



Pre-service Teachers Beliefs to be EFL Teacher-Writers: A Case Study

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Abstract. Being a teacher in teaching writing means that the teacher's writing has been shaped as a way to pursue the improvement in the quality of his instruction, feedback, and classroom environments. Yet, enjoying writing has been a near-to-incompatible activity for teachers. Thus, this case study aimed to explore how preservice teachers retain their identity and beliefs as a writer in the teaching preparatory course. Ten students were voluntarily involved in a series of interviews and focus group discussions during February to April 2024 and had their lesson plans examined. The findings show that these preservice teachers' beliefs in being a teacher have been insufficiently low. Despite being negatively impacted by their previous experiences at senior high schools, they believed that reshaping their beliefs to be a teacher-writer was possible, which was shown in the differences in responses at the beginning of the course and the middle of it. Half of them have been showing the progress on which they have been trying to engage in out-of-class writing activities. Yet, their participation in the writing tasks has been staggeringly slow due to their weekly course assignments. Thus, there has been a need to address how classroom instructions in the teaching preparatory course would lessen their cognitive load in the writing process.

Keywords: Pre-Service Teacher, Teacher Identity.

1 Introduction

Writing has been a rigorous activity combining individual actions and social practice at the same time. When it comes to personal actions, an individual focuses on highlighting certain aspects of the writing process, whereas in a social context, understanding how writing interacts with society is crucial for a specific genre. Yet, language teachers tend to avoid incorporating literacy learning into their classroom, as there are existing beliefs that the implementation tends to be ineffective and fail to engage learners in the literary activities. Furthermore, in Indonesian EFL context, the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum and previously-implemented 2013 curriculum put more foci on covering language contents while at the same time excluding extended writing tasks in the formal Indonesian curriculum as well as in the national exams for the social and natural science programs. As genre-based language teaching is mandated by the curriculum, incorporating genre-based language activities requires careful control of textual knowledge in a text, and of appropriate teaching strategies to manage genre-based writing activities

[1], which Indonesian teachers should respond. The development of current socio-cultural environment surrounding the practices of ELT in Indonesia leaning towards genre-based pedagogy has been shaped during the last two decades, introduced in the Competence-based Curriculum in 2006. Moreover, Seloni and Lee [2] criticize “the overreliance on English-dominant contexts in L2 writing scholarships (p. 1)” in Indonesia, reflecting that there has been an enormous movement toward adopting English as Second Language (ESL) knowledge on writing instructions that are naturalized as a general approach to teaching writing even in EFL countries, especially in university level [3]. Consequently, institutions of teacher training and education occupy critical responsibilities in preparing a sufficient number of highly qualified EFL teachers in Indonesia.

Being a writer-teacher may provide more opportunities to solve the aforementioned problems. According to Young and Ferguson [4], the requirement of a teacher-writer in the classroom does not mean that the language teacher has to be excellent at writing. In this approach, teachers must actively engage with the children as co-writers in the classroom, working alongside them throughout every stage of the writing process. Teacher-writers should help learners overcome their challenges with articulating themselves in their writing. Teacher-writers should cope with learners’ struggles of expressing themselves in their writing. As what Kaufman [5] suggested, one of the most effective methods of instructing learner to engage more into writing is to establish a writing community within the classroom. This community would operate within the condition that allows teachers to demonstrate and model to learners how writers work. After that, the learners will begin to view their instructor as a genuine writer who writes genuinely beside them simultaneously. Along the way, the teacher will moderately assist his learners to reflect and revise their progress of writing, that will allow them to become a more independent writer.

In addition to writing practices, the texts and writing processes by which the texts operate also need to be carefully considered to boost its effectiveness in assisting the learners. It may indirectly have shaped their own writing competencies. Ultimately, many teachers, relying on their own past experiences and perspectives on writing, may have different anticipated results for their learners’ writing [6]. Additionally, the teachers’ implicit theories underlying writing are considerably influenced by their prior knowledge about writing instructions [7]. Despite this, teachers should not separate the outcomes they measure solely into products and processes, as writing product and process can be seen as distinct from one another. To optimize the effectiveness of writing instruction, a range of mediation tools should be implemented to support both the process and product of writing, thereby enhancing the potential for meaningful writing experiences that facilitate learners’ writing development.

