The Academic Writing Needs of Students: A Case Study on Stakeholder Perspectives

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Abstract

The international appeal of English has resulted in an expansion of courses adopting English-medium instruction, and many institutions require students to pursue their studies in programs with English medium. However, to what extent these programs meet the expectations is yet to be understood. Numerous studies have documented the effectiveness of EMI particularly in English as a foreign language contexts. However, perspectives of different stakeholders were not adequately captured. The present study attempts to fill this void by exploring students' needs of academic writing from the perspectives of different stakeholders. A total of 9 participants, namely, 5 students, a language instructor, and 3 teachers of content professors were selected using the snowball sampling method. All the participants were selected from a department offering English-medium instruction at a state university in Turkey. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The results show that students require more investment in academic writing courses to get familiar with the disciplinary register and fulfil the requirements of future English courses. The stakeholders' perspectives are compared to have a better understanding of students' needs, lacks and wants. The study suggests some implications to approach language education policies more critically.

Keywords: Academic writing, English medium instruction (EMI), stakeholder perspectives, writing needs

INTRODUCTION

EMI can be described as "the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English" (Dearden, 2014, p. 2). With the thrust of globalization, the importance attached to English has been gaining momentum in higher education institutions. As a result, English has had significant demand both in education and in private sectors such as tourism, international industry and overseas business (Kırkgöz, 2007). The widespread demand and use of English in an increasingly globalizing market, the internationalization attempts of universities and the stiff competition in the form of research publications have had a correspondingly growing emphasis in educational settings (Macaro & Akincioglu, 2018; Macaro et al., 2017;). Galloway

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et al. (2017) explain EMI as an opportunity to 'to kill two birds with one stone' (p. 6). Even though these developments make EMI appealing especially with reference to its triggering of 'global competitiveness' (Kim, Kweon, & Kim, 2016), not all stakeholders are equally receptive to EMI instruction (Ekoç, 2018) as such instruction brings substantial challenges (Yıldız, Soruç & Griffiths, 2017). Therefore, the effectiveness of EMI was called into question in many studies (Aslan, 2017; Bozdoğan & Karlıdağ, 2013; Ekoç, 2018; Karakaş, 2016, 2019; Kılıçkaya, 2006; Kırkgöz, 2009; Sert, 2008; Yıldız, Soruç, & Griffiths, 2017; Zaif, Karapınar, & Yangın Eksi, 2017).

Previous studies into the effectiveness of English medium instruction have yielded conflicting findings, and Selvi (2014, p. 133) explains the multifaceted nature of the role of EMI through the metaphor of a pendulum, which "oscillat[es] between national ideas and bilingual ideals". The manifestations of incompatible perspectives are apparent in studies exploring perception or performance. In the one camp, we see the findings pointing to the positive effects of EMI instruction. Zaif, Karapınar, & Yangın Eksi (2017), for instance, compared the performance of students who were taking courses either in their L1 or in English. The two groups did not show a significant difference regarding the medium of instruction. However, when the university entrance examination scores of students placed in the lowest and highest quartiles were compared, a significant difference in favour of the EMI was observed. Similarly, Sert's (2008) study drew a comparison of EMI, English aided instruction, and Turkish medium instruction. Gathering data from 527 undergraduate students and 87 instructors, the study concluded that EMI was the most effective medium considering skills development. In the other camp, however, several challenges were noted, resulting in Turkish lecturers' unfavourable views. Kılıçkaya (2006), for instance, found that instructors in a Turkish EMI context held more favourable dispositions towards Turkish as an instructional medium. Similarly, research examining students' perspective indicated some challenges of EMI including linguistic challenges, challenges related to the instructors' proficiency and effectiveness of courses (Ekoç, 2018; Yıldız, Soruç, & Griffiths, 2017); challenges in the comprehension of content and disciplinary register (Bozdoğan & Karlıdağ, 2013; Yıldız, Soruç, & Griffiths, 2017); incongruence between the disciplinary requirements and what is taught (Kırkgöz, 2009); a lack of coherence at the macro policy level (Kırkgöz, 2009). Since such challenges are context specific, there is a pressing need to understand the context in which EMI is delivered. What might contribute to our understanding at this stage might be the perceptions of stakeholders who are most affected by the medium of instruction. Therefore, lending a sympathetic ear to voices of different stakeholders might prove to be enriching.

