Do Pre-Service Turkish Language Teachers Succeed In Developing Argumentative Writing Skills?

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to determine pre-service Turkish language teachers' use of text structure elements and their awareness and experience with argumentative writing. The research was designed as a case study, which included 115 undergraduate students studying Turkish language teaching. The data of the study consisted of the participants' argumentative writings and interviews. As data collection tools, the researchers developed an "Evaluation Rubric of Argumentative Text Elements" by conducting validity and reliability tests and prepared a "Semi-structured Interview Form" to uncover the participants' experiences and opinions about argumentative writing. Quantitative data were evaluated using descriptive statistical techniques, and qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The quantitative results showed that the average success of the participants was 75.2% in topic element, 72.6% in claim element, 65.6% in the element of supporting a claim, 42.3% in counterclaim and backing for the counterclaim, 36.8% in grounds for rebuttals, 49.3% in conclusion element, and the overall average success was 56.54%. The qualitative results indicated that the participants' awareness of argumentative text structure was weak. Lastly, the participants' experiences with and opinions on argumentative writing were categorized to determine the factors that contributed to their success.

Keywords: Argumentative Writing, Text Elements, Pre-service Turkish Language Teacher

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INTRODUCTION

Genre has an important function in meeting individuals' communication needs. In communication process, genre plays an important role both in producing text in a format suitable for the purpose of the writer and directing the readers' comprehension process (Yazıcı, 2004). Therefore, genre can be considered to have various functions in terms of comprehension and expression skills. This is also relevant to writing as one of the expression skills. "Writing is a skill that is closely related to textual knowledge since it is fundamentally a process of creating a text. If an individual understands what features the end-product must have, they will be equally successful in constructing it (Çeçen, 2015, p. 131). Hence, genre knowledge is one of the key elements of development of writing skills.

Writers use genre knowledge to perform rhetorical functions of different types of texts. Writing skill requires a recognition of the purpose of genre and their changing structural features. Thus, the knowledge of genre is a prerequisite for writing skills (Dilidüzgün, 2020). Writing competence is inseparable from genre knowledge because writing consists of the use of linguistic tools that certain genres demand (Kress, 1994). Understanding all these dimensions of genre knowledge and the relation among these dimensions is central to the process of learning to write effectively (Kamberelis, 1998). Various studies showing that genre knowledge contributes to the quality of writing support this point of view (Hoogeven & Gelderen, 2015; Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013; Uzun, 2017).

One of the important elements of the relation between writing competence and genre is text structure. Text structure is a schematic form that shows how texts are organized, regardless of their genre (Temizkan, 2016). “Information conveyed through text is organized by text structures” (Güzel Özmen, 2011, p. 50). Knowing the superstructure of a genre with which a writer engages makes it easier to master the qualities of the text and the characteristics of the elements that make up the text (Çakmak, 2013). Thus, having schemes to establish text elements while creating a text allows the writer to present the text in an organized manner (Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2011). Therefore, raising awareness related to the unique structure of each genre is of great importance for the development of writing skills. There is various evidence that knowing the structure of the text has an impact on writing performance (Taylor & Beach, 1984; Armbruster et al., 1987; Englert et al., 1988; Raphael et al., 1988; Çakmak, 2013; Yaylacık, 2015; Rona, 2017).

Argumentative Writing and its Structure

One of the genres regarded as important to teach for the development of writing is argumentative writing. Argumentative writing is a genre of writing where the writer establishes a position on an issue or topic and explains and supports this position with reliable pieces of evidence (Ozfidan & Mitchell, 2020). According to Knapp and Watkins (2005), argumentative writing included a process of persuading the reader to accept a point of view. One of the most fundamental characteristics of argumentation was to rely on a certain point of view. The writer defended a point of view against readers who held different opinions (Van Eemeren, 2001). Argumentative writing required that students embraced a particular point of view and tried to convince the reader to adopt that the same view (Nippold et al., 2005). Therefore, in such texts, the writer should take a stand, predict the point of view of the target audience, justify their standpoint, and rebut alternative standpoints (Ferretti et al., 2000).

Toulmin (1958) developed a model explaining the structural features of argumentative discourse. According to Toulmin, an argument was composed of the claim revealing individual's standpoint, data establishing the grounds of the claim, a warrant that strengthened the link between the claim and the data, the backing, which set the general rules to increase the acceptability of the claim, the qualifier defining the extent of strength and characteristics of the claim, and the rebuttals that proved the invalidity of the counterclaim. These elements represented the basis of argumentative discourse and an organizational framework for argumentative writing (Chase, 2011).

Toulmin's (1958) argumentation model was expanded by various researchers and presented in different ways (Graham & Harris, 1989; Feretti et al., 2009; Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2011). In all these models, argumentative writing elements were divided into functional and non-functional elements. Graham and Harris (1989) determined the functional elements of the argumentative text structure as premise, reasons, conclusions, and elaboration. Premise represented the belief that writer credited and supported. Reasons were the writer's explanations as to why the writer believed a particular premise. Conclusion was defined as a closing statement of the discussion. Elaboration, on the other hand, is the elaboration of opinions about these three elements. "Finally, nonfunctional text was any unit that was repeated but had no discernible rhetorical purpose" (Graham & Harris, 1989, p. 205). Furthermore, Feretti et al. (2009) explained the argumentative text structure in a relatively more detailed manner. The functional elements in this model were the writer's standpoint(s), reasons for writer's standpoint(s), elaboration, alternative standpoint(s), reasons for alternative standpoint(s), rebuttals, introduction, and conclusion. Nonfunctional statements included information that was irrelevant to the topic.

Another model explaining the argumentative text structure was designed by Coşkun and Tiryaki (2011). According to the model shown in Figure 1, the functional elements of argumentative text structure were handled at two different parts, which were the main and auxiliary elements. The main elements were data, claim, counterclaim, and conclusion. The auxiliary elements were conditional acceptance, support reason, and grounds for rebuttals. The nonfunctional elements not included in the figure were classified as unnecessary repetition and irrelevant unit.

