

ANALYSES OF MECHANICAL ERRORS IN THE ENGLISH WRITTEN ARTICLES OF TURKISH ACADEMICS: A CASE STUDY

TÜRK AKADEMİSYENLERİN İNGİLİZ DİLİNDE YAZILAN
MAKALELERİNDEKİ MEKANİK HATALARIN İNCELENMESİ: BİR OLGU
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Abstract

The mastery of academic writing in English or English as Academic Purpose (EAP) has a crucial role at Turkish universities; whereas some EAP problems still face Turkish Academics. One of the major EAP problems is 'writing'. This study focuses on mechanical writing errors of Turkish Academics, and aims at revealing: the common errors of Turkish Academics; annual rejected article number due to English-borne troubles; and the reason of writing in English. The data were collected through 30 English written articles from 3 different universities, and analyses were done in tabulated forms. To able to ensure the equality in data, the gathered articles were separated into two: Positive Sciences and Social Sciences, and analyzed in accordance. The articles collected as data were those which were turned down by the Journals due to grammatical errors. The errors found in the writings of Turkish Academics were classified under 10 categories, which were thought as the most common error types by Gaskell and Cobb (2004). The findings reveal that some error types were much more frequent than others. Furthermore, thanks to the study, it is understood why Turkish academics insisted on writing their articles in English although they had difficulty in doing so.

Keywords: Academics, English, writing, error, article

Özet

İngilizcede makale yazma üzerine uzmanlaşma yada akademik olarak İngilizce yazabilme becerisi Türk üniversitelerinde önemli bir role sahipken Türk akademisyenler hala akademik İngilizcede çeşitli problemlerle karşılaşmaktadırlar. En sık rastlanılan sorunlardan biri 'yazma' becerisidir. Bu çalışma Türk akademisyenlerin İngilizce yazarken ortaya çıkan mekanik yazım hatalarına odaklanmaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı; Türk akademisyenler arasındaki yaygın İngilizce yazım hataları, İngilizce kaynaklı reddedilen makale sayıları ve akademisyenlerin makalelerini İngilizce yazma amaçlarını ortaya çıkarmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu çalışmanın verisi 3 farklı üniversiteden 30 İngilizce yazılmış makaleden toplanmıştır. Makalenin örneğinde bir eşitlik sağlayabilmek için veri iki ayrı bilim dalında toplanmış - Fen Bilimler ve Sosyal Bilimler- ve bu doğrultuda analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada kullanılan makaleler İngilizce dilbilgisel kaynaklı reddedilen makalelerden oluşmaktadır. Türk akademisyenlerin makalelerinde bulunan hatalar, en sık rastlanılan İngilizce hatalar olarak kabul edilen (Gaskell & Cobb, 2004) 10 kategori altında toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucu bazı hataların diğerlerine oranla daha sık yapıldığını göstermekte. Sonuçlar aynı zamanda İngilizce makale yazmakta zorlanmalarına rağmen neden İngilizce yazmada ısrar ettikleri konusunda da bazı sebepler göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akademisyenler, İngilizce, yazma, hata, makale

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary writing has a history that dates back to B.C. Cave paintings from thousands of years ago show the habitat and experiences of the earliest humans, but as humans began to live in larger and larger settlements and communities the need to record and manage information, rather than just express it, grew tremendously. Today, the scripts used in modern age bear little resemblance to each other if looked at them on a page. For saying; Arabic looks nothing like the Latin alphabet, but as marvellous systems of recording information, neither of them requires the author to be near us, or a very good memory to keep all in mind, if we want to understand the message recorded in them (British Museum). The only need is just to read the script and understand the message.

Writing, for all these, is among the most powerful tools used only by humans among the other living creatures. David Sedaris --humorist and essayist—says that "Writing gives you the illusion of control, and then you realize it's just an illusion, that people are going to bring their own stuff into it" while some others believe the carrier mission of it; such as conveying an information to other people through pen&paper or technologically through devices.

