

# An Evaluation of Academic Writing Course Materials Used for International Students From the Perspectives of Students and Teachers\*

Eser KOCAMAN GÜRATA\*\*

**Abstract.** An indispensable part of the success of a foreign language teaching program is the course material evaluation process. Therefore, it is thought that examining whether the teaching materials and practices used to improve the academic skills of international students meet the needs of students and teachers will contribute to the literature. In this study, which was planned as a case study for this purpose, the course materials and teaching practices used for teaching academic writing to international students at four state universities were evaluated by investigating students' and teachers' views. In the research, a materials evaluation questionnaire and semi-structured interview forms were used as data collection tools. Based on the literature, a questionnaire was adapted and the quantitative data were collected through this questionnaire. As for the qualitative data collection, focus group interviews were conducted with teachers and students. Analyzing the data received, the suitability of the materials and applications used in the education environment was examined and suggestions have been put forward for designing more effective materials and curriculum.

**Keywords:** Teaching Turkish as a Foreign/ Second Language, Academic Turkish, Academic Writing, Materials Evaluation, International Students

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\* This study was presented as an oral presentation at the 8th International Congress Of Teaching Turkish As A Foreign Language (ICOTFL22) held in Skopje, North Macedonia on September 15-16, 2022.

This study was produced from the doctoral thesis titled "Evaluation of Course Materials Used in Teaching Turkish Academic Writing to International Students" (2022), prepared under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ayten Genç at the Institute of Turkish Studies, Hacettepe University

\*\* Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0774-3208>, Dr., Hacettepe University, School of Foreign Languages, Türkiye, [eser.kocamangurata@hacettepe.edu.tr](mailto:eser.kocamangurata@hacettepe.edu.tr)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The number of international students in Turkey is increasing every year. In the literature, there are needs analysis studies based on the difficulties and problems experienced by these students. The results of these studies show that academic writing skill comes first among the skills and sub-skills that students have difficulty with (Ekmekçi 2017; Demir, 2017; Konyar, 2019; Seyedi, 2019; Güde, 2019; Güral, 2020). In order for students to develop their academic language skills and adapt to university life, the content, scope and efficiency of academic Turkish courses should be examined.

In order to prepare qualified and effective programs, it is necessary to investigate and determine the needs in depth by taking the stakeholders' views. Cunningsworth (1984) states that no coursebook can fully and precisely meet the needs of learning conditions specific to the environment. Teachers should find their own teaching ways and make the necessary adaptations in order to use these materials most effectively. Accordingly, an ideal coursebook that can meet all these needs is an unrealistic expectation, and what is realistic is to find a common ground between the needs of institutions, teachers and students and what the materials offer. In this respect, a regular evaluation of materials and implementations is necessary. Furthermore, revising and redesigning the teaching and learning environment according to the results of the evaluation is an indispensable part of achieving success in a course program.

In view of the facts mentioned above, utilizing a post use evaluation model (McGrath, 2006; Ellis, 1997; Tomlinson, 2003), this study was designed to analyze the perceptions of the tertiary level program designers, instructors, and students concerning academic writing materials they have used during the academic Turkish courses. In order to have a better and thorough understanding of a variety of points of views globally and to reach more reliable conclusions, the research was carried out in four different educational contexts: Gazi University, Hacettepe University, Yıldırım Beyazıt University and Eskişehir Osmangazi University. With the aforementioned problem and purpose, the research question of this study has been identified as follows:

### The Research Question

In this study, the following research question has been investigated:

- What are the main considerations of teachers and students regarding the academic writing materials and practices in Academic Turkish classes?

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Design of the Study

A mixed methods design was used in this research and a case study was presented. In the research which was conducted with the multiple case study design, the cases were examined separately. According to Creswell (2007), case study is a research approach in which the researcher examines one or more limited cases in time with data collection tools (observations, interviews, audio-visuals, documents, reports) that includes

multiple sources, and defines situations and situation-related themes. In this study, a mixed method was used as a data collection method in which quantitative data was collected through questionnaires, and qualitative data was collected through interviews. A mixed-method study is a research approach in which the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data to understand research problems, integrates two data sets, and then draws conclusions by taking advantage of integrating these two data sets. The basic assumption of this approach is that combining statistical trends (quantitative data) with personal experiences (qualitative data) would be more advantageous than using either of these methods alone to better understand the research problem (Creswell, 2017).