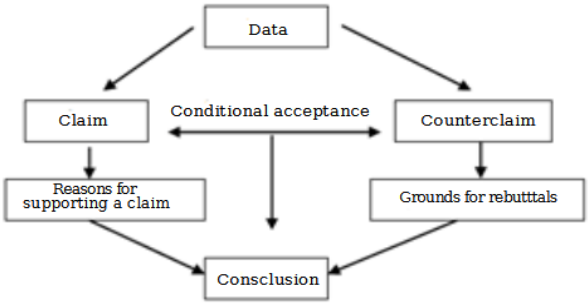

Figure 1. Argumentative text structure (adapted from Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2011, p. 65.)

According to Coşkun and Tiryaki (2013a), *data* were general information given on the topic to facilitate understanding of the topic of discussion. *Claim* was the standpoint that the writer advocated. *Counterclaim* was the opinion that contradicted the writer's claim. *Conclusion* was the element in which the basic message was delivered to the reader. *Conditional acceptance* as the first of the auxiliary elements was the acceptance of the counterclaim as valid under certain circumstances. *Reasons for supporting a claim* and *grounds for rebuttals* were the explanations or evidence used to support for writer's standpoint(s) and refute the counterclaim(s), respectively (Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2013a, pp. 103-104).

Pre-service Turkish Language Teachers' Argumentative Writing Skills

Argumentative writing comes across as a mode of academic writing and common writing genre that university students utilize during their education (Ozfidan & Mitchell, 2020). In this part of the article, we need to pay special attention to the pre-service Turkish language teachers majoring a bachelor's degree. The reason is that these students, unlike other university students, are prospective teachers who will take on the responsibility of teaching writing in schools in the future. The Turkish teachers' competence to guide students in developing their writing skills depends primarily on their knowledge and skills about writing (Mete, 2015). Put differently, in order for prospective Turkish teachers to gain writing skills to teach their students, they must initially improve their writing skills (Çifçi, 2011). Well-trained teachers will enable individuals' development of writing from primary

school to higher education who can express themselves clearly and concisely and convey their feelings and thoughts in writing (Altunbay, 2017, p. 60).

The Turkish Language Teaching undergraduate program, implemented in 2018 by the Higher Education Council (YÖK) and enforced at all universities in Turkey, includes the Turkish Language I and Turkish Language II modules to improve pre-service teachers' knowledge, skills, and awareness of writing skills. The content of Turkish Language I module includes teaching argumentative and persuasive writing along with genres, while the content of Turkish Language II consists of various practices regarding supporting or opposing a claim. However, whether this training for teacher candidates increases their interest in writing skills and provides knowledge and skills is an issue that needs to be addressed (Göçer, 2016). The reason is that the knowledge and skills teacher candidates gain in their education and the attitudes they develop are reflected in their teaching skills throughout their professional lives. Therefore, it is eminently important that teacher candidates are well-qualified and equipped with professional skills. On the other hand, even though teacher competencies are an important matter, the problems seem to persist (Topuzkanamış, 2014).

Although many studies conducted in the Turkish context have highlighted prospective teachers' genre-specific writing problems (Altunbay & Demir, 2020; Aydın et al., 2017; Baki & Gökçe, 2020; Bozkurt, 2019; Ceran, 2015; Ergene, 2013; Kurudayıoğlu & Yılmaz, 2014; Örge Yaşar & Gümüşkaya, 2019; Şeref & Cin Şeker, 2018; Temizyürek & Vargelen, 2016), there are a limited number of studies on argumentative writing (Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2013a, 2013b; Öztürk, 2016). Although participants of these studies included pre-service Turkish language teachers, they were evaluated with undergraduate students majoring in other disciplines, and their data were not independently analyzed. Coşkun and Tiryaki (2013a) found out that university students, including prospective Turkish teachers, had many problems in argumentative writing. In another study, they determined that the teacher candidates' success averages in argumentative text elements were low (Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2013b). Similarly, Öztürk (2016) found out that teacher candidates' level of success in writing argumentative texts was extremely poor (37.41%). These results are alarming for prospective native language teachers and obligate to approach the problems they experience in more detailed manner. The way to achieve it is firstly to determine their success in argumentative writing and their experience and awareness of argumentative writing.

There are various types of research conducted in the Turkish context in relation to argumentative writing skills, including *review articles* (Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2011), *deterministic studies* (Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2013a, 2013b; Gökçe & Çelebi, 2015; Gökçe, 2016; Tiryaki, 2017; Tiryaki & Kayaturk, 2017), *experimental studies* (Çakmak & Civelek, 2013; Çağlayan Dilber, 2014; Demirel, 2021; Sis & Bahşı, 2016; Rona, 2017; Sünter, 2017) and *correlational studies* (Tiryaki, 2011; Öztürk, 2016). Among these studies, only Coşkun and Tiryaki (2013b) and Öztürk (2016) discussed the university students' argumentative writing skills, and Tiryaki (2017) examined pre-service Turkish language teachers' use of ways of developing thinking in their argumentative writing. As noted, there is no studies in the literature examining the levels of pre-service Turkish language teachers' construction of argumentative text elements. Furthermore, the existing research was conducted prior to the new curriculum introduced in 2018, hence it does not cover the possible impact of the new curriculum on students' argumentative writing skills. On the other hand, deterministic studies on language skills in the Turkish context are of great importance. As in many developed countries, in respect to education, it is only possible to determine students' writing skills through scientific research to a large extent, since skill-based national assessment is not administrated in Turkey. Therefore, the aim of this research is to determine the pre-service Turkish language teachers' use of text structure elements in their argumentative writing as well as their awareness of and experience with argumentative writing. To this end, the study attempts to answer the following questions.

RQ1: What are the participants' success means and levels in constructing argumentative text elements?

RQ2: What is the participants' awareness of argumentative writing?

RQ3: What are the participants' experiences with and opinions about writing argumentative texts?

METHODOLOGY

In this section, information about the research model, the study group, the data collection process, and the analysis were presented.