English has reached a considerable interest and speeded up among European higher education institutions that focus on internalization. These developments have not gone unnoticed in Turkey. As Cosgun & Hasırcı (2017) noted: "EMI is a growing phenomenon in Turkey similar to the other part of the world" (p. 12). As a manifestation of the rising interest, many universities in Turkey started the provide EMI. Students from different educational backgrounds enrol in universities, and universities require either Turkish or English (100% or 30%) as their medium of instruction (Ekoç, 2018). Figures from Arık and Arık's (2014) study reveal that 20% of all undergraduate programs execute EMI at varying degrees. However, students' scores from the Student Selection and Replacement Centre (OSYM), which is a high stakes test determining the programmes they are able to enrol, do not demonstrate their writing proficiency. Due much to the washback effect of the examination-driven system, a considerable number of enrolling students' performance in productive language skills especially in writing and speaking is not at a desired level. Many universities, therefore, require their students to have or develop a mastery of the English language before taking departmental courses. This lack of emphasis on productive language skills makes these programs' tasks more demanding

as the possibility of a mismatch between different language skills increases. Therefore, understanding the students' needs in productive skills is critical. It is thought that understanding these needs from the perspectives of different stakeholders could give a better picture of the reality, providing multifaceted snapshots of individuals' beliefs. To address such a critical need, this study aims to find out the academic writing needs, wants and lacks of the students enrolled in a Civil Engineering Department. To achieve such an aim, stakeholder perspectives will be brought together to have a deeper understanding of the academic writing practices in EMI settings. Doing so will help us understand the practices of delivery and implications for teaching and learning.

Academic writing has received considerable attention in different disciplines. The premium placed on academic writing courses is evident in the integration of EMI courses which are expected to be of significance for students to become professionals on discipline-specific writing (Lillis & Turner, 2001). Despite such growing attention and substantial focus, academic writing investments have not always proved to be rewarding. For instance, the impact of a one-semester program was examined to see how effective the academic writing instruction in an L2-medium university was (Storch, 2009). It was found that after a one-semester period the students improved their writing skills particularly with reference to idea development and structure even though no progress was observed in accuracy. In another study, Kılıç (2018) revealed the perceptions of students, instructors, and professors on students' needs for content-based academic writing and the education that they have received in a preparatory school. It was found that the writing instruction offered in preparatory school and required disciplinary competencies were not congruent. Given that many factors might play a role in the effectiveness of EMI, identification of perspectives regarding the implementation of EMI might be helpful to determine and develop students' language proficiency (Cosgun & Hasırcı, 2017).

A great many learners in EFL writing contexts require practice and experience to produce texts with appropriate register and rhetorical genres (Grabe, 2001), which might be frustrating for those who do not feel competent enough (Hyland, 2002). Therefore, developing familiarity with the conventions of the target language community or acculturation to disciplinary-specific context might bring difficulties (Hyland, 2013). Since content professors expect learners to be armed with at least a modest degree of background, their reactions towards students' writing could be discouraging. As a result, it is likely that some students fall behind their expected progress and fail to socialize in the discourse conventions of the target linguistic and/or disciplinary community.

Research Questions

According to the stakeholders (students, language instructor, content professors) included in the study,

1)   What are the academic writing needs of students enrolled in EMI programs?

2)   What are the academic writing lacks of students enrolled in EMI programs?

3)   What are the academic writing wants of students enrolled in EMI programs?

METHODS

This study employs a case-study methodology. Case-studies attempt to explore the complexities of events by elaborating on the details of an event, person or group, and the interrelationships of cause-effect and variables (Çepni, 2018). To gather data, semi-structured

interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis. The interviews consisted of a demographic part which contains some background questions related to respondents. The questions addressed to the faculty and students were adapted by Kılıç (2018). All participants responded to the questions in Turkish, which is the mother tongue of all participants. Data were collected by using a voice record with the consent of the participants, and all answers were translated and transcribed into English by the researcher.

