# The Academic Writing Approaches of Turkish Graduate Students of English Language

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**Abstract:** *This study investigates Turkish graduate students' academic writing approaches and processes at English-based departments. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 70 graduate students at English departments from different universities in Turkey. Subjects were only graduate students who have been carrying out or have recently completed their either master or doctoral studies. "The Inventory of Graduate Writing Processes" was used as the quantitative research instrument. Semi–structured interviews were also conducted under certain criteria. The findings displayed that Turkish graduate students have relatively deep writing approach compared to surface level writing and aware of the optimum components of academic writing at the conceptual level. However, they appear to be unsure about the process of academic writing, and need both explicit academic writing course and affective support due to motivational concerns, procrastination, and low self-efficacy.*

**Keywords:** *graduate writing, English writing, academic writing*

## İngiliz Dili Alanında Lisansüstü Düzeydeki Türk Öğrencilerin Akademik Yazma Yaklaşımları

**Öz:** *Bu çalışma, İngilizce eğitim veren bölümlerde, lisansüstü düzeydeki Türk öğrencilerin akademik yazım yaklaşım ve süreçlerini incelemektedir. Çalışmada kullanılan nicel ve nitel veriler, Türkiye'deki farklı üniversitelerin İngilizce bölümlerinde lisansüstü çalışma yapan 70 öğrenciden toplanmış olup, katılımcılar, yüksek lisans ya da doktora eğitimini sürdürüyor ya da henüz bitirmiş öğrencilerden oluşmaktadır. Nicel araştırma aracı olarak "Lisansüstü Yazma Süreçleri Envanteri" kullanılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar uygulanmış, veriler önceden belirlenmiş kıstaslara göre toplanmıştır. Bulgular, öğrencilerin yüzeysel düzeye nazaran kısmen derin yazım yaklaşımlarına sahip olduklarını ve kavramsal düzeyde akademik yazımın beklenen unsurları konusunda farkındalıkları bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Bununla beraber, lisansüstü öğrencilerin akademik yazım süreci konusunda kesin bir bakış açısına ve bilgiye sahip olmadıkları ve dil ve psikolojik alanda birtakım zorluklar yaşadıkları ve gerek akademik yazım öğretimine gerekse psikolojik anlamda kaygı, öteleme, düşük düzeyli kişisel güven gibi nedenlerden motivasyon and eğitim desteğine ihtiyaç duydukları görülmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *lisansüstü düzeyde yazma, İngilizce yazma, akademik yazma*

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### I. Introduction

Academic writing, at tertiary level, is presumed to have not only instructional and evaluative dimension in which students need to be prepared but this solitary activity has also strategical, perceptional and evolving process which makes writing task more complex and questionable. Graduate writing, in particular, within its own conventions and norms, appears to be demanding for novice researchers.

Prior to graduate education, students are generally inducted into a particular discipline through lectures, discussions, readings, and they are most commonly evaluated through their written assignments. However, when these students embark on graduate studies, writing becomes more complex, demanding and challenging. Higher education expects the members of the academia to adopt the ability of actively constructing new knowledge through integrating the existing knowledge. Therefore, writing has been defined in a hierarchical organization, alternating level of focus, coherence and with audience concern. This appears more difficult for students writing in English as a second language owing to their lack of familiarity with the conventions and expectations of academic writing.

Therefore, the present study explores the academic writing approaches and processes of Turkish graduate students. It is important to turn attention to novice writers' approaches by means of a psychometric parameters to define the nature of academic writing and the various roles of variables and factors.

### II. Review of Literature

The term "approach" was originally used to describe university students' personal experiences of learning that give the priority over student rather than instruction (Biggs, 1999). The approach perspective represents a relationship between the learner and learning context with preferences and tendencies to lead to task outcomes. Thus, research into university students has supported a model of writing approaches that elucidates the relationship between the writer and writing task through deep that takes an active position to make a new meaning at a higher conceptual level using some strategies such as revision or knowledge transforming, and surface process continuum which is basically reproductive and involves listing knowledge and creating linear outcome (Biggs, 1988).

Writers, including the ones at the graduate level, carry out their writing tasks through some strategies and tactics on the basis of their approaches and perceptions of writing. The source of appraoches and perceptions basically comes from language proficiency of L1 and L2 writers (Benton, Kraft, Glover, & Plake, 1984), the influence of L1, educational settings and implementations and affective factors.

L2 writing is influenced by the writer's L1 composing during planning, revision and editing phases. Moreover, L2 writers inexperienced in their L1 are likely to encounter similar problems with their native-speaker counterparts when controlling their own writing processes and when they need to develop strategies to overcome certain writing

problems. Nevertheless, their efforts towards revision and editing remain often at the surface level changes, such as mechanics, word choice, and grammar (Zamel, 1982, 1983; Victori, 1999).

L2 writers tend to spend more time to analyze the topic and remain focusing on surface levels of language use. They meanwhile lack clarity, and fail in balanced generalization and exemplification. Research also suggests that L2 writing appears to be less coherent and productive (For detailed studies see Johns, 1997; Chang & Swales, 1999; McCormick & Whittington, 2000; Lavelle & Guarino, 2003; Hinkel, 2004; Rushbrook & Smith, 2007; Evans & Green, 2007; Salager-Meyer, 2008).

