Exploring Students' Developing Perception of Writing in an EAP Program of an English-Medium University in Turkey

Meryem Özdemir-Yılmazer
Eötvös Loránd University
Çukurova University

ABSTRACT

For non-native students majoring in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) departments, it is essential to have academic language proficiency, particularly academic writing proficiency, to successfully manage their studies. In Turkey, English-medium universities offer one-year pre-university English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs to the students to prepare them for their English-medium studies. While there has been a growing interest in the of the EMI students' academic writing needs in recent years, far less attention has been paid to the students' developing perception of L2 writing prior to their EMI studies. Therefore, this longitudinal case study, framed within the Academic Literacies Approach, aims to investigate the changes in the prospective EMI students' perception of writing over their one-year study at the preparatory EAP writing program. The data were obtained from writing background questionnaire and students' written narratives. As a result of the qualitative analysis, the findings demonstrate that the skill-based EAP writing pedagogy, framed by the limited writing background of the students, fails to help the students develop a sense of academic literacy that can facilitate their future EMI studies. The study offers some implications for improving EAP writing pedagogy in EMI university settings to help students succeed as academic writers.

INTRODUCTION

Learning to write in English in the university context has recently received considerable attention mainly because of the increasing demand of students for education in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) departments as a result of the status of English as an international language of research and scholarly communication (Hyland, 2013; Macaro, 2020). Such attention has led to a growing number of studies investigating the effectiveness of various instructional approaches in pre-university or across-the-curriculum writing courses, and the possibility of transfer of writing skills from these courses to the academic contexts of the students' major fields (Harklau, 2001; Leki & Carson, 1997; James, 2008). In addition, based on the socio-cultural theories of learning, there has been a growing interest in the complexity of academic writing which includes an interest in issues concerning the students and the context in which they learn to write (Morton, Storch & Thompson, 2015).

In EMI university contexts, where content is taught in a language other than the native language of the students, writing in English is central to the non-native students' academic lives as they are often expected to demonstrate understanding of their course content over their written work. Therefore, attaining fluency in English academic writing is fundamental for those students to understand their disciplines and to successfully navigate their learning of the disciplinary subject (Hyland, 2013; Kuiken & Vedder, 2021). Given that university-level writing is different from the writing practices outside the academy requiring students to get familiar with certain rhetorical and discourse features of written academic English (Hinkel, 2015), learning to write at the university is a new and cognitively demanding experience for many students (Harklau, 2001). Although there is a growing interest in how multilingual undergraduate students learn academic writing at the universities in the countries where the majority speaks English (Leki, 2007; Pomerantz & Kearney, 2012; Morton et al., 2015), few studies have investigated the perception of students related to "good writing" in EAP settings of the pre-university preparation programs of EMI universities.

In Turkey, the students who have obtained the necessary score on the national university entrance exam are accepted to study in EMI departments at various public and private universities across the country. That is, a student with a low proficiency of English can be qualified to study EMI based on his/her scores on the university entrance exam, and this is not a rare situation due to the inadequate implementation of the English language curriculum at secondary schools (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019). Therefore, to address the linguistic challenges of the students and prepare them for their English-medium studies, the universities offer one-year preparatory program unless students prove a certain level of English language proficiency in a preliminary proficiency test or submit an equivalent score from other national or international examinations determined by the universities (Kamaşak, Sahan & Rose, 2021; Selvi, 2014). The primary task of the program is to provide English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curriculum to the students to equip them with academic language skills to be transferred to the disciplinary contexts of their English-medium undergraduate programs (Kırkgöz, 2009). Considering the increasing importance of writing for the academic survival of non-native students in EMI contexts, the role of preparatory programs is even more crucial as most of the students from various educational backgrounds learn academic writing in English at the university level for the first time.

