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Secondary & Collegiate English Composition Education in Turkey: a Case Study of History and  
Present State

by

Haris Ul Haq

Under the Direction of George Pullman, PhD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2022

## ABSTRACT

Turkey is a nation situated between Europe and Asia with a population of over 80 million. It is literally and metaphorically an embodiment of its reputation as the intersection of East and West, be it geographically, socially, politically, or culturally. Its modern history was significantly influenced by its role as the succeeding state to a collapsed empire and adapting to the ever-changing world it found itself engaged with. This dissertation analyzes the state of English composition education in Turkey at the secondary and tertiary levels, responding to a gap in the literature in examining contexts outside of the United States. English is a significant area of national educational policy in Turkey. There is a dynamic research community within the more prominent field of English Language Teaching (ELT), but this is not the case with rhetoric & composition, which is mainly absent in Turkey.

This study focuses on English composition and writing in Turkey in both a descriptive and comparative way. The secondary school period is given particular attention, considering its significant influence on future writing development. Through the implementation of a qualitative case study methodology, this project analyzed university and secondary school curriculums, syllabi, program goals, course objectives, government policy documents and studies, existing literature, news articles, and government and school websites to provide a survey of composition education with regard to outcomes, goals, and limitations. Framed in an interdisciplinary context, this study builds on history, pedagogy, EFL, Linguistics, English studies, and rhetoric & composition literature.

It was found that there are various frameworks in place at the secondary and university levels in Turkey to accommodate for English composition education. While the accessibility and quality of this education are varied, writing competencies do hold a place in the generally

centralized educational curriculums. Still, a variety of challenges exist with regard to composition education in Turkey, including rigid curricular models, a lack of research and study on writing, and ineffective teacher selection frameworks, and for which a variety of solutions are proposed.

INDEX WORDS: International composition, Rhetoric, Turkey, ELT, Applied linguistics, TESOL, Writing studies, Policy

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2022

Secondary & Collegiate English Composition Education in Turkey: a Case Study of History and  
Present State

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May 2022

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The topic of this thesis is personally deeply meaningful, as it is not only an analysis of an environment in its own way very familiar to my heritage, but it also coincides with my academic passions in international composition education and English education in Turkey, as well as my aim to pursue my career with an international focus after the completion of my Ph.D. This research project engages with multiple disciplines (rhetoric & composition, linguistics, academic administration, policy), and in that sense, is not only scholarly important, but it also will allow me versatility in my career after graduation, be it related to teacher training, EFL, composition studies, or policy. Even more so, as I hope to work between secondary and tertiary education, this project is a step in my goal to become a scholar-practitioner and make a wider impact on my future students and research. Finally, this thesis is my way of contributing to the field from my unique viewpoint, as someone who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in policy-related areas. My inclination to discuss policy-related elements stems from that background, alongside my doctoral training in composition education, program administration, and history. Thus, as much as this thesis intends to engage with composition studies and its wider scholarship in informing about a unique context, I hope also that it will be of use to educational policymakers in Turkey seeking to understand how writing education is viewed in their country and how its challenges can be overcome.

### **1.1 Direction of This Thesis & Influences**

My thesis will aim to understand English composition education in Turkey with regard to its history, international influences, aims in the broader context, and current state. To do so, I will consider composition's place within the overall education framework, particularly the secondary education framework in the nation. In this goal, the varying challenges that pertain to

composition education will also be discussed, particularly with regard to secondary school preparedness and English teacher training. To date, while there has been a great deal of study relating to English education in Turkey at the K-12 and university levels in general, there has not been a thesis-level study to do with just composition education. Most of the work is in subsections of larger papers, and most are related to EFL writing; additionally, they focus on either secondary education or tertiary level education (Altinmakas and Bayyurt, Ata and Erturk. Celik, Kirmizi and Kirmizi, Tanyer and Susoy, Toprak and Yucel, Uysal). The topic of the international manifestations of composition studies has been equally understudied; in fact, “U.S. composition studies have paid little attention to insights that might emerge from cross-national comparisons of writing development and pedagogy, given that general college composition courses largely do not exist outside the United States” (Russell and Foster 3).

For this reason, I firmly believe that there is a tremendous need for such a study. This study will contribute to the literature in questions considered increasingly crucial by composition scholarship, including those on global composition education and its influences and non-native countries’ composition education frameworks (in this case, Turkey). Additionally, this research aims to engage with the field of secondary-level education, considering how scholarship may often disconnect it from the broader narrative despite its direct relationship with tertiary-level composition studies. In that regard, this study will blend in elements from EFL/ELT, educational policy, English studies, and rhetoric & composition, and use scholarly work from all these sources to provide a comprehensive look at the topic.

Ultimately, it is my hope to engage with scholars across the research areas of international composition studies, secondary school education (and its relationship to the university level), and academic writing in Turkey. The work by Mary N. Muchiri, Nshindi G. Mulamba, Greg Myers,

and Deoscorous B. Ndoloi, titled “Importing Composition: Teaching and Researching Academic Writing Beyond North America,” one of the few studies of its kind that encourages composition researchers to look outside the U.S. context particularly inspires the direction of this thesis. As they mention, “composition remains largely restricted to the United States and Canada,” and therefore looking outside of that, with regard to elements such as context, diversity, history, and function, seems extremely important (Muchiri, et al. 195). The work of scholars such as Steve Graham and Gert Rijlaarsdam, who have called for a “a new international study of writing, one that takes more descriptive rather than a comparative approach” (although in this study both are of importance to me), Otto Kruse in his studies of writing systems and methodologies across different countries, and Paul Matsuda in his phenomenal work on L2 writing, are also inspirations for the direction of this thesis (Graham and Rijlaarsdam 781). Additionally, initiatives such as “Looking Both Ways” (LBW) (also the name of its respective publication), of the City University of New York (CUNY) that have worked on bridging the gap between high school and university writing education through teacher training, and studies related to the topic, such as “The high school writing center: Establishing and maintaining one,” published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) also served in this direction.

In summary, this project aims to present a comprehensive overview of the state of composition education in Turkey, particularly with focus towards its lived state and associated challenges. In particular, it centers on the secondary school element, in understanding its importance within the more focused lens of composition, namely, the university. This project realizes the significance of globalization in writing education, and in that sense, views the topic at a larger level from the lens of connectedness, that is, in the import and export of methodologies, frameworks, and even challenges associated with composition. The field of



rhetoric & composition largely continues to move in the direction of pushing for increased understandings of contexts beyond our own, and this project is meant to be a humble contribution to that wider vision.

## **1.2 What is Composition?**

Composition, due to its variation across contexts, cannot be defined or summarized. Rather, it is an amalgamation of many forms of practice and ideologies that ultimately inform the discipline. For that reason, it is important to discuss how composition is defined in the context of this dissertation. According to *A guide to composition pedagogies*, written by practitioners and scholars of the field seeking to define it, “Composition pedagogy is a body of knowledge consisting of theories of and research on teaching, learning, literacy, writing, and rhetoric, and the related practices that emerge. It is the deliberate integration of theory, research, personal philosophy, and rhetorical praxis into composition instruction at all levels from the daily lesson plan to the writing program and the communities it serves.” (Tate, et al. 3). Indeed, as the authors write, “Composition pedagogy is an umbrella term like theory, rhetoric, or literacy; it contains much that is worthy of extensive scholarly and practitioner attention, and the more deeply we engage it, the more complex and diverse it becomes-which is why composition pedagogy morphs into composition pedagogies just as literacy becomes literacies” (Tate, et al. 3). In the field’s diversity then lies its importance for writing instruction. It engages not just writing but critical thinking, analysis, and engagement. More so than that, it not only morphs into the different disciplines, but is a centerpiece in all of them.

Composition education is even broader than what has been just described. In its study, constraining it to a singular context is a fruitless exercise. As it varies between institutions, it also varies in many more ways, between geographies, non-native versus native environments,

students, and instructors. More so than that, it is not something that is constrained to any particular level of education (despite the fact that it is generally practiced with the aim of preparing students for further tertiary studies), because as is obvious, the phase of university education is just a part amongst many within an individual's educational journey. In that sense, students' primary and especially secondary educational experiences play a big role in composition educational practice. As is the case, composition education came out of the idea that the students coming into universities just couldn't perform at the expected level. Composition then, was a direct response to the perceived inadequacy of earlier (and particularly secondary level) education (as was spoken about by Brereton, Crowley, Grego and Thompson, and Ritter and Matsuda).

### **1.3 Composition in the United States**

Composition is a crucial piece of academic education in the typical university within the United States. It is the foundation of academic writing, no matter what discipline the respective students intend to go into, and a crucial piece of the general education requirements for nearly every public and private tertiary institution in the country (ACTA, Duffy Para 10, Moghtader, et al.). Its importance then, is not to be understated. The aims of composition reach into every field of study, namely, to prepare students for a world in which writing is considered of utmost importance regardless of a student's choice of career. From the early days of formal composition studies in the university, this is something that has been recognized. For example, in the 1962 study by William Templeton (Downs considers 1963 as the year of the birth of composition studies), where a survey of academic departments across disciplines was done to determine their hopes for student competencies coming out of "Freshman English," it was found that the development of a variety of competencies was expected (Downs 55; Templeman 35). Examples

of these can be demonstrated in “air science,” which desires its students to “use correct grammar in both speaking and writing” and to “be able to separate ideas and express them”. Similarly, film studies, as Templeton indicated, worked from the aim to give students the “ability to write, to organize meaningful thoughts which are not repetitively redundant. Ability to convey emotions. Ability to spell. Ability to understand dramatic form, to dramatically structure a situation. Ability to write a proper topic sentence followed by development in a paragraph” (Templeman 35, 36). The sentiment that introductory college writing is a crucial piece of further academic competence in the disciplines has continued until this day, as FYC, or “first-year composition” has extended to every American university. The first-year writing course is one that has proved to present numerous benefits, such as fostering student engagement and retention, advancing rhetorical skills, aiding in metacognitive development, and increasing students’ senses of responsibility (NCTE 1,2,3). That is not to say that the first-year writing course taught throughout the nation has been without its share of controversy and criticism. Indeed, there has even been a debate about the course’s utility, with scholars such Lil Brannon, Robert Connors, Sharon Crowley, and Charles Schuster who have argued against the requirement for first-year students to study composition (Roemer, et al. 377). However, what can be seen in the composition studies field in the past years, as well as what is apparent in university initiatives, is that the debate no more centers around the use or effectiveness of the course, but rather, on how the course can be used to advance long-term student success in light of the ever-changing contexts it exists within.

Composition educators hold tremendous responsibility when considering the expectations that academic departments hold for them. Sharon Crowley, in *Composition in the university: Historical and polemical essays*, one of the most authoritative (and debated) texts on

composition studies, writes of this desire of academic departments for their students to possess strong writing skills. As Crowley mentions, academics across departments see the Freshman English course as a way to remedy the “lack of literate mastery once and for all” (Crowley 8). And, in an environment where students are thought to lack the skills needed in the first place to write correctly and effectively, composition instruction is regarded as ever important. In response to the expectations placed on the field, significant action has taken place in composition studies and its associated methodologies. Whether it be through university-level structured education, college preparatory curriculum development in secondary (and earlier) schools, increased interest academically across all levels, or whatever else, composition education is something that is viewed as urgent and essential.

#### **1.4 Models of Composition Education**

Today, composition education is generally viewed as a university-level subject meant to prepare students to develop the competencies of effective writing for the duration of their careers. There are many forms of composition education and various terminologies or acronyms associated with, like FYC, EAP (English for Academic Purposes), or “Freshman English”. This of course brings up the question: why are there so many different approaches to composition? These approaches are certainly not simply mirrors of each other. In contrast, they represent many different curriculums representing a diverse set of methodologies. That makes composition education something that can hardly be studied broadly, as every institution (even within the same region) may have drastically varying standards. However, the commonality among them lies in the fact that all are offered at the introductory university level and are taken during the first year (or two) of academic study, before entering the discipline-specific coursework.

There is another differentiation, however, in composition methodologies. Within the American context, they can manifest themselves as WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum), Writing in the Disciplines (WID), Writing-Intensive or Writing-Emphasis Courses, Writing in the Professions, and Writing in Content Areas (Bazerman, et al. 9-11). All of these are somehow integrated with FYC, in the sense that FYC is the bridge into these, but they have their own unique frameworks and philosophical underpinnings and stretch beyond the initial years of university education. For example, WID aims to “provide discipline-specific support for writing instruction and learning through writing” whilst WAC “refers specifically to the pedagogical and curricular attention to writing occurring in university subject matter classes other than those offered by composition or writing programs” (Bazerman, et al. 9-10). More often than not, these two are grouped together as WAC/WID. From a researcher’s perspective, FYC has a role in the “abilities and knowledge students take with them” in these new contexts (Wolfe, et al. 42).

### **1.5 Composition Studies: The Secondary School Element**

The line between university and secondary education is an invisible one, and indeed, as Robert Tremmel writes, “the writing curriculum should not be severed between grade 12 and grade 13. The majority of first-year composition students still have one foot firmly planted in high school” (Tremmel 24). Many students in the United States, who benefit from the resources of advanced education in the high school environment, can even skip introductory level English education that is otherwise required. Secondary school then, is not a separate entity, but a foundation for further composition success. Accordingly, “writing is recognized as a vital skill in postsecondary education and the workplace, students must graduate from their K-12 schooling as competent writers” but “the majority of students are not prepared” (Street and Stang 38).

The importance of a strong K-12 (and specifically secondary level) foundation is a significant point of study in composition pedagogy. In the past, composition coursework at the introductory university level was considered a direct response to the inadequacies of earlier education, and hence, concerned remedial (Brereton 18, 157-158, Crowley 147, 254). But still, that by no means negates the fact that even with introductory composition coursework existent in nearly all American institutions, secondary school education continues to play a tremendous role in furthering university success in writing. That is why an examination of this formative period is crucial in this study.

## **1.6 Composition Studies and the World**

American composition scholars tend to think about their field in universal terms, although it takes place within an American context. With the spread of the influence of the nation within the last century, its methodologies, educational practices, and pedagogical practices have manifested themselves in a global context. Recognizing the global character of composition studies is crucial to fully understanding the discipline, and indeed, this stretches to the roots of composition education. Thus, viewing the field within a historical context is important for the study of it in any given region (in the case of this thesis, Turkey). An example of this can be seen in Canada, where American influences pertaining to composition studies have permeated in various practice areas and certain institutions, despite the fact that the nation's academic culture has been resistant to the idea of first year composition (Brooks). More so, across the ocean, the "philosophies of and technologies for the teaching of writing..." have been imported from the US and are present in writing within the European educational system (Kruse 38). But this of course, is not something unique to the US, and indeed, there has been a lively import and export tradition associated with writing. For instance, American composition education has its roots in

the German educational system, and British writing methodologies are also present in universities across the world (Harbord writes about this in a central/eastern European context, while Kruse speaks of the export of the UK essay writing tradition in countries where English is taught as a foreign or academic language). It is clear that writing education has been internationalized, and when studying a given region, these influences must also be taken into account. As far as English-specific composition education is concerned, the influence of British colonization cannot be understated. The element of colonization, which pertains to the English language in general, presented itself through the form of “language imperialism” in the modern world and was the result of five centuries of transformation in the colonies Britain governed (Sekhar 111). English, as we see it today, became dominant on the world stage “with the roots of British colonialism and also the dominance of America in the modern world” (Sekhar 111). In the wider context of English composition studies, that colonial influence rings even louder, specifically in English language learning. In this case, it is manifested as instructional imperialism, where English education possesses a significant western bias, as was elaborated on by Modiano (2001) and Naysmith (1986).