Graduate students are required to write more than reporting and summarizing, in other words, they must integrate different perspectives, synthesize diverse arguments and transform into new knowledge without ignoring accuracy, appropriateness, their own identity and audience. To achieve these writing tasks, writers adopt approaches to writing activities through the influence of their own beliefs and intentions. In the domain of tertiary learning, researchers have described students' approaches to learning within the relationship between the writer and the task (Biggs, 1988; Lavelle, 1993, 1997). The basic distinction has been between the deep that seeks the task as a whole and proactive position in making new meaning and using strategies such as reflective, revision and audience concern; and surface writing approach that gears to mostly reproductive and a linear presentation of facts (Biggs, Lai, Tang, Lavelle, 1999; Lavelle & Guarino, 2003; Lavelle & Bushrow, 2007).

In line with psychometric investigations of the writing strategies of university students (Lavelle, 1993; Lavelle & Guarino, 2003), and in consideration of the research carried out with graduate students (Torrence et al., 1994), Lavelle and Bushrow (2007) developed a writing process model based on graduate students' beliefs and writing processes, called the Inventory of Processes in Graduate Writing (IPGW).

Given greater emphasis on depth and breadth, deep and surface factors and intertwined challenges have been investigated (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001; Lavelle & Guarino, 2003; Lavelle & Bushrow, 2007) and research has identified a number of key areas where NNESs experience difficulty in writing at tertiary level, particularly encompassing writing for publication and thesis and dissertation writing (Swales, 1990; Maurenan, 1993; Reid, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999; Tait, 1999; Fletcher, 2002; Okamura 2006; Taillefer, 2007). Karabınar (2014) found out that undergraduate level of students whose majors were English language teaching had deep writing approaches when they wrote in English language. Karabınar's study also attempted to find a potantial gender difference in terms of adopting deep and surface approach to writing, and she concluded that female learners tended to have deep approach in their writing compared to male learners. Apart from this, within the scope of deep and surface learning, Kırkgöz (2013) investigated the approaches to learning and the effective factors to adopt strategic learning and Karabınar (2014) focused on the writing approaches and strategies of tertiary level students by means

of both quantitative and qualitative instruments. Kırkgöz (2013) found out a tendency towards surface learning and highlighted the importance and desire of deep learning. Likewise, Senemoğlu (2011) investigated learning approaches of Turkish and American students at tertiary level. The results of the study revealed that majority of both Turkish and American pre-service teachers mostly have deep and strategic approaches to learning, and deep approach appears to be more prominent in paralel with their education level.

### III. Method

#### A. Subjects

All the participants were enrolled in higher degrees in the same or the approximate disciplines. The rationale behind the selection of participants from the graduate students whose fields of study and the medium of instruction were only English-based departments is that they have advanced English proficiency and have to produce in English. Therefore, their responses could be more reflective and authentic about graduate level writing approaches and processes. Further, the other fundamental reason for the confinement of English departments' graduate students is the fact that many academics from other disciplines seem to write or publish in English by having their texts translated from Turkish into English. The profile of the subjects is shown in Table 1:

**Table 1.** General Profiles of the Subjects

| Department | MA Students | | PhD Students | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | M | F | M | |
| English Language Teaching | 23 | 16 | 4 | 9 | 52 |
| English Language and Literature | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 11 |
| Department of English Linguistics | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Department of Translation and Interpretation | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | | | | | 70 |

#### B. Instruments

Based on the Inventory of Processes in College Composition of Torrance et al.'s (1994), the questionnaire consisted of five factors that are elaborative, low self-efficacy, reflective-revision, spontaneous-impulsive, and procedural, reflecting students' approaches to writing and writing processes at university level, Lavelle and Bushrow (2007) modified the Inventory of Processes in College Composition and they designed the Inventory of Graduate Writing Processes (IPGW) under seven types of factors that illustrate graduate writing of the students with a total of 67 items.

To have a deeper understanding of the participants' writing approaches and processes in line with describing and interpreting their feelings, perceptions and experiences while writing academic texts in their own voice, semi-structured interview was also used as

an another tool. The approximate duration was 30 minutes for each interviewee and before the interview each of them was given a consent form which signified that their participation was voluntary for both text analysis and interview. In the consent form the participants were informed about the details of the interview. The interviews were recorded and transcribed later.

### C. Procedure

The questionnaire was administered online so that distance and time restrictions could be reduced, and participants could respond to the questions most easily with little effort wherever they were. The questionnaire administration was realized by means of e-mailing the link of the website to the graduate students. The reliability of the research was found as α=0.96, thus, the value of reliability displayed that the scale used in the research was reliable.

### IV. RESULTS

### D. Elaborative

Personal engagement in the meaning and writing freely describes elaborative writer. It is categorized within deep approach writing. An abstract and deep personal investment in writing may be related to knowledge transforming from only knowledge translating in advanced academic literacy, therefore, to be able to make students acquire this deep approach to writing can be understood not only from the view of narrative or self-referencing writing.

