



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences  
Department of Foreign Language Teaching  
English Language Teaching

**WRITING STRATEGY PREFERENCES OF UNDERGRADUATE  
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINEES AT  
HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY**

Burçin YAPICI

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2009

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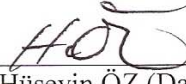
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## KABUL VE ONAY

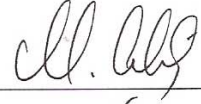
Burçin YAPICI tarafından hazırlanan “Writing Strategy Preferences of Undergraduate English as a Foreign Language Teacher Trainees at Hacettepe University” başlıklı bu çalışma, 15 Haziran 2009 tarihinde yapılan savunma sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



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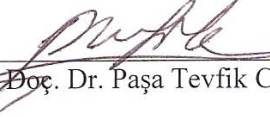
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Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylıyorum.

Prof. Dr. İrfan ÇAKIN


Enstitü Müdürü

## BİLDİRİM

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15.06.2009

  
Burçin YAPICI

*To my beloved parents Sema & Ömer, sister  
Nezahat and brother Onur YAPICI for their  
encouragement, patience and endless love*

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## ÖZET

YAPICI, Burçin. *Writing Strategy Preferences of Undergraduate English as a Foreign Language Teacher Trainees at Hacettepe University*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi Ankara, 2009.

Dil Öğrenme Stratejileri, İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretiminde giderek artan bir öneme sahip olmuştur. İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimindeki öğrencilerin, özellikle İngilizce dili öğretimi öğretmen adaylarının kullandığı yazma stratejileri hakkında sınırlı bilgi bulunduğundan bu çalışma lisans seviyesindeki İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümüne kayıtlı Türk öğretmen adaylarının yazma stratejileri tercihlerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu amaçla, kendi kendine rapor etme veri toplama aracı kullanılmış ve geriye dönük yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Kendi kendine rapor etme aracı olarak, Yazma Stratejileri Anketi Hacettepe Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümü lisans düzeyindeki ikinci sınıf 92 öğrenci arasından rastlantısal olarak seçilen 35 kişilik katılımcı grubuna uygulanmıştır. Veri analizi için önemli bir başka kaynak ise katılımcıların yarıya yakını ile (11 bayan ve 4 bay) yapılan geriye dönük görüşmelerin çeviriyazısı olmuştur.

Çalışmanın temel amacı İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi alanında lisans düzeyindeki 35 öğretmen adayının yazma stratejilerini birkaç açıdan açıklamak idi: (1) katılımcıların genel yazma strateji tercihleri; (2) yazma öncesi, yazma esnası ve gözden geçirmeden oluşan üç yazma aşamasına ilişkin strateji kullanımlarının sıklığı; (3) İngilizce kompozisyon yazarken karşılaştıkları güçlükler ile özellikle bu güçlüklerin üstesinden gelmek için başvurdukları onarıcı yazma stratejileri.

Bulgular İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi alanında lisans düzeyindeki öğretmen adaylarının İngilizce kompozisyon yazarken yazma stratejilerini kısmen kullandıklarını göstermiştir. Katılımcılar yazma stratejilerini en sık olarak ise yazma esnasında ve gözden geçirme aşamalarında kullanmaktadırlar. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin yazı yazarken karşılaştıkları en büyük güçlüklerin ilk dil müdahalesi ve güdülenme olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Tek dilli ve çift dilli sözlüklerin öğrenciler tarafından ilk dil müdahalesi

sorununun üstesinden gelmek için sorun çözücü yazma stratejisi olarak geliştirildiği bildirilmiştir. Buna karşın, öğrenciler tarafından güdülenme problemleriyle başa çıkmak amacıyla hiçbir onarıcı yazma stratejisi belirtilmemiştir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretmenler için eğitsel çıkarımlar ve ilerideki araştırmalar için öneriler sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Dil Öğrenme Stratejileri, Yazma Stratejileri, Yazma Güçlükleri.



## ABSTRACT

Language learning strategies have come into an increasing prominence in the field of English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL). As there is limited information about writing strategy use of EFL learners and, in particular, of language teacher trainees in English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) departments, the current study aimed to investigate the writing strategy preferences of Turkish undergraduate ELT trainees. For this aim, a self-report data collection instrument was used and retrospective semi-structured interviews were conducted. As a self-report instrument, Writing Strategy Questionnaire (henceforth WSQ) was applied to 35 participants who were selected randomly among 92 second year undergraduate students in the division of ELT at Hacettepe University. Another major source for data analysis was the transcripts of the retrospective interviews conducted with approximately half of the participants (11 female and 4 males).

The main purpose of the study was to explore the writing strategies of 35 undergraduate EFL teacher trainees in several perspectives: (1) the general writing strategy preferences of the participants; (2) the frequency of their writing strategy use regarding three writing stages that consist of before, while and when revising stages; and (3) writing difficulties that they experience while constructing English compositions with the coping writing strategies they apply particularly to overcome these difficulties.

The findings revealed that undergraduate EFL teacher trainees employ writing strategies moderately while constructing English compositions. They apply the writing strategies most frequently at while writing and revising stages. In addition, first language interference and motivation were found to be the greatest difficulties the learners encounter while writing. It was also found out that using mono-lingual and bilingual dictionaries was reported to be developed by the learners as a problem-solving writing strategy to overcome the problem of first language interference in English writing. On the other hand, no strategies were specified by the participants in order to cope with

their motivation problem. The findings of the current study provide pedagogical implications for EFL writing teachers and suggestions for further research.

**Key words:** Language Learning Strategies, Writing Strategies, Writing Difficulties.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 PRESENTATION**

It is a global fact that English has become a cardinal language in the world. The prevalence of English language has had a stimulating effect on the system of education, especially in countries where English is spoken and taught as a foreign language. New developments have emerged in the field of English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL). These developments include textbooks and new syllabus and curriculum designs. These changes empowered the students in these settings in order to keep them up with the modern world requirements and to get themselves ready for their future academic life.

The importance of English language along with the new developments in foreign language education increased the emphasis of effective teaching of English language to EFL learners. In this respect, the effectiveness of previous language teaching methodologies is still being questioned, which results in continuous revisions. From 70's onwards, it has been observed that communicative language teaching and oral skills have gained considerable importance in the field of EFL learning and teaching. Nevertheless, reading and writing remain to be significant skills taught as part of the methods in EFL settings especially for academic purposes.

Although the focus of writing skill in foreign language teaching and learning has shifted towards process writing in the course of time, it is apparent that it has drawn much more attention in the last years within foreign language instruction. It probably stems from the fact that new perspectives and focuses of teaching writing have been developed. In this respect, a process approach in foreign language education has come into prominence which puts emphasis more on what learners actually do in the process of writing instead of the final products. As Hyland (2003) states, "A priority of teachers in



this orientation therefore is to develop their students' metacognitive awareness of their process, that is, their ability to reflect on the strategies they use to write" (p. 12). Consequently, the process approach has increased the importance of language learning strategies which also help learners to take more responsibility of their own learning and become more autonomous learners.

Ample research about language learning strategies and writing processes in both first language (henceforth L1) and second language (henceforth L2) has emerged especially in the last years, to the outer's knowledge; however, there is limited information specifically about the writing strategies EFL learners employ in the process of constructing an essay. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap in the literature by conducting a study with the second grade language teacher trainees in the division of English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) at Hacettepe University.

Within this study, the first chapter includes, initially, the background to the study and the statement of the problem. Then, the purpose of the study is explained. Next, the significance of the study, research questions and statement of the hypothesis of the study are stated. The method of the study is also included. Following the method, limitations and assumptions are indicated. The chapter is finalized with the definition of terms.

## **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The notion of writing has always received attention by the scholars and researchers in terms of its place in education. This interest stems from the fact that learning how to write requires special effort even in L1. Emerging theories in L1 writing especially increased the status of writing skill in the field of second/foreign language as well.

Theories mainly in 1970's and 1980's were dependent upon the understanding of L1 writing and writing process theories (Grabe, 2001). Among these theories that contribute to the field are Flower and Hayes model of LI writing (1981) and Bereiter and Scardamalia's Knowledge-Telling and Knowledge-Transforming Model of LI

process writing (1987). In 1990's, there was a substantial increase in the amount of second language writing research in process writing. The scholars and researchers attached more importance to "teaching of writing with an emphasis on the writer and the strategies used to produce a piece of writing" (Richards, 2002, p. 21), (such as Hall, 1990; Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990).

As Richards (2002) has noted above, writing process and teaching writing have been dealt closely related to the writer himself/herself in second/foreign language contexts. Writers in this theory have been the main focus of the writing process and are expected to take more responsibility of their own learning. In the 1980's and 1990's, a lot of research has been carried out in examining the writing process of L2 learners (Zamel, 1983; Henry, 1996; Polio & Glew, 1996). In these studies, the main concern has been the composing processes of English as a Second Language (henceforth ESL) students. Zamel (1983), for instance, explored these processes using six case studies. Polio and Glew (1996) focused their attention on the way ESL students choose topics in writing exams and Henry (1996) dealt mainly with changes in L2 writers' texts in the amount of production.

As the focal point of the writing process theory is the writers themselves, the strategies EFL learners employ in the writing process are recognized as an indispensable piece of the puzzle that constitutes the writing process. Although there is not a consensus among the scholars in terms of common features that define language learning strategies, Oxford's (1990) definition is a comprehensive one in terms of indicating the contributions of learning strategies to the learners themselves. Her definition is as follows: "Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8). Namely, learners should take more responsibility in the learning process.

As a matter of course, learning strategies discussed above cover all the four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) because it is apparent that learners should develop efficiency in all these skills in order to learn the target language. Particularly,

writing is considered to be a problematic one by EFL learners as some researchers mention. For instance, Chen (2002) conducted a study to investigate the problems of university EFL students while writing. He discovered the frequent problems EFL learners experience with an expectation that these can provide insight to writing instruction in universities.

There is a considerable amount of research in the field of ESL learning which examine specifically the writing strategies L2 learners employ when they compose writing (such as Villamil & deGuerrero, 1996; Wong, 2005). Very limited number of studies, on the other hand, has investigated the writing strategies EFL learners employ. One such example is Roca de Larios *et al* (1999) who conducted a study with Spanish learners of English as a foreign language in order to identify restructuring strategies they employ in their writing. More recent study has been carried out by Junju (2004). Junju investigated the writing processes and strategies of Chinese EFL learners along with the examination of the mother tongue influence. Another is Porte (1997) who attempted to identify how underachieving EFL students perceive revision and its effect on revision strategies they employ.

Besides, few thesis and dissertations have attempted to examine particularly writing strategies notion comprehensively in the field of EFL teaching and learning situations in Turkey (such as Uğur, 2000; Alpaslan, 2002; Dülger, 2007). However, Uğur (2000) and Dülger (2007) dealt with the instruction of the writing strategies and explored its effects on EFL writers and writing. Alpaslan (2002) attempted to identify the writing strategies of EFL freshman students. However, Alpaslan's study focused its attention on three freshman students and their strategy use in EFL setting. Although these studies provide invaluable information about writing strategies EFL learners employ, the knowledge of writing strategies that EFL learners use in undergraduate level especially in terms of essay writing is still limited. This study attempts to fill this gap by conducting a study with undergraduate EFL students in ELT department at Hacettepe University.

Identifying the strategies as a matter of course is only the one side of writing phenomenon, though it is supposed to give invaluable information. What teachers do to

help learners is another important issue to be dealt with. As Hyland (2003) suggests “The teachers’ role is to guide students through the writing process, avoiding an emphasis on form to help them develop strategies for generating, drafting, and refining ideas” (p. 12). Thus, teachers’ role and responsibilities should not be underestimated regarding the writing process and the language learning strategies albeit the importance attached to the learners themselves. Consequently, teachers should do their best in order to help learners improve themselves in employing writing strategies in each phase of the writing process.

Raimes (1991) underlies this issue with the following statement: “There is widespread acceptance of the notion that language teachers need to know about and to take into account the process of how learners learn a language and how writers produce a written product” (p. 422). Thus, teachers should be aware of the scope of the process approach and pay attention to its requirements in teaching context, initially. Although it seems that the focus has been shifted from teachers to writers with the writing as a process approach, teachers’ role is assumed to be more arduous than before. They are expected to undertake the responsibility of being a supporter and helper in order to get the learners take more responsibility of their own learning which is among the most essential objectives of writing as a process approach. Teachers can achieve these roles by getting the learners to think what they actually do during writing process. By this way, teachers give the students a chance to evaluate themselves about what kind of writing strategies they employ in this process.

Creating self-awareness, as mentioned, provides the learners also with the strategies which they do not or have never employed before. This approach can open up a new way for the students and encourage them to use the other strategies which may contribute more to the writing process. In this respect, learners take more responsibility and “when students take more responsibility, more learning occurs, and both teachers and learners feel more successful” (Oxford, 1990, p. 11).

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As can be barely observed in foreign language teaching (henceforth FLT) contexts, EFL learners mostly have difficulty both in expressing themselves and reflecting their ideas in a clear and organized way as they would like in English even in a piece of writing. In this respect, writing skill is regarded as the most challenging of all skills by the EFL learners. The prominent reason that gives rise to these thoughts probably lies in the fact that writing skill requires various demands from the EFL students with the linguistic components (e.g. lexical, grammatical knowledge) as well as other sub-components of writing (e.g. cohesiveness, coherence, topic familiarity, etc).