It is commonly known that writing activities have changed over the past years. They have also changed with the increase of technological devices; such as computers and mobile phones. More, writing is undergoing changes, moving from clausal embeddedness towards simpler sentence structure (Kress, 2003; Scott, 2005). However, it is still a fact that the ability to produce written text, cohesive and understandable, is an important skill in our society and essential to academic success (Feagans & Applebaum, 1986). In the earlier times, the focus used to be on teaching spelling and punctuation rules, but now it is on the content itself.

Today, thanks to the studies conducted on writing skill we know that writing process, as commonly conceived, is a highly sophisticated skill combining a number of diverse elements, some of which are strictly linguistic. That is to mean that writing is a multidimensional task in addition to its including like a high level of abstraction, elaboration, and constant reflection (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Gombert, 1992). Writing also requires developing metacognitive processes that include self-regulation and learning strategies (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, & Wilkinson, 2004; Ochsner & Fowler, 2004), among these rehearsal, elaboration, organization, and self-monitoring (McCrinkle & Christensen, 1995). While writing faculty is a requisite for every aspect of the quotidian life, scholarly writing is an indispensable part of an academic's professional life (Yağız & Yiğiter, 2012). The situation poses an impasse for Turkish academic when writing difficulty merges with writing in a target language; there are other national academics experiencing the same difficulty though (Fadda, 2012).

As every word has a collocation, the word 'writing', indispensably, may collocate with the word 'error'. Now that writing is a complex and sophisticated process, it will be impossible for writer to avoid errors, especially if the writing language is a foreign language as in Turkey. But what to be kept in mind is that it is important to accept the fact that errors are an inevitable part of the learning process (Davies & Pearse, 2002). It is through errors that we can see what learners are struggling to master, what concepts they have misunderstood and what extra work they might need (Lavery, 2001). Therefore, errors are often seen as the sign of learning in language acquisition process.

Concerning all statements to now, what is searched in the present study is the Academics' general tendency of writing error. In essence, it is more than ever that writing essays have become a major part of academic milieu; and Academics are encouraged to have the ability to write articles in English by an unknown power. Accordingly, this study tried to provide an answer for that desire and searched why Academics are in tendency to write articles in English.

Although writing skill is very important, it is a difficult work for many Academics to write an article in English from scratch. In the light of that knowledge, 30 article papers which belong to 30 Academics from 3 different universities were checked and their writing errors were set forth. These articles are those which were rejected by the editorial boards of Journals because of grammatical mistakes. Having detected general writing errors of Turkish Academics through scrutinizing their articles by two raters, the results were given in table 9. Also, the participants were given a questionnaire to get their English background and some other issues necessary to achieve the aim of the present study.

Subject-specific Writing

The New York State's English Language Arts (ELA) standards identify four main areas of competency for writing: "writing for information (reports and thesis-support papers)," "writing for critical analysis and evaluation (essays, speeches, debates, arguments)," "writing for literary response and expression (poems, stories, personal responses)," and "writing for social interaction (letters, notes, journals)" (New York State Education Department, 1996). When it is asked 'for which one does an academician writes', the answer undoubtedly will be 'all' despite the fact that what will be focused in here is 'writing for critical analysis and evaluation'. Consequently, the writing spectrum of an academician is large. In here another crucial question arises: what makes a writing prompt good? Or in other words; what is good writing? - It is a writing that requires both subject-specific knowledge and grammatical competency.

It is explicit that articles are genre-based writings. So, the content competency of the writing is important as much as grammatical competency. But, as can be guessed, to evaluate a paper through its semantic meaning in terms of English competency is almost impossible if you do not have a specific knowledge on the issue. So, this study will go on via syntactic fluency (also known as syntactic maturity or syntactic complexity) and grammatical competency of the articles, not semantic analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Writing is an intricate and complex task; it is the most difficult of the language abilities to acquire" (Allen & Corder, 1974, p. 177). Writing is a complex and hard process even in the native language. So, undoubtedly, it is more complicated and harder to write in a Second language (SL). Because of its complexity and necessity to use grammar efficiently, it becomes almost impossible to avoid errors. Consequently, many researchers have attempted to identify the common error that EFL students make in their writings (Yates & Kenkel, 2002; French, 2005; Futagi, Deane, Chodorow, & Tetreault, 2008; Dempsey, PytlikZillig, & Bruning, 2009; Leijten, Waes, & Ransdell, 2010; Wang, 2010; Falhasiri, Tavakoli, Hasiri, & Mohammadzadeh, 2011; Abushibab, El-Omari, & Tobat, 2011; Dastgoshadeh, Birjandi, & Jalilzadeh, 2011).