The research on the quality of preparatory EAP writing courses in preparing students for the academic writing requirements in different settings have revealed a discrepancy between what is valued in writing classes and what is valued in writing for disciplinary courses. They argue that the academic writing needs of the academically-bound students are not sufficiently addressed in EAP writing courses (Grabe, 2001; Kırkgöz, 2009; Leki, 2007; Leki and Carson, 1997; Harklau, 2008; Hinkel, 2015). A similar concern is relevant to the preparatory EAP programs in Turkey, where the effectiveness of writing instruction has recently been questioned as a result of the academic writing-related challenges of students studying at EMI departments. Kamaşak et al. (2021), for example, highlighted that writing is one of the most challenging areas of EMI study for students even after they completed and met the requirements of the preparatory program, which led them to raise questions about the effectiveness of preparatory programs in addressing the students' academic needs. In another study, based on the perception of undergraduate students and lecturers at an EMI university in Turkey, Kırkgöz (2009) revealed a disconnection between the reading and writing requirements of disciplinary courses and what the preparatory EAP programs taught the students. In addition, Altınmakas and Bayyurt (2019) explored the factors influencing the writing practices of EMI undergraduate students and uncovered multiple interrelated educational and contextual factors that influenced undergraduate students' academic writing

practices. In particular to the writing instruction at preparatory programs, the first encounter with explicit and systematic writing instruction for most of the students in the study, Altınmakas and Bayyurt (2019) implied insufficient focus of the program on the academic writing skills that are required by the students' respective academic disciplines.

A large body of research has documented the perspective of the undergraduate EMI students and lecturers at EMI departments concluding that the preparatory EAP writing courses are insufficient for students' future academic needs (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019; Ekoç, 2020; Grabe, 2001; Kamaşak et al., 2021; Kırkgöz, 2009).; however, far less attention has been paid to the students' developing perception of L2 writing at preparatory programs. This study bases on the premise that learning to write is a socially-situated activity involving the acquisition of a set of local practices by participating in personal discourse communities (Casanave, 2002; Ivanic, 1998). It argues that the problems in student writing in EMI departments might result from the gaps between students' interpretations of what is involved in writing and the staff's understanding of writing at EMI departments (Lea & Street, 1998; Lea, 2004). Given that preparatory program is the first place where explicit L2 writing instruction is provided to the academically-bound students in Turkey, it is important to understand their developing perception of writing during their EAP training before they embark on EMI studies. This study aims to explore how prospective EMI students perceive "good writing" at the university level as they engage in the process of learning to write in the preparatory EAP program by placing their emic perspectives at the core of the inquiry. The research question addressed in this study is:

How do the prospective EMI students' perceptions of "good writing" develop as they engage in the process of learning to write in the preparatory EAP program?

Theoretical Framework: Academic Literacies Approach

This study adopts academic literacies approach (Lea & Street, 1998) as the conceptual framework to understand and interpret prospective EMI students' meaning-making about what is involved in writing as they learn L2 writing for academic purposes at the preparatory EAP program. The academic literacies approach, building upon social constructive theories, assumes that the process of learning academic writing is "complex, dynamic, nuanced, situated, and involving both epistemological issues and social processes, including power relations among people, institutions, and social identities" (Lea & Street, 2006, p. 369). In contrast to the prevailing orientations towards deficit models of writing, academic literacies approach views writing as a social practice by foregrounding the socioculturally embedded nature of writing activity (Lea & Street, 2006; Lillis & Scott, 2015).

As Coffin et al. (2003) pointed out, writing at the university can be understood as a social practice for the following reasons: First, student writing is embedded within the relationships around teaching and learning and these relationships have an impact on, among other factors, the extent to which students succeed in writing in higher education. Second, academic writing conventions are social "to the extent that these have developed within specific academic and disciplinary communities over time" (Coffin et al., 2003, p.10). Third, student writing is a social practice in the sense that the process of learning to write at the university involves not only learning to communicate in particular ways but also creating a new identity as a writer (Hyland, 2002; Ivanic, 1998).

From the perspective of writing as a social practice, the academic literacy demands of the particular institutional contexts shape the conceptions of student-writers on academic writing and

their identities. This emphasis on the social meanings and identities is opposed to the study skills approach which views academic writing as a technical skill transferable to the disciplinary contexts. In this sense, as Lea and Street (1998) contend, academic literacy practices focus on "the requirement to switch practices between one setting and another, to deploy a repertoire of linguistic practices appropriate to each setting, and to handle the social meanings and identities that each evokes" (p. 159). Within the EAP context of the preparation programs, students' academic writing perception and identities are first constructed fitting in the expectations of language teachers, which might conflict with the complexity of the disciplinary requirement of academic writing, and the expectations of the subject tutors at the EMI departments (Wingate & Tribble, 2012). Therefore, in such pre-university EAP contexts, understanding students' meaning-making about what is involved in writing is critical to recognize the problems caused by the gaps between students' interpretation of what is involved in writing and the disciplinary requirements (Lee & Street, 1998; Wingate & Tribble, 2012), which is the primary focus of this study.

