Undergraduate-Level English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Distance Education: Perceived Effectiveness of Two Assessment Techniques

Uzaktan Eğitimde Lisans Düzeyinde Akademik Amaçlı İngilizce: İki Ölçme Tekniğinin Algılanan Verimliliği

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of undergraduate-level students of English language and literature program about their English academic writing experiences in the assessment of courses requiring essay writing during a temporary distance education period in 2022-2023 spring term in Türkiye. The study followed a qualitative case study design and utilized semi-structured student interviews for data collection. Synchronous timed-writing exams and home assignments were identified as the two e-assessment techniques EAP writing was involved. The findings revealed that both synchronous timed exams and home assignments had their own limitations and merits with respect to their effects on the efficacy of the students' EAP writing; however, home assignments were found to be more applicable and convenient for students in adhering to the conventions of academic writing. Online timed-writing synchronized with videoconference sessions affected students' emotional reactions and writing task management in a negative direction. The results are discussed in light of the available literature and implications are provided.

Keywords: EAP writing, EAP assessment, E-assessment, L2 writing.

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de geçici olarak uzaktan eğitimle sürdürülen 2022-2023 bahar döneminde İngiliz dili ve edebiyatı lisans programı öğrencilerinin kompozisyon yazmayı gerektiren derslerin değerlendirme süreçlerinde İngilizce akademik yazma deneyimlerine ilişkin algılarını incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Çalışmada nitel durum çalışması deseni kullanılmış, araştırma verileri yarı yapılandırılmış öğrenci görüşmeleri ile elde edilmiştir. Eşzamanlı süreli-yazma sınavları ve ev ödevleri, akademik yazım gerektiren iki e-değerlendirme tekniği olarak belirlenmiştir. Bulgular, öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma yeterliliği üzerindeki etkileri bakımından değerlendirildiğinde, hem eş zamanlı süreli sınavların hem de ev ödevlerinin olumlu ve olumsuz etkileri bulunduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Süreli yazma sınavlar ile kıyaslandığında ev ödevlerinin öğrencilerin akademik yazım kurallarına uyması açısından daha uygulanabilir ve uygun olduğu görülmüştür. Video konferans oturumlarıyla senkronize edilen çevrimiçi süreli yazma deneyimi, öğrencilerin duygusal tepkilerini ve yazma sürecindeki görev yönetimini olumsuz yönde etkilemiştir. Sonuçlar mevcut alan yazın ışığında tartışılarak çıkarımlar sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akademik amaçlı İngilizce, EAP değerlendirme, E-değerlendirme, ikinci dilde yazma.

INTRODUCTION

Writing has recently been acknowledged as a language area fostering language development through its functions of internalizing, modifying and consolidating knowledge (Williams, 2012). Academic writing, distinct from free or narrative writing, has been conceptualized by some scholars within the framework of academic literacies (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis, 2003), and approached as a high-order learner capability with linguistic, cognitive, individual and social dimensions (Rowe, 2011) and a prerequisite for effective academic performance in higher education (Hyland, 2013).

For those students majoring in programs with English-medium instruction (EMI), using English language efficiently and fluently in an academic discourse is a necessity as their performances are principally assessed in accordance with their ability to compose texts in English (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019; Perpignan et al., 2007). Complying with the conventions of English academic writing (hereafter referred to as English for academic purposes [EAP] as it is the more prevalent term) is demanding for many students (Chen & Tseng, 2019; Fernsten & Reda, 2011; Hirvela & Du, 2013; Horstmanshof & Brownie, 2011; Hyland, 2003; Karaca & Uysal, 2021; Kulusaklı, 2021). They experience fear and anxiety while communicating their thoughts or ideas in an academic environment (Holmes et al., 2018). Pineteh (2014) suggests that the difficulties undergraduate students encounter in academic writing at higher education stem from their ineffective earlier school experiences, insufficient literacy and linguistic skills and negative attitudes towards academic writing. Particularly students writing in a second/foreign language (L2) are challenged with the difficulties stemming from the differences across languages with regards to the formalities of writing (Bacha, 2002; Hyland, 2013). Goodfellow and Lea (2005, p. 267) contend that students at varying levels of education are in a constant struggle with the necessities of academic writing. They explain the reasons for this struggle as follows:

> "Student writing is not concerned merely with the acquisition of a set of discrete cognitive skills; in contrast it sees student writing for assessment as engagement in a variety of social practices as students become familiar with – and learn to engage in – a range of complex discourses and genres as part of their studies. Writing then is integral to the process of learning."