While some researchers try to identify common error that EFL learners make, some other researchers have attempted to find ways on correcting the writing errors (Kubota, 2001; Ferris, 2004; Gaskell & Cobb, 2004; Myhill & Jones, 2007; Shin, 2007;

Pilotti & Chodorow, 2009; Shabani & Meraji, 2010; Ansari & Varnosfadrani, 2010; Hamouda, 2011; Van Beuningen, DE Jong, & Kuiken, 2012). Meanwhile, some researchers who were concerned about not only correcting errors but also finding applicable implications for instructors and learners proposed useful pedagogical suggestions to overcome and minimize writing errors (Lee, 2003; Hunter, Mayenga, & Gambell, 2006; Beck & Jefferey, 2007; Shin, 2007; Dempsey, PytlikZillig, & Bruning, 2009; Martines, Kock, & Cass, 2011; Abushibab, El-Omari, & Tobat, 2011; Mirahmadi, 2011; Camp, 2012)

There are still ongoing discussions on whether major written errors emanate from the intrusion of L1; which is because of L1 negative transfer (Krashen, 1981). In this sense, Abisamra (2003) in her error analyses study of Arab English learners found that 35.9% of errors were of transfer/Interlingual errors while, 64.1% were developmental/Intralingual. She also found that the highest percentage of transfer errors was in semantics & lexis, and as for the highest percentage of developmental errors, it was, by far, in substance (mainly spelling). On the other hand, in contrast with Abisamra, the study conducted by George (1972) found that only one-third of the second language learners' errors can be attributed to native language transfer.

When it is searched why researchers are interested in errors, we see that it is because they are believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that people use to acquire a language (Richards, 1974; Dulay & Burt, 1974). Moreover, according to Richards (1974, p.15) "At the level of pragmatic classroom experience, error analysis will continue to provide a method by which the teacher assesses learning and teaching and determines priorities for future effort."

It is widely know that one useful way to measure general proficiency in a second language (L2) is to assess writing samples. When the literature holistically examined, it is understood that the samples to be evaluated are collected or gathered through manual tasks created on purpose. However, rather than testing passive knowledge or artificial text writings, as do traditional exam-style tasks, originals written texts –as in the present study-- show active language use on the part of the L2 user in all its facets, including the use of vocabulary, idioms, verb tenses, sentence constructions, errors. Accordingly, with its authentic data, the present study is divorced from the huge many of studies in the literature (for a similiar study; Johnson & Vanbrackle, 2012).

What also makes the present study unique is that it not only describes the writing error tendency of the participants (Academics) by evaluating their articles that were rejected by the journal on the pretext of low-level English quality or high number of written mistakes, but also carries the study further by employing a questionnaire to get info on their annual article construction productivity as well as reasons in writing the articles in English. Furthermore, another uniqueness of the present study is that it is the first time the writing prompts of Turkish Academics were evaluated in terms of English proficiency. Having searched the literature, it was seen that there exist few data or studies done on the issue. The present study emerged from that gap.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

The central focus for the present study is Turkish Academics and their writing skills, and the purpose of this illustrative case study is to describe the common writing error tendencies of Turkish Academics while writing an article in English; whether they resort to professional translation services or get help at the process of writing; turned

down article number due to English-borne problems; and for what reason the Turkish Academics write the articles in English

METHODOLOGY

Population & Sample

The population of this study were Turkish university Academics and their English written articles. Three universities were selected to study from among 165 Turkish universities²: they are The University of Siirt, The University of Kafkas, and The University of Batman.

Participants

The present study includes 30 participants (academics) from 3 different universities; 16 of whom were from The University of Siirt, 9 from The University of Kafkas and the rest from The University of Batman. All participants have English proficiency at a certain level (see Table 3 for UDS & KPDSⁱ scores). English proficiency levels were accepted through their UDS and KPDS exam results. The scores of participants, which were not UDS or KPDS but other equivalent exams such as IELTS or TOEFL, were matched according to the YOK exam equivalence tableⁱⁱ.