METHODOLOGY

Context of the study

This study was carried out in one of the preparatory programs at a public university in Turkey, which implements EMI instruction in eight degree programs: Computer Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical-Electronical Engineering, Economy, Econometrics, Business Administration, and Political Science and International Relations. Unless the students of those departments pass the institutional proficiency exam or submit an equivalent score from the national Foreign Language Proficiency Exam (YDS) or international examinations including The Cambridge English C2 Proficiency exam (CPE), Cambridge English: Advanced and the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE), Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-based Test (TOEFL IBT), Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic, they have to attend a one-year preparatory program and pass the proficiency exam at the end of the year to enroll in their programs. At the time of the data collection, the minimum passing score from the institutional proficiency exam was 60 over 100 points (equivalent to B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference), or equivalent scores of 70 from YDS, 84 from TOEFL IBT, B from CAE, and 71 from PTE Academic examinations were required to prove B2 level of English proficiency.

Participants

This paper reports a case study of three prospective EMI students (one female; two male) attending one of the B1 level of English classes at the preparatory program based on their scores on the institutional English Placement Test taken at the beginning of the academic year. The EMI departments that the participants sought to study were the Department of Computer Engineering (two students) and the Department of International Relations (one student). This focal group of three students was purposefully selected based on the criteria that their major field of study would proceed in one of the EMI programs in the context of the study[1], and they gave a formal written

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[1] Most of the students in the classroom are the prospective students of English Language Teaching Department which does not provide EMI in the context of the university under research but has a compulsory preparatory year of study. These students were purposefully excluded.

consent for full participation in the study. Table 1 displays the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

Name*	Gender	Age	EMI Department	L1 Background	English Proficiency**
Bora	Male	18	Department of Computer Engineering	Turkish	B1
Nuri	Male	20	Department of Computer Engineering	Turkish	B1
Berna	Female	18	Department of International Relations	Turkish	B1

*All student names were pseudonyms.
**Based on the scores of the institutional proficiency exam taken at the beginning of the academic year. The framework of references implemented by the program is CEFR.

Methods of Data Collection and Data analysis

The data were collected through a writing background questionnaire and students' written narratives throughout the preparatory year of study. At the beginning of the data collection procedure, the students were asked to fill in an open-ended writing background questionnaire adjusted from the "Seeing Yourself as a Writer" exercise developed by Fernsten and Reda (2011). The questionnaire included open-ended questions about students' writing memories and writing history both in their L1 and L2, their successes and not-successes in previous writing experiences, the influences on the way the students write, and truths and lies about students as writers. The primary data source was the narratives written by the students for each writing assignment where they wrote about their experiences of learning to write in another language for academic purposes. To collect written narratives, the teacher/researcher asked students to write about their feelings, experiences, and challenges while developing their first draft of each writing assignments and their favorite sentence in the written piece and reason for that choice in a short paragraph. For the second draft of texts, the students were asked to narrate their experiences again. They were also asked to include their response to getting feedback from the teacher, their experiences of revising the first draft, and how far they felt that they could revise the text to improve it. The narratives were submitted attached to the writing assignments and they were collected throughout the preparatory EAP writing program during the 2019-2020 Academic Year.

The qualitative data were digitally recorded, transcribed, translated, and analyzed by the researcher and two external reviewers to refine key themes and subthemes related to the L2 writing perceptions of the students by adopting a similar approach of qualitative data analysis conducted by Leki (2007), Pomerantz and Kearney (2012) and Morton et al. (2015). The writing assignments submitted by the students, the drafts sent back by the teacher, the writing tasks and materials included in the institutional writing curriculum were also reviewed for triangulation purposes.

Overview of the EAP Writing Instruction

Within the context of the preparatory program under study, similar to the many of the other programs in Turkey, the writing curriculum and the course plans (syllabus) for each proficiency

level of classes are designed by the institutional Curriculum and Material Development Unit that is formed by language instructors working at the program. The students participating in this study had a B1 level of proficiency according to the institutional proficiency exam taken at the beginning of the academic year. However, it is generally presumed that their writing experience in English is insufficient compared to the B1 level since most students in their final years of high school prepare themselves for the university entrance exam that excludes writing assessment. Therefore, the writing instruction has traditionally been designed in a bottom-up way, starting with sentence-level writing, paragraph writing, and essay writing.

