



COPING STRATEGIES USED BY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS TO OVERCOME WRITING CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers in the writing process and the coping strategies they used to cope with these challenges. For this purpose, being one of the qualitative research methods, the case study was used. Based on existing writing models in the literature, the study group of the research included 69 third-year pre-service teachers who studied in the Turkish Language Teaching program of a state university during the 2018-2019 academic-year. Prior to the data collection, the participants were asked to write a 1500-2000-word essay in the triangle of “reader-writer-context”. Next, they were asked to answer two open-ended questions were asked and they were asked to answer these questions and descriptive analysis technique was used to analyze the data. When the writing difficulties experienced by the pre-service teachers in the writing process were examined, it was determined that they had the most writing challenges at the process level, followed by the writing difficulties at the control level, and the least at the resource level. Coping strategies used by pre-service teachers in response to their writing challenges in the writing process, it was determined that coping strategies aimed at providing cognitive support were used the most, which was followed by coping strategies towards providing instrumental support, and strategies towards creating affective support. In conclusion, problems encountered in the professional training process and the ability to come up with solutions for these problems will be the predictor of the potential resolutions created by pre-service teachers for the problems they might face while performing their own professions.

Keywords: Writing skills, writing challenges, coping strategies, pre-service teachers.

INTRODUCTION

To be equipped with writing skill in any language and advance this skill depends on numerous variables. While some of these variables stem from the internal dynamics of the writing itself, some are dependent upon the personal experience of those who write apart from the action of writing. On this note, over a forty-year period, several models have been developed starting with Flower and Hayes (1980). Starting from the factors that affect the act of writing, these models (Hayes & Flower, 1980; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Kellogg, 1994; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997; Hayes, 2012) has attempted to describe the nature of writing.

Writing is a multi-purpose communication activity, and writing instruction is performed with consideration to a certain set of standards. These standards focus on the acquisition of foundational



writing skills, such as handwriting and spelling, but writing is more than that. Writing is a process activity for writing purposes as well as the following four writing applications;

- ✓ for multiple purposes (narrate, persuade, inform/explain),
- ✓ producing and publishing well-organized text appropriate to task and purpose by increasingly applying processes involving planning, revising, editing, and collaborating with others,
- ✓ using writing to build knowledge about specific topics or materials read,
- ✓ and the last applying writing to extend and facilitate learning in a range of discipline-specific subjects as well as across purposes and audiences (Harris, Graham, Friedlander, & Laud, 2013, p. 539).

Writing is a productive skill that comprehends cognitive processes (Jebreil, Azizifar, Gowhary, & Jamalinesari, 2015) such as expressing intentions, composing ideas, problem-solving, and critical thinking (Fareed, Ashraf, & Bilal 2016). According to Erkan and Saban (2011), due to its nature as a productive skill, language learners find writing challenging. Nation (2020) argues that writing involves complex thinking skills and special ways of organizing and presenting the writing that deserves attention and can be prepared for other skills of listening, reading, and speaking. Besides, writing is not only referred to as a text in the written script but also as the acts of thinking, composing, and encoding language into such text (Cumming, Lai, & Cho, 2016) and it has precisely defined as highly required to involve an entirely different set of competencies (Brown, 2000). Because of implicating extra efforts in understanding, thinking, planning, and revising, writing has been considered as the most difficult skill to master (Pimsam, 2013; Shukri, 2014).

Writing is a difficult skill to master, and it subjects individuals to certain challenges during writing. Considering the literature related to the challenges in writing, the studies are supported with comparative research categorized as a foreign-native language (Alsamdani, 2010; Crosby, 2009; Ghabool, Edwina & Kashef, 2012; Rabab'ah, 2003; Tahaine, 2010) and bilingual writing skills. Challenge, in the statement of Collin (2012), means a task or situation that tests someone's ability. In this study, challenges are those difficult situations that pre-service teachers encounter in writing. These challenges were examined under three categories based on the stages of Hayes's (2012) writing model as follows: *control level*, *process level*, and *resource level*. However, in this study, writing anxiety as another variable, which is not included in the Hayes's (2012) model yet affects the writing process, was also examined. This study will contribute to the field in terms of the writing challenges encountered in the field of writing and the determination of coping strategies, based on the Hayes's (2012) model, which has been handled differently from other studies on this subject.

When writing difficulties are addressed it was revealed in many studies that anxiety as a demotivating trait affects writing. Writing anxiety, as a subject and situation-specific anxiety, was defined as a general avoidance of writing behavior and situations thought to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing (Hassan, 2001: 4). The research has shown that language anxiety is the specific type of anxiety that is mostly associated with language performance. It has a significant and negative effect on performance in these indices of language achievement (Cheng, 2004; Horwitz, 2001). That is why, writing anxiety, which is non-existent in the Hayes's (2012) model, was handled as a constituent that impacts the writing process, and a category titled as writing challenge was constructed through the participants' responses. Hence, writing anxiety as a demotivator that affects the writing process was added to the motivation component of the Hayes's (2012) model. For this reason, the writing challenge arising from both lack of writing motivation and writing anxiety was investigated within the control level motivation component of the Hayes's (2012) model.

A challenge encountered related to any matter necessitates coping with it. As can be suggested by the related literature, studies recommended as a solution for the writing challenges were conducted in the contexts of self-evaluation and self-regulation; meanwhile, the studies addressing writing-oriented coping strategies are quite limited in number. Therefore, besides the challenges encountered during



writing, this study attempted to determine strategies to cope with these challenges. Carver (2013) defines coping as “efforts to prevent or diminish threat, harm, and loss, or to reduce the distress that is often associated with those experiences.” It includes self-regulated goal attainment strategies and personal growth. On one hand, coping is referred to as a sub-component of self-regulatory processes only occurring under stressful circumstances while, on the other hand, it can be described as the entirety of complex systems harboring the regulation of feelings. When individual faces stress, they not only have to cope with the emotional experience and the physical reactions expressing this experience, but attempt to coordinate the reactions emerging from social and physical surrounding through motor behavior, attention, and cognition (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001). Thus, coping is “basic process integral to adaptation and survival, as it depicts how people detect, appraise, deal with, and learn from stressful encounters” (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2014). It is also found that adopting the coping strategy largely determines how individuals experience anxiety to help an individual being shielded (Adasi, Amponsah, Mohammed, Yeboah, & Mintah, 2020). Coping also involves the use of different strategies and techniques in order to manage the situation.

Psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed coping strategies or coping skills. Therefore, just as the challenges faced in writing are not only cognitive difficulties, coping strategies are not problem-oriented only, requiring affective-based approaches to the potential challenges in the writing process. At this point, if coping is operated against writing challenges, besides cognitive-based practices, the use of affective factors will be highlighted and Snyder (1999) listed three broad types of coping strategies as appraisal-focused, problem-focused and emotion-focused. Typically, people use a mixture of all three types of coping strategies, and coping skills usually change over time. According to the author, all these methods can prove useful, but some claim that those individuals who use problem-focused coping strategies adjust better to life. Coping, in the context of this study, is the reaction and effort needed by pre-service teachers to minimize or tolerate challenges in writing in three categories: “Towards Cognitive Structuring”, “Constructing Affective Support”, and “Providing Instrumental Support”. Strategies used to cope with the challenges in writing were attempted to be determined under these three categories.

The capability of teachers about to serve in the field of language teaching to resolve the writing challenges faced by their students within the process itself is dependent upon their awareness of such challenges and their guiding competence for the solutions. That is why; this study seeks answers to the following questions with regards to determining the strategies used to cope with the challenges encountered in writing:

- ✓ What are the challenges faced by pre-service teachers in the writing process?
- ✓ What are the strategies used by pre-service teachers to cope with the challenges encountered in the writing process?

Hayes (2012) Writing Model and Writing Difficulties Addressed in the Model Basis

Writing production has been one of the main subject areas of language learning processes, and it has been investigated along with cognitive and metacognitive aspects and variables such as anxiety, self-efficacy and motivation that affect writing, and various models have been developed on how to write better. In this study, the writing model of Hayes (2012), which is one of the current writing models, was used as the basis. Hayes (2012) constructs his updated writing model in three phases as “Control Level”, “Process Level” and “Resource Level”. The control level consists of four subcomponents as follows: motivation, goal-setting (plan, write, and revise), current plan, and writing schemas. Process level is divided into two categories as writing processes and task environment. Here, the proposer, translator, transcriber, and evaluator subcomponents are located cyclically in the writing processes component, while collaborators and critics, transcribing technology, task materials and writing plans, and text written so far components interact with the task environment component. Considering the source level, it can be seen that there are subcomponents of attention, working memory, long-term memory, and reading.

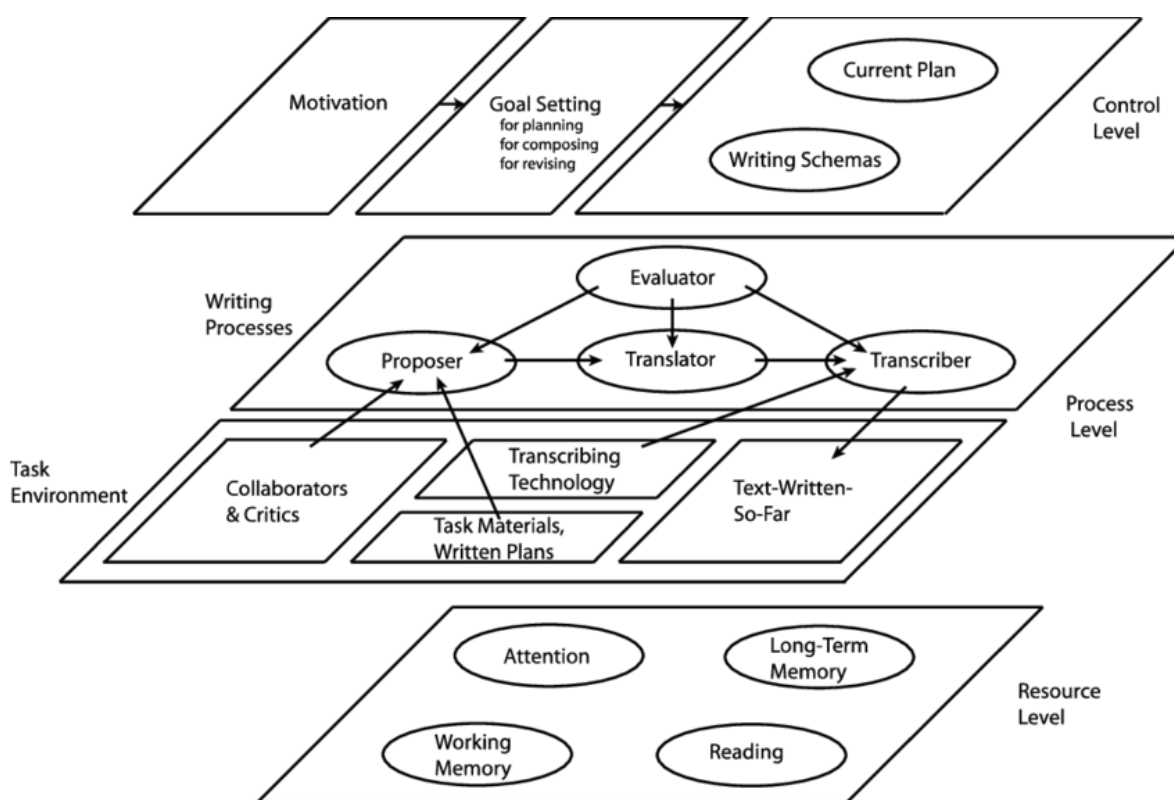


Figure 1. Model of writing proposed by Hayes (2012)

Out of these stages, the "motivation" component, which was not included in previous models, was highlighted at the control level. Emphasizing the lack of it being included in previous models, Hayes (2012) advocates that the affective dimension of writing cannot be ignored as an important element of the writing process and that it is necessary to learn how to combine motivation with cognitive processes to adequately explain how people write. Stating that the importance of motivation for writing is prioritized with the realization of its effect on people's willingness to participate in writing, Hayes (2012) suggests that through handling the affective dimension of the writing process, such feelings that are difficult to define are observed to submerge to the conscience. With these observations, it can be understood that whether people write, how much they write, how much they participate in writing activities, and the quality of their writing has a direct relationship with their motivations. Additionally, emphasizing the effect of the individual's motivation level during writing, Hayes (2012) reveals that it was found that writers with high motivation participate in the writing process more and produce more qualified sentences and texts than those with less motivation to produce quality texts (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001).