## **1.7 Turkey**

This thesis studies Turkey, a nation between Europe and Asia, where literally and metaphorically, be it culturally or socially, “East meets West”. Turkey, situated in the ever-volatile region where it is, is a nation with a deep-rooted history between conquests, empires, religions, and major cultural and demographic changes. As someone raised between East and West myself (being the child of Pakistani immigrants to the US), Turkey has for long fascinated me. To elaborate, its political system was built upon secular traditions inspired by Western thought, and the nation, in its current form, was built in many ways to be on par with Western

science, thought, philosophy, and tradition. Yet, as a majority Muslim nation, and with deep ties to its past, it remains firmly entrenched in the East in the same ways as well, for example, with the Ezan, or call to prayer, being chanted from its minarets all across the country five times a day, or with its numerous villages where the way of life has hardly changed from a hundred years ago, or in how traditional values still are held with utmost importance by its citizenry in their celebration of religious holidays or the conducting of marriages. At times, the divides associated with the nation have become heated politically and socially, and for any observer, show an example of a unique paradox.

### **1.8 English Education in Turkey**

Turkey presents a fascinating study within English education broadly, as it is an area where the national educational policy has emphasized. A considerable amount of work has been done on this topic, specifically by the ELT (English Language Teaching) scholarship in the nation (i.e., Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe, Koksall and Ulum, various works by Kirkgoz, Saricoban and Saricoban).

It is imperative to see how things evolved to where they are today in the context of composition education, whose topic this dissertation will be centered on. To only give a brief background, it is essential, for the sake of context, to look firstly at the influence of Western languages in the general pre-republic period. During the late part of the Ottoman Empire, the attitude of foreign language education was shaped considerably by the political situation, especially as military alliances with Western states grew. In that sense, languages such as German and French became fashionable in the educational system, particularly for those fortunate to receive such an education in the first place. This of course, would have made for a small proportion of the population of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the



Muslim literacy rates was only about 15% (there was variation amongst religious groups), and in 1910, a mere 5.3% of the population was in school (Quataert 167; U.S. Government Printing Office 570). Whilst the influence of English was not hugely significant during this time, it did show up increasingly throughout the final years of the empire (abolished in 1922) and coincided with increased American presence on a global stage as a precursor to America's greater influence.

With the creation of the Modern Turkish Republic in 1923, a new state apparatus gave birth to a new educational system. What is significant to note here is that modern Turkey, in contrast to countries around it, was more or less free from the effects of colonization. In the study, "English Education Policy in Turkey" Yasemin Kirkgoz writes that "since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkey has responded to the global influences of English in its education system through a planned education policy" (Kirkgoz 237). Whilst this is by no means to say that English Education policy in Turkey has been free from outside influence, it does show a very interesting case study as far as how differentiated it is from other countries that Kirkogoz mentions, such as India, Pakistan, and China (Kirkgoz 237). Kirkgoz explains that aspects such as the rise of English's role in globalization, the desire for economic growth and other benefits that English is perceived to bring, and instrumental values such as the prestige it holds in personal advancement (such as being competitive for higher job opportunities), have all influenced the Turkish English education policy (Kirkgoz). More so, the national priority for scientific and technological development has been significant, as Yasemin Kirkgoz writes:

That English is clearly the dominant language of science and technology worldwide also had an impact on promotion policies in Turkish academia. Not only are Turkish

academics called on to have access to information and work with the ever increasing body of information in their subject area, but they are also required to report their research findings in internationally recognized journals for academic promotion listed in Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) or other related indexes specified by the YOK, which in turn means that academic staff needs to be proficient in English. In addition to publications mainly in English, Turkish academics need to attain a specified level of English proficiency in a centrally administered test English Language Proficiency Examination for Academic Personnel (Üniversitelerarası Kurul Yabancı Dil Sınavı, UDS) to be promoted in the academic field. (Kirkgoz 673)

Whilst it should be realized Kirkgoz in this paper was writing about the increased focus of English Language Teaching in general (and in this particular case, at the academic level within universities), it should be noted that this directly concerns composition. Why? Because academic writing is central to the focus of increasing scientific output, and thus, is taught across various universities in Turkey, either as a stand-alone course, or within wider English language courses. Already here, we can see a Turkish-specific distinction in composition education from native English ones, particularly in that it takes place within a policy context of increasing English language literacy generally (not just in writing).

During the post-1980's period, the government undertook changes through a series of acts pertaining to its educational policy at the secondary school as well as university level, establishing elite English medium schools, and providing benchmarks for universities to provide English instruction (Kirkgoz 238). At the entire educational policy level, this followed with significant curriculum changes, efforts in English teacher training, and even changes to the entire high school system. Since then, English has played a significant role in K-12 education policy

within the country, which is consequential in the wider context of university-level English education and composition education specifically.

Composition education in Turkey takes place within the wider conversation of English language competency and literacy, just as it would in any other non-native environment. Primarily, this relates to how composition must be taught in a L2 (second language) and EFL context. That is one of the clear distinctions it has from traditional composition education like that in the US, where writing is the bread and butter of such a course. For example, in many universities, for students wishing to study in English medium programs (or in universities that are fully instructed in English), a “Preparatory Year” is often a requirement, given that naturally, basic academic English competencies are crucial. In this endeavor, writing is theoretically a major part of the curriculum. These Preparatory Year programs are often offered through a Department/School of Foreign Languages, which “have mostly been inspired by writing and reading integrity and this has been put into effect in the language curriculum” (Ata and Ertürk 73).

For this study, secondary education will be analyzed due to its relevance for composition education at the university level, although it should be noted that the English educational curriculum from the primary school level takes place as early as Grade 4. In past years, this level of education has also faced significant changes as far as English Language Teaching (ELT, which will be discussed more in this thesis, concerns the training of most English teachers in the country) is concerned. Turkey operates on a system where public schooling is differentiated. Traditionally, the more elite schools (which require high scores on a high school entrance exam after completing grade 8) have been the providers of English education, making them increasingly attractive to parents and prospective students. In the past, these schools were called

“Anatolian” high schools and “Super English Language High Schools” and used even to include a preparatory year, which was an intensive year of English education (Kirkgoz 238). Now however, educational policy has led to the making English education something that is offered to all secondary school students, regardless of high school (of which there are huge disparities) (Kirkgoz 244). The secondary school English coursework offered at the secondary school level, in theory, is meant to prepare students for university education, and hence, is important to study in the wider spectrum.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW & METHODS**

Composition studies is a widely encompassing field that evolved out of traditional English studies and eventually morphed into its own discipline. It is by nature interdisciplinary and cannot be constrained to any one department. This literature provides context for a detailed study on composition within another environment. In the following section, a foundational basis is put forward, informed by scholarly literature in composition, ESL, educational theory, applied linguistics, history, and other fields. This literature review is divided into three major areas: 1) (Re)Situating Composition Studies in a Global Context, 2) the Relationship Between Secondary & Tertiary Level Writing Education, and 3) Contrastive Rhetoric & L2 Writing Education.

### **2.1 (Re)Situating Composition Studies in a Global Context**

The rhetorical scholar Robert Connors writes about the American roots of composition education given that the Freshman English class was first mandated at Harvard University in 1874 (Connors 66). This innovation was a direct response to its entering students being seen as deeply inadequate on its first written entrance exams (Connors 66). By 1885, a freshman course was offered at the basic level, and by 1880, this had become a mandatory feature of a Harvard education (Connors 66). With Harvard occupying the place of an educational model for institutions in general, this eventually became a standard across American universities.

From this period onwards, the evolution of composition education is an area of deep scholarly exploration studied extensively by scholars such as Albert Kitzhaber, Robert Connors, Sharon Crowley, James Berlin, and John Brereton. While that is a lengthy discussion, it should be noted that composition education had evolved into a widespread, formal, and scholarly area of study in and of itself within the next century. In analyzing the study “Where Did Composition Studies Come From? An Intellectual History,” by the scholars Martin Nystrand, Stuart Greene,

and Jeffrey Wiemelt, what can be learnt is that the post-1970 period became a defining moment for modern composition studies in the US. This was due to the emergence of “coherent research programs” that unified empirical methods and theoretical conceptions, a community of writing research, doctoral programs in rhetoric and composition at various universities including Carnegie Mellon, Purdue, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, refereed journals relating to writing education, and even a Special Interest Group (SIG) dedicated to writing research (Nystrand, et al. 3). Additionally, post this period, significant approaches to writing emerged that were refined by some of the great American composition scholars, such as the process approach, which emphasized writing planning, and the Writing-in-the-Disciplines (WID) tradition that based writing education as a “means of integration into and specialization in their fields of study” (Kruse 39).

American composition scholars tend to think about writing instruction and the history of composition in a US-centric way. But writing instruction happens in many different parts of the world, and American scholars can learn a great deal about writing studies from how it is taught elsewhere. Often, composition scholars are so engaged in the national discourse that the focus on the international component is limited. And even when discussing global contexts, this internal bias remains. Indeed, in the U.S., “the attention to internationalization and its relatives, globalization and cross-cultural comparison, has tended so far to focus on the increasingly global nature of U.S. classrooms and U.S. students or students attending U.S. universities” (Donahue 213). And, as Donahue speaks about, with regard to international writing research, which is present, still, “...most U.S. teachers and scholars have not considered in contexts outside of U.S. borders: what the teaching of academic writing might look like elsewhere, its forms, its teachers” (Donahue 221). This relates to identity, a significant area of study in composition studies today

(one of the seminal pedagogical texts in the field, *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*, dedicates significant space to this discussion). In this text, Tony Scott writes of precisely this issue of identity, something that seems perhaps apparent, but ironically, is often overlooked. That is, because by nature, “writing is always ideological because discourses and instances of language use do not exist independently from cultures and their ideologies” (Scott 48). While making associations of cross-cultural movement, it is easy to forget the fact that very naturally, composition-related research and engagement is a response to its surroundings.

Additionally, most scholars in the field write solely for their surroundings: their institutions, students, or regions. Positively, however, it has been observed that “work in rhetoric and composition, a field once thought to have relatively little influence outside its own sphere, is increasingly cited in the work of non-US writing researchers and integrated in internationalization projects” (Heilker and Vandenberg xiii). In other words, there has been an emergence of international scholars taking U.S.-centric work and contextualizing it.

Historically, the United States was not the only place making advances in writing education. According to Kruse, “At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, three essentially different modes of using writing for teaching and of teaching writing emerged in France, England, and Germany” (Kruse 40). According to Kruse, the French tradition is similar to essay writing, and “these essays are characterized, among other things, by easily recognizable external structures, by a “strong reliance on paraphrase without citing,” and by a statement of “the problem” and “the plan” at the beginning and a thesis statement at the end (Kruse 40, 41). The UK tradition is based on “writing with oral communication among students or between student(s) and tutor” and introducing students to scholarly work, and the German tradition is “connected with seminar

teaching” and “...always included student writing and made students submit papers in regular intervals” (Kruse 41). Kruse continues:

The models for student writing these three countries provided have been transferred to several other European countries. The German kind of seminar writing has spread with Humboldt’s university model to most Northern and Eastern European countries while the French model has influenced several of the Romance countries. The export of essay writing in the UK tradition is of more recent origin and seems to follow the teaching of English foreign or academic language. (Kruse 42)

Writing center education has also made headways internationally, which stems from the American influence on this matter. The writing center, which became, especially after 1970, part and parcel of American academia, was something that had started in its development even at the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Elizabeth Boquet writes about in *"Our Little Secret": A History of Writing Centers* and Peter Carino in *Early Writing Centers: Toward a History*. Today “the US tradition of “writing centers”—student support units emphasizing individual support for student writing—have long been associated with composition courses or WAC/WiD. These efforts have also become a feature globally” (Clark and Russell 377).

The global writing instruction landscape is exceptionally diverse (Khadka 32). Indeed, around the world, “some countries and schools teach writing in mother tongues while others teach in English” and “some emphasize writing in all courses, some others in the English subject, and some countries like the U.S. have separate composition courses” (Khadka 32). Simply because other countries don’t teach composition in the American way does not make it the case that they don’t have a tradition of writing education. Rather, “Countries have, indeed, traditions of mother tongue university student writing courses, or popular large courses in student support



centers, or writing centers, WiD programs, technical and business writing. The absence of an “industry” of first-year composition, Muchiri et al. point out, is not the absence of the study and teaching of higher education writing (Donahue 331). Indeed, writing studies, in general, has evolved into its own community, one that is “an increasingly global construct of academics comprising of methodological diversity and linguistic orientations...” (Heilker and Vandenberg xiii).

Santosh Khadka, in his essay on the “Rhetoric of World Englishes,” and Helen Fox in her text *Listening to the World: Cultural Issues in Academic Writing*, present arguments for the democratization within composition pedagogy. The arguments in their essence center around the fact that even in the US, students from different backgrounds should not be judged on rigid and inflexible criteria. Instead, composition education should embrace the differences in English worldwide, students’ cultural experiences, and so forth. As can be seen, there are limitations and debates on the methodology of instruction, mainly whether uniformity in practice is a positive or negative notion.

Composition education has also adapted to the non-native academic interest in English worldwide. As “general college composition courses largely do not exist outside the United States,” composition is usually part of other courses that also incorporate more relevant aspects for non-native speakers (Russell and Foster 3). A prime example is EAP, which refers to “the teaching of English with the specific aim of helping learners, conduct research or teach in that language” (Flowerdew and Peacock 8). It is a British innovation where “marvelous progress” has been made “by tailoring and designing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) on modern lines” (Sajid and Siddiqui 174). This methodology has had tremendous success in both native and non-native countries across the world and includes a huge emphasis on skills such as research and

scientific writing. Academic writing generally is a “research-led sub-discipline in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)” (Schmeid 1). In many countries, including non-native ones, EAP is increasingly being taught (Flowerdew and Peacock 9). In Europe, “approaches to writing from the English as a Foreign Language disciplines, may they be called EAP, ESP (English for Specific Purposes), ESL/ EFL (English as a Second/ Foreign Language) or TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)” have become increasingly significant, with their own adaptations and methodologies (Kruse 39). It is evident that fields outside of academic writing, like TESOL, have fused with academic writing instruction.

## **2.2 Relationship Between Secondary & Tertiary Level Writing Education**

Writing instruction at the university level is part of a continuum, of which a significant part is the secondary school phase. In the text *Writing and Learning in Cross-National Perspective: Transitions from Secondary to Higher Education*, Russel and Foster write about this in a very detailed manner using case studies worldwide. As they write, “In most national education systems, students' writing development plays an important though often unacknowledged role in the crucial transition from secondary school to university” (Russell and Foster 1). The writing curriculum that is now FYC at the university has its origins in being designed as a remedy for what was considered lacking from this formative period of study, as was discussed in Chapter 1. Thus, effective writing education transcends the lines of secondary and university institutions.

The relationship between the high school and college writing classroom, student, instructor, and task is discussed by various practitioners in the compilation of essays in *Teaching Writing in High School and College: Conversations and Collaborations*. The work is invaluable because it addresses a common misconception in university academic writing studies generally, that there is a significant line between high school and college writing, be it in standards,

instruction, or importance. In an essay written by four teaching professionals within the text (two at the university, and two at the high school level), “What We Talk about When We Talk about College Writing,” these similarities between the secondary and university level are discussed. According to the educators, there is not much difference between the secondary school senior and the college freshman. Indeed, there are only two and a half months between these phases, and as much as their designation has changed, they are (obviously) very much the same people (Thompson et al. 74).

With regard to what differentiates the instructor of first-year composition from teachers of 12<sup>th</sup> grade English, the educators allude to the fact that that line is blurry, perhaps merely being a gap in perception and communication (Thompson et al. 74). Ultimately, the educators argue that literacy is “socially constructed” and there should be ways to bridge curricula, given the students’ role as individuals before anything else (Thompson et al. 74). Additionally, it can be said that often, high school and college teachers share the same concerns about their student’s achievement in writing and composition, are committed to their student’s academic success, are affected by their institutional policies (such as assessments and so forth), and try to find ways to navigate through these in the best interests of their students (Wolfe 3). For both professionals, there exists a “loneliness in teaching,” that is, there is little opportunity available for educators of both levels to come together and share their knowledge and experience or collaborate on or discuss common issues in the broader context of educational policy (Wolfe 3).

