

# A Closer Look at the Doctoral Writing Practices in an English-Medium Instruction University in Turkey



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**Abstract** As the international language of science, English has been utilized as the primary language in academic writing, including dissertations and scholarly articles across the world (e.g., Philipson R, *World Engl* 27(2):250–267, 2008; Tardy C, *J Engl Acad Purp* 3(3):247–269, 2004). The increasing dominance of English within academic communities results in establishing the universities having English as the medium of instruction. Thus, graduate students in these universities faced requirements of producing their academic essays, theses, and articles in English. However, developing such English writing skills has become a significant challenge for these students, especially in non-English speaking countries, such as Turkey. Nevertheless, the academic writing learning experiences of the nonnative graduate students and their relationships with their supervisors still seem *terra incognita* in English-medium universities in EFL context, including Turkey (e.g., Flowerdew J, *J Second Lang Writ* 8(3):243–263, 1999; Uysal HH, *Emerg Writ Res Middle East-North Afr Reg* 41, 2017). In this regard, this study aimed to explore the writing practices of doctoral students and supervision procedures of supervisors. For this purpose, online semi-structured interviews are conducted with eight different participants including four doctoral students, four supervisors. Using the Constant Comparison Method, the findings of this study have revealed the nature of the supervisors' writing support practices and students' learning processes, their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with feedback provided and received, and the reasons behind these procedures during the English academic writing process. The analytic findings of this study will contribute to the academic writing in English-medium education research field.

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## 1 Introduction

A growing number of studies have recently pointed out the increasing dominance of English as a medium in the dissemination of academic and scientific knowledge in the world (e.g., Curry & Lillis, 2004; Flowerdew, 1999, 2000; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Therefore, English has recently been described not only as a lingua franca of international communication in many areas, such as business and trade but also as a “lingua academica” (Phillipson, 2008) of international academic communication. As the widely accepted language of academia across the world, English has become a prestigious language preferred over native languages in the scientific and academic domain in many non-English speaking countries, including Turkey (e.g., Bradford, 2013; Braine, 2005; Curry & Lillis, 2004; Kırkgöz, 2005a, b, 2018; Uysal, 2014; Uzuner, 2008). Therefore, to prepare the future generations to take part and compete in the global academic and scientific communities, English has also been utilized as the medium of instruction in many universities through government-initiated language policies in Turkey.

In these English-medium instruction (EMI) universities, especially at the graduate level, students are required to produce complex classroom projects, theses and dissertations, and scholarly articles in English as part of their education. Even though their supervisors suppose that students start their doctoral education as proficient writers in English (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000), most students learn how to write academically during the dissertation writing process (Dong, 1998). While writing academic papers or dissertations, they also learn about their particular disciplinary research traditions and characteristics of the global academic community (Brause, 2012). Therefore, this scholarly writing process is often a complex and painful task for most doctoral students, and they need support from different resources, such as supervisors, formal courses, well-written advice books, peers, or academic writing centers.

Especially supervisors play an important role in enabling doctoral students to become competent authors and independent researchers. For this purpose, they support their doctoral students in line with the approach that identified academic writing as both social and individual practice (Kamler & Thomson, 2006). However, it is not known whether graduate students, particularly doctoral students have any problems in scholarly writing in English and whether the current writing education or support practices in the EMI universities are adequate to prepare students to write and publish, and accordingly be able to effectively communicate their ideas and become visible in the international academic communities. In addition, we still know a little about supervisor support practices and opinions of doctoral students and supervisors about the feedback provided or received. Considering these issues, this study aimed to explore the doctoral writing experiences of the students and supervisors with particular focus on supervisor support practices, their satisfaction,

and dissatisfaction with feedback provided and received, and the reasons behind the feedback providing/revising procedures in an EMI university in Turkey. In order to do that, online semi-structured interviews were conducted with four doctoral students and four supervisors. In the interviews, questions were asked to the participants regarding attitudes towards doctoral writing procedures in English and individual/peer review and learning/teaching practices and relations between students and their supervisors. Video recordings of these interviews were transcribed and analyzed using the Constant Comparison Method. This chapter reports findings based on themes and categories that emerged from both supervisors' and doctoral students' opinions about supervisor support practices, their satisfaction, and dissatisfaction with the feedback provided and received during the scholarly writing process. The analytic findings of this study are expected to contribute to the fields of academic writing and EMI research.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *English-Medium Instruction*

In recent years, globalization and policies of internationalization have led universities across the world to adopt EMI in the planning of academic communications in local and global contexts (e.g., Bradford, 2013). In this regard, English has also become the medium of instruction to teach academic subjects in countries where people are not native speakers of English (Macaro et al., 2017), which has received increasing attention in various social contexts (e.g., Costa et al., 2012; Lasagabaster, 2015). For example, Wächter and Maiworm (2014) revealed that 2637 higher education institutions around the world provided 8089 programs taught entirely in English. Such universities often enjoy various advantages of EMI policies, such as having an appeal for international students or offering better English instruction for international communication (Muthanna & Miao, 2015). On the other hand, it is indicated that EMI can be threatening for native languages and also lead to the creation of an elite class (e.g., Kırkgöz, 2005a, b). From both perspectives, recent research has investigated EMI policies of these universities with a particular focus on teacher and student beliefs about EMI (e.g., Earls, 2016) and professional development of EMI teachers (e.g., Guarda & Helm, 2016).

