AN ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC WRITING NEEDS OF

GRADUATE STUDENTS

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

AN ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC WRITING NEEDS
OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

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This study mainly aimed at investigating the academic writing needs and writing self-efficacy beliefs of graduate students studying at an English-medium university, Ankara. Furthermore, such areas that have a crucial role in determining writing needs as the frequency of writing tasks, usefulness of written sources, perceived importance of academic writing, and role of Turkish while writing were explored. In this study, quantitative data via "Academic Writing Needs Assessment Survey for Graduate Students" were collected from 213 graduate students enrolled at Graduate School of Social Sciences. Descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple regression analyses were employed to analyze the data. The results of descriptive statistics indicated that the graduate students need a wider vocabulary repertoire in order to cope with the challenges of academic writing and they are mostly assigned longer research papers. In addition, using journal articles published in the area of specialization during writing was the most common method and more than half of the graduate students stated that when stuck with finding the right word, they first look for a Turkish word first.

The exploratory factor analysis produced two factors and the regression analyses were carried out. The results yielded that the predictors accounted for 24% of the variance in productivity-related academic writing needs, and 22% of the variance in accuracy-related academic writing needs. For the productivity-related academic writing needs, writing self-efficacy and academic status made a significant

contribution and for the accuracy-related academic writing needs, writing self-efficacy and English proficiency exam score were significant.

Keywords: Academic Writing, Writing Self-Efficacy, Writing Tasks, Written Sources

ÖZ

LİSANSÜSTÜ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN
AKADEMİK YAZI İHTİYAÇLARI ÜZERİNE BİR DEĞERLENDİRME

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Bu çalışma temelde, Ankara'da bulunan öğretim dili İngilizce olan bir üniversitedeki lisansüstü öğrencilerin akademik yazı ihtiyaçlarını ve yazma özyeterliği inançlarını araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Buna ek olarak yazma ile ilgili ihtiyaçların belirlenmesinde önemli rolü olan yazma ile ilgili ödev türlerinin sıklığı, yazılı kaynakların faydalılık derecesi, akademik yazının algılanan önemi ve Türkçenin yazma sırasındaki rolü incelenmiştir. Çalışma için gerekli nicel veriler Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü'ne kayıtlı 213 lisansüstü öğrenciden "Lisansüstü Öğrenciler için Akademik Yazı İhtiyaçlarını Değerlendirme Anketi" yoluyla toplanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde ise betimsel istatistik, açıklayıcı faktör analizi ve çoklu regresyon analizleri uygulanmıştır. Betimsel istatistik sonuçları lisansüstü öğrencilerin akademik yazının zorluklarının üstesinden gelebilmek için daha geniş bir kelime dağarcığına ihtiyaç duyduklarını ve daha uzun araştırma makaleleri ile görevlendirildiklerini göstermiştir. Buna ek olarak uzmanlık alanlarında yayımlanan akademik dergilerdeki makalelerin yazılmasında en sık başvurulan metot olduğu gözlemlenmiştir ve çalışmaya katılan lisansüstü öğrencilerin yarısından çoğu doğru kelimeyi bulamadıklarında önce kelimenin Türkçesini belirtmişlerdir.

Açıklayıcı faktör analizi sonucunda iki farklı faktör ortaya çıkmış ve regresyon analizleri yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar, yordayıcıların bir tarafta üretkenlikle ilgili akademik yazı ihtiyaçlarındaki yüzde 24'lük değişimi açıklarken, doğruluk ile ilgili akademik yazı ihtiyaçlarındaki yüzde 22'lik değişimi açıkladığını göstermiştir. Üretkenlikle ilgili akademik yazı ihtiyaçlarına yazma özyeterliği ve akademik durum anlamlı

katkı sağlamışlardır. Diğer yandan, yazma özyeterliği ve İngilizce yeterlilik sınavı doğruluk ile ilgili akademik yazı ihtiyaçları için anlamlı olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akademik Yazı, Yazma Özyeterliği, Yazma Görevleri, Yazılı Kaynaklar

To my wife,

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aimed at presenting a general notion regarding the structure of the thesis. To this end, the background to the study and the purpose, research questions, significance of the study, and the definitions of some crucial concepts are presented.

1.1. Background to the Study

Language as a means of communication tool has gathered importance in the previous decades and today this crucial tool seems to be affecting the communities' culture and social interactions deeply. When the current situation in the "global" world is considered in terms of a language's common use, English is regarded as one of the most widely used and taught languages in the world, although there are other languages spoken by more people in populated countries (McKay, 2010). As a result of this, in language teaching contexts the use of English as an International Language has become a popular term (Brutt-Griffler, 2003; Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 2003; McKay, 2002). In addition, as stated by Carey (2010), English has progressively begun to be the international academic language especially because of the Internet and multimedia, which are regarded as the agents of the need for a common world language. Besides, the idea of English as an international language is supported by the fact that the amount of academic research papers, which are published in English, is more than 85-90% when the academic research papers are examined on a global level (Ammon, 2007; Hamel, 2007). Therefore, to take part in and contribute to conferences and publications, improving academic English is indispensable and of great importance for graduate students and faculty members of all countries world-wide (Carey, 2010).

The quest for a common world language and accepting English as a medium of communication, both spoken and written, has resulted in the teaching of the language in the wide arena. For this reason, teaching English, particularly the teaching of four

main skills either segregated or integrated has become an integral part of language classes. This has also brought about another important concept for the academicians, including master and doctoral degree students, which is "academic literacy." Spack (1997) defined the term as being able to read and write the texts assigned at the university level. Later, Braine (2002) added that "academic literacy is a knowledge of one's chosen field of study; in addition, research skills, and good reading and writing skills form only the foundation for the acquisition of academic literacy" (p. 60). Except for the additions made, the two similar points in the definitions are the two language skills, namely reading and writing. The significance of the two skills, especially writing in terms of academic success was also implied by Carey (2010) who pointed out the requirement of "reading and writing literacy in academic English to access professional success" and asserted that "the inability to write well in academic English constitutes a barrier of immense proportions to academic and professional advancement" (p. 148). Therefore, it can overtly be said that writing, apart from other skills, is thought to be a crucial part of thinking and learning in the classroom, especially when the requirements of 21st century are taken into account (Johannessen, 2001). In addition, the writing tasks assigned to the students are regarded as important tools in the development of both the individual and the society (Bruning & Horn, 2000).

However, as indicated by a study carried out in Turkey, the students are unable to convey their ideas even when they write in their first language (Köse & Şahin, 2008). Since the results of the study showed that Turkish university students had a score of 48.87 out of 100 for their compositions in their first year when they wrote in their native language. Köse and Şahin (2008) also stated that it was because the necessary language skills for writing even in the first language were not taught to these students during primary and secondary schools.

Apart from the above mentioned issue that the Turkish students face while writing in their own language, the indispensability of English for academic writing in the academic world worsens the problem in some situations. One of the reasons for this is that English has been widely recognized as the language of publication for many

international articles and the scholars are to publish in English to be recognized at the international level. From this point of view, academic writing in English, especially for the non-native students, constitutes both an opportunity and a threat. As asserted by Wang and Bakken (2005), for the majority, academic writing is perceived as a barrier because of the complex nature of writing as a skill and writing is regarded as a challenging skill for the novice scholars.

Writing, as mentioned before, among the other main skills, is considered to be an effortful and complex activity and to be able to handle the many limitations in writing, the organization of cognitive activities is a basic need for the writers (Kieft, Rijlaarsdam, & Van den Bergh, 2006). Therefore, the students need support in handling the necessities of academic writing. However, the graduate students have few opportunities to take courses that will provide them with a transition from writing a term paper to writing an academic paper. Moreover, these few opportunities sometimes cause a concern since there seems to be a wide gap between what is required from the graduate students and what is taught during writing classes. Because, the courses offered for the graduate students by preparatory classes often focus on composition types and they do not prepare the students to deal with graduate-level academic writing (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999). As a result of this, the graduate students would assert that academic writing can be the most difficult part of learning and studying (Pelias, 2003). Therefore, the literature regarding the undeniable role of English as a commanding language has increased to a great extent. Especially, the topics related to the part English plays as a language of scientific publication and the difficulties this presents for non-native English scholars who are required to write in English to gain audience have been the focus of many research studies (Ammon, 2007; Benfield & Feak, 2006; Buckingham & Geri, 2008; Curry & Lillis, 2004; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005; Uzuner, 2008).

Although writing is a demanding activity and despite the drawbacks it may pose, the central function it has in the academic world, because of its extensive usage in teaching, research and administrative tasks is undeniable. (Antonioua & Moriartyb, 2008; Eyres, Hatch, Turner, & West, 2001; Lee & Boud, 2003; Rose & McClafferty,

2001). For academics written outputs produced through academic writing are the most crucial agents that characterize a long and successful career (Antonioua & Moriartyb, 2008; Lee & Boud, 2003; McGrail, Rickard, & Jones, 2006) and these outputs also support the visibility of the authors (Tahar, 2010).

In addition, academic writing is an essential component of a successful academic career; however, the number of graduates who are blamed for being unprepared for the academic writing tasks in the universities is rapidly increasing. One of the reasons for this is the amount of knowledge related to the processes regarding the needs and perceptions of graduate students through which students acquire the academic writing skills to achieve success is very little. Apart from the needs and perceptions of the graduate students, having knowledge about self-efficacy, which was defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations"(Bandura, 1997, p. 2), is of great importance. Because the term encompasses the graduate students' perceptions of themselves regarding the coping strategies they utilize when they encounter challenges related to academic writing. While defining self-efficacy, Pajares (1996) stated "knowledge, skill, and prior attainments are often poor predictors of subsequent attainments because the beliefs that individuals hold about their abilities and about the outcome of their efforts powerfully influence the ways in which they will behave" (p. 543). When academic writing is considered within this framework, it can be clearly stated that the perception an individual has regarding his or her ability to write effectively is a crucial constituent. In other words, the theory of self-efficacy has powerful implications for student writing if belief so strongly influences behavior (McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985).

Nevertheless, research regarding a crucial impact on the quality of student writing, which is the relatedness between the writing attainment of students and their sense of efficacy about their writing, is in the beginning stages (McCarthy et al., 1985; Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). What is more, the emphasis in the research has been on the academic writing tasks in terms of their requirements and

expectations rather than the processes the students go through while writing (Braine, 1989; Bridgeman & Carlson, 1983; Canseco & Byrd, 1989; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Horowitz, 1986a, 1986b; Johns, 1981; Kroll, 1979). In addition to this, the research studies carried out so far have utilized the analysis of documents or texts (Canseco & Byrd, 1989; Hale et al., 1996; Horowitz, 1986b; Rose, 1983), surveys for the faculty members (Bridgeman & Carlson, 1983; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Johns, 1981; Sherwood, 1977) or for the students (Kroll, 1979; Leki & Carson, 1994). Apart from these methods, gathering information through a needs analysis regarding the needs of the students could also be an important indicator. Because, when the underlying reasons behind the students' target needs are identified, the curriculum developers and the faculty members can be supported with crucial information related to the design of a successful curriculum or a course (Kirkgöz, 2009). To this end, changing the current situation for academic writing, which involves the already established writing tasks independently of student needs, and placing the graduate students' needs at the center has become a necessity.

Based on the above mentioned studies that utilized a variety of methods, this research will take a further step in academic writing by combining the results of a needs analysis and self-efficacy. The results of the study will be an important agent for the graduate students; in that, detecting the needs and self-efficacy beliefs of students will have an immediate effect on the nature of academic writing courses, workshops or seminars for the graduate students.

1.2.   Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to shed a light on the academic writing needs of the graduate students at the Graduate School of Social Sciences. To this end, graduate students' needs, perceptions, and self-efficacy beliefs regarding academic writing, the frequency of academic writing tasks assigned, the usefulness of written sources, and the role Turkish plays while writing were explored through a survey research. In addition to this, the study attempted to identify the relationship between English proficiency scores and writing self-efficacy beliefs.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in the current study:

1. What are the academic writing needs of the graduate students at the Graduate School of Social Sciences?
2. What is the level of writing self-efficacy of the graduate students at the Graduate School of Social Sciences?
3. How well do perceived importance of academic writing, writing self-efficacy, and English proficiency predict academic writing needs of graduate students?

1.4. Significance of the Study

The main idea behind the writing assignments at the graduate level is to lead the students to discover, think critically, and learn while searching for information. At this level, the closed-book type exams are replaced with take-home type exams which require the graduate students to evaluate and synthesize other documents (Vifansi, 2002). In addition to the take-home exams, there are quite a few prevailing ideas related to the writing tasks carried out. According to Rose (1983), most of the writing tasks require expository or transactional writing and within these tasks rhetorical conventions change from discipline to discipline. In addition, Canseco and Byrd (1989), after analyzing the syllabi, pointed out that apart from the discipline related conventions, writing at this level is partially controlled by faculty members.