The need to be competent in all these areas in order to gain the writing ability and the effort to display effective performance create pressure on the EFL learners which may cause them alienate from the writing tasks completely. Also learners feel discomfort in the case of getting a bad mark from the writing task because as Zamel (1985) specified, “Teachers are still by and large concerned with the accuracy and correctness of surface-level features of writing and that error identification” (p. 84). Namely, most teachers in foreign language settings carry on implementing the traditional way of evaluation technique which is the evaluation of final written products of learners.

Consequently, writing as a process notion may help to create the intended learning atmosphere for both teachers and learners. As Hyland (2003) stresses “The process approach to writing teaching emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of texts, but it goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing task.” (p. 10). From this perspective, it is hard to ignore the view of Oxford’s (1990) who pointed out that “appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence” (p. 1). Therefore, it is obvious that language learning strategies are important in terms of both triggering the students’ trust in themselves and helping them improve in learning.

As defined by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), learning strategies are “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information” (p. 1). As it is clear from the definition above, language learning strategies may display differences from learner to learner because it is a rather individualistic issue. The fact that every learner has his/her own way of using learning strategies creates more pressure on the teachers and load them with more burden affecting their way of teaching the target language.

Taking into account the grueling feature of learning and teaching of writing skill, the strategy training along with the strategy instruction may create double pressure in the EFL contexts. Accordingly, as an initial step to depressurize this matter under discussion, there occurs the need to explore and identify the writing strategies that EFL learners employ in each phase of the writing process. In this respect, teachers first should seek for more information from the literature in this subject matter and use a Writing Strategy Questionnaire (henceforth WSQ). Consequently, they may help the learners discover multiple strategies together with increasing the awareness of the learners of various writing strategies. The current study, then, aims to serve the purposes above with the identification of writing strategy preferences of undergraduate EFL learners in the division of ELT using WSQ and interviews to validate the results of the WSQ.

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to identify and explore what writing strategies second grade EFL learners in the division of ELT at Hacettepe University employ in constructing their essays. Although there is ample research about developing writing skills of EFL learners in Turkey, there seems to be a gap in the literature in the field of EFL learners' application of writing strategies. The present study aims to fill this gap by conducting this study in order to identify EFL learners' writing strategy use both in general and at each stage of constructing English compositions. The study further attempts to explore the writing difficulties that undergraduate EFL teacher trainees encounter while writing compositions and the coping strategies they employ in overcoming these problems.

#### 1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The prominent reason behind conducting such a study is to explore the writing strategies of EFL learners in depth with an emphasis on writing as a process approach and its probable positive effect on creating active and self-directed EFL writers.

Although EFL higher education curriculum in Turkey seems to allocate sufficient time to writing skill, it is one and the foremost skill which learners complain about. At the outset, it is observed in classrooms that EFL learners generally have difficulty in handling writing tasks and that they get bored easily of those tasks accordingly. One of the reasons behind the negative attitudes of the students toward writing may stem from the traditional character of a writing course with attributed roles for the teachers and the students. Namely, the teacher gives a task to the students and expects them to accomplish it. S/he evaluates usually grammatical mistakes and marks the written products. However, students may still make the same grammatical, organizational, etc. mistakes in another writing task. Students focus their attention more on the mark they get and how their product will be evaluated by the teacher. Furthermore, as Zamel (1985) puts it “Teachers’ marks and comments usually take the form of abstract and vague prescriptions and directives that students find difficult to interpret” (p. 79).

In this respect, writing should be seen as a process rather than a product. Teachers should improve themselves more in this issue and act as helper for the writers to develop themselves in language learning strategies. D’Aoust (1996) lists the contributions of writing as a process approach within a writing course as follows: “... student writers come to understand that they have ideas to express, that they can find ways to communicate those ideas, that others are interested in what they have to say, and finally that they can acquire the expertise to clarify that communication” (p. 9).

Besides, teachers in EFL classes should divert their attention more on writing as a process approach detaching themselves more from traditional role which they have internalized so far. They should follow recent developments in the field and should seek

for alternative ways by observing the students during writing courses from time to time. By this way, EFL learners can identify the writing strategies they employ and may explore more strategies with the help of the teachers' support and self-awareness raising tasks.

### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The increasing importance attached to process writing in foreign language has brought about the need to identify what learners actually do during the writing process. Strategies that EFL learners apply in English writing are also needed to provide insight to the writing process. In order to get a clearer picture, then, more research using different instruments is required to conduct with EFL learners. Therefore, it is possible to explore which strategies learners employ in such contexts which may also enable the learners to self-evaluate themselves.

Analysis of the writing strategies EFL learners employ is a crucial outset in the field of EFL writing process. However, as the writers are expected to become aware of, and gain control of the strategies they employ how to achieve this aim comes into prominence in this respect. How can teachers help EFL students be more aware of various writing strategies? In addition, it is important to find out difficulties they experience in order to help them be aware of what they do while writing. What are the major problems they encounter and which strategies do they apply to overcome them?

The current study has been constructed onto these questions and focused its attention on undergraduate EFL writers' strategies. Accordingly, the following research questions have been designated in order to attain the stated goals of the study:

- 1) What writing strategies do second grade undergraduate EFL teacher trainees employ in constructing their essays?
- 2) How often do second grade undergraduate EFL teacher trainees apply writing strategies at different stages of writing (before, while and when revising stages)?



3) What kind of writing difficulties do second grade undergraduate EFL teacher trainees encounter? Which writing strategies (if any) do they use specifically to overcome these difficulties?

### **1.6 STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS**

Writing in EFL settings still continues to be a problematic issue. Furthermore, it is observed that traditional way of teaching writing is assumed to be insufficient in writing classes. For this reason, alternatives for teaching writing has been varied and the interest in the last years shifted from writing as a product to writing as a process approach, the focus of which are the writers and the strategies they employ during writing process. As the issue is a relatively new one, it requires more research in EFL settings. In this respect, the present study aims to contribute to the issue and provide new insights in the field of EFL teaching and learning.

It is hypothesized in the current study that undergraduate EFL students in the Division of ELT employ various writing strategies and they employ these strategies most frequently at while writing stages of writing an English composition. It is also assumed that learners in EFL settings still experience serious problems while writing although they are advanced level ELT teacher trainees. On the other hand, it is hypothesized that they are aware of these difficulties and employ repair writing strategies to get rid of these problems.

### **1.7 METHOD**

The present study intends to find out the writing strategies undergraduate EFL learners employ along with the difficulties they experience writing and their problem-solving writing strategies in order to overcome the difficulties. For that purpose, the study was carried out with second grade EFL teacher trainees at Hacettepe University who took Advanced Reading and Writing Course I and II in their first year. The study was conducted with one group of students, 35 participants in total. The class included 27 female and 8 male students.

In the first week, the participants were given a Likert-Scale Writing Strategy Questionnaire (see Appendix A) which was adapted from a study of Petric and Czarl (2003) (see 3.3 Instruments for details). The students were expected to circle one among the five alternatives for each writing strategy according to three (before, while and when revising) stages of writing. The questionnaire also included questions that aimed to receive factual information about the participants. In addition, two open-ended questions were constructed and added at the end of the WSQ by the researcher. These questions were aimed to find out the difficulties and coping strategies applied by the participants.

Three weeks after the application of the WSQ, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B for the guiding questions) were conducted with nearly half of the (11 female and 4 males) participants mainly as a supportive instrument for the WSQ. The research was conducted in order to provide suitable answers to the research questions, accordingly, the data gathered via available instruments were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

## **1.8 LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

In an attempt to explore EFL writing strategies the participants apply and difficulties they experience in that process, a WSQ and retrospective semi-structured interviews were conducted. As data were collected with 35 EFL learners in an EFL setting so as to explore the writing strategies comprehensively, the results reflect only the intended learners' writing strategy preferences. Consequently, the results are not supposed to be representative of all EFL learners at undergraduate level.

On the other hand, the findings of the study are expected to increase the understanding of the writing strategies that undergraduate EFL learners employ. Also a probable self-awareness raising instrument used in the present study which is WSQ which is presumed to be effective in adult EFL settings and provide valuable insight for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (henceforth TEFL) in these settings.

## 1.9 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Crucial key terms are used throughout the study. The definitions of these terms are required in order to clarify the issue under discussion in the study.

**Writing process approach:** It is an approach which focuses on what actually learners do during the writing process instead of the final product.

**Language learning strategies:** Language learning strategies are specific actions or behaviors accomplished by students to enhance their learning (Oxford, 1990).

**Writing difficulty:** Writing difficulty is any problem a writer encounters in writing.

**Coping writing strategies:** Writing strategies that writers employ in order to overcome the difficulties they encounter in writing.

**Learner autonomy:** Taking conscious control of his or her own learning processes (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002).

**Metacognitive strategies:** Behaviors used for centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating one's learning (Oxford & Crookall, 1989).

## 1. 10 CONCLUSION

With the current trend which posits the language learners at the heart of language teaching and learning phenomena, studies mostly have diverted their attention more on individuals and their behaviors in the language learning process. Writing as a process approach has been one of these trends which attempts to identify what learners actually do during the writing process. In this respect, language learning strategies which learners employ have been dealt with comprehensively, for the strategies EFL writers employ during the writing process are assumed to give more hints about the individuals and how they construct the written product.

The identification of writing strategies writers employ is assumed to contribute to the English language learning field in multiple aspects which constitute the language teaching and learning education. In students' dimension, they are expected to take more responsibility of their own learning and increase their self-awareness about the strategies they employ in the writing process. Teachers also can obtain detailed data about the individuals and be more helpful to the writers as a guide in the process. They can begin to seek for the latest studies and literature not only to develop new insights but also to increase the students' self-awareness by providing them with various strategies. All in all, the findings of research studies such as the current study which aims to identify and explore the writing strategies and the difficulties undergraduate EFL learners experience are expected to draw more attention to learner autonomy and widen the scope of EFL teaching and learning field in this respect.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 PRESENTATION**

In order to help EFL learners produce well-written essays, the strategies they employ during a writing process are assumed to be fundamental in various aspects. Learners who are aware of what they are doing while writing are able to evaluate themselves. It is also important for the teachers to be familiar with the writing strategies of the students. By this way, they have the opportunity to guide the learners and help them try different and various strategies both to increase the quality of their written products and enhance their learner autonomy. In this respect, this study investigates the writing strategies of undergraduate EFL learners at Hacettepe University and it aims to provide insight for EFL writing course and the writing syllabus, accordingly.

For this aim, the following chapter covers review of literature about language learning strategies and writing in language learning which are believed to contribute to the overall understanding of writing and learning strategies. Then, writing approaches and process approach specifically, are mentioned in detail with the relevant research. Lastly, in connection with the research questions, strategies for writing section are included.

#### **2.1 WRITING IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Writing which is “originating and creating a unique verbal product that is graphically recorded” (Emig, 1997, p.8) is a complex and demanding activity especially for composition writers because writing requires not only linguistic knowledge but also competence in the sub-skills of writing (such as cohesive devices, coherence etc). In this respect, foreign language writing is claimed to be more challenging because language learners may be less proficient writers in the target language than they are in their L1 because of the lack of linguistic knowledge.

Another demand for language learners is that they should be able to conduct all these components properly when constructing writing which requires the learner to be more aware of the strategies that they employ within the writing process. Cumming has pointed out this issue with the following statement:

“..As people gain proficiency in their second language, they become better able to perform in writing in their second language, producing more effective texts, attending more fully to aspects of their writing. Unlike writing expertise, however, attaining greater second-language proficiency does not appear to entail qualitative changes in the thinking processes or decision-making behaviors used for composing” (Cumming, 1989, p. 121).

In line with Cummings’ point, it is apparent that writing strategies are one of the factors that play a prominent role in writing skill and further they are the ones which help language learners be more aware of the steps that they take in the construction process.

## **2.2 APPROACHES TO WRITING**

As a challenging activity, “writing tends to be learned initially only with the aid of formal and systematic instruction” (Emig, 1997, p. 8). With regard to this point of view, writing scholars searched for the best way for the teachers to teach writing. For this aim, different approaches occurred in time two of which have been notably influential in the field of L1, ESL and EFL writing. These two approaches are product and process writing approaches.

### **2.2.1 Product-oriented Writing**

Product approach in writing is among the first known approaches in composing that pays attention to the product of composition. Until the 1970’s, teaching writing was product-oriented. According to this approach, writers are responsible for collecting and manipulating the linguistic structures and discourse organization and teacher edits and checks the products according to these features.

The advocates of this approach pay more attention on the finished product of writing and deals with “knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development as mainly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher” (Badger & White, 2000, p. 154).

The product-approaches in writing have been the subject of a considerable amount of research studies in L2 settings since it appeared. More recently, product-oriented studies analyzed the written products of L2 learners via different instruments. Some of the studies used discourse analysis (such as Connor 1984, 1990; Govardhan, 1994) in order to examine the quality of the written texts of ESL learners. Many other studies (such as Connor & Lauer, 1985; Ferris, 1991; Zhu, 1992) investigated cohesion and coherence features in ESL writing using cohesion analysis.