Upon examining Hayes's (2012) writing model, it is seen that the goal-setting component is at the control level and consists of the stages of planning, writing, and reviewing. During writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981), which is a purposeful process in which the writer sets many goals in motion, what the target output will be and what actions will take place in this process are determined at the goal-setting stage. On another note, according to Alamargot and Chanquoy (2001), the goal-setting component in writing is a terrain on which what to say and how to say it in writing are supervised. Based on this, in Hayes's (2012) model, it can be noted that the writer places the goal-setting component at the control stage in order to determine and supervise their purpose during the production of the text. As a sub-component of the goal-setting component, the planning, writing, and review phases take place as separate writing processes. First, the writing process is planned; subsequently, the writing process begins, and the written text is reviewed. All these processes require the writer to go through certain



cognitive stages. For the presentation of existing information in writing, many sub-processes such as generating ideas appropriate for the purpose of the writing, ordering, and correcting thoughts are employed in the planning, and this process is maintained during writing. The written product, which has been developed to a certain point in the review stage, is evaluated in numerous dimensions, and if necessary, it is controlled and edited. Whereas Flower and Hayes (1980) state that competent writers create a more detailed plan for writing and continue to develop and change this plan throughout the labor of writing, Cho (2003), similarly, points out that competent writers use multi-faceted review processes to improve texts; states that competent writers utilize multifaceted reviewing processes to improve their texts. Conversely, incompetent authors aim to compose and complete the text completely in their first attempt. This constitutes proof that the planning and review phases should not be neglected, keeping them under control so as to become proficient in writing and increase the quality of the writing product.

At the control level of the Hayes's (2012) model, the last components are the current plan and writing schemas. The fact that the current plan and writing schemas components are included at the control level is an indicator of the point that the writing process cannot be handled independently of previous writing experiences and that the process is a cumulative action. When these components are assessed holistically, it is evident that they are constructs that control the writing processes. The current plan is described by Hayes's (2012) model as follows: Creating a written plan not only includes setting goals, generating and evaluating ideas, but also transcription and translation. That is why, creating a written plan involves a complete writing process that produces a text designed to assist the writer of the plan in producing another text. Indeed, writers may create many plans that they did not put into the text. For instance, short plans that can be easily stored in memory for the later applications do not need to be copied. Since such plans act as a supervisor in the writing process, Hayes's (2012) model harbors the current plan at the controlling level of the writing process. In addition, writing schemas reflect the writer's thoughts or beliefs about how writing processes and resources are to be used to produce the planned text. These components in their entirety take place at the control level and constitute the framework of the writing action (Bayat, 2020, p. 24).

The second section of the model is referred to as the process level. At this level, there are two main parts as writing processes and task environment. In the writing processes component of the model, proposer, translator, transcriber, and evaluator sub-components are involved whereas in the task environment component, collaborators and critics, task materials and writing plans, transcribing technology, and text written so far sub-components take place. In the writing processes component, proposer, translator, and transcriber are in active interaction with both their sub-components and the sub-components of task environment. The proposer, which is utilized for constructing the intellectual content to be included in the text, collaborators and critics present in a task environment, task materials, and writing plans all make a delivery. Through this delivery, an idea package is constructed by the proposer. Collaborators and critics aid the formation of an idea package with their support or criticism. Similarly, sub-components of task materials and writing plans in the task environment back the formation of the text through generated drafts and plans by creating various instructions. Task materials are the tools such as books, articles, etc. that form thoughts. Benefitting from such tools greatly contributes to the formation of the text. The thoughts formed are conveyed to a translator to transform into the linguistic structure; subsequently, it is transferred to the transcriber to be put into text. Here, transcribing technology, which is one of the sub-components of the task environment, makes deliveries to this component. Transcribing technology harbored in Hayes's (2012) model, shows how the text is written via keyboards or hands. Hayes (2012) asserts that transcribing technology in current technology as the component of task environment must definitely be taken into consideration. Since how a text is written is related to the act of production by transferring through copying, transcribing technology is related to text-written so far at the same time. The last sub-component of the writing process is the evaluator. This component individually evaluates the writing, supervising proposer, translator, and transcriber in the meantime. As can be seen, the process



level is a detailed stage that explains the writing process through interrelated sub-components that influence one another.

The last level in the model is the level of resources. Within the boundaries of this component, long-term memory, working memory, and attention and reading sub-components are included. Reading, which is the prominent requirement to produce a text, is an indication of how long things remain in the long-term memories of the writers and what type of experience they have regarding the topic. Providing that the writers are proficient in the text topic, the knowledge is stored in their long-term memory, and they use the knowledge in the working memory when the need arises, it will be easier for them to produce a quality writing product. Certain knowledge stored in long-term memory is used to form ideas and extract the existing knowledge during writing. The knowledge in the long-term memory is activated to derive text-appropriate knowledge by structuring it in the working memory. The knowledge present here is related to both the topic area and the coherence and cohesion of the sentences. Another emerging component during these processes is attention. Construction and textualizing of the knowledge in the memory are dependent on a certain extent of focus. The process is initiated by transferring the target knowledge to the area of the text. Following this, the knowledge is transferred to the text through working memory and adequate attention. Thus, supervision of attention is ensured while a memory-related process is performed. If the individual is of low potential at one of these stages, they encounter challenges during writing.

METHOD

Research Model

This study aimed to determine the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers in the writing process and the coping strategies they used to cope with these challenges. For this purpose, being one of the qualitative research methods, the case study was used. The case study is a research method that is used to answer how and why questions in current situations where researcher control does not exist over variables (Yin, 2003). Case studies are classified into different types according to the purposes of the research. In this study, an exploratory case study was used since the research aimed to determine the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers in the writing process and the strategies they used to cope with these challenges. The exploratory case study is a type of research where the researcher seeks to answer the question of "what" and the researched phenomenon is explored within the data they collect in line with the focus of the study. Moreover, at the end of the study, hypotheses about the phenomenon are developed and suggestions are presented for future studies (Yin, 2015).

Study Group

The study group of the research consisted of 69 third-year pre-service teachers (29 males, 40 females) who studied in the Turkish Language Teaching program of a state university during the 2018-2019 academic year. In determining the study group, the criterion sampling method was used. The criteria for determining the sample are that the participants were to complete theoretical and practical courses focusing on developing language skills such as written and oral expression and teaching language skills such as reading education, writing education, listening education, and speaking education, which meant that they reached the third grade. In criterion sampling, the researcher can construct the observation units of the research with people, events, objects, or situations with certain qualities. In such settings, units that meet the criteria determined for the sample are taken into the sample (Büyükoztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel 2017).

