# Academics' Views on the Characteristics of Academic Writing

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## Abstract

Academic writing is the process of sharing original research with other scholars in accordance with certain standard rules. This process requires correctly following the steps of scientific academic writing. However, a close analysis of recent academic texts reveals a wide range of mistakes or shortcomings. The purpose of this research is to examine the characteristics of academic writing based on the views of the academicians creating it. A semi-structured interview form was created on Google Docs virtual office for this research using qualitative research methodology. Thus, 30 academicians from different cities and universities of Turkey were involved. Content analysis was used to assess the collected data. Each answer given by the academicians was placed into a category such as similarity and relatedness. These categories were transformed into tables by frequency values of the answers, and each table was supported with quotations extracted from the answers. The results show that the academicians presented the highest number of comments about the characteristics related to sections containing "methodology" and "results, discussions and suggestions." The participants also reported that in their article reviewing process, they encounter the highest number of errors in the "methodology" section, followed by errors in formal standards, spelling-punctuation / expression and academic style.

**Keywords:** *Academic writing, academicians, academic writing education.*

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**Introduction**

Writing enables human thoughts to become visible, allows them to be developed, restricted, and modified, and helps new ideas to be triggered (Fulwiler, 2002, p. 32). One of the most pivotal components to solidify thinking is academic writing. Academic writing is one of the steps of the academic research process through which scientists report situations of thinking, experience, observation, application / testing etc. as to the solution of a scientific problem identified. In addition to following the general rules of a text genre, all principles considered while reporting an academic research and process of textualizing it is called "academic writing" (Bahar, 2014, p. 213) or "scientific writing." Academic writings are "written and printed" reports (Day, 2005, p. 9) that describe "original research results", "with a strongly structured intellectual system" (Bayat, 2014: 157), that requires "logic, clarity, truth" (Aceto, 2003, p. 8) to "inquire, render unknown known, and shed light on darkness" (Karasar, 2006, p. 22).

Searching for, finding and evaluating information through mental processes and interpretation and reconstruction is one of the most crucial characteristics of academic writing. "An acceptable basic academic publication, should be 'the first explanation' that will provide sufficient information to the colleagues to help them evaluate observations, replicate experiments, and assess intellectual operations" (Day, 2005, p. 10). The phrase "first explanation" stated here indicates the need to be informed of previous studies and to say what has not been said while preparing academic writing. Therefore, the author is expected to present a different approach, idea, and experience for further research. "The written scientific text will ensure that individuals are known by their writing in building their academic career" (Murray & Moore, 2006, p. IX).

"In academic writing, it is necessary to produce logically structured ideas with well-thought-out, verified points and to consider different opinions" (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009, p. 88). "What is common in all categories of academic writing is that wheres the ideas are centralized and people remain in the background, the author's personal feelings play no role whatsoever in the presentation of ideas or insights" (Monippally & Pawar, 2010, p. 77).

Academic writing has various types including theses, articles, papers, projects and posters. These types usually involve reporting a research process as a composition. Academic writing, which has a wide range of types, is regarded as a discipline in itself. This discipline contains different parts ranging from title writing to bibliography, and attributes related to their writing that include language, expression and form. With its own systematicity, the most common type of academic writing is the academic articles, because scientists publish their research reports by writing various articles throughout their academic careers (Deniz and Karagöl, 2017, p. 148). Regardless of its specific type, it

is important for any piece of academic writing to be clear, understandable, remarkable, and concise, and to be presented in a certain order by ensuring coherence and cohesion among its subsections (Akın, 2009, p. 69-72).

As Bahar put it (2014, p. 214), dimensions of an academic writing can be analyzed in four sections named as process, text, form and ethics that are shown below:

Process dimension contains the steps for reporting and publishing from a selection of the subject. The question is concerned with the process of decision-making and drafting on the basis of the audience to be addressed, identifying a course of action to be followed to achieve the intended results through the analysis of the research subject, accessing information sources, and systematizing the analysis / synthesis / evaluation/ comments based on the accessed sources.

In an academic article, whatever the attitude about the issue or the power of the assertion put forward, it is hardly possible that the available evidence is sufficient to indicate that something is absolutely correct. For this reason, it is pivotal to take a comprehensive and cautious approach that also considers exceptions (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009, p. 205).

The text dimension refers to being competent about written expression from spelling-punctuation to word selection, from sentence structure to paragraph flow. To be able to say that on has a robust foundation in the creation of an academic text, s/he needs to have the basic functional writing skills at a certain level. Academic writings require a planned blending of rules of language and writing, times of action, type of discourse (subjective or objective), mastery of the specific field terminology, by following the academic stylistic standards. Bowker (2007, p. 5) emphasizes that regardless of the subject, the writer's written communication skills are very important as it is crucial that the reader understands what the writer is talking about, so developing robust writing skills as well as research skills is an important part of improving academic writing success.

Monippally and Pawar (2010, p. 78) state that academic texts are not to be superficially handled like a newspaper; they should be carefully perused and analyzed since their sentences and paragraphs tend to be longer and more complex than newspaper texts. Hogue (2008, p. 2) classifies the skills required for academic writing as sentence structure (how words in a sentence are organized), organization (how ideas in a paragraph are organized), and grammar and punctuation.

The form dimension contains visual standards other than linguistic and stylistic features. Presentation of information in a systematic order, the way of citing in the text and bibliography, basic rules applied by the journals where the article is to be published (font, font, line spacing, margins, article template etc.) are the basic elements of this form dimension. The American Psychological

Association (APA) rules are the most widely used set of standard guidelines. Murray and Moore (2006, p. 7) emphasize that to form a piece of academic text, it is necessary to sequence and present it in a disciplined and formal way.

The ethical dimension "can be explained as a set of moral rules that researchers must follow regarding the data collection, synthesis, evaluation, interpretation and publication of results in the process of seeking a solution for a problem" (Aydın, 2015, p. 39). An ethical violation occurs when impartiality becomes questionable, professional dignity, respectability and responsibility are not maintained, integrity is undermined through illegal actions, and efforts are made to obtain privileges over other researchers. "According to a report published in Turkish Academy of Sciences, the types of ethical violation encountered in academic research are classified as duplication, slicing, not specifying the supporting institution, removing the names of active contributors, changing the order of authors or adding authors, and secrecy" (Kozak, 2014, p. 192-198).