As for the Turkish context, especially with the impact of the Bologna process (Arık & Arık, 2014), EMI policy has been followed by 208 public universities with 8328 undergraduate programs (<http://www.studyinturkey.gov.tr>). In this regard, EMI universities and their programs have been closely examined through various research foci, including enhancing sources for EMI programs (e.g., Kırkgöz, 2009a, b, 2016; West et al., 2015), learners' language skill development, and content learning capabilities in these programs (e.g., Karakaş, 2016, 2017), instructor's views of EMI (Karakaş, 2014; Kılıçkaya, 2006) or efficiency of teachers' delivery of courses in English (e.g., Ekoç, 2018). In addition, a few researchers (e.g., Duran & Sert, 2019; Şahan, 2020) have closely examined the pedagogical practices of higher

education classrooms and revealed interactional dynamics of co-constructed conversations between the teacher and students in EMI universities in Turkey.

In brief, researchers have explored educational practices in general, and participants' perceptions of EMI at mostly undergraduate levels. However, students' and supervisors' experiences during the doctoral education process, particularly with regard to academic writing in EMI universities, have not been examined in Turkey. In this regard, the present study attempts to explore students' and supervisors' viewpoints and stated practices with a particular focus on the English academic writing process during doctoral education.

## ***2.2 Doctoral Writing Process at Graduate Level***

Scholarly writing refers to academic writing, including dissertations and journal articles of doctoral students (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000). The quality of these publications plays a significant role in evaluating individual academic performance and increasing opportunities for promotion and various kinds of professional dialogue, such as receiving competitive research funding (Kamler, 2008). For this reason, doctoral students need to become familiar with the academic discourse structures or patterns in English and the expectations of the disciplinary and academic communities to be able to successfully write and organize their academic texts and to meet the needs of the global academic community.

Doctoral students face difficulty, especially in finding appropriate content to write about, organizing the comprehensive content around a proper structure (Bitchener & Baştürkmen, 2006), and discuss research findings analytically and logically (Dong, 1998) during the scholarly writing process. Even though their supervisors think that they enter graduate programs with proficient writing skills, doctoral students often lack academic writing skills as universities do not have enough facilities and educational opportunities for scientific academic writing, especially in advanced genres (Uysal, 2014, 2017). Academic writing is not an easy skill, but it requires a long time and wide-ranging training to produce effective academic texts and publications. In this regard, a variety of guiding strategies, such as analyzing sample texts as a writer, has been suggested to solve doctoral students' academic writing problems (Kamler & Thomson, 2006). Through these practices, doctoral writers can be familiar with the writing conventions of the academic community, and they also can improve a suitable voice in their scholarly publications (Cotterall, 2011). In addition, feedback provided by their supervisors has a positive impact on fostering writing skills of doctoral candidates, increasing their motivation, facilitate self-confidence, decrease isolation, and build well-developed networks (e.g., Ferguson, 2009). This interaction is provided through written and/or verbal feedback in forms of written comments and/or face-to-face interactions (e.g., Race, 2005). Such feedback encounters can create 'new habits of mind' (Spigelman, 1999) that enables doctoral students to produce and improve scholarly publications (Aitchison et al., 2012).

Academic writing skills enable students to complete their doctoral degrees and produce scholarly publications (Odena & Burgess, 2017) in their fields to be accepted for good positions in the global job market. Qualified publications also enhance not only students' professional careers but also their universities' reputations (Can & Walker, 2011). In this sense, doctoral students mostly try to experience practices of textual writing and improve their academic texts through a variety of writing help strategies such as using advice books (e.g., Kamler & Thomson, 2008), participating in a writing support group (e.g., Aitchison, 2003), or visiting writing centers. To illustrate, it is known that such strategies allow the doctoral candidates to reach useful tips and tricks through advice books (Oliver, 2004), or to build and improve membership in a new writers' community in writing groups (Aitchison, 2003). However, there are not any in-depth studies based on doctoral students' and their supervisors' preferences or practices during their academic writing processes.

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the doctoral writing process with a particular focus on writing help, including self-help, peer review, and supervisor support to promote academic publications, re/making of academic identities as well as improving research work (e.g., Aitchison & Lee, 2006; Kamler, 2008). These studies have been mostly conducted with either supervisors or doctoral students using diverse methodologies such as semi-structured in-depth interviews (e.g., Odena & Burgess, 2017) or article/dissertation compilations (e.g., Dong, 1998). Some of these studies have emphasized that supervisor feedback plays a significant role in improving the quality of this process, thereby identifying effective and ineffective writing practices (e.g., Cotterall, 2011, 2013). During this process, supervisors inform their students about what they should do, review and edit their texts, and talk about their papers collaboratively (González-Ocampo & Castelló, 2018). However, supervisors often do not prefer to provide feedback about basic linguistic errors to their students by stating that they are not English language instructors (e.g., Aitchison et al., 2012). However, while providing support, advisors need to be involved more in the article/dissertation writing process through more individual-oriented supportive feedback both on content and writing (e.g., Dong, 1998; Odena & Burgess, 2017).