Data Collection

At the beginning of the data collection process, theoretical information about writing models, writing strategies, writing methods, and techniques were given to the participants by the researcher who also ran the course. In addition, the stages of the writing process are presented depending on the planned writing. In this section, which can be considered as a preparation for writing, it was tried to increase the knowledge and experience of the participants about the writing process. Then, were asked to write an article between 1500-2000 words in the triangle of "reader-writer-context". Preparation, drafting,



revision and correction processes were carried out gradually so that the article could be realized in accordance with the planned writing model. Then, taking this practice into consideration, "What are the difficulties you encounter in the writing process?" and "What do you do to cope with the difficulties you encounter in the writing process?" In the form of two separate open-ended questions, they were asked to answer these questions. For the content validity of the questions, the opinions of four experts working in the field of language teaching were consulted and it was agreed that they reflect the purpose of the research. The data collection process was carried out over a period of eight weeks. Accordingly, the research was prepared in accordance with scientific research processes and ethical principles.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of the gathered data at the end of the research, the descriptive analysis technique was used. Descriptive analysis, which allows the research results to be presented by focusing on the research questions, is an analysis technique in which the obtained data are summarized and interpreted in accordance with the previously determined themes, excerpts are frequently used to reflect the views of the interviewed participants in a striking way, and the results are interpreted within the framework of cause-effect relationships (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this vein, first of all, each participant's opinion was handled by taking the questions as themes and the codes pertaining to the answers given to each research question were categorized under that theme. Subsequently, the frequency values of the codes belonging to each theme were calculated.

In the study, Hayes (2012) writing model was taken as a reference in the generation of codes related to writing challenges. Studies based on the theoretical and applied dimensions of coping strategies were used in the generation of codes related to coping strategies. The data were analyzed by three independent researchers to ensure the reliability of the research. To establish consensus among experts, the percentage of coder reliability was used as the reliability formula ($\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Consensus}}{\text{Consensus} + \text{Disagreement}} \times 100$) suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). According to the formula, the percentage of agreement in the coding was calculated as %89.9. In addition, in order to increase the internal validity of the research, excerpts from the answers given by the study group were presented in the findings section.

FINDINGS

This study aimed to determine the challenges encountered by Turkish pre-service teachers in the writing process and the coping strategies they used to overcome these challenges. To serve this purpose, the obtained data towards the research problems were presented.

Findings Regarding Writing Challenges

Findings concerning the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during writing were tabulated as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Writing challenges

Writing Challenges	<i>f</i>
Writing Challenges Encountered at Control Level	93
Writing Challenges Encountered at Process Level	114
Writing Challenges Encountered at Resource Level	19
Total	226

According to Table 1, writing challenges ($f=226$) were classified under three categories as challenges encountered at the control level ($f=93$), challenges encountered at the process level ($f=114$), and challenges encountered at the resource level ($f=19$). It was determined that pre-service teachers experienced the highest challenge at the process level and followed by the challenges experienced at the control level. The lowest amount of challenge was experienced at the resource level.



Findings Regarding the Writing Challenges Encountered at Control Level

Findings concerning control-level challenges as one of the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during writing were tabulated as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Writing challenges encountered at control level

Writing Challenges Encountered at Control Level	f
Challenges Related to Motivation	58
Challenges Related to Goal-Setting (Planning, Writing, and Reviewing)	17
Challenges Related to Making Current Plan	10
Challenges Related to Writing Schemas	8
Total	93

Based on Table 2, writing challenges experienced at the control level (f=93) consisted of four sub-components as challenges related to motivation (f=58), challenges related to goal-setting (planning, writing, and reviewing) (f=17), challenges related to making current plans (f=10), and challenges related to writing schemas (f=8).

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the data obtained in the component of challenges related to motivation were examined under two categories as anxiety-related challenges (f=40) and motive-related challenges (f=18). Considering the anxiety-related challenges, it was determined that pre-service teachers struggled with distinct types of writing anxiety as text-oriented (f=21), reader-oriented (f=12), and writer-oriented (f=7), which negatively impacted the writing processes. In text-oriented anxiety, pre-service teachers stated that they had anxiety related to the quality of the text (f=12) and style (f=9). Pre-service teacher (Ç.T.) accounted for the anxiety for the text and the reasons for this anxiety with the statement “*When I also don’t like what I’ve written, I may be running away from writing because a person can’t always create a product as they like and it causes me to have anxiety of writing*”. Pre-service teacher (E.E.) stated “*I have difficulties expressing in literary ways. I prefer using idioms rather than highly literary words. I can’t keep an accurate saying.*” and participant (Ş. G) remarked “*I was anxious if I could maintain my style during writing*”, addressing the challenge regarding the style. In reader-oriented anxiety, it was revealed that pre-service teachers had anxiety about being disliked (f=4) and others reading the text (f=3). For this, the pre-service teacher (Ç.Y.) remarked on their anxiety about others reading their text as “*if someone is going to read what I’ve written, this also prevents me from writing calmly.*” and pre-service teacher (E.Ö.) as “*I feel shy reading my writings in the classroom and when others hear it*”. The pre-service teacher (N.A.) refers directly to the writing challenge itself by stating “*I feel anxious my writing might be bad*”. Writer-oriented anxiety emerged as getting nervous (f=9) and getting stressed (f=3). The pre-service teacher (K.S.) addressed the challenge created by nervousness while writing: “*while writing I have unnecessary panic feeling and I get nervous.*” while with the expression “*It makes me stressed when I’m writing*”, the pre-service teacher (H.K.), the pre-service teacher (G.A) with the remark “*writing makes me stressed*” and the pre-service teacher (N.Ş.) with the statement “*I got overly stressed.*” All addressed the challenge created by stress.

Difficulties regarding the motive (f=18) were found to be as reluctance (f=9), negative attitude (f=5), and lack of focus (f= 4). With the statement “*My biggest problem is not being able to be motivated*”, the pre-service teacher (E.Ö) brought a general explanation to the motivational reason of writing difficulty. The pre-service teacher (F.K.), with the remark “*I can’t get rid of the reluctance (lack of motivation) to writing*”, expressed the challenge faced in writing due to the lack of motivation. Concerning the affective difficulty faced while writing with their bodies, the pre-service teacher (G.Ö.) stated “*To be uninterested in writing.*” and the pre-service teacher (B.K.) noted “*Starting to the writing reluctantly*”. Another challenge for writing is the negative attitude. The pre-service teacher (C.Z.) explained this challenge with the sentence “*As in the other stages, my negative attitude towards the writing process pushes me to finish the writing as soon as possible and I do not show the necessary care*”.