With limited research available in the area of teacher beliefs and writing instruction within the Indonesian EFL context, this study aims to provide initial data on the need for pre-service teachers to acknowledge the significance of their role as teacher-writers. The negative experiences that preservice teachers obtained during their secondary-level education experiences or during their professional preparation programs in the university. Providing more opportunities to reverse these negative experiences is particularly beneficial for preservice teachers in shaping their future writing instructions. Thus, this

study seeks to inform how preservice teachers retain their teacher identity and writing beliefs as future teacher candidates.

2 Teacher's Beliefs in Writing

The concept of beliefs in language teaching revolves around an individual's perspective on how their reasoning influences their objectives, emotional responses, choices, behaviors, and reactions, all of which are embedded within their personal beliefs. [8], [9]. The idea that beliefs shape practice can be countered with the notion that teachers' beliefs are developed through particular actions and practices. (e.g., [12]). Student teachers who are still developing their sense of classroom instructions are very much influenced by how their lecturers or instructors implement their classroom instructions. Specifically, instances in which language teachers participated in particular classroom practices and implemented these practices in their classroom have been linked to changed beliefs. Teachers' participation in specific practices has a significant impact on their perceptions of their ability to teach, as demonstrated by the effect of capability beliefs on their self-efficacy. Bandura [8] proposed that people learn about their ability to accomplish a task through hands-on experience.

Sanders-Reio et al. [10] conceptualizes beliefs about writing as knowledge transmission, transactional process, recurring activities, and specific audience-orientation. For the purpose of conveying knowledge through writing, a writer will consider the crucial functions of quotes, precise reporting, and conveying ideas. Writing as a transaction also involves an emotional aspect and utilizing the writing process to sharpen and refine ideas. In iterative writing development, recurring activities are inherently necessary. Writing is always tailored to specific audiences, with its community establishing standardised concepts. Theoretical frameworks such as product, process, and genre have provided a basis for further research into students' views on the nature and components of academic writing. Previous studies have predominantly concentrated on students' views regarding writing processes, including whether writing is inherently linked to refining ideas [11], and are now increasingly considering additional beliefs [10].

In its implementation of writing instruction, there have been two basic orientations of writing instruction as the focus: process-orientation to writing and product-orientation to writing. The former approach does not define writing as a result of linguistic knowledge, as the product-orientation does. This orientation relies heavily on exerting the use of the learners' linguistic abilities, as it heavily involves planning, drafting, and revising. The process of writing involves writers discovering and rephrasing their concepts as they attempt to achieve their intended written meaning [13]. It is goal-oriented, non-linear, exploratory, and generative. Moving forward and backward in the writing process is a natural phenomenon [11].

In the product-based approach, writing is composed of a series of cohesive sentences that adhere to grammatical rules, with words, clauses, and sentences crafted with precision [11]. Teachers who adopt this method often integrate writing exercises that encompass essential language skills, word choice, grammatical structures, and cohesive devices necessary for effective writing. The teaching sequence primarily involves a

process from familiarization, to controlled writing, guided writing, and ultimately free writing. Developing effective writing skills requires students to grasp grammatical structures that form the foundation of a well-composed text.

Another aim for adopting specific writing instruction is to strengthen the learners' existing self-efficacy beliefs that they are able to write. For this to take place, the teachers need to provide a supportive environment where they can control their mental challenges, such as writer's block, during the process of writing. The failure to cope with these mental challenges may sufficiently weaken their perception of being able to write by themselves [14], [15], [16]. In a study by Tschannen-Moran and McMaster [15], the teachers who underwent additional professional development with the absence of the instructor's assistance showed decreased degree of self-efficacy. Engaging in specific teaching methods and experiencing success with them can enhance teachers' self-efficacy, as indicated by these findings.

3 Development of Teacher's Beliefs in Pre-service Education

Teachers' belief systems are heavily influenced by their prior experiences with K–12 teachers as well as their inherent experiences during teacher preparation programs, according to teacher educators and researchers [17]. According to Cutler and Graham [18], many in-service teachers do not possess sufficient confidence to teach writing, which may affect their classroom instruction and further increase any existing unfavorable learners' attitudes about writing. When it is about writing instruction, it has been significantly important to pay attention to how these belief systems influence as many previous studies suggest that learners who do not write enough in class will further formulate negative beliefs towards writing [19].