However, the secondary school and university-level composition instruction dynamic does possess some notable differences. Gail Kleiner, a high school instructor, writes about some of these differences in *Looking Both Ways*. For one, there is an issue of autonomy; high school teachers (of English/writing) are “told what to teach,” with the curriculum being crafted around

state Regents exams (Kleiner 15). Teachers' classroom knowledge and instincts, which are undoubtedly invaluable, are ignored (Kleiner 15). Kleiner found the opposite in college instructors, who even spoke about having too much autonomy to the extent of them feeling as though they were working in isolation rather than as part of a more extensive, coherent, and structured program with broader goals for student literacy (Kleiner 15). In conversations that high school teachers had with their university colleagues, the teachers observed that college classrooms allowed for more autonomy for the individual student (concerning speaking, engaging with class time, or even pursuing their writing assignments) (Kleiner 16). Finally, differences in the structure of the school day and usage of classroom time were found to be significant, with high school teachers having shorter class periods. Additionally, in the high school classroom, each lesson was treated as a completely new one with a beginning, middle, and end, compared to the college one where there was a sort of "continuity" existent between individual classes (Kleiner 18).

Viewing composition at the university broadly, specifically in consideration of consequential secondary school period, is important. The secondary education period is one that should be enriching itself, not merely one that prepares students for the sometimes-inflexible constraints of university composition education. It is imperative to understand that the role of a high school writing education must extend beyond just trying to teach another version of a university composition course. In the book chapter "Crossing Levels: The Dynamics of K-16 Teachers' Collaboration," an elaboration is made of the cross-collaboration between university instructors and K-12 teachers that, ultimately, they are all instructors with differing and unique skill sets, at an equal level, with the same ultimate purpose. The goal for all the practitioners is in increasing writing competencies not for any particular level, but for student success generally.

For that reason, as the essay points out, all levels of instructors (elementary, middle, secondary, and university) have a lot to learn and benefit from each other in terms of working with students (Thompson, et al. 205).

It was observed that there were some issues that made this high school to college bridge less effective in one study where a qualitative analysis was done on high school students and their success in a first-year composition course. For example, “heavier workloads, longer papers, and different structure when it came to writing papers in college versus writing papers in high school,” high school teachers teaching writing solely for the purpose of standardized testing to their students, and “anxiety over expectations at the college level versus the high school level,” as well as “self-efficacy” (Hoppe 29, 30, 31). At the same time, students who had positive experiences or more thorough writing instruction at the high school level felt much more confident going into introductory university courses.

### **2.3 Contrastive Rhetoric & L2 Writing Education**

It should be no surprise that the academic needs for L2 (second language) are different from L1 (first language) learners. Thus, it is crucial to understand the non-native side of composition education. Even within universities in the United States (such as the Arizona State University, North Dakota State University, Purdue University, and the University of Georgia), dedicated introductory composition-related courses are offered for EFL students. The issues experienced can best be described in a study by Linda Steiman, where she mentions “Learning to write in English for academic purposes presents a significant challenge for non-native speakers. Not only must they deal with the obvious linguistic and technical issues such as syntax, vocabulary, and format, but they must also become familiar with Western notions of academic rhetoric” (Steinman 80). The L2 learner should be viewed in a particular context for various

reasons, not least amongst them, that they think and approach the task of writing differently. For example, “Non-native speakers rely heavily on strategies from their L1 writing” (qtd. in Steinman 81). This point is central in the study of contrastive rhetoric, which is essentially a field that “examines differences and similarities in ESL and EFL writing across languages and cultures as well as across such different contexts as education and commerce” (Connor 493). Steinman brings this point to practice, when she mentions “Western notions of academic writing are not neutral, not objective, and not universal. A variety of rhetorical issues such as audience, organization, and voice have significant cultural implications and variations” (Steinman 80). For this reason, “organizing text in the Western style may be difficult for non-native speakers” (Steinman 81). As will be seen in Chapter 4, this has implications in the Turkish context, where students don’t always realize the conventions of academic writing in a western context.

No discussion about contrastive rhetoric would be complete without reference to Robert Kaplan, one of its foremost scholars and theorists. Kaplan defines contrastive rhetoric as a “hypothesis claiming that the logic expressed through the organization of written text is culture-specific; that is, it posits that speakers of two different languages will organize the same reality in different ways” (Kaplan 21). Accordingly, writing has deep cultural notions embedded within it, and in that sense, an exercise of writing even based on the same topic will end up having significant differences relative to the native language of the author. Indeed, “contrastive rhetoric posits that speakers of two different languages will organize the same reality in different ways. That they should do so seems self-evident, because different languages will provide different resources for organizing text” (Kaplan 38). In that sense, Kaplan provides four questions that must be asked by a writer before any cross-linguistic exercise, those being the question of “What can be discussed?” “What is evidence?” “How can that evidence most effectively be organized?”

and “To whom may text be addressed?”. As he explains, these answers will be answered differently (and thus affect the discourse), because ultimately writing is cultural, and in the context of EFL writing, an instructor needs to be cognizant about this.

In “Contrastive Rhetoric and the Teaching of Composition,” Kaplan gives an example of an L2 writer from an Arabic (L1) background, who, given the nature of the L2 language in question, wrote in a way reflective of Arabic’s rhetorical emphasis of parallelism, in contrast with the fashion in English writing that is in preference to subordination (Kaplan 12). Thus, Kaplan once again emphasizes that rhetoric is ultimately a “culturally coded phenomena,” and that this should affect the the way instruction is to be delivered (Kaplan 15). Indeed, just because a given student “has learned to control the phonology and the syntax of a second language, it is not fair to assume that he is able to write that language” (Kaplan 16). They must also be taught the rhetorical logic, with one potential possibility of this being in the imitation of models (Kaplan 15-16). In this light, however, Kaplan stresses that there exists a much more consequential possibility of brainwashing the said students into viewing the world from a rhetorical lens that is not their own (Kaplan 16).

The text *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* is a phenomenal and detailed study of EFL writing. With a compilation of chapters going over unique aspects of the matter, it presents an important resource for scholars going into any study related to contrastive rhetoric in the classroom. According to Tony Silva in his contributing chapter, “to be effective teachers of writing, English as a second language (ESL) composition professionals need an understanding of what is involved in second language L2 writing” (Silva 11). This point is interesting because it connects the wider study of English language learning to writing, rather

than seeing them as separate competencies or one seen as outside the ESL process. In fact, in Turkey, the priority is often teaching ESL *rather* than composition.

ESL and its relationship with composition education is not in any way constrained to simply one methodology. Indeed, various methods have developed through time and can be found employed worldwide today. In the study of global composition, it is vital to understand how the L2 learner experiences writing education because ultimately, they engage with the curriculums. Silva focuses on four of the most well-known of these methodologies that have been significant in L2 writing education, including “controlled composition,” “current-traditional rhetoric,” “the process approach,” and “English for Academic Purposes’ (Silva 12). All of them have had their time and place and their share of criticism.

These four methodologies relating to ESL writing instruction deserve a closer look since they are the most prevalent, and much of what is practiced internationally falls within one of them. To elaborate on these methodologies from Silva’s work, “controlled composition” puts writing at a lower level than the attainment of other competencies (listening, speaking, and reading). From this perspective, writing is seen as a byproduct of proper competency in the other areas mentioned. In theory, if learners can develop strong skills in the other skills, those will transfer to their writing. The “current-traditional rhetoric” approach came from the view that this “controlled composition” approach was inadequate. Instead, it focused on form and especially the paragraph in writing (Silva 14). In this methodology, writing is seen as a process of arrangement, and the writing learner is instructed in writing patterns as thus (Silva 14). From criticisms and discussions on this approach, which saw previous methodologies as inadequate (for example in discouraging creative thinking and writing), came the process approach, which in a practical setting “calls for providing a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop



environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing processes” (Silva 15). This approach took out many constraints and gave students autonomy and creativity in crafting their own projects with instructor support (Silva 15). Finally, is the EAP method, which essentially is itself a criticism of the process approach, that, in actuality, writing needs to consider “variations in writing processes due to differences in individuals, writing tasks, and situations’ (Silva 16). For example, the aspects of writing in different fields and disciplines. Also, as Silva mentions, the idea that the process approach may not prepare students for academic work was a reason for this new approach being crafted (Silva 16). So, the EAP approach focuses on students being able to write within the larger academic discourse (Silva 17).

Accordingly, the L2 writing student faces difficulties that cannot be focused on in an aggregated manner, given the variations in geography, culture, region, and so forth. That is another purpose of this study when analyzing the Turkish case as is intended to do in this dissertation. Some things can be spoken about in the larger L2 composition research context, for example, the phenomenon that “writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second language” (Friedlander 109). Elements that are important to note include the tendency to think and then translate from the L1 language to the L2 one (Friedlander 110); the importance of good feedback to the L2 learner (Hyland and Hyland 3); and writing anxiety for a variety of reasons such as English self-confidence, stages of language learning, and so forth (Cheng 652).

## **2.4 Notes on Methods**

Here, I will discuss the research methods in questions that will guide this thesis. To center the conversation, I call upon the renowned text by John W. Creswell and J. David

Creswell *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, a textbook used extensively in my graduate studies on research methods. As the authors mention, “Research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation” (Creswell and Creswell 3). A research approach, as the text speaks about, is based on the philosophical assumptions of the researcher, the “procedures of inquiry” (research designs), and ultimately, research methods (Creswell and Creswell 3). Choosing a research approach is consequential because it guides the study and accommodates its limitations and constraints in the most effective way possible.

As for approaches, this study will use a qualitative approach, in this case, “data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes,” and from there, with myself “making interpretations” of subsequent meanings (Creswell and Creswell 4). As a form of inquiry, qualitative research “honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation” (Creswell and Creswell 4). All these components are present here. Trochim expounds on inductive reasoning, as the scenario where “we begin with specific observations and measures, begin to detect patterns and regularities, formulate some tentative hypotheses that we can explore, and finally end up developing some general conclusions or theories” (Trochim). This type of reasoning, by nature, “is more open-ended and exploratory” (Trochim). To date, little scholarship has been done in the intended direction of this thesis in both the American and Turkish contexts, and due to that, I see that a broad survey is essential as I try to make inductive hypotheses.

Philosophical ideas and inclinations, specifically the researcher’s, are naturally crucial in guiding the research process. Creswell and Creswell suggest that researchers explicitly mention

“the larger philosophical ideas they expose” (Creswell and Creswell 5). These philosophical ideas, in research, are termed by Creswell and Creswell as “worldviews.” While there are various philosophical worldviews, the one that guides me in this study is a “constructivist” worldview, which is based upon the belief “that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” (Creswell and Creswell 8). In summary, this view has some common features, such as open-ended questioning or observation (and doing so in a broad way is favored), a desire for subjectivity in analyses, and an emphasis on social interaction (Creswell and Creswell 5). In particular to this thesis, Creswell and Creswell’s statement directly fits my direction here, that researchers in this worldview:

...focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work to understand the participants' historical and cultural settings. Researchers recognize that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences. (Creswell and Creswell 8)

This methodology is representative of inductive reasoning. Here, I stand as the researcher with my own background (as someone raised between different cultures and identities), pursuing a study in another, very specific context (that of composition education in Turkey). I am strongly cognizant of this given feature - that of recognizing a diversity of backgrounds - and its important role in research.

Next, I focus on research design, which essentially lies within the realm of the given method (in our case, qualitative research). “Research designs are types of inquiry” that “provide specific direction for procedures in a research study” (Creswell and Creswell 11). Qualitative research has several associated designs, but of interest here would be the “case study,” which is

classed by Janice Lauer and J. William Asher as “qualitative descriptive research” (Lauer and Asher 23). The case study, then, is the process of “closely studying individuals, small groups, or whole environments” to “help the researcher to identify new variables and questions for further research” (Lauer and Asher 23). In the case of this study, these entities, especially that of the “whole environment,” will be observed based on primary documents pertaining to writing education in Turkey. Generally, the data sources of a case study are “quite extensive,” and they can include “documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts” (Yin 85). But, they can even stretch to films, photographs, street ethnography, and life history (Yin 85). In the case of this thesis, those data sources are university and secondary school curricula, syllabi, program goals and course objectives, government policy documents and studies, existing literature, news articles, government and school websites, and so forth.

Case studies exist in differing types, and one of those is the “instrumental” case study, a term coined by Robert E. Stake, which seems more or less appropriate to this study (Stake 3). An instrumental case study “is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because in all its particularity and ordinariness, the case itself is of interest” (Baxter and Jack 549). As we observe composition education in Turkey in this research project, this element is relevant. The analysis from this case study falls with Yin’s categories of such, particularly in “pattern matching” and “explanation building,” which will be done as the various cases are assessed. Here, I will look for patterns in composition within the university and secondary school system in Turkey and focus on explaining any observed phenomena. From there, the reporting of this case study lies in my responsibility, as the researcher, to “convert a complex phenomenon into a format that is readily

understood by the reader” (Baxter and Jack 555). This responsibility is compounded by the fact that the Turkish educational system is unique and thus challenging, especially for a reader familiar with the U.S. context, to draw any parallels. Some methods of reporting, then, are relevant here. These include reporting by telling the “reader a story” or addressing the respective propositions presented forth in the larger case study (Baxter and Jack 555). I intend to precisely do these, as ultimately, composition in Turkey presents its own historical narrative, and I will be putting forward various propositions to “stay within feasible limits” while dealing with such a comprehensive and broad topic (Baxter and Jack 551).

Finally, concerning case studies, I find an accurate, although somewhat abstract, vision for my project in Gesa Kirsh and Patricia A. Sullivan’s text, *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*, where they write that “the case-study researcher usually tells transformative narratives, ones in which the individual experiences some sort of conflict and undergoes a qualitative change in the resolution of that conflict” (Kirsch and Sullivan 134). In my eyes, I expand this idea of the “individual” to the entirety of the composition scenario in Turkey, in my exploration of what transformations have been relevant, where conflicts lie, and where they can be resolved. Ultimately, a case study is the “examination of an instance in action” (Macdonald and Walker 2). This is how composition should be viewed in Turkey, as something that is constantly evolving, yet viewed through a lens, tells its own story.

*Table 1 Research Methodology*

Approach	Qualitative
Philosophical Worldview	Constructivist
Research Design	Case Study
Research Methods	Pattern Matching, Explanation Building, and associated analysis based on researcher interpretations

## 2.5 Conclusion

The literature review establishes a base upon which further research questions pertaining to the topics can be pursued. Drawing from a diverse range of source material, the discussions on the globalization of modern composition education, contrastive rhetoric's & L2 writing education, and the secondary school element existent in composition studies opens doors in consideration of what lies in the nexus of them all. Already from here, we see that writing studies is something that stretches beyond our national borders and lived environments. There is much yet to discover in considering the diversity of backgrounds that exist in the larger narrative of writing education. From this literature review, composition education as it exists in Turkey can be probed in consideration of the very significant secondary school element. In studying the similarities and differences between our national context and that of Turkey, I also hope for this study to contribute to and encourage work in international composition studies.

The topics mentioned in the literature review are crucial to understanding the importance of the thesis and its academic goals. My research aims to bring these areas into practice when observing a real-life case study of Turkey. I hope that through this work, a scholar in the field hoping to learn more about the applications of composition in Turkey, or broadly speaking, in some other context, can benefit.

### 3 RELEVANT HISTORIES

Turkey is a nation that is unique in many ways. With a population exceeding 89 million, it sits on a historical crossroads of civilizations and identities. It is a nation with a vibrant and turbulent history. Its reputation as a “melting pot” of civilizations and cultures is only too appropriate. The nation consists of many ethnic groups besides Turks, including Armenians, Assyrians, Alevi, Arabs, Circassians, Greeks, Kurds, Laz, and the Zaza (Ozfidan et al., 2). While 90% of the population speaks Turkish, “some 70 other languages and dialects are also spoken including various dialects of Caucasian and Kurdish, as well as Arabic, Greek, Ladino and Armenian” (T.C. Kultur Ve Turizm Bakanligi).