The literature on scientific/academic writing shows that the number of scientific studies in Turkey is very limited. These studies generally focus on article review forms (Deniz and Karagöl, 2017), the effect of reflective teaching on academic writing skills (Aydın, 2017), the relationship between critical thinking and academic writing success (Bayat, 2014), views on academic writing and processes of building a thesis (Kan and Gedik, 2016), postgraduate students' metaphorical perceptions of academic writing (Aydın and Baysan, 2018), some fundamental principles of scientific writing (Ekmekçi and Konaç, 2009), and the importance of academic writing in postgraduate education (Bahar, 2014). In addition to these, there are also meta-analyses of academic texts (See, Sevim and Özdemir-Erem, 2012; Kan and Uzun, 2014-2015-2016; Aktaş and Uzuner-Yurt, 2015; Kara and Öztürk, 2015; İşeri and Şen, 2017; etc.).

Writing is often described as a challenge and sometimes an obligatory dimension of academic life. Analyzing complexities and paradoxes of writing can help further refine the situation for most academicians in a wide range of different contexts (Murray & Moore, 2006, p. 4). Although studies on the subject are limited, there is a striking number of writing errors and deficiencies in scientific publications, which underscores the importance of the present study of academic texts.

**Purpose of the research**

The aim of this research is to examine the characteristics of academic writing based on the views of academics. To this end, the following questions were asked:

1. What are academic staff's views about the formal features that should be included in academic texts?

2. What are academic staff's views about the linguistic and stylistic features that should be included in academic texts?

3. What are academic staff's views about the ethical principles that should be followed in academic texts?

4. What are academic staff's views about the features that should be included in the "abstract" section of the academic texts?

5. What are academic staff's views about the features that should be included in the "introduction" section of the academic texts?

6. What are academic staff's views about the features that academic texts should have in their "problem statement"?

7. What are academic staff's views about the features that academic texts should have in their "statement of purpose"?

8. What are academic staff's views about the features that should be included in the "method" section of the academic texts?

9. What are academic staff's views about the features that should be included in the "findings" section of the academic texts?

10. What are academic staff's views about the features that should be included in the "results, discussion and suggestions" section of the academic texts?

11. What are academic staff's views about the features that should be included in the "bibliography" section of the academic texts?

12. What are the errors that attract academic reviewers' attention?

## Method

### Research Design

The case study approach was adopted as a qualitative research method in line with the purpose of the study. "Qualitative research is a type of research where qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used and a qualitative process is carried out to determine perceptions and events in a natural and realistic manner" (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006, p. 39). Emphasis is placed on studying what is experienced in a certain situation, rather than generalizing it (Denzin and Lincoln, 1985, p. 435).

### Participants

This study was implemented with 30 academic staff from different cities, different universities, and different departments, who filled out a semi-structured interview Google Docs form via web-based virtual office in April 2018. Convenience sampling was used in the research. This method of sampling is preferred because of it affords higher speed and practicality, incurs less cost, and it is easier for researchers to study a familiar sample (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). The distribution of the participants by gender is as follows:

**Table 1.** Distribution of the participants by gender

| Gender | (f) | % |
|--------|-----|---|
| Female | 8 | 26.7 |
| Male | 22 | 73.3 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100** |

The distribution of the participants by age is as follows:

**Table 2.** Distribution of the participants by age

| Age Range | (f) | % |
|-----------|-----|---|
| 26-30 | 5 | 16,7 |
| 31-35 | 6 | 20,0 |
| 36-40 | 5 | 16,7 |
| 41-45 | 8 | 26,7 |
| 46-50 | 4 | 13,3 |
| 51-55 | 1 | 3,3 |
| 55-60 | 1 | 3,3 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100** |

The distribution of the participants by their level of education is as follows:

**Table 3.** Distribution of participants by their education level

| Level of education | (f) | % |
|--------------------|-----|---|
| Master's degree | 4 | 13,3 |
| Doctorate | 26 | 86,7 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100** |

The distribution of the participants by the universities they work for is as follows:

**Table 4.** Distribution of the participants by university

| University | (f) | % |
|---|---|---|
| Abant Izzet Baysal University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Adnan Menderes University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Adiyaman University | 4 | 13,3 |
| Akdeniz University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Amasya University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Anadolu University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Ataturk University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Bozok University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Cukurova University | 2 | 6,7 |
| Dokuz Eylül University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Fırat University | 2 | 6,7 |
| Inonu University | 2 | 6,7 |
| Istanbul Aydin University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Istanbul University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Kafkas University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Kahramanmaras Sutcu Imam University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Kastamonu University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Kilis 7 Aralik University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Mersin University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Mustafa Kemal University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Necmettin Erbakan University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Nevsehir Haci Bektaş Veli University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Nigde Ömer Halis Demir University | 1 | 3,3 |
| Yildiz Technical University | 1 | 3,3 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100** |

The distribution of the participants by their academic fields is as follows:

**Table 5.** Distribution of participants by academic field

| Academic field | (f) | % |
|---|---|---|
| Educational Sciences and Teacher Training | 20 | 66,7 |
| Social, Humanities and Administrative Sciences | 5 | 16,7 |
| Philology | 4 | 13,3 |
| Agriculture, Forestry and Aquaculture | 1 | 3,3 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100** |

The distribution of the participants by their departments is as follows:

**Table 6.** Distribution of the participants by department

| Department | (f) | % |
|---|---|---|
| Turkish and Social Sciences Education | 17 | 56,7 |
| Turkish language and literature | 2 | 6,7 |
| Department of Educational Sciences | 2 | 6,7 |
| Basic training | 1 | 3,3 |
| Turkish language and literature | 1 | 3,3 |
| Tourism | 1 | 3,3 |
| International Relations | 1 | 3,3 |
| Foreign Languages | 1 | 3,3 |
| Cultivation and Diseases (Aquaculture) | 1 | 3,3 |
| Contemporary Turkish Dialects | 1 | 3,3 |
| Economy | 1 | 3,3 |
| Business Administration | 1 | 3,3 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100** |

The distribution of the participants by the types of their published academic texts is as follows:

**Table 7.** Distribution of participants by academic texts they published

| Academic writing type | (f) | % |
|---|---|---|
| Thesis | 28 | 93.3 |
| Article | 30 | 100 |
| Book / Book Section | 26 | 86.7 |
| Conference paper | 29 | 96.7 |
| Report | 12 | 40 |
| Project | 18 | 60 |
| Referee, Jury Member, Committee Member | 1 | 3.3 |

The distribution of the participants by the number of their published academic studies is as follows:

**Table 8.** Distribution of participants by the number of published academic studies

| Number of academic studies | (f) | % |
|---|---|---|
| 6-10 | 7 | 18,4 |
| 11-20 | 4 | 10,5 |
| 21-30 | 6 | 15,8 |
| 41-45 | 8 | 21,1 |
| 31-40 | 3 | 7,9 |
| 41-50 | 4 | 10,5 |
| 51-60 | 1 | 2,6 |
| 61-70 | 3 | 7,9 |
| 100-120 | 2 | 5,3 |
| **Total** | **38** | **100** |

The distribution of the participants by their refereeing status is as follows:

**Table 9.** Distribution of the participants by refereeing status

| Referee status | (f) | % |
|---|---|---|
| I did | 25 | 83.3 |
| I did not | 5 | 16.7 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100** |

The distribution of the participants by the number of manuscripts they reviewed is as follows:

**Table 10.** Distribution of the participants by their number of refereeing

| Number of Refereeing | (f) | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0-5 | 4 | 15,4 |
| 6-10 | 5 | 19,2 |
| 11-15 | 6 | 23,1 |
| 16-20 | 5 | 19,2 |
| 31-40 | 1 | 3,8 |
| 100 | 3 | 11,5 |
| 101-200 | 1 | 3,8 |
| 500 | 1 | 3,8 |
| **Total** | **26** | **100** |

The distribution of the participants by their thesis supervision status is as follows:

**Table 11.** Distribution of participants by thesis supervision status

| Thesis supervision status | (f) | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 15 | 50 |
| No | 15 | 50 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100** |

### Data Collection

In this study, a semi-structured interview form was used as the data collection tool. In a semi-structured interview, "researcher prepares a protocol of interviews with questions that they plan to ask in advance" (Türnüklü, 2000, p. 547). The experts were consulted about whether or not the open-ended questions in the semi-structured interview form were appropriate for the aim of the study. In this way, the content-scope validity of the questions in the semi-structured interview form were verified through expert opinions. A total of 12 questions about academic writing characteristics and personal information (sex, age, education level, academic field, department of study, academic studies, number of academic studies, refereeing status, number of refereeing, thesis supervision status) were included. The data were collected on 5-10 April 2018, by sending the Google Docs form entitled "Views of Academics on the Characteristics of Academic Writing" to the academic staff participating in the study.

### Analysis of Data

In the qualitative research design, it is very important to explain and describe, without prejudice and distortion, both the clearly expressed and implied views of the participants on the topic of research (Charmaz, 2006). Therefore, the data were analyzed by content analysis. "The basic process in content analysis is to put together similar data within the framework of specific concepts and themes and to interpret them in a way that readers can understand" (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006, p. 27).

The semi-structured interview form was given to 30 volunteering academics. The responses of these participants were then examined and classified under the categories identified based on similarity and relatedness; words and phrases were used as data analysis units; and wherever possible the expressions used by the participants were used in coding. The data were presented in tabular form with frequency values. In addition, the data were presented by direct quotations from academicians' expressions. In citing direct quotations, each academic was given a code name (P1: Participant 1) so that the identities of the participants were kept confidential. At the end of the analysis process, three

experts were asked to analyze each participant's statements, and the degree of inter-reliability was found to be quite high.

## Findings

The analysis of the interviews revealed that some of the academics reported multiple views for a question and some did not answer some of the questions. For this reason, the tabulation of the data was based on the number of responses, not by the number of respondents. The results are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12.** Views on formal features that should be included in academic texts

| Formal features | (f) |
| --- | --- |
| Use of visual elements | 12 |
| Segmentation/ entitling | 12 |
| Appropriateness for the journal | 9 |
| International criteria (APA etc.) | 5 |
| Spelling-punctuation | 4 |
| Underestimating formal features | 1 |
| **Total** | **43** |

30 participants shared their views on the formal features that should be included in academic writing. These opinions are classified in six basic categories. Considering the frequency values, *use of visual elements* was mentioned 12 times, *segmentation / entitling* 12 times, *appropriateness for the journal* 9 times, *international criteria* 5 times, *spelling-punctuation* 4 times, and *underestimating formal features* was stated for once. Some of the statements expressed by the participants regarding this formal dimension are as follows:

*"Font, margins, paragraph spaces, items, etc. that are appealing and regular" (P10)*

*"There should be an order in the form of title, abstract, introduction, problem statement, purpose, method, findings, conclusion, discussion and suggestions. An extended abstract or a full-text version of the English version of the work can be added if so required by the journal." (P16)*

*"Standards that are set by the publishing organization." (P12)*

*"These can be arranged in accordance with the journal" (P28)*

*"An academic publication should be written according to internationally accepted criteria."*
*(P7)*

*"Formal features are a detailed issue. In this regard, an up-to-date APA handbook should be referred." (P24)*

*"All of the writing rules." (P6)*

*"Writing without spelling errors and by following the plan." (P31)*

Nearly all of these views concentrate on what should be. One participant criticizes the strict requirements of *international criteria (APA, etc.)*, while another participant thinks that form is not that important:

*"APA etc. style should not be imposed. There must be options." (P8)*

*"I never thought these features were not important to me. In fact, journals or institutes publish these rules, and we follow these rules." (P13)*

**Table 13.** Views on linguistic and stylistic features that should be included in academic writing

| Linguistic and stylistic features | (f) |
|---|---|
| Clarity | 18 |
| Academic language | 18 |
| Avoiding incoherency | 8 |
| Mastery of the field | 7 |
| Using daily / colloquial language | 1 |
| Absence of intervention | 1 |
| **Total** | **53** |

30 participants expressed views on the linguistic and stylistic features that should be included in the academic writing. These opinions are classified in six categories. When the frequency values of these were examined, there *clarity* occurred 18 times, *academic language* 18 times, *avoiding incoherency* 8 times, *mastery of the field* 7 times, *using daily / colloquial language* 1, and *absence of intervention* 1 time. Some representative quotations from data on this subject are as follows:

*"I suggest using a plain, understandable language. Attention should be paid to the use of references and citation. Binding clauses must be included between the parts." (P11)*

*"...the verb must be used in passive form without the use of personal suffixes" (P16)*

*"The most striking mistake in the field of social sciences is not using the third person language. Instead of 'we found the following results in this study', 'the following results were found in the research' is more appropriate and scientific" (P26)*

*"An academic writing should use a concrete, easy-to-understand style appropriate to the literature of the area concerned" (P18)*