These product-oriented studies searched for an answer to what a text includes and how it looks like. One can easily assert that product-oriented writing puts more emphasis on form. In this respect, this approach has received criticism by the advocates of process approach which focuses on the question of ‘why’ instead of ‘what’. Process-oriented research, therefore, aimed to identify the writing process and studies have been conducted to seek for answers to why and for whom learners write.

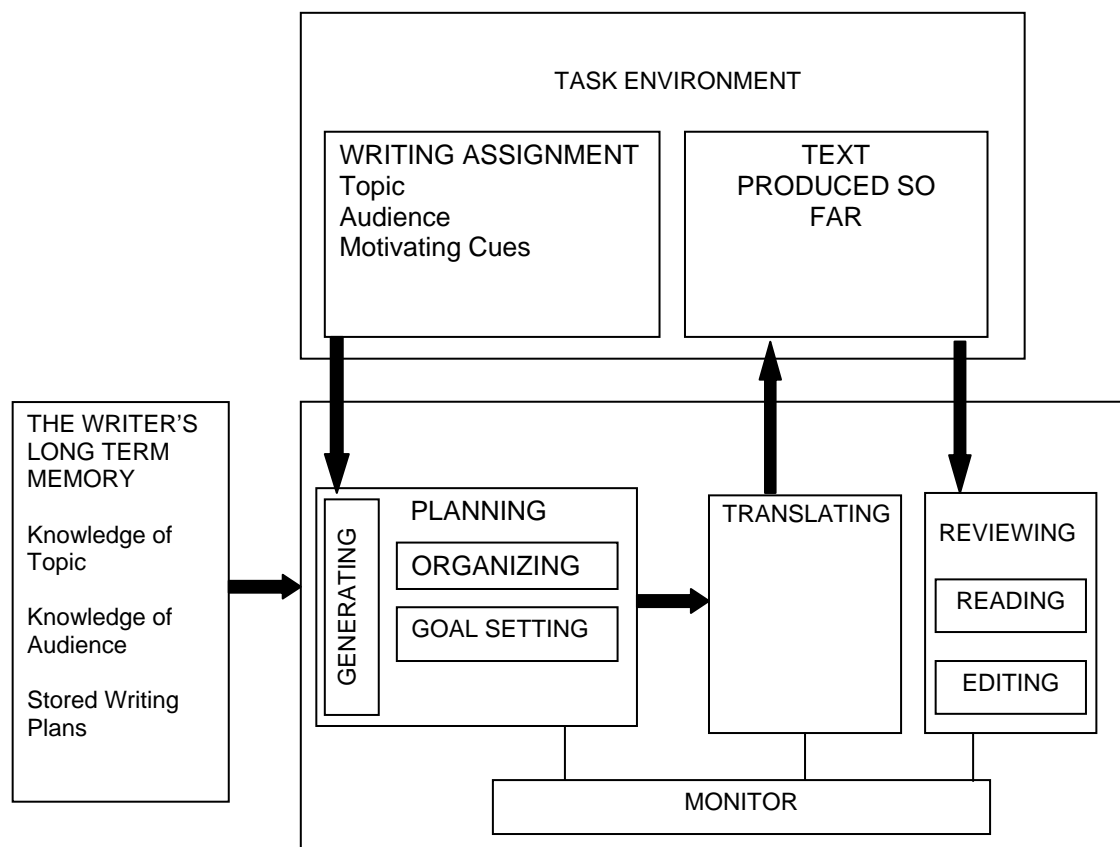
### **2.2.2 Process-oriented Writing**

With a shift from product-oriented writing which mainly deals with the written products of the writers, the process approach to writing appeared “in the 1960’s and the early 1970’s” (Matsuda, 2003, p. 67) stressing the importance of process that learners go through while writing. In those years, it began to be recognized that sub processes of writing such as planning, formulating and reviewing occur in a nonlinear process. This feature of writing skill in process writing is distinct from traditional product-oriented approach that is concerned with the finished product of writing. Process approach in writing deals, instead, with the cyclical sequence that writers go through before they reach to a finished product. In this respect, advocates of the process approach in writing

are more interested in these nonlinear stages of writing instead of examining only the product generated at the end of a writing task.

With the process-oriented writing approach, models of process writing have been developed (such as Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; De Beaugrande, 1984; Flower & Hayes, 1981). Among these models, Flower & Hayes (1981) L1 Cognitive Process (related to mental activities while writing) Model has been influential in L2 contexts. According to this model, writing is seen as a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (Zamel, 1983, p. 165).

This model involves three recursive sub processes of writing consisting of planning, translating and reviewing that correspond to pre-writing, writing and revising stages of writing.



**Figure 2.1 Flower and Hayes Composing Process Model (1981)**



In the Flower and Hayes Model (Figure 2.2), the writers monitor the writing process in each phase which consists of ‘planning’, ‘translating’ and ‘reviewing’. “The monitor functions as a writing strategist which determines when the writer moves from one process to the next” (Flower and Hayes, 1981, p. 374). This helps the learners move between stages and evaluate themselves throughout the process. In addition, the task environment is seen as a major element in this theory which involves topic, audience, motivating cues and also the texts produced so far by the writers. Consequently, these elements are indispensable parts of the composing process.

Although this early version of composing process model has been cited widely both in first and second language writing research, the theory received criticism. The model has been claimed to be much concerned about the writers’ mental activities and ignore the social effects in the composing process. Later extended version of Flower and Hayes Model has been developed in 1990’s. According to the more recent framework of this theory which Hayes (1996) proposed, the physical and social elements of task environment should be taken into consideration in the act of writing process itself. With this model, Hayes proposed that social elements of writing are as significant as the cognitive process of writing.

In parallel with Flower and Hayes Model, Seow (2002) emphasized that writing process comprises four main stages which are planning, drafting (writing), revising (redrafting) and editing adding that these four main stages are in a non-sequential order. He also mentioned three more stages which are teacher-sourced: responding (sharing), evaluating and post-writing.

As process-oriented writing has dominated the field of second and foreign language writing, a lot of studies have been carried out that focus on composing processes of ESL and EFL learners. Considerable amount of the ESL process writing studies are based on L1 process writing research designs. Among these studies, Cumming (1989), Lay (1982) and Raimes (1985) investigated the use of L1 in L2 writing. For instance, in one of the earliest studies, Raimes (1985), investigated think-aloud data and questionnaires of eight unskilled ESL students with whom she conducted writing tasks. In relatively large

sampled size study, Cumming (1989) explored 23 French-speaking students via think-aloud protocols in order to examine their English writing processes. The results of these studies are contradictory in that there are both similarities (e.g., Cumming, 1989; Lay, 1982) and differences (e.g., Raimes, 1985) between L1 and L2 writers' writing process.

Research on EFL process writing, on the other hand, is relatively a novel field of investigation. In addition, research topics in that field are divergent. For instance, Sasaki (2000) explored writing processes of Japanese EFL learners. He conducted his study with three paired groups of Japanese EFL learners whose L2 writing ability were different from one another. The researcher used multiple data collection tools ranging from written texts of the participants, data available from videotape recording, stimulated recall protocols, etc. The results were indicative of the differences between expert and novice writers in their writing process (such as writing fluency and strategy use). It was also suggested that the differences between these groups can be explained partly due to their L2 proficiency.

Gümüş (2002) has also conducted a study about process writing. She investigated Turkish teachers' attitudes and understandings towards process writing in the school of foreign languages at one of the universities in Turkey. The researcher used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as data collection instruments. The results showed that EFL teachers were willing to teach writing via process writing and their attitudes were positive toward writing. On the other hand, it was revealed that EFL teachers' understanding of process writing were limited and some had misunderstandings of it.

Process approaches are advantageous in that "they understand the importance of the skills involved in writing, and recognize that what learners bring to the writing classroom contributes to the development of writing ability" (Badger & White, 2000, p. 154). Accordingly, it is required to do more research concerning process-oriented writing in foreign language contexts in order to better comprehend the strategies writers employ within the process of composing.

## 2.3 STAGES OF WRITING

As the investigation tool of the current study (WSQ) is based on Flower and Hayes (1981) model of process writing, this section focuses on the non-linear stages of writing specified mainly in this model. These stages are planning; translating and reviewing that correspond to pre-writing, writing and rewriting phases of the writing process.

### 2.3.1 Planning

Planning refers to the activities in which writers lay the groundwork for writing. The planning activities involve thinking about what to say and organizing ideas either in mind or on paper or both. At planning stage of a writing process, writers develop a plan to help them in writing. It is required for them to generate ideas related to the topic.

Although planning is not limited to this specific stage, writers are expected to devote some time to generating ideas, organizing, and goal-setting which are the sub-strategies of planning. While generating ideas, writers pay attention to the subject. They think about the topic and make use of their long-term memory to retrieve information. Also, writers can collect information from available sources. Organizing involves elaborating the information and putting ideas in order about the topic. In goal setting, writers make use of the task environment and long-term memory which are the first two components of Flower and Hayes Model of process writing. As part of this strategy, writers also consider the audience and set goals to guide their writing (Flower & Hayes, 1980).

According to Seow (2002), this stage alternatively is called as pre-writing stage which “moves students away from having to face a blank page toward generating tentative ideas and gathering information for writing” (p. 316). He named the possible activities and techniques applied at that stage as: group brainstorming, clustering, rapid free writing and *WH*-Questions.

In addition, Cowan & Cowan (1980) have mentioned two useful techniques in planning stage which are looping and cubing. They define looping as “a writing activity which

you start with a subject and, without planning or consciously thinking, writing anything that comes into your mind on the topic” (p. 9). Another important technique which is cubing has been explained by Schlemmer & Bratsch (2007) as “is a way of differentiating and adding novelty to the learning process” (p. 30) which is composed of 6 steps which are describe, compare, associate, analyze, apply and argue for or against.

### **2.3.2 Translating**

Translating involves composing ideas into written, paper form. Although writers can continue generating ideas at this stage, they generally make use of the plan and information that is generated at the planning stage of writing (Hayes and Flower, 1980 a). This stage is the act of generating the first draft of writing. Seow (2002) suggests that at this stage “the writers are focused on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft” (p. 317).

### **2.3.3 Reviewing**

According to the model of Hayes & Flower (1980), there are two reviewing processes: reviewing and editing. In reviewing, “...the writer decides to devote a period of time to systematic examination and improvement of the text. It occurs typically when the writer has finished a translation process rather than as an interruption to that process (Hayes & Flower, 1980, p. 18).” Editing, on the other hand, includes revising and evaluating processes. It occurs to check and edit “standard language conventions, accuracy of meaning, reader understanding, or reader acceptance” (Hayes and Flower (1980 a, p. 18).

Moreover, writers can consult their peers and get feedback from each other at that stage. The writers can review the work of their peers via questions. Are the paragraphs worth saying? Is the spelling correct? Are the sentences understood well? Are the paragraphs organized? The writers can also ask these questions themselves in the reviewing and editing stage which can provide them with an effective revision of their compositions.

## **2.4 LEARNERS' ROLES**

Learners in process-oriented writing classrooms are responsible for writing activities in which they are active in what they write, how they write and the evaluation process of their writing. As Decker and Kathy (1985) put it, "The learner is an active participant in the learning process, collaborating with his teacher /coach to make meaning. He is afforded an opportunity to think, to read, and to write in a critical, discriminating, and meaningful context" (p. 3).

## **2.5 TEACHERS' ROLES**

Although learner-centered curriculum seems to undervalue the importance of teachers' roles, foreign language teachers continue to be invaluable piece of the puzzle that constitutes language learning class. Their role in process-oriented writing classrooms is to facilitate the writing activities of the learners. In this respect, teachers are regarded as guide and facilitator in process writing classrooms. They are expected to provide assistance to the learners, "avoiding an emphasis on form to help them develop strategies for generating, drafting and refining ideas (Hyland, 2003, p. 12)".

Teachers are also expected to be more tolerant toward foreign language writers in process-oriented classrooms partly in order for the students to be motivated and to be able to handle the writing process with ease.

## **2.6 LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES**

The focus shifting from teacher-centered learning approaches to student-centered learning approaches has led to various studies which aim to identify strategies that learners employ along with the links between language learning strategies and success (Naiman et al. 1978; O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). The idea that gave way to such studies probably stems from the supposition that every language learner develops learning techniques and takes some steps in the learning process and

further good language learning strategies may help less successful learners improve in learning.

A considerable number of studies have been carried out since 1970's which focus on the connections between success and strategy use in language learning (Abraham and Vann, 1990; Green and Oxford, 1995; McIntyre, 1994; Politzer and McGroarty, 1985) and these studies on the whole aimed at seeking an answer to the question of "... what can be learned from the good language learner?" (Naiman, 1996, p. 4). For that purpose, researchers tended to identify learning strategies that successful language learners employ while learning. As a result, these studies reported that proficient language learners employ more strategies than low-proficient ones (Vidal, 2002).

In their attempt, researchers also aimed to investigate how can failure in language learning be prevented and what strategies less successful language learners should employ in order to become more competent language learners. For instance, Abraham and Vann (1990) conducted a study with two unsuccessful learners attending an academically-oriented intensive English program. The participants were expected to accomplish the tasks that researchers prepared. At the end of the study, they found that although the participants were active strategy users "they often failed to apply strategies appropriately to the task at hand" (p. 191).