The universities having English as the medium of instruction also reported the lack of scholarly writing skills of their students as a problem within different academic communities (e.g., Aitchison & Lee, 2006). The students in these EMI universities have difficulties in understanding and creating written texts, and some researchers (e.g., Perez & Ramiro, 2015) suggested that a new methodology should be adopted to identify these students' problems about their writing skills, and develop their writing competence in English within their own discipline. In the Turkish context, little attention has been paid to explore a common conceptualization of EMI universities with a particular emphasis upon the academic writing practices (e.g., Uysal, 2014, 2017). In this regard, the current study sets out to explore the nature of supervisors' support practices from both sides (supervisors and doctoral students), participants' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the feedback provided and received, and the reasons behind these practices during the doctoral writing process. For these purposes, the following research questions are

determined to elicit responses from both supervisor and doctoral student participants comparatively:

1. How do the supervisors back up their doctoral students during the English academic writing process?/How are the doctoral students supported by their supervisors?
2. To what extent are supervisors and doctoral students satisfied or dissatisfied with the communication with their students/supervisors and the supervision practices during this process? What are the reasons behind their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the current supervision practices during the academic writing process?

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 *Participants and Research Context*

The database of this study consists of semi-structured online interviews employed to grasp stakeholders' personal experiences with regards to their doctoral writing learning and teaching processes and to provide some useful explanations for these processes through qualitative data (Krathwohl, 1997). As a multiple case study, the investigators conducted eight 45–50-min Zoom meetings with eight different participants from two different groups individually during June 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers selected all the participants considering the diversification of their research fields and their experiences about academic writing in the particular EMI university. In other words, these participants are studying and working in different departments, and they are actively taking part in scholarly writing teaching and learning procedures through both articles and dissertations. These multiple cases enable the researchers to reach rich and detailed descriptions of the doctoral writing process and to establish transferability of the findings by providing meaningful comparisons of supervisors' and doctoral students' responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Wu, 2020).

The first group of the participants included four doctoral supervisors working at an EMI state university in Ankara, Turkey. They came from four different disciplines, including business administration, educational sciences, engineering, and sociology. All these doctoral supervisors completed at least one phase of their graduate educations abroad for various purposes, such as doctoral research or Ph.D. education, which is a prerequisite for working at this EMI university. All of the doctoral supervisors have published more than 15 international academic papers written in English, and they mostly preferred to write them individually. Table 1 shows other additional information about these doctoral supervisors.

The second group of participants was four doctoral students. In the Turkish doctoral education system, students firstly receive graduate courses in 2 years as part of their doctoral program. Later, they are expected to pass a comprehensive exam, assessing their achievement in their doctoral courses, and start writing their dissertations. They defend their dissertation after they collect and analyze the data and

**Table 1** Additional information about the doctoral supervisors

	AYL	ESR	GUL	MAH
Age	48	49	54	39
Affiliation	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Assoc. Prof.	Prof. Dr.	Assoc. Prof. Dr.
Discipline	Sociology	Administration	Education	Engineering
Numbers of supervising graduate thesis	18	52 (in different countries)	26	16
Year of academic teaching experience	18	14	25	8
Abroad experiences	PhD	Working as lecturer Doctoral research	Doctoral research	PhD

**Table 2** Additional information about the doctoral students

	ECE	DER	CER	AYT
Age	29	29	29	34
Affiliation	Research assistant	No work	Research assistant	Research assistant
Doctoral position	Dissertation writing	Dissertation writing	Recently graduated	Recently graduated
Year of PhD education	5 (in process)	5 (in process)	6 (completed)	6 (completed)
Abroad experiences	Erasmus (BA)	Dual diploma program (Ph.D.)	Erasmus (BA)	PhD-research

complete their dissertation approximately within 2 years. In this sense, while two of the doctoral students had completed their Ph.D., the other two were at the dissertation writing stage at the same EMI university in Ankara, Turkey. These doctoral students were also from different disciplines, including psychology, educational sciences, engineering, and industrial design. In addition, these students stated that they had learnt English in real terms right after they became university students at this EMI university. They have also been abroad for educational purposes, including Erasmus programs during their undergraduate education, Dual Diploma Programs, and Ph.D. research. Moreover, all of the doctoral students have published different English academic texts with their supervisors as joint papers, unlike supervisor participants. Table 2 also illustrates some demographic information about the second group participants.

For the ethical considerations, all the participants were informed about the purpose and scope of this study, and they gave their informed written consent. Official permission was also granted from the ethics committee of the focal EMI university. All names used in the present study are pseudonyms. Following this, semi-structured interviews were carried out with each participant online. The interviews with both the supervisors and the doctoral students were based on a two-part interview schedule. In the first part, the participants were asked about their learning experiences in English academic writing. In the second part, they were asked about supervisor



support practices about English academic writing during their academic writing process to compare answers of both groups for confirmatory purposes.

