Writing Performance Relative to Writing Apprehension, Self-Efficacy in Writing, and Attitudes towards Writing: A Correlational Study in Turkish Tertiary-Level EFL

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify whether writing performance in students of English as a foreign language (EFL) is related to writing apprehension, self-efficacy in writing, and/or attitudes towards writing. The subjects were tertiary-level EFL188 students at Çukurova University School for Foreign Languages (YADIM) in Turkey. Three instruments were used to collect data: a writing apprehension test (WAT), a self-efficacy in writing scale (SWS), and a questionnaire on attitudes towards writing (WAQ). The study was carried out in two phases. The first phase involved adapting the WAT and WAQ so these would be tailored to our study population. In the second phase, all subjects were tested with all three instruments in a 2-hour period on the same day. WAT, SWS and WAQ were administered in the first hour, and students were then given 45 minutes to write a composition on a given topic. The compositions were graded and these marks were taken to indicate students' overall writing performance points. The results of the study suggest that, in these tertiary-level EFL students, writing apprehension and writing performance are negatively correlated, writing apprehension and writing self-efficacy are negatively correlated, and writing apprehension and attitude towards writing are positively correlated. Writing apprehension and writing attitude are supposed to be negatively correlated but although WAQ was devised to test attitude, it has subscales that measure apprehension, too. That is why the result regarding the relationship between writing apprehension and attitude towards writing is surprising.

Keywords: Attitudes towards writing, EFL context**,** self-efficacy in writing, writing, writing apprehension, writing performance.

Introduction

Writing is a language skill that is essential to academic success. Since it is an active, productive skill, students learning to write in a foreign language face multiple challenges. For this group, writing requires thinking strategies that allow the individual to express him or herself competently in the other language, and is a complex activity that requires a certain level of linguistics knowledge, writing conventions, vocabulary and grammar. As noted by

Celce-Mercia (1991), expressing one's ideas in written form in a second or foreign language, and doing so with reasonable accuracy and coherence, is a major achievement. The complexity of writing as a task tends to heighten anxiety levels in students who are taking writing courses. This anxiety can often demotivate the student or lead to discouragement, and thus may result in negative attitudes towards writing (Gere, 1987; Sharples, 1993). Most students, low and high achievers alike, find writing difficult and view it as something they just have to persevere through in order to pass certain exams (Yavuz & Genç, 1998). This may relate to affective elements such as student attitudes, writing apprehension and self-efficacy in writing. As Pajares (2003) and Pajares, & Valiante (1996) suggest, our experience has shown that if a student is unwilling to express him or herself in writing, lacks confidence in his or her ability to write, or feels apprehensive about writing, then the student is unlikely to be proficient at writing composition.

Thus, over the past 30 years, an enormous amount of research has been done on the writing-composition processes that student writers undertake (Daly, 1978; Daly & Miller, 1975a, 1975b; Daly & Wilson, 1983; Faigley, Daly & Witte, 1981; McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985; Onwuegbuzie, 1999; Pajares & Johnson, 1993; Phinney, 1991; Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995; Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989). Approaches to writing instruction have gone through numerous pendulum swings over the decades. Investigators have sought interesting and practical methods to enhance student writing, but an action research study carried out at Cukurova University (YADİM) (Yavuz & Genç, 1998) revealed that regardless of the methods used, students tend to exhibit negative attitudes towards writing. Even students who are proficient at other language skills, namely, reading, speaking, listening and grammar, share the same problems with writing: They are afraid to make writing errors; they lack self-efficacy in writing. In

short, they feel that actually expressing themselves in written English is beyond their command of the language.

Most language learners at all levels believe that writing is one of the most difficult language skills to master (Kurt & Atay, 2007; Latif, 2007; MacIntyre, & Gardner, 1989, 1991; Sağlam, 1993; Shrewsbury, 1995). Students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) at the Center for Foreign Languages at YADIM are no exception. The results of a questionnaire completed by 150 graduate and 353 undergraduate EFL students at YADIM at the end of the 2001-2002 academic year revealed that students believe writing and speaking are the most difficult skills to learn (Yavuz-Erkan, 2004). Yavuz and Genç (1998) also concluded that students view writing composition as something they "have to make it through" in order to pass the YADIM final exam. At YADIM, teachers consistently find that when students come to the writing sections of exams, many leave the classroom without trying to write even a few sentences. This may suggest that the students are extremely apprehensive and lack self-efficacy in writing.