Data

Total 30 of 32 writing prompts were examined. Two articles were excluded because they violated the specification of being a data for the present study. The excluded articles had been switched to English by translation services but not by the Academics. 13, that is 43%, of which belong to social sciences while the rest, 57%, belong to positive sciences (Table 1). As seen in table 1, the highest data provision is from Siirt University, then Kafkas University and Batman University, respectively %53, %30 and %17. The data were those that were rejected by a journal due to English grammar borne errors.

Table 1.

Distribution of articles

University	Soc. Sci. <i>f</i>	Pos. Sci. <i>f</i>	Total
Siirt University	8	8	16
Kafkas University	4	5	9
Batman University	1	4	5
Total	13	17	30
<i>f</i> percent	43	57	

Through word count, the length of the articles, word number, was measured. The results are shown in table 2. The first 13 articles are social sciences while the rest are positive sciences. The word count results showed that there were a large range of words. The 9th essay included the most vocabulary number while the 27th essay includes the lowest vocabulary number. The word number differences among articles will not have any positive or negative impact on the results of this study because the study focuses on overall error number of the articles.

² Source: <https://www.yok.gov.tr/content/view/527/222/lang.tr/> Site access date: 27.01.2013

Table 2.

Word count results

Article	N. of Words	Article	N. of Words	Article	N. of Words
Soc. Sci. 1	3953	Soc. Sci. 11	6214	Pos. Sci. 21	5875
Soc. Sci. 2	6634	Soc. Sci. 12	3749	Pos. Sci. 22	3558
Soc. Sci. 3	6275	Soc. Sci. 13	5506	Pos. Sci. 23	3260
Soc. Sci. 4	4944	Pos. Sci. 14	5165	Pos. Sci. 24	4117
Soc. Sci. 5	6951	Pos. Sci. 15	5252	Pos. Sci. 25	3553
Soc. Sci. 6	5863	Pos. Sci. 16	3954	Pos. Sci. 26	4168
Soc. Sci. 7	3484	Pos. Sci. 17	2222	Pos. Sci.27	1952
Soc. Sci. 8	5429	Pos. Sci. 18	8246	Pos. Sci. 28	3143
Soc. Sci. 9	9395	Pos. Sci. 19	4510	Pos. Sci. 29	2149
Soc. Sci. 10	5652	Pos. Sci. 20	6206	Pos. Sci. 30	2623

Recruitment and access

The participants were reached by means of personal efforts and collegiality. Fellow colleagues who work in different universities were asked for providing data in accordance with the study purpose. Whereas 12 of sampling were compiled by the researcher of the present study, the others were picked up through the contributions of colleagues at the other universities. The fellow colleagues also are at the department of English Language Teaching; so they are familiar with the core of the study.

Data collection methods

The data of this study were picked up from the participants through e-mail or face to face communication. Also, a questionnaire was devised mainly to see English proficiency levels of the participants; reason for writing articles in English, and how many of the articles are turned down by the Journal due to problems arising from English (see appnx 1 for the questionnaire). The questions in the questionnaire were quantified by different point likert-scale options, and employed open-ended questions. The questionnaire was important to get some general and crucial points to able to supply and increase the reliability and validity of the study. Cronbach-alpha value for the questionnaire was found to be $\alpha = 0.70$.

Procedure

At the very first, the research purpose was told to the prospective participants and asked whether they could contribute to the study or not (that was done because articles turned down by the Journals would be needed). Then those who are volunteered to exist in the study were determined. Then, each participant was asked to provide one article. Having obtained 30 articles, holistic checking of overall grammar processed by two raters and the errors were detected. Meanwhile, the questionnaire had been given to the participants. The data were checked through syntactic and grammatical analyses. Since writing accuracy is difficult to quantify (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim, 1998) and can be biased, two raters were employed to detect the errors. The two raters examined the writing prompts and set down the errors in terms of typos, inconsistency, ambiguity and impropriety in the form of structural and organisational. The errors were categorized under 10 categories: Article, Conjunction, Gerund/Infinitive, Noun, Preposition, Capitalization & Punctuation, Word order, Pronoun, Modal, and SVA. The raters scrutinized the mechanical errors but not content or discourse errors; so, no semantic or discourse errors were determined.