According to Pajares, preservice teachers acquire their competencies of teaching writing from effective model teachers, extensive writing practices, and implementation of their writing expertise [20]. Subsequently, Graham and Perin [21] showed that learners achievement significantly dropped when teachers failed to effectively model writing instruction practices in their seminal work on effective writing instruction. Thus, when teacher educators are educating future pre-service teachers in the higher education, the concept of successful modeling must be introduced [5]. It has been mainly contributed due the failed connection between theoretical knowledge, advancement in research, and extensive practices from their teacher preparation courses that most pre-service teachers frequently tend to adopt similar writing instruction like how they were taught in their secondary-level classrooms and universities [22]. The task of making sure that pre-service teachers are able to negotiate these complicated connections is on the teacher educators, who are able to interfere and further enhance the efficacy of preservice teachers by directing the pre-service teachers to think critically and implement effectively of their writing instructions. Consequently, teacher educators may have become the spearhead to expose effective writing instructions, starting from drafting, revising, and proofreading their writing. Furthermore, there has been a requirement for courses that give future educators more chances to write, think about their own perspectives on writing (metacognition), and practise offering feedback on others' work in

order to shape positive attitudes towards writing [23]. Yet, many in-service teachers went further to claim that even after their professional certification process, they still feel lacking the necessary preparation to teach writing [24].

Writing skills are steadily improved by practice. Students who write more frequently have more favorable beliefs about the act and process of writing [25]. In fact, preservice instructors who had daily writing chances displayed higher favorable attitudes toward writing [26]. However, studies also demonstrate that preservice teachers receive few chances to observe efficient writing instruction methods [27]. These pedagogical strategies ought to place a strong emphasis on what teachers do with their pupils and how they develop their writing skills. Grisham and Wolsey add that for preservice teachers, these aspects of teaching writing should be openly addressed, not just implied. As a result, preservice teachers need to engage in dual capacities—both as writers and as writing teachers—at the same time [28].

4 Research Method

This study adopted a case-study approach, defined by Stake [29] as the complete investigation of a bounded and integrated system. The bounded and integrated system describes the process by which pre-service teachers transform and develop their beliefs from the in-service teachers or lecturers who become their writing models, ultimately reshaping their beliefs about writing. Case study was selected due to the availability of participants who were willing to participate voluntarily in the investigation. As was used by Cao [30], case study is compatible with the perspective of exploring the complexities of reality being investigated. The research design of this study focuses on exploring pre-service teachers' beliefs about writing and teaching writing [31], [32], [33] during their participation in a professional preparatory program before the participants were assigned teaching duties in the school. This study investigated the key factors influencing the formation of writing beliefs, with an emphasis on their impact on pre-service teachers' beliefs.

4.1 Setting and Participant

The study included a total of ten participants who were students in the sixth semester of a state university in Yogyakarta province. To guarantee that the participants received proper administration, a voluntary participation form was required to be completed by each individual participant. It was also permitted for the participants to withdraw from the activity at any point in the middle if they could provide a valid reason for their decision.

Following the completion of the course, they were prepared to teach at each of their respective schools. The program that they participated in was a teaching preparation course that lasted for a total of fourteen weeks and earned two credits. For the most part, the program was geared toward preparing pre-service teachers with the four primary teaching skills, which are professional, personal, social, and pedagogical compe-

tence. In addition to the required course tasks of preparing lesson plans through individual consultation, the participants were also asked to compose two instructional materials together with their peers to teach at the same level.

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The participants took part in a focus group discussion that lasted for two sessions in order to collect the necessary data. Only six of these ten participants took part in the subsequent individual interview that was conducted subsequently. In addition, the lesson plans that they had drafted were subjected to thematic analysis in order to determine the writing practices that the participants had prepared and the manner in which the writing instructions were delivered.

5 Findings and Discussion

The data from the earlier transcript indicated that the participants were in a situation that was leaning toward negative attitudes toward the writing process and writing instructions. Furthermore, there were heated individual discussions with half of the participants. This was in response to the research question that was posed to find out about the characteristics of the writing beliefs held by pre-service teachers. There are three themes that emerge from the studies: the low degree of pre-service teachers' beliefs in being teacher-writers, the detrimental impacts of negative previous experiences in writing classrooms at the K-12 level, and the high possibility of improving their low degree of teachers' beliefs in writing curriculum and writing instruction.

5.1 The low degree of pre-service teachers' beliefs in being teacher-writers

Six participants were found to have an insufficiently low degree of beliefs in becoming teacher-writers. Their previous experiences at K-12 education, among others, contributed massively into their lack of interest to teach writing. Instead of teaching writing, these participants preferred to teach other languages, even grammar that they unilaterally conceived as difficult materials to teach. The following extracts provide how the pre-service teacher claimed their disinterest to engage in the writing activities:

Extract 1

I : Why did you think writing is not of your interest to teach?