Research design

Qualitative research designs are mostly used for the sake of comprehending natural contexts, subjective opinions and personal feelings within a typically small group of respondents (Dörnyei, 2007). Since the study aimed to understand stakeholders' perspectives of academic writing needs, a qualitative research design was considered suitable for the purposes of the study. The data gathered were divided into different and related categories, themes and patterns (Creswell, 2014) in order to develop an understanding of the respondents. After their transcripts were made by the researchers, the key terms were coded in light of research questions. The InVivo coding method (Saldana, 2013) was used for coding the data.

Participants

To have a better representation of reality, 9 participants who are in a stakeholder position were chosen from a department whose language of instruction was 100% English. These participants represent different roles, 5 students, one language teacher who is teaching those students in a prep program, and 3 content professors teaching at the Department of Civil Engineering. A snowball sampling procedure was followed. All students were enrolled in the preparatory school and were taking writing courses at the time of data collection. The content professors were all male, and they reported that they had a teaching experience ranging from 13 to 26 years. Thirdly, one female instructor from preparatory school was also selected with snowball sampling. The instructor reported that she had been teaching for 18 years. All participants chosen were well-informed of the study.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results of the data obtained from the students, course instructor and content professors were analysed, and the analyses are provided respectively.

Students' Perceptions

Students' Motivation for EMI: Four of the students (n=4) replied that the reason behind their departmental choice is their desire to work abroad. They claimed that in a globalizing world, English is required by companies and helps them to reach more resources, so it is a must for them to learn. S3, for instance, said that "*In most of the companies, they are not even asking us if we know or not, they are accepting us as if we are professionals (in English) which we should be.*" A similar sentiment echoed in S5's excerpt: "*One of the biggest advantages for me is*

when I start to pursue my career. English terms will not surprise me and will not be a trouble for me. ...It is not important which department I pick; I want to have an education in preparatory school first.” Besides being a requirement for employment and career situations, English has a salient place as it is the language of science. This is made explicit by S2: *“English is the language of science now, and if we want to reach more resources, we need to learn it.”* As students mentioned, English has its own place in Turkey in many fields, for both governmental and non-governmental organizations such as education, industry, tourism, and business (Kırkgöz, 2007). Its de facto use in various domains alone encourages many learners to become well-prepared for this reality.

Students' Investments in the Preparatory Program: To achieve their desires, students get considerable support from educational institutions. They told that they had considerably developed their writing in the preparatory school. Since the majority of students enrol in the department with insufficient English writing competence, in general they were satisfied with their progress. Their satisfaction is evident in the following excepts:

“Developed a lot! After seeing tons of grammar rules, structures, usages of the words, there was a significant process on writing” (S1)

“I was even not A1; I was really terrible at English ... In the middle of the year, I was really good because we were doing a lot of writing assignments during the classes” (S4)

“I was literally zero, and always asking myself why I am here.” (S5)

However, their reported progress was not commensurate with their preparedness for departmental courses. It can be seen from the findings that what they learnt were mostly types of essays and paragraphs, not much related to their department. For example, S2 pointed to the need for departmental courses: *“They taught us fundamental structures like grammar and other rules, but not business English or something related to our department.”* while another learner said that: *“We learnt the most basic ones like types of essays and paragraphs.”* S5. The learners taking the writing courses do not seem to have a proper degree of writing self-efficacy. It could be attributed to the students' limited exposure to L2 writing practice. Writing is a neglected skill in the students' previous language experience (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019), and due much to the negative washback of the exam-driven system in Turkey, it does not get the due respect it deserves. What is more is that, when the students cannot establish a connection between the departmental courses and the preparatory program, connecting the dots might appear more difficult for them. Such a need for a seamless transition seems to be evident about the perceived need for vocabulary. Without a wide range of vocabulary, learners many not exhibit their potential and might be discouraged from using and learning the language effectively (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Since the participants highlight the need to be equipped with departmental vocabulary, they did not seem to be self-confident about their language development. Inadequate technical vocabulary of students is likely to curb their efforts in departmental courses, and insufficient knowledge of specialist vocabulary is also highlighted in previous studies (Chang, 2010; Evans & Morrison, 2011).