*"Academic terms on the subject should be used..." (P23)*

*"There should not be any organizational or structural error." (P2)*

*"...the sentences appropriate to the Turkish syntax should be constructed, and a language that the reader cannot understand should not be used." (P29)*

*"...the rules of language and writing must be strictly observed." (P14)*

*"Writing rules should be observed..." (P28)*

In addition to these views, some opinions that would be unacceptable for academic writing were also stated. These are:

*"Instead of the too dry and didactic style of our academic life, the words that people use should be a little more colorful, more proverbial and more idiomatic." (P24)*

*"...As long as the objectivity is preserved and remains within these boundaries, the style of the academic should not be intervened." (P13)*

**Table 14.** Views on ethical principles that should be followed in academic writing

| Ethical principles | (f) |
|---|---|
| Avoiding plagiarism | 18 |
| Citation and reference | 14 |
| Originality | 5 |
| Obtaining permissions | 3 |
| Acknowledging the contributors | 3 |
| Avoiding distortion, diversion or deception | 2 |
| Accurate, reliable, unbiased presentation | 2 |
| Avoiding the use of improper method | 1 |
| Integrity | 1 |
| Not publishing just for academic incentives or for increasing publication quantity | 1 |
| Avoiding self-plagiarism | 1 |
| Paucity of bibliography/ references | 1 |
| **Total** | **52** |

30 participants expressed their views on the ethical principles to be followed in academic writing. These views are classified in twelve main categories. Considering their frequencies in the dataset, *avoiding plagiarism* occurs 18 times, *citation and referencing* occurs 14 times, *originality* 5 times, *obtaining permissions* 3 times, *acknowledging the contributors* 3 times, *avoiding distortion, diversion or deception* twice, accurate, reliable, unbiased presentation twice, *avoiding the use of improper method* once, *integrity* once, *not publishing just for academic incentives or for increasing publication quantity* once, *avoiding self-plagiarism* once, *paucity of bibliography/references* once. Some of the academic staff's views on this subject are as follows:

> *"Plagiarism must be taken into account." (P2)*

> *"To cite the references appropriately and completely, to make a contribution to the field through the originality of the study, to cite all the primary and secondary sources throughout the text and in the references section" (P18)*

> *"...should be original by avoiding replication of the same studies" (P9)*

> *"...permission must be obtained from everyone involved in the research." (P5)*

> *"...the name of everybody that makes any amount of contribution to it must be in the text." (P13)*

> *"...research that is not based on field work must not be presented as such, and data must not be fabricated  (which is done)" (P9)*

> *"Accuracy, reliable data, unbiased presentation." (P21)*

>  *"...do not mention an inaccurate method in the methodology section, do not present false (unused) information..." (P16)*

> *"...Most importantly, academic work should not be conducted by subcontracting and paying others (or by exploiting personal networks) and not be mispresented as original personal work." (P23)*

> *"...Most importantly, academic work should not be done to obtain personal benefits (for incentives, inflating the number of publications) rather than creating scientific value! A genuine problem should be identified and a real result oriented towards that problem should be presented, at least one or two suggestions focusing on the solution must be proposed." (P28)*

*"...It is also necessary that an author should always cite references, even if s/he quotes it from her/his own work. It is possible to encounter the same sentences or even the same parts in different works written by the same author. To say the least, this is simply cutting corners." (P26)*

Despite the general belief that the number of sources cited in a scientific study is directly proportional to its quality, a participant expressed a contrary opinion:

*"There should be few quotations and their original sources should always be indicated." (P4)*

**Table 15.** Views on features that should be included in the "abstract" section of academic texts

| Abstract section features | (f) |
|---|---|
| Covering outline of research | 25 |
| Clarity | 4 |
| A clear explanation of topics | 3 |
| Absence of quotations | 3 |
| Evoking curiosity in readers | 2 |
| Key words | 2 |
| Avoiding repetition | 1 |
| **Total** | **40** |

A total of 30 participants commented on the features that should be included in the "abstract" section of an academic paper. These views are classified in seven categories, whose frequencies from the highest to the lowest rank as follows: *covering outline of research* (25), *clarity* (4), *a clear explanation of topics* (3), *absence of quotations* (3), *evoking curiosity in readers* (2), *key words* (2), and *avoiding repetition* (1). Reagarding this subject, some of the participants commented as follows:

*"It should reflect the general outline of the research. All parts should be addressed." (P4)*

*"In the abstract, I clearly express the purpose, scope and method of my study, and I highlight the key points representing the main text." (P6)*

*"Explaining the study in the shortest and clearest way" (P21)*

*"Explaining the subject that I'm dealing with..." (P9)*

*"Purpose, scope, limitations" (P11)*

*"I make sure that the first paragraph of the introduction consists of my own words, and the problem in the last paragraph is defined and composed with my own words without quoting." (P14)*

*"We make a point of writing a few sentences that will draw the curiosity of readers about the importance of the research, the reason for its conduct, the methods and results, without focusing too much on the details." (P7)*

*"...I definitely place 3-5 keywords under the abstract. I try to use the phrases in the title when choosing keywords." (P8)*

*"...the sentences in the main body of the text must not be repeated verbatim in the abstract" (P29)*

**Table 16.** Views on the features that should be included in the "introduction" section of academic texts

| Introduction section features | (f) |
|---|---|
| Subject | 20 |
| Literature | 10 |
| Avoiding redundancy | 6 |
| Statement of problem | 5 |
| Significance | 3 |
| Purpose | 3 |
| Limitation/s | 1 |
| **Total** | **48** |

30 participants shared their views on the features that should be included in the "introduction" section of an academic text. These views are classified into seven major categories, which rank by frequency from the highest to the lowest as follows: *subject* (20), *literature* (10), *avoiding redundancy* (6), *statement of problem* (5), significance (3), *purpose* (3) and *limitation/s* (1). Some of the academic staff's views on this subject are as follows:

*"I try to explain it in its simplest form." (P13)*

*"I emphasize the information in the relevant literature that provides the current and scientific basis for the subject." (P16)*

*"I try to access the basic and current sources." (P1)*

*"I make sure to present an adequate review on the basis of reliable and up-to-date information regarding the purpose and the subject of the study" (P18)*

*"Instead of using the commonplace and de facto expressions which move from a broader to narrower focus, I try to get to the heart of the matter and state the research problem directly..." (P8)*

*"The introduction should not be like a Turkish poem that describes the first two verses of the quartet, which are of interest to folk literature genres. In other words, instead of pouring down all the collected materials into the text, it should be prepared by clearly outlining the general and specific scope of the study, with a keen attention to arrange it from more general to more specific before getting into the main subject." (P26)*