Other than the effect of discipline related rules and the faculty members, the effect of first language (L1) on second language (L2) writing has been a focus for some other researchers. To this end, Cumming (1990) asserted that knowing writing in L1 helps L2 writing tasks while language problems hinder writing and make transition from one writing style (L1) to another difficult process. Besides this, lack of knowledge of grammar and familiarity with the features of written academic discourse and rhetorical principles in English can be stated as reasons for experiencing difficulties in academic writing.

Within the framework of above mentioned assertions, there are a few important aspects of the current study. Initially, as mentioned above, the focus was on the academic writing needs and self-efficacy beliefs of the graduate students. Because at the graduate level, students' feelings related to academic writing can expose a great deal of information regarding the problems they encounter. Therefore, knowing the graduate students' feelings is crucial. Although academic writing, which includes such crucial tasks as research reports, take-home exams, reflection papers, is an important component of graduate studies, it can sometimes be a burden for some students. Thus, such an important component of academic career needs to be clarified, so that the idea of writing can relieve itself from being a cause of anxiety for the students.

The problems faced by the graduate students are not the same for native and non-native students. Native students, in terms of academic writing, are regarded as advantageous since the background education they have provides them with an abundant resource to utilize during writing, such as lexical information, formal and informal writing skills and rules related to organization of a written document. However, non-native speakers, although some has a good vocabulary repertoire, occasionally face the problem of using the appropriate word, idiom or connotation in the right place (Vifansi, 2002). Besides, such concepts as cohesion and unity can also become problematic issues for these students. When the current situation in the social sciences is taken into account, academic writing for the non-native students becomes more important. Because, it was also pointed out that there is no alternative in social sciences as regards to academic writing in English. Nevertheless, the number of studies, focusing particularly on Turkish graduate students' writing processes and challenges, is only a few and the literature regarding these issues is very limited (Yağız, 2009). When the existing literature is thoroughly examined, it is seen that the majority of the studies attempted to investigate composing process in the foreign language especially at the high school or undergraduate level (Akyel, 1994; Akyel & Kamisli, 1996; Alagozlu, 2007; Uysal, 2008) and the studies mentioned focused on the "similarities, differences, strategies, experiences, attitudes and/or effect of foreign language instruction" (Gürel, 2010, p. 28). In addition, it is thought-provoking that

when the first language education is considered, it is noted that Turkish students are not provided with any formal first language writing instruction at any level (Yağız, 2009).

Besides the effect of the students' being native or non-native, researchers have also focused on the different faculties' point of view regarding academic writing. To this end, Casanave and Hubbard (1992) reported that when compared in terms of the weight put on development of ideas, organizational issues, and appropriateness of vocabulary and style, humanities and social science faculties place a greater importance on academic writing than science and technology faculties. Similarly, Buckingham and Geri (2008) stated that humanities consider academic writing as the main way to put ideas into words and, when compared in terms of the nature of writing, humanities seems to be more challenging than the sciences. On the other hand, social sciences and arts received relatively little attention despite the high number of studies concerning non-native academics (Dong, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999; P. Shaw, 1991). More specifically, there is a scarcity of research investigating the academic writing process and students' needs and the challenges arousing from the difference between the theoretical and practical applications. Hence, gathering data about the perceived needs of the graduate students regarding academic writing is of great importance. In addition, the results might be helpful for academicians in designing and offering academic writing courses at the graduate level in English-medium Turkish universities (Buckingham & Geri, 2008; Yağız, 2009; Zhu, 2004).

Moreover, although various studies focused on the challenges faced while writing in English as a native language, issues encountered in English as a second or foreign language settings in a foreign country have not been highlighted adequately before. Buckingham and Geri (2008) emphasized that previous research focusing on the graduate students at a university in an English–speaking country has so far overgeneralized the results and has not shed a light on the realistic needs. As a result, the findings provided are far from being a solution for the non-native graduate students at a university in a foreign country. Therefore, literature regarding the

situation of the academic writing related studies, especially in the Turkish context, is insufficient at the graduate level (Yağız, 2009).

Apart from the challenges faced by the non-native students, the relation between self-efficacy and academic writing is one of the academic fields which have received very little attention from the researchers although the importance of self-efficacy is so clear. Beach (1989) stated that to have an idea regarding writing instruction, the students' self-efficacy beliefs constitute a particularly promising road of research. When the important role that writing skill play at the graduate level is considered, the place of self-efficacy and students' needs comes to the fore and this adds further to the significance of this study. To sum up, it can be stated that the importance of this study stems from its role in exploring the academic writing needs and writing self-efficacy beliefs of graduate students and identifying the relations among variables and adding depth to the previously carried out studies.

1.5. Definition of Terms

Academic writing: In the research paper prepared by Finnish Institutions, academic writing is defined as "structured research" written by "scholars" for other scholars (with all university writers being 'scholars' in this context). The objective of academic writing is the creation of "new knowledge" via a review of *what is currently known about a given topic* based on *the author's new views or perspectives* (2011, p. 3).

Academic Literacy: The term is broadly defined as the ability;
- to summarize and synthesize various literary and theoretical texts;
- to compare and contrast academic texts with one another and with popular cultural texts and empirical data;
- to analyses both academic and popular-cultural texts as well as empirical data;
- to critique arguments presented in academic and popular texts;
- to explain and defend a written or oral argument;

- to effectively challenge opposing arguments;

- to engage and incorporate multiple theoretical perspectives into the formulation of research questions, the development of research methodologies, and the analysis of data; and

- to use the appropriate tools of research and the language (discourse) of the research community. (Morrell, 2004, pp. 53-54).

Self-efficacy: "People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986b, p. 391)**.**

Writing self-efficacy: The confidence that students possess regarding their ability to complete required writing tasks successfully (McCarthy et al., 1985; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994).

Needs analysis: Activities involved in gathering information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the learning goals of a particular group of students (Brown, 1995).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, literature regarding the importance of writing and academic writing, writing self-efficacy, need and needs analysis are reviewed. Moreover, research conducted worldwide on academic writing and writing self-efficacy is presented.

2.1.   Importance of Writing

Writing has an important place in language learning when compared to other skills. In the report named as "The Neglected 'R' – The Need for a Writing Revolution," The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges asserted that one of the main goals of education has always been to develop writing fluency; however, the expectations based on this idea has never been totally accomplished (Magrath et al., 2003). The commission emphasized that writing is not restricted only to such elements as grammar and punctuation; writing is seen as a complex intellectual activity. In addition, it is expressed that writing cannot be regarded as a device to show what a student knows; it is a way to aid the students to comprehend what they know - "At its best, writing is learning" (Magrath et al., 2003, p. 13). Because of this, writing constitutes a basis for an academic career (Horowitz, 1986b) and the academicians are regarded as 'writers' due to the requirements of the writing tasks, which range from the research papers, dissertation or some kind of written assignment, to the writing of conference papers, journal articles and books (Cameron, Nairn, & Higgins, 2009). Therefore, the ability to write well is a crucial component of academic achievement, and the requirements of the universities implicitly support that writing well is integral to academic success (Leki & Carson, 1994). The idea is further supported by the fact that in most of the departments graduate students are required to write a thesis, some type of professional research paper or a dissertation to complete the program. In this sense, writing, as stated by Saville-Troike (1984) is "the language skill which is most likely to develop … academic competence" (p. 217).

The graduate students are aware of the role the skill plays for their survival in the academia (Yağız, 2009), but they confront some difficulties when they are assigned writing tasks and also the professionals are usually left to rely largely on guesswork of what their students need (Horowitz, 1986b). This type of 'guesswork' results in the notion that learning academic writing in EFL contexts is challenging (Daoud, 1998). One of the reasons for this is "the academic writer's task is not to create personal meaning but to find, organize and present data according to fairly explicit instructions" (Horowitz, 1986b, p. 455). Because of this, academic writing is regarded as a highly complex and anxiety provoking activity (Johanson, 2001; Torrance, Thomas, & Robinson, 1994; Zhu, 2004). This is mostly the result of the nature of the skill. Because writing is a constrained activity on many levels: cognitively, communicatively, textually, linguistically, and contextually (Daoud, 1998), it is more than listening, speaking or reading (Frederiksen & Dominic, 1981). According to the results of the studies based on this idea, writing is reported as a complex activity that calls for the unification and utilization of numerous subskills (Benton, Kraft, Glover, & Plake, 1984; Hayes & Flower, 1980; Shanahan, 1984; Stanovich & West, 1981). Therefore, the graduate students have to be supported to overcome the challenges brought about by this activity. These challenges in learning academic writing are even greater in countries where English is a compulsory subject. In the studies carried out in Turkey, it was reported that the students were not required to practice writing even in their native language and therefore, they were not able to produce proper texts while writing (Ayyıldız & Bozkurt, 2006; Gürel, 2010; Karageci, 2006). These studies have also given rise to the idea that academic writing is performed differently by native and non-native students since the non-native students may depend on the translation of native language into English too much. As a result they encounter such problems as lack of lexical resources, less ability to revise, inability to express their own ideas, less effective writing with more errors at the discourse level (Silva, 1997, p. 668).

In line with these factors, for some researchers, knowledge of vocabulary seems to be the foremost factor influencing good writing (Leki & Carson, 1994; Santos, 1988; Vifansi, 2002). Saville-Troike (1984) also claims that in second language learning,

knowledge of vocabulary is the most significant field. Students mostly state that their inefficiency in grammar and vocabulary results in poor writing. Other studies also reported that lexical inadequacy is a common problem in graduate students' texts and the students have difficulty finding the right word to express their ideas in English (Yağız, 2009) and writing requires having a large vocabulary to be able to produce the scientific work (Gürel, 2010). In addition to vocabulary, the EFL students do not have enough knowledge regarding audience awareness, rhetorical patterns, coherence, tones, and the compositions skills and strategies which are important components of language education in English speaking countries (Wang & Bakken, 2005). In line with these, Sherwood (1977) expressed that EFL students need such important skills as "organization, summarization, sentence structure, research skills, usage, vocabulary" (p. 146) in order to write effectively.

The feeling of inadequacy regarding one of the problems listed above may also lead to a corrupt practice, which is regarded as deceptive, corrupt and even criminal behavior in academia: "plagiarism." The term is at the heart of academic writing because of its key role in drawing the ethical boundary for the graduate students. In a document published by Middle East Technical University Academic Writing Centre (2011), plagiarism is defined as the use of someone else's words or ideas without taking permission. This kind of academic dishonesty can go up to 80% among the students (Franklyn-Stokes & Newstead, 1995) and these students consult to such a method because of a variety of reasons. There are some who deliberately plagiarize and their only motivation is to gain undeserved benefits and there are still others who plagiarize because of lack of knowledge or writing skills rather than honesty reasons (Davis & Carroll, 2009). However, most of them plagiarize because they lack confidence in writing and rely too much on textual borrowing (Pecorari, 2003; Ryan, 2000). In addition, according to the results of a study carried out in Turkey there are some factors affecting plagiarism like problems arousing from using a foreign language, constraints related to time, little or no knowledge regarding academic writing, too much course requirements, assignments' level of difficulty, insufficient understanding regarding the content of the assignment, lack of enough academic skills, and others (Ellery, 2008; Eret & Gokmenoglu, 2010). Besides these problems,

it is asserted that the frequency of plagiarism and other issues regarding academic dishonesty have significantly increased due to the unlimited sources the Internet presents (Diekhoff et al., 1996). Because of this, some studies have been carried out to understand plagiarism and find solutions. Pritchett (2010) stated that establishing a plagiarism policy based on the perceptions, informing the students of this policy and finally enforcing strict consequences may deter the students from carrying out such an act. Another solution might be the integration of plagiarism related topics into higher education institutions' graduate curricula, especially the academic writing courses, with clear instructions (Ellery, 2008; Eret & Gokmenoglu, 2010). Apart from these, taking attention to the good practices, having the students detect plagiarism in their own work, supporting them for better writing and citing styles can help to prevent plagiarism (Anderson, 2009).

As implied, writing courses have significant place in the prevention of plagiarism and helping the graduate students overcome the difficulties they face while writing. However, for some researchers the basis for the problems may also be attributed to the writing courses at the undergraduate level. In an EFL context, these courses are mostly based on composing letters to a friend, describing argumentations, which are far from being a part of the discourse of academic writing. As a result the graduate students are not able to make transitions and they fail to connect paragraphs (Gürel, 2010). To highlight this inadequacy, Yağız (2009) asserted that most of the graduate students in his study have not taken any academic writing course at university level which could provide valuable information to the students in learning about language to realize the convenience and correctness of their texts. Despite the type of tasks required from the students during writing courses in a traditional EFL context, Horowitz (1986b), to imply the difference of academic writing, stated that at the graduate level the types of tasks required were: "summary of or reaction to reading, annotated bibliography, reports, connection of theory and data, case study, synthesis, research projects" (p. 449).