## 2.2 Setting and Participants

### 2.2.1 Students

The student group, which constitutes the study group in which the quantitative data of the research was collected through a questionnaire, consists of a total of 148 people who took courses in the Academic Turkish Teaching Program at the Turkish Teaching Centers in Hacettepe University, Gazi University, Yıldırım Beyazıt University and Eskişehir Osmangazi University in the summer term of 2018-2019 academic years. Table 1 presents the distribution of this student group by universities.

Table 1

*Frequencies of the students regarding the universities where they study*

Universities	Frequency	Percentage
Eskisehir Osmangazi University	46	31.1
Hacettepe University	16	10.8
Yıldırım Beyazıt University	20	13.5
Gazi University	66	44.6

As seen in Table 1, the university with the highest frequency is Gazi University, and students studying at Gazi University in the study group constitute 44.6% of the group. This group is followed by Eskişehir Osmangazi University with 31.1%. The university with the lowest frequency is Hacettepe University. Students studying at Hacettepe University constitute 10.8% of the study group. In this case, Gazi and Eskişehir Osmangazi Universities constitute the majority of the group.

A total of 39 students, including 6 students from Hacettepe University, 9 students from Yıldırım Beyazıt University, 14 students from Gazi University in two groups of 7, and 10

students from Osmangazi University, also participated in the focus group discussions on a voluntary basis.

### **2.2.2 Instructors**

11 instructors who teach Academic Turkish to international students at 4 different universities participated in the study. Gazi University TÖMER provided the highest number of instructors with 6 people. 2 faculty members from Eskişehir Osmangazi University, 2 from Yıldırım Beyazıt University, and 1 from Hacettepe University participated in the study.

## **2.3 Data Collection Instruments**

### **2.3.1 Turkish Academic Writing Course Material Evaluation Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was applied to collect data about the opinions and evaluations of the students about the textbook and its applications, which are used to develop their Turkish academic writing skills. In the research, Barut's (2012) questionnaire was adapted to the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign/second language academic writing and used after necessary permissions were obtained. In this study, the questionnaire was translated into Turkish and simplified by the researcher so that international students could understand the questions. It was also adapted in the context of teaching Academic Turkish as a Foreign/Second Language. Afterwards, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts who were a foreign language instructor, an assessment and evaluation specialist, and a specialist in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. In addition to this, the necessary corrections were made in terms of meaning and grammar and it was finalized. Finally, a pilot study was conducted with four international students who completed the Turkish C1 level and their feedback was received.

### **2.3.2 Semi-Structured Focus Group Interview Form for Students and Semi-Structured Focus Group Interview Form for Instructors**

The questions of the interviews with the students and instructors were prepared by the researcher. While the semi-structured questions in the students' form and instructors' form were being prepared, they were written based on the topics and themes prepared in the student questionnaire, taking into account the data and results of scientific research on Turkish academic writing in the literature. Opinions of a foreign language teaching expert and an assessment and evaluation expert were taken for semi-structured questions. The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants.

## **2.4 Data Analysis Procedure**

### **2.4.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data**

Quantitative analysis methods were used to analyze the data collected from the students using the questionnaire. For this, first of all, the percentages and frequencies of those

who said strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3) and strongly agree (4) were calculated on the basis of each item.

In order to provide a more holistic review, the items were divided by the researcher into nine different subtitles (Learning Environment, Language Level, Supplementary Resources, Needs and Goals, Class Motivation, Content and Linguistic Input, Activity Types, Feedback and Evaluation, General Evaluation). Then, the percentages and frequencies of the answers given for all these subtitles were calculated. This categorisation helps the researcher to present the distribution of student views into categories regarding the subject areas.

Finally, in order to examine whether there is a statistically significant aggregation in the distributions between those who gave positive and negative opinions for each item, separate chi-square analyses were performed on the items, and the results were reported and discussed under the subtitles of subject areas.