Research Model

This research was designed as a case study. According to Stake (2005), the main purpose of a case study is to address and understand a given situation with its many aspects. In a case study, a research topic with defined boundaries is described and examined in detail in its natural environment (Birinci et al., 2009). The case for the research can be a person and student, as well as groups such as a classroom, school, or community. Case study is valuable in educational research. Educational researchers can examine the quality of education and the causes of the problems they experience by implementing a case study model in their research (Leymun et al., 2017). The current study was also designed as a case study to determine the situation with pre-service Turkish language teachers in terms of argumentative writing skills and understand the causes of the problems encountered in regard to argumentative writing.

Participants

The participants of the study were 115 undergraduate students at the Department of Turkish Education, the Faculty of Education, Bursa Uludağ University in the Academic Year 2021/2022. 49 of the participants were male, and 66 were female. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 29 years old. Purposeful sampling as a method of non-probability sampling was used in the selection of the participants. Document data were collected from all participants, while 40 of them were also interviewed.

Instruments

The data were collected through document review method and interviews. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. The data collection tools were presented in detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Data collection tools

Data Collection Tools	Intended Purpose	Audience	Approach
1-Rubric for Evaluating Argumentative Text Elements	Determining the participants' level of use of argumentative text elements	Students	Quantitative
2- Semi-Structured Interview Form	Determining the participants' past experiences related to argumentative writing	Students	Qualitative

Rubric for Evaluating Argumentative Text Elements (REATE): It was developed by the researchers of this study to determine the participants' use of argumentative text elements. For the development of the rubric, validity and reliability analyses were conducted.

a) Validity Analysis: Cresswell (2019) stated that one of the commonly used validity evidence was the evidence based on test content. This study used validity evidence based on test content to ensure the validity of the measurement tool. This type of evidence, also called content validity, is defined as the degree to which "the content that makes up the instrument is representative of the concept that one is attempting to measure" (Gliner & Morgan, 2015, p. 166). In other words, it renders the relevance of the content of the measurement tool to what is intended to be measured (Creswell,

2019). Lawshe's content validity was used to ensure the content validity of the measurement tool. This technique consisted of the following steps: "developing potential scale forms, establishing a group of field experts and obtaining expert opinions, collecting the content validity rates and indexes of the items, and preparing the final form of the scale based on the content validity ratios/indices criteria" (Yurdagül, 2005, p. 2).

Firstly, a draft rubric was developed examining the relevant literature and various existing scales (Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2013a; Çağlayan Dilber, 2014; Öztürk, 2016; Lam et al., 2018). At this stage, the researchers discussed the scale items and their features in two sessions lasting a total of 11 hours. Moreover, based on various sample argumentative articles, any potential problems with the items were examined by implementing a pilot study. After completing the piloting stage, the draft form was prepared using a 3-point rating of "necessary (1), necessary but insufficient (2), unnecessary (3)" for each item and sent to 17 field experts. 13 of the experts responded to our request, while 4 did not. The scope validity ratio and scope validity index were calculated by considering the experts' opinions, suggestions, and criticisms. The result of the calculations was illustrated in the following table.

Table 2. Content validity ratio (CVR) and content validity indexes (CVI)

	EXPERT OPINIONS			VALUES	
Items	3 Necessary	2 Necessary but insufficient	1 Unnecessary	CVR	CVI
1. Topic	10	3	0	0.99	
2. Claim	10	3	0	0.99	
3. Reasons for Supporting a Claim	13	0	0	0.99	
4. Counterclaim and Backing for the Counterclaim	12	1	2	0.69	0.94
5. Grounds for Rebuttals	13	0	0	0.99	
6. Conditional Acceptance	9	0	4	0.38	
7. Conclusion	12	1	0	0.99	
** the value of content validity criterion (CVC) accepted in the studies that consist of 13 expert opinions: Lawshe (1975, p. 568)*					0.54

CVR has a value between -1 (absolute rejection) and +1 (absolute acceptance). If all participants rate any item on the scale as "Acceptable", the CVR value of that item is 1. However, considering the margin of error, this value is 0.99." (Yeşilyurt & Kross, 2018, p. 255). If the CVR values in the Lawshe analysis take a zero or negative (less than zero) value, the scale items are removed. As Table 2 showed, since no item in the scale had a zero or negative value, it was not considered acceptable to remove items from the scale based on this criterion. Apart from the CVR value taking a zero or negative value, the statistical significance of the CVR values is determined based on the content validity criterion (CVC) values, which is identified by the number of experts involved. The context validity criterion represents a reference value determined by the number of experts who provide an opinion. Lawshe (1975, p. 568) determined the expected CVC values based on the number of experts. The number of experts required for the Lawshe technique varied between 5 and 40, and in this case which included 13 expert opinions, the CVC was 0.54. As Table 2 showed, there was no item, other than Item 6, whose CVR value was less than the CVC value (CVC=0.54 > CVR=0.38). Therefore, only the sixth item was removed from the scale (conditional acceptance).

After calculating the content validity ratio in the Lawshe technique, the content validity index of the items in the scale was calculated. The content validity index is a calculation that includes all the items in the scale. The mean of the content validity ratio gives the content validity index value. If the CVI of a scale has a value less than the CVC identified by the number of experts involved, its content validity cannot be ensured (Lawshe, 1975). Table 2 showed that since the content validity index calculated for all items in the scale was larger than the content validity criterion after item 7 was removed, the scope validity of the scale was at a statistically significant level (CVI = 0.94 > CVR = 0.54). After the content validity analyses were carried out using the Lawshe technique to evaluate the teacher candidates' use of argumentative text elements in their writing, the researchers prepared the

final version of the rubric by discussing the items that the experts considered as necessary but also voiced various criticisms about, which took several sessions lasting 8 hours.

b) Reliability Analysis: Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) was used to determine the consistency of the REATE among the raters and thus provide reliability evidence of the scale. In order to determine the consistency among the raters, the reliability among raters' scores must be identified. In the case where there were more than two raters, the correlation coefficient used for reliability was Kendall's coefficient of concordance, which was one of the nonparametric statistical techniques (Tavşancıl, 2002). Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) has a value in the range of 0 to 1. The closer the coefficient of concordance is to 1, the higher the agreement among the raters is (Can, 2019). According to Szymanski and Linkowski, for the analyses conducted with Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W), the agreement among the raters should be at least 0.80 (as cited in Delicoğlu, 2009). For the purposes of this study, 30 argumentative writings collected from pre-service Turkish language teachers were evaluated by three different raters. The results were analyzed with the SPSS 23 package statistical program. Table 3 showed the agreement ratio among the raters' scores for the texts.