The writing instruction of the program can be described as focus-on-text-features, which involves teaching the communicative functions of the particular texts (Hyland, 2019). In this sense, the focus of the curriculum was on helping students write topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, and transitions to produce various types of paragraphs, which were later organized into different types of essays following the pattern of Introduction-Body-Conclusion (Hyland, 2019). An overview of the writing curriculum implemented at the time of the data collection process of this study is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. An Overview of the EAP Writing Curriculum

Content	Task/s
Introduction to Paragraph Structure	Write topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences for the gaps in the given paragraphs
Opinion Paragraph	Write an opinion paragraph about one of the topics given below: - Public transport is beneficial for people. - Working part-time as a college student provides many benefits.
Comparison or Contrast Paragraph	Write a comparison or contrast paragraph about one of the topics below. - Two computer games you play - Two ways of learning a language
Cause and/or Effect Paragraph	Write a cause and/or effect paragraph about one of the topics below. - Causes and/or effects the increase in the number of people who shop online - Causes and/or effects traffic accidents
Introduction to Essay Structure	- For the following thesis statements, write topic sentences for supporting body paragraphs. - Read the following thesis statements. Circle the best concluding sentence.
Opinion Essay	Write an opinion essay on the following topic in max. 250 words.

Argumentative Essay	-"Cosmetic surgery should not be legal for teenagers under 18." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write an argumentative essay discussing whether public works of art are a waste of money in in max. 300 words.

In practice, there were four hours of writing courses each week, and each writing content was planned to be covered in approximately two weeks (eight hours). At the time of the study, a commercially-available integrated academic reading and writing skill textbook was used as well as several extra writing materials. For each text type, the students were provided with a model text on which they focused on relevant vocabularies, transitions words, and particular formulas of writing sentences. After working on each text type, the students were asked to produce the first draft of the text on which they got feedback from the teacher. Having revised the first draft according to the feedback, the students submitted the second draft. The write and revise cycle was practiced once for each text type unless there were serious mistakes on the second draft. The writing skill of the students was progressively evaluated through pop-quizzes, achievement and final exams all through the academic year and by a proficiency examination at the end of the year. In all of those examinations, the students were asked to write one or two texts on given topics by paying attention to the type of text being asked and the pre-determined word limits. Individual raters assessed students' texts holistically on four primary dimensions: content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary.

FINDINGS

Case Studies of Three Students

Bora: Concerned with correct use of grammar

On the writing background questionnaire, Bora reported that his experience with L1 writing is limited with writing compositions due to the requirements of Turkish language courses at the secondary school. Regarding L2 writing, he reported only once writing a summary of a short story as an assignment at the high school. Being an inexperienced writer both in L1 and L2, Bora also explained his negative attitudes towards writing in his narrative reports. He defined writing as a hard and stressful practice and stated that he had no self-confidence in writing. It was not common for him to write unless it was made compulsory by course or assessment requirements. He reported:

> *I hesitate to write; I have no confidence in myself. Writing is daunting because you have to think constantly, you have to connect things to other things and remove the ambiguity, which is quite difficult for me.* (Narrative Report #2)

Although Bora had a good command of spoken English, and was successful at listening and reading comprehension, he was frequently concerned with his control over grammar in his writing assignments and repeatedly told this in almost all of his written narratives. He felt insecure about using the correct grammar to convey his ideas properly, which frequently caused him to miss the overall consistency between ideas in his compositions. In one of his narrative reports, he stated:

I was a little stressed out while writing this assignment (writing an opinion paragraph) because the grammar thing is killing me. I wondered a lot if I could make out the meaning I wanted. So I wasted a lot of time thinking about sentences. Sometimes I felt like I fell into a void because I thought I couldn't write more. Writing generally scares me because I feel that I am not very good at it. (Narrative Report #4)

As Bora progressed through the writing curriculum, he had gained confidence in writing and stated his positive feelings when he received fewer corrections over his grammar mistakes by the teacher on the first draft of assignments. For instance, he stated his joy of getting less corrections on one of his assignments in the following excerpt:

The fact that my mistakes were few in the assignment made me very happy, I corrected them with great pride, of course, it is necessary to carry on, and show the same performance on the exams. (Narrative Report #6)

The central theme identified in his narratives was his constant focus on writing with fewer grammar mistakes on the writing tasks in the achievement and final examinations. Based on his narrative accounts throughout the year, it was observed that Bora perceived the writing courses as a site allowing him to practice his developing grammar knowledge, and he extensively focused on form, which uncovered his perception of good writing as composing sentences with few grammar mistakes.