Inasmuch as writing is considered intrinsic to learning, it is naturally involved in the assessment of student knowledge and learning (Goodfellow & Lea (2005). Among the EMI departments, English philology and literature programs stand out as those placing the highest emphasis on academic writing as an integral component of assessment criteria of students' content knowledge and academic skills at not only graduate levels but also at undergraduate level (Zorba, 2023). Assessment in the majority of undergraduate courses in these departments involve requiring the students to write their responses in well-developed and organized essays adhering to the conventions of academic writing. That these students' overall achievement is determined to a large extent by their academic writing capabilities (Kuiken & Vedder, 2021) necessitates scholarly scrutiny of the aforementioned difficulties of L2 academic writing in assessment practices. Potentially one of the rare studies on EAP assessment, the current research specifically aims to scrutinize the EAP writing experiences of English language and literature program students in distance-assessment practices during an emergency remote teaching period in 2022-2023 academic year in Türkiye.

The integration of information and communication (ICT) technologies into education has led to the introduction of novel approaches to assessment (Stödberg, 2012). E-assessment, which may be described as utilizing digital learning technologies to administer and conduct assessment in different form and formats (Evans, 2013), is in most cases the only type of assessment in distance education. As is the case with traditional assessment types, e-assessment

can be delivered in formative or summative forms. Formative e-assessment entails a diagnostic evaluation of student performance throughout the process of learning, whereas summative e-assessment refers to a final judgment about student progress at the end of an academic period (Stödberg, 2012). Despite this similarity in the form of assessment in face-to-face and online education, assessment in online settings embraces distinctive features when compared to paper and pencil assessment procedures as a result of the mode and nature of communication between the teachers and students as participants of online interactions (Gikandi et al., 2011).

E-assessment is considered to be advantageous owing to its several temporal and spatial conveniences (Chen & Tseng, 2019) as well as its educational outcomes (Nicol, 2007). Formative e-assessment, in particular, is advocated to provide long-term meaningful student-teacher interactions and effective learning outcomes as long as it is integrated into online learning environments appropriately and effectively (Gikandi et al., 2011). On the other hand, factors pertaining to reliability and validity issues undermines its applicability (Wong et al., 2022). When the assessment of writing skills is considered, many students find different rhetorical requirements in electronic classrooms complex and challenging (Goodfellow & Lea, 2005). Benson and Brack (2010) determines the drawbacks of online writing assessment as the problems related to student assistance, technological inconveniences, plagiarism, and poor instructor administration.

Studies focusing on the academic writing problems of graduate or post-graduate students (Akcaoglu, 2011; AlMarwani, 2020; Alostath, 2022; Holmes et al., 2018; Singh, 2015) and undergraduate students (Pineteh, 2014) exist in literature. However, scant attention has been paid to the EAP challenges that undergraduate L2 students encounter in e-assessment practices in distance education. This paper addresses student perceptions about the EAP writing experiences during the assessment practices of department courses necessitating essay writing in an English language and literature program during a one-term distance education period at a state university in Türkiye. From this purpose, following research questions aroused:

1. What are the perceptions of undergraduate students regarding their experience of EAP writing e-assessment during distance education?
    a. What are the perceived advantages of the e-assessment techniques in regards to EAP writing?
    b. What are the perceived disadvantages of the e-assessment techniques in regards to EAP writing?

METHOD

2.1. Research Design

The present research was designed as a qualitative case study. In qualitative case studies, researchers conduct in-depth analyses of cases, programs, events, activities, processes, or individuals (Creswell, 2014). This design was adopted in the study as the researcher intended to investigate the perceptions of the participants with the aim of obtaining an individualized, detailed and deeper understanding of the case under discussion.

2.2. Study Group

The study was conducted at the English language and literature department at a state university in the eastern region of Türkiye in the spring term of 2022-2023 academic year. All educational activities in the university were delivered online due to a national emergency situation. The survivors of a devastating earthquake occurring in the southeast of the country in February 2023 were allowed to shelter temporarily in student dormitories in other cities, and higher education was compulsorily transformed into distance education. Although the Council

of Higher Education later transformed distance education to a voluntary-basis hybrid education, all students in the department preferred attending the online classes. The courses were delivered on videoconferencing platforms of Zoom and Microsoft Teams and the students could follow courses asynchronously on the learning management system (LMS) of the university. The mid-term and final exams at the university were also administered online. The instructors were offered to select among a range of assessment types including online tests or examinations, take-home assignments, projects or performance tasks.

The study was announced only to the sophomores and juniors in the department. The freshmen were excluded as their understanding of challenges related to EAP could be associated with the novelty of the experience for them. The seniors were also excluded in the scope of the study due to the researcher's concerns over cross-cultural differences among the students since the department students at this level were of another nationality in majority (only one student was of Turkish nationality). Finally, the students participating in the present study were twelve (eleven female and one male) voluntary students studying at their second and third years at the department. The information about these students is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Information about the Participants

No.	Pseudonym	Year of Study
1	Nur	Sophomore
2	Arzu	Sophomore
3	Dilek	Sophomore
4	Deniz	Junior
5	Duygu	Junior
6	Nevin	Sophomore
7	Ahsen	Sophomore
8	Bilge	Junior
9	Sevgi	Junior
10	Merve	Sophomore
11	Işıl	Sophomore
12	Tekin	Sophomore

The courses that the subject groups (sophomores and juniors) were enrolled in the given semester are provided in Table 2 below. The assessment techniques adopted by the course instructors in these courses involved homework assignments (basically writing essays or research reports), projects, and synchronous timed exams.