Table 3. Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W) for the scale

Dimensions/ Overall	Number of raters (N)	Coefficient of concordance (W)	Significance level (p)
Item 1	3	0.851	,000
Item 2	3	0.839	,000
Item 3	3	0.806	,000
Item 4	3	0.864	,000
Item 5	3	0.846	,000
Item 6	3	0.818	,000
Total Score	3	0.801	,000

According to the Kendall W statistics in Table 3, the first item in the scale had a W value of 0.851; the W value was 0.839 for the second item; 0.806 for the third item, 0.864 for the fourth item, 0.846 for the fifth item, 0.818 for the sixth item, and the total score was 0.801. Since these values were greater than 0.80, they were considered positive in terms of reliability. In addition, since the p-value of less than 0.05 in the Kendall test indicated significant agreement (Can, 2019), the p values calculated for all items in the scale and the total score ($p = .000 < 0.05$) also demonstrated a significant level of coherence in the scale.

Semi-Structured Interview Form: Interview is the most appropriate approach to explore people's experience and the meaning they make of it (Seidman, 2006). Therefore, an interview form was designed to capture the participants' awareness, experience, and opinions about argumentative texts. Interviews are categorized as structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Çepni, 2014; Merriam, 2013; Türnüklü, 2000). In this study, semi-structured interview was used to collect qualitative data. "In semi-structured interviews, questions are designed prior to the interview, and the interview process requires to be flexible. In such interviews, the order of the questions can be shifted, and the questions can be explained in more detail, if necessary." (Çepni, 2014, pp. 172-173). The participants were asked the following questions in the interviews.

1. Do you enjoy writing? Describe your standpoint on writing (positive or negative) explaining your reasons.

2. Are you familiar with the argumentative text elements? What can you say about argumentative texts?

3. Have you studied argumentative writing in your education in the past (elementary, high school, university)?

4. Have you ever written a text that illustrates the argumentative style of expression? If yes, when and where did you write it?

Data Collection

The quantitative data were collected from the argumentative texts written by teacher candidates. In data collection, eight different topics were suggested to the teacher candidates, and they were also given the flexibility to write on the topic of their choice, which warranted their freedom to select a different topic. When determining the topic, we paid attention to the selection of topics and controlled whether the topics were appropriate for argumentative writing. After the participants had selected their topics, they were given 2 hours to write a text. When the text writing process was completed, the texts were collected and prepared for analysis. The qualitative data of the study were collected with a semi-structured interview. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder, and ultimately, these audio recordings were transcribed to begin the data analysis.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of the quantitative data, firstly, the researchers evaluated the students' texts independently using the REATE. The two researchers used the means of their scores upon evaluating the students' texts. For the quantitative data analysis, descriptive statistical tests (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) were carried out using the SPSS 23.0 software package. On the other hand, thematic analysis was used for the analysis of the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is an examination of a series of individual or focus group interviews to detect patterns of meaning in a dataset of various texts (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 882). The researchers utilized NVivo software in qualitative data analysis. They conducted the qualitative data analysis together and reconciled by discussing the codifications over which they could not agree initially.

FINDINGS

This section presented the quantitative findings first, and the qualitative findings followed.

Participants' Success in Constructing Argumentative Text Elements

Table 4 presented the findings for the first research question.

Table 4. Participants' success in constructing argumentative text elements

Text Elements	Min.	Max.	X	SS	%
Topic	1	4	3.008	0.86	75.2
Claim	1	4	2.904	0.89	72.6
Reasons for Supporting the Claim	1	4	2.626	1.146	65.6
Counterclaim and Backing for the Counterclaim	1	4	1.695	0.952	42.3
Grounds for Rebuttals	1	4	1.473	0.805	36.8
Conclusion	1	4	1.973	0.602	49.3
Total	6	22	13.57	3.70	56.54

Table 4 demonstrated that the pre-service Turkish language teachers' success in constructing the topic element in their argumentative texts was 75.2%, 72.6% in the claim element, 65.6% in the element of supporting a claim, 42.3% in counterclaim and backing for the counterclaim, 36.8% in grounds for rebuttals, and 49.3% in conclusion element. According to these findings, we argued that the mean scores were quite insufficient, especially in terms of grounds for rebuttals, counterclaim and backing for the counterclaim, and conclusion. Besides, the fact that the mean score of the total success was 56.54% indicated that the participants' average success in constructing argumentative text elements was at the "*acceptable*" level. On the other hand, we determined that the text elements in which the participants were most successful were the claim and the topic (ground).

Table 5. Participants' level of construction of argumentative text elements

	Topic		Claim		Reasons for Supporting the Claim		Counterclaim and Backing for the Counterclaim		Grounds for Rebuttals		Conclusion	
Level	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Insufficient	9	7.8	11	9.5	34	29.5	74	64.3	83	72.2	22	19.2
Acceptable	26	22.6	30	26.1	11	9.5	12	10.5	18	15.7	81	70.4
Good	58	50.4	48	41.8	46	40	25	21.7	11	9.5	10	8.7
Excellent	22	19.2	26	22.6	24	21	4	3.5	3	2.6	2	1.7

As Table 5 demonstrated, more than half of the participants constructed the elements of the topic, claim, and reasons for supporting the claim at the good and excellent levels. However, more than half of the participants showed insufficient and acceptable levels of success in constructing the elements of counterclaim and backing for the counterclaim, grounds for rebuttals, and conclusion. This finding illustrated that a significant number of the participants were more successful in the elements of topic, claim, and reasons for supporting the claim in their argumentative texts than in other elements. It was especially noteworthy that the number of participants at the insufficient level of the scale for the elements of counterclaim and grounds for rebuttals was high.