Challenges regarding the goal-setting (planning, writing and revision) (f=17) are other types of challenges experienced by the pre-service teacher at the control level. In this vein, pre-service teacher (N.Z.) stated *“I’m having trouble deciding what to write before I start writing”* and the pre-service teacher (K.S.) remarked *“I can’t really form a purpose and a plan in my head before the writing phase”* to address the challenge they experienced in setting their writing goals. Regarding setting plan and writing challenges, the pre-service teacher (B.K.) said *“I cannot show the necessary attention to the planning process.”* and the pre-service teacher (E.Ö.) stated *“I can’t make the outline of the text about where and what to include by dividing the main ideas and side ideas that I need to focus on to stay on the subject..”*. With the statement *“I want the writing to end I don’t want to read and check again”*, the participant (B.B.) revealed that they did not perform revision as a part of the writing stages, which posed a challenge for the writing.

Upon examining the challenges of making current plans (f=10) at the control level, it was found that some participants had difficulties with making plans while some had challenges with sticking to the plan. These challenges were addressed by the pre-service teacher (M.E.)’s statement *“I try to write what comes to my mind instantly and a mixed text appears. I can’t stick to the current plan”* and the participant (S.S.)’s remark *“I’m having difficulty planning my writing and going with the plan”*.

Regarding the participants’ challenges experienced related to writing schemas (f=8), it was seen that they had challenges in using and managing existing resources and conforming to the writing process. For this issue, the participant (K.S.) stated *“I was challenged with scanning the resources”*, the participant (K.K.) said *“I was inadequate in finding resources”* and the participant (E.Ö.) remarked *“Because the chosen topic was abstract, I had difficulty in searching the sources on the topic.”*, addressing the writing schema challenge. With the statement *“I couldn’t keep up with the writing process time duration, it was incomplete”*, the pre-service teacher (H.C.) and the participant (G.D.) with the remark *“I couldn’t finish planning and writing in time”* mentioned the challenges they experienced regarding conforming to the writing process.

Findings Regarding Writing Challenges Encountered at Process Level

Findings concerning process-level challenges as one of the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during writing were tabulated as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Writing challenges encountered at process level

Writing Challenges Encountered at Process Level	f
Challenges Related to Writing Processes	96
Challenges Related to Task Environment	18
Total	114

In accordance with Table 3, challenges encountered at the process level (f=114) consisted of two sub-components as challenged related to writing processes (f=96) and challenges related to task environment (f=17). Considering the challenges related to writing processes, it was determined that the most challenging sub-component was the proposer sub-component, and this component’s interaction with collaborators and critics, task materials, and writing plans. As an example, the pre-service teacher (G.T.) stated *“I write and delete all the time, I find it hard to choose the right word”* and the pre-service teacher (M.A.) said *“When I’m writing, I make repetitions with many words, sentences, and thoughts”*, addressing this challenge in collaborators and critics, and proposer sub-component. Similarly, in this sub-component, the participant (C.Y.) remarked *“I generally have difficulty finding a title.”* and mentioned the challenge in choosing the title. In addition, the pre-service teacher (M.S.) remarked *“I find it hard to form a topic sentence for the text”* to refer to the challenge in forming a topic sentence. Challenges encountered by translator and transcriber in the writing process were mentioned by (B.K.) stating *“I have difficulties abiding by spelling rules and punctuations, make mistakes”* (G.Ö.) *“I can’t create a page layout”*.



The pre-service teacher (K.A.) remarked, “*Even if I make a plan, I can’t keep consistency in the text*” Referring to the challenges experienced in writing plans while Pre-service teacher (A.A.) mentioned the challenge experienced in collaborators and critics and evaluation sub-component in the statement “*What I write in a previous paragraph and in the later paragraphs look like two separate texts*”. As an example of the challenge in text-written-so-far sub-component in the task environment component, the pre-service teacher (E.T.) stated “*I couldn’t reach fluency in the writing process*”. Regarding the task materials sub-component of task environment component, the pre-service teacher (G.A.) stated “*I had difficulty doing research on the topic and finding articles.*”, the pre-service teacher (N.Z.) said “*I had difficulty basing the text on scientific data, I could increase my text’s validity by including scientific data and giving concrete examples.*”, and the pre-service teacher (P.B.) remarked “*I tried to do research on the topic I was going to write about in various ways but it was hard. Then, I was late for my writing process*”.

Findings Regarding Writing Challenges Encountered at Resource Level

Findings concerning resource-level challenges as one of the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during writing were tabulated as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Writing challenges encountered at resource level

Writing Challenges Encountered at Resource Level	f
Challenges Related to Memory	6
Challenges Related to Attention	8
Challenges Related to Reading	5
Total	19

According to Table 4, writing challenges encountered at the resource level (f=19) were divided into three sub-categories as challenges related to memory (f=6), challenges related to attention (f=8), and challenges related to reading (f=5). The pre-service teacher (S.G.) responded “*We write without thinking or we can’t find a template or draft in our minds*”, the pre-service teacher (Ş. Y) stated “*I find it hard to shape up the sentences and give the text a direction while writing*”, and the pre-service teacher (G.F.) remarked “*Writing requires experience. Knowledge or emotional experience. Sometimes, even if I have the experience, I can’t think of anything to write*”, all mentioning the writing challenges stemming from long-term memory or working memory during writing.

Another challenge experienced at the resource level is related to attention. Pre-service teacher (N.G.) claimed “*Trying to pay attention to the tidiness of the writing while writing also creates problems for me to focus on the content of the text*” and pre-service teacher (E.Ö) noted “*I become distracted in the writing stage because of thinking about what to write*”, underlining the effect of cognitive load over attention. In the meantime, the pre-service teacher (Ş.Y) said “*Crowded, loud, or messy environments become problems when I want to write*”, the pre-service teacher (P.B.) stated “*From time to time, I can’t focus on writing because of external factors*”, and the pre-service teacher (B.K.) remarked “*I find it hard to gather my attention. The smallest thing can distract me*” referring to the writing challenges due to the effect of other variables over attention.

To exemplify the writing challenge caused by insufficient reading, the pre-service teacher (R.A.) stated “*My vocabulary is inadequate because I don’t read books. That’s why, I have difficulty writing*” and the pre-service teacher (O.T.) noted “*Firstly, to become a good writer, one needs to be a good reader. This lack makes me have difficulties with writing*”.