It is reasonable to speculate that success with writing in a foreign language may be related to attitudes towards writing, apprehension about writing (hereafter referred to as "writing apprehension"), and self-efficacy in writing. The assumption that these elements do affect writing performance in this subject group was the impetus for this research. To investigate these possible relationships in the Turkish tertiary-level EFL context, the following research questions were formulated:

- Is there a significant difference between writing apprehension and self-efficacy in writing, attitudes towards writing and writing performance?
- Is there a significant relationship among writing apprehension, self-efficacy in writing, attitudes towards writing and writing performance?

The investigation was largely based on the following assumptions from earlier research:

- Writing apprehension is a strong predictor of academic performance in first language (Pajares & Valiante, 2001).
- Academic self-efficacy beliefs are strongly predictive of academic performance (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984). Language learners with high self-efficacy who believe they can learn a language are more likely to learn a language than learners who believe they cannot learn a language (Templin, Shiroku and Taira, 1999). Students who lack confidence in skills they possess are less likely to engage in tasks in which those skills are required, and they will more quickly give up in the face of difficulty.
- Writing attitude influences writing achievement in first language (Graham, Berninger, & Fan, 2007).

English Language Instruction in Turkey

In Turkey, English language competency is the main determinant for having a well-paid, prestigious job. Turks have considered English the most popular and prestigious foreign language to learn since World War I (Acar, 2004; Ministry of Education). Today, English classes are an indispensable part of Turkish education system and more and more importance is being placed on English language education. Turkey has a dual education system: private and state. Eight years of primary education is mandatory (between ages 6 and 14 years), and 4 years of state-paid optional secondary education is available for those 14 to 18 years of age. English is the primary foreign language and is taught in private schools starting at kindergarten. In state schools, however, English classes start in fourth grade and continue throughout secondary

school. Students are exposed to 2 hours of basic English instruction per week in state schools (mainly following a grammar-based curriculum), whereas private schools offer the same basic English-language curriculum but devote more time for classes. Depending on the school, this can be 8-10 hours of instruction per week based on a task-based and integrated-skills curriculum that encourages use of language. Regarding university-level English education, at so-called "English-medium" universities, first-year students receive intensive English-language teaching, usually 24 to 30 hours of instruction per week. In such programs, students are taught using task-based or integrated-skills syllabi or a combination of both. In the research context, a combination of both is used. At the universities that are not English-medium, students have two hours of English classes a week throughout their education.

Overview of Writing Issues in the Research Context

Writing is one of the most important skills for learners at English-medium universities like Çukurova University to master. In the research context, at Çukurova University Center for Foreign Languages (YADIM), acquiring good writing skills is considered to be of utmost importance. YADIM students are tertiary-level and are learning English for academic purposes. At their departments they are required to write projects and to sit written exams in order to complete their education. Reading and writing are the major language skills students must master to fulfill school requirements at their departments. Reading of English is a receptive skill and therefore less problematic for a university student to learn. In contrast, writing is a productive skill and considered one of the most difficult to learn.

The process-oriented approach to writing has been adopted in the research context, YADIM. One of the activities that has emerged and gained

popularity with the introduction of this approach is the "Writing Portfolio." Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer (1991, p. 60) define writing portfolio as "a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas." Students of tertiary level at most universities in Turkey are required to keep a writing portfolio just like students studying at Çukurova University, YADIM. In a typical writing class, YADIM students write a rough draft and the work is then edited by a peer who comments on the content, provides feedback, checks the work for mechanical mistakes such as grammar, punctuation and capitalization, and sometimes makes corrections. Then a conference is held with the teacher, who also reads the work. Required changes are made in light of the peer's and teacher's suggestions and, finally, a finished copy is produced and placed in the student's portfolio folder. What makes process writing valuable is that the same piece of writing is worked on until a satisfactory and effective final draft is achieved through peer and teacher editing. This stepwise method helps forge lasting improvements in student writing. In addition, editing peers' work teaches learners how to critique, which may lead them to look at their own work critically and consequently improve their own writing. In some foreign language centers of Turkish universities, including YADIM, word processing is also used and makes process writing easier because of the ease with which drafts can be created.