Learning Content-Based Writing Skills: The issue of learning content-based writing skills is another issue the respondents were asked to elaborate on. A majority of the students (n=4) reported that it would be really better if they had a chance to receive that kind of education, so they would not be that unfamiliar with the terms and writing conventions of their department. The following excerpts bear testimony to the students' expectancies:

“Learning something related to my department can be really great. We are always dealing with terms in verbal classes and this is really making things harder because you do not have a

chance to guess them, either you know them or fail. In some exams, they ask us to describe some structures related to the classes, and most of my friends are failing.” (S1)

“If we learnt more terms or topics related to our department, we would be definitely better now.” (S5)

One of the students (S4), however, reported that, it would be really hard for them to do that at the very beginning of the preparatory year:

“It sounds good, but if we had a chance to pick, I will not do that. The main reason is even though learning how to write papers related to my department sounds good, it still feels like so hard to learn. For me, learning the things related to construction is already so hard, but also writing about them can be really troublesome.” (S4). Since some students were A1 at the beginning of the preparatory year, it would be not easy for them to comprehend the advanced writing skills well. Such a move by the respondent is in line with the principles of pedagogy. The investment in content-based instruction should start at a level when learners feel confident. As Wong & Wu (2011) noted, poor proficiency learners who are exposed to EMI education are not likely to demonstrate success in content knowledge as their L1 counterparts.

Writing in different genres: It can be seen from the findings where participants were asked about learning how to write in different genres, students reported that it would be great and beneficial so much for them right now. For example, S5 responded that: *“It would be better for us to learn actually. Now, they (the department) are asking us to write our reports in English, or giving us some assignments related to our topics which require English as well, so it would be really better for us. We would be well-prepared.”* As mentioned above, students want to become more well-prepared and more familiar with the terms as such familiarity will help them not only for the language aspect but also for the content aspects.

Familiarity with the academic vocabulary: Even though the students reported considerable progress, voices remarking several self-perceived weaknesses were apparent. These weaknesses are related to relatively poor writing background and lack of content-based vocabulary/terms teaching. For instance, Student 1, 4 and 5 addressed the need for content-specific vocabulary development. The following words were reported by S5: *“I was quite good at writing, especially at the end. I am reading a lot, and I guess it helped me a bit. Still there are some unfamiliar terms/expressions/structures to me…”*. Even though they had made great progress in preparatory school, a substantial progress with reference to discipline-specific vocabulary needs was still necessary. Such need for department-specific words push learners to reconsider their investment in language learning. In the absence of department-specific satisfactory returns, the picture of effectiveness does not seem to be complete.

When the respondents were asked about their adequate familiarity with the academic vocabulary, majority of them reported that they do not have it especially for two different reasons. The first one is, they are not studying enough on it: *“I do not have it, but it is some problem coming from myself. I have some classmates who are really good at English, I am not studying enough.”* (S5)

“I do not have enough, because I am only studying exam-focused and lots of my friends are doing the same as well. Before we take an exam, we memorize everything, and after the exam we forget because we are not practicing again.” (S4)

The second reason is, the respondent claimed that they will learn more and more in the coming years by being exposed and repeating content-based terms in the classroom: *“For now, I do not have it. Most probably we will be better after the third grade.”* (S3)

Solutions for writing improvement: Majority of the students noted that doing extensive reading, e.g., reading content-based articles, and doing more writing assignments could promote their writing and vocabulary skills. However, as students have noted, their investment in writing is less likely to have satisfactory returns at the end of the day. For instance, S1 pointed out that *"For writing, we are mostly dealing with numbers, so we need to write as much as we can."* while another student writing development could come with extensive reading: *"For writing, we need a wide range of vocabulary knowledge, before that we need ideas, a good idea that we can think about within details. For the sake of doing these all, we need to search, we need to read more……"* (S3). It appears from students' excerpts that having field-specific assignments that could trigger them to read and write more might be one of the possible solutions for them to learn more vocabulary and practice writing structures as well as getting new insights.

Language Instructor's Perspective

Data obtained from language teacher's interviews reveal some information related to the students' progress at different times of the year. The instructor said that even though they were definitely not good at the very beginning, with the tasks, and, most importantly, students' efforts, the majority of them got better at the end. The reason is most of the students are coming from different numerical sections, and they did not spend much effort and started from zero. However, at the end of the year, they got better after following a process-writing procedure. For example, the instructor said: *"I think they got so much better, because we are starting with paragraphs, giving them feedback and this contributed a lot I think. Because they are seeing their mistakes and after that I am showing them how to do it better."* Apart from the process approach, genre-based structures proved to be useful. This is evident in the following words: *"Since I am teaching them basic English, I am showing them how to write e-mail, and some formal structures, but none of them are related to their own department actually."* When providing reasons for teaching English that is not geared towards students' departments, the instructor claimed that: *"We found different types of paragraphs related to the students' departments. It was really hard for the teachers here since we are not familiar with the academic vocabulary/terms related with students' departments."* Tailoring the English courses according to the students' majors requires training teachers for different content-specific Englishes. Since English teachers are not trained to do so, except for individual attempts, such an expectation does not seem to be realistic.