Literally and metaphorically, the region lies very much between East and West. Geographically, it sits between Europe and Asia. It is an officially secular nation, yet Islam influences much of the ongoing discourse (Heper). Religiously, mosques are widespread, the headscarf is typical amongst women, and the call to prayer is heard five times a day. Yet, all this co-exists around noisy bars and pubs and revealing western fashion trends. Economically, the nation stands with aspirations to ascend to the European Union and with a heavily internationalized economy, yet, as Gul Berna Ozcan writes in her analysis “Small business networks and local ties in Turkey,” “social networks dominate business linkages of entrepreneurs, and they are based on sectarian affiliations such as religion, ethnicity and kinship ties” (Ozcan 281). Additionally, “in small and medium-sized towns, values and traditions are very influential over the entrepreneurs' social networks, and they bring an inertia over technological change” (Ozcan 281). Finally, “Turkish small firms survive by exploiting local ties and market niches at the expense of flexible specialization and innovation” (Ozcan 281).

The Republic of Turkey distinguishes itself today as a secular democracy in an unlikely region. And, as modern as the country is today, with a bustling economy, rising GDP, increased international influence outside of its borders (Cevik, Kardas, Onis and Kutlay), and global identity, it is equally traditional, with certain areas with old villages (officially numbering over 18,000 according to data by the Interior Ministry of the country) looking much the same as they would a century ago, tribal communities, and established practices (T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı). As much as the nation can be compared to the most modern countries of Europe in values and societal practice, including its democratic structure, advancement in women's rights, and rule of law, it can also be related to its Middle Eastern counterparts who have not yet achieved its level of progressiveness and economic development. This nation of paradoxes deserves a closer look concerning how it came to being. That is a topic on which there has been a glut of literature and is naturally far beyond the intention of this thesis. However, for any subject of study, the history of its context is crucial to its understanding. Hence, a brief history of the nation and how it came to be in its current form is necessitated.

The Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922). The history, culture, policies, and values of the six-century Ottoman Empire significantly influenced the modern republic that succeeded it. In the course of its long history, it, at its peak, stretched from Central Europe to what is now beyond Iraq and the Gulf. It reigned as multinational, multicultural, multiethnic, and in every sense of the word, global empire, and was significant in its role as the natural successor to the Muslim & Arabs Empires of the past and posture as the face of the Islamic World. From the origins of the Empire in 1299 until its collapse in 1923, governance and policy varied under the leadership of a succession of Sultans, who eventually came to manage a bustling bureaucracy for better and worse.



### 3.1 A Look Back in Time

In the most unlikely of circumstances, the Ottoman Empire made its home in the turbulent Anatolian region. Its creation followed a series of Turkic migrations from Central Asia, caused by a rising empire, the Seljuks, after their legendary victory against the Byzantines at the Battle of Malazgirt in 1071. This essentially stamped the Turkic presence in Anatolia, which was of far less significance before. Although Turkic, the Seljuk Empire was also uniquely Persianized in its own cultures and traditions, something the Ottomans carried forward, which ultimately led to an entirely new cultural tradition exceptional to these empires being created. Through a combination of internal and external factors not uncommon amongst the empires at the time, the Seljuk's in Anatolia eventually dissipated into an assortment of small tribal powers, known as Beyliks (principalities), who often found themselves in direct competition for influence and power. After a long-lasting power struggle, the Ottoman Beylik ultimately emerged as the most significant one in Anatolia. By the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century, this small tribal confederation had stretched into Europe and reinvented itself as an empire, a change that was significant because it meant the transformation of a close-knit tribal confederation into a diverse and multicultural state. Naturally, significant changes were necessary, as the policy of a tribe, no matter how great the influence, was still tribal and traditional by nature. The policy of a multicultural state had to be completely different. And in that, the extraordinary story of the Ottoman Empire arose.

The new state had to be restructured into a completely new political and social landscape from a mere principality. And, as the empire grew in direct opposition to other significant empires and powers, its demographic also experienced drastic changes. These influences had far-reaching effects from issues relating from general jurisdiction to educational policy. As the

empire grew (and faltered), so did the policy on these issues, which were often determined by the diplomatic and military situation of the given time. The Ottoman Empire had reasserted itself entirely with the conquest of Constantinople under Mehmed II (1453) and reached its peak territorially under the rule of Suleiman the Magnificent between 1520-1566.

Like any empire in its natural course, the Ottomans eventually began to falter after the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the late modern period was a particular rocky and significant one in that elements such as incompetent leadership, lagging in technological innovation, high debt, a severely weakened military crippled the Empire (Lewis). By 1853, the Ottomans began to be seen as the “sick man of Europe,” as crisis upon crisis engulfed the once mighty and threatening empire. Once a civilization that embodied the highest level of law, reason, intellect, science, technology, and innovation, holding a robust legal system well-known for its ability to appeal to all its demographic groups, it transformed into a heavily bureaucratic state held back by tremendous corruption and nepotism. Compounding this situation was the long-term issue of hereditary rule which often meant incompetent Sultans coming to power, influenced by the rivalries of a Royal Court filled with ambitious Grand Viziers and other powerful individuals and entities. If that was not enough, the religious class (an important one in a theocratic empire) had itself become corrupted, eventually becoming political actors who often exploited religion for personal gain and control. By the time of the entry of the Empire into WWI, the empire was already a severely weakened entity. The decline of the empire can hardly be better summarized than in Lewis’ statement, that:

Fundamentally, the Ottoman Empire had remained or reverted to a mediaeval state, with a mediaeval mentality and a mediaeval economy - but with the added burden of a

bureaucracy and a standing army which no mediaeval state had ever had to bear. In a world of rapidly modernising states it had little chance of survival. (Lewis 127).

This discontent and discord ultimately laid the foundation for the formation of the modern Republic of Turkey, led by a revolutionary Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Atatürk was born in 1881 in what was then Ottoman Thessaloniki. This was during the turbulent final years of the Empire, where it was slowly facing an accelerated territorial loss and was increasingly on the verge of collapse. It was in this society that Atatürk grew up, ultimately careering as an Ottoman officer in the Balkans, North Africa, and the Middle East, watching as those territories gradually left Ottoman control. Atatürk was very much a nationalist who was deeply affected by what he saw around him, particularly in the ineffective state, the squabbling, corrupt, and nepotistic politicians, an overly influential and backward clergy, and a nation left behind in the past as the world moved ahead. Through a combination of absolute genius and pure luck, Atatürk, by now a war hero in the Ottoman Empire's disastrous decision to enter WWI, managed to take control of the nation as it fought its War of Independence against the Allied powers seeking to divide its territory as victors. From here, he abolished the Sultanate and wholly restructured the state with an iron fist, cracking down hard on dissent and enacting much-needed reforms that had been stalled for too long due to competing interests by those in power (Armstrong).

From a fledgling, broken down empire, Atatürk built Turkey on the basis of secularism, gender equality, justice before the law, and the western education and ideals of which he looked up to. Atatürk made massive reforms and enforced them with force to transform his nation, a perhaps necessary evil of the time. He replaced the traditional Ottoman script with a new Latin script and traveled across villages in a largely illiterate nation to teach it. He took control of the clergy, severely limited their power and influence, and centralized religion by state control. He

oversaw women gaining voting rights which ultimately allowed them to hold political office. Until this day, Atatürk remains a nationally revered figure in Turkey. His statues stand in every city, and a moment of silence is observed on the anniversary of his death. His image remains everywhere and is a central part of Turkish political rhetoric (Elmas; Zurcher).

### **3.2 Atatürk's Educational Reforms**

Atatürk's educational reforms are particularly relevant for this thesis. Atatürk centralized the educational system and directed it under a Ministry of Education with complete control over the educational curricula and objectives. The educational system was designed to promote state policy (secularism and scientific enlightenment). Thus, it was seen with increased importance in direct contrast to the Ottoman period, where education, while regulated, was also highly convoluted. Elements such as implementing coeducation across the board, severely restricting traditional religious seminaries, and increasing school access on general terms were significant policy aspects of the new Republic.

As we discuss Atatürk's educational reforms, one thing that should be pointed out is that they were central to his idea of state-building. What is particularly interesting to scholars of rhetoric & composition is the language reform hinted at earlier. In his text, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*, Geoffrey Lewis writes about this as an example of "linguistic engineering," in the sense that it was a "...tinkering with language with the express purpose of changing people's speech habits and the way they write" (Lewis 1). Lewis elaborates on linguistic engineering as "the sort of deliberate campaign that has been carried out at various times by Germans, Swedes, Hungarians, Finns, and Albanians, among others, for nationalistic reasons, to purge their languages of foreign words and substitute native words" (Lewis 2). For Atatürk, "the aim of the Turkish language reform was to eliminate the Arabic and Persian

grammatical features and the many thousands of Arabic and Persian borrowings that had long been part of the language” (Lewis 2). In essence, this language reform was a means of advancing the people and purging traces of the old status quo. While Ottoman was a language that in its complexity was somewhat exclusive even its spoken form (the average citizenry spoke a much more primitive form of Turkish), and whose writing was only reserved for a certain class, this was to change when suddenly, with the language reform, the intellectual class found themselves in many cases equally as illiterate as the villagers.

Thus, the power of language and expression was utilized for political and nationalist purposes. In this case, this was to reassert a national identity that had been highly weakened after WWI after many former territories had become independent and take a nation that had fallen so behind in enlightenment into a new age of development. In that sense, switching the Ottoman language (which borrowed significantly from Arabic and Persian) to a Turkish one made a distinction between the Turk and the other, ultimately reasserting a Turkish national identity over an Islamic one, as had been Ottoman policy. And through a combination of a new language altogether coupled with a low literacy rate, the ability to educate masses from scratch in the framework of a new curriculum and educational policy was very much enhanced.

“Atatürk adapted education as an attractive power, a locomotive in total development of Turkish nation” (Unal 1719). In every way, education was meant to propel Turkey into the modern age. Turkey today still has a long way yet to go in educational quality and access measures, but it has come a long way from the time of its founding in terms of education and its transformation as an urban nation with significant economic development.

### 3.3 Turkey's Education System Until Present

Turkey's educational system today is known as the 4+4+4 system, which was a product of a relatively recent policy change in 2012, where compulsory education was "divided as four years of primary school (First, Second, Third and Fourth Grades), four years of middle school (Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grades) and four years of high school (Ninth, 10th, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12th Grades)" (qtd in Kasa and Ersoz 2). Before 2012, this period of compulsory education was eight years, and only in 1997, this period was merely five years (Kasa and Ersoz 1). In Turkey, educational transformation "...took place parallel to the developing industry and service sectors, starting in the 1950s. By 1980, Turkey had become a largely urban society, and enrollment in grades 1 to 5 had grown to 97%. By 2000, enrollment in grades 1 to 8 was at 100%." (Nohl and Somel 1). Today, the centralized educational system put in place by Atatürk remains managed by its designated ministry. As Mehmet Dincer writes in his thesis *Education policy issues in Turkey*, "two characteristics of the education system in Turkey stand out. First, private provision of education is very limited. (and) Second, the education system is highly centralized" (Dincer 4).

The 4+4+4 system would be very familiar to Americans. Indeed, "Primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels constitute compulsory education (grades 1-12)," and even the grade levels corresponding to elementary, middle, and high school are essentially similar (Dincer 5). Yet, some significant differences in the structure itself are entirely different to the familiar American system, in that starting in the lower secondary school phase (Grade 5), "there are different tracks that can be followed" (Dincer 5). At the lower secondary education level, these are "in the form of religious middle schools," and at the upper secondary education level, these include "academic and vocational/technical schools" (Dincer 5). As can be inferred, "in addition to differentiation of program types, education institutions at the upper secondary level

also differ in terms of selectivity” (Dincer 6). Turkish students who want to increase their post-secondary school chances must compete to attend the most selective and best government schools in an exam known as the High School Transition System (LGS). (Taskin and Aksoy). The language of instruction is Turkish.

While growing in both the private and public sectors, tertiary education in the country is still limited in its supply. Just like the entrance into high schools is decided through a single ever-determining examination, so is the case at the university level, through the Higher Education Institutions Examination (YKS). The exam was taken by over 2.5 million students in recent years (2019 and 2020) and is a multi-step exam administered across the country at one time each year. Quite often, a student’s results on this exam dictate their educational trajectory from that point forward. With regard to the secondary and tertiary education of its young population, this has been steadily rising, but is still low, with only one-third (33%) of Turkey’s young adults (25–34-year-olds) having attained tertiary education, and 57% having attained an upper-secondary school education by 2018 (OECD).

### **3.4 Foreign Language Education**

As we begin to direct our conversation into the educational elements of modern Turkey, we need to analyze the broad theme of foreign language education in its historical context until now. Doing this for the entirety of the Ottoman Empire would be far beyond the context of this thesis, even at a summarized level. For that reason, the late period of the Ottoman Empire, which led into the modern Republic, should be looked at and analyzed. The Ottoman Empire lived and prospered (and fell) during times of conquest, militarism, imperialism, and an ever-changing global landscape. It is no surprise then that, like any other empire, Ottoman policy was dictated very much by the reality of these matters. “The international relations in the Ottoman State had

influence on the preference of foreign language to be taught in the schools” (Boyacioglu 655). And this emphasis became increasingly focused on Western languages as European languages “especially French were taught in its period of stagnation and decline with the adoption of the European supremacy” (Boyacioglu 651). To elaborate, as the Ottoman Empire declined, it also faced modernization efforts from within the State that included emphases on foreign language education. Into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, French was heavily emphasized due to the longstanding Ottoman-French alliance. With French holding a certain prestige as a language of knowledge and modernization, it was a natural candidate and became a language of the Ottoman intellectual class (Boyacioglu). However, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was changed to German as the Ottomans reasserted their alliances according to the ever-changing situations common at that time, in this case, due to “economical and political plans and interests” that “put forward German teaching against French and English teaching” (Boyacioglu 657). As is known, the Ottomans carried through with this alliance into a disastrous WWI, ultimately setting the stage for new changes.

As the Modern Turkish Republic slowly asserted its identity after its creation in 1923, the element of language, particularly the “linguistic engineering” spoken about before, was used to reassert a national identity and make education accessible. In this early period of modern Turkish history, foreign language policy was more ambiguous but in line with the larger aims of emulating western standards of progress. Indeed, “After the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, modernization and westernization movements brought closer connections with Europe and the United States, which accelerated the spread of ELT [English Language Teaching] in the country. English gained precedence over other foreign languages, particularly French, which was previously preferred in diplomacy, education and art” (qtd. in Kucukoglu 1091).



Most histories of this topic focus on the 1980 period during which major educational policies took place. Post-1980, policy became more defined and formal through a “Foreign Education and Teaching Law. According to this law, the rules for formal training and common-public education were adjusted,” something that had not been done before at such a level. This came when universities and academic departments were being restructured, which included significant foreign language teacher training changes and university departments devoted explicitly to such (Nergis 183). During this time, the importance of English was being increasingly realized at a governmental level, given the increasing influence of the language globally and especially, on education (Kirkgoz, *English Education Policy in Turkey* 238). The most significant change happened in 1997, where the “Turkish educational system underwent a number of fundamental changes regarding the foreign language teaching (FLT)” (Saricoban 2544). In 1997, a project through the Ministry of National Education (MONE) was initiated as a “major curriculum innovation in FLT” with the aim “to promote the teaching of English in the Turkish educational institution” (Kucukoglu 1092).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

From the very beginning of the creation of modern Turkey, the state prioritized education as one of its own major responsibilities. The educational system of the Republic, including its English policy, was crafted in such a way to assert its values. This stands unique in its national context because unlike other countries in the region and around that made their English language educational policies in a post-colonial context, Turkey had no such history. Educational policy in the modern history of the country has, particularly with regard to foreign language education, carried a significant nationalistic component. Any component within foreign language education, including composition, exists in this context.