In addition to the differences in the task requirements, academic writing also calls for the students to transfer from writer-based writing to reader-based writing, from personal writing to expository writing and from knowledge telling to knowledge transforming (Vifansi, 2002). This brings about the idea that while writing something there are a variety of influences which are the writer, the professor, the language and the source text (Jiang, 2001). Because of the influence of these groups, the role their expectations play cannot be disregarded when the writing tasks at the graduate level are considered. Among the groups that affect writing, the influence of the faculty members, who are mostly stated as professors in the literature and the graduate students themselves, whose needs and self-efficacy beliefs are the foundations of this study come to the fore. Since the two groups have a crucial effect on student's writing and, sometimes students' understanding of what is expected may interfere with the expectations of the faculty members. Therefore, the discrepancies in the expectations of the students and the faculty members regarding task interpretations result in unsatisfactory written products (Jiang, 2001). This discrepancy between the two groups were clearly pointed out in the results of two different studies carried out by Leki and Carson (1994) and Gambell (1991). In the first study, when the feelings of the students related to the expectations of faculty members were asked, they stated that the faculty members did not focus on sentence level features of writing and ignored spelling or grammar errors, which were stated by many as one of the most important problems. On the other hand, in the second study, professors were stated to believe that the students write poorly because of the inability to understand the type of discourse required by the discipline and their expectations. In order to find out a solution to these kinds of discrepancies, a needs analysis, which helps identify the constituents of target English situations, can act as a guide for the graduate students.

In spite of the fact that the requirement for more and better writing at the graduate level has increased, support for the graduate students to develop as an academic writer seems to be inadequate. Little is known regarding the processes the graduate students go through, their beliefs and the challenges they face while writing (Lavelle & Bushrow, 2007). Academic writing is blamed for being a complex part of graduate studies, which may be a result of writing's being a difficult skill. However,

putting the blame on the skill without offering the graduate students an academic writing course during their education which would prepare them for the knowledge transformation stage is not a plausible solution (Gürel, 2010). Therefore, studies based on revealing the difficulties should be carried out. The results of this study will build on to the findings on academic writing needs and self-efficacy beliefs of the graduate students that have been studied in the studies carried out before. Furthermore, the ideas of the nonnative graduate students will be elicited so as to help them figure out the reason behind the challenges they face while writing.

2.2.   Self-Efficacy and Writing

The beliefs individuals have regarding the capacities they have and the consequence of their endeavors strongly affect the way they will act in a particular manner (Bandura, 1986b). Self-efficacy, which is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986b, p. 391), is believed to be the most effective control in human agency and describes the reason behind changing behavior even when the people have almost identical knowledge and skills (Pajares & Johnson, 1994). If people do not believe in their ability to create necessary things and prevent undesired effects, their motivation will be very little. Therefore, because of its effect on behavior and other factors such as "goals and aspirations, outcome expectations, affective tendencies, and perception of obstacles and opportunities in the social environment," self-efficacy is considered to be an important agent (Bandura, 2000, p. 75).   In addition to these factors, the influence of self-efficacy beliefs can be broadened to such behaviors as the choices, efforts, perseverance, thought patterns, and emotions of individuals (Pajares & Johnson, 1994).

According to Bandura (2000),

> Efficacy beliefs influence whether people think erratically or strategically, optimistically or pessimistically; what courses of action they choose to pursue; the goals they set for themselves and their commitment to them; how much effort they put forth in given endeavors; the outcomes they expect their

efforts to produce; how long they persevere in the face of obstacles; their resilience to adversity; how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands; and the accomplishments they realize (p. 75).

By asserting this, Bandura (1986b) dismissed the theories of behaviorists and suggested a theory emphasizing the crucial part the self-referent beliefs play. In his theory, the term self-efficacy, as mentioned above, plays an important role. Contrary to what behaviorists suggest, individuals are not passively shaped by reactions, they are active participants (Bandura, 1997; Maddux, 1995) and it is strongly argued that from this active participation purposeful behavior and learning are attained. Because of this in general terms, self-efficacy, as a theory, is considered under social-cognitive theory in which indirect experiences, or the act of watching another's success and/or failure, can promote self-efficacy. Therefore, self-efficacy involves those beliefs one has about specific capabilities that can influence actions leading to goal or skill attainment since the level of confidence, higher or lower, determines the anticipation regarding success (Pajares & Johnson, 1994). In other words, people believing they have no power to change an outcome may not make an effort to do so. Because, the influences on the behavior are not solely the external elements, the personal or internal beliefs one holds regulate choices, outcomes, and functioning (Bandura, 1997). In addition, these internal beliefs the individuals have enable them to have control over their thoughts, feelings and actions (Pajares, 2003) and Bandura (1986b) thought that these self-beliefs can be better predictors of the capabilities. It was also stated that   To this end, self-efficacy is described as "a powerful motivational construct regarding the pattern and supervision of goal-directed behavior" (Wentzel, 1996, p. 392).

In line with Bandura's thinking pattern and based on the research carried out, it can be concluded that in predicting an individual's performance, abilities are less effective compared to that of self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, even if the person has the ability, he or she might feel that a task is more difficult to achieve than it actually is if the individual has low self-efficacy, which may result in stress, task avoidance,

and/or depression (Pajares, 1996). On the other hand, higher self-efficacy can enhance the motivation, because when students "perceive" progress, they may experience increased motivation (Schunk, 1995). Zimmerman (1995) also found that the persistence, effort and motivation of a student towards an academic task increased as a result of high self-efficacy.

The level, strength, and generality of self-efficacy beliefs can change (Bandura, 1991). For instance, an individual may overrate his efficacy and experience failure or underrate his efficacy and restrain his development (Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991). In an educational setting, the influence of self-efficacy on motivation can be complicated (Schunk, 1995). Since, in terms of its function, self-efficacy is either regarded as influencing all areas or a specific area such as reading in English or mathematics. Therefore, an individual may feel high self-efficacy on a specific task, but low self-efficacy on another (Zimmerman, 1995). Furthermore, the students, who have doubts about their abilities, may encounter problems in terms of effort and perseverance regarding a certain task (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). Hence, what the students believe about their abilities can better predict their achievement in a certain task than measures of their capabilities (Pajares & Johnson, 1994). Although the notion that students with higher self-efficacy beliefs can compensate for their inadequacies is wrong (Schunk, 1995), it can be stated that those beliefs may help them show determination when faced with failure or some type of difficulty (Bandura, 1995). Particularly, in a language learning setting, showing perseverance and determination, in other words, having high self-efficacy, can act as an instrument which may deeply affect the performance of students "by mediating the motivational effects of goal setting, outcome expectations, effort attributions, persistence, affective self-reactions and goal orientations" (Walsh & Kelly, 2002, p. 30). When this effect is taken into account in an academic writing environment, it can be stated that if the student feels inadequate about the written output, the written product will probably be poor. On the contrary, less anxious students with better feelings regarding writing may show greater interest in writing and such difficulties as writing as a barrier or complex skill can be better dealt with by those students. Upon studying on high writing self-efficacy and level of strategy

use, Zimmerman and Kitsantas (1999) also indicated a relationship between the two terms.

As a result, it was concluded that increased effort regarding writing and goals related to accomplishing a writing task are also a part of self-efficacy (Perry, 1998). Because writing, especially academic writing, is highly influenced by what a student thinks or believes about himself or herself (Charney, Newman, & Palmquist, 1995; Nelson, 1990; Perry, 1998; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Therefore, faculty members must keep the importance of motivational factors in mind, for instance students' perceptions of themselves as writers and the role self-efficacy plays in writing tasks, since, self-efficacy can affect the level of persistence a student attributes to a writing task (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Unless a student has high self-efficacy regarding academic writing, she or he will not be able to reach the expected level in terms of mental capacity. In fact, it is stated that when a student have low self-efficacy to support the writing ability, she or her will probably underrate her or his capabilities, even to the point of being unable to write a simple paragraph (Gürel, 2010). Therefore, it can be asserted that motivational factors and self-efficacy play an important role in improving academic writing (Yağız, 2009).

Consequently, having high self-efficacy can be regarded as an important part of writing success and low or no self-efficacy might be regarded as a cause of the "writing as a challenge to overcome" belief. Although the differing writing capacities of each student is an undeniable fact, self-efficacy can help a student to get rid of some of the challenges in any subject and may give him or her the power to become successful.

2.3. Need and Needs Analysis

One of the most effective ways to acquire comprehensive knowledge regarding the needs of the students is carrying out a needs analysis. In needs analysis, the term need constitutes an important part. A need is defined as the gap between "what is" and "what should be;" in other words, a need expresses the absence of something

required (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). In accordance with this, Kaufman (1992) asserted that to mention a need there should be a difference when the current and desired outcomes are compared. Therefore, "a need is not a thing in itself but, rather, an inference drawn from examining a present state and comparing it with a vision of a future state or condition; in a sense, a need is like a problem or concern" (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995, p. 18). Within this framework, needs ranging from simple biological things to more sophisticated requirements can be mentioned. The focus of this study will be the pedagogical needs of students. Pedagogical needs refer to knowledge and skills required from the students to carry out certain activities at the beginning or end of a study (Vifansi, 2002).

There are two types of pedagogical needs. The first type is the target needs, in the context of this study; it comprises the faculty members' requirements. The writing tasks required from the students can be an example of target needs The studies carried out by Horowitz (1986b), Bridgeman and Carlson (1983), Hale, Taylor, Bridgeman, Carson, Kroll, and Kantor (1996) were to this end. The second type is the learning needs which come to the fore while struggling to achieve target needs. Learning needs are tailor made and vary according to the learners' proficiency and they are important in that, they combine the knowledge the students need to know and the things they have to master to meet those needs. Since the present study aims at determining the needs of the graduate students from their own point of view, learning needs makes up an important part of the study. Conducting a needs analysis plays a crucial role in determining any kind of need and a needs analysis is comprised of a set of procedures to describe and identify both present and desired states and placing the needs in order of priority for later action (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). The first step of these procedures is gathering information from the concerning group. There are a number of ways to gather information, such as using a survey for the students, asking faculty members for information, studying on the collected assignments or observing the activities the students do in their classes (Benesch, 1996). The results of these data collection methods may yield such significant needs as academic writing courses, curricular requirements across disciplines, workshops/seminars, and writing centers (Yağız, 2009).

2.4. Previous Studies Regarding Academic Writing, Writing Self-Efficacy and Needs Analysis

When the research carried out in the last two decades and especially in the last few years is considered, the key points in writing have been found to be the objectives regarding a writing task, perceptions of the writers, writers' character and apprehension about writing process (Efklides, 2006; MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2008). In addition, a review of the research on the previous studies regarding needs analysis and self-efficacy beliefs carried out on writing disclosed a variety of explanations related to writers' thought patterns as well as the perceptions and self-efficacy beliefs they have. Up until 1970s, writing was thought be composed solely of grammar and rhetorical rules (Flower, 1989). However, with the advent of cognitivist theory, writing has been considered to be a higher order skill that includes identification of the problem, planning and such other stages as revising or editing (Flower, 1989). When the skill started to be identified as complex and higher order, the number of the studies carried out increased. Because the researchers tried to determine the stages the students go through, their needs and self- efficacy beliefs.

In a study performed by Behrens (1978) among 128 faculty members at the American University in Washington, DC, the perceptions of faculty members regarding student literacy and types and frequency of writing tasks assigned to the students in fields other than literature were measured (Behrens, 1978). The researcher wanted the faculty members to classify tasks under three types: reports, themes or essays, and research papers. He concluded that 86 percent of the courses among the 288 reported required some type of paper, which was an important indicator of the role writing plays.

In another research study, Kroll (1979) collected data through a three-part questionnaire to find out "the past, present and future writing needs of students" (p. 219). Past writing needs were classified into nine different tasks and also to imply the importance of English it was stated that eighteen percent of the international students expressed they had never written reports for disciplines other than English.

According to the results of present writing needs section of his study, Kroll (1979) found out that among the international students, 33 percent wrote papers integrating mathematical or statistical data into a report, 54 percent wrote reports based on lab experiments, and 54 percent wrote term papers. The figures regarding the above types of writing tasks for the students, whose native language was English, were 15 percent, 21 percent and 55 percent. In the third part of the questionnaire, which was about the students' future writing needs, Kroll used sixteen different tasks, three of which were related to academic writing. Of the international students, 35 percent were required to write survey reports, 59 percent technical reports, and 48 percent reports of scientific experiments. For the native-speakers, the results were 35 percent, 40 percent and 30 percent. Kroll concluded that there is a need to provide the students with the opportunity to understand different types of written assignments that they will be required.