In this respect, it is clear from the studies mentioned above that there are mixed results notably regarding the connection between successful /less successful language learners' strategy use. Regarding the research findings up to the present, it is obvious that all language learners employ language learning strategies of some kind; however, the frequency and variety of use vary between different learners (Chamot and Kupper, 1989). Consequently, as Cohen (1998) puts it "the total number or variety of strategies employed and the frequency with which any given strategy is used are not indicators of how successful learners will be on a language task" (Cohen, 1998, pp. 8-9).

On the other hand, all of these studies revealed that second language learners employ learning strategies and that it is possible to describe and classify these strategies

(Michael & O'Malley, 1990); however, there is not a consensus in terms of providing a specific all-embracing definition of language learning strategies in the literature.

Language learning strategies appear in literature under wide range of names (such as “strategies”, “tactics”, “techniques”, “learning behaviors”) (Griffiths, 2003, p. 368). In addition, there are various definitions of learning strategies provided by different scholars. Among these scholars, Rubin (1975) is the pioneering figure who defined language learning strategies, in an early attempt, as “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge” (p. 43). Therefore, learning strategies in Rubin’s terms refer to techniques that are employed by learners to get any knowledge. Another more recent and worthy of definition has been provided by O’Malley and Chamot (1990). They defined language learning strategies as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information” (p. 1).

For the purpose of the current study however, the definition of language learning strategies provided by Cohen (1990) which is “learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner”, is adopted. Although learning strategies can be used somewhat automatically after they become familiar through repeated use, most of the learners will be able to call the strategies to conscious awareness if it is required (Chamot, 2005). In the same vein, according to Oxford (1990), “learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, more transferable to new situations” (p. 8). As it is clear from the definition above, Oxford also puts emphasis on the consciousness feature of language learning strategies with the entitlement of ‘specific actions’. Consequently, strategies are different from non-strategic processes with their being conscious (Cohen 1998), otherwise the learning behavior would be the representative of a common process in learning rather than a strategy.

As for the classification of language learning strategies, those of Oxford’s (1990) and O’Malley and Chamot’s (1990) categorization and classification of language learning strategies have been influential and popular among researchers and scholars. Oxford’s (1989) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) “perhaps the most

comprehensive classification of learning strategies to date” (Ellis, 1994, p. 539) has been widely used as an instrument for studies that investigate the strategy use of the language learners in a variety of contexts.

In her classification system, Oxford (1990) preferred a detailed categorization and divided the strategies into two main categories: direct and indirect. Direct strategies include memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies and indirect strategies include metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (see Figure 2.2).

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1. *Memory strategies*, such as grouping, imagery, rhyming, and structured reviewing (9 items).
  2. *Cognitive strategies*, such as reasoning, analyzing, summarizing (all reflective of deep processing), as well as general practicing (14 items).
  3. *Compensation strategies* (to compensate for limited knowledge), such as guessing meanings from the context in reading and listening and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning when the precise expression is not known (6 items).
  4. *Metacognitive strategies*, such as paying attention, consciously searching for practice opportunities, planning for language tasks, self-evaluating one’s progress, and monitoring errors (9 items).
  5. *Affective (emotional, motivation-related) strategies*, such as anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward (6 items).
  6. *Social strategies*, such as asking questions, cooperating with native speakers of the language, and becoming culturally aware (6 items).
- 

**Figure 2.2 Oxford Classification of Learning Strategies (Oxford, 1996, p. 31)**

In the same vein, Rubin (1981) divided learning strategies into two groups which are direct and indirect. Direct strategies include clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning and practice. Indirect strategies include creating opportunities for practice and production tricks. O’Malley and Chamot (1990), on the other hand, categorized learning strategies into three groups which are cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective strategies. The following table (Table 2.1) displays the comparison of the Strategy Classification System of O’Malley and Chamot with Oxfords’.



**Table 2.1 A Comparison of Two Major Strategy Classification Systems**


---

O'Malley & Chamot Oxford (1990)	
(1990)	
O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Küpper, & Russo (1985)	
O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Küpper (1985)	

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Metacognitive Strategies	
Advance Organizers	Metacognitive Strategies
Directed Attention	Metacognitive Strategies
Selective Attention	Metacognitive Strategies
Self-Management	Metacognitive Strategies
Functional Planning	Metacognitive Strategies
Self-Monitoring	Metacognitive Strategies
Self-Evaluation	Metacognitive Strategies
Delayed Production	Metacognitive Strategies
Cognitive Strategies	
Repetition	Cognitive Strategies
Resourcing	Cognitive Strategies
Translation	Cognitive Strategies
Grouping	Memory Strategies
Note Taking	Cognitive Strategies
Deduction	Cognitive Strategies
Recombination	Cognitive Strategies
Imagery	Memory Strategies
Auditory	
Representation	Memory Strategies
Keyword	Memory Strategies
Contextualization	Memory Strategies
Elaboration	Memory Strategies
Transfer	Cognitive Strategies
Inferencing	Compensation Strategies
Socioaffective Strategies	
Cooperation	Social Strategies
Question for	
Clarification	Social Strategies
Self-Talk	Affective Strategies

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*Note.* Adapted from Hsiao (1995).

Retrieved from (Hsiao and Oxford, 2002, p.371).

Although both of these categorization schemes are comprehensive, “there is some difficulty however, in distinguishing between what is cognitive and metacognitive” (Purdie & Oliver, 1999, p. 376). In order to clarify that point, it is fundamental to

provide the definitions of these two terms which are cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Oxford and Crookall (1989) defined cognitive strategies as “skills that involve manipulation or transformation of the language in some direct way and metacognitive strategies as “behaviors used for centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating one’s learning” (p. 404).

Oxford (1990) mentions the possibility of a category conflict and “gives an example the metacognitive strategy of planning, which, in as far as planning requires reasoning, might also be considered of a cognitive strategy (cited in Griffiths, 2004, p. 4). On the other hand, SILL has been widely used in the studies as a convenient instrument to elicit the strategy preferences of second/foreign language learners (Alptekin, 2007).

In these studies, various ways of data collection instruments were used ranging from think-aloud protocols (Chamot & Keatley, 2003; Cohen et al., 1998), interviews (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990), diaries and journals (Carson & Longhini, 2002), questionnaires (Fan, 2003; Oxford et al. 2004) and some of the combinations of two or more of these instruments (Vidal, 2002) in order to identify the language learning strategies. On the other hand, each has its own limitations. As Grenfell and Harris (1999) stated “it is not easy to get inside the ‘black box’ of the human brain and find out what is going on there”(p. 54) but researchers can only identify the data that they collect and work on what they can obtain from the learners. In this respect, these methods are crucial for eliciting the language learning strategies that learners employ. They further help language teachers develop instructional methods, accordingly.

One of the reasons behind these studies is that teachers pay more attention to content and learning products other than the process itself (Jones, 1998). However, language learners should be aware of the strategies they employ and think about their learning in depth which is also essential to enhance learner autonomy. In this respect, these studies in the field of language learning strategies are crucial in that they can “guide the development of learner training activities so that learners become not only more efficient in learning and using their second language, but also more capable of self-directing these endeavors” (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 6).

## 2.7 STRATEGIES FOR WRITING

In order to provide a specific definition of what strategy is, there have been different attempts to achieve this (see 2.1 Language Learning Strategies section). The problem that accounts for strategy definition does exist not only in language learning strategy notion but also in ‘process’ and ‘strategy’ terms. In an attempt to cease the pervasive overlapping of these terms, Ellis (1985) made the distinction by defining ‘process’ as ‘a sequence of operations’ and ‘strategy’ as ‘a single operation, that is, as a feature of a process’ (p. 166). Hence, process and strategy are interrelated and strategies that are employed by the learners constitute that process. According to Manchon (2001), “writing strategies correspond to those actions and procedures employed by the writer to (i) control the on-line management of goals; (ii) compensate for the limited capacity of human beings’ cognitive resources; and, generally, (iii) overcome the problems writers pose to themselves” (p. 48).

In an attempt to reveal and identify strategies of L2 and EFL learners, researchers conducted certain studies; however, language learning strategies research in productive skills which are speaking and writing is limited. Concerning writing strategy studies, researchers mainly focused on L1 and L2 differences in writing and they made comparisons between L1 and L2 writing strategies. There are a lot of studies that found that L1 writing strategies are transferable to L2 (such as Edelsky, 1982; Hirose & Sasaki 1994; Pennington & So, 1993).

There are also other L2 studies which investigate writing strategies of ESL learners. One of these recent studies has been conducted by Wong (2005). The study investigated the composing strategies of four L2 writers and the rhetorical context of their composing. The researcher videotaped the writing sessions and conducted think-aloud protocol and follow-up interviews with the participants. At the end of the study, he found out that participants used variety of strategies; however, different writers employed similar or different strategies regarding the purpose for that specific part of the composing process.

On the other hand, limited number of study has investigated EFL and FL writing strategies and one of such FL research has been done by Kubota (2001). The researcher conducted the study in order to explore error correction strategies of Japanese as a foreign language learners when revising their writing task. As a result of implementing interview, observation and think-aloud protocol as research tools, he found out that learners had difficulty in correcting vocabulary errors but not script errors.

Despite the multidimensional results, such studies are invaluable in that they help both the language learners and teachers be more aware of the significance of strategy use in writing. Students in particular should be more aware of various writing strategies so that they can achieve more control over the process of their writing.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

Language learning strategies bring to light important aspects of language learning by focusing on learners more than traditional based teacher-centered approaches do. In this respect, language learning teachers are expected to guide their learners in the process of learning and help them be more aware of what they do while learning. Accordingly, many studies were conducted on language learning strategies and the results of these studies support the view that language learning strategies are key to enhance efficient language learning.

In order to understand and show the importance of language learning strategies, more studies should be conducted in different contexts focusing on each skill that is part of the language learning process. From this point of view, the number of studies on language learning strategies in EFL contexts should be increased. Particularly, more investigations on writing skill should be made which is regarded as one of the hardest skill for the EFL learners. To the outer's knowledge, limited number of studies attempted to explore the difficulties especially undergraduate EFL teacher trainees continue to encounter in English writing. The employment of undergraduate EFL learners' writing strategies in English writing along with the difficulties can provide the field with valuable pedagogical insights for the EFL learning contexts. By this way,

learners will be more aware of their writing process and teachers will be able to help their students more in that process supplying them with learner training activities which would enhance efficiency in language learning.

Regarding the reasons above, the current study aims to identify and explore the writing strategies that undergraduate ELT teacher trainees employ while writing. Further, the writing difficulties the intended EFL learners encounter while writing with the coping writing strategies that they apply to overcome these problems while writing. In the next chapter, then, the methodology of the study that includes the design of the study, the participants in the study, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and lastly the analysis of the data is explained in detail.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 PRESENTATION**

This study investigates the writing strategies that undergraduate EFL learners employ in constructing an essay. In order to reach these intended aims of the study, initially, the design of the study is explained in this chapter. Next, participants and instruments used in the study which are Writing Strategy Questionnaire (WSQ), and retrospective semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants are provided. Following this, the section of data collection procedures aims to present a detailed picture of the research process and the chapter concludes with the data analysis technique and procedure.

#### **3.1 DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The current study was conducted with a group of language teacher trainees in Hacettepe University ELT Department. The data were collected by the researcher herself via Writing Strategy Questionnaire (WSQ) (Petric & Czarl, 2003) and semi-structured interviews and were analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The WSQ was designed by Petric and Czarl between 2002 and 2003 and was validated through their research study. The quantitative analysis of the WSQ helped the researcher identify the writing strategies the participants employ in general while writing. The reliability of the results obtained from WSQ was achieved through utilizing the Cronbah's Alpha. Further, in order both to explore the writing strategies of the participants in depth and to validate the findings from the WSQ, the researcher collected data using other instruments. In this respect, retrospective interviews were conducted with approximately half of the participants (11 female and 4 males) which were transcribed and then analyzed qualitatively.

### 3.2 PARTICIPANTS

This study was conducted with a group of 35 EFL learners in Hacettepe University ELT department. The participants were second grade learners in ELT department and this class was selected randomly among three second grade groups. For the interviews, on the other hand, the stratified sampling was applied. The interviews were held with approximately half of the females (11 of 27) and males (4 of 8) in order to secure gender stabilization among the participants. Before the study, the procedure was explained to the students through the inform sheets and they voluntarily consented to participate in the study signing the consent forms. Another reason for their willingness to participate in the study was probably the fact that they are language teacher trainees and are motivated to improve themselves for their future job.

As shown in Table 3.1, the participants consisted of 27 female and 8 male students all of whom took Advanced Reading and Writing Course I and II in their first year in the department. The average age of the students is 19 and their native language is Turkish. All of the participants were graduates of Anatolian Teacher Training High School and they have been learning English nearly for 10 years. Consequently, the intended group under investigation in the current study has similar linguistic background in English language.

**Table 3.1 Demographic Features of the Participants**

Variables	Groups	N	Percentage
Gender	Female	27	77.1%
	Male	8	22.8%
Total Size		35	100.0%

### **3.3 INSTRUMENTS**

As it is specified in the research design, the data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative instruments. The quantitative instrument was (a) Writing Strategy Questionnaire (WSQ). Other instrument which was retrospective interviews had a qualitative nature. In addition, two open-ended questions asked at the end of the questionnaire were analyzed qualitatively. In this section, data collection tools used in the current study will be explained in detail according to manner and chronological order they were administered.