Table 2

Courses Taught in the Fourth and Sixth Semesters in the Department

Course Title	Semester
18th Century English Literature	4
Literary Terms and Movements	4
Popular English Literature	4
Short Stories	4
19th Century Literature	6
19th Century Novel	6
Literary Theories II	6
Romantic Poetry	6
Translation	4
Introduction to Language and Linguistics –II	4
American Theatre	6
Approaches to Language Teaching -II	6

Although all courses taught in the department in the subject semester are provided in Table 2, it should be noted that the students were asked to consider specifically the courses that required structured essay writing, either synchronous or asynchronous, in the assessment while responding to the interview questions.

2.3. Data Collection

The ethical approval for the present study was granted by XXX University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on 25/05/2023 with the document number E-37077861-900-102339. Research data were collected via a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher based on a review of the relevant literature. The form consisted of seven open-ended questions (Appendix A). In the first three questions, the students were requested to provide their impressions on their experiences in the assessment and evaluation procedures of the online department courses. The fourth and fifth questions interrogated the students' perceptions of the most effective and least effective e-assessment techniques to measure EAP writing to be explained with reasons. The sixth question inquired the e-assessment technique the students had greatest difficulty in terms of EAP writing, again with reasons. The last question probed the students' preferences for the e-assessment techniques in the courses requiring academic writing. In all questions, the students were requested to consider the assessment of the courses requiring them to provide their responses in structured essays.

Once the ethical approval was granted for the study, the students were informed about the scope, purpose and method of the research through the personal contact of the researcher, who is also an instructor at the department, with the class representatives. The representatives announced the research in the class chat groups and reported the volunteers to the researcher. Videoconference meetings were arranged with each volunteer student in one of the weeks following the mid-term exam/assignment period according to the availability of both the researcher and the students. A one-time interview session was held with each participant. The abovementioned interview form was presented to each interviewee on a shared screen during the online meetings and the videoconferences were recorded and stored by the researcher upon the interviewees' consent.

2.4. Data Analysis

The research data collected and stored as video records were later displayed and transcribed by the researcher for thematic analysis. In thematic analysis, researchers read the qualitative data (usually transcripts of records or written open-ended responses) for several times to create codes and group these codes under overarching categories and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process in the present study was deductive in nature. In other words, the themes did not emerge naturally out of the codes. They were rather determined in line with the scope and research questions, and accordingly interview questions, of the study.

The researcher scanned the video conferences, generated codes out of student responses, and subsumed the codes in the categories and themes antecedently determined. The analysis process was recursive and iterative. The codes initially generated were checked and the earlier and later coding schemes were compared several times. Thus, the initial forms of codes evolved into more concise and sophisticated tables, producing valid and clearer categories, sub-categories and themes. This process, which required the researcher to reiterate scanning the interview reports several times eventually contributed to the dependability and credibility of the research. The researcher also intended to provide as many deatiled explanations and example quotations as possible as findings in order to illustrate the extracted codes and accentuate their categorisation for the sake of stronger confirmability.

FINDINGS

The interview reports revealed that the e-assessment techniques adopted by the instructors for the courses in which writing structured academic texts was required consisted of synchronous timed-writing exams and home assignments. The two e-assessment techniques were determined as the main themes of the study, and the advantages and challenges of each technique constituted the categories under each theme. Table 3 displays the themes, categories and codes determined for the study.

Table 3

Themes, Categories and Codes Developed from Research Data

Themes	Categories	Codes
Synchronous timed-writing exams	Advantages	More reliable, requiring higher effort
	Challenges	Negative emotions, lack of concentration, distractors, time limitation, technical problems, strict teacher control, inability to use writing strategies
Home assignments	Advantages	Absence of timed-writing, prior research, planning and organisation, revising and editing, online editing sources, plagiarism detection softwares,
	Challenges	Procrastination and last minute submissions, obscure instructions, inefficacy of measuring actual skill and performance

3.1. Synchronous Timed Exams

The online exams were administered on the LMS of the institution. Some instructors required the students to attend synchronous Zoom video-conferences during the LMS exams. This e-assessment technique had notable drawbacks as well as some conveniences according to the students' perceptions.

Online exams with synchronous videoconferences on other digital platforms were found to be the e-assessment practices with multifaceted shortcomings that negatively influenced writing performance of the students. All participants reported complaints and concerns over the efficacy of the technique in testing the students' English writing capabilities. A commonly-expressed concern was the negative emotional reactions the students developed due to the limited time and technical requirements of the exam procedure. Most students (N=8) reported high anxiety, stress and high excitement, and lack of concentration and focus due to the presence of these emotions. For instance, Nur expressed how stress affected her writing performance as follows:

"Online exams are definitely too stressful and difficult. We do not write very well already, and in online exams your time is limited. Writing under such stress was really difficult for all of us."