*"Just as I do for the abstract, I try to write the reasons that have motivated me to do this work in an interesting way..." (P11)*

*"...it must present evidence for why you needed to conduct the study..." (P29)*

*"The purpose and the significance of the study must be established with support from other research in the literature." (P21)*

**Table 17.** Views on the features that academic texts should include in "problem statement"

| Problem statement features | (f) |
| --- | --- |
| Clarity | 10 |
| Appropriateness for the purpose of the study | 10 |
| Reflecting the scope / abstract of the study | 9 |
| Forming research questions | 4 |
| Originality | 2 |
| Relevance to the title | 2 |
| **Total** | **37** |

A total of 30 participants commented on the features of academic writing that should be included in the "problem statement". These opinions are classified in six basic categories. The frequency values of these categories reveal the following ranking from the highest to the lowest: *clarity* (10), *appropriateness for the purpose of the study* (10), *reflecting the scope / abstract of the study* (9), *forming research questions* (4), *originality (*2), and *relevance to the title* (2). Some participant views on this subject are as follows:

*"Due care must be taken to ensure that the statement describes the problem in a clear and understandable way." (P6)*

*"I try to form my research problem by forming a question and paying attention to create it in a way that it will address the purpose." (P1)*

*"I try to answer the question of 'what kind of a problem has been found and planned in the field?' I point out the detected errors, deficiencies, gaps, etc. in the field and I explain my study as one way of addressing this deficiency." (P9)*

*"I write a question sentence that includes the study group and the context in line with the research purpose." (P14)*

*"I give information about how this study differs from the previous research done so far and which gap it will fill in the literature." (P11)*

*"I make sure that the problem is in accordance with the title." (P13)*

**Table 18.** Views on features that the academic texts should include in the "statement of purpose"

| Statement of purpose features | (f) |
|---|---|
| Clarity | 15 |
| Reflecting the abstract | 11 |
| Contribution to the field | 4 |
| Appropriateness for the problem | 2 |
| Originality | 1 |
| **Total** | **33** |

28 participants expressed their views on the features of academic writings that should be included in the aim statement. These views are classified in five basic categories. When the frequency values of these were examined, *clarity* was 15, *reflecting the abstract* 11, *contribution to the field* 4, *appropriateness for the problem* 2, and *originality* 1. Some participants' views on this subject are as follows:

*"It must be explanatory and the problem in question must be expressed accurately and completely." (P6)*

*"The purpose must be clear and understandable; it is very important that the aim of the research is explained with regards to its significance. If there are more than one sub-purpose,*

*they must be also be stated. The points that the study will address and serve have to be clearly stated." (P9)*

*"It must state which gap in the literature the study will fill, and it must articulate the need for the study in a clear and simple way." (P27)*

*"It should be appropriate for the problem." (P13)*

*"It must focus on conveying the originality and the research purpose of the study in the clearest and most comprehensible language possible." (P25)*

*"It should parallel the results." (P18)*

**Table 19.** Views on features that should be included in the "method" section of academic texts

| Method section properties | (f) |
|---|---|
| Method selection | 17 |
| Describing the method | 13 |
| Research design | 8 |
| Data collection | 8 |
| Data analysis | 7 |
| Universe-sample / study group | 6 |
| Validity and reliability | 5 |
| Citations | 5 |
| **Total** | **69** |

29 participants commented on the features that should be included in the "method" section of an academic paper, which fall into eight major categories. Considering their frequencies in the dataset, these textual features rank as follows: *method selection* (17), *describing the method* (13), *research design* (8), *data collection* (8), *data analysis* (7), *universe-sample / study group* (6), and *validity and reliability* (5), *citations* (5). Some of the participants' views on this subject are as follows:

*"I make sure that I choose the correct method, and apply it in a systematic way by following its principles." (P5)*

*"First, I determine the method that is appropriate for the nature of my research. I describe this method by citing the experts in the field. Relating them to the process of my own study, I then describe each step of the research design, the study group, the data collection technique, and the data analysis, by citing the experts." (P9)*

*"The method should be described in as much detail as possible so that it is replicable and verifiable by other researchers as well." (P22)*

*"I try to clearly describe the research elements like the study group, collection of data and analysis." (P18)*

*"I pay attention to the steps to be followed in the research, the research design, and the reliability and validity." (P26)*

*"I will pay attention to how and with which means the work will be conducted." (P20)*

*"I make sure to write the data collection and analysis parts in a complete and comprehensible manner. In doing so, I base them on scientific resources by making relevant citations." (P15)*

**Table 20.** Views on features that academic texts should include in the "findings" section

| Findings section properties | (f) |
|---|---|
| Truthful reporting of data | 12 |
| Clarity | 9 |
| Order | 6 |
| Relevance to purpose | 5 |
| Using visuals | 4 |
| Interpretation | 3 |
| Originality | 1 |
| **Total** | **40** |

28 participants gave their views on the features that should be included in the "findings" section of the academic literature. These views are classified in seven basic categories. Considering their frequencies in the dataset, these textual features rank as follows: *Truthful reporting of data* (12), *clarity* (9), *order* (6), *relevance to purpose* (5), *using visuals* (4), *interpretation* (3), *originality* (1). Some participants' views on this subject are as follows:

*"I pay attention to be truthful to the data." (P3)*

*"I first explain what I have obtained in an objective way, then I interpret what it means in terms of theory and practice." (P10)*

*"I pay attention to report the findings in a clear, comprehensible and complete manner." (P13)*

*"I take care to present the findings clearly." (P17)*

*"I try to give the findings in the same order as the research questions, and try not to give any information beyond the scope of the study..." (P8)*

*"I try to make sure that the findings are systematically presented. If I seek answers to different problems, I present the findings under individual headings." (P26)*

*"I pay attention to include the data that serve the purposes of the study, and explain them in a clear scientific language." (P16)*

*"To improve comprehensibility, I include figures, tables and graphs wherever needed." (P14)*

*"I definitely make sure to add my comments to the findings." (P27)*

*"Associated with the problem statement, I include especially striking or divergent data not previously encountered in the literature." (P19)*