**Table 2.** Mean Values and Standard Deviations for the Elaborative Factor

| Items | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 45. At times my academic writing has given me deep personal satisfaction. | 4.13 | .83 |
| 4. Writing academic papers makes me feel good. | 3.71 | 1.02 |
| 46. The main reason for writing an academic paper is just to get a good grade on it. | 2.69 | 1.13 |
| 30. Writing assignments in graduate courses are always learning experiences. | 3.97 | .83 |
| 61. Writing an academic paper helps me develop my ideas. | 4.47 | .77 |
| 62. Academic writing is cold and impersonal. | 2.67 | 1.13 |
| 50. Writing an academic paper is like a journey. | 4.04 | .87 |
| 44. Academic writing helps me organize information in my mind. | 4.19 | .70 |
| 58. My intention in writing is just to answer the question. | 2.60 | 1.06 |
| 21. Academic papers usually have little to do with what I do in my career or my life. | 2.30 | 1.27 |
| 40. Writing an academic paper is making a new meaning. | 3.87 | .91 |
| 15. I worry about how much time my paper will take. | 3.51 | 1.20 |

Table 2 shows the personal involvement to writing. Most of the graduate students indicate that writing an academic paper makes them feel relatively good (m=3.71), meanwhile, the perception that academic writing is cold and impersonal takes one of the lowest scores (m=2.67). Most probably, because of this reason, they very often believe that academic writing gives them a deep personal satisfaction (m=4.13). Extension or going beyond the bounds of the assignment in general seem quite valid among the students, therefore the item " My intention in writing is just to answer the question" takes one of the lowest scores(m=2.60). In addition, as the elaborative approach reflects self-referencing, a great number of students appear to believe that writing is for applying new information in personal manner (m=4.47), in other words, graduate students generally highlight creation of new and original information in scientific writing.

Considering the status of the graduate students and seeing the t-test results, master and doctoral students have similar approaches as for the personal involvement to writing, thus, as the relevant table shows there are no significant differences between the master and doctoral students (p<0,05) (See Appendix A).

E. Low Self-Efficacy

Table 3 describes a writing approach based on anxiety and thinking about writing as a challenging task. Writers scoring on this scale high appear to have no adequate writing experience and confidence; therefore, they need special encouragement for achievement.

**Table 3.** Mean Values and Standard Deviations For the Low Self Efficacy Factor

| Items | M | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| 53. I worry so much about my writing that it prevents me from getting started. | 2.97 | 1.26 |
| 63. I need special encouragement to do my best academic writing. | 3.53 | 1.25 |
| 13. I can write a term paper without any help or instruction. | 3.59 | 1.29 |
| 56. I do well on tests requiring essay answers. | 3.76 | 1.02 |
| 32. Having my writing evaluated scares me. | 2.77 | 1.25 |
| 64. I can't revise my writing because I cannot see my own mistakes. | 2.56 | 1.28 |
| 35. I like to work in small groups to discuss ideas or to do revision in writing. | 3.34 | 1.26 |
| 49. I expect good grades on academic papers. | 3.83 | 1.02 |
| 27. I am familiar with the components of a research paper or thesis. | 4.01 | .94 |
| 18. Writing an essay or paper is always a slow process. | 3.83 | .94 |
| 23. Studying grammar and punctuation would greatly improve my writing. | 3.79 | 1.11 |

Though most of the graduate students state that they are familiar with the component of a research paper and thesis (m=4.01), they need some motivational support (m=3.53). Further, they display a high tendency towards procrastination among the emotional blocks, thus the items indicating that they consider writing a slow process have rather a high score (m=3,83) and students delay for getting started to write (m=2.97). A high score for the item "Studying grammar and punctuation greatly improve my writing" suggests a needy writer, thus, many students tend to focus on structural details to be able to write well (m=3.79). In addition to this, more than half of the participants are very close to have a fear of evaluation (m=2.97).

As for the graduate students' approach according to their status, t-test results show significant differences in two items at the level of p<0.05. In the items assessing their performance in the tasks requiring writing tasks (3.62–4.17), master students seem to have less confidence. In line with this, the same group significantly differs from the doctoral students in terms of being familiar with academic writing types and the subcomponents (3.88–4.39).

F. No Revision

Revision describes a deep writing process based on a sophisticated remaking or rebuilding of one's thinking. It meanwhile implies audience awareness that is basically proposed as an important part of scholarly writing. The ideal level of focus is thematic and hierarchical; however, EFL/ ESL writer will probably tend to focus on their products at the sentence level according to their proficiency of use of language.