With respect to the language areas, Merve explained how synchronous timed writing affected their vocabulary use, spelling and grammar as follows:

"In online exams, we confuse words because of the excitement we feel then. We spell words incorrectly or make many grammar mistakes."

Merve also explained how the stress of being recorded and monitored distracted her attention and affected the quality of her writing when she intentionally avoided losing eye-contact with the monitor screen with the fear of being evaluated as cheating:

I do not cheat but I feel like I should not look elsewhere because I do not want my instructor to think that I am cheating. I try to focus totally on the screen, but then I freeze with stress. Finding the right words, not making grammar mistakes and writing well and giving the correct information in the end under this stress is really difficult.

Technical problems constituted another significant drawback of synchronous timed exams. Many students (N=8) stated that they had difficulty in completing the assignment in the given time as a result of too complex and unsynchronized use of Zoom and LMS platforms, and they had to send their essays as e-mails to the course instructor in the next 15 minutes following the timed exam. Some students were dropped out of the LMS exam session and had too limited time (10 or 15 minutes) to rewrite their essays from the very beginning. There were also others who suffered from unstable internet connection, limited technological support and the distractions of home environment. Several students reported writing their essays on their mobile phones since they did not possess personal computers. Following are extracts from the narratings of some students:

Bilge:

"Online exams were so difficult for me. I could not save my responses, there were connection problems, we tried to send them as emails. Our LMS system has problems. (…)"

Nevin:

(…) I could not upload my response to the system and that was unfair. The zoom session finished before the LMS exam session and the instructor asked us to rejoin the Zoom meeting. When I tried that, I was dropped out of the LMS session. I had to reenter the exam session and it was a torture for me to rewrite that essay in the last ten minutes. (…)

The negative influences of the abovementioned technical problems were highly associated time limitations, which was probably the most challenging and demotivating factor in online essay writing. As reported by the students, the time limit for all Zoom-concurrent exams was determined as forty minutes by the instructors. Almost all students stated that the quality of their writing was negatively influenced by the limited time. The students believed that the time limit was not realistic and sufficient, and that it was the result of the instructors' over-skeptical and over-precautious attitude. Ahsen, for instance, expressed her opinion as follows:

"In the exams, our cameras had to be on and there was a time limit. Besides uploading problems and all, I think the instructors do not believe that we write our own essays and grade us accordingly."

An area that timed-writing adversely affected was the effective administration of writing strategies in pre-writing and post-writing stages. The students complained that they had to pass over the planning and outlining their essays and had to submit them as first drafts since they did not find the time to revise and edit them. Furthermore, effective essay organization, especially preserving unity and coherence, was another challenge the students were faced with in online synchronous timed-writing. Işıl, for instance, emphasized the difficulties she encountered with following words:

"I cannot put my thought down on paper in online exams. There is a given time and we have no chance to do research. Vocabulary is another problem. We cannot go back and review what we have written. It is not effective."

Sample extracts from other students' responses expressing similar concerns are provided below.

Deniz*:*

"Time was so limited in online exams. Writing while you are thinking at the same time was very contradicting. It influenced how I conveyed my thought into words. (…)"

Dilek:

There was a time limit, so I could not write my sentences properly. I might have written a sentence at the beginning while I had to write it at the end, or written a sentence that had to be in the body section at the introduction part. Honestly, I could not manage that well. My sentences got scrambled in the end because I panicked to compete the exam in the given time.

Few advantages of synchronous timed-writing were mentioned by one of the students. Tekin advocated that online exams were more reliable sources of information regarding the actual student performance. He compared online exams to home assignments in this regard and said:

I believe that the most effective technique is online exams because we only write what we know about that subject at that time, but when one-week time is given, we can do as much research as we can. We can start the assignment today and finish it at another time. So I do not find it very useful.

Tekin also believed that synchronous online exams improved student writing as higher effort was exerted in preparation for and during such assessment practices. He maintained:

"(…) When the task is hard, you can see your mistakes, your strengths, and you can compare them. So I believe the harder is always more effective."

3.2. Home Assignments

The home assignments were announced and required submission on either the LMS or similarity detection software systems. Some home assignments were due on the same day, whereas some others had one-week submission periods.

High effectiveness with regard to EAP writing assessment was reported for home assignments. The students found this technique of e-assessment as more advantageous when compared to synchronous timed-writing exams. The most influential factor was the absence of time limitations. The students could allocate time for all stages of writing process. They could do prior research on both the content and style of essays. Nevin said:

"Home assignments are definitely better. When we prepare the assignments, and ask 'how to write an essay?', 'In one, three or five paragraphs?', we can check the rules about essay writing."

Dilek explained how she could plan and organize her papers before assignment submission as follows:

"I think home assignments are more effective because I can research about the subject thoroughly and express my thoughts in a more organized way. As I have enough time, I can write clearer and more organized sentences."