Interrater Reliability

The researcher and his colleague served as two raters to evaluate Academics' articles. The second rater has an MA degree on English language, and has been an instructor on duty in a university for 4 years. The second rater was given the error template and requested to detect errors in accordance with it. To maintain consistency in scoring and to minimize any bias a rater could develop, each rater independently scored each article tied up to a certain evaluation criteria obtained from Gaskell and Cobb (2004). Inter-rater agreement measured through Cohen's kappa in terms of how articles were scored; and the result was .80, which equals to not perfect agreement but substantial. So, it can be said that there existed a consensus or homogeneity between raters in terms of scoring.

RESULTS

Questionnaire Results

As stated earlier, before examining the articles of the Academics, a questionnaire was applied to the participants. Below we work with each questionnaire question.

Q1: What is your department?

The departmental distribution of the participants is at a very large scope from Biology to Business, so the results were categorized as social and positive sciences to able to avoid any trouble that may arise from too discrete distribution of the subjects. According to the results, the number of positive science articles outnumbers the number of social science articles; 17 to 13. The results had already been showed in table 1.

Q2: What is your UDS/KPDS score?

The results –in table 3-- show that the score range fluctuates between 55 and 92. So, all the scores were categorized under 5 different levels as seen in table 3. It is understood from the results that the majority English proficiency scores of the participants accumulates on the range of 60-69 with a percentage of 46.7. Meanwhile, it seems that only one score is over 90 while two are in the range of 80-89. In concise, on having considered the figures over 50 as an enough proficiency score, it can be said that all the participants have a stable English proficiency background.

Table 3.

English proficiency scores (UDS/KPDS) of the participants

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	50-59	4	13,3
	60-69	14	46,7
	70-79	9	30,0
	80-89	2	6,7
	90-99	1	3,3
Total		30	100,0

Q3: Do you resort to professional translation services while writing an article?

It can be seen from the table 4 that 12 of 30 did not resort to translation services while the rest, 18, did. More, only 3 of 18 participants said 'Yes' whereas the others stated that they occasionally made their articles translated.

Table 4.

The rate of resorting professional translation services

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	3	10,0
	Sometimes	15	50,0
	No	12	40,0
	Total	30	100,0

Q4: If your answer is 'Yes or Sometimes', what is the reason?

As seen in table 5, on having asked the reason of resorting to translation services to make their articles switched into English, eight of the participants gave an excuse of 'Better writing quality of translation services' whilst for 7, the reason was their insufficient English knowledge. The rate of obeying Journal refugees' advice was 6.7%. None of the participants filled the option of 'The other'. We have 12 missing which represent for those who do not resort to translation services.

Table 5

The reason of resorting to professional translation services

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Insufficient English Knowledge	7	23,3
	Don't have time	1	3,3
	Better writing quality of translation services	8	26,7
	Journal refugees' advice	2	6,7
	Total	18	60,0
Missing	System	12	40,0
Total		30	100,0

Q5: Is it you who wrote the article submitted for the present study?

For the reliability of this study, it should have been known whether the article submitted for the present study was written by the Authors or just translated by someone else. In this sense, 30 of 32 participants stated that the article was written by their own, and hence other 2 articles were eliminated from the study data.

Q6: Do you get English language support while writing your article?

The table 6 shows us that very few of the participants did not take English help while writing an article in English. While 40% stated that they get language help, 47% of the participants occasionally require English support.

Table 6.

English support application rate

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	12	40,0
	Sometimes	14	46,7
	No	4	13,3
	Total	30	100,0

Q7: How many English written articles do you submit to a Journal in a year?

It is seen in table 7 that majority of the participants --53%-- submit one or two articles in English annually while 33% submit three or four. The number of those who submit over four articles is only 4.

Table 7.

Annual number of submitted article

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1-2	16	53,3
	3-4	10	33,3
	4+	4	13,3
	Total	30	100,0

Q8: How many of the English written articles are not turned down by a Journal due to troubles with English in a year?