#### **2.4.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data**

In the analysis of qualitative data, content analysis techniques from qualitative analysis techniques were used. In content analysis, there are four stages: processing the qualitative research data obtained from the documents, coding the data, finding the themes, organizing the codes and themes, defining and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this study, qualitative data obtained from students and instructors by interview method was processed and coded according to the evaluation criteria determined in the first stage, and various themes were reached in this context. After the codes, categories and themes were created, they were reviewed by two experts in the field of foreign language teaching. Finally, codes, categories and themes were finalized in line with expert opinions. Direct quotations from the obtained data were also determined at this stage. At the stage of presenting the findings, the pre-structured data was defined and supported with citations. After this stage, the association and interpretation of the defined and grouped data was carried out. In order to protect their identities while quoting the participants, codes were used between S1-S10 for the student participants and between I1-I11 for the instructor participants. Academic Turkish program and academic writing teaching practices carried out in Turkish Language Teaching Centers at Gazi University, Hacettepe University, Yıldırım Beyazıt University and Osmangazi University, where the research was conducted, were described in the findings section and interpreted in relation to other findings in the discussion and conclusion section. Within the scope of reporting the research, the relevant centers are anonymously coded as Turkish Teaching Center I, Turkish Teaching Center II, Turkish Teaching Center III, Turkish Teaching Center IV and these codes were used while reporting the findings.

The similarity rate of the data set coded by different coders is important for the reliability of qualitative research. This similarity, which is called internal consistency in the Miles and Huberman model and conceptualized as the consensus among the coders,

can be calculated using the formula  $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Consensus}}{\text{Disagreement} + \text{Consensus}} \times 100$ . According to the coding control, which gives internal consistency, the consensus among coders is expected to be at least 80% (Miles & Huberman, 1994; as cited in Baltacı, 2017). The thesis advisor, field expert and researcher took part in the reliability of the study and the reliability calculation was determined as 86.2% according to the above formula.

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Applications for Academic Turkish Courses in Turkish Teaching Centers in Universities

Although the total course hours and schedules in the Turkish Teaching Centers are similar (5 weeks, 140 hours), the course materials, application methods and techniques used in these centers may vary. In the first and second Turkish teaching centers, a single book – Academic Turkish for International Students II (Writing) (Uluslararası Öğrenciler İçin Akademik Türkçe II-(Yazma)) (Temur & Kurt, 2017) – is followed for teaching academic writing within the scope of Academic Turkish course. In Turkish Teaching Center I, the book accompanies a syllabus and the standard is provided by following a syllabus that ensures the same course content is applied in the classrooms. On the other hand, there is no syllabus used in the Turkish Teaching Center II. Activities are planned according to the student demands that arise during the follow-up and processing of the book, or additional supporting materials are prepared by the instructors. There is no coursebook followed as course material in the Turkish Teaching Center III. The instructors carry various materials into the classroom by making photocopies from academic journals, various original materials and from some of the coursebooks prepared for Academic Turkish purposes. However, from the students' statements, it is not clear that these choices are within a systematic program. In the Turkish Teaching Center IV, the Academic Turkish for International Students – Social Sciences/Sciences/Health Sciences book set (Uluslararası Öğrencileri İçin Akademik Türkçe – Sosyal Bilimler, Fen Bilimleri, Sağlık Bilimleri) (Moralı et al., 2018) and the Academic Turkish for International Students II (Writing) (Uluslararası Öğrenciler İçin Akademik Türkçe II-(Yazma)) (Temur & Kurt, 2017) coursebook are used systematically using related parts aligned with objectives defined in the syllabus. The books are also supported by various additional materials. At the first, second and third Turkish teaching centers, only academic reading and academic writing skills are studied, yet in the Turkish teaching center IV, four skills namely academic reading, academic writing, academic listening and academic speaking skills are studied, allocating equal time for each skill. As for the feedback and evaluation systems in the Turkish teaching centers, there is no proficiency test or assessment system used for course completion. Furthermore, feedback for the written assignments is either limited or not available due to time constraints or inconsistencies between plan and practice.