### **3.2 Research Method: Constant Comparison Method**

The current study carried out qualitative research methodology, and the research findings reported in the following section were dependent upon the main principles of qualitative analysis. A qualitative methodology was chosen because it is suitable to look for participants' reactions and viewpoints about their experiences on a specific phenomenon (e.g., Caffarella & Barnett, 2000). Hence, the Constant Comparison Method (CCM) is adopted to explore the social learning and teaching procedures behind the doctoral writing processes. Due to the exploratory nature of the study CCM was chosen because it aims at capturing and analyzing emerging themes by comparing with other participants' previous statements and regrouping with similar themes rather than attempting to validate a predetermined phenomenon (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In other words, CCM provides a data-led approach for analysis through emerging themes and patterns (Boeije, 2002). Therefore, conceptual categories of the particular phenomenon are verified on the base of similarities and differences (Wang & Li, 2011). In this study, each response of the participants was constantly compared within their participant groups. It means that doctoral students' and supervisors' statements were analyzed separately. Then the themes and the related categories emerged from the data were identified regarding these expressions, and finally, the codes were determined according to the participants' references to these categories. Thus, such a qualitative analysis of the multiple cases aimed to reveal a more detailed description of the doctoral writing process experienced by the participants in the Turkish EMI context.

In order to identify all English academic writing-related practices and expressions, the researchers watched and listened to the video recordings of the semi-structured interviews repeatedly and transcribed every online session through basic conventions, including pauses, overlaps, or nonverbal utterances (Richards, 2003). Following this, during the iterative analytical process, the investigators identified the emerged categories and codings from the transcripts of video files within the scope of CCM (Glaser, 1965). Then, these periodic and analytic categories pointed out the participants' opinions based on English academic writing and doctoral supervision. In brief, this study mainly investigated the participants' viewpoints about the doctoral supervising and writing practices and compared the doctoral students' viewpoints with the supervisors' ones. In this regard, the current study emphasized on the particular themes, including supervisor support practices, supervisors' and students' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with feedback provided and received, and the reasons behind these procedures, and suggestions about future supervising practices.



## 4 Findings and Analysis

In this section, we will share the findings based on both focal supervisors' and students' responses to the questions that are related to supervisors' writing support practices, and participants' learning processes, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the feedback, and the reasons behind these procedures. In the following subsections, emerging themes and their categories will be represented for two groups of the participants separately. Also, it is essential to remember that these students and supervisors have not worked together regarding English academic writing.

### 4.1 Supervisor Support Practices

In line with the focus of this study, the doctoral students were asked about varying support mechanisms provided to them by their supervisors. Table 3 below shows six different categories that emerged from the doctoral students' responses to the question 'How do/did your supervisors support you during article or dissertation writing process?'

Three of the students responded to this question by referring to detailed supervisor feedback received regarding English academic writing except for DER. Thus, this is the most frequently referred category with regards to supervisor support practices. They stated that their supervisors provided comprehensive feedback on time. The following excerpt is representative of this category:

**Excerpt 1** CER: *My supervisor backed me up a lot (.) If I explain it in detail, she provided feedback on time (.) in ea:ch step without postponing.*

Two of the doctoral students (ECE and AYT) also expressed that their supervisors advised a reference book to assist them in learning the principles of English academic writing while two of them (ECE and CER) mentioned that their supervisors provided explanations and instructions about writing a dissertation part by part. Furthermore, as seen in the following excerpt (Excerpt 2), ECE stated that her

**Table 3** Sub-categories of supervisor support practices stated by the doctoral students

Main theme: Ways of supervisor support practices stated by the doctoral students					
	ECE	DER	CER	AYT	TOTAL
Providing detailed feedback	+		+	+	3
Suggesting a reference book	+			+	2
Explaining how to write a dissertation part by part	+		+		2
Suggesting/sending previously published articles of some prestigious journals/authors	+		+		2
Organizing thesis meetings regularly		+			1
Directing students to check papers through Turnitin		+		+	2

supervisor directed her to read previously published articles from the prestigious international journals in her field.

**Excerpt 2** *ECE: For example, when we were writing our first article, we shared chapters (.) well, she said: In order to write the methodology, you should look at the journals, e::r the methodology part of the published articles in these journals. Well, neither more nor less! Accordingly, take some notes for yourself, outline, and write.*

In addition, one doctoral student (DER) referred to ‘organizing meetings regularly,’ because her supervisor preferred to give his supervising support through face-to-face conferences. Moreover, in the Turkish doctoral education system, students need to take a report from Turnitin that is an Internet-based plagiarism detection program. This report demonstrates similarities with the existing resources in the literature. Thus, paraphrasing and expressing your viewpoints with your own words play a significant role in decreasing the similarity ratio. In this sense, two of the doctoral students (DER and AYT) mentioned that their supervisors directed them to check their papers using Turnitin because it is both obligatory before submitting dissertations. The following quote is an indicator for this category:

**Excerpt 3** *DER: I forgot its name, we need to take a citation report, (.) e::r it's about where you cited (-) Turnitin huh Turnitin it's obligatory well. We need to look at Turnitin.*

In sum, six different categories were explored in terms of doctoral students’ viewpoints about the support mechanisms offered by their supervisors. While ‘Providing detailed feedback’ is the most frequently referred category in terms of their responses, ‘Organizing meetings regularly’ is the least mentioned category under the current theme.

The interviewer asked the focal supervisors about the ways they support their doctoral students during the English academic writing process. Table 4 below illustrates eight categories that emerged from the supervisors from four different disciplines (two of them from Social Sciences, two of them from Physical Sciences). As seen in the codes of these categories, all the supervisor participants were aligned with only one category, and they mostly verbalized different supervisory practices demonstrated by one or two codes.