Research Context

This study was conducted at the Center for Foreign Languages at Çukurova University (YADIM). This center offers an integrated-skills program to graduate and undergraduate students. The program consists of four levels (elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate), each taught in an 8-week period. At the end of the academic year, each YADIM student

takes a standard proficiency test before continuing on in their main area of study. This proficiency test is designed to measure the student's ability in English regardless of the language training they have had throughout the year. In addition, each student takes an achievement test every 2 months. Thus, they complete four achievement tests and one proficiency test before finishing the program. Each of these tests includes one section solely devoted to writing. At YADIM, students' writing skills are assessed based on a portfolio of revised essays the student produces over the course of the semester, and based on the timed-essay section of the achievement and proficiency tests.

Method

Subjects

Twelve randomly selected tertiary-level classes of 24 students (188 students in total) took part in this study. The subjects were all Turkish students learning English as a foreign language at Çukurova University, an "English-medium" university as mentioned above. At the time of the study, the students had been attending YADIM for 8 months and ranged from 18 to 22 years of age. All subjects had been enrolled in beginner English classes at the start of the academic year and were intended to have achieved intermediate-level academic proficiency in English after 8 months of the intensive EFL program.

Measurements

Three instruments were used for this research were: A writing apprehension test (WAT), a self-efficacy in writing scale (SWS), and an attitude-towards-writing questionnaire (WAQ).

Writing Apprehension Test (WAT)

For this study, we used Daly and Miller's (1975a) WAT to assess students' apprehension about writing. This is a 26-item questionnaire that features 13 items with positive polarity and 13 with negative polarity. Scoring is done on a 5-point Likert scale that asks the subject to state whether they agree or disagree with statements about writing. This inventory was specifically designed to measure self-reported writing apprehension.

To date, the WAT is the instrument most widely used to measure anxiety related to second-language writing. This test was originally developed with reference to first-language learners, particularly English native speakers, and therefore may not tap the essential aspects of foreign-language writing anxiety. Cheng (2004) stated that, although on the whole the Daly-Miller WAT has been shown to be an instrument of satisfactory internal consistency reliability with concurrent and predictive validity, it needs to be adapted in order to be used to study second-language writing. We adapted the WAT for use with our Turkish EFL students as follows:

Phase 1. First, the WAT was translated into Turkish by three EFL instructors and the two researchers. Second, translations were compared and necessary changes were made so that all items in the scale were clear to Turkish EFL students. Then the scale was read by three Turkish lecturers. It was revised based on their comments and then administered to 15 tertiary-level EFL students. After this, the final version of the scale was established with feedback from the 15 students. Once in its final Turkish form, the scale was back-translated. The team then discussed any discrepancies between the two versions until all members reached a consensus. The final version turned out to be very similar to the original one. (We used the Turkish version of WAT, and when the Turkish version was translated into English to ensure construct validity, we saw that it was almost the same as the original version

so since WAT appears on the Internet, we think there is no point in adding our translation (from Turkish to English) to the Appendix. We did not use it anyway, we used the Turkish version. Do you think we should have added the Turkish version?)

Phase 2. Next, the modified 26-item WAT was administered to 263 tertiary-level EFL students to assess its validity and reliability. Exploratory factor analysis with principal components estimation and varimax rotation was applied. Results indicated that five factors with Eigen values above 1.00 accounted for 62.13% of the variance. However, two factors had Eigen values above 2.00 (9.72 and 2.84). A scree plot of the factors showed that a solution with two factors was possible.