#### **3.3.1 Writing Strategy Questionnaire**

There has been an increasing interest in the field of language learning strategies and considerable amount of studies focus their attention on identifying the strategies learners employ while learning a language. These studies help to highlight the importance of language learning strategies in learning a new language. As Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) specified “learning strategies ... not only help learners become efficient in learning and using a language, but also contribute to increasing learners’ self-directed learning” (p. 400). In order to determine the strategies used by language learners, there have been numerous studies most of which applied questionnaires as an instrument one of which that is used extensively is Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (henceforth SILL). As Alptekin (2007) has suggested SILL “has become a suitable instrument to measure the strategy preferences of all language learners, whether the target language is learned as a second or foreign language, or acquired in a naturalistic or instructed context” (p. 5).

On the other hand, as for the specific skills such as writing which is the concern of the present study, any questionnaire specifically designed to measure the writing strategies of ESL and EFL learners does not stand out in the literature except for the one used for the current study. The questionnaire which was applied in this study was structured by two scholars (Petric and Czarl, 2003) with the aim of validating a writing strategy questionnaire with advanced non-native speakers of English. Although the



questionnaire was applied to L2 learners of English by these researchers, it is suitable for the current study whose participants are undergraduate EFL learners in Turkey where English is spoken and taught as a foreign language. The reason is that the participants of the current study are English language teacher trainees so they are academically proficient with an advanced level of English to accomplish such a task. On the other hand, in order to achieve content validity, several modifications were done in the construction of items in the questionnaire. As a result, adapted version of the WSQ was administered in the present study (see Appendix A).

The items of the original questionnaire were constructed by the researchers themselves. The researchers (Petric and Czarl, 2003) stated in the study that “the ideas for writing came from the researchers’ personal experience as non-native writers in English and writing teachers, from informal interviews with students, and from the literature on writing as well as questionnaires on similar issues (e.g. Oxford’s (1990, p. 190) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)). The adapted version used in the current study was constructed after piloting it with three non-participant students in the same department.

There are two types of questions in the questionnaire. (See Appendix A). In the first section, there are 6 general questions which aim to receive factual information from the participants and the second part involves 38 items related to the writing process itself. As explained by Petric and Czarl (2003) “the main part, dealing with strategies, is divided into three subsections: planning strategies (8 items), while-writing strategies (14 items), and revising strategies (16 items)” (p. 190). The underlying theory for segmenting the questionnaire into three stages is “based on Flower and Hayes cognitive model of the L1 writing process, which emphasizes the idea of recursion in writing” (Petric and Czarl, 2003, p. 193). The items were constructed basing on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) Never True, (2) Usually Not True, (3) Somewhat True, (4) Usually True and (5) Always True. In addition, the items in the questionnaire were grouped by the researcher herself into seven categories based on Oxford’s Classification of Learning Strategies (see Appendix A). The reason behind such a classification was to explore the writing strategy preferences of the participants in depth and to unearth the

frequency of their use on level basis. Although each strategy is a combination of more than one level, the categorization was established according to their predominance (Baker & Boonkit, 2004).

The WSQ was used in the current study for the purpose of getting an idea of the writing strategies the participants employ while constructing an essay. In addition, with an aim to investigate the writing strategies the participants apply in particular to cope with their writing difficulties, two open-ended questions were provided by the researcher at the end of the WSQ. First question was “What kind of writing difficulty(ies) do you experience while writing English compositions? Please elaborate on it(them).” The second question was constructed related to the first question: “What do you do to overcome the difficulty(ies) you encounter while writing? Which strategies do you employ?” With these questions, the researcher aimed to identify the problems that participants encounter while writing and the problem solving strategies they employ to overcome these difficulties.

However, the answers of the students might have been insufficient in order to discover the writing strategies they employ with the difficulties they experience and coping strategies they used to overcome these difficulties. For the purpose of providing more consistent results, retrospective interviews were conducted in an attempt to explore in depth the writing strategies of the participants and support the results of the WSQ.

### **3.3.1.1 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

The writing strategy questionnaire was validated by the researchers (Petric and Czarl) who constructed the questionnaire themselves. For this aim, this aforementioned study was conducted by two researchers with advanced non-native speakers of English via both qualitative and quantitative instruments. In order to achieve reliability, test-retest method was applied. Moreover, the content validity, construct validity and response validity of the instrument were checked.

As for the current study, with the purpose of achieving content validity, interviews were piloted with three students from non-participatory class in the department. They were asked whether the instructions for the questionnaire were clear. In addition, the researcher asked for their opinion about the questionnaire items and whether they were clear for them to understand. According to the results of the interview, the instructions about what they were expected to do in the WSQ and explanations about how to answer WSQ were easy to comprehend. On the other hand, the students reported solely minor difficulties in understanding only three items in the WSQ. Accordingly, the researcher re-constructed these three items adding detailed explanations about their aims to be applied by the participants.

One such item was the first strategy at the *planning* stage of the questionnaire which is '*I make a timetable for the writing process*'. The interviewees reported that the item was unclear and required to be explained in detail. Consequently, the researcher provided the participants with an explanation and telling them that it means 'arranging their time that will be spent on each writing process'.

The second and third items belonged to *when writing* strategy items which were '*I stop after each sentence to read it again*' and '*I stop after a few sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea*'. These items were reconstructed adding explicitly the potential aims with which participants would have to apply these strategies.

According to the interview reports, the editions and changes made in the items in the questionnaire are as follows:

1. I make a timetable for the writing process - *I make a timetable and arrange the time I will spend for the writing process.*
2. I stop after each sentence to read it again - *I stop after each sentence to read it again which would help me see if it requires editing or how to continue.*
3. I stop after a few sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea – *I stop after a few sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea to see if any editing is required or how to continue.*

In order to achieve internal-consistency reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbah's Alpha was implemented. The results of the analysis are shown in the Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2 Reliability Analysis of WSQ**

	N of Cases	N of Items	Alpha
Before	35	8	,6710
While	35	14	,7114
When Revising	35	16	,6612
Total	35	38	,7897

As displayed in Table 3.2, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in total is ,7897. As the reliability coefficient of an instrument should be above .70 to accept the instrument as reliable, the questionnaire applied in the current study has internal-consistency reliability.

### 3.3.2 Retrospective Interviews

With the purpose of gathering data about the general writing strategies participants employ, and the difficulties they experience in writing along with the coping writing strategies they apply to overcome these problems, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the application. The interviewees were selected among 35 participants via stratified sampling. According to stratified sampling, the interviewees were selected regarding the gender. 11 females were selected among 27 and 4 males among 8 (15 in total) which correspond to approximately half of each gender. As gender has not been taken into account as a variable in the study, the researcher aimed to decrease the probable effect of gender on the results with stratified sampling.

To explore the writing strategies that the participants apply in depth and get richer data about the problems they face in English writing, the researcher used semi-structured interviews. As Miller and Brewer (2003) explain "semi-structured interviews involve

the interviewer deciding in advance what broad topics are to be covered and what main questions are to be asked” (p. 167). As a result, several guiding questions (see Appendix B) were prepared to ask the participants beforehand. The first four open-ended questions were constructed based on the same logic as the WSQ and were listed according to planning, while writing and when revising stages of writing. The rest two guiding questions aimed to reveal their problems and coping writing strategies they employ to get rid of these difficulties and were related to the open-ended questions asked at the very end of the WSQ. The guiding questions were more general ones; however, according to the student utterances they were specified with more closed questions to make in depth analysis. The interview sessions were audio-taped and transcribed.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

The current study was conducted in 2008-2009 Academic Year Fall Semester in Hacettepe University ELT Department. At the beginning of the study, the researcher contacted with all the second grade EFL learners in the department to explain the aim of the study. In order to make an in depth analysis and due to time limitation, 35 students were selected as participants among 92 in total via random sampling on a voluntary basis.

In the first week, three non-participant students were asked to examine the WSQ in order to achieve content validity. Each was interviewed individually in approximately 45 minutes in total. According to their comments, three items in the second part of the questionnaire were re-constructed.

In the second week, participants were given a Writing Strategy Questionnaire (WSQ) which includes questions about factual information and perceptions of their writing strategy use while writing in English. The researcher provided instructions and explanations about the questionnaire. The participants were asked to answer the questions in one session which took about 45 minutes.

In the second phase of the study, 15 interviewees were selected via stratified sampling. 11 females were selected among 27 and 4 males from 8 were selected which corresponds to approximately half of each gender. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the students one by one in English; however, they were allowed to use their native language Turkish when they had difficulty in expressing themselves. Despite the fact that the participants were ELT students, it was assumed that they could express themselves easier and clearer in their native language which is Turkish. Furthermore, the researcher helped the interviewees to find English equivalents of their Turkish utterances. The following Table 3.3 shows the process of the study in detail.

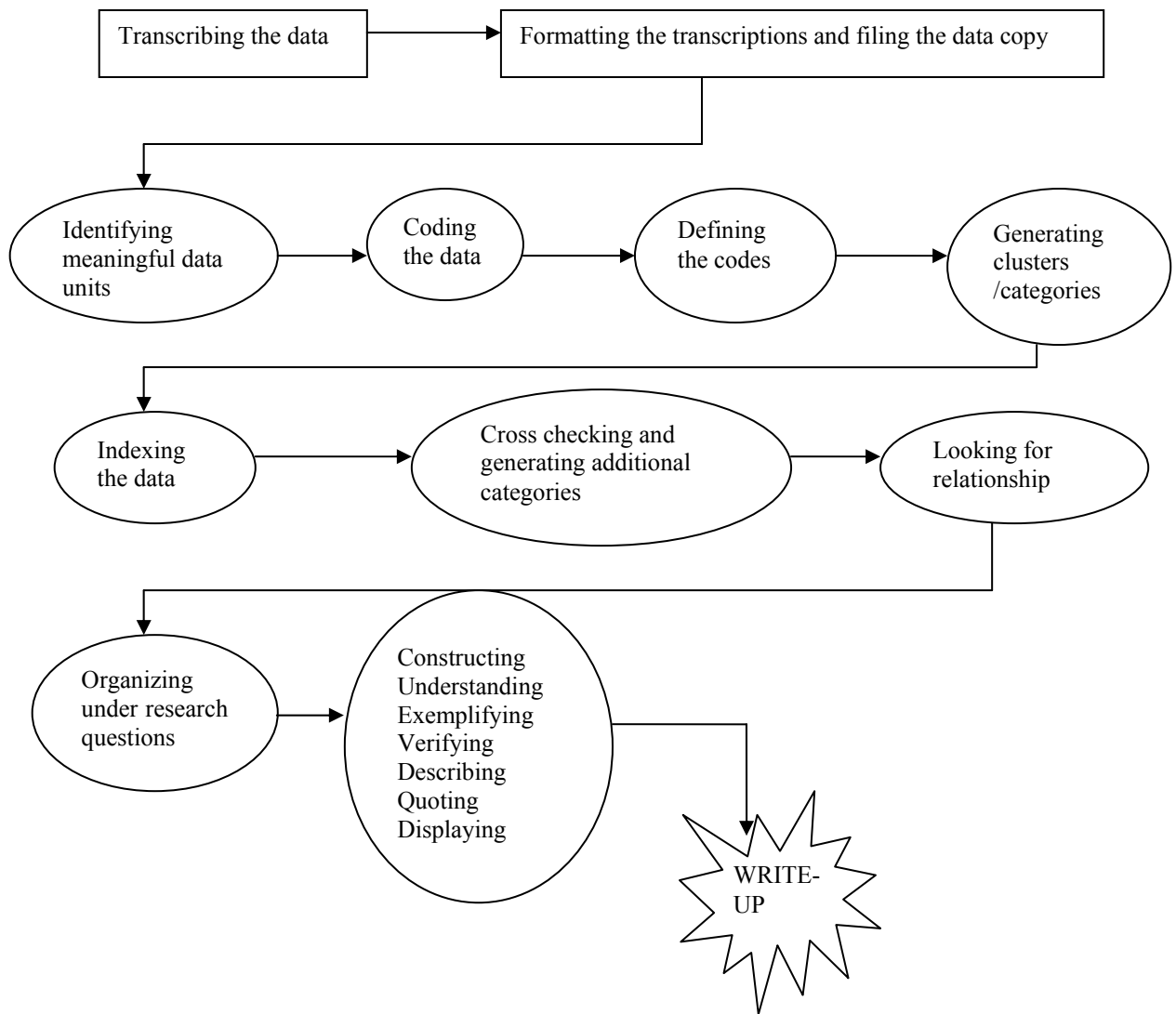
**Table 3.3 An Overview of Methodological Tools**

<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Why</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>		
3-4 November 2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contacting with all the second grade learners in the department</li> <li>2. Random sampling</li> <li>3. Collecting the e-mail addresses of the participants</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To explain the aim of the study</li> <li>2. To select a class of students as participants</li> <li>3. For future contact with the participants</li> </ol>
11 November 2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interviews with three students from the Department about the WSQ Piloting</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To achieve content validity</li> </ol>
14 November 2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Giving out WSQ and give instructions to the participants</li> <li>2. WSQ</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To remind them of the aim of the study and explain what they should do</li> <li>2. To answer Research Questions</li> </ol>
<b>Phase 2</b>		
21 November 2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stratified sampling</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To select interviewees for the second phase of the study</li> </ol>
26-27-28 November 2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Semi-structured interviews</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To answer Research Questions</li> <li>2. To validate the results of WSQ</li> </ol>

### 3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

In the current study, the data collected through WSQ were analyzed quantitatively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (henceforth SPSS), version 11.5. Two open-ended questions at the end of the WSQ and retrospective semi-structured interviews were analyzed qualitatively. In terms of quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics such as frequencies means and standard deviations were utilized for the purpose of investigating the frequency of writing strategy use both in general and according to three writing stages which are *before*, *when writing* and *when revising* stages. In an attempt to examine content validity of the WSQ, interviews were conducted with three learners from the same department but among non-participatory students from the other two classes. As a result, three items of the WSQ were rewritten. As for the inter-rater reliability of the writing strategy questionnaire, Cronbah's Alpha procedure was implemented.

