). For this reason, it seems probable for this belief to become associated with higher grades. These findings also support Sanders-Reio’s (2010) outcomes in which audience-adaptation, attaching importance to development, and viewing writing as an iterative process were the three of the beliefs held by expert writers. So, the first-year pre-service teachers tend to implement the requirements of becoming an expert writer. As it is known that the majority of the participants (67.3%) have never practiced foreign language writing until higher education, the writing classes and its components at university will be the first environment in which the teacher candidates can shape their beliefs about foreign language writing. So, as teacher trainers, we should benefit from this opportunity as much as possible.

The 19% of pre-service teachers believed that good foreign language writing aimed to address and impress audience. The same beliefs were also discovered to be one of good writer characteristics; in other words, according to the interviewees, good writers should be aware of

their audience (46%). The belief that supports developing rational and persuasive arguments was also confirmed both as a good property of foreign language writing (e.g., Developing good and creative ideas, 58%), and competent foreign language writer (e.g., Producer of knowledgeable and convincing essays, 27%) with the interview results. Moreover, the other adaptive belief which regards writing as a process of reviewing was also associated with the features of good writing and good writer by the participants. Therefore, it can be argued that the pre-service teachers have started to discover and internalize expert writing orientations, which is a desirable and promising finding for us.

Some writing mechanics such as punctuation rules and grammar as well as vocabulary were believed to be a requirement for good foreign language writing. The 8% of participants stated that good foreign language writing were required to be “accompanied with punctuation rules”, and all those respondents (100%) were high-achieving students. Moreover, 58% of the participants expressed that complex and correct sentences must be formed with advance grammar in good foreign language writing, and 67% of that group had also received high-scores in their writing exams. These findings also confirmed the adaptive nature of these beliefs, which was found in the quantitative studies of Sanders-Reio (2010) and Tanyer (2014). It means that the students subscribing to the beliefs such as “Accompanied with punctuation rules” and “Advance grammar/ Complex and correct sentences” were prone to have higher scores on their papers.

As for writing ability, 42% of teacher candidates viewed writing both as an innate talent and a skill that can be improved with appropriate instruction, teacher feedback and student effort. Moreover, 39% of the participants characterized writing skill only as an innate gift, which means that it is almost impossible to become a good writer no matter how a novice writer puts effort to success. Lastly, only 19% of teacher candidates viewed writing as a skill that could be developed via enough training and student attempt. These findings are in line with Norman & Spencer’s (2005) study in which majority of the participants (63%) described writing as “an innate talent or gift that one either has or does not have” (p.34). Interestingly, 80% of the respondents who had regarded foreign language writing as an innate gift (39%) were low-achieving students while 60% of the interviewees who had viewed it as an improvable skill (19%) were high-achieving students. Moreover, 73% of the participants who regarded foreign language writing both as an innate gift and improvable skill (42%) had received higher scores in their exams as well. All these interview findings have supported the maladaptive tendency of the belief of “Writing is an Innate Gift” for our sample, and they might be one of the explanations why the belief that “Writing is an Innate Gift” was found as one of the maladaptive beliefs in our current research environment as well.

As for the factors and individuals shaping the beliefs about good foreign language writing, the responses fell into three categories: feedback and inspiration from teachers (58%), previous confrontations with good pieces of writing (39%) and personal experiences/background knowledge (12%). Those findings also provided support to the ones revealed in a few former studies (e.g., Norman & Spencer, 2005) which had indicated the importance of teachers’ effect on writing identity, and in which the writer instructors interested in students’ opinions and supporting them as writers had the most valuable positive influence on pre-service teachers. Specifically, 34% of pre-service teachers (program in early

childhood development) reported how “corrective feedback instruction” assisted them to improve their writing (Norman & Spencer, 2005; p.33).

Conclusion, Suggestion and Implications

The present study highlights the existence of pre-service English teachers’ domain specific beliefs about foreign language writing and writers. It has been revealed that first-year undergraduates approach foreign language writing with already shaped or adopted beliefs, truths and experiences. Furthermore, it has become noticeable that pre-service teachers interpret various writing components such as good writing or good writer with different sets of beliefs. Most essentially, some domain-specific beliefs about writing were found to have a relationship with writing performance and/or contribute to writing scores in the literature (e.g. Sanders-Reio, 2010; Sanders-Reio et al., 2014 and Tanyer, 2014), which can be supported by the current qualitative study. Therefore, it can be concluded that domain-specific beliefs about writing are one of the influential factors of foreign language writing discipline and writing performance.