Findings on Strategies Used in Coping with Writing Difficulties

Strategies used by pre-service teachers to cope with the challenges encountered during writing were presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Coping strategies

Coping Strategies	<i>f</i>
Strategies towards Cognitive Structuring	109
Strategies towards Providing Instrumental Support	23
Strategies towards Creating Affective Support	19
Total	151

According to Table 5, coping strategies ($f=151$) were divided into three categories as coping strategies towards cognitive structuring ($f=109$), coping strategies towards providing instrumental support ($f=23$), and coping strategies towards creating affective support ($f=19$). It was determined that pre-service teachers mostly used coping strategies towards cognitive restructuring, followed by coping strategies towards providing instrumental support, and they used coping strategies towards creating affective support the least.

Findings Regarding Coping Strategies Used for Cognitive Structuring

Findings regarding coping strategies used by pre-service teachers towards cognitive structuring were presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Coping strategies for cognitive structuring

Codes	<i>f</i>
Planning before writing	22
Reading books, acquiring reading habit	23
Doing research from different resources	16
Practicing writing more often	11
Thinking over the writing topic	6
Making time for writing	7
Using methods/techniques	21
Self-evaluation after writing	3
Total	109

According to Table 6, reading books and acquiring reading habits ($f=23$) were the most used coping strategy towards cognitive structuring. The pre-service teacher (L.S.) stated “*In parts I am stuck, I scan different resources and read new things*” and the pre-service teacher (I.T.) noted “*To overcome these challenges, I am careful about reading a book I obtain and like, short articles written on any subject, etc. I try to get into the habit of reading books*”, exemplifying the most frequently used coping strategy towards cognitive structuring. This strategy was followed by planning before writing ($f=22$) and using methods/techniques ($f=21$). The statement “*I realized that to deal with these, I had to first create a plan and then draft it. Choosing the right sentences, doing research, and using techniques such as mind maps when necessary can make my job easier*” by the pre-service teacher (Y. S.) can be given as an example for both strategies. Pre-service teachers stated that they used a coping strategy for cognitive restructuring by doing research from different sources ($f=16$) and practicing writing more often ($f=11$). Making time for writing ($f=7$) and thinking over the writing topic ($f=6$) and self-evaluation after writing ($f=3$) were the least used coping strategies. Pre-service teacher (R.A) stated “*To overcome writing challenges, I force myself to write something by thinking about the place and importance of writing in my life...*”, implying that they overcame writing challenges by writing.

Findings Regarding Coping Strategies Used for Providing Instrumental Support

Findings regarding coping strategies used by pre-service teachers towards providing instrumental support were presented in Table 7.

In accordance with Table 7, regarding providing instrumental support, pre-service teachers used dictionaries ($f=6$), spelling dictionaries ($f=3$), and the internet ($f=4$). The pre-service teacher (Ç.T.) listed the instrumental supports they used by stating “*To solve my writing problems, I try to read the interviews of writers, musicians and theater actors and what is written about them in newspapers, magazines and the internet from time to time*”.

**Table 7.** Coping Strategies Used for Providing Instrumental Support

Codes	<i>f</i>
Benefitting from spelling dictionary	3
Benefitting from dictionary	6
Using the internet	4
Keeping diary/journal	1
Asking for others' opinions	5
Changing the environment	3
Attending the writing education lesson regularly	1
Total	23

Asking for others' opinions ($f=5$) and changing the environment ($f=3$) are among the coping strategies used to provide instrumental support. In terms of using changing the environment as a coping strategy, the pre-service teacher (P.Ç.) remarked "*Showing enough flexibility about the space*" and the pre-service teacher (E.A.) stated "*Space is also a factor that affects writing. Good light, fresh air, refreshing scents make it easy for us to relax our minds*". Keeping diary/journal ($f=1$) and attending the writing education lesson regularly ($f=1$) were the least used coping strategies towards providing instrumental support.

Findings Regarding Coping Strategies Used for Providing Affective Support

Findings regarding coping strategies used by pre-service teachers towards providing affective support were presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Coping strategies used for providing affective support

Codes	<i>f</i>
Self-motivating	10
Relaxing the self	5
Listening to music/watching documentaries-films	4
Total	19

According to Table 8, self-motivating ($f=10$) is the most preferred coping strategy regarding providing affective support. The pre-service teacher (N.Ş.İ)'s remark "*I try to get myself motivated to start my writing*" and the pre-service teacher (O.T.)'s statement "*I prevent my motivation from decreasing during writing*" can be given as an example. Relaxing the self as an affective support tool ($f=5$) and music ($f=4$) are the remaining commonly used coping strategies. The pre-service teacher (D.S.) underlines the preferred coping strategy as affective support with the remark "*I try to relax with music playing in the background*".

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS

When the writing difficulties experienced by the pre-service teachers in the writing process were examined, it was determined that they had the most writing challenges at the process level, followed by the writing difficulties at the control level, and the least at the resource level. Writing challenges at the process level consisted of two sub-components: challenges related to writing processes and challenges related to the task environment. Regarding the challenges related to the writing processes, it was determined that there were mostly challenges in the proposer sub-component and in the interaction of this component with the collaborators and critics, task materials, and writing plans. It was determined that the proposer component, which is used to create the intellectual content in the text, and the collaborators and critics units, where the processes of choosing the right words and presenting the ideas in cohesion are carried out, were the areas where pre-service teachers had the most difficulty.

In many studies in the literature, it was similarly determined that pre-service teachers had challenges in forming the intellectual content of the text and in ordering the thoughts in cohesion, and they made various mistakes in word selection and syntax. Baki and Karakuş (2017) determined that Pre-service



teachers had difficulties in choosing words, forming sentences, connecting sentences, creating paragraphs, paragraph integrity, introduction, development, and conclusion in the writing process. Bayat (2013), in his study to identify errors in the academic writings of pre-service teachers, found that there were many types of errors in the dimensions of word choice and syntax. Coşkun and Sidekli (2012) examined pre-service teachers' writings in terms of textuality criteria and determined that pre-service teachers had problems in forming sentences, connecting sentences, creating paragraphs, and connecting paragraphs while Arıcı (2008) found that 33% of pre-service teachers used words in the wrong place and in the wrong meanings. Dyan (2010) added that college students had problems dealing with writing as they lacked vocabulary mastery, cannot express their idea in good writing, and lacked in the content of the topic. Khuwaileh and Al Shoumali (2000) reported that in their study 55% of the students wrote compositions in their first language that lacked organization of thoughts and with no appropriate linking of an idea. In other research it has found that most students in their writing, focus almost exclusively on the word and sentence levels rather than the level of the whole discourse, that is, textual coherence (Ferris & Hedgecock, 1998).