In the above mentioned study, Kroll (1979) collected data from both international and American students. In another study, Ostler (1980) carried out a survey only among international students. The survey tried to find out the students' own views about their academic skills needs and their success in using English. A list of sixteen academic tasks was provided for the students and they were asked to select the one that they were required. The list included multiple choice examinations, essay examinations, lab experiments, book reviews, research proposals, and research papers. The results of the survey revealed that teaching some specific skills, such as reading or academic writing, should be a component of ESL courses. Ostler (1980) also stated that there were certain differences between what the students required to write at the undergraduate and graduate level. She concluded that at the undergraduate level the need for multiple choice exams and writing lab reports was greater and at the graduate level the students were expected to write critiques, research proposals, and research papers.

In terms of the number of surveyed faculties, 190 faculties from 34 American and Canadian universities, Bridgeman and Carlson (1983) carried out one of the most wide-ranging academic writing task survey. The survey included items to find out the

type of writing tasks required from both undergraduate and graduate students. The parts of the survey attempted to gather data regarding 1) the academic departments surveyed, 2) the writing task demands of each department, 3) the criteria used to evaluate writing assignments, 4) data on writing problems of native and non-native speakers, 5) use or potential use of a writing sample in the student admission process, and 6) the acceptability of ten specific task types listed in the questionnaire for use in the admission or placement of students at the beginning of graduate work. After analyzing the results, the researchers concluded that writing as a skill is regarded more important to success after graduation, some type of writing is required from first-year students enrolled at different departments, descriptive skills are considered crucial for the students in engineering, computer science and psychology departments and discourse level characteristics (e.g., organization, content quality) were valued more by the faculty members. The findings of the research also included the results regarding the native and non-native students and writing parts of TOEFL exam.

Following Bridgeman and Carlson's (1983) study, Horowitz (1986b) carried out a research to point out the writing tasks assigned at universities. In the study, the data collected through written papers such as handouts assigned by instructors, book or article reviews, take home exams, and so on. The results were classified into two groups; essay test questions and other written materials which included 54 writing assignments taught during 29 courses in 17 different departments. The handouts were then put into seven separate categories; "summary of/reaction to a reading, annotated bibliography, report on a specified participatory experience, connection of theory and data, case study, synthesis of multiple sources and research project" (Horowitz, 1986b, p. 449). Apart from the importance of synthesis of multiple sources, the results of the study indicated that summary of/reaction to a reading, report on a specified participatory experience, and the writing tasks required were mostly controlled. In addition, the expectations were related to finding, organizing and presenting the gathered data in line with the given instructions. Horowitz (1986b) concluded that to become successful, students should practice the constituent skills of academic information processing, which can be represented in the following

way: "Selecting data which is relevant to a question or issue from a source or sources, reorganizing that data in response to the given question or issue and encoding that data into academic English" (p. 456).

In addition to the above studies which focused on the perceptions and needs of students and faculty members to identify the writing needs and to categorize academic writing tasks in terms of their importance, some other studies tried to reveal the reasons for writing deficiencies. These include experience related issues, problems related to instruction, and rhetorical problems. Apart from these, as mentioned in the self-efficacy section, self-beliefs also play a crucial role in writing. However, the number of research showing a relation between self-efficacy and writing is not adequate (Page-Voth & Graham, 1999; Pajares & Johnson, 1996; Pajares & Valiante, 1999, 2006; Pajares, Valiante, & Cheong, 2007; Shell et al., 1989). The influence of perceived academic self-efficacy on writing grade achievements both directly and through its impact on personal goal setting was studied by Zimmerman and Bandura (1994). Moreover, in another study, the relation between the two important concepts self-efficacy and reading and writing skills was explored by Shell, Murphy, & Bruning (1989). The results of the study indicated an increased performance in the writing skill of the writer, when self-efficacy and writing were in relation.

The impact of high self-efficacy on writing was summarized as higher probability to get into writing tasks, persistence when there is a difficult writing assignments and striving for competence (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997). As a result, self-efficacy beliefs of the students are very important in terms of the writing tasks. Pajares and Johnson (1994) conducted another study in order to find out the effect of self-efficacy on writing. The results of the study indicated that self-efficacy towards writing skill was a better predictor than the self-efficacy of a student with respect to the task. The same topic was also studied by McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer (1985). They reported that in predicting writing performance, self-efficacy beliefs are of great importance. In the study, it was stated that "students with a strong sense of efficacy wrote better essays than students with a weak sense of efficacy" (McCarthy

et al., 1985, p. 468). The relation between writing self-efficacy and writing performance was also studied by Pajares and Johnson (1994). Their findings again showed a significant relation between writing self-efficacy and writing performance. Findings of multiple regression analysis indicated that at the end of the term, 68% of the variance in the writing performance explained the role of confidence in writing skills and ability to accomplish writing tasks, outcome expectations, writing apprehension, general self-confidence and writing performance at the beginning of the term. Among the variables used in regression equation, the students' confidence in writing skills and their performance at the beginning of the quarter were significant predictors (Pajares & Johnson, 1994).

Finally, Spaulding (1995) investigated the role the teachers' presence during the writing activity play regarding the writing task engagement of middle school students. The results of the study indicated that self-efficacy beliefs were significant and that students with relatively higher linguistic self-efficacy were more involved in their writing assignment.

2.5.   Summary

In this chapter, a detailed literature review of the important concepts for the present study was presented. The chapter started with the importance of academic writing since the issue of effective writing and writing in the required conventions cause challenges to students and this challenge increases as English continuously expands as the main language for dissemination of academic knowledge. This section started with some basic information regarding the importance of writing as a skill. Besides this, the challenges encountered by the student writers, plagiarism, types of writing tasks, differences between native and nonnative students were reported. In the second part, the discussion shifted to another important topic regarding academic writing, which was writing self-efficacy. This section implied that academic achievement is not solely a question of studying, practicing, and attendance, but beliefs can also affect academic performance. To this end, in this part, after giving the definition of self-efficacy, the researchers' views regarding the importance of self-efficacy were

provided. This part also included information about the role of self-efficacy on writing. In the third part, on account of the importance of the needs analysis in determining the point of view of the students and their perceptions detailed literature regarding the two important concepts; need and needs analysis were presented. In the final part detailed information regarding the findings of the previous studies based on academic writing, academic writing needs, perceptions and writing self-efficacy were presented.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter presents the research methodology of the study. Research design, research questions, description of variables, participants' demographic information, and instruments used in the study are mentioned in detail. The last section of the chapter presents the data analysis used in this study.

3.1.   Research Design

In this study, survey was used as a research method and data were collected through a comprehensive survey instrument. As a research method, survey research is defined as "a systematic set of methods used to gather information to generate knowledge and to help make decisions" (Lavrakas, 2008, p. 35). Surveys are used as one of the most common methods in the social sciences (Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, & Singer, 2009). In addition, it is asserted that in a modern information-based society, surveys act as building blocks (Groves et al., 2009). To this end, social scientists (e.g., economists, political scientists, psychologists, and sociologists) especially prefer surveys to study scientifically and provide data regarding people (Lavrakas, 2008).

In order to measure academic writing needs and self-efficacy beliefs of the graduate students, a survey instrument with 68 items was developed based on four different existing instruments. For the data collection, both paper and online versions of the survey were designed. The administration of online surveys is very common, for instance in the United States, online surveys, either as an instrument for some studies or for evaluation purposes, was utilized by around 45% of the universities (Hoffman, 2003). In addition, online surveys are popular because they create the flexibility in how, where, and when to study for the students, meaning that for an online survey attending class is no longer a prerequisite (Nair & Adams, 2009). However, online surveys are disadvantageous in terms of response rate (Dommeyer, Baum, Hanna, &

Chapman, 2004). As asserted by some researchers, when compared to the traditional paper-pencil type, these type of surveys produce a significantly lower rate (Couper, Blair, & Triplett, 1999; Crawford, Couper, & Lamias, 2001; Tse et al., 1995). For these reasons, data were collected using both online and paper forms of the instrument.

3.2. Research Questions

The aim of the present study was to shed a light on the academic writing needs and self-efficacy beliefs of the graduate students studying at social sciences. In addition, the results of the study will help determine the difficulties and challenges the academic writers face at this level. More specifically, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the academic writing needs of the graduate students at the Graduate School of Social Sciences?
2. What is the level of writing self-efficacy of the graduate students at the Graduate School of Social Sciences?
3. How well do perceived importance of academic writing, writing self-efficacy, and English writing proficiency predict academic writing needs of graduate students?

3.3. Participants

Since the study aims at examining the academic writing needs and writing self-efficacy beliefs of the graduate students, the target population comprised of all the graduate students enrolled at the Graduate School of Social Sciences at English-medium state universities in Turkey. The graduate students at the Graduate School of Social Sciences were chosen because academic writing is of great importance both during the course period and thesis\dissertation writing period and studies carried out at social sciences are only a few. The accessible population included all the graduate students enrolled at a Graduate School of Social Sciences. The students enrolled in

the secondary education and in the programs without thesis were excluded as they are exposed to limited academic writing experience.

As the reported number of graduate students was limited to 1370, the current study employed census sampling. That means that an email invitation to the study was sent to all 1370 graduate students. To ensure confidentiality of the participants, emails were sent by the Registrar's Office. Of those students, 162 students completed the online version of the survey, with a response rate of 11.82%. In order to increase the response rate, a paper version of the survey was administered to 51 graduate students from different faculties in the classroom environment. The final number of participants was 213 (15.55% total response rate).

The number of participating graduate students in terms of gender, academic status, and faculty/graduate program are presented in Table 3.1. Two hundred and thirteen graduate students participated in the study. Of the participants, 34.3% were male and 65.7% of them were female. The age of the participants was between 22 and 37 and the mean age was 27. The data regarding academic status of the students indicated that 48.4% of them were master's degree (with thesis) students, 4.6% of them were doctoral degree (following a non-thesis master's degree) students, 29.7% of them were doctoral degree (following a master's degree with thesis) students, and 7.3% of them were integrated graduate degree students.

There are 30 graduate programs offered by the Graduate School of Social. The data regarding the current programs of the graduate students were categorized into 5 groups: Arts and Sciences, Economics and Administration Sciences, Education, Architecture, and Interdisciplinary Fields. About half of the participants (47.4%) were from the programs in Education, 24.9% of the students were from the programs in Arts and Sciences and 16.4% of the students were from the programs in Economics and Administrative Sciences. In addition, although the response rate is much lower when compared to other fields, 8.5% of the students participated in the study from the programs in Interdisciplinary Field and 2.8% of the students were from the programs in Architecture.

Table 3.1

Demographic Information Regarding Gender, Academic Status, and Faculty/
Graduate Program

	f	*%*
Gender		
Male	73	34.3
Female	140	65.7
Academic Status		
Master's Degree (with thesis)	106	48.4
Doctors Degree (following a non-thesis master's degree)	10	4.6
Doctors Degree (following a master's degree with thesis)	65	29.7
Integrated Graduate Degree	16	7.3
Missing	16	7.5
Faculty/Graduate Program		
Arts & Science	53	24.9
Economics & Administration Sciences	35	16.4
Education	101	47.4
Architecture	6	2.8
Interdisciplinary Field	18	8.5

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

For the data collection, a survey instrument with seven sections was used. The sections of the instrument were taken from (1) Thesis/Dissertation Writing Scale (Dong, 1998), (2) TOEFL Research Questionnaire (Bridgeman & Carlson, 1983), (3) Doctoral Students' Survey (Gürel, 2010), and (4) Questionnaire on Self-Efficacy in Writing (Wong, Butler, Ficzere, & Kuperis, 1996). In addition, to collect demographic data, eight questions were asked in the first section. Five experts in the fields of needs assessment and English writing, especially academic writing, and a native speaker revised and edited the survey to provide evidence for content validity. Following the changes made regarding the suggestions, the survey was submitted. The final form of the data collection instrument is presented in Appendix A.

3.4.1. Demographic Information

The purpose of the first section was to gather information related to the participants' characteristics. Eight questions were included which were gender, current graduate program, academic status, graduate program stage, English Proficiency Exam (EPE) score, Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), and the number of semesters the student completed in the current graduate program. The questions with answer categories and scale of measurement are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Summary of Demographic Variables

Variables	Categories	Scale of measurement
Gender	(1) Female (2) Male	Nominal
Current graduate program	-	Nominal
Academic status	(1) Master's degree (with thesis) (2) Doctoral degree (following a non-thesis master's degree) (3) Doctoral degree (following a master's degree with thesis) (4) Integrated graduate degree	Nominal
Graduate program stage	(1) Scientific preparation (2) Taking courses (3) Writing thesis	Nominal
English Proficiency	-	Interval
Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)	-	Interval

3.4.2. Academic Writing Needs Scale

The scale, designed to assess the academic writing needs of graduate students, included fourteen items. Eleven items were taken from Thesis/Dissertation Writing Scale (Dong, 1998) and three items were developed by the researchers. The statements mainly focused on linguistic difficulties such as organizing the whole text, choosing correct words (field-related terminology), using proper grammar, using proper mechanical conventions (e.g. APA style) or developing ideas.