The instructor pointed out that it could be really useful to each them discipline-specific writing even though it does not appear to be a realistic expectation for students with poor linguistic skills: *"As I mentioned before, it can be really so beneficial for students when they can receive some help from the departments."* As the term "content-based" suggests, teaching with this method might give students new insights about the way of using language. That is, students are assisted not only in comprehending the language skills but also in the subject-specific topics at the same time.

Students' familiarity with the academic vocabulary knowledge: When the teacher was asked if students have adequate familiarity with the content-based academic vocabulary, she mentioned that they actually do not have it and said: *"They learn the department-specific terms after they start taking departmental courses."* Since the majority of the students come to the preparatory school with a beginner level of English, it is not easy for them to comprehend and put low frequency words or department-specific terms into practice. That content-based instruction requires a proper degree of language background not only on the part of the students but also

on the content-teachers' perspective is supported in the documented literature (Dearden, 2014; Vu & Burns, 2014).

When the participant was asked about the possible solutions for improving the academic vocabulary, she claimed that working in tandem with related departments can be one of the possible solutions. Through such collaborations, the instructors will have more insights about the related departments and know what they actually want them to learn and expect from students, and said: *"It may work better if we could cooperate with the related departments, for example receiving help from the lecturers in related departments, we can create different student clubs and teach them what they need."* Also, one of the possible solutions is reading. The instructor claimed that students' need to do theme-based reading and said: *"They need to learn as much as they can, like different articles related to their subjects."* As the instructor suggests, there is a great link between reading and learning vocabulary. Also, vocabulary knowledge has one of the majority roles in the success of having good language skills and language competence (Laufer, Elder, Hill, & Congdon, 2004). To achieve this, reading is one of the essential parts.

Lastly, when the respondent was asked about ideas on EMI, she said it was very beneficial for students: *"I think it is a great opportunity for them to develop themselves. Yes, we are teaching them English in here, but they should practice more in their daily life as well. Learning in school is never enough."* As the instructor suggested, it is a great opportunity for them to develop themselves, and they should not see this as a burden. EMI has been gaining momentum in many universities in Turkey. However, reducing the attempts to get prepared for the content specific language to schooled instruction seems not to be adequate.

Professors' Perspectives

The interviews with the professors of the content courses revealed some key findings about the students' expected levels of English writing proficiency, difficulties encountered by students, and some suggested solutions to help the transition from language-focused courses to content-focused courses less painful. The majority of the professors reported that students mostly failed to understand the classes completely. One of the professors (P2) reported that there are two main reasons for this comprehension problem: courses and students themselves. *"I am doing my best and teaching them, and they are doing their best to understand me, forcing themselves to understand. I also cannot tell you that they understand me perfectly, because even though I teach you this in Turkish, at the end of the class you cannot tell that "okay, I understand it perfectly!". So, it depends on how hardworking they are. If you are asking me how they are, I would say they are intermediate."* Therefore, even uneven scaffolding may not suffice if learners are not truly involved. Apart from commitment, as professors argued, students should benefit from more articles both in Turkish and English (P2; P3) and get familiarity with the terms even in Turkish. In a situation where such preparedness is missing, things get more demanding for students and teachers.

 Difficulties students face in writing assignments: Writing in English is one of the most difficult language skills for English language beginners (Al Fadda, 2012). When respondents were asked about what difficulties students face in writing assignments, the professors mentioned problems related to correct usage of the words/terms. For instance, Professor 3 said that: *"I do give them writing assignments. But generally our students have some problem with writing, not only in English but also Turkish as well. They cannot express themselves clearly in writing and cannot use words correctly."* Since the majority of the students did not receive enough writing assignments related to their department, it is not that easy for them to express themselves clearly in a different domain. Such competence is possible when students develop some self-confidence about the content of the target discourse community. Considering all

these, academic writing is also a complicated process. It requires correct usage of the word in an appropriate place, a wide range of vocabulary knowledge, clear ideas about the related topic and a combination and organization of those steps in the paper (Rusinovci, 2015). Moreover, an increased awareness of the demands of the target discourse community makes it necessary for students to be patient about writing development. However, the students and the teacher of content courses need to be less ambitious to achieve such fluency.