S1: (smiling) I don't feel good enough to teach... My teacher did not read my writing at all.

S3: Agreed with S1... I wrote my writing tasks so much that I even ditched my extracurricular activities in the tenth class... But the book got thrown as my handwriting was bad... I wonder if he did read my writing. (laughing) Did he read that? I don't know. I hate him.

S4: (laughing) My teacher did even worse... She threw her anger every time she came to the classroom.

Reading my writing? As if. I don't want to teach writing.

Extract 2

I : Why did you think writing is not of your interest to teach?

S8: Why did you say? To be honest, I am not that bad in writing. I can write few sentences already, but

my teacher always see my writing as bad... She don't tell me why...

I : How about you S5 and S9?

S5: My lecturer... I don't like his writing teaching. He keeps giving assignments without even reading our

work or even just open in the classroom. My friend said that he would get a revision note, but I never had

it... Until I finish that class.

S9: (pondering for 10 seconds) I don't know Pak... I like writing in instagram or X, or even Tiktok. But I

don't feel like teaching writing. Too much for me.

I : Why?

S9 : Don't know Pak, I never saw my teacher write, maybe.

Based on extract 1, most reasons were attributed to the previous experiences in their secondary levels, being in junior high school or in senior high school. Their teachers did manage to inflict a long-lasting impact on preventing these participants to enjoy their writing and eventually teaching writing. Meanwhile, extract 2 further enhanced how previous negative experiences are harmful to students' attitude of writing process and writing instruction. These indicated how their lack of interest could be attributed to the teacher factors, mainly from their lack of competence in teaching writing and their personalities.

5.2 The detrimental impacts of negative previous experiences of writing classrooms at the K-12 level

The second theme reveals the negative consequences of the learning materials used to support students' writing development.

Extract 3

I : Didn't your teacher explain about it?

S4: She does... But I don't think she is, never she does... The teacher asked us to search... after searching

about it, it will be checked by the teacher. If it was wrong, then it finished that way...

[She] never

explains about the text. Even if she does, it will be about sentences... That grammar-related thing...

The excerpt above indicated that students, in their learning process, were guided into believing that grammar was the main source in writing, which is an indication of the implementation of product approach to teaching writing [11]. In product approach to writing, writing is only seen as the product consisting only of linguistic devices making

up the text. The context of how the writing is aimed to is disregarded, resulting in the development of writing to solely focus on the final product of writing consisting of appropriate usage of grammar in the text. Focusing solely on the product as their mark of success in writing may not be perceived as a well-considered attempt to appreciate their efforts in writing.

Extract 4

S3: Sometimes, the teacher often tells us to be correct, which makes us anxious. Afraid of getting wrong, that is...

I : So the grammar must be absolutely correct? Beware if you make mistakes. If there is a mistake, do you get scolded?

S3: Not really, but sometimes, I don't understand, yet the teacher did not help me. But she asks me back in which that makes me anxious

Extract 2 revealed that it was apparent that students were not prepared to write without grammatical mistakes. Seloni and Lee asserts that attending the grammar may provide opportunities in developing their writing skills. However, text does not consist of only grammar that the meaning can be perceived in a single view of interpretation.

Extract 5

I : Ok... then, are the topics used boring?

S7: Yes... if I may say...

I : Why did you feel bored? Is it only like this? Sangkuring and Sangkuriang. From junior high school until now...

S7: Yes. From junior high school, the topics are always like that... Monotonous... No variation, no challenge

Extract 5 further reinforce the notion that using commonly-used texts that were thought to be interesting also contributed to the downfall of writing interest. Maintaining their identity as the writer had been a struggle in itself that participant S7 disliked the text being used in the teaching.

5.3 The high possibility of improving their low degree of teachers' beliefs in writing curriculum and writing instruction

Despite the imminent decrease in the participants' beliefs in the writing process and writing instruction, there have been possibilities that the participants, being demotivated pre-service teachers, can properly develop their writing instructional competen-

cies if they are exposed to the proper writing instruction along with the gradual construction of their writer identity. The following extracts display how the talks correspond to how proper writing instruction could improve their low state of writing beliefs.

Extract 6

I : Your writing, after finishing your writing, do you often evaluate it?