As seen in table 8 below, almost all of the participants have a rejection for 1-2 articles due to English borne troubles. Only one of the participants says that s/he has rejections for 3-4 articles due to English borne troubles.

Table 8

Annual number of turned down article

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1-2	29	96,7
	3-4	1	3,3
	Total	30	100,0

Q9: Why do you write your articles in English? Do English written articles bear any benefits?

As understood from the table 8, all Academics in this study had English troubles while writing their articles in English. Accordingly, it is asked why they struggle for writing in English although they have difficulty in doing so. Not to border the answers, an open-ended question was employed. When the answers compiled, two answers came to the forefront: (1) the prestigious of writing articles in English in Academic settings; (2) high international recognition level of English publishing journals.

Article Examining Results

The written data of the present study were analyzed by the researcher and the other rater in terms of identifying and classifying the grammatical errors. The analyses were conducted through discovering errors which found in articles, conjunctions, gerund & infinitive, nouns, prepositions, capitalization & punctuation, word order, pronouns, modals, and SVA. A total of 337 grammatical errors were found. As indicated before, they were categorized into 10 major linguistic categories. The table 9 shows the types and number of written errors. Furthermore, it provides percentile values of all error types at the last column of the table.

Table 9.

Types and number of errors

Sample	Art	Conj	Ger/Inf	Noun	Prep	Cap	WO	Pro	Mod	SVA	Total
S1	3	2	1	4	5	1	2	2	2	1	23
S2	5	6	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	0	22
S3	5	4	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	18
S4	4	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	13
S5	3	1	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	9
S6	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	5
S7	4	2	3	2	1	0	2	1	0	2	17
S8	3	3	1	1	2	0	0	1	4	0	15
S9	4	2	2	0	2	1	1	2	0	1	15
S10	3	3	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	13
S11	5	4	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	17
S12	4	1	2	3	1	0	1	1	1	0	14
S13	3	2	0	1	5	0	0	0	2	1	14
S14	2	4	1	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	12
S15	2	1	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	8
S16	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
S17	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
S18	2	2	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	1	13
S19	3	0	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	10
S20	2	1	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	8
S21	4	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	12
S22	3	1	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	10
S23	2	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	10
S24	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
S25	5	3	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	15
S26	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	6
S27	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	8
S28	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
S29	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	4
S30	3	2	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	11
Total	88	58	30	39	30	25	21	17	21	8	337
%	26	17	9	12	9	7.3	6.2	5	6.2	2.3	100

Key. Art, articles; Conj, conjunctions; Ger/Inf, gerunds and infinitives; Noun, noun plurals; Prep, prepositions; Cap, capitals and punctuation; WO, word order; Pro, pronouns; Mod, modals; SVA, subject/ verb agreement.

Each error type was examined and explained with one or two examples extracted from the data of the present study:

Articles: The data obtained from the articles of the Academics showed that article use is the reason of the most common source of error; 88 in total. When scrutinized, it seemed that the most problematic part among article was the use of 'the' and 'a-an'. The article errors were aroused from either unnecessary insertion (1) or confusion of them (2). From time to time, the Academics overlooked article use, and omitted the usage (3).

(1) One of these important heritage units is the historical a town* of Hasankeyf.
(no need to use *a*)

(2) Hotel management is the* sector based on manpower and encloses enterprises which serve 24/7/365. (confusion; *a* instead of *the* to be used)

(3) Above all, it will not be wrong to say that it is good for students to share room* with others so that they can raise their own cross-cultural awareness towards other cultures. (missing *a* or *an*.)

Conjunctions: Conjunction errors make up of 17% of the total errors, and take the second rank after articles in total error number. The general error tendency reason was wrong conjunction use or ignoring the need of conjunction. The examples acquired from the study data show that the misconjunction use or deficiency of conjunction led to misunderstanding (4) or stabbing the meaning (5).

(4) The purpose of the study is to appoint if there is any correlation among the features in (horizontal or non horizontal integration) web sites of different enterprise types which hotels possess. Notwithstanding*, content analysis method has been used in the review.