**Table 21.** Opinions about the features that academic texts should have in the "conclusion, discussion and suggestions" section

| Conclusion, discussion and suggestions section features | (f) |
|---|---|
| **Conclusion** | |
| Presentation of findings | 14 |
| Inferences | 5 |
| Contribution to the field | 3 |
| Use of a clear language | 3 |
| Stating the limitations of the study | 2 |
| Reaching acceptable conclusions | 2 |
| Avoiding definite statements | 1 |
| Avoiding repetition | 1 |
| **Discussion** | |
| Comparison | 20 |
| Currentness | 2 |
| **Suggestions** | |
| Making suggestions related to the problem/ sub-problems | 7 |
| Presenting applicable suggestions | 5 |
| Creating horizons for future researchs | 4 |
| Making original suggestions | 1 |
| **Total** | **70** |

30 participants expressed their views on the features of academic writings that should be included in the "conclusion, discussion and suggestions" section. These opinions fall into fourteen main categories. Considering their frequencies in the dataset, these textual features rank as follows: *presentation of findings* (14), *inferences (5)*, *contributing to the field* (3), *use of a clear language* (3), *, stating the limitations of the study* (2), *reaching acceptable conclusions* (2), *avoiding definite statements* (1), *avoiding repetitions* (1); *comparison* (20), *currentness* (2); *making suggestions related to problem/ sub-problems* (7), *presenting applicable suggestions* (5), *creating horizons for future researchs* (4), and *making original suggestions* (1). Some participants' views on this subject are as follows:

*"I try to make conclusions by reflecting the findings obtained, and making inferences based on the results of the other studies." (P5)*

*"I try to make the conclusion section relevant to the findings, and to express the results effectively, to avoid definitive statements, to present overlapping and divergent aspects of my results with similar research, and not to make suggestions outside the scope of the article." (P9)*

*"I pay attention to the similarities to and differences from the previous studies and to make a new contribution to the field." (P3)*

*"Thinking pragmatically, I make sure to express the results I have obtained as clearly as possible, and to be realistic in my suggestions." (P30)*

*"...I describe the shortcomings of my study and specify points that should be taken into consideration in future research." (P11)*

*"There must be correct and acceptable findings." (P25)*

*"I try to avoid making the conclusion section a repetition of the findings..." (P28)*

*"In the discussion section, similar ideas should not be repeated but be synthesized. By comparing opposing views, references should be made to the studies supporting the obtained findings..." (P8)*

*"In the discussion part, I make sure to cite all the research that supports my own study and to access the current sources..." (P16)*

*"Care should be taken to base each conclusion on a finding, and then propose suggestions according to the research sub-problems." (P6)*

*"I make sure that the conclusion is substantial, and the discussion is multifaceted. I present the suggestions in a feasible and applicable way." (P4)*

*"The conclusions must be based on the findings. One of the conclusions must include the future studies to be conducted. Researchers interested in the subject should be directed to new research." (P20)*

*"It is important that the suggestions must be clear and original, and not to be repetitive." (P10)*

**Table 22.** Views on features that should be found in the "bibliography" section of academic texts

| Bibliographic section features | (f) |
|---|---|
| Usage of in-text citation | 14 |
| Formal consistency (using journaling rules, APA, etc.) | 14 |
| Using the accurate / related sources | 11 |
| Using current sources | 5 |
| Using a sufficient number of sources | 3 |
| Putting references in alphabetical order | 3 |
| Using full references | 2 |
| Including the secondary sources in the bibliography | 2 |
| Using indenting properly | 1 |
| Paying extra attention to using Turkish sources | 1 |
| **Total** | **56** |

28 participants reported on the features that should be included in the "bibliography" section of an academic text. These views are classified in ten major categories. Ranked from the highest to the lowest frequency, these categories are distributed as follows: *usage of in-text citation* (14), the *formal consistency (using journaling rules, APA, etc.)* (14) *using the accurate/ related resources* (11), *using current sources* (5), *using a sufficient number of sources* (3), *putting references in alphabetical order* (3), *using full references* (2), *including the secondary sources in the bibliography* (2), *using indenting properly* (1), and *paying extra attention to use of Turkish sources* (1). Some statements made by the participants regarding this subject are as follows:

*"I make sure that everything I quoted in the text is in the bibliography and that every reference in the bibliography is in the text..." (P10)*

*"I make sure that it conforms with the writing rules of the publishing journal and the degree it benefits from the existing research." (P1)*

*"I pay attention to citing according to the APA criteria, to match in-text references with the bibliographical references, and to sort resources in an alphabetical order." (P8)*

*"I take care to include as much of the primary resources as possible in the bibliography, to cite the most current research, and to arrange the bibliography in accordance with the rules of the journal and the APA." (P16)*

*"The primary sources rather than secondary sources must be used at all times. If such primary sources cannot be accessed, detailed information about the secondary source must be provided." (P7)*

*"The references cited in the bibliography must be of sufficient number and must adequately reflect the scope of the problem. The most important and fundamental sources of relevant research must be cited." (P21)*

*"I check and make sure that all the references I have used are in alphabetical order." (P28)*

*"I make sure that the all the information in the bibliography is complete." (P27)*

*"I make sure that I have ordered and formatted the bibliography correctly. I use an alignment tab if the reference is longer than a line. It looks better." (P9)*

*"I prefer Turkish rather than foreign sources." (P5)*

**Table 23.** The errors that attracted participants' attention as referees

| Errors detected | (f) |
|---|---|
| Method section | 9 |
| Formal standards | 6 |
| Spelling-punctuation | 6 |
| Scientific style | 5 |
| Inadequate review of the literature | 4 |
| Subject selection | 3 |
| Discussion section | 3 |
| Violation of Ethics | 3 |
| Stating purpose | 2 |
| Insufficiency in the area of expertise | 2 |
| Lack of interpretation | 2 |
| Redundancy of statistical information | 2 |
| Abstract writing | 1 |
| Introduction section | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Suggestions section | 1 |
| Use of irrelevant sources | 1 |
| Failing to synthesize the quoted information | 1 |
| **Total** | **52** |

24 participants gave their opinions on the errors that caught their attention in the academic texts. These opinions are classified under seventeen headings. Considering their frequencies in the dataset, these textual features rank as follows: *method section* (9), *formal standards* (6), *spelling-punctuation* (6), *scientific style* (5), *inadequate review of the literature* (4), *subject selection* (3), *discussion section* (3), *violation of ethics* (3), *stating purpose* (2), *insufficiency in the area of expertise* (2), *lack of interpretation* (2), *redundancy of statistical information* (2), *abstract writing* (1), *introduction section* (1), *suggestions section* (1), *use of irrelevant sources* (1), *failing to synthesize the quoted information* (1). Some quotes from the participants on this subject are as follows:

*"The methodology section in particular is either missing or totally absent in some articles." (P1)*