Participants' Awareness of Argumentative Writing

To determine the awareness of the argumentative writing, the findings obtained from the interviews were classified under three categories as "text elements, purpose, characteristics of language and expression", and we provided some examples of participant views in the confines of the codes in these categories.

Table 6. Participants' awareness of argumentative writing

Theme	Sub-theme (f)	Examples of Opinions
Text Elements	topic (5), claim (19), reasons for supporting the claim (2), counterclaim and backing for the counterclaim (15), grounds for rebuttals (3), conclusion (2)	"Information should be provided on the topic being supported." (P21) "I know that we assert a claim that we support in argumentative writing and support it with some elements." (P29) "Opinions that we support and object are included." (P2) "The opposing view is to be refuted with evidence." (P34) "Argumentative writing elements include these four: data (ground), claim, counterclaim, and conclusion." (P11)
Purpose	changing opinions (6), persuading (4), refuting an idea (2), convincing (2), proving (2), explaining (2)	"Argumentative wiring includes changing opinions and positions." (P36) "Argumentative writing is a type of writing to persuade others." (P15) "Argumentative writing is used for the purpose of challenging or refuting a judgment or idea." (P22) "It is a kind of writing that aims at convincing the reader rather than conversing with them." (P40). "I would say that argumentative writing is a type of writing in which the writer attempts to prove a point in a way that is also open to different views." (P30). "In argumentative writing, the writer elaborates and explains a question or a phenomenon." (P17).
Characteristics of Language and Expression	simplicity (7), precision (5), clarity (2), reader engagement (2), ways to improve thinking (1),	"Language and expression are simple, modest, and smooth." (P2) "Opinions and feelings are expressed in short and precise phrases." (P13). "It (argumentative writing) attempts to engage the reader with the text by asking questions and giving prompts to think about the text." (P32) "Such ways of improving thinking as exemplification, comparison, and providing evidence are used." (P22).

According to Table 6, in the category of argumentative text elements, the participants expressed their understanding of the elements of claim (19), counterclaim and backing for the counterclaim (16), topic (5), grounds for rebuttals (3), reasons for supporting the claim (2) and conclusion (2), respectively. This finding showed that almost half of the students identified the

elements of claim and counterclaim, and very few recognized the other elements. Gathering from these statements, we argued that the participants did not have enough information about text elements. On the other hand, although it was not the focus of this study, the findings from the "purpose" and "characteristics of language and expression" categories showed that a significant part of the interviewees failed to identify the characteristics of the argumentative texts.

Participants' Experience with and Opinions about Writing Argumentative Texts

In this section, the participants' experiences with and opinions about writing argumentative texts were categorized, and the findings were examined as the "perspectives on writing skills and learning experiences".

Table 7. Participants' perceptions of writing skills

Theme	Sub-theme (f)	Examples of Opinions
Perspectives on Writing Skills	positive (23)	"I like writing because I can compose my statements better in written texts, and I can convey my thoughts freely." (P1)
	negative (11)	"To be honest, I don't really enjoy writing. Because I think it can sometimes be an exhausting and tedious activity." (P23)
	conditional/partial (6)	"I partly enjoy it. It depends on my mood. I can't say negative, but I can't always say positive either." (P30)

According to Table 7, although the pre-service Turkish language teachers' perspective on writing skills was generally positive (f=23), some stated that they did not enjoy writing (f=11), and a small number of them reported that they partly enjoyed it (f=6).

Table 8. Participants' learning experiences about argumentative writing

Theme	Sub-theme(f)	Examples of Opinions
Learning Experiences	receiving no training on argumentative writing (30)	"I have not studied argumentative writing in my academic life." (P15)
	studying at the university (10)	"In my elementary and high school years, we did not receive any practical training on argumentative writing, yet we just covered it briefly. I received a more detailed and practical training at the university." (P35)
	experience (21)	"I got familiar with argumentative writing at the end of middle school, high school, and university, but I wrote on argumentative text for the first time at university." (P23)
	lack of experience (19)	"No, I have not written any text that could be considered as argumentative writing." (P13)
	wrong teaching practices (13)	"They used to have us write a lot of compositions in school. For example, write a composition explaining the proverb “As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined.” That is why our writing has not improved. The expectation of a composition solely written on a proverb only means having students to write for a grade." (P8)
	negative teacher behaviors (3)	"During my high school and middle school years, my teachers' attitudes were not very encouraging. That is why I did not really care about writing." (P20)

As shown in Table 8, a significant number of the interviewees (f=30) stated that they had not received training on argumentative writing, while some (n=10) stated that they only did at the university level. Moreover, almost half of the participants had experience of writing argumentative texts during their education (f=21), while the other half did not practice any argumentative writing, including their university education. It was noteworthy that most of the participants who practiced argumentative writing had this experience at the university level. One of the issues that attracted attention was the participants' views of wrong teaching practices (f=13). The participants emphasized that what they practiced as "composition" writing did not provide them any benefit, and this method was mostly implemented to grade them. In addition, some participants also underlined negative teacher behaviors (f=3). Based on these findings, we can conclude that primary and high school education has not been effective enough for participants' training on argumentative writing and their

practice of writing, and university education relatively stands out in regard to developing knowledge and skills.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to demonstrate the situation with pre-service Turkish language teachers in constructing argumentative text elements and determined that the participants' average success in this regard was 56.54%. This finding showed that participants' success with constructing argumentative text elements was not at a sufficient level. The findings of the present study seem to overlap with Coşkun and Tiryaki (2013b), who found out that the mean score of university students' success in argumentative writing was 49%, and Öztürk (2016), who reported a 37.41% of success. Both studies showed that university students' success in constructing argumentative text elements was not sufficient. However, the reason for the lower success rate in both studies may be due to the fact that, unlike in these studies, our participants were pre-service Turkish language teachers.