Nuri: Familiarity of topics matter.

Nuri stated his insufficient experience with both L1 and L2 writing at the beginning of the writing courses at the preparatory program. His L1 and L2 writing practices included writing for the composition sections on the examinations of Turkish language courses at the secondary school, writing short compositions for the writing sections on the English coursebooks, and writing short texts in English such as narrating a holiday memory at the high school. He indicated that he avoided writing and did not prefer writing as long as he did not have to. Despite not being perceived as a challenge, writing was considered a tedious practice by Nuri. He associated writing with "homework" and explained this association by expressing that "you do not want to do both unless you are required to do."

Nuri explained that he felt more relaxed while writing on a topic related to his personal experiences since it was "less painful" for him to find supporting ideas. For example, he stated he felt less stressed while writing about a comparison paragraph between two computer games or developing ideas related to his personal experiences, such as commuting by public transportation. As the writing curriculum moved towards writing essays, not the essay format, but unfamiliar topics, such as public works of art or cosmetic surgery operations, become more challenging for Nuri. He frequently expressed his difficulty in coming up with ideas on topics that are unfamiliar to him. He expressed his difficulty with the argumentative essay, pointing out that "the topic was hard, I could write that much if I had written in Turkish".

In addition, he included sentences describing some pseudo statistical data from credible sources such as American Public Transportation Organization or Turkish Statistical Institute to support his ideas in his texts. He maintained this practice as he indicated these sentences as his

favorite sentences in most of his narratives. It was observed that Nuri followed the instruction in writing courses on using statistical data to support the main ideas in compositions. However, he did not bother himself to search for accurate data and he did not consider the use of pseudo statistical data as malpractice. Nuri explained that he just liked to practice how to support his ideas with numerical data. He stated:

> *It will be the same on the exams; we do not have time to search for statistical data to support our ideas; thus, it is better to make up a data supporting your idea.* (Narrative Report #5)

Overall, Nuri found the systematic L2 writing practice helpful in improving his writing ability and self-confidence as a writer. For Nuri, the most challenging part of composing in English was coming up with ideas on unfamiliar topics. In addition, it was observed that Nuri perceived the writing courses as a preparation for the exams and considered that the information composition content carried did not need to be accurate as the primary task was practicing correct grammar within the structure of the text type under focus.

Berna: Writing about each text type is a new experience

As a prospective student of the Department of International Relations, Berna was a graduate of the high school section which puts equal weights on social and scientific courses. In the writing background questionnaire, she reported that she had the experience of composition writing in Turkish for competitions in primary and high school, and her composition was selected among the first three compositions to be exhibited on the school's literature board at high school. Although she had limited writing experience in L2, including only the writing for writing sections of English coursebooks, her previous success story in L1 writing allowed her to hold a positive attitude towards L2 writing, which is explicit in her following excerpt: "I think writing is not difficult, I feel that I only need time to improve my writing in English." She emphasized the process to learn about L2 writing by resembling writing to exploring new places, during which she could search and learn about a variety of new things.

Her positive attitude was also evident in her narrative accounts as she practiced writing across the writing curriculum. She was well-aware of the importance of writing for her future studies in the department; thus she believed that she would be more successful in her disciplinary studies as she gained more experience in writing within different text structures. Similar to Bora and Nuri, Berna also shared some of her insecurities and challenges surrounding the text production in the following excerpts:

> *I could not understand all the corrections when I first read the feedback but then I did my best to correct the grammar mistakes and ambiguity in my sentences. I hope I could correct them all in the right way.* (Narrative Report #3)

> *It took me a long time to write this essay as I had a hard time finding supportive ideas on the subject.* (Narrative Report #5)