#### **4 A SURVEY OF UNIVERSITY COMPOSITION EDUCATION IN TURKEY**

Composition education at the university level in Turkey, while possessing similarities to the more familiar system of composition in the United States, is unique in that it has evolved in response to its own respective needs. Additionally, it has followed the trend of the increased importance of English within the educational system at the larger policy level. This brings us to the question, what exactly is “composition education” in the Turkish context? Unlike in the US (or other English-speaking countries), where the purpose of such courses is to teach students who already are fluent in the language how to express their ideas adequately, non-English speaking contexts do not have the liberty of students who struggle to convey their thoughts in writing but who can otherwise communicate perfectly well. Learning to write becomes an entirely different challenge in these contexts when even comprehension capabilities are limited. This is highly relevant in Turkey, where the nation scores extremely low on English proficiency measures, scoring “Very Low Proficiency” on the EF English Proficiency Index, and nearly at the bottom of Europe in this regard (“EF EPI 2019 – Turkey”).

As Turkey intends to advance itself nationally in English proficiency, its university system has adapted to providing English education. The most prominent example of this is through English Medium Instruction (EMI) universities or programs that deliver the entire course of study in the English language. This is in opposition to Turkish Medium Instruction (TMI), which still plays a significant role in many Turkish universities (often universities will offer both types of programs as well). It may be noted that “students must sit an exam conducted by the Student Selection and Replacement Centre (OSYM) and the grade they achieve determines the programmes they are able to pursue. Students come from different educational backgrounds and most of them enter higher education with limited English” (Ekoç 232). Studying in an EMI

program generally requires a higher score on the exam, and thus, lower-achieving students have less access to tertiary English education. Still, all university students do attain some degree of English language education. Indeed, a “policy for higher education in Turkey states that as of the academic year 2001–2, compulsory foreign language preparation classes will be integrated into all Turkish-medium university programs” (Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe 254).

This is where the most significant difference comes in, however. English composition education is not equal across the country. Instead, it is given to those students who can manage to be selected into an English medium program, and at an increased level, those who manage to get into the better EMI universities. While all university students will take some version of first-year English, this can have massive variations. For the student in a TMI program, this will often be in EFL-type courses to build up basic English proficiency. For the student in a complete EMI program, the first-year English course could in practice vary from simple English literacy education to a framework of study very similar to goals and intended competencies to what a student at an American university student would partake in, such as in writing a variety of compositions or being educated in academic writing practices, as will be discussed in 4.3.

Here then, lies a class difference. Not all students have access to English composition education (although in TMI programs, a course pertaining to Turkish composition is often a requirement); only those who elect to study in English (whose departments often have a higher score requirement) get this opportunity. This underscores the importance of high school success, especially on the “determine all” exam, the YKS, which is taken after the last year of high school, and whose score dictates where a student goes from that point. This exam does not include a foreign language portion except for students wanting to study English, English Language Teaching, or other Foreign Languages. As there is no way to gauge English language

competency, students who get a high enough score on the exam and elect to enter an EMI program will enter university, starting with a preparatory year of English to build appropriate language competencies before starting degree-specific requirements. Given the high degree of importance attached to English language competencies in the country compounded with an already overcrowded job market for university graduates, it can reasonably be inferred that students getting access to advanced educational opportunities in English (and elements such as writing) will set them apart. Indeed, English is considered a “must” in both the entry and advancement of competitive jobs within urban Turkey and even in a dated study of the state of English in the Turkish job market, it was found that the majority of job descriptions required a certain degree of English proficiency (and this was listed as a priority item on the list of necessary qualifications) (Dogancay-Aktuna 33-34). There is excellent social prestige associated with English (Zok 2).

#### **4.1 Models of English Composition Education**

It is essential to take a closer look into the various ways that English education is delivered within the country at the tertiary level. English education takes place only with EMI programs and can be considered “two-phase.” The first phase is an English Preparatory Year or a year of intensive English study to build up sufficient English capacity in students to then move onto their respective programs of study, which last another four years. In summary, “At the beginning of the academic year in Turkey, all students are invited to take a language proficiency exam which serves as a placement test. If they attain a suitable score, usually 70 and above which it is felt corresponds to B1 and above on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), they are allowed to proceed to studying in their faculty” (Trotman 59). And “Students who fail to turn up for the exam and those attaining less than the required score are obliged to

take the English preparatory year. To pass, by the end of the year, students are expected to be at or very near to B1 level on the CEFR” (Trotman 59). The second phase of English education is when the students begin their respective programs. They must take one course per semester for the first year in “Academic English” or a similar course, which is essentially English writing education (see 4.3). This is a general standard across Turkish universities, although the title and syllabi vary, much as they do in universities within the US.

While the Preparatory Year can best be defined as EFL education rather than composition, leaving it out would be inappropriate for this thesis. The Preparatory Year develops the fundamental tools that will later be applied in the academic writing courses during the first official year of university studies. Additionally, the Preparatory Year contains writing education (essay writing) embedded within its curriculums. In many ways, this compares to what is known in the U.S. as “Basic Writing,” and its associated coursework, which, similar to the Preparatory Year in Turkey, “began as an effort to give access to college writing to students who had not had access before” (Otte and Mlynarczyk 78). Specifically, these students were considered “high risk” and those perceived unprepared for the conventional freshman composition coursework (Nordquist). For the students in both classrooms, freshman composition occurs only after remediation.

## **4.2 The Preparatory Year**

The Preparatory Year (sometimes known as the English Language Preparatory Year, or ELPP) is the first phase of intensive English education at the EMI university or program. The Preparatory Year allows for language competency building of those students who will be pursuing their degrees in English but have a lack of English literacy, to begin with. In theory, then, a student who scores high enough on the YKS exam to be placed into an EMI university or

department, but comes from a low English background, will not be disadvantaged due to the remediation the Preparatory Year offers. The Preparatory Year is a vital part of future English success at the tertiary level in Turkey. Indeed, “the Turkey National Needs Assessment report by TEPAV (2013) state that although Turkish students receive more than 1000 hours of instruction between Grade 4 and 12, their level of English is still rudimentary, and they fail to communicate in English. It is argued that students do not seem to be motivated to learn and communicate in English mostly because their English knowledge does not contribute to their scores in university entrance exams (TEPAV, 2015)” (Bayram and Canaran 48). As can be seen, students struggle with prior preparedness in English compounded by the lack of incentive to learn it. For a high school student in Turkey, the initial hurdle is to score high on the YKS, incentivizing a “studying to the test” strategy. As English is not relevant for the exam, it is not prioritized.

In general, the Preparatory Year program is a two-semester, 28-week (30 hours per week) intensive program that emphasizes four macro skills (writing, reading, listening, and speaking) as well as other micro sub-skills like grammar and vocabulary (Coskun 5). In this program, an integrated skills framework is used for instruction on all of these skills, “such as the four-level (beginning, high beginning, low intermediate, intermediate) coursebook and other additional materials like hand-outs” (Coskun 5). When these students arrive for their studies, most of them “display low proficiency levels in English, and they start EPPs from beginner or elementary levels” (Bayram and Canaran 49).

The problem of low proficiency affects both students and teachers. For the former, in that they need to learn within one year “to be able to read, write, speak and listen in English to succeed in their departmental courses,” and for the latter “who -as curriculum developers- have to design their language curriculum in such a way that it can provide support for students with

limited exposure to English so that they can pursue their academic studies in their undergraduate courses.” (Bayram and Canaran 49). It is a mistake to think of the Preparatory Year as something separate from university-level writing education. This is because students who often come from meager English backgrounds develop what will essentially become the entirety of their English skills in this crucial year. The training in grammar, punctuation and other aspects of writing within the preparatory program is theoretically designed to make students competent participants within their respective programs.

Of course, every program varies in its quality, staff, and even teaching frameworks, curriculums, and methodologies, but they all emphasize writing skills to some extent. In one study, it was observed that students had their first exposure to English writing instruction during the Preparatory year, with one student stating, “I didn't even know what an essay was like until I came to prep school at the university. I learnt all about it here” (Altinmakas and Bayyurt 93). Per the study, “At the initial phases of the undergraduate program, students who had studied at one-year preparatory school encountered considerably fewer challenges and felt more self-confident in terms of their writing practices in contrast to students who came directly from secondary school and lacked systematic practice prior to their first academic writing assignment” (Altinmakas and Bayyurt 93). In that sense, the Preparatory Year plays a massive role in continuing tertiary level English writing success from that point forward.

### **4.3 Academic Writing**

Once students successfully pass the Preparatory Year, they can begin their intended (four-year) courses of study. In the first year of official university study, students will take two semesters worth of further English (and explicitly writing) coursework. This course sequence is essentially the Turkish version of FYC, and the objectives are engrained in what is mostly the

building up of writing competencies. The course title can vary among universities, but is generally “English for Academic Purposes,” “Academic English,” or “English I.” As mentioned before, this is a two-semester sequence of courses. However, certain universities (especially those that market themselves as fully English medium) do have longer sequences of up to four semesters of study.

Currently, there is a gap in literature about this level of composition as compared to that available on the Preparatory Year in general. Compared with the United States, the first-year writing course seems to be quite a mute topic in scholarly circles. Indeed, it points to a lack of perceived relevance or significance compared to the Preparatory Year. This is not to say that first-year writing is entirely irrelevant, but it is overshadowed by the attention given to the Preparatory Year.

Syllabi vary between universities, although they are generally very similar in their respective objectives and aims. The existent variations are dependent on whether the university is a private (foundation) or public university, and, assuming the university is private, what exactly its educational influences are (for example, certain private universities in Turkey follow closely American model of education and strive to do so through constant program evaluation). To illustrate some examples of curriculum(s), the syllabus texts from various universities can be looked at (public versus private).



*Table 2 Introductory Writing Course Syllabi Descriptions for Various Universities<sup>1</sup>*

University	Title	Description
Ankara University (Public)	Development of Reading and Writing Skills in English I	Consolidation of what have been learned in English Preparatory School. Grammatical and lexical improvement of students who have completed English Preparatory School. Improvement of Reading Comprehension skills.  1) Students will have intermediate level of vocabulary. 2) Can use basic English structures creatively and form full and correct sentences. 3) Students will be able to comprehend intermediate level reading texts, answer questions and make inference about the text
Atilim University (Private)	English For Academic Purposes I	English language skills, especially academic skills, such as reading comprehension, vocabulary building and critical analysis of texts; listening and note-taking, class discussions, presentations, writing, research assignments and use of technology.
Bilkent University (Private)	English and Composition I	The central basis of ENG 101 is to introduce students to an academic approach to thinking, reading, speaking and writing in an integrated, meaningful manner such that they are able to apply the skills learnt to their departmental studies. In addition, the ENG 101 course aims to further develop the students' linguistic accuracy and range in English.
Istanbul Technical University (Public)	English I	The English 101 course is designed to improve the students' skills of reading, understanding and analyzing texts published in English and writing an academic text using this information. Students are both prepared by writing for the requirements of Academic and Technical English and also develop other linguistic and critical thinking skills. In addition, in this course, students will be able to define an object and a mechanism in a comprehensive way using appropriate technical language; to classify the information about the subject they are researching effectively and to write an analytical text on this classification; It is expected to refer to external resources that it utilizes in all these processes.
Middle East Technical University (Public)	English for Academic Purposes 1	The overall aim of this course is to develop students' academic writing skills through reading, listening and speaking, which serve as input for writing.
Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University (Public)	Academic Writing and Oral Presentation Skills I	The aim of this course is to develop the reading and academic writing skills and to improve perceiving ability of students.

<sup>1</sup> This information was found from university databases; links can be found in the works cited.

After surveying universities across the country, these examples fit a general model for both private and public institutions. Unfortunately, not all universities (in fact, the overwhelming majority) have accessible information systems (i.e., databases or websites to access syllabi and other course documents), making it hard for academics and researchers to gain insight into their curriculums. However, public universities have a very similar curriculum, while private ones vary more, but even then, not considerably. It is encouraging to see that these courses are standardized across universities to some extent (given the similarity of course titles and their respective descriptions). The differences in public and private provision are significant to the larger study, and hence deserve a closer look.

#### **4.4 Private Universities**

Until 1981, all university education was public in Turkey, and private higher/tertiary education was unconstitutional (Dogramaci 1). The ban on private education had its roots in the government policy that the nation found so crucial to state-building and creating a nationalist population that its founders propagated, as discussed in Chapter 1. In 1981, a major reform finally allowed private universities to be permitted under specific (and stringent) conditions. According to the report *Private Versus Public Universities: The Turkish Experience* by the late Ihsan Dogramaci, one of the most prominent educators in Modern Turkish History, private universities are characterized by particular elements that make them unique within the country. These include being exempt from certain governmental oversight for “financial or administrative issues,” which allows for “a far greater ease of action than do the public universities” (Dogramaci 4). Additionally, all private universities have a Board of Trustees, which allow for these institutions to “re-allocate funds to areas which in its judgment need more financial

assistance than originally planned on” rather than be lost to macromanagement (Dogramaci 4). Since 1980, Turkey has advanced heavily in research rankings as a nation, being one of the top countries in this regard, leading to the conclusion that “the establishment of strictly non-profit private universities has influenced the public universities to raise their standards of teaching and research” (Basal and Keskin; Dogramaci 4).

This is relevant to the more extensive study of composition, and precisely because amongst all the universities surveyed, it is apparent that private universities have a much more advanced level of composition education. The most prominent amongst these universities, namely Bilkent University, Koç University, Sabancı University are outstanding examples of this. These universities rank highly in national rankings, at 1, 6, 9, and 14, and all of them have sophisticated, well-formed, and advanced first-year writing programs and course offerings (U.S. News & World Report). These universities also have a significant contribution to larger Turkish academia in general. For example, Bilkent and Koç universities are on top in terms of research outputs have an unproportionate representation in publications generally (Nature Index). Because of their independence from the government and, specifically, the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). More so than that, these universities were founded in emulation of the highest standards of international education and have constantly engaged in program improvement.

The differences inherent in private institutions reflect greatly on composition education, with offerings of both introductory and required core courses and advanced courses related to report writing, essay writing, editing, grammar, and so forth at these institutions. These universities have built writing centers staffed with highly trained national and international (native speaking) faculty. However, when it comes to writing about other private universities, these vary considerably from the top cadre of institutions mentioned earlier. There are numerous

private universities in Turkey in total (above 80), and there is a vast range of quality across them. Nonetheless, one of the selling points of these universities often is their emphasis on international (and specifically English) education. In that sense, writing and academic English classes are generally offered, although few works or program evaluations detailing quality are available.

#### **4.5 Public Universities**

The public university system is Turkey's most significant component of tertiary educational provision. With around 125 public universities (this number continues to change with the aspect of mergers and the creation of new universities), public institutions account for most of the student population in the country. Indeed, half a million students enroll in private universities, while more than 6.5 million students study in state universities (Yinanc). There is a significant disparity amongst these public universities, although they have the same oversight from YÖK.

“Turkey has promoted a rapid expansion of universities since 2006, establishing 58 universities throughout the country at a growth rate of 109%” (Acer and Guclu 1911). These new universities have been part of government policy to increase tertiary educational access, and have in that sense, been successful. However, from the top-ranked public university to the lowest-ranked one, there are tremendous differences, and these have direct effects in English and composition education. More so, because of the inherent bureaucracy that public universities operate under, a high degree of isomorphism exists (Acer and Guclu). This means that educational innovation is often slow in comparison to the private universities that have an entirely different set of incentives to improve their pedagogy. As expected, any policy change within these universities requires a bureaucratic procedure. This significantly impedes the ability

to make progress and means that private universities have a competitive edge in providing quality English (and composition) education.

The top public universities have sophisticated English composition frameworks similar to what was described before concerning the top private universities, with writing centers and advanced course offerings beyond freshman composition. These generally have to do with special allowances given by the government for these institutions due to historical or other exceptional reasons. The Middle Eastern Technical University (METU) is an outstanding example, which “was first established by the Americans as an offshore American University, in the early 1960s (and) was established as a special university by special decree” (Hami Oz 336). This designation has allowed it to operate more independently, and the freshman composition curriculum is similarly based on American standards. Another example is Boğaziçi University, arguably the best university in the country, which, since its inception, has had a high degree of internationalization in its staff (the highest in the country, which stands at 18%) and a wide array of curriculum offerings (Boğaziçi University). Other high achieving public universities like the Istanbul Technical University (ITU) also have high standards of English education, and even the lower ranking EMI institutions have started to make strides in this regard, with Academic Writing education being present across the board and Writing Centers even being observed in universities. However, public universities have a significant quality difference even though they operate under the same overseeing body (YÖK). For that reason, the various public universities that operate under a considerable degree of standardization do vary considerably. Higher-ranked public universities are far more innovative in their educational practices, and their student bodies are remarkably differentiated (due to selection being based solely on exam scores). These

variations also bleed into university budgets due to research and the increased ability to compete for funding that higher-ranked universities can more easily attain.