(5) ...the seven mutation carrying final extended DNA fragment was first cloned into pGEMTEasy in E.coli XL1-Blue; [then] the sequence was confirmed.
(Omission of *then*)

Gerund/Infinitive: Gerund&Infinitive issues do always seem hard for the ESL learners. At that point 30 errors appear in the data of the study. As can be seen from the table 9, 30 errors make up of 9% of all errors. Here, the general error type was to use gerund instead of infinitive or vice versa (6). Although -- in most cases-- misuse or interchanging use of Ger&Inf does not change the semantic meaning much, it is regarded as a grammatical error.

(6) 550 million hectare of agriculture fields has lost the ability growing* crops because of the erosion caused by wrong soil cultivation. (Wrong Ger/Inf use, [*to grow*])

Nouns: As have been indicated earlier, Brians (2006) talks about noun errors that outnumber two thousand. So it will not be wrong to infer that it is a common error type for ESL speakers. The table 9 shows that noun errors build up 12% of all errors found in 30 English written articles. From among myriad noun error types, two widespread ones emerge: countable/uncountable noun errors (7), and incorrect word use (8).

(7) One of the biggest strength* [strengths] of the new curriculum is removal of a system based on memorizing and channelling students to research and inspection.

(8) That table is important for us because it gives us info in regard to* [as regards] the experience of administrators.

Prepositions: The raters detected 30 preposition errors which comprise 9% of all errors. Common preposition error inclination was wrong preposition choice; for example *in* instead of *at* (9).

(9) ...and leaf water potential under clear skies in* [at] midday or in some instances midmorning to midafternoon.

Capitals and Punctuation: With 25 errors, capitals and punctuation errors build up 7.5% of all errors. It is understood from the data of the present study that errors related to the use of comma was the most common punctuation errors (10). Although the wrong comma use in the example below did not change or hinder to convey the meaning, in some cases it did in the data of the present study.

(10) The machine learning methods used for DERM, WBC and LYMP as well as success rates thereof are illustrated in Table 6, Table 8 and Table 10 respectively*. (Needs a comma before the word *respectively*)

Word Order: 21 which comprise 6.2% of the total errors emanated from word order errors. The Academics either placed the word in incorrect place (11) or infringed a fixed or semi-fixed expression order.

(11) The purpose of the review, by studying web sites hotels in Turkey and Spain with four&five star*, is to determine what features they include. (better if "*hotels with four&five star*")

Pronouns: The raters detected 17 errors concerning pronoun error. That is equivalent to 5% of all errors. In example 12 a, a reflexive pronoun error is made. Although the meaning does not confuse, it is grammatically wrong. However, there are situations which the meaning confuses due to incorrect pronoun use (12 b).

(12) a. It offers the students chance of embodying themselves* [themselves] a lot more easily.
b. Image searching is one of the most important services and they* need to be supported. (What *they* refer to is incorrect. The thing which is important is *image searching*. So, the pronoun was to be *it*).

Modals: 21 of 337 errors arisen due to incorrect modal use or modal-borne reasons. That equals to 6.2%. It was seen in the articles that the general error sources as regards modals were wrong modal use, lack of modal or redundancy of modal. In the example 13, we see a redundancy of modal use.

(13) It is estimated that human existence along the river could have been* dated back to the beginning of life on earth.

Subject Verb Agreement: With 8 errors, which equals to 2.3% of all errors, SVA is the lowest common error types that Turkish Academics did. The major error reason of SVA in the data of this study was incorrect match of subject and verb (14).

(14) Fundamentals processing element of a neural network is a neuron and each of these neurons compute*[computes] a weighted sum of its input signals.

As understood so far, each error type took a part in the writings of the Academics' at diverse degrees. In table 10, we shortly see the error types from the most common to the least.

Table 10.