### 3.2 Findings from the Questionnaire

Table 2

#### *Distribution of Items*

	Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Learning Environment	m1	18	12.2	33	22.3	71	48	21	14.2
	m2	20	13.5	34	23.0	60	40.5	26	17.6
	m3	9	6.1	27	18.2	80	54.1	31	20.9
Language Level	m4	3	2.0	22	14.9	71	48.0	46	31.1
Supplementary Materials	m5	15	10.1	39	26.4	61	41.2	30	20.3
	m6	13	8.8	37	25.0	69	46.6	29	19.6
	m7	15	10.1	46	31.1	68	45.9	13	8.8
Needs and Targets	m8	7	4.7	29	19.6	79	53.4	30	20.3
	m9	5	3.4	33	22.3	85	57.4	25	16.9
	m10	7	4.7	26	17.6	85	57.4	28	18.9
	m11	13	8.8	42	28.4	70	47.3	21	14.2
Motivation	m12	11	7.4	30	20.3	74	50.0	29	19.6
	m13	14	9.5	46	31.1	74	50.0	13	8.8
	m14	20	13.5	38	25.7	64	43.2	23	15.5
Content and Linguistic Input	m15	13	8.8	28	18.9	91	61.5	12	8.1
	m16	9	6.1	40	27.0	73	49.3	24	16.2
	m17	8	5.4	39	26.4	78	52.7	18	12.2
	m18	9	6.1	25	16.9	82	55.4	28	18.9
	m19	15	10.1	48	32.4	61	41.2	20	13.5
	m20	10	6.8	28	18.9	77	52.0	28	18.9
	m21	13	8.8	27	18.2	76	51.4	30	20.3

		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Types of Activities	m22	14	9.5	42	28.4	70	47.3	17	11.5
	m23	10	6.8	46	31.1	74	50.0	15	10.1
	m24	14	9.5	47	31.8	72	48.6	12	8.1
	m25	16	10.8	50	33.8	62	41.9	17	11.5
	m26	18	12.2	49	33.1	59	39.9	18	12.2
Feedback and Evaluation	m27	9	6.1	35	23.6	89	60.1	12	8.1
	m28	16	10.8	25	16.9	74	50.0	29	19.6
	m29	17	11.5	31	20.9	65	43.9	28	18.9
	m30	10	6.8	40	27.0	80	54.1	14	9.5
General Evaluation	m31	13	8.8	35	23.6	74	50.0	23	15.5
	m32	25	16.9	38	25.7	63	42.6	19	12.8
	m33	14	9.5	49	33.1	68	45.9	11	7.4
	m34	24	16.2	35	23.6	52	35.1	35	23.6

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the highest frequency values for all items are in the "agree" category. When the categories with the highest frequency in the second place are examined, it is seen that 26 of the 34 items have the "disagree" category. It is seen that the categories of "disagree" and "strongly agree" have equal frequency in two items, and the category of "strongly agree" in the remaining six items is the category with the highest frequency in the second place. From this point of view, it can be interpreted that while the students in the study group tend to give closer answers such as "agree" and "disagree", they avoid giving sharper answers such as "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree". It can be interpreted in two ways why students exhibit a positive perspective on all subject areas in the survey in terms of the materials used, practices and their own needs. Firstly, in academic Turkish programs for students, there are no assessment and evaluation practices regarding the proficiency of the student in academic skills. Even though some universities give feedback on homework, there is no application that distinguishes successful students from unsuccessful students. This does not allow students to evaluate themselves and observe their deficiencies. Students who are not aware of their own shortcomings may think that they are sufficient in general, and that the books and practices covered are also sufficient. The second reason may be that students have different perceptions of Turkish academic language skills and lack awareness of the duties and needs in their departments. Students who lack knowledge



and awareness of the scope of academic Turkish and do not know their academic needs for departments cannot define their own academic writing needs regarding books and practices and their own skills, and generally display a positive opinion in their self-evaluation.