When the argumentative text elements were analyzed individually, the average success of the participants was found to be 75.2% in the topic element, 72.6% in the claim element, 65.6% in the element of supporting a claim, 42.3% in the counterclaim and backing for the counterclaim, 36.8% in the grounds for rebuttals, and 49.3% in the conclusion element. This finding showed that participants' success with the grounds for rebuttals, the counterclaim and backing for the counterclaim, and the conclusion elements was not at a sufficient level. On the one hand, more than half of the participants constructed the elements of the topic, claim, and reasons for supporting the claim at good and excellent levels. On the other hand, more than half of the participants showed insufficient and acceptable levels of success in constructing the elements of counterclaim and backing for the counterclaim, grounds for rebuttals, and conclusion. It demonstrated that a significant number of the participants were more successful in the elements of topic, claim, and reasons for supporting the claim in their argumentative texts than other elements. Moreover, it was noteworthy that the number of participants who had an insufficient level of success in the counterclaim and grounds for rebuttals elements was quite high.

The findings of this study illustrated that the success rate of pre-service Turkish language teachers in constructing the topic (ground) element in their argumentative texts was 75.2%. Such a finding did not coincide with the existing research in the literature. In Coşkun and Tiryaki (2013b), the university students' success rate of constructing the topic element was 34%, and it was 16.3% in Tiryaki (2011) and 28.33% in Öztürk (2016). The difference between the research in the literature and the current study in terms of the topic element can be explained by the difference in the study group and the selection of topic. In this study, unlike other comparative studies, we focused only on the pre-service Turkish language teachers. Argumentative writing topics selected to collect our research data can also account for this difference. In this research, the participants were offered several writing topics, and they were also given the option to choose the topics of their own interests. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982) stated that when self-selection of the topic was an option for students, they placed less demand on their cognitive processing capabilities, as they chose the topics that were most familiar to them. Gradwohl and Schumacher (1989) found that students had significantly more knowledge on topics they wanted to write about than on the teacher-assigned topics. Bonyadi (2014) found a significant difference in the performance of the students who wrote on their self-selected topics and for those who wrote on a teacher-assigned topic.

One of the most successfully constructed elements by the participants was the claim element, with a rate of 72.6%. While this finding was similar to Coşkun and Tiryaki's (2013b) and Öztürk's (2016) studies, it did not coincide with the conclusions of Tiryaki (2011). On the other hand, we also observed that the success rate decreased slightly in the element of reasons for supporting the claim (65.6%). The findings indicated that Turkish teacher candidates could generally introduce a claim in their argumentative writing, but they had various difficulties in providing reasons to support their claims. However, claims must be considered together with reasons for supporting these claims in argumentative texts (Demirel, 2021). According to Aldağ (2005), the source of the issue about

presenting reasons to support the asserted claim may be that the writers find it unnecessary to show evidence. Besides, the participants' competence in text organization may also affect this finding. Limpo and Alves' (2018) research on argumentative writing revealed that organization led to an increase in the use of argumentative text elements and the plausibility and overall quality of the texts.

One of the most prominent findings was that the participants' success rate in creating the elements of counterclaims and backing for the counterclaim and grounds for rebuttals was quite low. These two elements were among the ones in which Turkish teacher candidates had the most difficulty. Knudson (1992) asserted that the writers essentially created a counterclaim in their minds when expressing their claims, but they often failed to write it out. Perkins et al. (1991) stated that students generally did not produce counterclaims. However, when the writer introduced a counterclaim and provided grounds for rebuttals, it increased the persuasiveness of students' argumentative writing (Kuhn, 1991; Nussbaum & Schraw, 2007; Walton, 2007; Stanovich & West, 2008). Participants generally did not set forth a counterclaim with their reasons to support it and attempt to refute the claims in their argumentative writing. This finding was not particularly surprising when we surveyed the literature. Various studies revealed that students had difficulty in creating a counterclaim (Nussbaum & Schraw, 2007; Tiryaki, 2011; Qin & Karabacak, 2013; Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2013b, Öztürk, 2016).

Another finding in the current study was that participants' success rate in cronstructing the conclusion element was 49.3%. This result showed that the participants were not successful at the desired level in terms of constructing the conclusion element. The findings of this study were similar to the studies by Öztürk (2016), who found out that university students' average success in the conclusion element was 38.66%, and Tiryaki (2011), whose findings put forward a success rate of 59.2%. However, in Coşkun and Tiryaki's (2013b) study conducted with university students, they found that the success rate of the participants in constructing the conclusion element was 65.2%. The participants' success rate was not at the desired level, which may be related to the lack of use of summarization strategies in the construction of the conclusion element. However, the conclusion element is generally the summary of the text in successful argumentative writing (MEB, 2012). On the other hand, the fact that the students failed to remain engaged with their thoughts in an organized manner throughout the text may account for their inability to conclude their discussion (Tiryaki, 2011).

Since writing is a complex skill (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001), many factors need to be addressed for the problems participants experience in argumentative text elements. The first of these may be the difficulty of writing argumentative text. Argumentative writing is an area of great difficulty for students (Gleason, 1999). Writing an argumentative essay is considered a major challenge for university students, and many students struggle with serious problems when writing argumentative texts (Dang et al., 2020). According to Akyol (2006), it is a complex process for a writer to put forward their claim on a topic with reasons, attempt to refute a counterclaim, and reach a conclusion by synthesizing all these elements. Argumentative writing is one of the most difficult writing genres to learn because it inherently requires processing information deeply and constructing relationships among ideas (Razaghi & Zamanian, 2014). Argumentative writing is thought to be difficult because it is more cognitively demanding than narrative writing (Crowhurst, 1990). On the other hand, another factor underlying the problems can be students' attitude towards and perception of writing. The reason is that attitude towards writing (Baştuğ, 2015) and perception of writing (Akar, 2008; Pajares & Valiante, 1997; Pajares, 2003) can affect writing performance. In the interviews, the fact that some of the teacher candidates stated that they did not like writing while some partly enjoyed it can explain the reason for the problems encountered in writing. Attitude towards writing is a significant predictor of writing success (Ulu, 2018).