The students could also revise and edit their home-assigned papers, which is of critical value in EAP writing. They reported that they could assess their own papers or negotiate their papers with other students in the given time, which enhanced the quality of their papers. Sevgi said:

"In assignments, we have the opportunity to do extensive research. We can discuss our ideas and check our essays later to see if we wrote correctly or not."

Işıl explained how she edited her essays and used online editing sources before submitting her assignments:

(…) For home assignments, we have a chance to have a look at our essays a few days later to see our mistakes and so on. It is very advantageous in that regard. (…). There are grammar checker programs on the internet. We can check our essays there before submission to see our grammar mistakes.

Another advantageous aspect of home assignments was fair assessment approaches such as some instructors' use of plagiarism detection software systems. the students alleged that this enabled them to to be more secure and self-confident in their assignments. For instance, Ahsen said:

"I would prefer assignments over online tests because in online tests we are always under the suspicion of cheating. But when our instructors use plagiarism applications, we can all see the similarity report."

The duration of home assignments was found to be an important criterion in the efficacy of this e-assessment technique. One of the students, Arzu, believed that long term assignments led to procrastination and eventually last-minute and unsophisticated submissions. She asserted:

"I find long-term assignments ineffective because we always think we have so much time and leave it to the last minute. We cannot write well-written essays then."

Task complexity was the other drawback of home assignments. Some students reported that the assignments in some courses were too obscure and complicated. Bilge, for instance, criticized some instructors' ignorance of the limitations of distance education, probably referring to weak teacher student interaction, with the following words:

"In the online exams, yes, my performance was restricted, but the assigments were harder for me. In some assignments, the instructors asked embedded questions. I could not achieve the unity in my responses; I could not organize my thoughts and did not know where to start. I could not find any information on the internet, either. In one of the assignments, it took me three days to understand what I had to do. Some instructors forget that we are in distance, not face-to-face education, and behave that way."

One of the students, Tekin, highlighted that the weakness of home assignments was that they did not reflect the actual skills and knowledge of the students. He expressed his thoughts as follows:

"I do not think that essay writing requires a long time. When we have too much time, we do research from any resource, so I do not find assignments very effective."

In summary, the findings of the study demonstrated that both synchronous timed-writing exams and home assignments as e-assessment practices in distance education had their own limitations and merits with respect to their effects on the efficacy of the students' EAP writing. When compared, home assignments were found to be more applicable and convenient for students in adhering to the conventions of academic writing. Online timed-writing synchronized with videoconference sessions affected students' emotional reactions and management of cognitive processes in a negative direction.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the perceptions of a group of undergraduate students majoring in English language and literature program about e-assessment practices during a temporary distance education period with a specific focus on their EAP writing experiences in the assessment of the courses requiring essay writing. Synchronous and timed essay writing and home-assigned essay writing were identified as the two e-assessment techniques EAP writing was involved. The findings indicated the highest student satisfaction with home assignments which had relatively shorter time limitations and which were submitted through plagiarism and artificial intelligence detection software systems. This might be explained with the fact that the use of plagiarism and artificial intelligence detection software systems creates a secured bond between the instructor and the students. Academic integrity of online writing assessment has been questioned by many teachers as it raises questions regarding the authenticity and authorization of the texts written by students (Al-Bargi, 2022). The secured bond alleviates both students' and instructors' stress and concern over the authenticity of student texts.

That most students preferred take-home assignments over synchronous exams due to the opportunity of utilizing online resources and tools to increase the linguistic quality of their writing aligns with prior research with similar findings (Shin et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2022). Preparing their essays in a longer period of time supplied them with the flexibility that the online exams failed to provide. The students could use the temporal advantage of assignments and could employ pre-writing strategies such as planning, freewriting and outlining, and post-writing activities of rereading, revising and editing. The students also had the opportunity of self-assessment and peer feedback in home assignments, which contributed to the improvement of their papers. On the other hand, the cases instructors preferred online timed-writing exams, during which all these processes crucial for effective academic writing were undermined, were not inconsiderable in the present context. This finding lends support to Çelik's (2020) findings which demonstrate that process writing, which is a process-oriented writing approach encompassing the stages of planning, drafting, revising and editing (Hyland, 2003), is undervalued in Turkish higher education.

The weakness of synchronous timed-writing exams principally arose from time limitation, technical problems, and the pressure of being monitored. Under such circumstances, the students had difficulty in dealing with the affective factors and focusing on the task, and their skills and knowledge could hardly be reflected in their writing performance. As Han and Hyland (2019) assert, negative emotions might impede student motivation, reduce the effort they expend and undermine their commitment to attain learning goals. Equally importantly, the students experienced confusion and difficulty while struggling to abide by academic writing conventions and follow the pre- and post-writing activities crucial to effective writing. Earlier research aligns with the present findings by asserting that student concerns over online academic writing focalize on the issues related to time, self-presentation and the genre-specific writing (Goodfellow & Lea, 2005; Şenel & Şenel, 2021). As Wong et al. (2022) argue, instructors as test-setters should develop an understanding acknowledging the potential effects of contextual differences between the traditional assessment and e-assessment on students' reference to resources as well as the length and quality of student texts in online exams. As for the challenges appertaining to task complexity of home assignments, relevant research supports the current findings by pointing out students' potential misunderstanding of writing tasks and possible conflicts over the essence of the task as concerns over EAP assessment (Dunworth, 2008).