Even the lower-ranked EMI universities/programs possess the baseline Preparatory Year and one year of academic writing, although such programs exist as a minority to begin with. Nearly all the public universities operate as TMI, with only a few exceptions. In public universities that possess EMI programs, which also tend to be higher ranked on the scale of universities, there is a system in place for structured composition. However, little work has been done in program evaluations and analysis, making it difficult to assess quality. The broad class descriptions and curriculum flow chart sheets showing the requirements for writing-based courses that are generally available do not give many insights beyond that.

#### **4.6 Analyzed Problems in Writing**

Having presented a broad summary of the current system of composition education at the university level in Turkey, the problems in writing instruction at this level can also be analyzed. Inherently, there already exists a natural problem due to composition's general status as being seen as no more than part of a larger context of L2 competency. At best, composition is synonymized with L2 writing competency, which continues to be a hot subject of academic research in the realm of ESL. This context, compounded with more nation-specific issues due to different rhetorical tendencies that affect L2 writing as well as general poor English competencies, is essential to realize before discussing any corrective action. In the more extensive study of comparative composition, such an approach that grounds the discussion in its respective context allows us to view problems that researchers exposed only to traditional settings may not have experience with.

Across the board, “Undergraduate students in Turkey are observed to experience difficulties with academic writing as they try to accommodate their existing writing knowledge to the requirements of the new discipline-specific writing and learning situation of tertiary level education” (Altınmakas and Bayyurt 88). While expounding on all of the student difficulties in writing would be a lengthy discussion, and a study in and of itself, highlighting them briefly is important to understanding the context of composition in the country. The study by Derya Altınmakas and Yasemin Bayyurt, “An exploratory study on factors influencing undergraduate students’ academic writing practices” in Turkey, sheds some important light on this matter where four major factors come to light:

- 1) the amount and nature of L1 and L2 pre-university writing instruction and experience
- 2) students’ perceptions about academic writing and disciplinary-specific text genres
- 3) prolonged engagement with the academic context and discourse
- 4) expectations of faculty members

Per the study, these four factors (briefly summarized) affect student academic writing competence the most. To elaborate, it was found firstly that pre-university writing education was insufficient. This insufficiency had to do with a lack of effective instruction at the L1 level on top of poor L2 writing instruction, which was found to be further compounded by the differentiations existent in high school type and the level of English writing education provided (a disparity that is common by design in the Turkish educational system and is discussed in Chapter 5). Additionally, the lack of incentive for high schools and their students to develop skills outside of the high stakes university selection exam, as discussed earlier, was also consequential in this. Secondly, students could not differentiate between regular English L2 writing and actual structured academic writing and had trouble working within the perceived

rigidness of composition frameworks taught to them. Finally, faculty members were analyzed to have a lack of consideration for students' backgrounds, ultimately leading to a disconnect given the faculty's lack of acknowledgment regarding student's actual state of unpreparedness and their inability to meet expected standards. Other issues and considerations that were analyzed included degrees of low self-efficacy and especially writing anxiety (Kirmizi and Kirmizi), and even writing inadequacies stemming from low L1 writing in Turkish (Zor). Additionally, in the transfer of skills between L1 and L2, L2 proficiency affected writing, and observations that correlated L1 (Turkish) rhetorical patterns with L2 English writing were noticed (Uysal).

#### **4.7 Graduate Education**

Turkey's English policy is expressed in economic and scientific terms, in line with a national desire to excel in science and technology. As these components occur in an academic context, it's essential to view academic writing and the other parts of composition education in Turkey at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Those who pursue graduate education are the next generation of scholars, researchers, and academics, who will ultimately engage with the international academic discourse. In that sense, the skills they build and impart regarding academic writing and publishing are important to analyze. Additionally, the jobs for those possessing graduate degrees will be those requiring more skill and be gateways for promotion into leadership and managerial positions. It is important for teachers of writing and composition to realize that the idea of writing education stopping during the first year of studies (or even later) is itself flawed.

Detailed studies on the topic of academic writing and composition education at the graduate level in Turkey would be an important feature of future research. This is because the situation on the ground varies considerably given the differences existent in graduate education



by default, including the fact that education at this level is far more university and faculty specific, even in the very centralized Turkish context. That discussion extends far beyond the scope of this thesis. Still, there have been some fine and detailed studies in this topic which can be looked at to gain a glimpse of the matter, for example by Louisa Buckingham (2008), Yagiz, et al. (2009), Servet Celik (2020), and Ziya Toprak & Volkan Yucel (2020). These studies have looked at the challenges of academic writing at the graduate level and allude to similar points despite the nearly ten-year gap between the older and newer studies.

For example, Celik's work gives a snapshot of the current state of graduate-level writing education. Celik found in his research (which while performed at a small-scale, built upon past research in the topic through its comprehensive literature review) that the conclusion remained that "even experienced graduate students in Turkey lack the writing skills that will be critical to their advancement in their academic careers" (Celik 12). Why is this? Toprak and Yucel point to one concern being a pedagogical one and explain that writing has not yet been viewed as what it really is by the next generation of Turkish scholarship (at least from the eyes of a composition scholar, as I may add). Writing is something that "involves complex rhetorical moves, strategies, and an understanding of research" (Toprak and Yucel 12). It is not simply "a practice that takes place at the end of the research" or merely a "matter of "writing up" findings" as it is only too often seen as in that context (Toprak and Yucel 12). This reinforced the findings of Buckingham, who, in her analysis of Turkish Academics (faculty-level), found that "despite receiving an unusually high level of exposure to formal English through a largely bilingual education" that group being observed still "perceived significant linguistic difficulties in developing their L2 scholarly writing abilities" (Buckingham 15).

The premise that writing competencies are very much lacking at the graduate level is something that scholarship on this topic is on agreement of. There is a low level of efficacy, and the problems are not so different from those faced at the early tertiary level. Of course, for a practitioner of composition, this is not surprising. The one year of FYC/Freshman English (or whatever else it may be termed) that evolved in the U.S. was designed to address this precisely. While one year of writing training is hardly ever sufficient, through further college coursework, students will ideally be able to continually improve their writing with the strong base that FYC has theoretically imparted on them. For example, FYC includes becoming familiar with brainstorming, editing, proofreading, fixing grammatical errors, analysis, and addressing contextual issues such audience, purpose, and developing stronger research skills. What can be learned from Celik's study is that there is a wrench in the process of English teacher training that needs to be assessed, particularly concerning writing instruction. Celik's study, presenting concerns that the graduate students should be given more support in skills like mechanics in the English language "such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, transitional language and so on," gives light to this (Celik 12). We also notice that the graduate students in this qualitative study (which was an action research study, meaning the students were engaged in academic writing instruction through the duration of the study) found that instruction in the process model of writing, feedback, and time management, greatly helped them, giving light to a defining feature of composition instruction (Celik). Indeed, in composition-related courses, these are all important skills and thus, the notion that effective first-year writing instruction is important is strengthened.

## 4.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided a broad summary of the state of composition education at the tertiary level in Turkey. I recognize that it is by no means comprehensive, but for a researcher interested in global composition pedagogy, this section provides a glimpse for further study. As Turkey intends to increase its quality in English education, composition education is truly already a parcel of Turkish higher education. Indeed, tremendous strides have been made in the post-1980 period as the influence of English has grown across academia, and this has been reflected in Turkish national policy. A framework for writing education exists in both public and private universities and is hand-in-hand with the English focus of certain educational programs. However, even up until the graduate level, there seem to be issues that draw attention to the educational experience that students receive. The small-scale studies that have been conducted to date give clues that often correspond with each other, on where the problems lie, specifically in a need for more feedback, instruction in writing and mechanics, and so forth.

## 5 SECONDARY EDUCATION: THE COMPOSITION ASPECT

Secondary education is a significant and defining period by design within the Turkish educational system. What happens during this crucial time of study, and particularly on the college entrance exam, dictates a student's trajectory from that point forward as far as higher education is concerned (Suna et al. 94). Secondary school concludes the formal education for students who cannot get into universities due to limited spaces unless they can retake the exam the next year and score higher. To understand the broader picture of composition competencies at the tertiary education level and beyond within the nation, it is essential to understand what type of knowledge, experience, and training in composition its secondary school students arrive with. This study will explore secondary education system with regard to the extent of English education and how much emphasis is given to composition throughout it.

From an outsider's perspective, secondary school in Turkey is very similar to what it is in America. This is apparent with the four-year high school structure mandated by the MoNE (Ministry of National Education) and provided to every Turkish citizen. However, significant differences characterize the Turkish secondary school system and make it unique. These differences affect English (and by extension, composition) education directly because secondary school education is differentiated through various school types in Turkey. Because of this, two students with similar exam scores can enter the university level with a significant disparity as far as English competencies are concerned.

The aspect of students entering university with varying levels of English preparedness is relevant. As discussed in 2.2, the influence of secondary school education (in even native-English speaking contexts) on further composition competency is significant. As someone who came from a solid composition background from a top-ranked high school in the U.S. with

collegiate level exposure to rhetorical analysis, language, and literature, taught by highly qualified instructors, I experienced this firsthand. We cannot forget that composition education was created as a response to inadequately prepared university students. Today, students who come in with good enough secondary preparation can skip through this remediation. As we have briefly seen from our discussion on university education, this also is the case for Preparatory Schools in Turkey.

To understand composition specifically, we must recognize the fact that is central to composition and writing education across any level in Turkey. Composition is not taught outside of an EFL context. EFL is the first aim of English education at the schooling level from when it starts as a required course (Grade 4+) in Turkey, and this remains true even as students advance into high school. Compared to primarily other native English-speaking countries where English competency is often taught through English literature courses (as almost every American high school graduate would have experienced), such instruction is not possible in Turkey, and even if so, possesses many problems (Isikli and Tarakcioglu). Higher-level English writing instruction is not possible in the Turkish context because students at the high school level, like those in university, have an extremely low English proficiency level (Isikli and Tarakcioglu 93). This level, which was analyzed at elementary proficiency levels, is far too low for any meaningful prose to be written.

Yet another difference exists, which pertains to high school choice. Just like the significant university exam that millions of students take each year to compete for a limited number of university seats, so is there a high school examination, known as the LGS (Liselere Geçiş Sistemi/ Transition System for High Schools), which is held during one particular period per year after students have graduated from high school. The LGS is not mandatory per se, as a

system of localized school placement exists within the country that allows students the opportunity to access some type of high school education dependent on varying personal factors such as “residential address of students, preference priority, school success grade, [and] regularity/absenteeism and age” (Coskun et al. 154). As for exam placement (which is synonymous with centralized placement in our case), it has been designed to “place students in science high schools, social sciences high schools, educational institutions implementing the project and Anatolian technical programs of vocational and technical Anatolian high schools” (Coskun et al. 153). These schools that conduct their placement through a centralized examination are competitive. Specialized high schools offer more educational opportunities, including in English education, where this differentiation is most definitely relevant.

In Turkey, there exist various types of high schools. These high schools include science, Anatolian, vocational and technical Anatolian, fine arts, social sciences, and Anatolian imam and preacher high schools (Sever et al. 231). The type of high school a student attends ultimately plays a large role in their English (and other) competencies. Indeed, “academic achievement differences between school types continue to exist significantly. In the studies conducted, it is seen that the differences in academic achievement between school types begin to occur at the secondary school level, and these differences continue to increase in secondary education” (Suna et al. 93). For instance, science high school students perform “considerably higher” when compared to their peers in other high school types as far as advanced general literacy (not specific to foreign language) is concerned (Suna et al. 94).

In that sense, “it is undeniable that there is no standard of equal opportunities for students to attend schools in Turkey considering English courses” (qtd. in Sarigul). It is impossible to view secondary education within the country as homogenous. It is no surprise then that students

at the university level enter with vastly different backgrounds. Of course, added to this are the numerous private schools, which also vary tremendously in quality. Since they operate outside the mainstream system largely, they will not be looked at in this study beyond this mention. Still, it is important to recognize that these schools do directly compete with public schooling and thus have an entirely different set of incentives added to their freedom and flexibility. That is not to say their students are more literate in English (this varies considerably by the school), but to stress the point that more analysis is needed. As could be inferred, a higher level of English education is given to students who can manage to be selected for the better secondary schools, and this naturally includes a higher level of composition education because writing is ultimately a higher-level skill.

### **5.1 The Secondary School National English Curriculum & the CEFR**

As we continue our exploration into composition education at the secondary level in Turkey, it's important to analyze the National Curriculum, with regard to how much composition is designed to be taught within it, and more so, to see what types of writing education broadly high school students are getting within the nation. The next section of this chapter will be dedicated to doing this through an analysis of the said curriculum, through examination of the official document released by the Turkish Ministry of Education, titled *İngilizce Dersi Öğretim Programı* (English Course Curriculum), for grades 9-12. As the curriculum is a general one, it reflects the theoretical standard across all schools and thus is crucial for this study.

*Table 3 Model English Language (9-12<sup>th</sup> grades) Curriculum*

*(from Milli Egitim Bakanligi 7)*

Grades (CEFR*) Hours per Week	Learner Age	Skill/Grammar/Vocabulary/Pronunciation Focus	Main Activities (Can be used in all grades)
9 (A1/A2) 4	14-14.5	All four skills integrated with an emphasis on Listening and Speaking. Maximum seven new Vocabulary items per lesson. Limited Pronunciation practice	Roleplays/Simulations Graphics/Charts Paragraph Reading and Writing
10 (A2+/B1) 4	15-15.5	All four skills integrated with an emphasis on Listening and Speaking. Limited focus on Language Structures. Maximum seven new Vocabulary items per lesson. Limited Pronunciation practice.	Information Gap Activities/Roleplays Paragraph Reading and Writing Skimming and Scanning
11 (B1+/B2) 4	16-16.5	All four skills integrated with an emphasis on Listening and Speaking. Limited focus on Language Structures. Maximum seven new Vocabulary items per lesson. Limited Pronunciation practice.	Surveys/Short Oral Presentations/Drama Short Reading Texts and Paragraph Writing
12 (B2+) 4	17-17.5	All four skills integrated with an emphasis on Listening and Speaking. Synthesis of Language Structures. Maximum seven new Vocabulary items per lesson. Limited Pronunciation practice.	Conversations/Oral Presentations/Projects/Task- based Activities Argumentative/Descriptive Text Writing

**\*CEFR = The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages**

The model curriculum aims to take students from a very introductory level of English-speaking competency (A1), all the way to the B2 level in four years. As discussed before, the emphasis is clearly on ESL/TESOL elements, but writing competencies are also designed to be built up. From basic paragraph writing to eventually writing full texts by the time students enter their final year, the intention is to put students on a trajectory that could be considered “composition preparatory,” especially when viewed within the larger university context. I argue that this is the case based on the CEFR language standard, being the most internationally recognized standard of language literacy measurement. Theoretically, students are expected to reach the B2 level by 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and as was discussed in Chapter 3, university-level students (who have inadequate English literacy coming into university) are expected to be at the B1 level *after* completion of the Preparatory Year.



The Turkish National Curriculum for English can be reasonably argued to be “composition-preparatory”. Indeed, according to the CEFR, the B2 level includes various descriptions which pertain to writing competencies. At this level, one, in theory, “can write an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail (and) can evaluate different ideas or solutions to a problem” (Council of Europe 24). Additionally, at this level of competency, individuals “can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options (and) Can synthesize information and arguments from a number of sources” (Council of Europe 24).