Interview data were analyzed using content analysis. Following Figure 3.1 displays the data analysis procedure followed for the interview analysis that Baş Collins (2000) provided:



**Figure 3.1 Overall Data Analysis Procedures (adapted from Baş Collins, 2000, p.70)**



### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the methodology of the study with reference to the design of the study, participants and instruments used in the study were indicated. The data collection procedure and the analysis of the data followed. Next chapter includes the results of the analysis which are presented in detail.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 PRESENTATION**

In order to find out the writing strategy use of the participants, the researcher applied several data collection instruments to the participants. Primarily, writing strategy questionnaire was administered to the students (see Appendix A). Apart from the writing strategies, there are several questions in the WSQ that aim to provide factual information about the participants. These questions cover gender, native language, years of English study, information about whether the participants attended a writing course before, text types they generally write and their attitudes toward writing in English. In addition, the researcher provided two open-ended questions at the end of the writing questionnaire. These questions aimed to identify the writing difficulties the participants encounter while writing and the specific writing strategies they employ to overcome these difficulties. The interpretation of quantitative analysis is presented in line with the open-ended questions and the transcripts of the retrospective semi-structured interviews held in the second phase of the study.

#### **4.1 LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS**

With an aim to gather factual information about the participants of the study, the first section of the questionnaire involved several questions (see Appendix A). As shown in the Table 4.1 below, the native language of the participants is Turkish. 62.8% of them have 10 years of English learning experience and most of them (91.4%) did not attend a formal writing course before coming to university. In addition, more than half of them (57.1%) write essays in general. As for their motivation toward writing English, 42.8% of the participants like writing and 5.7% of them like writing very much which shows that approximately half of the participants have positive attitudes toward writing English.

**Table 4.1 Learner Characteristics**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Native Language	Turkish	35	100%
Years of Experience in English Learning	8,00	1	2.8%
	9,00	4	11.4%
	10,00	22	62.8%
	11,00	6	17.1%
	12,00	2	5.7%
Course Attendance in Writing in English Before University	Yes	3	8.5%
	No	32	91.4%
Genre of English Writing Pieces (Participant Experience)	E-mails	9	25.7%
	Notes	2	5.7%
	Essays	20	57.1%
	Articles	4	11.4%
English Writing Motivation	I don't like it at all	1	2.8%
	I don't like it	8	22.8%
	I have no feelings about it	9	25.7%
	I like it	15	42.8%
	I like it a lot	2	5.7%
Total		35	100.0%

#### **4.2 OVERALL WRITING STRATEGY USE**

In order to explore the general employment of writing strategies of the participants and the descriptive statistics of each strategy were reckoned for three stages. It was also aimed to see whether the results were compatible with the retrospective interview reports. For this purpose, the transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed and discussed the reasons behind the frequency of the overall writing strategy use.

#### 4.2.1 Findings from Writing Strategy Questionnaire

It was aimed to find answers to the first and second research questions via the following tables and the explanations provided. The following Table 4.2 displays the mean and standard deviations of the strategies for *before*, *while* and *when revising* stages respectively.

**Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Writing Strategy Use at Three Stages**

WRITING STAGES		BEFORE	WHILE	WHEN REVISING	OVERALL
N	Valid	35	35	35	35
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2,248	2,953	2,659	3,105
Std. Deviation		0,362	0,378	0,325	0,355

The mean values and standard deviations for the three stages of writing and overall writing strategy use are displayed in Table 4.2. The mean value ( $M=3,105$ ) of overall writing strategy use of the participants show that they moderately apply writing strategies in English writing as the mean value is among  $M=2,50$  and  $M=3,50$ .

**Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Writing Strategy Use on Level Basis**

Level of Strategy	CP	C	S	MC	A	N-MC	M
Mean	3,383	3,11	3,085	3,042	2,828	1,856	--
Std. Deviation	,928	,920	1,153	,916	1,124	,990	--

CP: Compensation, C: Cognitive, S: Social, MC: Metacognitive, A: Affective, N-MC: Negative Metacognitive, M: Memory Strategies.

As displayed in Table 4.3, participants apply compensation (CP) strategies most frequently while constructing their essays. Although the mean value of N-MC is the least of all ( $M=1,856$ ), it shows that participants employ strategies at this level

frequently. On the other hand, participants employ affective (A) strategies least frequently of all.

#### 4.2.2 Findings from Retrospective Interviews

With the purpose of validating the results found via WSQ, retrospective semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 female and 4 males among 35 participants. The guiding questions of the interview were based on the research questions of the study (see Appendix B for the questions).

One of the reasons behind the moderate writing strategy use can stem from the fact that the participants are undergraduate ELT teacher trainees and have approximately 10 years of English learning experiences. They also received formal writing course previously in the department. On one side, they may be writing their essays in the way they are instructed during their formal course sessions. The following quotes of the participants from the interview support this idea.

**ST8:** There is a writing format and I try to write according to this format. For example, I make an outline in the paper. I write my essay according to this outline because everything should be organized. (*Interview, November 27, 2008*)

On the other hand, the participants are adult learners. To some extent, they know themselves and want to write in the way they want to, accordingly. The above comments and probable reasons for the moderate use of writing strategies are derived from their following quotes during the interview sessions.

**ST13:** I need to feel relaxed. There should not be any problem in my mind before writing. I just try to write freely. I start writing with the ideas that come to my mind directly. I feel more relaxed by this way. (*Interview, November 28, 2008*)

Motivation factor should not also be underestimated. As displayed in Table 4.3 above, 24.8% of the students do not like writing and 25.7% have no feelings about writing. Little motivation for writing may affect the frequency of their overall writing strategy use. ST 5 mentions his little motivation even in the first language during the interview as follows.

**ST5:** I really don't like writing. It is boring to write even in Turkish.  
(*Interview, November 26, 2008*)

### **4.3 INDIVIDUAL WRITING STRATEGY USE**

In order to find out the writing strategies the participants employ in English writing, particularly the frequency in each phase of writing, the mean and standard deviations of individual strategy were calculated for each stage. The participants were also asked questions in the interview sessions to identify their individual writing strategy use (see Appendix B) and the results were evaluated in line with those of questionnaires.

#### **4.3.1 Findings from Writing Strategy Questionnaire**

Following Table 4.4 displays the frequency of writing strategy use of the participants in a ranking order at planning stage.

**Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Writing Strategy Use at Before Writing**

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I note down words and short notes related to the topic. (MC)	35	3,942	,9684
I look at a model written by a native speaker or more proficient writer. (C)	35	3,714	,7503
Before I start writing I revise the requirements. (MC)	35	3,628	,5983
I write an outline of my paper. (MC)	35	3,457	,9500
I think about what I want to write and have a plan in my mind, but not on paper. (MC)	35	3,142	,9744
I make a timetable for the writing process. (MC)	35	2,429	,9482
I write notes or an outline in my native language. (MC)	35	2,342	,9983
I start writing without having a written or mental plan. (N-MC)	35	2,085	1,039
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	<b>35</b>		

As displayed in Table 4.4, the mean value of the first strategy ( $M= 3,942$ ) is the highest of all the strategies at *before writing* stage. It reveals that ‘*I note down words and short notes related to the topic*’ was reported to be the most frequently applied strategy at *before writing* stage by the participants. In addition, the mean value of the strategy employed by the participants which is ‘*I start writing without having a written or mental plan*’ is the least of all with the value of ( $M= 2,085$ ). However, as the item is negative, the results indicate that participants start writing having either a written or mental plan or both.

In terms of determining the most frequent used writing strategies by the participants, the interviewees were asked about their strategy use according to each writing stage which are *before*, *while* and *when revising* stages. The following section involves the planning strategies reported by the participants in the interview sessions.

## 4.3.2 Findings from Retrospective Interviews

### 4.3.2.1 Strategies Reported at Before Writing Stage

The interviewees were asked initially what they do before writing. The results were consistent with the questionnaire results. The participants reported that they think about what they would include in the composition and take notes about the topic.

**ST2:** First of all, I think about the topic of course, and what to write. (*Interview, November 26, 2008*)

**ST8:** I decide on what to write about the topic. Then, I take notes about them. I also think about which examples would be suitable to add in the supporting paragraphs. (*Interview, November 27, 2008*)

**ST13:** I make a plan in my mind about what to write first, second, etc. I then write that plan on a sheet and start writing according to this plan. (*Interview, November 28, 2008*)

Moreover, some of the participants stated that they make a plan about what to write and also how many sentences and paragraphs their composition will include.

**ST7:** I organize the paragraphs and the length of the sentences if it is an in-class writing session. As the time is limited, I believe I should make an organization so as not to exceed the time limit. The supporting paragraphs, for example, should not be either too short or too long... (*Interview, November 27, 2008*)

The following Table 4.5 shows the frequency of individual writing strategies participants employ while writing English compositions.



**Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Writing Strategy Use at While Writing Stage**

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I start with the introduction. (MC)	35	4,400	,6507
I reread what I have written to get ideas how to continue. (C)	35	3,971	,7469
If I don't know a word in English, I find a similar English word that I know. (CP)	35	3,942	,6835
If I don't know a word in English, I write it in my native language and later try to find an appropriate English word. (CP)	35	3,771	1,0025
I simplify what I want to write if I don't know how to express my thoughts in English. (CP)	35	3,742	,7413
I go for sure in grammar and vocabulary. (CP)	35	3,685	,9000
I stop after a few sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea. (C)	35	3,657	,8023
I use a monolingual dictionary. (CP)	35	3,485	1,0108
I go back to my outline and make changes in it. (C)	35	3,228	,9727
If I don't know a word in English, I stop writing and look up the word in the dictionary. (CP)	35	3,200	1,0792
I use a bilingual dictionary. (CP)	35	3,171	1,0977
I ask somebody to help out when I have problems while writing. (S)	35	2,914	1,1973
I write bits of the text in my native language and then translate them into English. (C)	35	2,542	1,1966
I stop after each sentence to read it again. (C)	35	2,171	,9230
Valid N (listwise)	35		

Table 4.5 shows that the mean value of the first *while writing* strategy has the highest mean score of all with the score of ( $M= 4,400$ ). It suggests that the most frequent use strategy at while writing stage reported by the participants was '*I start with the introduction*'. The table also suggests that '*I stop after each sentence to read it again*' was reported to be the least frequent used strategy at *while writing* stage ( $M= 2,171$ ).

The following section involves the writing strategies that participants reported to use while writing in the interview sessions.

#### **4.3.2.2 Strategies Reported at While Writing Stage**

The interviewees were asked what steps they take while writing and how they write. Reported as the most frequent while writing strategy in the questionnaire, ‘*starting with the introduction*’ is also mentioned by the interviewees to be the most frequent while writing strategy. The following utterances by the interviewees confirm this consistency:

**ST7:** I begin writing with my thesis statement and then the topic sentences for the development paragraphs... so I write the introduction part after the thesis statement. (*Interview, November 27, 2008*)

**ST12:** I revise my notes that I have taken before writing. I rearrange my thoughts and think about which sentences I should begin with. (*Interview, November 28, 2008*)

**ST15:** I always want to write an original composition, not to write everybody would write... So I think about what will make the reader be interested in that composition. I believe I should catch that point from the beginning of my writing and I try to start with an effective introduction. (*Interview, November 28, 2008*)

Other strategies that participants reported to use while writing are as follows:

\*Finding concrete examples

\*Writing simple sentences

**ST1:** While writing, I pay attention to the examples because I believe the examples are important in order to make the composition more effective. I try to find concrete examples. (*Interview, November 26, 2008*)

**ST8:** I think that the sentences should not be long or complex ones. The more simple sentences you use while writing, the more effective it will be for the reader. (*Interview, November 27, 2008*)

Table 4.6 that follows displays the frequency of individual writing strategy use of the participants at when revising stage that they reported in the questionnaire.