In line with the doctoral students’ emerged categories, all the supervisors stated that they gave detailed feedback chapter by chapter, and one of the supervisors (AYL) also added that she read through and revised all the parts of the dissertation at the final phase. The following quote demonstrates both categories expressed by one supervisor. In addition, Excerpt 4 shows that the supervisor shared the responsibility of writing articles/dissertations with her students, thereby using ‘we’ and its varying versions.

**Excerpt 4** *AYL: Generally (-) I read an article or dissertation chapter by chapter, give feedback, go back and reread it. And then I read all the text from the beginning. So, I don't lose my commands on a text. I regard it as ‘we, our research, ou- our writing process, and then our effort.’ So, I check the writing like this from the beginning.*

**Table 4** Sub-categories of supervisor support practices stated by the supervisors

Main theme: Ways of supervisor support practices stated by the supervisors					
	AYL	ESR	GUL	MAH	TOTAL
Providing detailed feedback chapter by chapter	+	+	+	+	4
Revising all the chapters at the end of the process	+				1
Giving a lecture about critical reading and writing		+		+	2
Suggesting/sending previously published articles of some prestigious journals/authors		+	+		2
Directing students to check papers on Turnitin			+	+	2
Directing students to other people for proof-check		+		+	2
Directing students to the academic writing center			+		1
Suggesting them to establish a structural framework				+	1

Two of the second group participants (ESR and MAH) also mentioned that they gave a lecture to their students based on English academic reading and writing principles, and they shared important points with their students. Supervisors' statements also justified that they mostly sent previously published articles from prestigious journals/ authors to their doctoral students as sample texts. They also referred to using Turnitin for checking students' English academic papers. Furthermore, two supervisors (ESR and MAH) stated that they directed their doctoral students to receive help from other people, such as peers or writing center tutors. They highlighted that fundamental issues based on English academic writing need to be corrected before they read the papers as supervisors. This type of supervisor support is captured in one of the supervisor's voice below:

***Excerpt 5** MAH: well, some of my doctoral students are writing very well now, and so my expectations are above a certain level. At least while I am guiding my students (-), I tell them: 'You should read your papers to each other, then you should send it to me after it is above a certain level. Well, I don't want to correct very basic English mistakes or incoherency problems on your dissertations or articles (.) I decided that this is a process in which students need to solve by themselves. e:r when I spend time on them, my nerves are shot.*

Finally, two supervisors (GUL and MAH) maintained that they directed their students to receive help from the academic writing center to establish a structural writing framework. In sum, eight different categories have emerged from the focal supervisors' responses, and it is indicated that providing detailed feedback is the most frequently referred category.

In brief, the responses of the participants who were working/studying at a state EMI university revealed that providing detailed feedback is the most significant component of the academic writing process. Furthermore, two groups of the participants produced similar responses on the categories, which were 'suggesting/sending previously published articles from the prestigious journals/ authors' and 'directing students to check papers on Turnitin.' Therefore, these supervisory support types were common practices regarding the English academic writing process in the Turkish EMI setting.

## 4.2 *Reasons for Satisfaction with Doctoral Writing Interaction*

As a follow-up question, both the doctoral students and supervisors were asked about their satisfaction level regarding supervisory support practices about English academic writing and its reasons. Table 5 shows the main theme, and two different categories for the participants' satisfaction level emerged from their responses. Three participants considered that they were satisfied with their communication with their supervisors, and only DER did not utter her satisfaction.

As seen in the table above, two different participants linked their satisfaction to detailed and constructive feedback provided by their supervisors during the English academic writing procedure. Excerpt 1 is the representative instance of this category in the preceding subsection. In addition, one of the participants (ECE) mentioned that she and her supervisor had similar writing or language styles and she learnt a lot about writing from her supervisor (see Excerpt 6).

**Excerpt 6** *ECE: well, I think that one of the biggest chances in my life is my supervisor. e::r we have never had any problem so far. .hh, and on the contrary, we think we are very similar to each other at some points. e:r I learnt many things about writing from her, well our language style is very similar while writing something.*

Table 6 below also illuminates the identified main theme, and the two different categories and two codes emerged from the focal supervisors' responses about their satisfaction and its reasons. In terms of their statements, three of the participants were satisfied with the communication with their doctoral students; one of them (GUL) did not share her opinion about her level of satisfaction and its reason.

Two of the participants (AYL and ESR) stated that their doctoral students mostly had enough ability/knowledge of English academic writing. To illustrate, Excerpt 7 below demonstrates that students are more comfortable about sharing their opinions because they are practicing English writing during their education process. She also produced a general statement (our students, they) while sharing her opinions, since she referred to all the students studying at the EMI university.

**Table 5** Reasons for doctoral students' satisfaction about the communication with their supervisors

Main theme: The reasons for satisfaction about the communication with their supervisors					
	ECE	DER	CER	AYT	TOTAL
Having similar styles/language usage with the supervisor while writing an academic paper	+				1
Providing detailed and constructive feedback			+	+	2

**Table 6** Reasons for doctoral supervisors' satisfaction about the communication with their doctoral students

Main theme: The reasons for satisfaction about the communication with their doctoral students					
	AYL	ESR	GUL	MAH	TOTAL
Having the ability/knowledge of English academic writing	+	+			2
Dramatically improving student writing styles between different drafts/articles				+	1

**Excerpt 7** *AYL: well (-), for example (.) for our students, they express themselves more comfortably because of their English writing practices at the university. Of course, their academic language is English.*

In addition, MAH established a link between his satisfaction and students’ development with writing practices. As indicated in Excerpt 8, MAH stated that his students improved their academic writing between drafts during the writing process due to his feedback.