### 3.3 Findings from the Interviews with Students

Tablo 3

*Students' perceptions about the academic writing materials and practices by content analysis*

Theme	Categories	Codes
Student Opinions on Academic Writing Lesson in Teaching Centers	o Difficulties in Academic Writing in Turkish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Grammar and structure deficiencies</li> <li>. Academic Vocabulary</li> <li>. Terminology</li> </ul>
	o Contents of Textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Spelling errors</li> <li>· Implementation shortcomings</li> <li>· Scientific text deficiencies</li> <li>. Content request for the department</li> <li>. Application request for the field</li> <li>. Worry about adaptation to future lessons</li> <li>. Academic writing practice deficiencies</li> <li>· The need for classification of education by department</li> </ul>

Student Opinions on Academic Writing Lesson in Teaching Centers	o Assessment and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Homework checks</li> <li>. Time constraints</li> <li>. Lack of feedback</li> <li>· Shortcomings of writing practices</li> </ul>
	o Lack of Technological Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Internet access problems</li> <li>. Traditional educational styles</li> <li>. Lack of technological resources</li> <li>· Time limitations</li> </ul>
	o Resource, Material and Application Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Practice with CD</li> <li>. The need for collaborative and project-based activities</li> <li>· Implementation shortcomings</li> <li>· Application need by department</li> <li>· Problems caused by translation</li> </ul>

When the students were asked about their views regarding the academic writing materials used, practices at the language centers and the problems they face during the implementation, several codes and categories emerged from the answers as can be seen from Table 3. The categories can be organized and presented under three main headings as: “Students’ views on their own needs regarding academic writing skills”, “Students’ views regarding the academic writing materials and coursebook(s) used” and “Students’ views about the course practices and implementation regarding academic writing skills”.

### 3.4 Students' views on their own needs regarding academic writing skills

When the students' answers about the problems and needs in terms of their academic writing skills were analyzed, it is seen that most of them have difficulties in many aspects such as building accurate and meaningful sentences in Turkish, choosing the right academic vocabulary for the right context, putting their ideas into words in Turkish, using the academic language, creating coherence and cohesion in an academic text. Furthermore, because of these incompetencies, students do not find themselves competent enough to be able to do well in their own study fields. They also stated that this has had a negative impact on their motivation. Some ideas mentioned in the interviews are as follows:

*"Normally we know them (the grammar rules) but how do we use them? We already know the rules, but how can we use them, that is, in writing, in composition, we do not know them, we have difficulties." (S2)*

*"Teacher, I do very little practice for vocabulary, that is word for word in Turkish. I only have this problem with academic Turkish." (S8)*

*"I know individual words, but when you read the whole sentence, I don't know what it means. I can hardly understand it. We bought the same thing, it's the same as what we saw before, it's not different, they talk passively, we listen to them all, but we don't know how to use it." (S3)*

### 3.5 Students' views regarding the academic writing materials and coursebook(s) used

The coding of the data from student interviews revealed that they feel the need of being grouped into classes according to their disciplines during the academic Turkish course because they stated that an academic course should provide field specific terminology with a content and material relevant to their departments and academic study fields. They also added that the material should also be supported with technology to enable effective learning. Students also complained about the density of texts and text based instruction. They claimed that too much reading was boring and they demanded more interactive and productive activities such as group work and project based activities and assignments. Some of the participants expressed their views as follows:

*"Composition practice is important, but it is better for each person in their own field. For example, I wrote an essay about global warming, but it is not important to me for my department because I am studying politics and social sciences, but global warming is not very relevant." (S6)*

*"Teacher, I think there should be homework such as writing a scientific text/article or making a presentation. We shouldn't sit in the classroom for 3-4 hours without being active. We could choose at least one topic related to your field, then the homework can be*

*presented in a written form. The teacher should check it. At least there would be a product.” (S4)*

### **3.6 Students’ views about the course practices and implementation regarding academic writing skills**

The third heading under which the categories from the content analysis can be grouped is “the course practices regarding academic writing”. Similar to their demands about discipline specific content, the students expressed their preferences about being placed in the same class with others from the same department as themselves and they demanded focusing only on their department specific needs. They also mentioned that the time allocated for academic Turkish courses and academic writing was not enough to develop their writing skills. They stated that the number of activities was insufficient and that they needed more time and more writing practice opportunities with constructive and immediate feedback from teachers. Some examples from the students’ views are as follows:

*“In academic Turkish, the duration of the books is 6 months, if the writing is academic, then it will be enough. We have already studied English for at least 7 years at school. For example, we couldn't bring English to the perfect level, and one year is too short for Turkish, this is our biggest problem.” (S1)*