*Table 4 Composition Related B2 Level Descriptors (Council of Europe 6, 24)*

<b>Overall Written Production</b>	Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources
<b>Creative Writing</b>	Can write clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences marking the relationship between ideas in clear connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned.  Can write clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest. Can write a review of a film, book or play.
<b>Reports &amp; Essays</b>	Can write an essay or report that develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail.  Can evaluate different ideas or solutions to a problem.  Can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options.  Can synthesise information and arguments from a number of sources.
<b>Self-assessment related to written interaction and production</b>	I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.  I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.

Of course, this is not to say that even if a student reaches the B2 level, they will possess these competencies. The CEFR is not by any means “primarily oriented to academic language

use,” but rather for particularly focused “foreign language learning” (McNamara, et al. 17). Indeed, this is heavily debatable, and that must be mentioned in the context of scholarly discussion. In one study from an Australian University, it was found in analysis of international students taking EAP courses (relating to Academic Writing) that “the CEFR descriptors underrepresent the complexity of the challenges of academic writing, particularly its cognitive demands” (McNamara et al. 16). The Turkish National Curriculum has “been designed in accordance with the descriptive and pedagogical principles of the CEFR” which points to the possibility that the curriculum is designed along the particular standard that could be flawed in composition and academic writing (T.C. Milli Egitim Bakanligi 4). There could be several factors associated with this, but one significant one has to do with the “wording of the descriptors,” which suggest “the kind of writing tasks to be found in advanced level general proficiency examinations, rather than the complex and unwieldy tasks of identification of relevant resources, evaluation of their relevance, and attribution and paraphrase” (McNamara et al. 23).

The CEFR is an internationally recognized standard and has implications for many aspects beyond spoken language competency, like university selection. In the Turkish university, students cannot proceed with their studies in EMI programs unless they meet the predetermined CEFR B1 threshold. The B1 level is seen as one where students will hold a level of competence suitable for further academic study and where they will have the skills needed to succeed in the required Academic Writing classes akin to the standard ENGL 1101 & 1102 within universities in the United States. This standard is not just the case for Turkish universities, but for many international universities that use this standard for university entrance (Harsch). For example, in Europe, the CEFR level B2 is “chosen most often as minimum entrance requirement” (Harsch


103). Of course, these standards are not necessarily because they have a proven record of predicting academic success or for purely educational purposes; indeed, in Turkey's case, a big reason for incorporating CEFR is due to its desire for ascension in the European Union (Tosuncuoglu and Peaci).

## **5.2 The English Curriculum: Methods of Instruction & Composition**

As we continue with the discussion of composition instruction within Turkey, we also must assess how the intended goals are being reached. In the National Curriculum, there seems to be a solid evidence-based strategy on employing a variety of materials to get the desired competencies (which are not at all specific to or aimed at composition). The National Curriculum itself does not reference required resources but instead gives ample room for flexibility for individual teacher innovation. According to the National Curriculum, “the curriculum is intended to be specific enough to guide teachers, administrators, and material designers to have a framework for having an efficient English language teaching and learning experience and broad/flexible enough so that teachers can creatively adapt the content to meet their learners’ individual needs” (T.C. Milli Egitim Bakanligi 19). Those that can be directly related to composition and writing instruction are highlighted in the wider list below:

*Table 5 Turkish National Curriculum Suggested Materials*

*(T.C. Milli Egitim Bakanligi 17)*

Format	Materials Suggested in the 9th- 12th Grades English Language Curricula	
		
	Movies TV/Radio Recordings Commercials Podcasts Infographics PPP Presentations Wikis Blogs V-logs E-mails Simulations Animations Animation Makers Virtual Environments Games/Fun Comics Maps Road Signs Posters Tables Timelines Patient Information Leaflets Brochures Advice Columns Invitee Lists Advertisements Shopping Lists Product Catalogues Recipes Coupons Call Center Dialogues Transportation Schedule Boards Travel Guides Notes/Messages Monolingual Dictionaries Planners Postcards/Greeting Cards Letters Tickets	Short Documentaries Short Lectures Interview Dialogues Phone Conversations Announcements Songs Websites Synchronous and Asynchronous CMC Online / Offline Newspapers /Magazines Online/Offline Pictures Picture Albums Contests/Quiz Shows Illustrations Realia (Real Objectives) Flashcards/Picturecards/Wordcards Song Lyrics Charts/Graphs Graphic Organizers Application Forms CVs/Letters of Intention Myths/Rhymes Poems Plays/Drama Surveys Short Stories Collaborative Stories Biographies Diary Entries Reflection Reports Peer and Self-Evaluation Checklists Jigsaw Readings Descriptive Texts Expository Texts Narratives Compare and Contrast Paragraphs Cause and Effect Texts Persuasive Texts Argumentative Texts Menus

In the National Curriculum, this multi-pronged approach shows great potential in the arena of composition education. The most direct of these materials, the ones highlighted in Figure 4, also emphasize writing and composition instruction. These instructional materials, such as narratives and argumentative, descriptive, persuasive, and expository texts, are key components of first-year composition programs at the university level in the United States and have direct implications in writing.

Another significant aspect that stands out is the emphasis on “authentic materials,” which has been defined by many scholars “as texts that are produced by a real speaker or writer for a

real audience,” such as: newspaper articles and radio programs” (Huda 1909-10). Authentic texts have been analyzed within L2 writing education to be effective tools in increasing motivation and cultural awareness, engaging students and allowing them to gain real world exposure (Albiladi). This is a central and stated part in the National Curriculum (T.C. Milli Egitim Bakanligi 6).

The National Curriculum includes a focus on ICT (Information and Communications Technology), employing a “blended-learning environment for language learners” (T.C. Milli Egitim Bakanligi 6). The recommendation given by the official curriculum is based on a scholarly study promoting a blended model, which is essentially a combination with face-to-face learning with approximately 45% online materials and activities. While this integration of ICT is for language teaching in general (considering that composition is by no means a central focus of the curriculum), this also has direct implications on any composition instruction delivered. One study of academic writing at a European university found that “ICT plays a significant and facilitating role in the development of writing skills, particularly for students” (Klimova and Poulova 4). At the secondary school EFL writing level, in particular, one study found that the advantages of ICT included “attracting students’ attention, facilitating students’ learning process, helping to improve students’ vocabulary knowledge and promoting meaningful learning” (Md Yunus, et al. 1).

The National Curriculum promotes a building blocks approach to composition education that gives opportunities for important elements of writing instruction to be delivered to students, such as exposure to varying types of composition and technological competencies. This can be simply stated, in that by Grade 12, before students graduate, objectives such as students being able “*to write an opinion essay about qualities of a good friend by stating reasons*” or being able

to “write an argumentative essay including solutions for disadvantaged people’s problems” are listed within the curriculum. In this table, all the writing objectives over the course of four years, from the A1 to B2 English competency level, are discussed. Ideally, students are to take these skills with them into university. Particularly, when analyzing the final two years of high school study, there seems to be a large emphasis on making sure students gain exposure to a wide variety of genres and writing applications.

It is important to view writing and composition in its context in Turkey and with regard to the larger stated objectives for composition. Ultimately, these objectives differ because writing is simply a part of the TESOL-focused curriculum, rather than standing alone as an objective. The university system that Turkish high school graduates go into is completely different from the American model in terms of FYC. A significant degree of formal writing education revolves around TESOL objectives and is often limited only to that.

### **5.3 The Secondary School Curriculum: Turkish Composition**

While this thesis and chapter are concerned with English composition education, glancing at the L1-L2 (Turkish/English) relationship in writing is important, given what was discussed in 2.3 pertaining to contrastive rhetoric and the bidirectional transfer of skills between languages. Like with the English curriculum, the Turkish Language national curriculum is accessed through the Ministry of Education website. The document, *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dersi Öğretim Programı* (Turkish Language and Literature Course Curriculum) gives a look at how composition education is viewed within the L1 context, and more so than that, the methodologies, expectations, and priorities associated with. Interestingly, one of the objectives of the Turkish language national curriculum is actually “to have communication in foreign languages” (T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 6). Undoubtedly, the relationship between L1 and L2

language skills has been highly studied in language research. Pae writes about the linguistic interdependence hypothesis, referencing research done on the topic from other scholars. As he explains, this is the scenario where “written language skills such as reading and writing do not have to be relearned in another language context once they are learned in the L1, and instead, language operations acquired in the L1 are simply available to learners as needed” (Pae 109).

The official curriculum mentions twelve learning outcomes related to writing that students are expected to achieve by the end of the four-year curriculum; these are listed below<sup>2</sup> (T.C. Milli Egitim Bakanligi 26, 27):

- 1) Students are able to write compositions in different styles.
- 2) Students are able to choose the subject, main idea, purpose, and the target.
- 3) Students are able to make prior preparation (reading, research, and take notes about their ideas), they are able to convey their impression on things; they are able to find documents that support their writing; they know how to take notes and to summarize, and they know how to use resources appropriately by giving the required citations.
- 4) Students can plan the composition that they will write
- 5) Students take care of the structure of the essay, namely the introduction, body and conclusion, and they know how to put the titles.
- 6) Students pay attention to the language and grammar rules, use an appropriate way of conveying things, and use the right methods to express themselves relative to the particular scenario.

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<sup>2</sup> This translation has been edited for clarity.

- 7) Good writing must have certain characteristics; those are clarity, fluency, and clarity;  
Students should write their composition taking care of these things.
- 8) Students should be aware of different types of sentences (noun sentences/verb sentences etc.)
- 9) Students will use visual and auditory elements in a correct and effective way. They will choose pictures/photographs/graphics depending on the type of composition that will either complete or support the composition, and not something unrelated or unnecessary.
- 10) Students should check their own writings according to grammar (proofread).
- 11) Students should take responsibility for what they write (care about ethics, morality, and writing rules).
- 12) Students can share their writings with others to read it. They can share it on mediums such as websites/books/newspapers, etc.. Furthermore, they are open to criticism and if needed, they can respond to those criticisms.

These twelve learning outcomes are consistent with standards in American composition classrooms. It is interesting to also note that there is no explicit mention of rhetorical elements. Additionally, a tremendous gap often exists between theory and practice. Thus, examining the actual curricular outcomes is essential for both Turkish and English language composition education.

The grade-specific writing curriculums also happen to be quite thorough. As an example, the grade nine curriculum can be seen:



*Table 6 Grade 9 English (Writing) Curricular Aspects  
(Described on pages 31-38 of the National Curriculum (T.C. Milli Egitim Bakanligi))*

Unit	Learning Outcome
Unit 1	Students write compositions regarding the purpose and procedures of writing. Students will think of other writers' ways and techniques, and will be lead to consider the nature of writing.
Unit 2	Students will do some exercises with the techniques they have learned, like engaging in storytelling for example. If needed, other exercises can be done, but the main priority is storytelling.
Unit 3	Students will try to write poems
Unit 4	Students write will on converting older writings into Modern Turkish
Unit 5	Students will engage with novels, and write one part of a novel from their own perspectives. In this way students will learn the importance of perspective.
Unit 6	Students will be put into groups and will write a theatrical play lasting 3-5 minutes.
Unit 7	Students will write a biography as well as a CV.
Unit 8	Students will write letters through email. Students will also write petitions.
Unit 9	Students will engage in diary writing.

Specific to composition education, practices such as the analysis of rhetorical techniques, narrative writing, professional writing, and letter writing are all integrated here. These objectives deserve attention because, in comparison to the English curriculum, there is a much heavier emphasis on writing education existent in the L1 realm. The Turkish educational system sees

writing as an important and crucial skill (Turkish Language is a significant and required part of secondary school education).

In analyzing the problems that students face with the writing abilities in the Turkish language, there are various points that come up for discussion. In the study by Tolga Taga and Suleyman Unlu analyzing the opinions of Turkish teachers on the matter, one of the issues affecting student's writing abilities was a lack of reading by students, and a major issue affecting teachers was their lack of continuing education in their field related to not following the latest developments in the field (Taga and Unlu 1286). In the study by Mehmet Fidan, one of the problems in L1 writing in Turkish that students were found to be facing is one that would be all too familiar to an instructor of composition education in the United States. The prevalence of technological communications and social media, such as texting and so forth, has largely made what we can call "proper" language usage something somewhat unnecessary. As Fidan writes, "the correspondence made by ignoring the requirements of the language becomes a habit and students learn that what they learn in lessons is unnecessary" (Fidan 68). As American instructors of composition, we can often relate to students being able to communicate quite clearly in their immediate surroundings and for the purpose of their day-to-day needs, but where formal writing is almost seen as a Shakespearean task given its almost apparent irrelevance in daily life.

#### **5.4 Discussion**

The English curriculum in Turkey was designed in consideration of national economic goals. The primary aim is not for students to write but to reach a certain language proficiency level (mainly spoken proficiency). The CEFR views spoken production (specifically, interaction) as the origin of language, and thus emphasizes it (Hazar 558). While the CEFR based curriculum

shows a multi-skill approach, including writing in practice, we must remember that there will always be a different story. However, research on the matter is limited, and to date, not much literature exists on curriculum evaluations with regard to its objectives. In that sense, getting a real sense of writing competency at the secondary school level is extremely difficult, and an important area of further research. To do this, data collection is crucial, particularly pertaining to writing samples, which can then be analyzed to see if CEFR objectives have been met. On top of this, evaluation surveys by practitioners and students would be of great use towards assessment. This will be discussed further in 7.1.

However, from a bird's eye view, some indicators allow us to see that composition education at the high school level in practice falls far shorter than its expectations. The disconnect between intended goals and the on-the-ground reality has to do with a variety of other EFL-related concerns. Perhaps the most prominent of these concerns is that students do not meet the intended B2 level of proficiency and very often fall far shorter than that. One study found in the observation of certain schools that a “considerable number of high school students in Turkey do not meet curricular requirements for English language proficiency” (Isikli and Tarakcioglu 92). Additionally, in an analysis of the updated curriculum, there was found to be a “lack of congruence and contingency among the intended and observed transactions within the scope of the updated secondary school curriculum” (Aksoy 16). Indeed, this can be essentially expressed as “a remarkable gap between what is intended and what is carried out” (Aksoy 16). Relating to this, the low proficiency level discussed before makes certain curricular goals impossible, along with other elements such as lacking practice-based teacher training in contemporary teaching methodologies and in managing, assessing, and approaching the curricular changes, as well as a need for a curriculum more in line with the realities of Turkey (Aksoy).

However, the lack of secondary school preparation does take a certain remedy in the fact that the university-level preparatory English framework and subsequent composition education do not rely on secondary school education. In that sense, the relationship between secondary and tertiary writing skills is less pronounced in Turkey, because universities within the country do not necessarily see high school as sufficient for making students ready to write at the level needed for academic success at the university. This is not unique to Turkey, of course. Indeed, most American colleges and universities offer special courses (often referred to as “remedial” courses, and in the case of composition, “basic writing”) for students who lack some of the skills that are critical for college-level work, with this type of education being widespread (Attewell et al. 886). Even in the case where university remediation is entirely effective, for the entirety of the system to discount the secondary school period makes it a wasted educational opportunity. As discussed in 2.2, the secondary school period is consequential in future collegiate outcomes and should be recognized as such.

In reflection of the survey on the secondary school curriculum, whose ultimate goals and objectives are “to engage learners of English in stimulating, motivating, and enjoyable learning environments so that they become effective, fluent, and self-directed users of English,” it can be seen that the curriculum does allow for a multitude of competency development opportunities (T.C. Milli Egitim Bakanligi 4). The updated curriculum has brought about many positive changes, such as in how it focuses on a multi-competency development approach, which upon observation, is quite effective in promoting a solid base for composition and writing competencies. Exposure to various types of writing (academic, business, formal, literary, translation) and instruction on rhetorical aspects makes it evident that the development of strong foundation skills in students is stressed in the curriculum. Much of the evidence-based elements

evident in the curriculum, such as the usage of authentic materials, the implementation of ICT, and the exposure to various genres, lay a framework for future success in composition.