Responses were rated on five-point rating scale, ranging from "no need" to "very high need."

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out through PASW 18.0 in order to examine underlying structure of the Academic Writing Needs Scale. In EFA, the aim is to describe and summarize data through grouping together correlated items, (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The assumptions of EFA including Kaiser-Mayer Olkin (KMO), Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, multivariate normality, absence of outliers, and correlations above .30 (Field, 2009) were checked prior to the analysis.

The value of Kaiser-Meyer- Olkin (KMO), which was .939, exceeded the criterion value of .60 suggested that a reliable factor analysis be conducted. In addition, the result of Bartlett's test was significant meaning that there was a significant difference between correlation matrix and identity matrix. Furthermore, none of the correlation coefficients was less than .36. Since findings indicated that there was approximately normal distribution, maximum likelihood extraction was used. In addition, to determine whether there was any univariate outlier, boxplots were also checked and the results indicated that there were no serious outliers in any of the cases. The results of these assumptions made it possible to pursue factor analysis. As stated by Field (2009), retaining factors that have relatively large eigenvalues and ignoring the ones with small eigenvalues is the basic notion. Therefore, in this study, eigenvalues greater than one and scree plot were utilized. When the above mentioned criterion regarding eigenvalues was considered, resulting two factors explained 66.82% of the total percentage of variance. The scree plot showing two factors is presented in Figure 3.1.
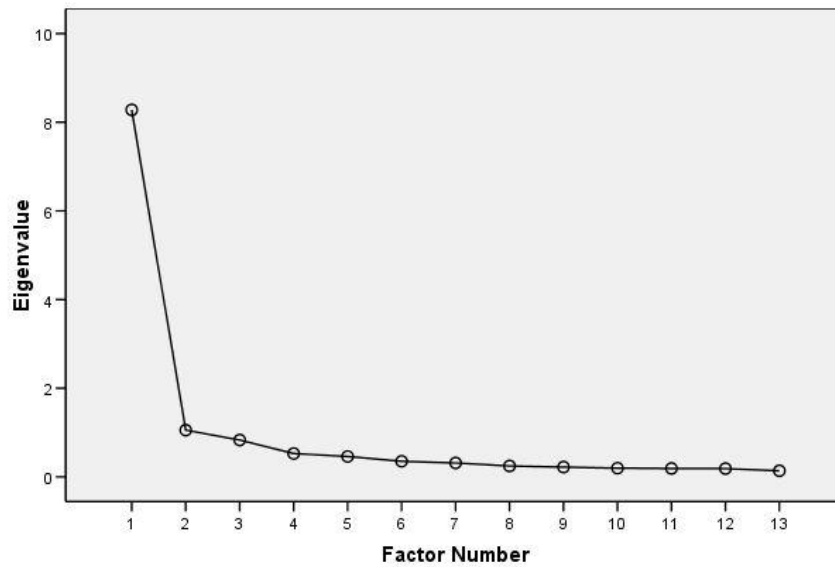
Figure 3.1. Scree Plot

In Table 3.3, the factor loadings of the two-factor structure were presented. According to the results of factor analysis, two factors appeared: *productivity-related writing needs* and *accuracy-related writing needs.* Factor 1 refers to the writing needs that are related to the organization of the writing tasks. These included such skills as "Preparing an outline before starting writing," "Organizing paragraphs," "Organizing the whole text," "Using proper mechanical conventions," "Developing ideas." The items in factor 2 are related to the grammar and vocabulary dimension of the writing tasks and factor 2 included such items as "Having rich vocabulary and expressions," "Using proper grammar," "Using proper connections and transitions," "Using correct punctuation and spelling." Item-total correlations ranged from .36 to .68 for the factors.

Table 3.3

Pattern Matrix of Academic Writing Needs Scale

	Factor	
	1	2
Developing ideas	**.99**	.17
Drawing conclusions	**.85**	-.04
Organizing the whole text	**.78**	-.01
Presenting ideas clearly	**.72**	-.19
Preparing an outline before starting writing	**.67**	-.06
Organizing paragraphs	**.66**	-.19
Avoiding plagiarism (how to quote, paraphrase or cite)	**.49**	-.30
Using proper mechanical conventions (e g APA style)	**.36**	-.32
Using proper grammar	-.13	**-1.02**
Using proper connections and transitions	.13	**-.79**
Choosing correct words (field-related terminology)	.07	**-.76**
Using correct punctuation and spelling	.13	**-.74**
Having rich vocabulary and expressions	.06	**-.71**
Factor correlations		
Factor 1 - *productivity-related writing needs*	1.00	-.77
Factor 2 - *accuracy-related writing needs*	-.77	1.00

In addition, Cronbach alpha coefficients of the subscales were calculated for reliability. Findings of .93 alpha value for productivity-related writing needs and .93 alpha value for accuracy-related writing needs indicated that there was high internal consistency.

3.4.3. Writing Tasks

The third section of the survey was designed to examine the use of writing tasks at the graduate level and it was a subsection of the TOEFL Research Questionnaire (Bridgeman & Carlson, 1983). This section included eight items that classify writing tasks according to their length. The tasks mentioned ranged from "brief summaries of

articles read (1-2 pages)" to longer "research papers (6 pages or more)" or "case studies and take home exams." The participants were asked to indicate the frequency (from "never" to "always") of the tasks that assigned throughout the semester. Bridgeman and Carlson (1983) indicated that tasks included in the scale were gathered from the faculty.

3.4.4. Written Sources

The fourth section of the instrument was taken from the Doctoral Students' Survey (Gürel, 2010). In this section, the participants were required to rate the usefulness of seven written sources (dictionaries, grammar books, journal articles, etc.) they utilize during the academic writing tasks in English. In addition, the item source books, which was used in place of books by Gürel (2010), was included in this section. Ratings were on a five-point scale from "not useful" to "very useful."

3.4.5. Perceived Importance of Academic Writing

The fifth section included two items, assessing the perceived importance attributed to academic writing by the graduate students. This section was a subsection of the TOEFL Research Questionnaire (Bridgeman & Carlson, 1983). These items read "How important is writing skill to success in your department?" and "How important is writing skill to success in your field after graduation?" Items were rated on a five point rating scale, ranging from "not important" to "very important." The reliability coefficient, estimated through Cronbach's alpha was .57.

3.4.6. Role of Turkish While Writing

The sixth section, aiming to determine the role of Turkish while preparing an academic writing task, included five statements taken from the Doctoral Students' Survey (Gürel, 2010). Such statements in this section as "I take notes in Turkish and use them later while writing" or "I outline what I will write in Turkish" mainly focus on the degree the students utilize Turkish in their writing. Participants were asked to

choose the statement that is appropriate for them. Choosing more than one statement or none of the statements was possible.

3.4.7. Questionnaire on Self-Efficacy in Writing

The final section of the instrument, assessing writing self-efficacy, was developed by Wong et.al (Wong et al., 1996). The main target of the items was to find out the graduate students' self-rated abilities in "generating and organizing ideas for a paper," "initiating and maintaining the flow in writing," "putting ideas into words and sentences," and "self-correcting mistakes." The scale included eight items. Ratings were on a five-point rating scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The reliability coefficient, estimated through Cronbach's alpha was .79.

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

For the data collection, a survey instrument, which was developed by utilizing four different surveys, and a demographic data form were used. The survey was administered in English. In order to carry out the research study, the necessary permission from Human Subjects Ethics Committee was taken prior to the data collection. The proposal of the study in terms of its purpose, significance, method, and measures that were going to be administered to the volunteered participants were examined by the committee. Upon completing the approval phase, an online version of the instrument was designed by the researcher. An e-mail including the purpose of the study, the researcher's and advisor's contact information, and the web address of the survey was sent to all the graduate students enrolled at a Graduate School of Social Sciences, by Registrar's Office. The purpose of the study, which also included confidentiality and anonymity of participants, was also given in the first page of the online survey. The online survey was designed by http://www.surveygizmo.com and the screenshots of the survey were presented in Appendix B. In addition, the survey was administrated in the classroom environment. Data collection for both the online and paper-pencil version of the survey lasted 7 to 10 minutes.

3.6.   Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data gathered through the survey and to answer the research questions, descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were utilized. Predictive Analytics Software 18.0 (PASW) was used for data analysis. Except for the third research question, descriptive statistics were generated. For the third question, multiple regression analysis was performed, and the predictors for the analysis were (1) self-efficacy, (2) importance of academic writing, (3) academic status (master or doctorate students), (4) graduate program stage (writing thesis or taking courses), and (5) English Proficiency Exam score. Prior to the analysis, all the necessary assumptions for multiple regression analysis were checked. In order to check normality of residuals, histogram and normal P-P plot of residuals were examined. Furthermore, for homoscedasticity, scatterplot was examined. In order to check for multicolinearity, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values were examined.

3.7.   Limitations

As an instrument, a survey reflects the respondents' self-perceived opinions about the topic. Because of the quantitative nature of the study, there were not any additional data collection methods, such as interviews and focus groups, which is a drawback for the study. Examining the current situation regarding academic writing from the viewpoint of the respondents can only be fruitful when the participants are sincere and truthful in their answers and it is assumed that the graduate students participating in this study gave accurate answers. Another limitation of the study was in terms of generalizability, since the study was only carried out in a state university in Ankara, the results cannot be generalizable. In addition, the findings of the study were mostly descriptive, which is a limitation since no cause and effect relationship between the variables can be established. Moreover, the variables in the study were limited to academic status, proficiency scores, graduate program stage, and writing self-efficacy. There may be other variables that influence the students' academic

writing needs. Finally, the low response rate arousing from the use of online survey was a limitation for the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The study aimed at understanding the degree the variables - importance of academic writing, self-efficacy in academic writing, and writing proficiency – predict graduate students' academic writing needs. In this chapter, descriptive statistics related to the variables are given. The chapter also includes the assumptions of multiple regression analysis and the results of assumption tests. In the final part of the chapter, the results of hierarchical regression are given.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics Regarding Writing Tasks, Written Sources, and Role of Turkish in Writing

Participants were asked to report the frequency of writing tasks at the graduate level. Findings of descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.1. The outcome of the analysis yielded that, although the mean values for the items were very close, the graduate students participating in the study mostly wrote longer research papers (6 pages or more) ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.15$). According to the results, another important point was that group writing projects had the lowest mean for the graduate students enrolled at Social Sciences Institute ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.51$).

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of the Academic Writing Tasks

	M	*SD*	*N*
Brief summaries of articles read (1or 2 pages)	3.40	1.08	210
Brief research papers (5 pages or less)	3.46	1.01	211
Longer research papers (6 pages or more)	3.68	1.15	209
Critical writing - reflection papers	3.56	1.14	210
Exams with essay questions	3.14	1.18	210
Group writing projects	2.51	1.15	210
Case studies and take home exams	3.38	1.16	208

When the results of descriptive statistics regarding the written sources section was taken into consideration, it was observed that graduate students mostly utilized journal articles published in their area of specialization, while carrying out the writing tasks (M = 4.64, SD = .70). The use of source books (M = 4.34, SD = .84) and web-based sources (M = 4.23, SD = .94) as written sources was also common among the students. However, as presented in the Table 4.2, using grammar books as a guide at graduate stage produced the lowest mean score (M = 2.01, SD = 1.11).

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics of the Written Sources

	M	*SD*	*N*
Journal articles published in your area of specialization	4.64	.70	208
Source books	4.34	.84	207
Web-based sources	4.23	.94	207
Dictionaries	3.87	1.16	208
Manuals (i e , APA manual)	3.79	1.21	207
Spell checks	3.77	1.19	207
Grammar books	2.01	1.11	207

Participants were also asked the role of Turkish while writing. Findings indicated that the item "When I get stuck with finding the right word, I look for a Turkish word first and then find its equivalent in English" was mostly preferred by the graduate students (n = 131, 61.5%). Another preferred method utilized by the graduate students during writing was "thinking in Turkish first and then writing in English" (n =81, 38%). Besides these two statements, graduate students also indicated that they "take notes in Turkish and use them while writing" (n = 63, 26.5%). However, the remaining two items were preferred less when compared to the other items. One of them was related to "outlining in Turkish" (n = 27, 12.7%) and the second was about translation, which was the least preferred writing method; because only seven (3.3%) graduate students selected the statement "I write in Turkish first and then translate it to English".