Possible solutions for writing development: When the professors were asked about possible solutions, the majority of the professors mentioned that doing more content-based writing/reading and doing more presentation during the class can be possible solutions for problems in writing. For example, Professor 3 mentioned that: *"I think giving them assignments and asking them to present in the classroom might be useful because in this way they need to do paraphrasing. While they are preparing their presentations, they need to write carefully and express themselves clearly."* On the other hand, Professor 1 significantly mentioned that education must be in the mother language otherwise students cannot learn 100% and said that: *"I do not accept education if it is not in the mother language. It will be possible only if they can understand the other language as well as their mother language. In my opinion, the proficiency exam does not prove anything."* What he believes is, one person can only comprehend 100% in their own language especially when it comes to technical disciplines such as Civil Engineering. On the other hand, vocabulary is a serious consideration for students who are taking departmental courses. One professor (P2) stressed that the students' need to build vocabulary: *"For our department, no they are not [enough], because they ask me the meanings in the classroom and I tell them. ...Because they are not checking the dictionary, they want to learn at that moment."* Since students are not familiar with the academic vocabulary sufficiently, for the sake of understanding the topic they are learning at that moment, they want to know the meanings immediately. To improve the academic vocabulary, professors (2 and 3) suggested that students should be exposed to more reading related to their department.

When expressing their complaints about students' writing, the professors (P1; P2) reported the need for genre awareness: *"While they are writing, they cannot remember the words completely which is quite normal, and they cannot remember the spelling as well. Also they do not know which word is suitable for the usage of the passage. For example, conclusions. They are thinking they should say ``result, conclusion or outcome."* P2 pointed to the process students go through, and how their familiarity with the "Englishes" bring about a decrease of uncertainties:

"Actually freshman students have some [problems], but it depends as well. Because there are some students who can really understand me well and give me some great feedback. When they become sophomores, complaints decrease. I believe this year it will decrease as well, but, of course, it will not disappear completely." The introduction of theme-based vocabulary was considered a big step to mitigate the pain of transition. For instance, Professor 3 reported that: *"They should learn vocabulary first and terms related to the department. Also they should read a lot, try to understand the meanings and memorize them."*

When citing the problems, the majority of the teachers of content courses reported that they actually do not have any information about what students learn in the preparatory program and how they learn it. Lack of cooperation with the language school was made evident in the following excerpts:

"Actually I do not have enough information about the preparatory school, so I cannot say anything bad or good. But my students said they are actually teaching pretty well there. Last year, I was thinking that "They do not know English, how am I going to teach them?" But this year the students are better, and I believe the coming ones will be much better." (P2)

"I actually do not know much about how they are learning there. For example, the way they learn, methods, curriculum etc. But students who come here do not have very high English knowledge. I think, all in all, it depends on the student at the end." (P3)

However, the professors of content courses reported that they would be willing to work in tandem with the preparatory school. Professor 3 reported that: *"If I have enough time, I will try to help of course."* However, one professor (P3) noted that he was against teaching them in English.

Last but not least, the participants were asked about English as a medium of instruction, and the majority of the professors reported that it is a must to learn. They explained that since we are living in a global world, we need to learn English as it is the common language as well as the language of science, just like what students mentioned before. For example, Professor 2 mentioned that: *"Since our aim is to train students at an international level, it is really a must for them to learn as many languages as possible. The biggest benefit is they can understand science works better."* Seeing English medium instruction as a manifestation of internationalization concurs with previous literature. English is growing rapidly and becoming a medium of instruction (Dearden & Macaro, 2016), attracting many international students and staff. EMI can also be applied with the aim of developing students' English proficiency so that they can run for a better position in the global industry (Sener & Erol, 2017).