One of the reasons for the insufficient rate of participant success in constructing argumentative text elements may be the low level of awareness about argumentative text structure. It is mostly because schema knowledge about text structure contributes to genre awareness, which, in return, is reflected in the process of producing a text (Bozkurt, 2019). The interviews revealed that almost half

of the participants did not recognize the claim and counterclaim elements, while most of them did not identify other argumentative text elements. Gathering from these findings, we argued that the participants did not have a sufficient level of awareness about argumentative text elements. Knowing the superstructure of a genre with which a writer engages makes it easier to master the qualities of the text and the characteristics of the elements that make up the text (Çakmak, 2013). Thus, having schemes to establish text elements while creating a text enables the writer to present the text in an organized manner (Coşkun & Tiryaki, 2013a). There is various evidence that knowing the structure of the text has an impact on writing performance (Taylor & Beach, 1984; Armbruster et al., 1987; Englert et al., 1988; Raphael et al., 1988; Çakmak, 2013; Yaylacık, 2015; Rona, 2017).

Writing skill development takes a long time (Çakır, 2010), which suggests that one of the factors causing the participants to encounter problems in creating argumentative text elements may be related to their past learning experiences. The interviews showed that a significant number of the interviewees had not received training on argumentative writing, while some participants (n=10) stated that they only did at the university level. On the other hand, almost half of the participants had the experience of writing argumentative texts, while the other half did not practice any argumentative writing, including their university education. It was a prominent finding that most participants with experience in argumentative writing had this experience at the university level. According to the findings of the interviews, there were almost no participants who had experience in writing argumentative texts in primary and high schools. Based on these findings, we can conclude that primary and high school education has not been efficient for participants' training on argumentative writing and their practice of writing, and university education relatively stands out in regard to developing knowledge and skills. On the other hand, the quality of training at the university was also negotiable. Many studies focusing on the problems of pre-service Turkish language teachers at the universities in relation to writing revealed this current situation (Arıcı, 2008; Bağcı, 2007; Baki ve Karakuş, 2017; Çamurcu, 2011; Kardaş, 2015; Lüle Mert, 2015; Yıldız ve Ceran, 2017).

One of the issues that attracted attention was the participants' views of wrong teaching practices (f=13). The participants emphasized that what they practiced as "composition" writing did not provide them any benefit and this method was mostly implemented to grade them. This opinion was common among the participants in the Turkish context and also well reflected in the literature. For example, Özdemir (2019) stated that the practice of so-called composition writing which has been a common pedagogical understanding in our country as a form of illustrating the aphorisms and proverbs was an ill-guided form of a product-based approach. Çifçi (2006) also pointed out that this so-called "composition" writing practiced in schools was a result of wrong teaching practices in writing education. Similarly, Göçer (2010) expressed that writing education in schools was mostly implemented with a traditional approach, and students were asked to explain the given aphorisms and proverbs in their writing exercises, and a vast majority of these texts were not assessed. These wrong teaching practices, which go against the genre-oriented perspective and standardize writing skill, may play an important role in the participants' failure to construct argumentative text elements at a sufficient level. In addition, some participants also underlined negative teacher behavior to which they were exposed during their past education. Daly (1977) stated that teachers' negative reactions in students' past lives caused them to develop writing anxiety. Smith (1984) argued that such teacher practices as marking all mistakes on students' texts and convincing students that they were poor writers could increase their writing anxiety. One can argue that increasing writing anxiety would negatively affect writing success. Various studies supported this claim revealing that writing anxiety negatively affects writing performance (Demirel, 2019; Faigley et al., 1981).

Considering the abovementioned quantitative and qualitative findings, we asserted that the undergraduate program of Turkish Language Teaching, implemented in 2018 by the Higher Education Council (YÖK) and enforced at all universities in Turkey, was not sufficiently effective in training the pre-service Turkish language teachers for their argumentative writing skills. It was quite suggestive that the pre-service teachers who would be responsible for teaching argumentative writing in schools had an undesirable level of writing competencies themselves. Teachers' poor argumentation skills may cause them to provide a low-quality education on argumentation (Lytzerinou & Iordanou, 2020). Pre-

service teachers who will guide students in their writing must improve their writing skill to teach writing. To this end, it is important to develop writing skills from an early age. In this regard, schools and teachers are well-advised to adopt the process-genre approach in writing education and focus on genre-specific writing, text production processes, and writing strategies. Furthermore, in teacher training institutions, applied courses and workshops can be included in order for teacher candidates to gain experience in writing in different genres.

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Appendix 1. Rubric for Evaluating Argumentative Text Elements (English Version)