4.2.   Descriptive Statistics Regarding Academic Writing Needs

To answer the first research question "What are the academic writing needs of the graduate students at the Graduate School of Social Sciences?" means and standard deviations were calculated for each item of the Academic Writing Needs Scale. Table 4.3 presents the mean values in descending order.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics of the Academic Writing Needs

	M	SD	N
Having rich vocabulary and expressions	3.13	1.23	212
Choosing correct words (field-related terminology)	3.03	1.26	213
Drawing conclusions	3.00	1.33	211
Presenting ideas clearly	2.96	1.30	211
Overall academic writing ability	2.94	1.18	212
Developing ideas	2.90	1.24	211
Organizing the whole text	2.89	1.20	212
Using proper mechanical conventions (e g APA style)	2.86	1.29	212
Using proper connections and transitions	2.73	1.33	212
Preparing an outline before starting writing	2.67	1.37	213
Using proper grammar	2.67	1.29	213
Avoiding plagiarism (how to quote, paraphrase or cite)	2.63	1.41	210
Organizing paragraphs	2.62	1.21	212
Using correct punctuation and spelling	2.48	1.26	213

In this section, participants were asked fourteen questions and they were required to indicate the degree of need they felt regarding academic writing on a five-point scale. When the results of descriptive statistics was taken into account, it was observed that graduate students need support related to having rich vocabulary ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.26$) and choosing correct words ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.26$), while carrying out the writing tasks. Besides this, "Drawing conclusions" was also an important area where graduate students needed help ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.33$). On the other hand, although a

few items had very close low mean values, using correct punctuation and spelling had the lowest mean ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.26$).

4.3. Descriptive Statistics Regarding Writing Self-Efficacy

For the second research question, "What is the level of writing self-efficacy of the graduate students at the Graduate School of Social Sciences?" means and standard deviations were presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Self-Efficacy

	M	*SD*	*N*
When writing a paper, it is easy for me to get ideas	3.54	.90	206
When writing a paper, it is easy for me to write my ideas into good sentences	3.34	1.01	202
When writing a paper, I find it easy to make all the changes I need to make	3.16	.89	204
When writing a paper, it is easy for me to get started	2.85	1.20	204
When writing a paper, it is hard for me to keep the paper going	2.82	1.04	204
When writing a paper, it is hard for me to organize my ideas	2.75	1.01	206
When writing a paper, it is hard for me to correct my mistakes	2.51	1.03	205
When writing a paper, I always believe that my paper is the best in my class	2.43	1.01	205

When the results of descriptive statistics regarding the writing self-efficacy was considered, the item "I always believe that my paper is the best in my class" came to the fore ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.01$), because the lowest mean value for the item meant that the graduate students' self-efficacy was very low. Despite this, as also shown in the Table 4.4, the items "it is easy for me to get ideas" ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .90$) and "it is easy for me to write my ideas into good sentences" ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.01$) produced the highest mean scores meaning that the graduate students' level of self-efficacy was very high regarding these two items.

4.4. Multiple Regression Analyses

Two separate simultaneous multiple regression analyses were conducted in which the outcome variables were productivity-related academic writing needs and accuracy related academic writing needs. The predictor variables were writing self-efficacy, importance of academic writing, academic status, graduate program stage, and English Proficiency Exam score.

In the survey instrument, respondents were asked to report their academic status in four levels: (1) Master's degree (with thesis); (2) Doctoral degree (following a non-thesis master's degree); (3) Doctoral degree (following a master's degree with thesis); (4) Integrated graduate degree. Frequencies were given earlier in Table 3.1. For the purpose of this analysis, academic status data were collapsed into two levels: master's degree and doctoral degree. There were 106 students (49.8%) pursuing a master's degree and 91 students (42.7%) pursuing a doctoral degree. Sixteen students did not report their academic status.

Similarly, for the graduate program stage, participants were asked to report in three levels: (1) Scientific preparation; (2) Taking courses; (3) Writing thesis. As there were only ten students in the "scientific preparation" stage, their data were recoded to be included in the "taking courses" stage. Therefore, the resulting graduate program stage variable had two levels: course stage and thesis stage. 115 students (54%) were at the course stage, while 96 students (45.1%) were at the thesis stage.

4.4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for the Study Variables

Results of descriptive statistics regarding the predictor and outcome variables of multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 4.5. Findings revealed that the respondents regarded academic writing as an important component for their career ($M = 4.61$, $SD = .52$) and the results also indicated a moderate level of writing self-efficacy ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .57$). Furthermore, the two factors of academic writing

needs, productivity-related ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.06$) and accuracy-related ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.12$), had similar results.

Table 4.5

Descriptive Statistics of the Predictor and Outcome Variables

	M	*SD*	*N*
Productivity-related writing needs	2.81	1.06	213
Accuracy-related writing needs	2.81	1.12	213
Writing self-efficacy	3.15	0.57	206
Importance of academic writing	4.61	0.52	208
English Proficiency Exam score	82.50	9.73	174

Table 4.6 presents the intercorrelations among the outcome variables and predictor variables. Findings indicated that the outcome variable "productivity-related academic writing needs" was significantly correlated with the following predictors: importance of writing ($r = .70$, $p < .01$), writing self-efficacy ($r = .44$, $p < .01$) and English proficiency exam score ($r = .22$, $p < .05$). In addition, the correlations between the outcome variable "accuracy-related academic writing needs" and writing self-efficacy ($r = .39$, $p < .01$) and English proficiency exam score ($r = .33$, $p < .01$) were also significant. Furthermore, writing self-efficacy was significantly correlated with English Proficiency Exam score ($r = .30$, $p < .01$).

Table 4.6

Intercorrelations among the Predictor Variables and Outcome Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Outcome variables					
Productivity-related academic writing needs	.44**	.70**	.16	.02	.22*
Accuracy-related academic writing needs	.39**	.07	.09	.03	.33**
Predictor variables					
1. Writing self-efficacy	1.00	.05	.01	.10	.30**
2. Importance of academic writing		1.00	.14	.07	.07
3. Academic status			1.00	.03	.03
4. Graduate program stage				1.00	.02
5. English Proficiency Exam score		.			1.00

*p<.05; **p<.01*

4.4.2. Assumptions of Multiple Regression Analysis for the Outcome Variable – Productivity-related Academic Writing Needs

The assumptions of multiple regression analysis (homoscedasticity, multicollinearity normality, linearity, and independent errors) were checked for the outcome variable, productivity-related academic writing needs, before carrying out the analysis. To test the normality of residuals, the histogram and normal probability plot for residuals presented in Figure 4.1 were examined. Field (2009) stated that "The normal probability plot also shows up deviations from normality and the straight line in the plot represents a normal distribution, and the points represent the observed residuals" (Field, 2009, p. 249). Hence, both histogram and p-p plot indicated an acceptable pattern for the present variable.
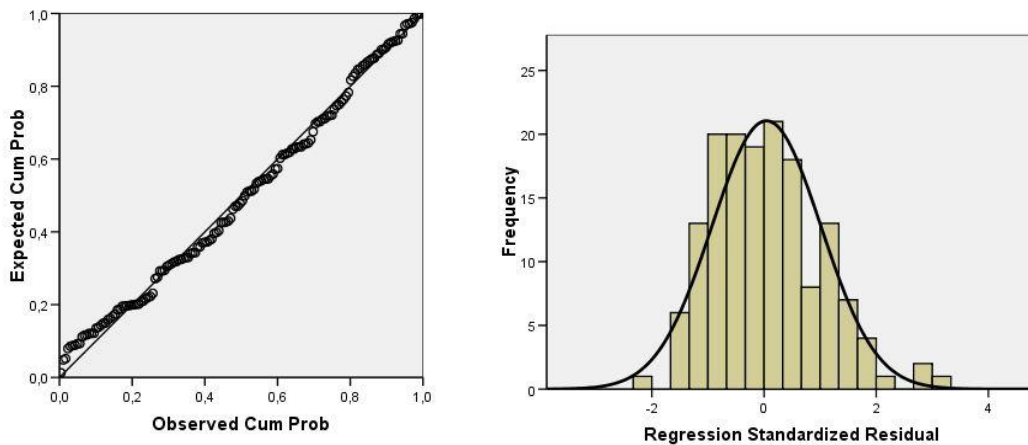
Figure 4.1. Histogram and normal P–P plot of normally distributed residuals

Durbin–Watson test was carried out to check the assumption of independent errors. The test was performed to find out if there was serial correlations between errors in the regression model (Field, 2009). According to Field (2009), the results of the test can vary between 0 and 4 with a value of 2 meaning that the residuals are uncorrelated. A value greater than 2 indicates a negative correlation between adjacent residuals, whereas a value below 2 indicates a positive correlation (Field, 2009, p. 785). The test value for the present study was 2.08, which was close to 2, indicating that the assumption of independent errors was met.

Another assumption checked was linearity. "Linearity is acceptable when the mean values of the outcome variable for each increment of the predictor(s) lie along a straight line" (Field, 2009, p. 221). The scatterplots were examined in order to decide on whether the assumption of linearity was met or not. Because the points in the scatterplots were randomly and evenly dispersed throughout the plot, the assumption of linearity was met.

As for the assumption of homoscedasticity, it is stated that the variance of the residuals should be constant at each level of the predictor variable(s) (Field, 2009). The scatterplots were examined for this purpose. Evenly distributed residuals observed in the scatterplots indicated that the assumption was met.

Finally, multicollinearity was checked to see whether there was a strong correlation between the predictors. In order to identify multicollinearity, the correlation matrix of all of the predictor variables were scanned to find out whether there were any correlations higher than .90 (Field, 2009). When the correlation matrix of the present study was examined (Table 4.6), it was noted that there were not any correlations higher than .90. Moreover, PASW also produced the variance inflation factor (VIF). Concerning the VIF values, it was suggested that a value of 10 or higher can be a problem in terms of collinearity (Myers, 1994). In the current study, all the VIF values were around 1. These evidences seemed acceptable.

4.4.3. Findings of Multiple Regression Analysis for the Productivity-related Academic Writing Needs as the Outcome Variable

The predictor variables for the first multiple regression analysis were writing self-efficacy, importance of academic writing, academic status, graduate program stage, and English Proficiency Exam score. The outcome variable for the analysis was "productivity-related academic writing needs." R^2 explains how much of the variability in the outcome variable that is accounted for by the predictors. In the present study, R^2 value, .24, meant that the predictors accounted for 24% of the variance in productivity-related academic writing needs. The model was significant, $F (5, 156) = 10.05, p < .05$.
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Table 4.7 presents the unstandardized regression coefficients and associated standard errors, standardized coefficients, semi-partial correlations, and t values. Findings of regression analysis indicated that writing self-efficacy ($\beta = .42, p < .05$) and academic status ($\beta = .16, p < .05$) contributed significantly to the productivity-related academic writing needs, whereas importance of academic writing ($\beta = .13, p = .07$), graduate program stage ($\beta = .03, p = .69$), and English Proficiency Exam score ($\beta = .11, p = .15$) made no difference in the outcome variable. The negative sign of the regression coefficients implied that as the writing self-efficacy of graduate students increases, productivity-related academic writing needs decrease. In addition, it appeared that master students reported more productivity-related academic writing

needs than doctoral students. Considering the semi-partial correlations, writing self-efficacy made the most unique contribution (16%).

Table 4.7

Results of Regression Analysis for Productivity-related Academic Writing Needs

Predictors	b	SE	β	sr^2	t
Writing Self-Efficacy	-.78	.14	-.42	.16	-5.69*
Importance of Academic Writing	.26	.14	.13	.01	1.79
Academic Status	-.37	.15	-.16	.03	-2.48*
Graduate Program Stage	.06	.15	.03	.01	.40
English Proficiency Exam Score	-.01	.01	-.11	.01	-1.44

Note: Outcome variable = Productivity-related Academic Writing Needs; *p<.05*

4.4.4. Assumptions of Multiple Regression Analysis for the Outcome Variable – Accuracy-related Academic Writing Needs

Before carrying out the second multiple regression analysis, the assumptions including homoscedasticity, normality, linearity, and independent errors were checked for the dependent variable, accuracy-related academic writing needs. As the same predictors were used, multicollinearity was not checked.

The histogram and normal probability plot for residuals are shown in Figure 4.2. The normality assumption was met based on the shape of the histogram and the p-p plot. As for the normal p-p plot, the points that lie on the line indicated an acceptable distribution.
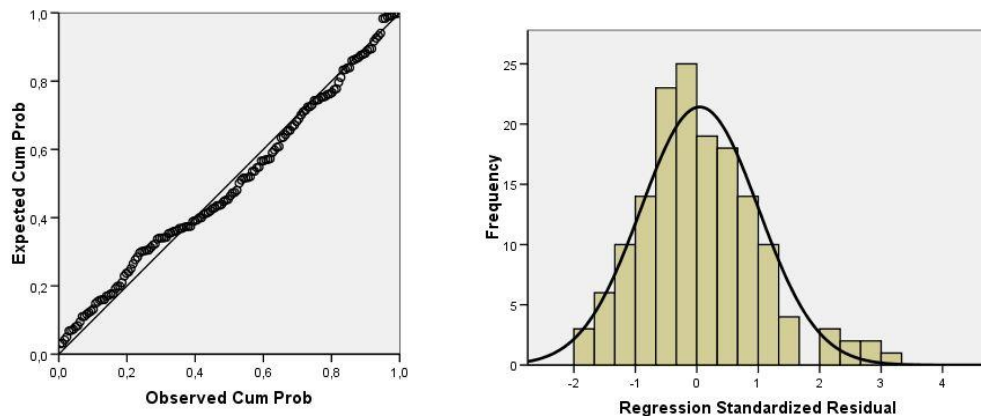
48

Figure 4.2. Histogram and normal P–P plot of normally distributed residuals

To check the assumption of independent errors, Durbin–Watson test was performed. As the test value was 2.02, which was very close to 2 and the assumption of independent errors was met. Linearity was the third assumption checked. In the scatterplots, the points were randomly dispersed which indicated that the assumption of linearity was met. Homoscedasticity was another assumption checked by examining the scatterplots. The absence of obvious outliers and evenly distributed residuals indicated that the assumption was met.