Phase 3. Factor loads were studied in this two-factor solution found through varimax rotation and items with factor loads of .30 or lower were dropped from the scale. Once this was done, the first subscale consisted of 12 items, the second subscale consisted of 11 items, and three items were omitted. The two factors accounted for 49.59% of the variance.

Phase 4. The results and the items loaded on two factors ended up to be very similar to the findings for the validity-reliability analysis done by Daly and Miller (1975). As those authors concluded, the two factors represented a separation of negatively and positively worded questions rather than two interpretable components of the overall measure. Consequently, one factor was generated. For this solution, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy was .92. Item analyses for both scales revealed that total items' correlations ranged from .36 to .77, the item mean values ranged from 2.61 to 3.84, and the standard deviations ranged from .93 to 1.19. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was .92. A split-half technique indicated that the reliability of the instrument was .86.

Self-Efficacy in Writing Scale (SWS)

The self-efficacy scale developed by Yavuz-Erkan (2004) was used to assess the students' self-efficacy in writing. Based on the self-efficacy construct proposed by Bandura (1977), Yavuz-Erkan developed a 21-item writing self-efficacy scale to grade the strength of subjects' belief in their writing ability. The items of the scale were graded with the four-tier system Likert scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree. Each statement on the scale was preceded by the phrase "I can …" (Appendix 1).

The reliability and validity were made by Yavuz-Erkan (2004). The scale was found to be cronbach alfa coefficient were .88 for the first factor (*Content*), .80 for the second factor (*Design*), .77 for the third factor (*Unity*), .74 for the fourth factor (*Accuracy*), and .50 for the fifth factor (*Punctuation*). According to the factor analysis results, the variance explained with five factors was found to be 66.16

In the current study, in order to make the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of punctuation subscale closer to the reliability point .70, the above-mentioned scale was administered to 189 YADİM students. Analyses yielded a solution with four factors. Four factors accounted for 66.16% of the variance. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were .92 for the first factor (*Content*), .94 for the second factor (*Design-Unity*), .74 for the third factor (*Accuracy*), and .72 for the fourth factor (*Punctuation*). In this application, the *Design* and *Unity* subscales blended to form a single subscale even though they appeared to be different subscales in Yavuz-Erkan's scale.

Based on its robust psychometric properties, the researchers deemed this new writing self-efficacy scale a reliable and valid tool for assessing self-efficacy in writing in foreign language. The scale was administered to the subjects in order to determine their self-beliefs linked to writing in English.

Attitude-Towards-Writing Questionnaire (WAQ)

The third measure used in this study was Rose's (1984) attitude-towards-writing questionnaire (WAQ), a tool for examining the link between attitudes about writing and student writers' actual writing performances. Attitude refers to the respondent's feelings about his or her writing ("I think my writing is good") and evaluation of that writing ("I think of my instructors reacting positively to my writing"). Rose's questionnaire has been shown to be valid for English and Spanish bilingual student populations (Betancourt & Phinney, 1988).

This questionnaire was adapted to Turkish in the following steps:

Phase 1. First, the WAQ was translated into Turkish by the researchers and three English instructors, the translation was compared and the necessary changes were made. Then the translation was edited by three Turkish teachers and necessary changes were made. Then the questionnaire was given to 15 students. More modifications were made and then the questionnaire was translated into English and compared with the original version. The two versions of the questionnaire were similar.

Phase 2. After the above-mentioned language validation study was completed, the 24-item questionnaire (The explanation we made above for WAT applies to your suggestion here, too) was administered to 190 YADIM students. Principal components analysis was done to determine the factor structure of the scale. The results revealed that six factors with Eigen values above 1.00 accounted for 62.81% of the variance. There were also two factors (7.38 and 2.84) with Eigen values above 2.00. A scree plot of these factors showed that it is possible to reach a solution with two factors. However, no limitation was performed in order to reach a solution suitable for the structure of the original questionnaire.