**Table 4.** Mean Values and Standard Deviations for the No Revision Factor

| Items | M | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| 60. Often my first draft is my finished product. | 2.61 | 1.18 |
| 66. I do not normally expect to make significant changes to my text by revising it. | 3.23 | 1.10 |
| 41. My revision strategy is usually making minor changes, just touching things up. | 3.37 | 1.06 |
| 16. I tend to write a rough draft and then go back repeatedly to revise. | 3.87 | 1.03 |
| 7. Revision is a onetime process at the end. | 2.86 | 1.36 |
| 3. I reexamine and restate my thoughts in the revision process. | 4.21 | .89 |
| 17. Revision is the process of finding the shape of my writing. | 3.83 | .88 |
| 51. I plan, write and revise all at the same time. | 3.11 | 1.26 |
| 29. I never think about how I go about writing. | 2.61 | 1.40 |

Table 4 shows graduate students' revision strategy preferences. More specifically, it proposes that revision as a concept is widely recognized by the students (m=4,21), for

example, the items "I never think about how I go about writing." (m=2.61), and "Often my first draft is my finished product." have the lowest scores (m=2.61). However; as for the notion of knowledge transforming, the role of which in professional writing is acknowledged, revision is not often employed in order to go beyond what is already known (cf. Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). For example, revision preference of the graduate students is confined to be minor (m=3.37) rather than significant changes. Further, the item stating that the writer does not employ revision at significant level appears to have a quite high score (m=3.23).

There appear no significant differences between master and doctoral students who are more experienced and aware writers use similar strategies about revision process. Nonetheless, there seem slight differences in terms of revision strategy use, for example, in the items indicating the first draft is often the finished draft (2.58-2.72), and making minor changes (3.31-3.56), appear higher in doctoral students. In other words, it can be said that as the academic level of the students advances, they might tend to ignore revision in their writing process (See Appendix A).

G. Intuitive

An Intuitive writer tends to be impulsive and writes in an unplanned way. Intuitive factor has to do with the quality of outcome and may be regarded as a predictive of this quality. There is somewhat sensual relationship between the writer and the pace and flow of writing. This strategy is often not found in the undergraduate population (Lavelle & Bushrow, 2003).

**Table 5.** Mean Values and Standard Deviations for the Intuitive Factor

| Items | M | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| 25. I can hear myself while writing. | 3.73 | 1.07 |
| 57. I often think about my paper when I am not writing (e.g. late at night). | 4.03 | .93 |
| 24. I visualise what I am writing about. | 3.96 | .90 |
| 33. I tend to spend a long time thinking about my writing assignment before beginning. | 3.89 | .941 |
| 6. I can hear my voice as I reread papers that I have written. | 3.66 | 1.22 |
| 36. I imagine the reaction that my readers might have to my paper. | 3.83 | .91 |
| 34. When writing a paper, I often get ideas for other papers. | 3.97 | .81 |
| 5. I closely examine the writing assignment before beginning. | 4.20 | .80 |
| 31. In my writing I tend to use some ideas to support other, larger ideas. | 4.06 | .74 |
| 22. It is important to me to like what I have written. | 4.46 | .89 |
| 28. I put a lot of myself in my academic writing. | 3.81 | 1.01 |
| 26. My prewriting notes are always a mess. | 2.89 | 1.19 |

Table 5 displays whether Turkish graduate students are able to hear or envision writing. The graduate students responded the questions whether they can hear themselves while writing (m=3.73) and envision their writing even though they are not writing (m=4.03) in a positive manner. However, the item "I put a lot of myself in my academic writing" gets one of the highest scores among the students (m=3.81). Students do not display significant differences in terms of the sensory connections which provide familiarity with the rhythm, pace, or flow of academic writing, however, doctoral students have slightly more intuitivist approach to writing compared to master students (See Appendix A).

### H. Scientist

The factor Scientist describes taking an organized structural approach to writing as scientists do. Table 6 shows whether and how graduate students manage and organize a wealth of information while relying on an agenda meanwhile weave, reflect and create meanings.

**Table 6.** Mean Values and Standard Deviations for the Scientist Factor

| Items | M | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| 43. The thesis or main idea is the heart of the academic paper. | 4.36 | .81 |
| 67. It is important to me to have my ideas or arguments clear before writing. | 4.27 | .76 |
| 1. When writing an academic paper, I stick to the rules. | 4.21 | .72 |
| 10. I keep my topic clearly in mind as I write. | 4.21 | .86 |
| 12. The thesis or main idea dictates the type of paper to be written. | 4.04 | .90 |
| 54. I like written assignments to be well-specified with details included | 3.93 | .90 |
| 2. I set aside specific times to do academic papers. | 3.84 | .97 |
| 9. When faced with an academic paper, I develop a plan and stick to it. | 3.70 | 1.02 |
| 55. I start with a fairly detailed outline. | 3.54 | 1.12 |

As can be seen, the main idea stands as the most important point in students' academic papers (m=4.36). They are all aware of writing in a planned and organized way, they basically appear to be overrelied to the rules given the high values for relevant items such as the item 1 indicating sticking to the rules (m= 4.21) and the item 67 making their ideas or arguments clear before writing (m= 4.27). Though academic writing inhibits free and narrative personal reflection, at different stages such as finding novel solutions and verification of their work, writers may need to be creative and be familiar with their genre.