Text Elements	Levels/Characteristics				Score
	(4) Excellent	(3) Good	(2) Acceptable	(1) Insufficient	
TOPIC (Ground)	*Detailed information about the topic/problem has been provided. The information has been presented in a clear and orderly manner.*	*Brief and general information about the topic/problem has been provided. The information has been presented in a clear and orderly manner.*	*Brief and general information about the topic/problem has been provided. However, the information has not been presented in a clear and orderly manner.*	*No information has been provided about the topic/problem.*	
CLAIM	*There is a claim about the topic of discussion. This claim is expressed in a strong and assertive language* that shows the writer's stand for the topic of discussion.*	*There is a claim about the topic of discussion. This claim shows the writer's stand for the topic of discussion. However, there is no use of a strong and assertive language.*	*There are opposite premises about the topic of discussion. However, these do not indicate the position that the writer advocates.*	*No claims have been put forward by the writer about the discussion.*	
	*Note: In order to use a strong and assertive language, the modalities such as "must" and "necessitatives," words that indicate validity and certainty, and expressions that indicate truth value must be used (for example, "Handwriting must be abandoned").				
REASONS FOR SUPPORTING THE CLAIM	*The claim is supported by reason(s), and these reasons are described in a detailed manner.*	*The claim is supported by reason(s), but these reasons are not detailed.*	*The reason(s) for supporting the claim have been introduced, but there is no elaboration.*	*No grounds for supporting the claim have been introduced.*	
	Note: One must resort to the ways of developing thinking in elaboration: "Explanation, exemplification, identification, comparison, analogy, giving evidence, utilization of numerical data, etc."				
COUNTER CLAIM AND REASONS FOR SUPPORTING THE CLAIM	*The author explains the counterclaim and the reasons for backing for the counterclaim overtly and in detail.*	*The author explains the counterclaim and the reasons for backing for the counterclaim overtly but at a superficial level.*	*The writer overtly introduces a counterclaim but failed to mention the reasons for backing for the counterclaim.*	*The writer introduces no counterclaim and reasons for backing for the counterclaim.*	
GROUNDS FOR REBUTTALS	*The counterclaim is refuted by reason(s), and these reasons are detailed.*	*The counterclaim is refuted by reason(s), but these reasons are not detailed.*	*The counterclaim is refuted by reason(s), but these reasons are not elaborated in any way.*	*No grounds for refuting the counterclaim have been introduced.*	
CONCLUSION	*The claim is repeated, the claim and counterclaim are summarized, and the text comes to a clear and consistent conclusion.*	*The claim is repeated, the claim or counterclaim are summarized, and the text comes to a clear and consistent conclusion.*	*The text comes to a brief and consistent conclusion.*	*The discussion does not lead to any conclusion.*	

Rating Scale	
Level	The range of scores
Insufficient	6-10 points
Acceptable	11-15 points
Good	16-20 points
Excellent	21-24 points

Appendix 2. Rubric for Evaluating Argumentative Text Elements (Turkish Version)

Metin Birimleri	Düzeyler/Özellikler				Puan
	(4) Mükemmel	(3) İyi	(2) Kabul Edilebilir	(1) Yetersiz	
KONU (ZEMİN)	Konu/problem durumuyla ilgili ayrıntılı bilgi verilmiştir. Bu bilgiler, açık ve düzenli bir biçimde sunulmuştur.	Konu/problem durumuyla ilgili kısa ve genel bilgi verilmiştir. Bu bilgiler, açık ve düzenli bir biçimde sunulmuştur.	Konu/problem durumuyla ilgili kısa ve genel bilgi verilmiştir. Ancak bu bilgiler, açık ve düzenli bir biçimde sunulmamıştır.	Konu/problem durumuna yer verilmemiştir.	
İDDİA	Tartışma konusuyla ilgili bir iddia vardır. Bu iddia, yazarın tartışma konusunun hangi tarafında olduğunu gösteren güçlü ve iddialı bir dille* ifade edilmiştir.	Tartışma konusuyla ilgili bir iddia vardır. Bu iddia, yazarın tartışma konusunun hangi tarafında olduğunu göstermektedir. Ancak güçlü ve iddialı bir dil kullanılmamıştır.	Tartışma konusuyla ilgili birbirine zıt önermeler vardır. Ancak bunlar, yazarın savunduğu tarafı göstermemektedir.	Yazar tarafından tartışmayla ilgili herhangi bir iddia öne sürülmemiştir.	
	*Not: Güçlü ve iddialı bir dil kullanmak için "zorunluluk, gereklilik" kiplikleri, haklılık ve kesinlik bildiren sözcükler, doğruluk belirten ifadeler kullanılmalıdır. (Örneğin: "El yazısı mutlaka kaldırılmalıdır.")				
İDDİAYI DESTEKLEME GEREKÇESİ	İddia, gerekçe/lerle desteklenmiş ve bunlar ayrıntılı* bir biçimde açıklanmıştır.	İddia, gerekçe/lerle desteklenmiş ancak bunlar ayrıntılı bir biçimde açıklanmamıştır.	İddianın, gerekçe/leri ifade edilmiş ancak bununla ilgili herhangi bir açıklama yapılmamıştır.	İddiayı desteklemek için herhangi bir gerekçe sunulmamıştır.	
	*Not: Ayrıntılandırmada düşünceyi geliştirme yollarına başvurulmalıdır: *"Açıklama, örnekleme, tanımlama, karşılaştırma, benzetme, tanık gösterme, sayısal verilerden yararlanma vb."*				
KARŞI İDDİA ve SAVUNULMA NEDENLERİ	Yazar, karşı olduğu iddiayı ve karşı iddianın savunulma nedenlerini açık ve ayrıntılı bir biçimde dile getirmiştir.	Yazar, karşı olduğu iddiayı ve karşı iddianın savunulma nedenlerini açık ancak yüzeysel bir biçimde dile getirmiştir.	Yazar, karşı olduğu iddiayı açık bir biçimde belirtmiş ancak karşı iddianın savunulma nedenlerini dile getirmemiştir.	Yazar karşı olduğu iddiayı ve karşı iddianın savunulma nedenlerini dile getirmemiştir.	
ÇÜRÜTME GEREKÇESİ	Karşı iddia, gerekçe/lerle çürütülmüş ve bunlar ayrıntılı bir biçimde açıklanmıştır.	Karşı iddia, gerekçe/lerle çürütülmüş fakat bunlar ayrıntılı bir biçimde açıklanmamıştır.	Karşı iddia, gerekçe/lerle çürütülmüş ancak bunlar herhangi bir biçimde açıklanmamıştır.	Karşı iddiayı çürütmek için herhangi bir gerekçe sunulmamıştır.	
SONUÇ	İddia tekrarlanmış, iddia ve karşı iddia özetlenmiş ve metin açık ve tutarlı bir sonuca bağlanmıştır.	İddia tekrarlanmış, iddia veya karşı iddia özetlenmiş ve metin açık ve tutarlı bir sonuca bağlanmıştır.	Metin kısa ve tutarlı bir sonuca bağlanmıştır.	Tartışma, herhangi bir sonuca bağlanmamıştır.	

PUANLAMA TABLOSU	
Düzey	Puan Aralığı
Yetersiz	6-10 puan
Kabul Edilebilir	11-15 puan
İyi	16-20 puan
Mükemmel	21-24 puan