S1: Yes, I often do it

I : Often? Or is it always?

S1: I always do it

I : How do you know to evaluate?

S1: Teacher in junior high taught me

Extract 7

I : That's good. Nah, in the classroom, in case of materials that have not been given or told, is there an

initiative to learn by yourself? Or do you wait?

S4: Depending on the mood

I : Is it often, that mood of yours?

S4: I think it's balance...

I : Balance positively or negatively?

S4: Not often... if I think it's out of my league, then I won't

In addition to the proper writing instructions, extract 7 indicated personal capabilities of the participants are also another engine that may hasten the process of re-shaping their negative beliefs of writing. Because writing is naturally a combination of conjoining the development of cultural and social competencies, in which the participants as the potential writer-teacher should be guided to explore and develop critical views on how the society works in their writing, which further strengthen their positive writing beliefs. This also establishes the concept that writing is deeply rooted in cultural and social contexts.

It has been noted that general studies in teacher beliefs acknowledge the existence of the past learning experience. The origin of teachers' beliefs dates back to their early days of schooling. In the Indonesian context, English may be experienced at least eight to nine years, with three years at elementary levels, three years at junior high levels, and lastly three years at senior high school level. This stage is mainly composed of 'apprenticeship of observation' [34] that the cycle of being a teacher would start with him being a student. These experiences would reflect how they were taught and how they would teach later on. In addition, the past learning experiences that pre-service teachers had experienced during their teacher education stages become another significant source of beliefs [35]. It is likely that writing instructors who were taught using a product-oriented approach will adopt a similar teaching style in their own classrooms or seek alternative methods. As an illustration, Tsui [36] reported that an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructor made the decision to employ process approaches in her writing lessons since she had received poor experiences as a student as a result of being taught through a product-oriented approach. Teachers' classroom behaviors can

be influenced by the positive experiences they have had in the past, which in turn shape their current teaching practices.

In short, teacher beliefs in writing indicated by these participants are in line with previous studies on the contributing factors of writing beliefs, including past and current teaching/learning experiences, previous writing experiences, past learning experiences and the contributions of materials and approaches of writing instruction [37]. The finding has also shown that pre-service teacher education programs are crucial in shaping the perspectives of aspiring teachers who often lack opportunities for hands-on classroom experience. Subsequently, these pre-service teacher candidates are more likely to accept and develop their own teaching philosophies and beliefs, adopting from the in-service teachers and teacher instructors already hold. In line with the adoption of constructivist teaching pedagogy by teacher education programs, it has been possible that these programs can bring more changes in the beliefs of prospective teachers. The findings demonstrate that pre-service teachers' beliefs are still in the development phase and that it is highly possible to assist them in developing new understandings and attitudes during the course of their careers [38]. Pre-service teachers began the course with pre-existing teaching beliefs and values concerning writing instruction. Further exploration on how writing beliefs are shaped and re-shaped are in need to be studied as it will enable pre-service teachers to adopt techniques to accomplish in their future writing instruction and investigate the challenges that they have while attempting to implement these plans during their three years of learning at the university.

6 Conclusion and Recommendation

This research aims to explore the potential of pre-service teachers to develop into teacher-writers, a foreign concept in Indonesian EFL classroom context. The findings of this research are presented in the form of a theory that is investigated and expanded upon in relation to the discovered facts. In general, there are three themes that emerge from the studies: the low degree of pre-service teachers' beliefs in being teacher-writers, the detrimental impacts of negative previous experiences in writing classrooms at the K-12 level, and the high possibility of remediating their negative teachers' beliefs in writing curriculum and writing instruction.

This work provides great insights into the critical writing beliefs that can be applicable not only to the writing process but also to teacher education. Despite the fact that there are ten participants, this work offers valuable insights into critical writing beliefs. Additional research has the potential to shed light on the efforts that have been made to counteract the adverse effects of past writing instruction experiences at the previous level and to integrate these findings with the advancements that have been made in writing education. This research has led to several questions that need to be explored in more detail. This study has also backed another recommendation aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of teachers' beliefs in the writing process and writing instruction. This suggestion is linked to the removal of negative cycles, which encompass the transmission of negative attitudes from one educator to his subsequent pupils. Pre-

paring the teacher candidates for a future role as a good language teacher can be facilitated by offering them support to work within a more positive environment that encourages student writers.

Disclosure of Interests. The authors declare that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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