The findings of the independent samples t-test analysis show that master and doctoral students do not significantly differ despite their background and experience in graduate

studies. Given the mean values are very close to each other, it might suggest that graduate students' perception about academic writing as a concept and as a process does not change in the course of time due to some reasons.

### I. Task-Oriented

Table 7 displays the students' approach to linear assumptions about writing. As can be seen, the item 38 indicating the writer implies what comes next takes the highest score(m=3.63), though it is not very high. The factor Task Oriented approach is generally strong in graduate writing, and rules and regulations appear important but the total mean value of this factor is relatively low compared to other factors. This reliance to rules is seen in the item 37 in which writers check each sentence out before going on next (m=3.31).

**Table 7.** Mean Values and Standard Deviations for the Task Oriented Factor

| Items | M | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| 38. I cue my reader by giving a hint of what is to come. | 3.63 | .85 |
| 47. When given an assignment calling for an argument or viewpoint, I immediately know which side I will take. | 3.56 | .94 |
| 42. I am my own audience. | 3.46 | 1.16 |
| 37. I complete each sentence and revise it before going on to the next. | 3.31 | 1.28 |
| 48. My essay or paper often goes beyond the specifications of the assignment. | 3.23 | .93 |
| 65. When writing an academic paper, my idea or topic often changes as I progress. | 3.10 | 1.21 |
| 39. My writing rarely expresses what I really think. | 2.61 | 1.40 |
| 8. There is usually one best way to write an academic paper. | 2.26 | 1.13 |

Due most probably to their written texts, they cannot go beyond the assignment specifications. This restriction might negatively affect the meaning. In addition, among the other items relevant to the rules and regulation reliance, the item having to do with audience concern while writing which indicates "I am my own audience" takes one of the highest values in this factor. They state that with a focus of rules, in a limited space of thought, they primarily think their own reaction and most probably commenting whether they are writing accurately and appropriately. There appear no significant differences (p<0.05) between the responses of master and doctoral students (See Appendix A).

J. Sculptor

Table 8 displays graduate students' systematic approach to writing. This factor also appears to be relatively low compared to other factors (m=3.43). In this factor, they considerably believe in the strength of originality of a text (m=4.19). Besides, they indicate that in this writing, they tend to write rough drafts before the final text (m=3.59). Given the t –test results of master and doctoral students, there appears no significant difference for this factor (See Appendix A).

**Table 8.** Mean Values and Standard Deviations for the Sculptor Factor

| Items | M | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| 14. Originality in writing is highly important in academic writing. | 4.19 | .87 |
| 52. I usually write several paragraphs before rereading. | 3.59 | 1.08 |
| 59. I just write off the top of my head and then go back and rework the whole thing. | 3.36 | 1.00 |
| 11. When writing an academic paper, I tend to write what I would say if I were talking. | 3.33 | 1.13 |
| 20. Writing academic papers reminds me of other things that I do. | 3.33 | 1.04 |
| 19. Academic writing is symbolic. | 2.83 | 1.09 |

4.8. Qualitative Findings about Process of Writing an Academic Text and Their Approaches

Each interviewee was asked how they write academic text according to the disciplinary rules and conventions, and what they mostly attached importance while writing, at both macro and micro levels.

Participants initially saw writing as an important tool to produce original ideas, generally emphasized originality and creativity stating that main idea and the topic which might be useful in their field would be the most important feature. They highlighted that even if they, according to them, were not so competent in writing as novice writers, and they may somewhat dislike writing, they had to gain the ability to construct new knowledge and show themselves according to the norms of their disciplines. Thus, the fundamental compensation towards this demanding and often difficult process seems to be able to create new ideas and contribute to their fields. The following extracts from the view of an interviewee exemplify the relevant idea about the nature of scientific writing. Below the participant 1 points out:

> *… What is more important to me is the original idea and if the writer's ideas can contribute to the field. If your study does not serve to your field and original and inspiring then your graduate studies mean nothing, because this is not scientific to me…*

In accordance with the first participant's assumptions, the second interviewee's view attracts attention. Thus, she states "*I don't want to study what others have already studied, at least from their findings I want to do something new and original.*

When they insisted on the originality of the topic, the flow of the conversation passed into the integration of writers' own knowledge and others' ideas. What was significant that the integration of the self-knowledge with others' knowledge was directly connected to the issue of citation rules and the ethical dimension of writing in higher education particularly the concept of plagiarism. All the participants' agreed on the sensitivity towards plagiarism. The following extract summarizes the common point of view of the interviewees.

> *Interviewee 4: … it is a serious and important issue, unfortunately in our country ethical sensitivity is not given to the students from earlier period. It means more than APA guide…*

However, as for obtaining this academic literacy, in other words, going beyond from knowledge transferring to knowledge transforming, each interviewee indicated that they had never taken explicit instruction or made practice about the motivation of knowledge transforming and citation rules. In the course of each interviewee they pointed out, they had never taken academic writing course, participated or made detailed practice with any experienced academics.