Another challenge experienced in the writing process is the challenge experienced in relation to translator and transcriber. The difficulties experienced in this component, which included formal elements such as page layout, spelling rules, and punctuation, were also emphasized in many studies in the literature. In his study, Kemiksiz (2020) underlined that success in written expression depends on attention to form features such as spelling and punctuation, as well as expressive power, and determined that pre-service teachers mostly make spelling mistakes in their written expressions. Baki and Karakuş (2017) stated that pre-service teachers mostly had problems with the use of spelling rules and punctuation, and that pre-service teachers did not comply with the basic spelling rules and punctuation marks (Coşkun & Sidekli, 2012; Bayrak Cömert & Aktaş, 2011). In his study, Bayat (2013) found that when the level of mistakes made in the dimension of word selection in the writings of pre-service teachers was examined, spelling errors were the most common. In the study conducted by Topuzkanamış (2009) on determining the spelling knowledge levels of Turkish pre-service teachers, it was determined that the participants were insufficient in some spelling rules and made many spelling and punctuation mistakes (Aydın, 2014). Babacan (2003) stated that there were many misspellings as well as spelling mistakes in the writings of pre-service teachers. Sülükçü and Kırboğa (2020) analyzed the reasons for using the punctuation marks correctly or incorrectly and demonstrated that the students made mistakes mostly in complex sentences and sentences that lack a clear clue about the punctuation marks. Their study findings demonstrated that the students did not learn knowledge on punctuation marks that should be learned during primary and secondary education and cannot use the punctuation marks when required and these findings demonstrated that the majority of freshmen college students experienced difficulties in correctly using the punctuation marks included in the curriculum.

Another one of the writing challenges experienced at the process level is the challenge experienced in the writing plans component in the task environment. It was determined that the students who did not make a plan had errors in their studies such as not being able to establish logical cohesion, not providing paragraph cohesion, and not being able to limit the subject. Because of not making an essay plan, students were able to make a thesis statement that showed their opinion, but were unable to develop the essay well and had writing problems including that they lacked ideas and organizing ideas (Setyowati, 2016). Baki and Karakuş (2017) determined that primary education pre-service teachers had the most difficulty in planning the writing. Genç (1997), in the study that aimed to reveal the factors constituting the students' writing challenges, found that 51,12% of the students wrote essays by simultaneously writing what came to their minds. This indicated that students did not make preparatory activities such as planning and noting down the associations. This study found that pre-service teachers similarly had challenges in this component.

Pre-service teachers stated that they had difficulty with collaborators and critics and the evaluation component as another writing challenge. In the collaborators and critics and evaluation component, the



content is reviewed by taking into account the re-reading of the draft, sharing the draft text that was written in a writing group created in the classroom, and the feedback from peers in the writing group. Kapka and Oberman (2001) stated that reviewing the content is a difficult stage for students. As an example of the difficulty experienced in the text written so far sub-component in the task environment component, it was found that pre-service teachers had difficulties in maintaining fluency in the writing process. Oğuz (2008) stated that 43% of the pre-service teachers in the study group stated that their written expressions were not fluent and underdeveloped. In this study, when the pre-service teachers evaluated their written expressions, they believed they did not write fluently. The finding of this study supports the literature.

Considering the writing challenges experienced by the pre-service teachers in the writing process, it was determined that they had writing challenges at the control level. Here, it was determined that they had the most difficulties related to writing anxiety among the difficulties related to motivation. Of many affective factors, anxiety can cause difficulties in language learning (Balta, 2018) since writing is a complex cognitive activity, it might cause as much anxiety as other language skills. Writing anxiety is a condition unique to individual distinctions of individuals that demonstrate general predispositions to writing such as their approach or avoidance of writing and more of a fear of the writing process that outweighs the projected gain from the ability to write (Takahashi, 2009). To define the combination of feelings, beliefs, or behaviors that interfere with a person's ability to start, work on, or finish a given writing task, Karakaya and Ulper (2011) stated that determination of writing anxiety determines the production of effective texts. Similarly, Katrancı (2015) states that the successful completion of the writing process is closely related to writing anxiety, and that the level of anxiety in writing plays a decisive role in starting, continuing and completing the activity, as in other areas.

The common ground of the studies in which the writing anxiety of pre-service teachers examined in various dimensions is that pre-service teachers, no matter the level, all had writing anxiety in the writing process (Cheng, 2002; Pajares, 2003; Yaman, 2010; Tiryaki, 2012; İşeri & Ünal, 2012; Topuzkanamış, 2014; Katrancı, 2015; Kalaycı & Erdoğan, 2017; Ürün Karahan, 2017; Altunkaya & Topuzkanamış, 2018; Deniz & Demir, 2019; Demir & Çiftçi, 2019; Ahıskalı & Akkaya, 2021). The findings retrieved from the literature show similarities with this study. In the study, it was also concluded that some of the pre-service teachers were afraid to read the articles they wrote in the classroom and were hesitant for others to hear them, and they were worried about the teacher's evaluation. In addition, in the literature, it was asserted that anxiety, which is one of the factors that ignite the writing problem, may arise from the possibility of negative consequences, the possibility of punishment, the difference between what the individual believes and their reactions, or uncertainty about the future. The findings of this study indicated that pre-service teachers experienced anxiety during the writing process are similar to the findings of many studies. It was determined that, among motivation difficulties, pre-service teachers secondly had challenges in motivation to write. Because language use is an essential part of the writing process, difficulty with language is likely to negatively affect writing outcomes and attitudes towards writing, including perceived writing competence (Scott, 2002). Writing, which requires adequate knowledge and experience as well as effective use of language thinking skills, causes students to have the reluctance to write, and lack of attention and motivation (Karadağ & Kayabaşı, 2013); and, these challenges related to motivation in the writing process makes it difficult for pre-service teachers to enjoy the writing activity and transforming writing into a lifelong skill (Yaman, 2010).

Regarding the writing difficulties experienced by the pre-service teachers at the control level, it was determined that they had difficulties in setting goals (planning, writing, and reviewing) and creating current plans. Considering goal-setting, Akyol (2010) states that at the beginning of writing problems, starting to write is quite a problematic area. Yıldız, Okur, Arı, and Yılmaz (2013) list the inability to start writing during the writing process and the lack of planning, the inability to sequence and associate thoughts as one of the writing difficulties experienced at the control level. Karatay (2011),



making a plan in written expression, emphasizes that it is necessary to create a writing draft that will form a meaningful and coherent whole from the thoughts, but many studies in the literature show that pre-service teachers have difficulties in planning their written expressions. Arıcı (2008), in his study, revealed that 37% of pre-service teachers could not plan in their writings or they made wrong plans. Baki and Karakuş (2017) found that primary school pre-service teachers had problems in planning the writing. Similarly, Esendemir (2019) stated that pre-service teachers had a problem of not knowing what to write about the internal dimension of writings due to a lack of planning.