Despite her occasional struggles with comprehending the correction or finding supporting ideas, her positive attitude allowed her to have a perspective to make meaning of her experiences. She recognized the value of the text types in the EAP curriculum and considered them central to

her EMI curriculum. It was evident in her narrations revolving around her focus on experiencing different types of texts and enriching writing repertoire. She echoed her experiences in the following excerpts:

> *This paragraph is one of the first paragraphs I have written in my university life. I am aware of the fact that I am going to write more texts like this. I hope I will add much more to what I know. In this way, I have enough writing experience for the writing demands at my department and in my business career.* (Narrative Report #1)

> *It was a paragraph that I had just learned and experienced writing for the first time… I am happy to add something new to my writing experience.* (Narrative Report #7)

DISCUSSION

Based on the academic literacies approach, the primary concern of this small-scale case study is to provide a comprehensive account of three preparatory EMI students' developing perception of what means writing at the university and to reveal their experiences of learning to write over the preparatory EAP courses at an EMI university in Turkey. The findings of the study will be discussed in light of the main themes that were found in the case studies.

First, the evidence drawn from the written background questionnaire and students' narratives revealed that the prospective EMI students had inadequate experience in L1 and particularly in L2 writing during their secondary education. This accords with the findings of Altınmakas and Bayyurt (2019) who also revealed that students are not sufficiently prepared for L2 writing by the pre-university education system in Turkey, and therefore, they lack useful knowledge and skills that can be utilized in the university. Due to the intensive preparation for the university entrance exam, the L2 and partially L1 literacy development of the students has been neglected in secondary education, particularly for the students who opted to study Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences in an EMI university (like two prospective computer engineering students, Bora and Nuri, in this study). In fact, the "overly skill-based EAP writing curriculum" (Kırkgöz, 2009, p. 92) provided by the preparatory program is framed by this "deficit" of the students, which was reflected in the curriculum, even designed for relatively higher proficient students (B1) as in this study, by bottom-up writing instruction from sentences to essays, the writing tasks and focus-on-text-features teaching approach relying on the imitation of the model texts.

The writing approach implemented in the writing courses helped the three prospective EMI students with limited L1 and L2 writing backgrounds to develop their composition skills at the end of the preparatory year. However, the narrative accounts of the students revealed that they perceived writing courses as a means of developing linguistic and rhetorical skills by exploring "good writing" as a production of a coherent text on a given topic with correct grammar (Leki & Carson, 1997). Situated within the institutional expectations of the preparatory program, this perception of the students was shaped by multiple factors, including institutional writing approach and overt correction of surface errors by the teacher, which were all informed by high-stakes exam bound context of the program. Consequently, the students perceived writing practice as working towards success on writing section in the achievement, final, and proficiency examinations to qualify for their EMI departments. In this regard, the EAP writing instruction is considered to be

helpful for the students to write sufficient texts on the proficiency examination at the end of the preparatory year. However, it might be argued whether the writing instruction facilitates students' EMI studies by helping them develop academic literacy to meet the literacy demands of disciplinary courses.

In this study, some of the concerns pertaining to the insufficient focus of the preparatory program on the students' academic literacy development were uncovered by the students' narratives. One of them was the students' disregard for the validity of the content as long as they succeed in writing coherently around a thesis statement. As in the case of Nuri, the use of incorrect data to add supporting details to his text was not perceived as academic misconduct as he perceived his writing as a practice of constructing knowledge of which accuracy was not conceived as an important aspect. In addition, in the writing courses, the students dealt with decontextualized writing tasks that were not supported by source texts, research findings, or pre-writing tasks. Although the students reported that they felt less stressed while writing about general topics that they could explain only by their personal experiences (e.g. writing about the differences between two computer games), the decontextualized writing approach might be considered as another factor leading students to care about the content less and value the superficial linguistic features. Considering the academic writing requirements for the content area courses where the accurate and valid content would be the most crucial part of writing, the results of the study show the inadequacy of the preparatory program in developing the academic literacy development of prospective EMI students by missing out the opportunity to engage them with the source texts (Leki & Carson, 1997).