4.4.5. Findings of Multiple Regression Analysis for the Accuracy-related Academic Writing Needs as the Outcome Variable

The outcome variable for the second analysis was "accuracy-related academic writing needs" and the predictor variables were writing self-efficacy, importance of academic writing, academic status, graduate program stage, and English Proficiency Exam score. The regression model was significant, $R^2 = .22$, $F (5, 156) = 8.89$, $p < .05$. Twenty-two percent of the variance in accuracy-related academic writing needs was explained by the predictors.

Table 4.8 presents the unstandardized regression coefficients and associated standard errors, standardized coefficients, semi-partial correlations, and t values. Findings showed that writing self-efficacy ($\beta = .32$, $p < .05$) and English Proficiency Exam

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score ($\beta = .24$, $p < .05$) contributed to the accuracy-related academic writing needs. As the writing self-efficacy and English Proficiency Exam Score increase, accuracy-related academic writing needs of graduate students decrease. Importance of academic writing ($\beta = .12$, $p = .11$), academic status ($\beta = .11$, $p = .14$), and graduate program stage ($\beta = .01$, $p = .94$) were not significant. Squared semi-partial correlations indicated that writing self-efficacy ($sr^2 = 10$) made more unique contribution than the English Proficiency Exam score

Table 4.8

Results of Regression Analysis for Accuracy-related Academic Writing Needs

Predictors	b	SE	β	sr^2	t
Writing self-efficacy	-.63	.15	-.32	.10	-4.32*
Importance of academic writing	.25	.16	.12	.01	1.61
Academic status	-.24	.16	-.11	.01	-1.48
Graduate program stage	.01	.16	.01	.01	.80
English Proficiency Exam score	-.03	.01	-.24	.05	-3.27*

Note: Outcome variable = Productivity-related Academic Writing Needs; *p<.05*

4.5.   Summary

In this chapter, the results of analyses carried out were presented in detail. According to the results, graduate students were mostly assigned longer research papers and they frequently utilize journals published in their area of specialization to write their papers. When the role of Turkish in writing was considered, it was seen that 61.5% of the graduate students chose the item "When I get stuck with finding the right word, I look for a Turkish word first and then find its equivalent in English".

For the academic writing needs section, descriptive statistics and two different multiple regression analyses were carried out. The results of the descriptive statistics revealed that having rich vocabulary and expressions and choosing correct words were two important need areas for the graduate students. In addition, drawing conclusions based on the written task was also indicated as a need area. As the

exploratory factor analysis revealed two factors ("productivity-related academic writing needs" and "accuracy-related academic writing needs"), two different multiple regression analyses were carried out. The results yielded that the predictors accounted for 24% of the variance in productivity-related academic writing needs, while predictors explained 22% of the variance in accuracy-related academic writing needs. For the productivity-related academic writing needs, writing self-efficacy and academic status (being master's student vs. doctoral student) made a significant contribution. On the other hand, for the accuracy-related academic writing needs, writing self-efficacy and English proficiency exam score were significant. In both of the analyses, writing self-efficacy made the strongest unique contribution.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In the background of the present study, it was stated that adapting to the conventions and expectations of academic disciplines in terms of academic writing, is a serious challenge for the graduate students. Furthermore, academic writing is one of the most important components of graduate courses since it is the cornerstone for well-quality publications; therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the challenges of academic writing from the point of view of the graduate students. Within this framework, this chapter summarizes and discusses the findings of the study. In addition, implications for practice and recommendations for further research are given in line with the results and shortcomings of this study.

5.1. Discussion of the Results

Survey research was utilized in order to examine academic writing needs and writing self-efficacy of the graduate students. The frequency of writing tasks, the use of written sources as a guide, the role of Turkish while writing, and the importance of academic writing were explored as well. Factors influencing academic writing needs were also explored through multiple regression analysis. These factors included perceived importance of academic writing, writing self-efficacy, and English proficiency.

To begin with, results of descriptive statistics regarding the frequency of writing tasks indicated that most of the graduate students enrolled at the Social Sciences Institute write long research papers, critical writing tasks, and brief research papers that have 5 pages or less. Graduate students who have poor writing skills but good skills in other areas can be successful if they are assigned to groups that include at least one good writer (Bridgeman & Carlson, 1983). However, group writing projects, which are regarded as a part of science faculties in the literature, had the

lowest mean of all in the present study. In addition, because of the emphasis on creative writing in many elementary and secondary schools, this kind of writing is apparently relatively high at the university level which contradicted with the findings of Bridgeman and Carlson (1983)'s study. They stated that critical writing was rare at most of the graduate departments although it was quite frequent for undergraduates. Yet, they found out similar results regarding exams with essay questions which were given as a common writing task on graduate levels.

Another descriptive finding was related to the written sources utilized by the graduate students. Gürel (2010) stated that such written sources as dictionaries, grammar books, and journal articles were the most common strategies documented by graduate students. Using other materials as guides or samples was also common methods utilized while carrying out writing tasks. These types of materials help the graduate students in terms of format, content, mechanical styles or the academic language used. When the present study was taken into account, it was observed that using journal articles published in the area of specialization during writing was the most common method. Dong (1998) also expressed that journal articles were listed as the major written source by 94% of the students in her study. Gürel (2010) stated that her study revealed thoroughly that "scholarly articles comprise a significant amount of the written sources the graduate students consult to overcome the challenges they face during writing in the foreign language" (p. 137). In addition, the present study indicated that source books were the second most important written source utilized, which was again in parallel with Gürel's (2010) study. Based on the findings it can be stated that utilizing journal articles or sources books is also important because the graduate students learn the conventions of academic writing through the use of such materials.

In the writing process, the preferred style is to think and write in the target language rather than translating or transferring everything. One of the main challenges the graduate students faced regarding the role of Turkish was in the word level. More than half of the graduate students stated that when stuck with finding the right word, they first look for a Turkish word first and then its equivalent in English. Besides

this, thinking in the native language, which was Turkish for the present study, not in the foreign language was a problem that needed to be overcome by the graduate students. Thirty-eight percent of the graduate students indicated that they think in Turkish first and then write in English which slows down the writing process although the students may regard this as a way to simplify the process. In addition, this type of writing causes the students to rely heavily on the native language for higher mental functions such as analysis or synthesis. When the students do not have the necessary background related to academic writing, they lack the ability to create and present ideas in the foreign language and so they have to transfer ideas from Turkish to English. In addition, transferring ideas from native language to foreign language causes inappropriate use of vocabulary, expressions or structural conventions. Initially, especially at the taking courses stage, the graduate students may not know that the conventions of the native language might oppose to those of target language but later when they are corrected and their assignments are revised they realize this fact (Gürel, 2010).

Moreover, regarding the academic writing needs of the graduate students, results descriptively indicated that the most crucial needs were "Having rich vocabulary and expressions" and "Choosing correct words," both items were parallel in that, they were both related to vocabulary. Therefore, it can be stated that graduate students need more vocabulary in order to cope with the challenges of academic writing. The results were in line with the results of both Gürel (2010)'s and Dong (1998)'s study, which administered the same survey instrument. Gürel (2010) worked with Turkish doctoral students, while Dong (1998, p. 256) worked with non-native students studying in the US institutions. Therefore, with regard to writing one area which is of special value is vocabulary and vocabulary is one of the most important features of writing (Muncie, 2002).

As for the academic writing needs section of the instrument, before running multiple regression analysis to investigate the predictors of academic writing needs, exploratory factor analysis was carried out to explore the underlying dimensions of the Academic Writing Needs Scale. Two factors that emerged as a result of the

analysis were: productivity-related academic writing needs and accuracy-related academic writing needs. The items in the productivity-related academic writing needs referred to the need areas that require the writer to produce the writing task starting from the outline and following with the organization of the paragraph and text. On the other hand, the items in the accuracy-related academic writing needs were related to grammar and some grammar-related rules such as transitions or punctuation. Furthermore, having rich vocabulary and choosing correct words to produce better written tasks were included in the second factor.

Two separate regression analyses were carried out to explain productivity-related and accuracy-related academic writing needs. The predictors in the both analyses were the same: writing self-efficacy, importance of academic writing, academic status, graduate program stage, and English Proficiency Exam score. In both analyses, writing-self-efficacy was statistically significant. Therefore, it can be claimed that in this study, the results of analyses regarding self-efficacy beliefs in academic processes proved Bandura's (1986b) suggestion that self-efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in human agency. When graduate students' writing self-efficacy increases, their academic writing needs decrease. Therefore, to increase students' confidence in their writing ability interventions designed to improve writing by decreasing anxiety may be useful (Pajares, 2003). The literature also suggests a relationship between higher writing self-efficacy and writing performance. In other words, writing self-efficacy was usually predictive of more skillful writing performance in students (Pajares & Johnson, 1996; Pajares, Miller, & Johnson, 1999; Pajares & Valiante, 1997). Because, in general terms, perceived self-efficacy refers to what people believe regarding their abilities to produce certain standards of performance which influence the events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1994). When the students have to depend on their own initiative, the ones with a strong sense of self-efficacy can better educate themselves (Bandura, 1986b). Therefore, finding a relation between the two terms is not surprising. A strong confidence can help students while writing since it reveals more interest in and attention to writing, stronger endeavor, and perseverance when faced with a challenge (Pajares, 2003).

Therefore, it can be asserted that the prominent role self-efficacy beliefs play regarding the students' writing is clear.

In addition, the students' academic status, i.e., their being either master's or doctorate's students, had a crucial role in determining their academic writing needs in productive skills. In other words, it was found that master's students reported significantly more academic writing needs in productive skills than doctoral students. On the other hand, in terms of accuracy-related writing needs, there was no statistically significant difference between them. Another finding was that English Proficiency Exam predicted their accuracy-related academic writing needs, not their productivity-related needs. Results showed that the students with lower proficiency scores stated they needed guidance in terms of accuracy-related academic writing. This was also meaningful since proficiency exam requires the graduate students to carry out tasks that are based on grammar and sentence level exercises. However, Crusan (1999) and Shaw (2008) stated that the placement essay or writing section of Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), which is similar to the writing section of English Proficiency Exam, was the strongest predictor of writing ability. As for grammar, it was asserted that the grammar test is not the best predictor of the ability of writing and it is not the best measure of the skill (Crusan, 1999). Therefore, to determine the academic writing needs of the graduate students, a closer to the writing section of the exam is needed since it is a better predictor of writing ability than a grammar test.

5.2.   Implications for Practice

The importance of academic writing to pursue a successful graduate education is an undeniable fact; therefore, the need areas regarding such a crucial topic have to be clearly searched out. The results of this study showed that there were two important factors that form academic writing needs: production-related related academic writing needs and accuracy-related academic writing needs. Both factors played a prominent role in writing performance. The strong relationship among the items within the factors was clearly revealed as a result of exploratory factor analysis. This highlights the need to realize the important role of academic writing for the graduate

students. In addition, the results indicate the need areas that should be focused on. However, importance and attention attributed to academic writing in the curriculum contrasts with what happens in reality. Because of this, it can be asserted that integrating an English academic writing course into the graduate curriculum by placing the graduate students' needs into center has become a necessity. As suggested by the findings of the current study, in such a course not only accuracy-related issues but also productivity-related issues should be included. In addition, teaching academic writing explicitly through a curriculum which can provide the graduate students with the ways to comprehend the characteristics of this kind of writing is of great significance. As stated by Gürel (2010) the graduate students are in urgent need of instruction related to academic writing which would center on such writing tasks as reports, research papers, and dissertations.