Upon examining the writing difficulties of the pre-service teachers at the resource level, it was seen that they had difficulties related to memory, attention and reading. Findings obtained in memory challenges generally showed that pre-service teachers tried to write without making a plan. Similarly, Ülper and Çeliktürk Zengin (2019), in their study examining the writing habits of pre-service teachers, determined that pre-service teachers had the habit of writing with instant reflexes and in a way that starts and ends without any planning beforehand. There is information in the literature that unplanned writing will burden the memory and reduce the quality of the writing. In this direction, it can be interpreted that not making a plan does not only affect the writing in terms of content, and that there is difficulty in the writing process as a burden on the memory during writing. Another difficulty experienced at the resource level is the difficulty in attention. Pre-service teachers stated that they had difficulty in the writing process due to not being able to focus and being distracted by the slightest thing. Demir (2016) mentioned that it may be difficult to focus on writing due to anxiety while writing. It is very important to determine this difficulty since the individuals having difficulty in focusing and the accompanying lack of attention may prevent them from doing even simple tasks that they can do in a normal situation. It was found that the emphasis on the writing challenge experienced from the lack of reading at the source level was generally made on not reading and the inadequacy of the vocabulary stemming from not reading. Whereas Aydın (2014) argued that one of the challenges experienced in written expression is due to the very limited vocabulary of the students, Karadağ and Kayabaşı (2013) found that insufficient vocabulary of pre-service teachers was one of the factors that prevented writing.

Coping strategies used by pre-service teachers in response to their writing challenges in the writing process were examined in three categories: cognitive restructuring, providing instrumental support, and creating affective support. It was determined that coping strategies aimed at providing cognitive support were used the most, which was followed by coping strategies towards providing instrumental support, and strategies towards creating affective support. Information similar to the finding of reading books and gaining the habit of reading, which was the most used strategy as a coping strategy for providing cognitive support, were included in the literature. According to Karataş (2009, p. 144), the prerequisite for writing is to be a regular reader. Similarly, Göçer (2013) stated that the richness of the individual's vocabulary and the power of observation directly affect the writing skill just as the effect reading habit imposes on the acquisition and development of writing skills. Deniz (2003), on the other hand, stated that reading and a wide vocabulary are effective in achieving successful writing skills.

Planning before writing is another coping strategy most commonly used by pre-service teachers to provide cognitive support. Long-term memory is needed in order to convey thoughts, feelings, and messages in the form of a composition according to the determined goal (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007). Writers prepare goals for their texts and make conceptual plans to achieve them through the “long-term-memory” which creates the content related to the subject, reader and other conceptual writing plans in the text and includes the writer's accumulation and knowledge (Hayes & Flower, 1980 & 1986). Thus, the writers prepare themselves cognitively for the writing process. In general, while competent writers move rapidly between the planning, transcription, evaluation and editing sub-processes, non-competent writers see text production as a linear process and plan the text first, then produce a sentence and perform the revision only after a text has been produced (Randsdell, Levy, & Kellogg, 2002). In many studies, it was stated that planning before writing has a positive and significant relationship with the quality of composition (Berninger, Fuller, & Whitaker 1996). Based



on this insight, coping strategies frequently used by pre-service teachers in the study were also suggested in the literature. One of the coping strategies used to provide cognitive support was found to be more frequent writing practice.

It was determined that pre-service teachers tried to cope with the difficulties encountered while writing with tools such as a dictionary, spelling dictionaries and the internet as the most frequent instrumental support among the strategies for providing instrumental support. It was stated in the literature that the lack of knowledge of spelling rules causes pre-service teachers to create a negative perception about writing (Karadağ & Kayabaşı, 2013). Therefore, it is important for pre-service teachers to use a dictionary and spelling dictionaries to cope with this negative perception. Changing the environment is another coping strategy used to provide instrumental support. Similarly, in a study in the literature, the importance of the writing environment and its contribution to focusing were mentioned (Ülper & Çeliktürk Zengin, 2019). Additionally, Golda (2015) stated that having a comfortable writing environment enables the writing process to take place without any difficulties. These views of pre-service teachers about using change in the environment as a coping strategy bear resemblance to the findings in the literature.

It was determined that pre-service teachers mostly used self-motivation strategy among the coping strategies aimed at providing affective support. Motivation, which urges one to perform an action and keep one in this action and is one of the fundamental factors effective in the learning and teaching processes, is defined by Ormrod (2018) as “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained” (Schunk, Meece, & Pintrich, 2008). Writing motivation enables students to develop their writing skills as well as gain the habit of writing with lifelong interest, desire and pleasure (Deniz & Demir, 2020). Therefore, writing motivation was investigated with many of its dimensions in the literature and it was found that students had low writing motivation in a general sense (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Graham, Harris & Mason, 2005; Garcia-Sánchez & Fidalgo-Redondo, 2006; Harris, Graham & Mason, 2006; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006; Bayülgen, 2011; Baş & Şahin, 2013; Karadağ & Kayabaşı, 2013; Cantezer, 2014; Katrancı, 2015; Deniz & Demir, 2019). Therefore, it was supported by the findings of the related literature in the field that the most needed coping strategy by pre-service teachers during writing was self-motivation.

In conclusion, problems encountered in the professional training process and the ability to come up with solutions for these problems will be the predictor of the potential resolutions created by pre-service teachers for the problems they might face while performing their own professions. That is why the ability of teachers working in the field of language education to overcome the writing challenges faced by students in the process also depends on their awareness of these difficulties and abilities to guide them in their solutions. On the other hand, coping strategies are not only problem-oriented but also require an affective-based approach to the challenges that may be encountered in the writing process. At this point, determining the problems encountered in writing and determining the strategies to cope with them highlights the importance of using cognitive-based practices in writing instruction, as well as using affective factors. As a result of the research, it can be suggested that necessary studies should be carried out in the future so as to ensure the competence of both pre-service teachers and in-service Turkish teachers, and that trainings should be designed by creating syllabi for coping with difficulties encountered in writing.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

We declare that the data used in this research were collected between “September 01, 2019” and “September 31, 2019”, and that research and publication ethics have been considered carefully. During the research process, all the rules specified to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were complied with, and none of the "Acts Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" stated in the second section were carried out. There is no situation or relationship that may constitute a conflict of interest in this research. All authors contributed equally.



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