When the perceptions are compared, it is significant to point out that EMI is considered a significant asset for many participants, except for a content professor who argued that education in learners' L1 should be the medium of instruction. This indicates that participants hold entrenched beliefs fuelled partly by the significant role of EMI in internationalization and attraction of a well-qualified workforce. Regarding the language needs, the participants seem to be satisfied with the "language" aspect of education, while more emphasis on content-based English instruction is expected by the students and content professors. The disjuncture between the students' language proficiency and professors' expectations is in line with the previous literature (see Harklau, 2001). Since writing development takes time, people teaching writing at different levels are expected to encounter greater challenges and be patient (Hyland, 2013). The preparatory program at this level serves as a transition period in which students should undergo acculturation to disciplinary-specific context. Focused attention, therefore, seems to be necessary for learners to address discourse-level patterns. Students' exposure and adoption to different genres is highlighted as a viable solution by all stakeholders. Moreover, reading articles and development of content-specific words are reported as working solutions to minimize the gap between the language-based and content-based instruction.

CONCLUSION

The reflections on the academic writing needs of the students from the perspectives of students themselves, a language teacher, and teachers of content courses are given. It follows from the participants' reports that students develop their English writing skills considerably in the prep programme. Specifically, they develop a proper degree of competence in paragraph and essay writing. However, these genres are not considered sufficient by the professors of content courses who expect the learners to write reports of classes/laboratory classes. As a result, after taking content courses, students' confrontation with "genuine writing practices" might make them unsettled as they are required to write for a discourse community, unlike their familiar L2 writing forms (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019). Moreover, all stakeholders seem to expect students to become more well-prepared for department-specific terminology. From the

language instructor's perspective, students' progress has been found satisfactory considering their moderate level of proficiency at the beginning of the semester, while professors of content courses seem to expect more regarding the development of disciplinary registers. In such a case, a mismatch between the students' actual and desired performance is likely to occur.

The findings also reveal that English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) Writing was found beneficial both by the students and professors while the instructor cautions that ESAP classes for learners with moderate language backgrounds might be overwhelming. However, the professors of the content courses expect content-based writing skills and vocabulary, which seems to be something beyond what English language instructors can do especially with low-proficiency students. Apart from students' proficiency, instructors' investment in department-specific content might determine the success of the transition from a language-focused realm to a content-focused one. It might be an unrealistic expectation for many language teachers, if not all, to be equipped with field-specific vocabulary or other discipline-specific writing genres. The idea that department-specific terms and vocabulary should be mastered when students start taking department courses is shared by all stakeholders. However, to encourage the students to be receptive to the department topics, more emphasis on content-based writing tasks could be made. That is, to make the transition less painful, more department-based topics should be covered, and a variety of genres could be used to integrate a "department feeling". Such a move might encourage learners to feel that their investment is reasonable.

Even though students' pursuit of studies in English is welcomed by two of the content professors, it is worth noting that such an idea is not embraced by a professor who is teaching content courses. Such entrenched beliefs are likely to be reflected into teaching practices. Therefore, commitment of all stakeholders is a repeated call to spend a concerted effort (Airey, 2016; Kırkgöz, 2009; Macaro, Akincioglu, & Dearden, 2016; Selvi, 2014). The fragmented picture of these diverse opinions could be considered an outward manifestation of the clashes between alluring internationalization attempts and pedagogical challenges.

The findings from the study are limited to English-medium departments, and the Civil engineering department was chosen as a representative of those departments. The findings to be gleaned from different studies could produce different findings and different perspectives as different language teaching contexts require different competencies at varying levels. Even though the inclusion of the perspectives of different stakeholders is enriching especially for needs analysis, it is thought that more in-depth data might be essential to triangulate the data obtained from this study. For instance, keeping track of students' writing over a long period could provide a better picture. Moreover, this study is reduced to writing skill, and other language skills or components could be investigated to see different aspects. The study might prove to be beneficial for researchers, decision-makers and serve as a call for a better employment of English medium instruction. Given that language learners are expected to be immersed in the target language and EMI offers such an atmosphere to a certain extent, benefitting from such instruction could make the learners more motivated. However, what would excite the keen supporters and sceptics alike and give a more nuanced view of the hotly contested issue at this stage would be looking for ways to promote the effectiveness of teaching through critical decision-making, or, in Elbow's terms, play doubting and believing games.

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