*"I think the basic problem is the lack of mastery of the research methodology. I have analyzed many studies that had problems in choosing the right method and applying it according to the research procedure. I also think that some people seems to think that placing a series of quotations in the text is a virtue in itself. I think it is very important to present quotations by synthesizing them and interspersing personal comments throughout." (P7)*

*"During my reviewing work, I have seen that some manuscripts do not follow the article format (introduction, method, findings, conclusion and discussion). I have observed that very little attention is given for academic discussion especially in the conclusions section, and some studies do not even offer any suggestions." (P14)*

*"Spelling mistakes. Sloppy expressions that may undermine objectivity." (P9)*

*"Sloppiness, haste, lack of academic style." (P2)*

*"There are not many current issues. (Research) just seems to be re-application of the old subjects and methods to another subject repeatedly. Authors write articles without reading all the relevant literature or the important sources regarding the subject."(P16)*

*"Introduction and discussion parts are too short and out of date."(P12)*

*"Failing to express the purpose and to comply with the general rules of article writing, and the wrong and unnecessary use of terminology."(P18)*

*"Academic writing rules, mastery of the subject, the contribution that the study makes to literature, and its originality are not taken into account." (P23)*

*"Inadequacy of the background, inadequate literature review, carelessness, inability to interpret (the results), etc…" (P6)*

*"Those who are good at statistics can turn anything into an article. That does not sound very ethical to me. Experimental practices in the field of social sciences just seem like cutting corners." (P24)*

*"Exclusion of the bibliographical references from the main text, the mismatch between the problem and the purpose, not specifying the method in the abstract" (P3)*

*"Especially Turkish researchers discuss the subject by talking about its history since time immemorial and beat about the bush. Only the studies that are directly related to the research topic on hand should be cited. "(P19)*

*"One common mistake is citing research that is not directly relevant to the research subject for the sake of providing a rich bibliography. The existence of studies that do not aim at a specific purpose, that do not clarify anything in the field, and are conducted just for sake of being conducted is also notable." (P22)*

### Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

This study, in which the academic writing characteristics were evaluated based on the views of academics, found out the following results:

In their views regarding the "formal features" of academic writing, the academics highlight *use of visual elements, segmentation/ entitling, appropriateness for the journal, the international criteria* and *spelling-punctuation*. Only one participant reported that the formal features were insignificant, which is supported by Bahar's (2014) statement that many researchers believe that formal rules are insignificant, that they should focus more on content, and that they do not care about style.

The opinions expressed on the "linguistic and stylistic features" of the academic texts emphasize *clarity, academic language,* and *avoidance of incomprehensibility*, and *mastery of the field*. These are important linguistic features in creating academic texts. However, the view expressed by

one participant that a *daily / colloquial language* should be used when writing an academic article, and the view expressed by another participant that aouthors' language and style *should not be interfered* with are unacceptable for academic texts because the language of the academic writing is formal. Tompkins (2009) stresses the fact that there is a difference between the academic language and the everyday language in terms of usage of words, sentences, and perspectives. As a matter of fact, referee evaluation reports always contain *language and expression* category (Deniz and Karagöl, 2017).

In their views on "ethical principles" that must be adhered to in academic writing, the academics highlighted the importance of *avoiding plagiarism, using proper citation and references, originality, obtaining permissions, acknowledging the contributors, avoiding distortion/diversion and deception, correct/ reliable/ neutral presentation, avoiding improper methodology, integrity, not publishing just for academic incentives or for increasing publication quantity*, and *avoiding self-plagiarism*. All these are views are acceptable, considering that the factor of ethics is directly related to all research stages from the planning of the research to its reporting and sharing, ethics influences the whole nature of the research (Kansu, 2009; Deniz and Karagöl, 2017). It is controversial that one participant emphasized the need for limiting the extent of bibliography (i.e. the number of references should be low) because the scientific validity of study is directly proportional to how many resources directly related to the subject are cited and used by summarizing and synthesizing them.

In their views regarding the "abstract" section, the academics underscored *covering outline of research, clarity, a clear explanation of topics, absence of quotations, evoking curiosity in readers, key words* and *avoiding repetition*. Abstracts should be seen as "a generalized evaluation based on information from other parts of the study" (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009, p. 232), "a reduced form of the article" (Day, 2005, p. 31). It is remarkable that the participants put particular emphasis on this.

Views regarding the "introduction" part of an academic writing highlight *subject,* literature, *avoiding redundancy, statement of problem, significance, purpose and limitations*. Ocak (2010) lists components of the introductory section as the research problem, the previous studies that address the same problem, shortcomings in the previous research, the importance of the study for the reader, and the purpose of the study. It is very important to establish the correct theoretical framework while writing the introductory section, which is ensured by reviewing the relevant literature. Generally, "researchers who are confronted with a large number of sources related to the research topic risk wasting most of their time by getting lost among these sources; therefore, in order to minimize such waste of time, they need to classify their sources in a systematic way" (Dinler, 2012, p. 72).

Regarding the "problem statement", the academics emphasized *clarity, appropriateness for the purpose of the study, reflecting the scope/abstract of the study, forming questions, originality, and being relevant to the title*. In view of the statement of "purpose features" that academic texts should have, *clarity, reflecting the abstract, contribution to the field, appropriateness for the problem, and originality* are highlighted.

In their views regarding the "method" section of an academic text, the academics underlined the importance of *selection of methodology, describing the method, research design, data collection, data analysis, universe-sample/ study group, validity and reliability, and citation.* The method, which means the pathway to be followed in order to obtain valid and reliable results from the research to be done, "is an actional and intellectual process involving ways of describing and explaining commonly used by the sciences" (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012, p. 7). This process has to be shaped before the research, and changes can be made in the process if needed. The views expressed by the participants all include elements that should be included in the method section of a research.

In view of the characteristics of the "findings" section of academic texts, academics underscored *truthfulness to data, clarity, order, serving the purpose, using visuals, interpreting and originality. Truthfulness to data*, on which majority of the participants placed a strong emphasis, refers to the data being analyzed and represented without prejudices or beliefs. Using a clear, understandable language, and presenting the data in the same systematic order as that of the research questions will strengthen the semantic relationships in the reader's mind.