*“Unfortunately, there is only limited writing practice in the course, this is a grammar study of 3-4 sentences. Besides, we haven't written a long article, we haven't written compositions or articles so far, so we don't know academic Turkish, we don't understand how to edit an article, or where the results should go in an article.” (S4)*

*“We did not receive a writing assignment, there was never any. It was mostly reading, and we sometimes watched movies for listening comprehension.” (S7)*

### 3.7 Findings from the Interviews with Instructors

Tablo 4

*Teachers' perceptions about the academic writing materials and practices by content analysis*

Theme	Categories	Codes
Instructor's Opinions on Academic Writing Lesson in Teaching Centers	o Academic Writing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Vocabulary</li> <li>. Perspectives on Academic Turkish</li> <li>. Translation problem</li> <li>· Grammar and structures</li> <li>· Academic style</li> </ul>
	o Using Academic Turkish coursebooks in the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Integrating practice into the classroom</li> <li>. Need for feedback</li> <li>. Thesis/project writing</li> </ul>
	o Methods Followed to Solve the Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Conceptual deficiencies</li> <li>. Additional resource support</li> <li>. The need for revision in the curriculum</li> </ul>
	o Variety of Activities and Helpful Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Requirement for terminology</li> <li>. Studies on thesis writing</li> <li>· Time limitations</li> <li>· Arrangement of book contents by chapter</li> </ul>

Instructor's Opinions on Academic Writing Lesson in Teaching Centers		. Crowded classes
	o Feedback and Assignments	. In-class practices and feedback . Observing student progress through assignments
	o Effect of Course Materials on Learning	. Standard curriculum . Student interest level
	o Course Material Contents	. System incompatibility . Reducing texts . Lack of activity
	o Development of Cognitive Skills	. Content incompatibility with student levels . The effect of student levels on learning and course . Density of book contents . Time problem
	o Testing and Evaluation	. Joint evaluation . Assessment without exam . Examination-free teaching

Instructors were asked about their opinions on the efficiency of academic writing materials and course practices. When the data was analyzed, the codes and categories, which can be seen in Table 4, were classified into three headings presenting their views on “student needs regarding academic writing skills”, “academic writing materials and coursebook(s) used” and “the course practices and implementation in terms of academic writing skills.”

### **3.8 Instructors' views on students' needs regarding academic writing skills**

According to instructors, more emphasis was necessary on the development of writing skills in the course because students lack the ability not only to create grammatically accurate sentences but also the ability of creating an organized, fluent and coherent academic text. Another concern that most instructors expressed was that the students needed to learn and use academic vocabulary and academic language more effectively. Unlike students' demands for discipline specific education during academic Turkish courses, instructors think that placing the students into classes according to their disciplines and focusing on their specific terminology of the academic field and specific field dependant tasks might be hard to implement since the student profile is usually heterogeneous from different disciplines, so common academic skills across the disciplines should be defined as course objectives for the academic Turkish course. Some comments show that instructors do not find themselves competent in terms of discipline-specific teaching. Lastly, a common problem that most instructors mentioned was that although the students get a C1 language level proficiency certificate before they start academic Turkish courses, this might not reflect their actual language level. Because of the standardization problem of education among Turkish teaching centers, the students' motivation level, language proficiency level and knowledge level might differ. As a result, this leads to the inefficiency of academic Turkish education according to the instructors. Some quotes from interviewees are as follows:

*"In fact, we cannot manage to fulfill the requirements of C1 (during the preparatory education). The books are dense. The program is finished before the student can get to C1 as well. Then, for example, he constructs a sentence but there is no beginning and end in the sentence." (I1)*

*"The student is not fully trained about word structures. He needs help with using affixes. There are those who say that they did not come up with an idea, we give an idea, this time they cannot write in detail, of course, it is something related to the student's educational background and qualifications." (I2)*

*"We bring articles in these classes with our own efforts, and as these articles are related to topics from different disciplines. An article about history does not appeal to the engineering student, we experience such problems somehow." (I5)*