While they want to put forward original ideas and constructing new knowledge, they at the same time tend to pay attention to the organization and unity of the text. Their common concern appears to be building a coherent text. As coherence is the implicit and quite abstract link in a text, they stated that they tend to use transitional devices as much as they can. The second interviewee's statement exemplifies this emphasis:

*I pay a great deal of attention to the format, coherency and organization. It is really important to me if what I am saying makes sense to the reader, or if the reader can see what I suggest. I also like creating clear links and transitions among my thoughts…*

As for the writing process, most interviewees indicated their approach about revising their texts both directly and implicitly. Besides, the changes that these writers make remain at minor level. When they were asked their revision strategy, most of them regard revision as having their texts proof read or editing on their own. They generally do not prefer rewriting and revising. The extract from the sixth interviewee's transcription illustrates this situation:

> *Interviewee 6: I make some corrections in the text such as grammatical rules, citation rules or punctuation.*

Though they believed that revision is an important phase of writing, they tend to do it at minor level and this process is largely disliked. The seventh interviewee's statement can be attributed to the overall participants' views about revision:

*…when I am to finish the work, I don't like last revisions much…*

## V. Discussion and Conclusion

Writing is a complex phenomenon and the approaches, processes and beliefs of the writers should be examined to understand writing. Examining students' writing under certain conditions with various influential roles helps to see the characteristics of writers encompassing genre familiarity, competence, motivation and achievement.

A deep approach based on perceiving tasks as a whole and proactive engagement in learning, and a surface approach based on reproduction and memorization reflect the prominent approaches of writers. Seven factors are thought to be indicators of writing approaches of the graduate students. The factors "Elaborative", "Intuitive", "Scientist" are marked as deep approach to writing. On the other hand, the factors "No-Revision", Task Oriented", "Sculptor" and "Low Self-Efficacy" reflect surface approach. Among these factors, "Elaborative" is quite open to discussion.

High scores on the Elaborative scale have been related to personal engagement into writing a narrative essay and are often argued to be undesired in academic writing process (Lavelle, 1993). However, academic literacy and knowledge transforming require personal identity and creativity in certain phases of writing such as providing novel solutions to the certain problems, synthesizing others' ideas with writer's own ideas. Here, instruction may be encouraged to be reliant on an elaborative approach to become more familiar with academic genre considering voice and audience in academic writing.

As the interview data confirmed, need of encouragement and procrastination existed in the comments of students scoring high on the Low Self-Efficacy approach. Students' motivational needs can be attributed to the lack of explicit instruction and experience in academic writing in a classroom setting, and the inadequate communication between the members of academia.

Revision and editing stand crucial for the development of the students' writing ability in a scientific context. Student writers should obtain the convention of thinking critically about their texts with regard to their structure, argumentation, and appropriateness of the language both lexically and stylistically in a discipline. In other words, they should be able to judge their own texts in terms of both language use in general and academic discourse patterns as being their first readers. The quantitative and qualitative data imply that graduate students are somewhat aware of the revision as an integral component of writing. However, since revision takes time, it seems difficult to acquire this habit for a student in a hectic university life; however, professors can encourage their students to plan and they can teach revision considering the fact that revision means more than editing or polishing a text.

Likewise, considering the high scores for the factor "Scientist", it can be said that graduate students are aware of the importance of organization in academic writing. However, it is important to recognize that developing new knowledge by processing new information and existing knowledge is different than knowledge telling, and meanwhile, being over-relied on the rules and form is different than writing in an organized way.

Many Turkish students until embarking on their graduate studies appear not to have learned how to write systematically except being instructed to be grammatically correct and writing in certain number of paragraphs. The study's findings revealed that creating and organizing ideas in a text is the common concern of the graduate student writers. As they attach significant attention to create new knowledge, they meanwhile confront some problems while organizing their ideas in a coherent and well-written way. However, the participants appeared to be much less worried about expressing their ideas in accurate English. In fact, this emphasis on structural accuracy in L1 is seen also in L2 in students' educational background; therefore, they appear to have moderate self-confidence to achieve linguistic correctness.

Explicit academic writing instruction, through student-centered exploration, and a curriculum that should be based on the strategies in which non-native speakers can describe, notice and broadly employ the characteristics of discipline specific writing. While explicit academic writing course is important and necessary, the qualification of the instructors in terms of cross-cultural writing conventions, discrepancies and similarities is of importance as well.

While explicit academic writing courses are suggested, it should be kept in mind that these courses should not be selective and be confined to one semester. If these courses are not required and encouraged, graduate students who are struggling several kinds of challenges and pressures may not take these courses seriously.

However, through academic writing courses, curricular requirements across disciplines, workshops/seminars, and writing centers, learning writing strategies to improve their academic performance should firstly be provided for students. This can be realized through engaging students in the tasks actively, revealing their needs and keeping them motivated to stay on task.

Note: This study was extracted from the PhD thesis of the first author under the supervision of the second author.