**Excerpt 8** *MAH: e::r well it seems good, but I saw that my feedback provided to the badly written article was useful when I compared it to the published version of the same article or with the same student’s second article. Well, I realized that students actually benefit from such feedback to improve themselves even if they don’t have any face-to-face writing education.*

In sum, when we viewed the participants’ statements and varying emerged categories, it is shown that six of the eight participants were satisfied with the communication during English academic writing procedure because of various individual reasons.

### 4.3 Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Doctoral Writing Interaction

In addition to the satisfaction question, all the participants were asked about any challenges faced during this process and any dissatisfaction they experienced, and they explained their arguments with their reasons. Table 7 illustrates that two participants of the first group participant were discontent about some points, while the other two students (ECE and AYT) never had negative criticism about English academic writing procedure.

DER stated that her supervisor was not involved much in her doctoral writing process, and he did not read all the chapters on time. From this statement, one category ‘Having difficulties in reading chapters of the dissertations on time’ was emerged as a reason for dissatisfaction. Excerpt 9 is representative of this category below since DER shared negative criticisms about checking the chapters on time right after she shared positive comments on organized meetings for English doctoral writing. DER also shared her positive opinions, mentioning supervisors’ busy program as a response to the interviewer’s follow-up question.

**Table 7** Reasons for doctoral students’ dissatisfaction about the communication with their supervisors

Main theme: The reasons for dissatisfaction about the communication with their supervisors					
	ECE	DER	CER	AYT	TOTAL
Having difficulties in reading chapters of the dissertations on time		+			1
Having expectations for writing many articles		+			1
No organizing meetings, spontaneous works			+		1

**Excerpt 9** DER: *e::r now as I said before ....we had lots of meetings, wrote reports very often, and he had control over every step. However, he didn't read all the chapters of my dissertation. he:h I had a problem like this. One year later, we wrote an article from my dissertation together. When he looked at my dissertation again, he realized some problems and said, 'why did we write here like this?', I wish we could fix it'. And when we did this, I had already defended my dissertation; actually, I am dissatisfied with this part. It seems to me that supervisors were not adequately involved in this process.*

INT: *in your opinion, what can be the reasons for this? [not being involved in this process*

DER: *[well, I guess they don't have enough time because they have many students that are writing dissertation simultaneously. Sometimes it is necessary to understand them, it is boring for people to read 200-pages dissertations constantly.*

The same student also stated that supervisors have more expectations about writing many articles during this process, which may create pressure on doctoral students.

**Excerpt 10** DER: *e::r well each supervisor encourages you to write more articles hu:h they want us to write a lot of articles honestly.*

Furthermore, another participant (CER) expressed that her supervisor was not working in an organized way while explaining the reason for her dissatisfaction.

The interviewer also elicited the supervisors' opinions about their dissatisfaction with students' writing and emerged four different categories based on the reasons for their dissatisfaction. As seen in Table 8, three of the supervisors were dissatisfied because of different reasons, but MAH did not express any negative statements about the doctoral writing process.

Two of the supervisors (AYL and GUL) expressed that they realized that the doctoral students did not know how to write a review of the literature during the procedure. In the following excerpt, this category can be seen in AYL's statement. She also added that it could result from other factors such as not teaching how to do it in any of the courses at the graduate level.

**Excerpt 11** AYL: *well generally, of course, it changes from person to person but I realized that students cannot review the literature, well they simply can't. One of the reasons that they cannot write a review because they mostly review the literature*

**Table 8** Reasons for supervisors' dissatisfaction about the communication with their doctoral students

Main theme: The reasons for dissatisfaction about the communication with their doctoral students					
	AYL	ESR	GUL	MAH	TOTAL
Insufficient effort for reviewing the literature appropriately	+		+		2
Not having an immediate benefit from the degree		+	+		2
Not having a writing habit		+	+		2
Writing like speaking in a daily language			+		1

*from Turkish resources rather than English ones. Specifically, I don't have any problems with it. Well, because I think it is not their own choice. Also, if we don't explain how to review literature in a research method course or a graduate seminar in any programs, e::r how can they do it? You know what I mean. When these students come to me, you think like this: 'But do I have to teach you how to review literature?' Well, this is a critical dilemma.*

Some supervisors also mentioned that doctoral students sometimes are unwilling to write a dissertation or do research, especially when they do not have an immediate benefit from the degree. The following excerpt is indicative of this category:

**Excerpt 12** *GUL: well, especially students have a lack of motivation at the graduate level. I mean, if students are working at a place except for the university e:r they often underestimate this process.*

Two supervisors also maintained that doctoral students do not write regularly as a reason for their dissatisfaction. Finally, one of the supervisors emphasized that they are writing as if they were speaking in the daily language.

**Excerpt 13** *GUL: I don't know well it is not like writing but rather like speaking in the daily language. Let alone, there is neither tense nor grammar. So, I suffer while reading them.*

In sum, the supervisors provided four different reasons for their dissatisfaction with communication with the doctoral students during the English academic writing process. When we closely examine both doctoral students' and supervisors' statements, it is clear that they had similar responses for dissatisfaction, such as working spontaneously and in an unplanned manner rather than a regular and organized working style. It is also seen that other responses varied regarding students' and supervisors' individual viewpoints.