Another noteworthy result of the study was that, for both e-assessment practices, teacher feedback was not reported. Teacher/instructor feedback is an essential component of L2 writing development (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). As Gikandi et al. (2011) assert, timely, ongoing and formative assessment feedback and learner support should be integrated into e-assessment so

that it may be appreciated as sufficiently valid and accountable. Relevant literature affirms the efficacy of immediate instructor feedback as a component of assessment in academic writing (Horstmanshof & Brownie, 2011). Şenel and Şenel (2021) studied student perceptions regarding online assessment practices in Türkiye during pandemic-urged distance education in 2019-2020 academic year. They found that the students reported greater satisfaction with e-assessment when they had more frequent interaction with the course instructors.

Following recommendations can be made with reference to the abovementioned results:

- Instructors may consider adopting formative approaches to EAP assessment instead of summative techniques in order to maximize student engagement and minimize the inconveniences of distance education.

- The assessment techniques to be adopted in distance education should be evaluated with regards to their appropriateness for measuring students' academic skills as well as their content knowledge. Besides, the differences between face-to-face and virtual environments should be taken into consideration when assessment types are determined.

- The students should also be provided with timely assessment feedback in order to enhance grading accountability and transparency which will eventually enhance instructor-student relationships.

- The applied measurement and evaluation methods and techniques should be diversified, taking into account their suitability for the relevant field, and alternative contemporary approaches sensitive to individual differences should be followed in addition to traditional methods.

- Student opinions regarding the effectiveness of the applied assesment techniques and the difficulties and disruptions experienced in application should be taken into account, and measures to increase the applicability and reliability of the assesment technique should be taken by instructors.

This study has limitations due to some factors. To begin with, the generalizability of the study results is limited to its specific context. Another limitation has been the reliance of the research data on the participant students' ability to recall and share the details of the subject experience. Also, the weak homogeneity in gender and academic year groups is another limitation that should be noted. Lastly, that the thematic analysis was conducted with a single coder is a methodological drawback for the study. Despite these limitations, this research has been one of the first attempts to reveal EAP-related challenges of e-assessment practices in distance education in L2 philology and literature programs. It intends to provide a deeper insight into EAP writing, EAP assessment and e-assessment practices. Future research is yet required for more extensive and deeper understanding of the factors affecting the efficacy of undergraduate EAP writing in assessment practices in varying contexts and under different circumstances.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZ

Giriş

İngilizce akademik yazma kurallarına uymak birçok öğrenci için oldukça zorlayıcı bir deneyimdir (Chen & Tseng, 2019; Fernsten & Reda, 2011; Hirvela & Du, 2013; Horstmanshof & Brownie, 2011; Hyland, 2003; Karaca & Uysal, 2021; Kulusaklı, 2021). Özellikle ikinci/yabancı dilde yazan öğrenciler, yazım kuralları bakımından diller arası farklılıklardan kaynaklanan zorluklarla karşı karşıya kalmaktadır (Bacha, 2002; Hyland, 2013). Yazma becerisi, öğrenmenin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak kabul edilmesi (Goodfellow & Lea, 2005) ve öğrencilerin genel başarısının büyük ölçüde akademik yazma becerileri tarafından belirlenmesi (Kuiken & Vedder, 2021), değerlendirme uygulamalarında ikinci dilde akademik yazmanın zorluklarının bilimsel olarak incelenmesini gerektirmektedir. Dahası, çevrimiçi öğrenme ortamlarında yazma becerilerinin değerlendirilmesi, birçok öğrenci tarafından sanal sınıflardaki farklı retorik gereklilikler sebebiyle karmaşık ve zorlayıcı olarak değerlendirilmektedir (Goodfellow & Lea, 2005). İlgili alan yazında lisans ve lisansüstü öğrencilerin (Akçaoğlu, 2011; AlMarwani, 2020; Alostath, 2022; Holmes vd., 2018; Singh, 2015) ve lisans öğrencilerinin (Pineteh, 2014) akademik yazma sorunlarına odaklanan araştırmalar bulunmaktadır. Ancak, yabancı dil alan öğrencilerinin uzaktan eğitimde e-değerlendirme uygulamalarında karşılaştıkları İngilizce akademik yazma zorluklarının yeterince araştırılmadığı görülmektedir. Bu makale, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinde bir dönemlik uzaktan eğitim sürecinde bir İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı programında kompozisyon yazmayı gerektiren bölüm derslerinin değerlendirilmesi sırasında öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma deneyimlerine dair görüşlerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda aşağıdaki araştırma soruları ortaya çıkmıştır:

1. Lisans öğrencilerinin uzaktan eğitim sırasında İngilizce akademik yazma e-değerlendirme deneyimlerine ilişkin algıları nelerdir?
   a. İngilizce akademik yazma açısından e-değerlendirme tekniklerinin algılanan avantajları nelerdir?
   b. İngilizce akademik yazma açısından e-değerlendirme tekniklerinin algılanan dezavantajları nelerdir?