Percentile values of error types from the most to the least

Error Type	Frequency	Percent
Art	88	26
Conj	58	17
Noun	39	12
Ger / Inf	30	9
Prep	30	9
Cap	25	7.3
WO	21	6.2
Mod	21	6.2
Pro	17	5
SVA	8	2.3
Total	337	100

CONCLUSION

The participants of the study were 30 Turkish Academics from three different universities: The University of Siirt, The University of Kafkas, and The University of Batman. They all had English knowledge at a certain level. The data of this study came from the articles of the participants. Each participant provided one article written by him/her; hence, total 30 writing prompts were collected. The articles were those which were rejected or turned down by the Journals due to English-borne reasons. The study was conducted with the purpose of finding and classifying the grammatical errors in the writing of the articles. As a result of the analysis of the data's errors, total 337 grammatical errors were found and these errors classified into ten major categories. The results showed that the largest error types in the number of errors was the errors of article that comprised 26% of the total errors whereas the lowest was SVA errors; 2.3%. The order of errors from the most problematic to the lowest was consecutively ranked in table 10: articles, conjunction, noun, gerund & infinitive, preposition, capitalization & punctuation, word order, modal, pronoun, and Subject Verb Agreement.

This study also included a questionnaire. According to the results, 60% of Turkish Academics resort to the professional translation services because of better writing quality of translation services and the insufficient English knowledge of themselves. On the other hand, 26 of 30 Academics, which build up about 88% of all Academics, stated that they take language support while they write their articles in English. Furthermore, the results showed almost half of the submitted articles had been turned down by the Journals due to grammatical written errors. What is most striking is that the Academics insisted to write their articles in English because they regard English written articles as more prestigious as well as high international recognition level of English publishing journals.

LIMITATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The population of the present study were the universities; however only 3 universities were employed to be studied with. When the number of university in Turkey is taken into account, inevitably the sample size stays small to able to make a generalization of the results. Therefore, it would be better to include more universities to increase the validity of the study. Meanwhile, in accordance with sample, the data size is insufficient to make a reliable generalization. Having excluded two articles due to

invalidness in terms of the study purpose, the present paper studied with 30 articles. In spite of the fact that the data size seems a bit reasonable to draw a conclusion and to make some inferences, it would be statistically more reliable if the sample size were over 60.

The present study examined the mechanical errors but not content or discourse errors, which is the other limitation. To able to examine content or discourse errors of the subject-wide articles would be almost impossible only by two raters who are specialized on only English language. More raters who are specialist on the scope of article subject as well as English language are to be employed in the study if the articles are wanted to be examined semantic as well as mechanic.

The results of this study set forth the common errors of Turkish Academics in an explicit way. By referring to the results, some further studies can be conducted especially in order to discover ways on how to reduce these errors through suggesting pedagogical implications. But, we recommend for researchers who have a mind to carry a study on the issue to have bigger sample size and subject-specific raters because content or semantic errors as regards English usage is as widespread as mechanical errors.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Area of use of the study

The questionnaire will be used in for a study titled “Analyses of Mechanical Errors in the English Written Articles of Turkish Academics; a Case Study” which aims to set forth general English writing errors of Turkish Academics.

Secrecy undertaking and official permission

The questionnaire documents will not be given to third person and kept secret at the end of the study. More, any identification information of the participants is not wanted. So any name to be written on the study was not demanded. The questionnaire got the necessary permissions from the responsible authorities, and can be submitted if wanted.

Questionnaire

1. What is your department?
2. What is your UDS/KPDS score?

3. Do you resort to professional translation services while writing an article?

- Yes Sometimes No

4. If your answer is 'Yes or Sometimes', what is the reason?

- Insufficient English knowledge
- Don't have time
- Better writing quality of translation services
- Journal referees' advice
- Other.....

5. Is it you who wrote the article submitted for the present study?

- Yes No

6. Do you get English language support while writing your article?

- Yes Sometimes No

7. How many English written articles do you submit to a Journal in a year?

- 1-2 3-4 4+

8. How many of the English written articles are not turned down by a Journal due to troubles with English in a year?

- 1-2 3-4 4+

9. Why do you write your articles in English? Do English written articles bear any benefits?

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.....

ⁱ The loan-translations of UDS and KPDS are “*Inter-university Foreign Language Exam*” (UDS) and “*Public Personnel Language Exam*” (KPDS). Both examinations have same implications. They have 80 questions that aim to measure Grammar and Reading skills – different from their equivalences that measure all skills. The results of UDS and KPDS are accepted by Higher Education Council (YOK), which is the institution that all the Turkish universities are under management.

ⁱⁱ For international equivalences of UDS and KPDS and more detailed info, see <https://www.yok.gov.tr/en/content/view/707/>