Phase 3. Only the loads of the factors obtained through the analysis were examined. Items with factor loads of .30 or lower and items with the difference between factor loads that were attached to more than one item below.20 were dropped from the scale. In this case, the first subscale contained five items, the second subscale had four items, the third scale had three items and the fourth subscale had two items. Eight items were omitted from the scale. Results indicated that five factors accounted for 67.89% of the variance.

Phase 4. The results and the items loaded to factors were very similar to the validity-reliability study done by Rose (1984). Specifically, the five subscales found in the present study overlap those that Rose identified. For the present study, the first subscale found was named "Blocking", the second "Complexity", the third "Editing", the fourth "Attitude", and the fifth "Lateness."

Phase 5. The adequacy of the sample was tested with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test. For this solution, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy was .82.

The items' common variance values ranged from .65 to .91, and the total items' subscale correlations ranged from .65 to .88. The item mean values ranged from 3.17 to 3.85, and the standard deviations ranged from .91 to 1.28. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were .83 for the first factor (*Blocking*), .75 for the second factor (*Complexity*), .67 for the third factor (*Editing*), .79 for the fourth factor (*Attitude*), and .76 for the fifth factor (*Lateness*).

Statistical Analysis

The data from the study were all analyzed using SPSS 11.5 program. To analyze the data Pearson correlation coefficient, independent groups t-test

and one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) were used. The analyses were carried out at a significance level of p= .05.

Respondents were classified as high, moderate, or low in writing apprehension on the basis of their responses to WAT. Responses were summed for each person so that a high score always indicated high apprehension. Individuals scoring one standard deviation above or below the group apprehension score (M = 66.68, SD = 6.66) were operationally defined as high and low, respectively, in apprehension. Respondents whose scores fell within one standard deviation of the mean were classified as moderates. A one-way analysis of variance with three levels of apprehension was computed on the apprehension scores to insure that the group differences expected were present. A significant overall effect was observed, $F(2, 185) = 270.134$, $p<.0001$. Follow-up analyses using the conservative Scheffé procedure for multiple comparisons indicated that each group mean was significantly different ($p<.01$) from every other one. For the primary test of the hypotheses all groups were used.

Findings

One-way ANOVA was done for the three levels of writing apprehension (high, moderate, low) using the overall score on the achievement test as a dependent measure. The results shows that, the higher the achievement test score the better the individual's performance, the group with high-level writing apprehension (X = 6.07, SD = 4.01) performed significantly more poorly [$F (1,185) = 6.020$, $p<.01$)] on the achievement test than the groups with low and moderate writing apprehension (X = 10.48, SD = 5.72 and X = 8.93, SD = 6.30, respectively) One-way ANOVA was also done to assess for significant differences among the writing-apprehension groups' results on the SWS and WAQ. These results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviations and one-way ANOVA results for writing apprehension levels and SWS and WAQ points

		Writing Apprehension Level								
		Low (N=88)		Moderate (N=73)		High (N=27)				
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	Sig.	Scheffé
	Writing Achievement	10.48	5.72	8.93	6.30	6.07	4.01	6.020	.003	H ≈ L H ≈ M
	Writing Self-Efficacy	78.23	13.47	70.57	15.36	62.24	11.70	15.191	.000	L≈ M L≈ H M≈ H
Writing Self-Efficacy Sub-Scale	Design-Unity	38.52	7.24	33.87	8.00	29.02	6.64	19.053	.000	L≈ M L≈ H M≈ H
	Content	17.54	4.20	15.83	4.47	14.07	3.60	7.901	.001	L≈ M L≈ H
	Accuracy	9.05	2.28	8.46	2.47	7.37	2.01	5.490	.005	L≈ H
	Punctuation	7.82	1.78	7.25	1.97	6.89	2.14	3.265	.040	Not significant among groups
Writing Attitude Sub-Scale	Blocking	16.25	4.08	17.98	3.89	20.97	3.01	15.873	.000	H ≈ L H ≈ M
	Complex	12.76	3.34	13.78	3.19	16.16	2.21	12.144	.000	H ≈ L H ≈ M
	Editing	9.08	2.82	10.08	2.57	10.64	2.95	4.525	.012	H ≈ L
	Attitude	6.62	1.20	6.95	2.15	5.74	1.81	3.461	.033	M ≈ H
	Lateness	5.15	2.05	6.11	2.17	8.07	2.04	20.538	.000	H ≈ L H ≈ M M ≈ L