### **3.9 Instructors' views regarding the academic writing materials and coursebook(s) used**

Another heading that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data was about the instructors' views regarding academic writing materials and coursebooks. Instructors highlighted the significance of teaching academic vocabulary. However, they criticized the way terminology is included in the textbooks and they added that there should be more functional academic vocabulary included and that there is a great need for more productive activities with academic vocabulary. According to most instructors, the writing activities in the coursebooks should adopt a process approach to academic

writing which allows the teacher and the students to go through the process of producing a text together. Since writing is a creative act, it requires time and feedback to be done well and this can only be provided with a process approach. Some examples from the teachers' views are as follows:

*"We are a little weak in teaching writing in our normal Turkish preparatory classes. As I said before, we give a topic and then we show grammatical errors, subject, verb, object agreement, etc., or we show some grammatical patterns and mistakes that the student uses, but it is about the process in the context of the word group, sentence, paragraph, text, you know, sometimes we do, but we don't systematically teach it." (I1)*

*"Tests can be given at the end of each unit, for example, matching synonyms and antonyms, etc. The student has limited vocabulary and does not know which word to use when completing a sentence. He goes to Google Translate, chooses the wrong word, and it is no longer considered academic writing." (I2)*

### **3.10 Instructors' views about the course practices and implementation regarding academic writing skills**

One of the common issues put forward by students and teachers was insufficient course hours. Instructors complained that there was not enough time to do writing practices during the course because of time constraints. Instructors demanded that they needed more time to guide students throughout the process and to be able to give effective feedback for the writing performances. Another important issue which the instructors pointed out was the different needs of undergraduate and graduate students. When undergraduate and graduate students are placed in the same class, this causes lack of motivation and conflicts in terms of their expectations and needs. Instructors also suggested that academic Turkish skills need a thorough definition. Only then the competencies can be identified and a standardized education will be possible among the Turkish teaching centers. Consequently, based on these competencies, there should be an evaluation system for the academic Turkish course so that the students would take the course seriously and get feedback about their strengths and weaknesses about academic skills.

*"Master and PhD students are very interested in academic Turkish. Because they know that they will write a thesis, write an article, or present a paper. Therefore, the materials and methods I have prepared are of great interest to them and the feedback I have received from these students is very positive. But the students who fall behind these practices sometimes question the need for these practices." (I2)*

*"Also, expectations are different. A student who is going to study undergraduate wants to know what to write in the exam paper when he starts university, how to answer the teacher or how to prepare when an assignment is given, but if he is going to graduate, he is*



*interested in writing the thesis a little more, if he is going to do a doctorate, he already knows how to do his thesis.” (I15)*

*“There's no time left. Questionnaires could be prepared, for example, we have a section on how to interpret graphs and tables for students, but there is not enough time for this, the main problem is time limitations.” (I13)*

*“The book is like a test book, with reading comprehension and so on. There may be more project-style, task-oriented activities and group work activities. I think it should be a different type of resource, not a test.” (I11)*

*“There are some tests at the end of each unit, but they are not enough. I can see the problem with that because I have seen different books for different foreign languages. The method we use in that book is not good enough. It is not a valid form of assessment for the student to find out about his capability in reading or writing skills. It is just a 50-question test and it is a word-oriented test. In fact, it would be interesting if there was a test by which the student could assess himself in all four skills.” (I10)*

#### **4. RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

This post-use materials evaluation study was carried out to analyze in detail the views of teachers and students at universities about the materials they use in their academic writing classes. In this way, the suitability of these materials and implications to the needs and requirements of the teaching and learning environment was evaluated and the results are presented with suggestions for more effective materials and curriculum.

##### **4.1 Results and Suggestions Regarding the Academic Writing Coursebooks and Materials Used**

A positive feedback given for the coursebooks by the students and instructors was about the relevance of the academic input in the coursebooks to the academic contexts. The originality of the texts used in the books, the variety and richness of scientific subject areas and themes, and the fact that they are mainly selected from scientific or popular sources with reliable academic content are compatible with the goals and language levels of the students. Proficiency in academic language; requires knowing the cognitive, linguistic, cultural and formal features of scientific/academic discourse” (Zwiers, 2006, pp. 317-318). Therefore, providing linguistic input to the student with unique examples of this discourse will contribute positively to academic language proficiency. However, the amount of the texts and focus on mainly reading activities were criticized. The students and the teachers demand activities and tasks to help them be more active in the class and be more cooperative in the learning process. Unfortunately, there are very few cooperative learning activities in the textbooks. Activating students with cooperative activities that support interactive learning positively affects their academic success (Önal, 2020). In this respect, it is recommended to add interactive and cooperative tasks

such as pair work, group work and project work activities to the academic Turkish coursebooks.