#### 4.4 Suggestions to Doctoral Supervisors

During these semi-structured interviews, only the doctoral students were asked about their suggestions to supervisors if they had an opportunity for changing negative points during this procedure. Table 9 demonstrates four categories that emerged from their expectations.

**Table 9** Doctoral students' suggestions to supervisors

Main theme: Suggestions to supervisors					
	ECE	DER	CER	AYT	TOTAL
Demands for writing more articles with supervisors	+				1
Reading the sections of dissertations on time		+			1
Providing more detailed feedback to doctoral students		+			1



One of the students (ECE) expressed her need for writing more articles with her supervisor as a suggestion for gaining better writing skills. However, this category was stated as a reason for the dissatisfaction by another doctoral student (see Table 7, DER). Another participant stated that supervisors should spend more time while giving feedback. The following excerpt is an example of this category.

**Excerpt 14** DER: *well, I think supervisors need to spend more time for providing feedback to students by reading parts. Well, we can do something surely. Well, I honestly see these parts incomplete for both my friends and me.*

#### 4.5 Final Additions About English Doctoral Writing

At the end of these interviews, the interviewer asked all the participants about whether they have any final comments about the English academic writing process. Tables 10 and 11 shows the emerged categories based on both doctoral students' and supervisors' statements, respectively.

One of the doctoral students (ECE) emphasized that academic writing centers contribute to English doctoral writing procedures, thereby stating the necessity of reaching foreign instructors in this process (see Excerpt 15 below). Also, two students mentioned the need for an official research writing course (see Excerpt 16 below):

**Excerpt 15** ECE: *e:r I think academic writing centers can be very beneficial by the way. I think if academic writing centers are founded, some foreigner instructors should be appointed, because learning a language from a native speaker is very different. I wish there were such opportunities.*

**Table 10** Doctoral students' final additions about English doctoral writing

Main theme: Final additions about English doctoral writing					
	ECE	DER	CER	AYT	TOTAL
Establishing effective practices in the Academic Writing Center	+				1
Providing a research writing course	+	+			2
The necessity for increasing motivation			+		1
The necessity for reading more articles				+	1
The necessity for increasing contact with supervisors				+	1

**Table 11** Supervisors' final additions about English doctoral writing

Main theme: Final additions about English doctoral writing					
	AYL	ESR	GUL	MAH	TOTAL
Developing content of BA Academic Writing Courses		+			1
Providing Research Writing Course	+		+		2

**Excerpt 16** *DER: no: I don't know, maybe an official education can be provided at the university. Well it can be a course that is related to academic writing. Well think it needs to be a must course nods her head.*

Three categories also emerged from the doctoral students' statements, and they expressed that students should increase their motivation about writing English academic papers, read more articles as writing models, and ask every question in their minds to their supervisors. Thus, they mostly shared suggestions for the doctoral education system and other doctoral students with these final points.

The same question was asked to the supervisors, and three doctoral supervisors answered this question, whereas one of them preferred not to add something as a final comment (see Table 11). One of the supervisors (ESR) expressed that there are some academic writing courses at the undergraduate level of the focal EMI university, and their contents need to be enriched to teach students how to do some tasks such as using references or citations (see Excerpt 17).

**Excerpt 17** *ESR: well, in my opinion, it should be developed at the undergraduate level, and I really wonder about this: What is taught at academic writing courses in our university? I really wonder about it, because it seems like how to give reference is not taught in those courses, is it? Well, a student does not know giving a reference or making a citation.*

Similar to the doctoral students, two of the supervisors (AYL and GUL) also put a particular focus on the necessity of an academic writing course. Excerpt 18 is indicative for this category:

**Excerpt 18** *GUL: well, writing English academic paper, e:r making publications, writing a report are very, very important. It is not only for writing a thesis or article. e::r we have a research method course, statistics course. Maybe a third course needs to be added; well it should be a required course about academic writing.*

In sum, all the categories and instances of the participants' statements demonstrated that English doctoral writing should be taught before doctoral students start writing their dissertations or articles within undergraduate or graduate programs. Some of the participants have taken an academic writing course during some phases of their education. Still, all of them emphasized the provision of a more advanced course for all the doctoral students in the graduate programs. These courses with well-informed pedagogies are needed for improving academic writing at the graduate programs in EMI universities. Overall, all the preceding findings indicated that doctoral supervisors provided various types of supporting opportunities for their students at this focal EMI university in Turkey. In general, both supervisors and students were satisfied, but there were also some challenges and dissatisfactions with these practices. The participants provided some advice and final additions to develop the English academic writing process.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

Considering the research questions, the present study explored supervisors' writing support practices and participants' learning processes, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with feedback provided and received, and the reasons behind these procedures, suggestions, and final additions to the English academic writing process. In this regard, all the responses were elicited from both the focal supervisors and the doctoral students considering English scholarly writing, which refers to the production of doctoral dissertations and article publications (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000) in the EMI university in Turkey.