H= High, M= Medium, L = Low

The results for writing apprehension levels, total SWS scores, and scores for each of the subscales studied reveal that the students with high self-efficacy in writing had low-level writing apprehension. One-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference among the means for SWS total score and subscale scores for the groups of students with moderate and high writing apprehension. [SWS total $F(2,185) = 15.191$, $p<.01$, Design-Unity $F(2,185) = 19.053$, p<.01, Content $F(2,185)=7.901$, p<.01 Accuracy

F(2,185) = 5.490,p<01 Punctuation F(2, 185) = 3.265, *p*<.05]. The Scheffé-F test was applied to determine which pairs of groups had significantly different results. Scheffé's F-testing revealed that students with low-level writing apprehension had significantly better scores than students with high-level writing apprehension for the above parameters. "Punctuation" was the only subscale in which Scheffé's test revealed no significant difference between these two groups.

When writing apprehension levels and points of attitude towards writing were studied, it was seen that means of 'Blocking, Complex, Editing, Lateness' subscales increased when writing apprehension level increased, it was also observed that means of 'attitude' subscale differed among levels and students with high apprehension level had lower means than the other levels (moderate, low).

To find out if the difference between mean scores was significant one-way variance analysis was performed. The results showed that there was a significant difference between low, moderate and high apprehension levels in terms of all subscales of WAT [Blocking F(2, 185)= 15.873, p<01, Complex F(2, 185)= 12.144,p<05, Editing F(2, 185)= 4,524, p<05, Lateness F(2,185)=20.538, p<01, Attitude F(2, 185)= 3.461, p<05]. Follow up analyses using Scheffe's multiple comparison procedure revealed that the differences among the three means were statistical significant. However, the magnitude of the means differences varied. Table 1 summarizes the important statistical information.

To assess whether students' scores for the WAT, SWS and WAQ were related to actual writing achievement scores, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. Table 2 shows these results.

Table 2. Pearson correlation analysis for writing achievement scores

		Writing Achievement	Writing Apprehension	Writing Self-Efficacy	Writing Attitude
		relative to WAQ, SWS, and WAT .			
Writing Self-Efficacy Sub-Scale	Writing Apprehension	-.23(**)	1	-.38(**)	.47(**)
	Writing Self-Efficacy	.27(**)	-.38(**)	1	-.46(**)
	Design-Unity	.30(**)	-.41(**)	.95(**)	-.43(**)
	Content	.14	-.34(**)	.81(**)	-.46(**)
	Accuracy	.26(**)	-.24(**)	.81(**)	-.36(**)
	Punctuation	.08	-.12	.50(**)	-.18(*)
Writing Attitude Sub-Scale	Blocking	-.20(**)	.38(**)	-.50(**)	.85(**)
	Complex	-.06	.32(**)	-.43(**)	.71(**)
	Editing	-.02	.21(**)	-.08	.61(**)
	Attitude	.17(*)	-.02	.42(**)	-.19(*)
	Lateness	-.22(**)	.43(**)	-.53(**)	.71(**)

*p<.05, **p<.01

The Pearson correlation coefficient for writing achievement and WAS total score was -.23, indicating a negative relationship between writing apprehension level and writing achievement. The correlation coefficient for WAS and SWS was -0.38 whereas total points between WAS and WAQ is 0.47. As the table indicates, both these relationships were statistically significant.

The Pearson correlation coefficient for writing achievement and SWS total score was 0.27, indicating a positive relationship between self-efficacy in writing and writing performance. When the values were calculated for the different SWS subscales relative to writing achievement, the coefficients indicated positive statistical relationships for *Design-Unity* (0.30) and *Accuracy* (0.26). The other subscales were not statistically correlated with writing achievement.