**APPENDIX C: T-test results, mean, standard deviation, and df values for both MA and PhD students according to the seven factors in the data.**

|  | ITEMS | MA n=52 | | PhD n=18 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | m | s.d. | m | s.d. | t | df | p |
| Elaborative | 45. At times my academic writing has given me deep personal satisfaction | 4.08 | .71 | 4.28 | 1.12 | -.88 | 68 | .38 |
|  | 4. Writing academic papers makes me feel good. | 3.60 | .93 | 4.06 | 1.21 | -1.66 | 68 | .10 |
|  | 46. The main reason for writing an academic paper is just to get a good grade on it. | 2.58 | 1.01 | 3.00 | 1.41 | -1.37 | 68 | .17 |
|  | 30. Writing assignments in graduate courses are always learning experiences | 4.00 | .74 | 3.89 | 1.07 | .48 | 68 | .62 |
|  | 61. Writing an academic paper helps me develop my ideas. | 4.46 | .69 | 4.50 | .98 | -.18 | 68 | .85 |
|  | 62. Academic writing is cold and impersonal | 2.58 | 1.07 | 2.94 | 1.30 | -1.18 | 68 | .24 |
|  | 50. Writing an academic paper is like a journey | 4.00 | .84 | 4.17 | .98 | -.69 | 68 | .49 |
|  | 44. Academic writing helps me organize information in my mind. | 4.13 | .56 | 4.33 | 1.02 | -1.02 | 68 | .30 |
|  | 58. My intention in writing is just to answer the question. | 2.54 | .99 | 2.78 | 1.26 | -.81 | 68 | .41 |
|  | 21. Academic papers usually have little to do with what I do in my career or my life. | 233 | 1.15 | 2.22 | 1.62 | .29 | 68 | .76 |
|  | 40. Writing an academic paper is making a new meaning | 3.79 | .89 | 4.11 | .96 | -1.29 | 68 | .20 |
|  | 15. I worry about how much time my paper will take. | 3.52 | 1.12 | 3.50 | 1.42 | .05 | 68 | .95 |
| Low self-efficacy | 53. I worry so much about my writing that it prevents me from getting started. | 2.85 | 1.14 | 3.33 | 1.53 | -1.42 | 68 | .16 |
|  | 63. I need special encouragement to do my best academic writing. | 3.56 | 1.11 | 3.44 | 1.65 | .32 | 68 | .74 |
|  | 13. I can write a term paper without any help or instruction. | 3.44 | 1.19 | 4.00 | 1.49 | -1.59 | 68 | .11 |
|  | 56. I do well on tests requiring essay answers. | 3.62 | .95 | 4.17 | 1.15 | -2.00 | 68 | .04* |
|  | 32. Having my writing evaluated scares me. | 2.79 | 1.09 | 2.72 | 1.67 | .19 | 68 | .84 |
|  | 64. I can't revise my writing because I cannot see my own mistakes. | 2.48 | 1.14 | 2.78 | 1.62 | -.84 | 68 | .40 |
|  | 35. I like to work in small groups to discuss ideas or to do revision in writing. | 3.38 | 1.17 | 3.22 | 1.51 | .46 | 68 | .64 |
|  | 49. I expect good grades on academic papers. | 3.75 | 1.00 | 4.06 | 1.05 | -1.09 | 68 | .27 |
|  | 27. I am familiar with the components of a research paper or thesis. | 3.88 | .90 | 4.39 | .97 | -2.0 | 68 | .04* |
|  | 18. Writing an essay or paper is always a slow process. | 3.77 | .89 | 4.00 | 1.08 | -.88 | 68 | .37 |
|  | 23. Studying grammar and punctuation would greatly improve my writing. | 3.71 | 1.10 | 4.00 | 1.13 | -.94 | 68 | .34 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No revision** | 60. Often my first draft is my finished product. | 2.58 | 1.07 | 2.72 | 1.48 | -.44 | 68 | .65 |
| | 66. I do not normally expect to make significant changes to my text by revising it. | 3.21 | 1.01 | 3.28 | 1.36 | -.21 | 68 | .82 |
| | 41. My revision strategy is usually making minor changes, just touching things up | 3.31 | .98 | 3.56 | 1.29 | -.84 | 68 | .39 |
| | 16. I tend to write a rough draft and then go back repeatedly to revise. | 3.83 | .92 | 4.00 | 1.32 | -.60 | 68 | .54 |
| | 7. Revision is a onetime process at the end. | 2.83 | 1.32 | 2.94 | 1.51 | -.31 | 68 | .75 |
| | 3. I reexamine and restate my thoughts in the revision process. | 4.23 | .83 | 4.17 | 1.09 | .25 | 68 | .79 |
| | 17. Revision is the process of finding the shape of my writing. | 3.77 | .83 | 4.00 | 1.02 | -.95 | 68 | .34 |
| | 51. I plan, write and revise all at the same time | 3.08 | 1.16 | 3.22 | 1.55 | -.41 | 68 | .67 |
| | 29. I never think about how I go about writing. | 2.71 | 1.39 | 2.33 | 1.45 | .98 | 68 | .32 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Intuitive** | 25. I can hear myself while writing. | 3.67 | 1.08 | 3.89 | 1.07 | -.73 | 68 | .46 |