**Table 4.6 Descriptive Statistics of Writing Strategy Use at When Revising Stage**

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I check if my essay matches the requirements. (MC)	35	3,771	,6896
I check my mistakes after I get back the paper with feedback from the teacher, and try to learn from them. (C)	35	3,771	1,0025
I make changes in sentence structure. (CP)	35	3,342	,7252
I make changes in vocabulary. (CP)	35	3,285	,8599
I show my text to somebody and ask for his/her opinion. (S)	35	3,257	1,0666
I compare my paper with the essays written by my friends on the same topic. (S)	35	3,085	1,1973
I use a dictionary when revising. (CP)	35	2,857	,9438
I give myself a reward for completing the assignment. (A)	35	2,828	1,1242
I only read what I have written when I have finished the whole paper. (CP)	35	2,742	1,1718
I make changes in the structure of the essay. (C)	35	2,571	,9482
I read my text aloud. (MC)	35	2,571	1,0923
I focus on one thing at a time when revising (e.g., content, structure). (MC)	35	2,428	,9167
I leave the text aside for a couple of days and then I can see it in a new perspective. (MC)	35	2,428	1,144
I make changes in the content or ideas. (C)	35	2,371	,9420
I drop my first draft and start writing again. (MC)	35	1,971	1,0706
When I have written my paper, I hand it in without reading it. (N-MC)	35	1,628	,9420
Valid N (listwise)	35		

According to Table 4.6, the most frequently used strategies at when revising stage are the strategy 11 and 16 with the same mean value of ( $M= 3,71$ ). The strategy 11 refers to ‘*I check if my essay matches the requirements*’ and 16 to ‘*I check my mistakes after I get back the paper with feedback from the teacher, and try to learn from them*’. In addition, as a negative item the third strategy which refers to ‘*When I have written my paper, I hand it in without reading it*’ has the mean value of ( $M=1,62$ ). Consequently, the result means that the participants frequently hand their paper after reading it.

Following section involves the strategies reported by the participants which they employ at when revising stage of the writing process.

#### **4.3.2.3 Strategies Reported at When Revising Stage**

In order to find out which writing strategies the participants employ at the revising stage of writing, they were asked what they do after the completion of their compositions. It was revealed that the results mostly are consistent with the ones in the WSQ. On the other hand, among three most frequent strategies that were reported in the WSQ, only one of them was not uttered by the interviewees which is ‘*I check if my essay matches the requirements*’. The other two most frequent ones were reported by most of the participants in the interview. One of them is ‘*When I have written my paper, I hand it in after reading it*’. The following utterances of the interviews are some examples. Note that each has different aims in reading their paper after completion.

**ST3:** Usually, I am not sure about my composition so I read it and check if I need to add anything. (*Interview, November 26, 2008*)

**ST6:** I generally read it all. If I find any irrelevant idea I omit it. However, I generally make editions in terms of grammar not about content. (*Interview, November 27, 2008*)

**ST10:** In order to find a suitable and effective title, I read what I write. However, I do not make much change in the composition. (*Interview, November 27, 2008*)

The other most frequent used when revising strategy reported in the WSQ which is ‘I check my mistakes after I get back the paper with feedback from the teacher, and try to learn from them’ was also uttered by most of the interviewees.

**ST4:** Although I believe that I write well, I can’t be sure and wonder what my teacher thinks about it. Most of all, I wonder if I can express my thoughts in the way I want to. (*Interview, November 26, 2008*)

**ST9:** No matter how many times I check for my mistakes, after I get it back from the teacher I see a lot of grammatical mistakes in my paper. (*Interview, November 27, 2008*)

#### **4.4 WRITING DIFFICULTIES AND COPING WRITING STRATEGIES**

In order to find out the writing difficulties participants experience in English writing and coping writing strategies they employ to overcome them, they were asked two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire. These questions were also asked during interview sessions. The results were analyzed qualitatively in line with each other.

##### **4.4.1 Findings from Open-ended Questions**

The participants mentioned various difficulties while writing English compositions and strategies they employ in order to overcome these difficulties. Some of the participants mentioned more than one difficulty for the question “What kind of writing difficulty(ies) do you experience while writing English compositions? Please elaborate on it(them)”. These difficulties were grouped under sentence-level (word choice, grammar), organization-level (discourse, coherence, and cohesion), first language interference,

background knowledge and motivation problems and with the numbers which indicate by how many participants each was mentioned in total (see Table 4.7).

In addition, according to the answers for the second open-ended question at the end of the WSQ, *coping* writing strategies the participants reported to employ in overcoming each difficulty were displayed in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Writing Difficulties and Coping Writing Strategy Use**

<b>Writing Difficulties</b>	<b>Coping Writing Strategies</b>
<b>A- Sentence Level Difficulties</b>	
1. Finding appropriate words (N=4)	1.a. Reading articles (N=2) 1.b. Reading short stories (N=1) 1. c. Reading simplified novels (N=1)
2. Using different and more conjunctions (N=1)	2.a. Reading articles on the Internet (N=1)
<b>B- Organization Level Difficulties</b>	
1. Time management in in-class writing (N=2)	1.a. Making time-tables (N=1) 1. b. Making outline (N=1)
2. Organization of supporting paragraphs (N=1)	2.a. Making outline and revising it while writing (N=1)
<b>C- First Language Interference</b>	
1. Thinking words in Turkish and difficulty in their appropriate English equivalents (N=8)	1.a. Using mono-lingual dictionary finding (N=6) 1. b. Using bilingual dictionary (N=2)
2. Thinking in Turkish and translating the ideas into English sentences (N=4)	2.a. Reading articles (N=3) 2.b. Asking peers for their help (N=1)
<b>D- Background Knowledge</b>	
1. Limited ideas about the topic (N=5)	1.a. Searching for related articles from the Internet (N= 5)
<b>E- Motivation</b>	
1. To be uninterested in writing English compositions (N=5)	1.a. No strategy specified
2. Uninteresting topics (N= 4)	2.a. Writing without a mental or written plan (N=1)
3. To be uninterested in writing both in English and Turkish (N=3)	3.a. No strategy specified

As shown in Table 4.7, the participants mentioned to be experiencing problems most frequently in ‘thinking words in Turkish and difficulty in finding their English equivalents’ (N=8) which belongs to *First Language Interference* difficulty category. It is suggested from the table above that these 8 participants employ ‘using mono-lingual and bilingual dictionaries’ strategy to overcome this aforementioned writing problem.

#### 4.4.2 Findings from Retrospective Interviews

In terms of identifying the difficulties the participants encounter in writing and the problem-solving strategies specifically to overcome these difficulties, two-open ended questions were asked in WSQ. With the aim of validating these results and exploring them in depth, interviewees were asked whether they experience problems in writing. Additionally, they were asked what they do to overcome these difficulties. The results were consistent with the ones that are acquired from previously asked open-ended questions (see Table 4.7 for the writing difficulties and coping strategies). However, several participants mentioned during interviews other difficulties and *coping* strategies to handle them as follows:

<b>Difficulty</b>	<b>Coping Strategy</b>
* Difficulty in writing the conclusion part	Reading the previous sentences and paragraphs
* Grammatical mistakes	Rereading the composition to check for the mistakes

**ST11:** The conclusion part is the most problematic one for me. I can’t sum up my ideas. Generally, I don’t read the previous sentences or paragraphs while writing my compositions. However, I sometimes feel the need to read what I wrote before. This can be helpful in writing the conclusion. (*Interview, November 28, 2008*)

**ST14:** I don’t spend much time on reading the composition after I think that it is complete because the more I read, the more ideas come to my mind that I want to add. However, after I get back the paper from the teacher, I see a

lot of grammatical mistakes that I have made. For this reason, I check my compositions for the spelling and grammatical mistakes at least. (*Interview, November 28, 2008*)

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the results of the study. The data was collected through a questionnaire and retrospective interviews. The results available from these two techniques were presented and discussed in line with each other. The next chapter of the study includes the summary of these results, relationships with other studies, pedagogical implications made from the study and lastly the recommendations for further studies.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 PRESENTATION

The current study aimed to investigate general writing strategy preferences of undergraduate EFL learners in the division of ELT at Hacettepe University. The study focused particularly on the frequency of writing strategy use of the participants at three stages of writing which are *Before*, *While*, and *When Revising* stages. Moreover, the writing difficulties EFL learners encounter and coping writing strategies they apply to overcome these problems were explored. For these aims, an overview of the study was provided initially. Then, relevant literature was reviewed in order to provide a background of the study giving information about the related topics with the study. The following chapter involved the methodology of the study that revealed the data collection instruments, characteristics of the participants, data collection procedure and the data analysis techniques applied to analyze the collected data. Then, the results were presented with the discussion of these results. The final chapter that follows includes answers for the research questions that the study sought for, pedagogical implications of the study and recommendations for future studies.

#### 5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The first question of the study concerned the general writing strategy applications of EFL learners when writing English compositions. According to the reports provided by the participants, it was found out that they moderately apply the writing strategies. One main reason can stem from the fact that participants are not aware of writing strategies other than the ones they apply. It is fundamental to note that the participants received Advanced Reading and Writing course in their departments for two semesters previously. The course descriptions of the first and second semester for writing are as follows.

**Course Description of Advanced Reading and Writing Course 1**

*...sub-skills of reading are employed by the students in their writings. Students also analyze and produce different types of writings (e.g. expository paragraph, descriptive paragraph, narrative paragraph, etc.); build up writing skills emphasizing the organization, coherence, cohesion and such sub-skills as summarizing, outlining, and paraphrasing at paragraph level. The use of spelling and punctuation conventions as well as non-alphabetic symbol use will be practiced as well.*

**Course Description of Advanced Reading and Writing Course 2**

*...production of different types of essays (e.g. comparison and contrast, classification, process analysis, cause-and-effect analysis, and argumentative); basic research skills including library/internet search, and basic research report writing skills such as citing, paraphrasing and referencing.*

According to these course descriptions, the participants were instructed to analyze reading passages and write paragraphs in the first semester of the course. In the second semester, they were expected to write different types of essays. They also received instruction about research skills. Although the participants were taught how to produce paragraphs and essays and also how to make research, it is understood that writing strategies specifically were not dealt with in detail. Consequently, not receiving formal instruction on writing strategies can be accepted as a reason for their moderate application of writing strategies.

Not only formal instruction but also practice on writing is necessary for a learner to discover writing strategies. Accordingly, another reason for their moderate application of the writing strategies can be related to lack of practice. In this respect, EFL learners should write English compositions in order to practice and internalize what they learn in their course and to discover other writing strategies. However, 24.8% of the participants reported to be unmotivated to write English compositions, which means these learners do not spend time on writing except for the course requirements. Consequently, it seems that there is minimum possibility for them to be aware of more writing strategies especially via practice.

In order to discover the general writing strategy preferences of the participants, mean and standard deviations were also reckoned for each writing stage (Before, While, and When Revising stages). The questionnaire results showed that participants reported to apply writing strategies most frequently at while writing and revising stages of writing. In order to see whether the interview results would support that of the questionnaires, the interviewees were asked how much time they devote for each stage and on which stage they spend most of their time. The interviewees reported that they spend most of their time on while and after writing stages. It was concluded that they employ more writing strategies at while and after writing stages than planning stage.

As for the second research question, the frequency of writing strategy use of the participants at three stages of writing which are *Before*, *While*, and *When Revising* stages were reckoned. The individual writing strategies were listed at each stage with mean and standard deviation values. Questionnaire results and transcriptions of the interviews were evaluated in line with each other. Interview reports were revealed to support the results of the questionnaires. The questionnaire results were shown in tables each constructed according to three stages. Regarding the results, the most frequently applied writing strategies by the participants at *Before Writing* stage are '*I note down words and short notes related to the topic*' and '*I start writing having a written or mental plan*'. The interview results were in line with that of the questionnaires. In addition, several participants mentioned that they also '*determine the number of sentences and paragraphs their essays would include in total*'. Therefore, it can be concluded that participants give much importance to 'generating ideas' which is one of the sub-strategies of planning stage of Flower and Hayes Model of process writing (1980). Other two sub-strategies of planning that Flower and Hayes explained which are organizing and goal-setting and the related techniques were attached secondary importance at planning stage by the participants of the study.

In an attempt to identify writing strategy applications of the participants at *While* writing stage, the frequencies for individual strategies were also reckoned. According to questionnaire results, participants were appeared to employ most frequently '*I start with the introduction*' strategy while writing. Interview reports were consistent with

questionnaire results. Furthermore, interviewees specified that they employ *'finding concrete examples'* and *'using simple sentences'* strategies at *While* writing stage. The fact that learners reported to start with the introduction shows that they plan to write in a classical order of writing and start writing with the introduction part. In addition, *'finding concrete examples'* strategy proves that learners continue generating ideas that corresponds to the view of Flower and Hayes (1980). This fact proves that writers can continue generating ideas in the construction phase of their writing.

With an aim to determine frequency of writing strategy application of the participants at *When Revising* stage, mean and standard deviations for individual strategies were reckoned. According to the questionnaire results, the most frequently employed writing strategies by the participants are *'I check if my essay matches the requirements'*, *'I check my mistakes after I get back the paper with feedback from the teacher, and try to learn from them'* and *'When I have written my paper, I hand it in after reading it'*. Although interview reports supported that of questionnaires in terms of these two most frequently applied writing strategies, one of them which is *'I check if my essay matches the requirements'* were not uttered by the interviewees.

As Flower and Hayes (1980) suggested reviewing process involves both reviewing and editing (see section 2.4.3 for detail). Accordingly, findings of the current study indicate that learners both review and edit their written work via *'checking mistakes after getting feedback and learning from them'* and *'reading their essays after they are complete'*. It was also revealed from the interviews that learners read their written work for different purposes. They read their completed essays with the intention of correcting grammatical mistakes, making addition and deletion and to find a suitable title for the essays.