In their views regarding the features to be included in the "conclusion, discussion and suggestions" section of the academic texts, the participants drew attention to the importance of *presenting the findings, making inferences, contributing to the field, using a clear language, stating the limitations of the study, reaching acceptable conclusions, avoiding definite statements, and avoiding repetition* with particular reference to the "conclusion" dimension. As regards the "discussion" dimension, they highlighted *comparisons* and *currentness*. And concerning the dimension of "suggestions", they pointed out to the importance of *making suggestions related to problem/ sub problems, presenting applicable suggestions*, *creating a horizon for future research* and *making original suggestions*. According to Dura (2005, p. 347), the three components of the conclusion part are *summary* (summarizing the information provided up to the conclusion section), *verdict* (responding to what the researcher has done), and *suggestions* (including the use of research findings and proposals for new research). It should be noted here that the verdict also includes, by comparison with other studies, what the research explains and does not explain. The most common opinions about the conclusions, discussions and suggestions section are *comparison* of the results in the "discussion" section with other research results in the literature, and *presenting the findings* in the dimension of

"conclusion". It is noteworthy that such insightful conclusions about "discussion" arise, although it is generally considered as a particularly neglected section in the academic texts written by Turkish researchers. On the other hand, participants stressed the necessity of not producing a conclusion that is irrelevant to the findings obtained.

In their views regarding the "bibliography" section, the participants stressed the *usage of in-text citation*, the *formal consistency, using accurate/ related resources, using current sources, using a sufficient number of sources, putting references in alphabetical order, using full references, including the secondary sources in the bibliography, using indenting properly*, and *extra attention to use of Turkish sources*. "To satisfy the ethical and legal obligations, to demonstrate the scientific value of the research, to support the validity and reliability of the opinions of the researcher, to show whether or not the researcher has the mastery of the resources, to determine the truthfulness of the researcher to the resources in question, and to guide future researchers on the sources that they can use, it is important to specify the source" (Dinler, 2012, p. 178). All of the arguments put forward by the participants reflect the whole set of rules that must be followed while creating the bibliography section. However, one participant's preference to use Turkish source does not overlap much with the widely adopted scientific practices. Because science is not peculiar to a language or nationality, it is universal. In this respect, it would produce better results to use any accessible source about the research subject without linguistic prejudice or discrimination.

Ranked from the most frequent to the least frequent, the views in the data display the following pattern: *results, discussion and suggestions* section (70), *method* section (69), *bibliography* section (56), *linguistic and stylistic features* (53), *ethical principles* (52), *introduction* section (48), *formal* features (43), *abstract* section (40), *findings* section (40), *problem statement* (37), and *purpose statement* (33).

Finally, regarding the common errors in the academic texts that academics have studied as referees, they highlight *the method section, formal standards, spelling-punctuation, scientific style, inadequate review of the literature, subject selection, discussion section, ethical violation, stating purpose, insufficiency in the area of expertise, lack of interpretation, redundancy of statistical information, abstract writing, introduction section, suggestions section, use of irrelevant sources, and failing to synthesize the quoted information*. Bayat (2014) found a significant relationship between critical thinking and academic writing success. Monippally and Pawar (2010) argue that academic writing allows the research process and findings to be presented as a means of communication. It is necessary to apply this communication tool in accordance with its purpose. However, a close examination of the scientific studies carried out in Turkey reveal some serious errors in this sense.

Aydin and Baysan (2018) examined graduate students' metaphorical perceptions of academic writing and found 95 metaphors, which they classified into 9 categories. They reported that more than half of these metaphors fell under three categories as "a long and challenging process" (f:23) "a process of producing / discovering new things" (f: 22) and "an action that requires composition / analysis / synthesis / interpretation skill" (f: 17). The rest of the metaphors were grouped under 6 categories as "an action that requires specialist / expert support" (f: 8), "a multi-threaded action" (f: 7), "an action requires care in language and expression" (f: 5), "an unpleasant action" (f: 5), "an action that gives joy" (f: 4) and the "other" (f: 4).

Aydin (2015), examined the effects of reflective teaching practices on academic writing skills and found that teachers had the highest success in general characteristics (form, punctuation, language and style, flow, length, etc.), bibliography and abstract dimensions, which are followed by method, results and suggestions, findings and comments respectively, while the lowest achievement was identified for the introduction section.

Aktaş and Uzuner-Yurt (2015) found that most of the article abstracts do not contain any information other than the purpose and results. Sevim and Özdemir-Erem (2012) similarly indicate that the thesis abstracts are inadequate except for their aims section. İşeri and Sen (2017) found that of all the 64 academic studies they examined in their research, 2 of them lacked all the functional steps in the introduction of part (subject and purpose of the research, theoretical framework, methodology, metatextual guideline), while 61 followed these functional steps partially. In his analysis of theses, Karadağ (2009, p. 219) found that the most common errors were writing the purpose part too long the presence of unnecessary terms, inability to express the purpose clearly, expressing the purpose and the problem statement separately, incompatibility of these separately mentioned purpose and problem statement, the inconsistence of the purpose with its sub-purposes, and explaining the significance of the study under the subheading of purposes. Sahin, Calp, Bulut and Kuşdemir (2013) point out that postgraduate students experience difficulties especially in writing the problem statement, significance, conclusion and suggestions sections.

In their analysis of the methodology sections of theses, Kan and Uzun (2016) found that they *give information about the research design*, *describe the universe and sample / study group*, *describe data collection processes* and *data analysis* as usual, but the *data collection tools* and the *structure of the department* are described as optional textual elements. In addition, in the method sections of the related theses, a linear presentation is not preferred and no prevalent sequence could be identified. Evrekli, İnel, Deniş and Balım (2011) state that theses display errors in particular as to the significance of research, design, universe-sample selection, reliability of measurement tools, statistical methods and data analysis techniques. Karadağ (2009) identified five types of errors in the "findings" section of

doctoral theses, which are inadequacies in statistical description, analytical interpretation errors, table heading errors, tabulation errors, and describing the demographic characteristics of the sample as findings.

Based on the results of this research, the following suggestions can be made:

- When the errors that academics most frequently report on and the most common errors that they identify as referees are correlated, the methods, formal features, language and style, discussion, ethics and literature review emerge as the most salient features. Therefore, practical training on these features can be delivered.

- By determining on a journal or index a multi-dimensional evaluation of academic studies can be performed by different academics for any given field in Turkey and some common viewpoints / standards can be created for the academic texts in that specific field.

- Acquisition of academic writing skills depends on the practices to be applied continuously with scholar candidates during their postgraduate studies. It is clear that the scientific research methods course alone is not enough to equip them with these skills. Therefore, it would be highly advisable for graduate programs to include some compulsory courses that focus specifically on academic language and style.

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