Reinforcing correct writing with grammatical repetitions and teaching academic language elements and expressions in the "Academic Turkish for International Students-Social Sciences, Sciences, Health Sciences" coursebook set (Uluslararası Öğrenciler İçin Akademik Türkçe- Sosyal Bilimler, Fen Bilimleri, Sağlık Bilimleri) (Moralı, et al., 2018) and "Academic Turkish for International Students II (Writing)" (Uluslararası Öğrenciler İçin Akademik Türkçe II (Yazma)) (Temur and Kurt, 2017) coursebook were perceived as positive features. The necessity of grammar teaching and the needs of the student were expressed by both the instructors and the experts. However, the students and teachers emphasize that the grammar should no longer be taught independently and it should be reinforced through feedback to written products focusing more on functional grammar in academic writing.

According to the instructors, academic writing genres in the coursebooks generally appeal to the needs of graduate students. Findings emerging from instructor and student opinions, supporting the literature, emphasize that academic texts such as scientific articles and abstracts are not among the primary targets of undergraduate students (Hyland, 2009; Bailey, 2011). Therefore, it can be said that the books prepared for the target audience in which undergraduate and graduate students take courses together as a heterogeneous group should be prepared by considering this distinction. In academic Turkish writing teaching, the fact that the activities in the books are mainly aimed at the target achievements of graduate students can be challenging and demotivating for undergraduate students because materials do not address this variability. Therefore, there needs to be additional research on this area, including practical suggestions for the practitioners to cope with this issue.

Another common consideration for almost all this study's participants was feedback. Both instructors and students complained about the lack of feedback guidance on the students' written performances. There are two reasons that cause this problem; the time constraints and the method that is used to teach academic writing in the coursebooks. Due to the short duration of the academic Turkish program and the intense content of the programs, students complain about not being able to practice writing adequately and not getting enough constructive feedback on their written products during the writing process. The teaching approach to academic writing in the coursebooks should also be evaluated based on the teachers' and students' views. It is claimed that materials prepared according to the principles of process-type approach rather than result and product-oriented approach to writing contribute positively to students' academic writing skills (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000; Hyland, 2006). It can be concluded that organizing the content of the books in this direction by increasing the activities of planning, creating multiple drafts and receiving regular feedback will positively affect the students' development.

## 4.2 Results and Suggestions Regarding the Academic Writing Practices and Course Implementation

The demands of students for discipline-specific content end education was not found applicable by the teachers during the intensive academic Turkish courses given before students start studying at their departments. Teachers claim that each departments' content, tasks and terminology might be different and they may not be familiar and competent enough about these discipline specific terminology and tasks. This opinion corresponds with the literature. According to the literature, there is a distinction between language teaching for general academic purposes and language teaching for specific academic purposes (Jordan, 1997; Hyland, 2006). Language teaching for general academic purposes focuses on basic core academic skills, e.g. types of descriptive, analytical, persuasive and critical academic writing-study skills, research skills, language teaching for specific academic purposes is designed to give discipline-specific terminology, types of text and discourse. For a course that has a heterogeneous group of learners from different disciplines, a general academic writing competencies which are common for all disciplines should be defined and the materials and the implementation should be designed accordingly. Moreover, a language course for academic purposes should start from lower language proficiency levels (B1, B2, C2) which will provide both the teachers and the students the necessary time and opportunities to develop writing skills utilizing the principles of process-genre approach.

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Scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed during the writing process of the study titled “An Evaluation of Academic Writing Course Materials Used for International Students From the Perspectives of Students and Teachers”. It has been committed by the authors of this study that no falsification has been made on the collected data and the “Sakarya University Journal of Education Journal and its editor” has no responsibility for all ethical violations. All responsibility belongs to the authors, and that the study has not been sent to any other academic publication medium for evaluation.

**Conflict of Interest Statement**

There is no conflict of interest

**Statement of Financial Support or Acknowledgment:**

No financial support was received from any institution for this study.