When the correlation coefficients for WAQ subscales and writing achievement were calculated, the results showed significant negative

relationships for *Blocking* and *Lateness* (*Blocking* -0.20, Lateness -0.22) and a significant *positive relationship* between *Attitude* and writing *performance* (*Attitude* .17).

Discussion and Conclusion

The term "writing apprehension" was coined by Daly and Miller (1975, p. 244), to describe "the tendency of a person to avoid the process of writing - particularly when it is to be evaluated in some way". Learners experiencing this feeling often find it difficult to express themselves, avoid writing as much as possible and find such classes unfavorable. Theoretically, apprehension often impairs and hinders performance so those with low writing apprehension are supposed to perform better on tests of writing skills than apprehensive writers (Krause, 1994). In the present study, we tested the hypothesis that individuals with low-level writing apprehension would perform significantly better on a test of writing skills than those with high-level writing apprehension. The results confirmed that this theory holds true.

   Previous research has demonstrated a clear, consistent and significant correlation between a student's level of writing apprehension and writing performance in both first and second languages. Indeed, our results were in line with those of many other researchers (Daly, 1978; Daly & Miller, 1975a, 1975b; Daly & Wilson, 1983; Faigley, Daly & Witte, 1981; McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985; Onwuegbuzie, 1999; Pajares & Johnson, 1993; Phinney, 1991;Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995; Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989). Daly (1978) found that students with high levels of writing apprehension consider writing to be unrewarding, and that these individuals will avoid classes that involve writing assignments, if possible. His 1978 study of 3,602 undergraduate writing-composition students examined the differences in writing skills between groups with low- and high-level writing

apprehension. Daly concluded that students with low writing apprehension tend to have stronger writing skills than those with high apprehension. This result is supported by Lee and Krashen (1997), who reported that native speakers of Chinese in Taiwan who had higher writing apprehension tended to receive lower evaluations on the composition section of the Senior High School Examination in Taiwan ($r = -0.21$). Powell's study (1984) also had a similar outcome, with a modest relationship (tau $= -0.27$) between writing apprehension and writing performance of students in a variety of university-level writing courses.

Apart from Gungle and Taylor's (1989 cited in Phinney, 1991) adaptation of the Daly-Miller WAT and a study of bilingual students by Betancourt and Phinney (1988), very little research has been done on writing apprehension in second-language writers. Our study expands this effort and looks specifically at relationships between writing apprehension and writing performance in the Turkish tertiary-level EFL context (see page 5 above). If, as our research shows, writing apprehension is a predictor of student competence in writing, then teachers should do their best to minimize writing apprehension.

Bandura (1997) stated that academic self-beliefs are strongly predictive of academic performance. Beach (1989), Meier, McCarthy, & Schmeck, (1984), Shell, Murphy & Bruning (1989), McCarthy, Meier & Rinderer (1985), Zimmerman and Bandura (1994), and McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, (1985) have all investigated the predictive value of self efficacy relative to writing performance. These researchers all concluded that the two constructs are related; that is, self-efficacy is a predictor of actual writing performance. If self-efficacy is a predictor of student competence, then teachers should pay attention to students' perceptions of their personal competence as well as their actual competence.

Pajares (2003) asserts that psychological states such as anxiety and stress provide information about efficacy beliefs. Our study also showed that students with high self-efficacy beliefs regarding writing in a foreign language had low-level writing apprehension. This finding supports the conclusions of Daly and Wilson (1983), Onwuegbuzie (1999) and Pajares & Johnson (1993) that writing apprehension is negatively correlated with self-efficacy. Similarly, it supports Pajares and Valiante's (1996) findings that elementary students' self-efficacy beliefs about writing capability predicted their writing performance, and that these beliefs also directly influenced the students' writing apprehension in their first language. In our study, we found no statistically significant difference among the three different writing-apprehension groups (low, moderate, high) with respect to *Punctuation* subscale scores in the SWS. This suggests that students at all apprehension levels have similar beliefs about their ability to use punctuation. In their 1997 study of self-efficacy in writing, Pajares & Valiante concluded that students with high self-efficacy scores had low-level writing apprehension. McCarthy, Meier and Rinderer (1985) also found that self-efficacy and writing anxiety were correlated with essay scores of undergraduate college students. Shell *et al.* (1989) investigated the writing self-efficacy of undergraduates and reported a significant correlation between students' confidence in their writing skills and their holistic score on a 20-minute essay (0.32).