According to the results of descriptive analysis, the graduate students need support in terms of choosing the correct word and having rich vocabulary while writing. This is mostly because of the difference between the terminology utilized at the undergraduate level and graduate level. In addition, this indicates that the vocabulary needed for graduate level writing tasks is more complicated than the compositions written at preparatory classes or during undergraduate English courses. Such needs as drawing conclusions, developing and presenting ideas clearly, organizing the whole text or overall writing ability were also important in terms of academic writing. Besides this, descriptive analyses were also carried out to understand the frequency of academic writing tasks assigned to the graduate students and the usefulness of written sources while carrying out an academic writing task. For writing tasks, although the mean values were almost the same except for group writing projects, it can be stated that the graduate students are responsible for writing research papers, reflection papers, essays, take-home exams and brief summaries of articles. All the tasks that are frequently assigned require higher level writing skills and knowledge of good vocabulary. In addition, the students must be aware of and familiar with the conventional rules of academic writing and words that are used in their disciplines because each discipline requires specific types of rules and words. To this end, professional help through an academic writing course or at least through

a seminar or workshop should be provided for the graduate students. Apart from this, the written sources utilized are different from the undergraduate level. While writing a text at undergraduate level the students' focus is mostly on the form, grammar and vocabulary. Because at this level the writing texts are mostly about a general topic, such as holidays, types of transportation, and require them to be careful about grammar rules and the use of correct words. However, the students at the graduate level have already passed the grammar stage and they know that their focus should be on rhetorical and conventional rules of their discipline. Therefore, the written sources utilized at this level are generally the journal articles, source books and web-based sources. Grammar books were stated as the least useful type of sources because of the above mentioned reasons.

In addition to the above analyses, multiple regression analyses for each factor were performed. The shared point for the two analyses was the importance of self-efficacy. The relation between self-efficacy and writing performance was also implied in the literature; moreover, studies to develop students' writing performance through improving their self-efficacy were carried out by some researchers (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Schunk, 2003). Furthermore, it is stated that although writing is partly based on the students' language related abilities, motivational agents also play an important role (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). As also supported by the results of this study, the assessment of students' self-efficacy beliefs can help educators understand the relationship better. The information gathered through surveys can be useful for the faculty members to focus on the weaker areas and provide students with tasks that enhance their self-efficacy beliefs. The relation between the two concepts also means that supporting the students with good models may help them be successful at a writing task. Moreover, Bandura (1986a) suggested that the difficulty and complexity of the task may determine the level of self-efficacy. Therefore, the faculty members should assign students with simple tasks in the beginning and continue with harder tasks during the term.

Before the graduate level, writing is mostly taught and tested in the class; however, at the graduate level writing tasks require self-study. Because of this, the graduate students must be supported with opportunities to differentiate between the writing tasks at two different levels. The result of first regression analysis revealed that there was a negative correlation between productivity-related academic writing needs and self-efficacy. Because when the students had higher self-efficacy, in other words they believed that they were better writers, their academic writing needs decreased. The result was also supported by the second analysis which also indicated a negative correlation between self-efficacy and accuracy-related academic writing needs. Therefore, educators have to focus on improving students' motivation and try to help students have positive feelings towards academic writing. Since, feeling that "writing is impossible" worsens the situation. According to the results of second analysis, there was also a negative correlation between English proficiency exam scores and accuracy-related academic writing needs. The finding of this study is also supported by the results of the dissertations written by Crusan (1999) and Shaw (2008). Proficiency exam and accuracy-related needs are parallel in that they both require the students have better grammar and sentence-level skills. As also implied by Cumming (1989) when people attain proficiency in the target language, their writing improves, they are able to produce better texts, and attend more to their writing. Therefore, it can be asserted that lower language proficiency may hinder better writing for the graduate students. Because of this, having dealt with the accuracy-related academic writing needs before productivity-related writing needs is also important. Upon taking the results into consideration, it can be stated that professional assistance should be given to the students with lower proficiency exam scores since they need to improve their academic writing.

In addition to specifying the needs and perceptions of the graduate students, the results of this study can help the faculty members, academic writing centers and curriculum developers. Especially, the faculty members can guide the graduate students to improve their writing by providing them with writing experiences during the courses or by taking the results of the present study into account while deciding on the requirements of courses and the level of assignments. When the results of

analyses are considered, it can be asserted that this study provides a useful first glimpse for researchers and educators interested in better serving the needs of the graduate students in terms of academic writing.

5.3.   Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, academic writing needs of the graduate students enrolled at the graduate school of social sciences were investigated. The parts of the instrument used in the study were adapted from four different surveys developed by other researchers. For the data collection, only a self-report survey was used because of this, utilizing other data collection methods, such as focus groups or interviews, could help the educators have a better insight about the situation. In addition, surveys reflect the respondents' self-evaluation and determining whether the answers are accurate is a difficult process. Furthermore, in a survey the participants are given the need areas and they have to choose among the stated areas. Thus, using observation and other methods as a way to improve validity and to obtain more information regarding the higher needs are recommended for further research.

The study also tried to reveal the academic writing needs from the view point of only the graduate students. Including other agents, for example faculty members, advisors or members of academic writing center, can yield better results regarding the issue. Because, especially the faculty members may observe the need areas while they are reading the writing assignments. Moreover, the inclusion of participants from different groups can help identify other aspects of the need areas and especially the advisors and instructions can help the graduate students in identifying their needs and improve their writing skills. Carrying out the same study in the science faculties and in the other English-medium universities and comparing the results to gain information regarding cross-disciplines can support the researchers with a broader line of vision. Besides, the results obtained from different universities can be compared in order to observe the academic writing needs of graduate students at different universities. With regards to the variables, the present study included self-efficacy, importance of academic writing, academic status, graduate program stage,

and English proficiency exam score and explained 24% and 22% of the variance depending on the outcome variable. In order to increase the variance, such variables as gender or perceived value of writing can also be included.

First and foremost, identifying the need areas has to be regarded as the first step towards a solution to the problems that graduate students face while writing. To this end, further research can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of seminars, workshops or an academic writing course and focus on finding out the best way to support the graduate students.

Academic writing is a "sine qua non" for academic studies. Therefore, the necessary support must be given to the graduate students to help them develop their writing skills. The above mentioned solutions must be provided for the students but prior to determining any type of activity and content of activity, a detailed research study must be carried out.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Dear student,

The present study aims to investigate how graduate students write academic papers (e.g., research papers, critiques, and thesis) in English. The literature regarding issues of graduate level writing is very limited; therefore, your participation in this study is crucial. The information you provide will only be used for research purposes. We guarantee anonymity of responses. We would appreciate your taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Mustafa Öztürk AKCAOĞLU

Assist. Prof. Dr. Yeşim ÇAPA AYDIN

METU – Department of Educational Sciences

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender: _____

2. Age: _____

3. Current Department: _____

4. Your English Proficiency Score: _____

5. Your Current CGPA: _____

6. Academic Status:

   ☐ Master's Degree (non-thesis)

   ☐ Master's Degree (with thesis)

   ☐ Doctor's Degree (following a non-thesis master's degree)

   ☐ Doctor's Degree (following a master's degree with thesis)

   ☐ Integrated Graduate Degree

7. Specify the number of semesters you completed in your current graduate program: _____

8. Choose the appropriate item indicating your graduate program stage:

☐ Scientific Preparation

☐ Taking Courses

☐ Writing Thesis

ACADEMIC WRITING NEEDS

For each of the following items, please indicate how much support you need during the process of writing an academic paper (e.g., research papers, critiques, and thesis/dissertation) ("1" indicating "No need" and "5" indicating "Very high need").

	No need	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
1. Preparing an outline before starting writing	1	2	3	4	5
2. Organizing paragraphs	1	2	3	4	5
3. Organizing the whole text	1	2	3	4	5
4. Having rich vocabulary and expressions	1	2	3	4	5
5. Choosing correct words (field-related terminology)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Using proper grammar	1	2	3	4	5
7. Using proper connections and transitions	1	2	3	4	5
8. Using correct punctuation and spelling	1	2	3	4	5
9. Using proper mechanical conventions (e.g. APA style)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Developing ideas	1	2	3	4	5
11. Presenting ideas clearly	1	2	3	4	5
12. Drawing conclusions	1	2	3	4	5
13. Avoiding plagiarism (how to quote, paraphrase or cite)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Overall academic writing ability	1	2	3	4	5

WRITING TASKS

The following questions pertain to the kinds of writing tasks that you are expected to produce in all of your courses. For each of the following items, indicate how frequently each task might be assigned per semester.

Writing Tasks	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. Brief summaries of articles read (1-2 pages)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Brief research papers (5 pages or less)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Longer research papers (6 pages or more)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Critical writing - reflection papers	1	2	3	4	5
5. Exams with essay questions	1	2	3	4	5
6. Group writing projects	1	2	3	4	5
7. Case studies and take home exams	1	2	3	4	5
8. Other (specify) ……………………………………	1	2	3	4	5

WRITTEN SOURCES

The following questions pertain to the kind of written sources you may refer to while writing (e.g. assignments, research papers, thesis, and dissertation). For each of the following items, indicate the degree of usefulness for each source by choosing the appropriate number "1" indicating "Not useful" and "5" indicating "Very useful").

	Not useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Useful	Very useful
1. Dictionaries	1	2	3	4	5
2. Grammar books	1	2	3	4	5
3. Journal articles published in your area of specialization	1	2	3	4	5
4. Source books	1	2	3	4	5
5. Manuals (i.e., APA manual)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Spell checks	1	2	3	4	5
7. Web-based sources	1	2	3	4	5
8. Others …………………………………………………	1	2	3	4	5

IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC WRITING

For each of the following item, indicate the degree of importance by choosing the appropriate number ("1" indicating "Not important" and "5" indicating "Very important").

	Not important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
1. How important is writing skill to success in your department?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How important is writing skill to success in your field after graduation?	1	2	3	4	5

ROLE OF TURKISH WHILE WRITING

The following questions are related with the role of Turkish while writing. For the following items, check all that apply.

- ☐ I take notes in Turkish and use them later while writing.
- ☐ I outline what I will write in Turkish
- ☐ I think in Turkish first and then write in English
- ☐ I write in Turkish first and then translate it to English
- ☐ When I get stuck with finding the right word, I look for a Turkish word first and then find its equivalent in English

CONFIDENCE IN WRITING

For each of the following items, indicate the degree you agree with each statement by choosing the appropriate alternative ("1" indicating "Strongly disagree" and "5" indicating "Strongly agree").

When writing a paper,	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. it is easy for me to get ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
2. it is hard for me to organize my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. it is easy for me to get started.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I find it easy to make all the changes I need to make.	1	2	3	4	5
5. it is easy for me to write my ideas into good sentences.	1	2	3	4	5
6. it is hard for me to keep the paper going.	1	2	3	4	5
7. it is hard for me to correct my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I always believe that my paper is the best in my class.	1	2	3	4	5

THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION ☺

Academic Writing Needs Assessment Survey for Graduate Students

WELCOME

Dear student,

The present study aims to investigate how graduate students write academic papers (e.g., research papers, critiques, and thesis) in English. The literature regarding the issues at graduate level writing is very limited; therefore, your participation to the study by completing this questionnaire is crucial. The information you provide will only be used for research purposes. We guarantee anonymity of responses. We would appreciate your taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Mustafa Öztürk AKCAOĞLU
Assist. Prof. Dr. Yeşim ÇAPA AYDIN

METU – Department of Educational Sciences

Next

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Academic Writing Needs Assessment Survey for Graduate Students

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender

○ Male
○ Female

2. Age

[_____]

3. Current Department

[_____]

4. Your English proficiency score

[_____]

5. Your CGPA

[_____]

6. Academic Status

○ Master's Degree (non-thesis)
○ Master's Degree (with thesis)
○ Doctor's Degree (following a non-thesis master's degree)
○ Doctor's Degree (following a master's degree with thesis)
○ Integrated Graduate Degree

7. Specify the number of semesters you completed in your current graduate program

[_____]

8. Choose the appropriate item indicating your graduate program stage

○ Scientific Preparation
○ Writing Thesis
○ Taking Courses

[Next]

20%

Academic Writing Needs Assessment Survey for Graduate Students

PART II

ACADEMIC WRITING NEEDS

For each of the following item, please indicate how much support you need during the process of writing an academic paper (e.g., research papers, critiques, and thesis/dissertation) ("1" indicating "No need" and "5" indicating "Very high need").

	NO NEED	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Preparing an outline before starting writing	○	○	○	○	○
Organizing paragraphs	○	○	○	○	○
Organizing the whole text	○	○	○	○	○
Having rich vocabulary and expressions	○	○	○	○	○
Choosing correct words (field-related terminology)	○	○	○	○	○
Using proper grammar	○	○	○	○	○
Using proper connections and transitions	○	○	○	○	○
Using correct punctuation and spelling	○	○	○	○	○
Using proper mechanical conventions (e.g. APA style)	○	○	○	○	○
Developing ideas	○	○	○	○	○
Presenting ideas clearly	○	○	○	○	○
Drawing conclusions	○	○	○	○	○
Avoiding plagiarism (how to quote, paraphrase or cite)	○	○	○	○	○
Overall academic writing ability	○	○	○	○	○