| | 57. I often think about my paper when I am not writing (e.g. late at night). | 4.00 | .79 | 4.11 | 1.27 | -.43 | 68 | .66 |
| | 24. I visualize what I am writing about. | 3.92 | .81 | 4.06 | 1.16 | -.53 | 68 | .59 |
| | 33. I tend to spend a long time thinking about my writing assignment before beginning. | 3.88 | .87 | 3.89 | 1.13 | -.01 | 68 | .98 |
| | 6. I can hear my voice as I reread papers that I have written. | 3.67 | 1.13 | 3.61 | 1.50 | .18 | 68 | .85 |
| | 36. I imagine the reaction that my readers might have to my paper. | 3.77 | .87 | 4.00 | 1.02 | -.920 | 68 | .36 |
| | 34. When writing a paper, I often get ideas for other papers. | 394 | .72 | 4.06 | 1.05 | -.505 | 68 | .61 |
| | 5. I closely examine the writing assignment before beginning. | 4.17 | .67 | 4.28 | 1.12 | -.470 | 68 | .64 |
| | 31. In my writing I tend to use some ideas to support other, larger ideas. | 4.02 | .67 | 4.17 | .92 | -.726 | 68 | .47 |
| | 22. It is important to me to like what I have written. | 4.50 | .72 | 4.33 | 1.28 | .678 | 68 | .50 |
| | 28. I put a lot of myself in my academic writing. | 3.75 | .90 | 4.00 | 1.28 | -.90 | 68 | .37 |
| | 26. My prewriting notes are always a mess. | 2.88 | 1.11 | 2.89 | 1.45 | -.01 | 68 | .99 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scientist** | 9. When faced with an academic paper, I develop a plan and stick to it. | 3.67 | .98 | 3.78 | 1.16 | -.37 | 68 | .71 |
| | 67. It is important to me to have my ideas or arguments clear before writing. | 4.27 | .66 | 4.28 | 1.01 | -.04 | 68 | .96 |
| | 1. When writing an academic paper, I stick to the rules | 4.19 | .62 | 4.28 | .95 | -.43 | 68 | .66 |
| | 10. I keep my topic clearly in mind as I write. | 4.19 | .76 | 4.28 | 1.12 | -.35 | 68 | .72 |
| | 43. The thesis or main idea is the heart of the academic paper. | 4.35 | .68 | 4.39 | 1.14 | -.19 | 68 | .85 |
| | 2. I set aside specific times to do academic papers. | 3.81 | .90 | 3.94 | 1.16 | -.51 | 68 | .61 |
| | 55. I start with a fairly detailed outline. | 3.50 | 1.09 | 3.67 | 1.23 | -.53 | 68 | .59 |
| | 54. I like written assignments to be well-specified with details included. | 3.81 | .86 | 4.28 | .95 | -1.93 | 68 | .05 |
| | 12. The thesis or main idea dictates the type of paper to be written. | 3.94 | .82 | 4.33 | 1.08 | -1.59 | 68 | .11 |
| **Task-oriented** | 65. When writing an academic paper, my idea or topic often changes as I progress. | 3.00 | 1.20 | 3.39 | 1.24 | -1.17 | 68 | .24 |
| | 39. My writing rarely expresses what I really think. | 2.71 | 1.39 | 2.33 | 1.45 | .98 | 68 | .32 |
| | 37. I complete each sentence and revise it before going on to the next | 3.29 | 1.21 | 3.39 | 1.50 | -.28 | 68 | .77 |
| | 8. There is usually one best way to write an academic paper | 2.27 | 1.06 | 2.22 | 1.35 | .15 | 68 | .88 |
| | 38. I cue my reader by giving a hint of what is to come | 3.52 | .75 | 3.94 | 1.05 | -1.85 | 68 | .06 |
| | 48. My essay or paper often goes beyond the specifications of the assignment | 3.15 | .80 | 3.44 | 1.24 | -1.13 | 68 | .25 |
| | 47. When given an assignment calling for an argument or viewpoint, I immediately know which side I will take | 3.56 | .85 | 3.56 | 1.19 | .008 | 68 | .99 |
| | 42. I am my own audience | 3.54 | 1.11 | 3.22 | 1.30 | .99 | 68 | .32 |
| **Sculptor** | 59. I just write off the top of my head and then go back and rework the whole thing | 3.33 | .92 | 3.44 | 1.24 | -.42 | 68 | .67 |
| | 11. When writing an academic paper, I tend to write what I would say if I were talking | 3.29 | 1.09 | 3.44 | 1.29 | -.49 | 68 | .62 |
| | 52. I usually write several paragraphs before rereading | 3.54 | 1.07 | 3.72 | 1.12 | -.61 | 68 | .53 |
| | 20. Writing academic papers reminds me of other things that I do | 3.21 | .95 | 3.67 | 1.23 | -1.61 | 68 | .11 |
| | 19. Academic writing is symbolic | 2.69 | 1.02 | 3.22 | 1.21 | -1.80 | 68 | .07 |
| | 14. Originality in writing is highly important in academic writing | 4.13 | .81 | 4.33 | 1.02 | -.83 | 68 | .40* |

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