Yöntem

Bu araştırma nitel bir durum çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Çalışma, 2022-2023 eğitim-öğretim yılı bahar döneminde Türkiye'nin doğusunda bulunan bir devlet üniversitesinin İngiliz dili ve edebiyatı bölümünde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Üniversitedeki tüm eğitim faaliyetleri, ilgili akademik dönemde ulusal bir acil durum nedeniyle çevrimiçi olarak verilmiştir. Dersler, Zoom ve Microsoft Teams'in video konferans platformlarında işlenmiş, ayrıca öğrenciler, üniversitenin öğrenme yönetim sistemi (LMS) üzerinden asenkron olarak dersleri takip edebilmişlerdir. Çalışma, bölümün ikinci ve üçüncü sınıflarında öğrenim gören çoğunluğu kız öğrenci (N=11) ve ikinci sınıf (N=8) öğrencisi olmak üzere on iki katılımcı ile gerçekleşmiştir. Araştırma verileri, araştırmacı tarafından ilgili alan yazın taramasına dayalı olarak geliştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Form yedi adet açık uçlu sorudan oluşmaktadır. İlk üç soruda öğrencilerden çevrimiçi bölüm derslerinin ölçme ve değerlendirme süreçlerindeki deneyimlerine ilişkin izlenimlerini belirtmeleri istenmiştir. Dördüncü ve beşinci sorular, nedenleriyle açıklanmak üzere İngilizce akademik yazmayı ölçmede en etkili ve en az etkili e-değerlendirme tekniklerine ilişkin öğrenci algılarını sorgulamıştır. Altıncı soruda öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma konusunda en çok zorlandıkları e-değerlendirme tekniği yine gerekçeleriyle sorgulanmıştır. Son soru ise öğrencilerin akademik yazma gerektiren derslerde e-değerlendirme tekniklerine dair tercihlerini gerekçeleri ile açıklamalarını talep etmektedir. Araştırma verileri tematik analiz ile çözümlenerek öğrenci cevaplarından elde edilen kodlar ilgili kategori ve temalar altında toplanmıştır.

Bulgular

Görüşme raporları, yapılandırılmış akademik metinlerin yazılmasının gerekli olduğu dersler için öğretim elemanları tarafından benimsenen e-değerlendirme tekniklerinin eş zamanlı süreli-yazma sınavlar ve ev ödevlerinden oluştuğunu ortaya koymuştur. Araştırmanın bulguları, uzaktan eğitimde e-değerlendirme uygulamaları olarak hem eş zamanlı süreli-yazma sınavlarının hem de ev ödevlerinin, öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma yeterliliği üzerindeki etkileri açısından kendi sınırlamaları ve yararları olduğunu göstermiştir. Ev ödevlerinin zaman sınırlamasının olmayışı, ön hazırlık ve araştırma yapma olanağı sunması, yazma öncesi (planlama, taslak oluşturma) ve yazma sonrası (gözden geçirme, düzenleme) süreçlerin uygulanabilirliği gibi özellikleri göz önünde bulundurulduğunda akademik yazım kurallarına uyulması açısından daha uygulanabilir ve uygun olduğu görülmüştür. Ev ödevlerinin öğrenciler tarafından tartışılan dezavantajları ise süre sınırlandırması esnek olan ödevlerde erteleme davranışının artması ve bu sebeple son dakikalarda teslim edilen ödevlerin kalitesinin düşük olması, bazı ödevlerde içeriğin fazla belirsiz ve karmaşık sunulması ve ödevlerin öğrenci performansını gerçek anlamda ortaya koymaması olarak belirlenmiştir. Video konferans oturumlarıyla senkronize edilen çevrimiçi süreli-yazma sınavlarının ise ev ödevlerinin sunduğu olanakların başta süre sınırlandırması olmak üzere uzaktan eğitime dair zorluklar ile sınırlandırılması sebebiyle öğrencilerin duygusal tepkilerini ve bilişsel süreçlerin yönetimini olumsuz yönde etkilediği ortaya konmuştur. Birçok öğrenci, eşzamanlı sınavlar esnasında yüksek kaygı, stress, yüksek heyecan ve bu duyguların varlığından dolayı konsantrasyon ve odaklanma eksikliği yaşadığını bildirmiştir. Senkron zamanlı sınavların bir diğer önemli dezavantajı ise teknik sorunlar olmuştur. Birçok öğrenci, Zoom ve LMS platformlarının çok karmaşık ve senkronize olmayan kullanımı sonucunda ödevi verilen sürede tamamlayamadığını belirtmiştir. Süre sınırlaması altında yazmanın olumsuz etkilediği alanlardan biri de yazma öncesi ve sonrası aşamaların etkili yönetimi olmuştur. Ayrıca, metnin organizasyonu, anlam bütünlüğü ve bağlılığı gibi konular, öğrencilerin çevrimiçi süreli sınavlarda zorlandıkları diğer alanlar olarak belirtilmiştir. Çevrimiçi sınavlara dair dile getirilen tek olumlu özellik, dış kaynaklara dayalı yazımı en aza indirmesi sebebiyle öğrencilerin gerçek performansını ortaya koyması ve daha zorlayıcı olması sebebiyle daha etkili öğrenme sağlaması olarak göze çarpmaktadır.

Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler

Araştırma bulguları, en yüksek öğrenci memnuniyetini intihal ve yapay zeka algılama yazılım sistemleri aracılığıyla sunulan ve nispeten daha kısa süre sınırlamaları olan ev ödevlerinde göstermiştir. Çoğu öğrencinin, yazılarının dil kalitesini artırmak için çevrimiçi kaynakları ve araçları kullanma fırsatı nedeniyle eşzamanlı sınavlar yerine ev ödevlerini tercih etmesi, benzer bulgular sunan önceki araştırmaları desteklemektedir (Shin vd., 2021; Wong vd., 2022). Makalelerini daha uzun sürede hazırlamak, öğrencilere çevrimiçi sınavların sağlayamadığı esnekliği sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, öğrenciler ev ödevlerinde öz değerlendirme ve akran geri bildirimi yapma fırsatı elde edebilir, bu fırsat yazılarını geliştirmelerine katkıda bulunabilir. Öğrencilerin çevrimiçi akademik yazmaya ilişkin endişelerinin kaynağının ise zaman kısıtlaması, teknik problemler ve izlenme baskısı olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Bu sonuçlar, zaman, etkili ifade ve türe özgü yazmaya dair zorluklardan kaynaklandığı yönünde bulgular sunan araştırmalar ile uyum göstermektedir (Goodfellow & Lea, 2005; Şenel & Şenel, 2021). Değerlendirme sürecini yönetme rolünde olan öğretim elemanlarının, geleneksel değerlendirme ile e-değerlendirme arasındaki bağlamsal farklılıkların öğrencilerin kaynaklara referansı ve çevrimiçi sınavlardaki öğrenci metinlerinin uzunluğu ve kalitesi üzerindeki potansiyel etkilerini kabul eden bir anlayış geliştirmeleri gerekmektedir.

Araştırma sonuçlarından hareketle şu önerilerde bulunulabilir:

- Öğretim elemanları, öğrenci katılımını en üst düzeye çıkarmak ve uzaktan eğitimin zorluklarını en aza indirmek için özetleyici teknikler yerine İngilizce akademik yazma becerilerinin değerlendirmesine yönelik biçimlendirici yaklaşımları benimsemeyi düşünebilirler.
- Uzaktan eğitimde uygulanacak değerlendirme teknikleri, öğrencilerin alan bilgileri kadar akademik becerilerini de ölçmeye uygunluğu açısından değerlendirilmelidir. Ayrıca değerlendirme türlerinin belirlenmesinde yüz yüze ve sanal ortamlar arasındaki farklılıklar da göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.
- Öğrencilere, notlandırma güvenirliği ve şeffaflığını artırmak ve nihayetinde öğretmen-öğrenci ilişkilerini geliştirmek için zamanında değerlendirme geri bildirimi sağlanmalıdır.
- Uygulanan ölçme ve değerlendirme yöntem ve teknikleri ilgili alana uygunluğu gözetilerek çeşitlendirilmeli, geleneksel yaklaşımların yanı sıra çağdaş ve bireysel farklılıklara duyarlı alternatif yaklaşımlar takip edilmelidir.
- Uygulanan ölçme tekniklerinin etkililiği ve uygulamada yaşanan güçlükler ve aksaklıklara dair öğrenci görüşleri dikkate alınmalı, ölçme tekniğinin uygulanabilirliğini ve güvenirliğini artırıcı önlemler öğretim elemanları tarafından alınmalıdır.

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

1. Which evaluation tools were used in the midterm exams of the courses you took via distance education in the 2022-2023 spring semester?

2.. Please give brief information about your midterm exams that required writing essays/articles/summaries etc. in English in the 2022-2023 spring semester.

3. Please evaluate your writing experience in midterm exams that required writing essays/articles/summaries etc. in English in the 2022-2023 spring semester.

4. Which e-measurement method (homework, online exam, project, etc.) do you find most effective in measuring your English academic writing skills? Explain with reasons.

5. Which e-measurement method (homework, online exam, project, etc.) do you find most ineffective in measuring your English academic writing skills? Explain with reasons.

6. Which e-measurement method (homework, online exam, project, etc.) did you find most difficult when using your English academic writing skills? Explain with reasons.

7. Which of the e-assessment tools do you prefer in the evaluation process of courses that require you to use your English academic writing skills? Explain with reasons.