It was found that the doctoral students in this study enjoy various ways of writing help practices like using advice books or visiting academic writing centers to improve their writing competence during the scholarly writing process. However, the role of supervisor support practices plays a significant role in the writing development of doctoral students (e.g., Odena & Burgess, 2017). In line with the analytic findings of the previous studies, both doctoral students and supervisors reported that giving detailed feedback helps doctoral students to develop their arguments while writing their dissertations or journal publications (Can & Walker, 2011). While giving such comprehensive feedback to the students' written texts, the supervisors preferred to use the pronoun 'we' and its varying versions that display their collaborative effort (see Excerpt 4). This aligns with Kamler's (2008) findings and Bolker's (1998) suggestions that doctoral supervisors need to use a positive tone of voice rather than critical and directive ones while sharing their comments with their students. Therefore, doctoral supervisors need to use such statements in a positive tone to share the responsibility with their students and to raise doctoral students' motivation and writing performance in the doctoral writing process.

Another important finding expressed by both groups of the participants was that the doctoral supervisors directed their students to read the previously published articles or dissertations as samples, to check their papers against plagiarism using Turnitin, to receive from academic writing centers. Therefore, unlike Kamler's (2008) results, this study indicated that the supervisors helped their students to prepare their submissions through adequate support, and directed them to received support from other people (peers) regarding very basic English mistakes or incoherency problems on their dissertations or articles (see Excerpt 5). Similarly, the finding of this study is consistent with Aitchison et al.'s (2012) findings. In their study, the supervisors also mentioned that providing feedback about basic English skills was not their job, and they did not want to check such language-related issues within the supervising procedure. In brief, supervisors indicate that students should learn the basic rules of the English language before starting to work with their supervisors. It is also accepted that they have English requirements before this process, especially in EMI universities. Thus, acceptance rules for EMI graduate programs should be elevated or reformative solutions should be offered to the students in terms to make up for the lack of their English language knowledge.

The findings also highlighted that the students linked their satisfaction to their supervisors' detailed and constructive feedback (e.g., Cotterall, 2011) as well as

having similar writing styles with their supervisors. On the other hand, one of the supervisors explained her satisfaction, thereby referring to the students' English writing practices because these students receive their education in English as a language of instruction in the EMI university (see Excerpt 7). Therefore, in contrast to Caffarella and Barnett's (2000) findings, these doctoral students were proficient authors because they had experiences in English writing at the focal EMI university. This result indicates that EMI universities provide plenty of English writing opportunities to their students. In this sense, all the higher education programs should allow their students to practice English writing more for increasing the quality and quantity of academic writing. Additionally, the findings revealed that one of the supervisors was satisfied with his students' writing development between drafts. Similar to Aitchison et al. (2012)'s results, his feedback stimulated their improvements during the English academic writing procedure based on writing, giving feedback, and rewriting. Thus, further research should be conducted to investigate the impact of feedback provision within this developmental process through longitudinal studies.

Regarding the reasons for their dissatisfaction with this process, one of the doctoral students criticized her supervisor about inappropriate and late feedback due to their busy schedules, and she also emphasized the necessity for detailed feedback on time during this process as a suggestion to the doctoral supervisors (Dong, 1998). Moreover, the same doctoral student was discontent about her supervisor's increasing expectations about producing many journal publications. In contrast to this reason for her dissatisfaction, another student (ECE) (see Table 9) demanded raising numbers of the joint publications with her supervisors, since doctoral students want to have both high-quality and great quantities of their publications (Aitchison, 2009). Therefore, these results indicated that such dis/satisfaction issues and the reasons behind them could change from person to person. In addition, the supervisor participants complained about their students' irregular writing practices, insufficient efforts for reviewing the literature, unwillingness about writing dissertations because of their jobs, and writing like speaking in a daily language (e.g., Alter & Adkins, 2006; Can & Walker, 2011). Thus, other researchers need to carry out more diverse studies to explore individual differences and dissatisfaction reasons based on the doctoral writing process.

In the current study, both the doctoral students and supervisors added final comments considering the English academic writing process. Providing a research writing course at doctoral level was the most frequently referred category regarding final suggestions of both groups. As earlier studies have already revealed (e.g., Brause, 2012; Cotterall, 2013), a research writing course is often not compulsory for doctoral education, and students have to develop their writing through individual efforts. However, such required doctoral courses could enable the students to improve their understandings and practices in their disciplines. Furthermore, one of the supervisors criticized the inadequate content of the Advanced Writing and Research Skills course, which is an undergraduate course in some programs in the EMI university. Uysal (2014) also highlighted that students had limited opportunities to practice different writing genres and receive feedback from their instructors or peers in the academic writing courses because of varying issues, such as

insufficient lesson hours. Therefore, classroom hours of these courses should be increased, and systematic and diversified writing practices should be integrated into both undergraduate and graduate level academic writing courses at EMI universities.

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide implications for academic writing in the EMI research field. However, the current study was conducted with merely eight different participants working/studying at one focal EMI university in Turkey. Thus, the results of the present study cannot be generalized to the scholarly writing process within other doctoral programs in EMI universities. Further studies, particularly longitudinal ones, need to be carried out to reach more comprehensive findings by observing graduate student-supervisor interactions within the doctoral writing process at different cultural and disciplinary contexts in EMI universities, especially in Turkey. Therefore, understanding such an academic writing process can improve the quality and quantity of doctoral students' dissertations and journal publications as well as the relationship between supervisors and students.

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