The last research question of the study aimed to identify the writing difficulties EFL learners encounter while constructing an essay and coping (problem-solving) writing strategies they particularly employ in an attempt to overcome these difficulties. First of all, it was found out that although the participants of the study are adult EFL learners in the division of ELT, they still continue to experience problems in writing. This fact proves that writing is a complex skill that requires special attention.

The difficulties participants reported to encounter while writing English compositions were identified via analysis of open-ended question at the end of the WSQ and transcriptions of the interviews. According to these reports, these difficulties were grouped under sentence-level (word choice, grammar), organization-level (discourse, coherence, and cohesion), first language interference, background knowledge and motivation problems. Among these problems participants see first language interference as most problematic. They think words in Turkish and have difficulty in finding their English equivalents and use mono-lingual and/or bilingual dictionaries to overcome this problem. In addition, they think in Turkish and have difficulty in translating the ideas into English sentences. As a coping strategy, they read articles and ask their peers for help.

Under sentence-level, participants reported to have difficulty in finding appropriate words and using different and more conjunctions. They read articles, short stories and simplified novels to handle the problem of finding appropriate words and read articles on the Internet to overcome the problem of using different and more conjunctions. Organization-level difficulties involve time-management in in-class writing and organization of supporting paragraphs. Participants make timetables and outlines that will help them solve their time-management problem. They make outline at planning stage of their writing and continue writing by revising that outline several times to help them organize supporting paragraphs.

Participants also have difficulty in finding sufficient ideas about the topic they intend to write and they search for related articles from the Internet to gather information about that topic. Another problem participants confront is lack of motivation. For instance, they can find a writing topic uninteresting and consequently they prefer to write without a plan either mental or written. In addition, some of the participants have lack of interest in writing English compositions and others have lack of interest in writing both in English and Turkish. Participants experiencing these problems reported not to apply any strategy to overcome them.

Apart from difficulties mentioned above, participants mentioned during interview sessions two more difficulties they experience in writing English compositions. One of these problems is difficulty in writing the conclusion part of an essay. These students read previous sentences and paragraphs they wrote to be able to write the conclusion part of their essays. The other problem is that they make grammatical mistakes and see these mistakes on their essays after getting feedback from their instructor. These students reread their composition to check for their mistakes before handing it out to their teacher.

## **5.2 RELATED STUDIES**

The findings of the current study showed similarity to the results of previous research conducted in the same field. One of these studies was conducted by Chen (2002) and explored the problems of university EFL writing. The study had comparable results with the current study. Chen (2002) found out that participants think in Chinese and translate their thoughts into English. Similarly, the participants of the current study mentioned ‘thinking in Turkish and translating the ideas into English sentences’ as one of the difficulties they encounter which was grouped under first language interference difficulty.

According to the answers given to the open-ended question at the end of the WSQ, participants reported to experience problems in finding appropriate words while writing English compositions. Chen (2002) also identified this difficulty that the participants in his study mentioned. He indicated that participants had difficulty in choosing appropriate word among the other words which had similar meanings.

Another related study aimed to identify the writing strategies of Turkish EFL learners. At the end of the study, Alpaslan (2002) found out that participants employ both ‘expected’ strategies that appear in writing strategies framework and ‘other’ strategies. Similarly, it was revealed in the current study that participants apply writing strategies that are included in the writing strategy questionnaire and other strategies they reported during interview sessions.

### 5.3 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study can serve several implications about EFL writing. First of all, the participants reported to apply writing strategies moderately. Their moderate use of writing strategies may show that they either are not aware of the writing strategies or they do not practice writing which would serve as awareness-raising activity. In this respect, writing instructors at the university could provide the learners with strategy instruction and more essay writing activities to increase their awareness of various writing strategies (see Appendix C for Self-Regulated Strategy Development Model). Strategy training would help the learners acquire “declarative knowledge (knowing what the strategy is), procedural knowledge (knowing how to apply certain strategy) and conditional knowledge (knowing when and where to use the strategy)” (Jones, Palinscar, Ogle & Carr, 1987).

Secondly, participants employ more writing strategies during writing and after completing writing their essays. It can be inferred from this fact that participants give more importance to these writing stages than planning or they are not aware of the importance of planning stage and the strategies that will help them at that stage. Another reason can be that learners aim to start and finish the task as quickly as possible. Consequently, EFL writing teachers should give strategy instruction putting excessive emphasis on planning stage of writing by providing ample practical exercises.

Thirdly, participants still continue experiencing difficulties in English writing despite the fact that they are undergraduate EFL teacher trainees. These difficulties involve sentence-level, organization-level, first language interference, background knowledge and motivation problems. These problems could provide insight to the program at the university. It shows that writing teachers should bear in mind the difficulties learners would confront while writing in order to arrange the writing course syllabus accordingly. In addition, participants experience motivation problems such as lack of interest in the writing topics or lack of interest in writing completely either in Turkish or English or

both. This implies that teachers should provide interesting writing topics and motivate the learners via variety of activities that would draw their attention.

Lastly, teachers should make a survey of writing strategies that their learners employ in constructing English essays. The Writing Strategy Questionnaire applied in the current study can also be used by EFL teachers as a writing strategy identification instrument. The writing strategy questionnaire would be valuable for both teachers and students. Teachers can explore writing strategy preferences of the learners and can arrange their writing syllabus according to the results. As for the learners, they can get an idea of other writing strategies and get aware of them though at a minimum level.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

The current study investigated writing strategy preferences of undergraduate EFL teacher trainees. It also identified writing difficulties they still experience in English writing and coping strategies they developed to overcome these difficulties.

Having both a qualitative and quantitative nature, this study has also provided pedagogical insights for EFL writing. On the other hand, further studies are required that would contribute to the field and some suggestions can be made to these researchers. First of all, the study was conducted with 35 EFL learners in the division of ELT at Hacettepe University in order to make in depth explorations. Studying with a large sample of population may contribute to the findings of the current study.

Secondly, approximately half of the participants were interviewed in the second phase of the study in order to increase the validity of the questionnaire results and also to get available data. Because of time limitation, retrospective interviews were conducted with 15 participants. The study can be replicated conducting interviews with all the students who participated in the first phase of the study.

Finally, the present study explored writing strategy preferences of the EFL learners and collected data based on their reports rather than what actually do while writing.



Therefore, think-aloud protocol data can be used in further studies in order to discover the actual applications of the writing strategies. Researchers may also compare the reported writing strategies and the actual writing strategies that are applied by the undergraduate EFL learners.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A WRITING STRATEGY QUESTIONNAIRE

### 1. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Sex (please circle): F M
1. What is your native language?
2. How many years have you been studying English?
4. Did you attend a course in writing in English before coming to this school? Please circle. Y N  
If yes, what was the main focus of the course?
5. What types of texts do you generally write in English? Please circle. E-mails letters notes essays articles reports research papers creative writing other:
6. Do you like writing in English? Please circle.  
I don't like it at all    I don't like it    I have no feelings about it    I like it    I like it a lot  
Why (not?)

### 2. THE WRITING PROCESS

In this part, you will find statements about the different stages of writing in English: before writing, while writing, and when revising. Please read each statement and circle the number indicating **how true of you the statement is**.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me (less than half of the time)
3. Somewhat true of me (about half of the time)
4. Usually true of me (more than half of the time)
5. Always or almost always true of me

#### EXAMPLE:

<i>I eat snacks while watching tv.</i> If you eat snacks all the time when watching tv, or almost always, circle 5.	never true 1	Usually not true 2	somewhat true 3	usually true 4	always true 5
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#### 2.1. BEFORE I START WRITING AN ESSAY IN ENGLISH...

Please circle the appropriate number.

BEFORE I START WRITING AN ESSAY IN ENGLISH ...	never true 1	usually not true 2	somewhat true 3	usually true 4	always true 5
1. I make a timetable and arrange the time I will spend for the writing process. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Before I start writing I revise the requirements. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
3. I look at a model written by a native speaker or more proficient writer. (C)	1	2	3	4	5
4. I start writing without having a written or mental plan. (N-MC)	1	2	3	4	5
5. I think about what I want to write and have a plan in my mind, but not on paper. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
6. I note down words and short notes related to the topic. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
7. I write an outline of my paper. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
8. I write notes or an outline in my native language. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5

**2.2. WHEN WRITING IN ENGLISH...**Please circle the appropriate number.

<b>WHEN WRITING IN ENGLISH...</b>	never true 1	usually not true 2	somewhat true 3	usually true 4	always true 5
1. I start with the introduction. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
2. I stop after each sentence to read it again which would help me see if it requires editing or how to continue. (C)	1	2	3	4	5
3. I stop after a few sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea to help me see if any editing is required or how to continue. (C)	1	2	3	4	5
4. I reread what I have written to get ideas how to continue. (C)	1	2	3	4	5
5. I go back to my outline and make changes in it. (C)	1	2	3	4	5
6. I write bits of the text in my native language and then translate them into English. (C)	1	2	3	4	5
7. I go for sure in grammar and vocabulary. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
8. I simplify what I want to write if I don't know how to express my thoughts in English. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
9. If I don't know a word in English, I write it in my native language and later try to find an appropriate English word. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
10. If I don't know a word in English, I find a similar English word that I know. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
11. If I don't know a word in English, I stop writing and look up the word in the dictionary. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
12. I use a bilingual dictionary. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
13. I use a monolingual dictionary. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
14. I ask somebody to help out when I have problems while writing. (S)	1	2	3	4	5

### 2.3. WHENREVISING...

Please circle the appropriate number.

WHEN REVISING...	never true 1	usually not true 2	somewhat true 3	usually true 4	always true 5
1. I read my text aloud. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
2. I only read what I have written when I have finished the whole paper. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
3. When I have written my paper, I hand it in without reading it. (N-MC)	1	2	3	4	5
4. I use a dictionary when revising. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
5. I make changes in vocabulary. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
6. I make changes in sentence structure. (CP)	1	2	3	4	5
7. I make changes in the structure of the essay. (C)	1	2	3	4	5
8. I make changes in the content or ideas. (C)	1	2	3	4	5
9. I focus on one thing at a time when revising (e.g., content, structure). (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
10. I drop my first draft and start writing again. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
11. I check if my essay matches the requirements. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
12. I leave the text aside for a couple of days and then I can see it in a new perspective. (MC)	1	2	3	4	5
13. I show my text to somebody and ask for his/her opinion. (S)	1	2	3	4	5
14. I compare my paper with the essays written by my friends on the same topic. (S)	1	2	3	4	5
15. I give myself a reward for completing the assignment. (A)	1	2	3	4	5
16. I check my mistakes after I get back the paper with feedback from the teacher, and try to learn from them. (C)	1	2	3	4	5

CP: Compensation, C: Cognitive, S: Social, MC: Metacognitive, A: Affective, N-MC: Negative Metacognitive, M: Memory

The following two questions request you to indicate the problems you encounter while writing and the strategies you apply to cope with these problems. Please provide your answers in detail.

1. What kind of writing difficulty(ies) do you experience while writing English?

2. What do you do to overcome the difficulty(ies) you encounter while writing? Which strategies do you employ

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONS GUIDING SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

1. What do you do before writing? What do you think?
2. While writing, what steps do you take? Can you explain what do you do? How do you write?
3. What do you do after the completion of your composition?
4. How much time do you devote for each stage? On which stage do you spend most of your time?
5. Do you think you experience problems in writing? If so, what are they?
6. What do you do to overcome the difficulty(ies) you encounter in writing English compositions?



## APPENDIX C

### Instructional Stages of the SRSD Model

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***Develop Background Knowledge:*** The first stage of instruction involves helping students develop the preskills—including knowledge of the criteria for good writing—needed to understand, acquire, and execute the writing strategy and accompanying self-regulation procedures.

***Discuss It:*** During the second stage, teacher and students examine and discuss current writing performance and strategies used to accomplish self assignments. The writing strategy targeted for instruction is then introduced, and its purpose and benefits as well as how and when to use it are examined. Students are asked to make a commitment to learn the strategy and act as collaborative partners in this endeavor. Any negative or ineffective self-statements or beliefs students currently use may also be addressed at this point.

***Model It:*** In the third stage, the teacher models how to use the writing strategy using appropriate self-instructions, including problem definition, planning, strategy use, self-evaluation, coping and error correction, and self-reinforcement statements. After analyzing the teacher's performance, teachers and students may collaborate on how to change the writing strategy to make it more effective. Students then develop and record personal self-statements they plan to use during writing.

***Memorize It:*** During stage 4, the steps of the writing strategy, any mnemonic for remembering it, and personalized self-statements are memorized. Students are encouraged to paraphrase as long as the original meaning is maintained. This stage is primarily included for children who have severe learning and memory problems and is not needed by all students.

***Support It:*** In stage 5, students and teachers use the strategy and self-instructions collaboratively to complete specific writing assignments. Self-regulation procedures, including goal-setting and self-assessment, may be introduced at this time.

***Independent Performance:*** During the final stage, students use the strategy independently. If students are still using self-regulatory procedures such as goal setting or self-assessment, they may decide to start fading them out. Students are also encouraged (if they are not already doing so) to say their self-statement covertly “in their heads”.

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Graham, S., Harris, K. R. & Troia, G. A. (1998) (p. 24).