Evaluating the outcomes related to preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing, writing instructors and teacher educators can modify the coursework and writing practices. They can let the preservice teachers reshape their belief systems, and guide them about good writing practices and good writer characteristics. As confirmed in the present study (e.g., factors and people affecting beliefs about good writing), school environment and its components (teachers, curriculum, feedback etc.) are potential factors shaping beliefs about good writing. For instance, it can be valuable to address the influence of reflection on learning. Perry (2011) suggests that reflective strategies such as “questions that students can answer for different ... content areas” and/or for their own beliefs about writing may be provided (p. 97). Based on student answers, both instructors and novice writers can mirror what they already know and believe about the writing skill. Therefore, writing instructors can both guide their students and help them develop their own strategies related to self-regulation, or build or rebuild their beliefs and confidence in the writing domain. Another study has also showed the probable positive influence of writing experiences at university (Beswick, 2006). For example, if an undergraduate writer experiences problems with spelling, which can also be discovered in reflective sessions, a writing instructor can design a weekly spelling test by using those mistakes in student texts. This approach would also provide that student an alternative technique that can be used in future learning and teaching situations.

Another more far-reaching implication is about probable elective writing courses. When pre-service English teachers’ limited experience in foreign language writing and the process oriented nature of writing skill are taken into consideration, it would be valuable to provide this group with additional elective writing courses in which they would be able to voluntarily practice foreign language writing and expert writing guidelines throughout a semester. As a close word, it would be crucial for pre-service teachers to inspect their domain specific writing beliefs while they are in preparation for teaching foreign language writing to their own students (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). Therefore, teacher educators should be encouraged to assist their trainees while they are both learning foreign language writing and being trained to teach it.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

As in most research studies conducted, there were some limitations in the current study, as well. The first one is related to the structured interviews. Although this interview type with a fixed set of closed questions is easy to replicate and practical to conduct, it is not flexible. In other words, no new question can be asked during the interview, which may affect the scope of answers that would be received. Secondly, among the eight sections of Academic Writing and Report Writing Course, only three of them were randomly selected for the interviews and all eight groups could not be included in the study. Thirdly, by grouping the students whose writing scores were lower and upper than the group mean (i.e. 66.1), two groups of participants (13 students in each) were formed applying extreme case sampling methodology. However, while grouping them according to their writing performance, only the grades received on one midterm paper could be included because of the limited time that the writers had for research.

As for the recommendations for further research, one strength of structured interviews can be utilized which is being easy to replicate. Since this interview type consists of a fixed set of closed questions, the outcomes of them would be easy to quantify and to compare with the previous studies. For the future research, it is possible to conduct structured interviews with different foreign/second language learner profiles, even with larger samples, and discover the domain specific writing beliefs of them. Therefore, it would be possible to find out whether some beliefs are more or less adaptive or maladaptive in different educational contexts and whether those beliefs are related to various writing tasks and practices or not. As well as the beliefs included in this study (e.g., beliefs about good writing, good writer etc.), beliefs about other dimensions of writing such as revision process can be investigated, too. Also, some longitudinal studies by providing intervention could be designed to find out whether specific instructional procedures might change students' beliefs about writing or not.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Questions (English Version)

1. Please define in your own words, “What is Foreign Language Writing?”.
2. Good Foreign Language Writing
 - a. Suppose that you were asked to be the teacher for your Academic Writing and Reporting Class today, and one of the students asked you, “What is good foreign language writing?”. What would you tell that student about good foreign language writing?
 - b. Do you think who and what might shape your beliefs and truths about good foreign language writing throughout your own educational life?
3. Good Foreign Language Writer
 - a. Do you think anyone can be a good language writer?
 - b. What are the characteristics of a “good foreign language writer”?

Appendix B – Interview Questions (Turkish Version)

1. Lütfen, kendi sözcüklerinizle, “Yabancı Dilde Yazma”yı tanımlayınız.
2. Yabancı Dilde İyi Yazma
 - a. Farzediniz ki, Akademik Yazma ve Raporlaştırma dersinizin öğretmeni sizsiniz ve öğrencilerinizden biri size “Yabancı dilde iyi bir yazı nedir, nasıldır?” diye sordu. Bu öğrencinize “iyi yazı” hakkında neler söylediniz?
 - b. Sizce “Yabancı Dilde İyi Yazı” hakkında geliştirdiğiniz inançlarınızın oluşumunda kimler ve neler rol oynamış olabilir?
3. Yabancı Dilde İyi Yazar
 - a. Sizce herkes “Yabancı Dilde İyi Bir Yazar” olabilir mi?
 - b. Sizce “Yabancı Dilde İyi Yazar”ın özellikleri nelerdir?