The students had chances to produce texts of various types with different functions throughout the EAP writing curriculum; however, "essay" was seen as the only and privileged genre implemented in the writing curriculum. As in the case of Berna, this "essayist literacy" (Lillis & Tuck, 2016, p.32) approach reinforced her perception of an essay as a discrete and autonomous writing practice that could be transferred to academic writing practices at the departmental courses. In fact, as discussed by Harklau (2001), the value held for essay writing fostered the students' assumptions of its centrality across the university curriculum. As a result, it is not surprising for students to find themselves in vulnerable positions when they encounter unfamiliar writing genres required by their academic disciplines. This also reveals the contradiction between the writing requirements of EMI studies and the students' interpretation of what is valued in their academic writing (Kırkgöz, 2009).

In addition to the criticism of the previous studies towards the EAP writing instruction of preparatory programs in regards to its failure to equip students with the necessary writing knowledge and skills from a retrospective perspective (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019; Ekoç, 2020; Kamaşak et al., 2021; Kırkgöz, 2009), the findings demonstrated that preparatory EAP writing program fails to develop a necessary sense of academic literacies for the prospective EMI students. Therefore, from a prospective perspective, it might be concluded that, as Lea and Street (1998) asserts, the problems that these students face in their EMI departments will be not only the insufficient writing skills but also "the gaps between academic staff expectations and student interpretations of what is involved in student writing" (p.159). As a result of these gaps, it is not surprising for those prospective EMI students to experience identity crisis (Hyland, 2002; Ivanic, 1998) when they encounter different literacy demands of subject tutors at the EMI departments.

Due to the small-scale case study design of the study, its findings may not be extended to the other EAP contexts implemented in other EMI settings in Turkey. However, several implications can be drawn from the students' narratives for other pre-university EAP contexts in

Turkey and other countries where the non-native students' demand for EMI is increasing. First of all, to better prepare prospective EMI students for writing in their academic disciplines, the skill-based writing pedagogy of the preparatory programs should orient towards the academic literacies approach which views learning to write as a social practice entailing learning to communicate in certain ways and forming a new identity as an academic writer (Hyland, 2002; Ivanic, 1998). To accomplish this, EAP teachers and subject tutors at the EMI departments should negotiate their interpretations of what is involved in student writing, and they should collaborate to engage the students with a wide range of genres that might enhance their understanding of communicative and social practices of particular disciplines (Lea & Street, 2006; Morton et al., 2015; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). These collaborative efforts can be supported by professional development programs to raise staff awareness about the recent research-informed pedagogies as well as the needs and priorities of prospective EMI students and students' roles as active participants in the construction of knowledge while producing texts in different genres. In addition, joint efforts between the EAP teachers and the students should be made for the explicit exploration of social practices surrounding academic writing by pre-writing activities in contrast to the limited communication between students and teachers involved in the conventional write and revise cycle. Also, considering the limited L1 and L2 writing experience of students in Turkey, the development of academic literacies of the students should be supported by ongoing across-the-curriculum writing support programs during the four-year undergraduate EMI study of the students (Kuiken & Vedder, 2021). Finally, the emic perspectives of the students through narratives in this study cultivated student-teacher interactions that allowed for insights into the struggles and challenges that the novice student writers lived through their experiences of learning to write and their perspectives surrounding text production in a university-level writing classroom. Such reflective practices can take place in writing classes to build a deeper pedagogical understanding of students and a student-centered approach to the classroom. (Casanave, 2002; Fernsten & Reda, 2011).

CONCLUSION

This paper focused on three prospective EMI students at one of the EMI universities in Turkey and described their perception of what is involved in L2 writing as they were learning to write in L2 over their preparatory EAP training. The analysis of the students' narratives demonstrates that the EAP writing curriculum concentrates on attempts to fix the problems with student writing. Thus, it fails to help prospective EMI students develop a sense of academic literacy to facilitate their transitions to undergraduate EMI studies. In this regard, the paper argues that EAP teachers and EMI policy-makers should offer a research-based EAP pedagogy encouraging students to consider the contexts in which the texts occur. To this end, the universities offering EMI should consider investing more in the EAP research, development of research-informed EAP pedagogies, EAP teacher education, and professional development for EAP practitioners to help prospective EMI students to succeed as academic writers in their studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Meryem Özdemir-Yılmazer *is a visiting lecturer at Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Budapest, Hungary. She holds a PhD in English Language Teaching from Cukurova University, Turkey. Her research interests include teacher education, language teaching, academic literacies, language assessment, and dynamic assessment.*
Email: meryemzdemir@gmail.com