In our study, we also hypothesized that writing performance is related to writing apprehension, self-efficacy in writing, and attitudes towards writing. The results indicate negative correlations between writing apprehension and writing performance ($r = -0.23$) and between writing apprehension and writing self-efficacy ($r = -0.38$), and a positive correlation between writing apprehension and writing attitude ($r = 0.47$) (Table 2). This last result was

surprising as one would expect that when one's attitude towards writing is good, one's apprehension about writing would be lower. As Phinney (1991) explains, while testing attitude, WAQ has such subscales that measure apprehension too, although it was devised to test attitude.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Study

Writing is not only a cognitive but also an emotional activity; thus, the affective components of writing strongly influence all phases of the writing process (McLeod, 1987). The results of our study underscore the need for nurturing the affective dimensions of EFL learning. The implication is that EFL practitioners should investigate students' beliefs about their writing capabilities, their attitudes towards writing, and their level of apprehension about writing. Our findings point to all these as important predictors of academic writing performance in tertiary-level EFL students. As Bandura (1986) suggests, self-efficacy beliefs are developed primarily through enactive attainment; that is, people's confidence grows as they attempt and complete tasks and the feeling of success increases confidence whereas failure decreases it. Bandura also acknowledges that verbal persuasion, that is, messages individuals receive from authority figures, can reinforce and increase self-efficacy.

As well as helping students with writing apprehension, self-efficacy and attitude, teachers should also make efforts to help students understand how their affective processes can influence their EFL writing performance. In short, teachers should make every effort to help their students increase competence through confidence.

As noted, our investigation provides evidence for the roles and importance of writing apprehension, attitudes towards writing, and writing self-efficacy in relation to actual writing performance. This research could be considered a

preliminary investigation on which follow-up work could be based. In a comparative future study, it would be interesting to assess whether student performance improves after training or coaching on self-efficacy, apprehension, and attitude related to writing.

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Appendix 1

Writing Efficacy Scale

Read each statement below and then use the following scale to indicate various degrees of effectiveness. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers to such questions, so do not spend too much time on any one

statement, but select the answer that best applies to you. Thank you for your cooperation.

1= I do it very well   2= I do it well   3= I do not do it well 4= I do not do it well at all

		1	2	3	4
1	I can write interesting and appropriate response to a given topic				
2	I can easily cover all the information that should be dealt within a given topic.				
3	I can use appropriate style to the task.				
4	I can easily match style with topic				
5	I can generate ideas to write about easily.				
6	I can think of ideas rapidly when given a topic to write about.				
7	I can write on an assigned topic without difficulty.				
8	I can easily find examples to support my ideas.				
9	I can justify my ideas in my compositions.				
10	I can write grammatically correct sentences in my compositions.				
11	I can use complex language in writing without difficulty.				
12	I can produce error free structures.				
13	I can spell very well.				
14	I can use the punctuation correctly.				
15	I can edit my compositions for mistakes such as punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing.				
16	I can easily use structures I have learned in my class accurately.				
17	I can link ideas together easily.				
18	I can use transition words correctly to make my composition a better one.				
19	I can use connectors correctly to make my composition a better one.				
20	I can use a wide range of vocabulary in my compositions.				
21	I can use synonyms in a composition rather than repeating the same words over and over again.				
22	I can write a brief and informative overview of a given				

	topic.				
23	I can manage my time efficiently to meet a deadline on a piece of writing.				
24	I can rewrite my wordy or confusing sentences to make them clearer.				
25	I can extend the topic to fit in a given word limit.				
26	I can choose and defend a point of view.				
27	I can make long and complex sentences.				
28	I can fulfill a writing task without difficulty within a given time limit.				