There is a general gap of scholarship within secondary school composition education generally, and this underscores the fact that writing, at an international level, has not seen the same type of attention as it has at the university level. Turkey's National Curriculum, inspired by international standards, is an example of this. Writing in English hasn't yet been singled out as a core competency in explicit terms, other than being a major part of the general English competency acquisition process. The rationale for this of course is that unlike in native countries, writing is merely composition-focused but rather a complementary element in the larger English learning process.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, a composition-focused analysis of secondary schooling in Turkey was presented. Per the updated 2018 National English curriculum, writing competencies are considered an area of emphasis. In theory, the curricular goals for writing can allow for great benefits in terms of university preparedness and further academic writing training. But writing education is not an explicit focus and rather one that is seen within the context of the wider purpose of ESL education. Additionally, the Turkish language curriculum has a significant writing focus integrated within it, alongside its own set of problems that teachers of it deal with that aren't so far off from what American secondary school teachers face in L1 writing instruction.

Henceforth, ELT (English Language Teacher) training will be discussed. ELT is a major academic discipline in Turkey and is the department of study that accounts for the overwhelming

majority of all English teachers at the K-12 level in Turkey. In that sense, their training with regard to composition is a topic of importance in the larger context of this thesis.

## **6 THE TEACHER DYNAMIC: COMPOSITION AND ENGLISH TEACHER TRAINING IN TURKEY**

When studying composition education and its respective aims and goals in any context, it is easy to become fixated on the curricular elements or, the most apparent element, the respective results. Yet it should be evident that composition instruction is ultimately delivered through teachers and instructors, and thus, their training and competency hold a vital role. Every nation has its unique requirements, and Turkey is no exception. As will be seen, Turkey's English teacher education system is particularly standardized and stands as a large academic field of study and research. In this chapter, this area of the larger story will be discussed with regard to elements such as the teacher selection process, ELT (English Language Teaching) departments, English teaching training related to composition, and English teacher writing ability. In doing this, a clearer picture of how teacher education curriculums manifest in practice and student outcomes can be drawn.

### **6.1 The Process**

In Turkey, English teacher training begins in high school. Of course, given the differentiation within the high school system in the country, these pathways are not all the same. Nonetheless, students in Turkey differ from students in places like the U.S., where majors can be switched quickly, and at any time one wants. This is not the case in Turkey, and these decisions must be made far earlier. *Choosing Teaching as a Career: Motivations of Pre-service English*

*Teachers in Turkey* is a phenomenal work that sheds more light on the matter. In summary, secondary students can elect to pursue a foreign language track during the second phase of their high school careers at a typical secondary school.

Interestingly, there also existed teaching specific vocational schools in the past, which universities preferred and gave extra points during entrance procedures. Whether through attending a specific teacher-training high school (which existed until 2015 but is relevant to many current teachers) or pursuing the respective track of study in other high schools, “This selection might be considered as a turning point in a student’s career because they can only prefer departments pertaining to their divisions of graduation while entering university. In this respect, foreign language departments of universities can be preferred by those students who graduate from language divisions of secondary schools” (Topkaya and Uztosun 128). High school teacher-training tracks are, of course, not the only way. But for those students dedicated to becoming teachers even at this early stage, it does mean that even their secondary education is teacher preparatory.

### **6.1.1 Testing**

From this point, students take the “determine all” exam that is the YKS (Higher Education Institutions Examination). This exam consists of three parts, known as the “Core Competency Test (TYT), Field Competency Test (AYT), and Language Competency Test (YDT)” (Atac 24). The TYT is a “multiple-choice assessment of core subjects such as Turkish, social sciences, mathematics, and science” (Kultur and Ozcan 451). The first part of this exam is mandatory, while the others are dependent on which department of study the student wants to pursue. In our case, this would be English Language Teaching (ELT) departments, discussed in more detail in 6.2. The final part of these exams, the Language Competency Test, is where a

significant distinction comes in. Students desiring to enter an English department must take a specific test related to English competency. This means that these students who will ultimately study English teaching are already differentiated.

Given that an effective teacher candidate can hardly be selected based on the results of one exam, this exam's effectiveness is already suspect. Indeed, while "students are selected with their knowledge and proficiency of English, the content of the test items is generally limited to reading, grammar and vocabulary knowledge" (Ozturk and Aydin 185). However, as far as writing is concerned, it was found that it is the most neglected aspect in this major-specific testing process, (Sayin and Aslan 35). The neglect of writing within standardized testing is by no means unique to Turkey, as even in the U.S., the writing sections of the SAT and ACT are optional.

Already, a composition-focused problem can be observed. Teacher candidates are assessed on measures that are not necessarily the most objective. Teacher selection is a significant issue, discussed in the study *The Challenge of Pre-Examination System in Turkey for Teacher Candidates and Potential Solutions to The Challenge* by Cagil Atac. Atac writes that the teacher selection model in Turkey differs from the models that successful countries on the PISA, such as Finland, Singapore, and Korea, employ. In the Turkish model, teachers are screened after they have finished their education programs, not before<sup>3</sup>. According to Atac, teaching itself is not necessarily a competitive profession where academic majors such as law and medicine followed by others take precedence in student preferences. Indeed, what can be seen is that the "rising generation with their high academical results does not have a desire to become teacher" (Atac 26). Ultimately, Atac argues that this type of screening is far from adequate.

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<sup>3</sup>Arac references Barber and Mourshed's important work in her analysis. This will be expounded about more in Chapter 5 in the section on teacher selection.



### ***6.1.2 At the University***

English teacher education at the point of entering university takes two forms. One is the mainstream and most common teacher training pathway, and the other represents an alternative pathway. To describe both, the first is pursuing a degree in ELT (English Language Teaching) through one of the fifty-seven programs relating to ELTE (English Language Teacher Education) programs (Atac 21). The other pathway is through attaining a “pedagogical formation certificate,” which, until recently, could be completed within one year until it was abolished in 2020 by YÖK (Council of Higher Education) and the MoNE in favor of non-thesis masters’ programs (Akor and Savasci 18). This pedagogical certificate allowed those who did not complete an education program to still qualify as teachers. For example, prospective English teachers who completed degrees in a field like English or American Literature in our case.

### ***6.1.3 The KPSS***

Both processes culminate in a final hurdle, the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS), the most significant aspect of Turkey’s teacher education and selection system (as well as for selection across the entire civil service). The KPSS is a crucial exam for every public/civil employee in the country, and as teachers fall under that category, so does this exam have relevance to them. However, the pedagogical component is unique to only teaching candidates. This exam is critical in determining prospects for a teacher who hopes to work in the state system. It is a multiple-choice exam composed of three parts: general knowledge/general ability, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical and content knowledge (Atac 26). The parts can be described as follows (Kilickaya and Krajka 254):

*Table 7 Components of the KPSS*

<b>General knowledge and ability</b>	This section aims to measure candidates' knowledge and ability in the Turkish language and mathematics, testing the basics of the language and the basic maths skills.
<b>General Culture</b>	This section deals with the history of Turkey with a focus on the Principles of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, the geography of Turkey, Turkish Culture and Popular Topics.
<b>Educational Sciences</b>	This section measures pedagogical background, focusing on the general principles of learning and teaching, curriculum and instruction, guidance and counselling.

Before 2013, there was no content (subject area) assessment, although there were questions common to all candidates in different subject areas such as mathematics, English, and biology (Kilickaya and Krajka 254). This changed after that, and now, the subject area portion for ELT teachers contains 50 multiple choice questions divided into two sections, a subject knowledge test (consisting of language proficiency, linguistics, and literature) and a subject teaching test (Ciftci 32). For teacher candidates, there is urgency in passing this exam, in that it is only offered once a year through a nationally administered procedure. After reaching a specific predetermined baseline score by the Ministry of National Education, teachers go on to a short interview, lasting only about ten minutes (Ozturk and Aydin 187).

In this interview, candidates are assessed by a series of questions consisting of “educational sciences, general culture, comprehending an issue and summarizing it, expression skill and reasoning skill; communication skills, self-confidence, persuasion skill; openness to scientific and technological improvements; representation ability in front of community and educational qualifications” (Atac 27). Crucially, this interview is conducted in Turkish, which presents another important limitation, compounded by a “lack of scoring rubrics and field experts” (Yesilcinar and Cakir 1550). That interview does not have subject-specific questions, and in one study of ELT teaching candidates, it was found that an extremely high percentage of

them were opposed to the relevance of the exam (Ciftci 35). Karatas and Okan also write the opinions of the teacher candidates from various fields on the exam, which highlight psychological problems, high levels of anxiety, pressure, and stress suffered by test-takers as well as even more crucially, a sense of demotivation for student teachers to follow the courses offered in their ELT departments (Karatas and Okan 1653).

As we can already see, Turkey is a nation where exams take utmost importance. What is relevant to the study of composition instructor training is that an English teacher's competency in any area of English, much less a specific area such as writing, plays no role in teacher selection. The KPSS, even in assessing general pedagogy - which is beyond the extent of this thesis but still worth mentioning - fails. The exam is a very general one taken by every prospective civil servant (teacher or not) and raises many questions about its ultimate effectiveness. Indeed, for the KPSS, "candidates say that most of the information they get during the preparation process is based on memorizing and most of them are not useful for their future" (Ugulu and Yorek 186). Ultimately, "candidates believe that, this exam is far from choosing the right person and candidates with memorizing skills become successful and advanced" (Ugulu and Yorek 187).

## **6.2 ELT & Composition Education**

The ELT (English Language Teaching) field is a significant part of the Turkish academic system at the tertiary level. It has made its own nation-specific identity, crafted through Turkey's national exploration with English education in its unique geography. The majority of training for prospective English instructors in Turkey takes place in these ELT departments in the education faculties of universities. In the programs, "the education normally takes four years unless the program entails one-year intensive English preparatory, in this case, 1+4 years" (Karakas 2). At the university level, much like the broader education level in Turkey, there have been numerous

constant changes throughout the years. One of the most significant ones for ELT Departments occurred in 2006. Per these changes, “The components of the program comprise field knowledge (linguistic competence), teacher education (pedagogic competence), general knowledge and teaching practice” (Karakas 2-3). ELT is the most significant pipeline from which English Teacher candidates graduate.

### 6.2.1 *The ELT curriculum*

The ELT curriculums across universities in Turkey have many similarities. This is because the curriculums of ELT programs (and other programs) are standardized by YÖK. This makes doing an analysis of the curriculum more straightforward since there is one set curriculum that is available on the YÖK website. Already, some work has been done on curricular analysis relating to the ELT program (Coskun and Daloglu, Karakas, Sanli, etc.). Through these analyses, a glimpse of the positive and negative aspects of the curriculum design regarding teacher training can be seen. However, to date, any type of writing or composition-specific analysis hasn’t been done. This points to a new research direction addressing this deficiency.

The official curriculum is outlined in the Turkish language, which I had translated (using the assistance of a translator) and describes the aims and content of each course broadly. Below, the four-year course of study can be looked at, and particularly highlighted the courses that pertain to writing education.

*Table 8 ELT Teacher Curriculum (İngilizce Öğretmenliği Lisans Programı)*

<b>Semester I:</b> Introduction to Education Educational Sociology Atatürk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution 1 Foreign Language 1 Turkish Language 1 information technologies Reading Skills 1	<b>Semester II:</b> Education psychology Educational Philosophy Atatürk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution 2 Foreign Language 2 Turkish Language 2 Reading Skills 2 <b>Writing Skills 2</b>
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<b>Writing Skills 1</b> Listening and Pronunciation 1 Oral Communication Skills 1	Listening and Pronunciation 2 Oral Communication Skills 2 Structure of English
<b>Semester III:</b> Instructional Technologies Teaching Principles and Methods Elective 1 Elective 1 Elective 1 English Learning and Teaching Approaches English Literature 1 Linguistics 1 <b>Critical Reading and Writing</b>	<b>Semester IV:</b> Turkish Education History Research Methods in Education Elective 2 Elective 2 Elective 2 English Teaching Programs English Literature 2 Linguistics 2 Language Acquisition
<b>Semester V:</b> Classroom Management Morals and Ethics in Education Elective 3 Elective 3 Elective 3 Teaching Foreign Languages to Children 1 Teaching English Language Skills 1 Language and Literature Teaching 1	<b>Semester VI:</b> Measurement and Evaluation in Education Turkish Education System and School Management Elective 4 Elective 4 Elective 4 Teaching Foreign Languages to Children 2 Teaching English Language Skills 2 Language and Literature Teaching 2
<b>Semester VII:</b> Teaching Practice 1 Special Education and Inclusion Elective 5 Community Service Practices Elective 5 Course Content Development in English Language Teaching Translation	<b>Semester VII:</b> Teaching Practice 2 Counseling in Schools Elective 6 Elective 6 Exam Preparation in English Language Teaching

**Career Electives:** Open and Distance Learning, Child Psychology, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, Education Law, Anthropology of Education, History of Education, Drama in Education, Non-Program Activities in Education, Program Development in Education, Project Preparation in Education, Critical and Analytical Thinking, Education of Hospitalized Children, Inclusive Education, Character and Values Education, Comparative Education, Micro Teaching, Museum Education, Out-of-School Learning Environments, Learning Difficulty, Individualizing and Adapting Teaching, Sustainable Development and Education, Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

**ELT Electives:** Language and Society, World English and Culture, Pragmatics and Language Teaching, English Textbook Analysis, Drama in English Teaching, Material Design in English Teaching, New Approaches in English Teaching, English Vocabulary Teaching, English in Mass Communication, Assessment of In-Class Learning, Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching, Discourse Analysis and Language Teaching, Teaching Integrated Language Skills

The curriculum shows clearly that there are opportunities existent for prospective teachers to develop their writing skills explicitly. And there seem to be courses where implicit writing competencies can also be built, such as “Language and Literature Teaching” and so forth.

The description of the explicit coursework directly related to pedagogical training (with their course objectives) can also be seen:

*Table 9 Description of Relevant Teacher Candidate Coursework*

<p><b>Writing Skills 1</b></p> <p>Paragraph forms and structure; technical features of the paragraph; paragraph analysis; paragraph plan drawing; producing text with description, comparison, discussion, narration types, summary writing, interpretation; Writing short stories, reviews (on a book and / or film) and formal / informal letter.</p>
<p><b>Writing Skills 2</b></p> <p>Reading to write, writing to be read; will be done before, during and after writing raising awareness about practices; rewriting by paraphrasing; the ability to review what you have written; self-evaluation of what you write; peer review; writing an essay and homework report.</p>
<p><b>Critical Reading and Writing</b></p> <p>To be able to summarize and/or report by examining current studies selected from the field of English language education; to be able to examine studies within their own context and localize knowledge; comparing texts defending different views on the same subject and synthesizing them and producing their own original texts.</p>

### **6.2.2 Teacher Writing: An Analysis**

There has been some work regarding ELT curricular assessments, but nothing that analyzes the program of study for teaching candidates with regard to its successes and failures has yet been done, even broadly. Of course, such an initiative would have to be done at both the national and university levels. This will be relevant to one recommendation I will expound upon later in 7.4. However, going through the available literature, various issues can be reflected on to piece together somewhat potential writing issues amongst teacher candidates. In one study of ELT students at one highly ranked university, it was found that the “majority of the participating prospective teachers of English had high and average anxiety,” suggesting what I see is a lack of exposure to formal, focused training in writing (Atay and Kurt 110). The problem of teacher anxiety in writing is evidenced by Selma Kara, who, in her study of 150 ELT candidates at a

major Turkish university, found that they spoke of not having writing habits nor being used to expressing themselves through writing given that in their previous education, they were familiar only with test-taking (Kara 103). In another qualitative study analyzing the writing ability of ELT students (known as pre-service teachers), various sources of writing difficulty were found, being 1) student-based sources, 2) educational practices and tendencies, and 3) lecturer-based sources (Tanyer and Susoy 26). These are particularly relevant for the purpose of this thesis, since they have direct relevance to ELT instruction and the curriculum itself. Elaborating on this:

The *student-based sources* were subcategorized into eight codes: 1a) demotivation, 1b) limited practice in and effort for L2 writing and reading, 1c) nervousness and fear, 1d) linguistic competence, 1e) class absenteeism, 1f) competency in writing, 1g) lack of planning/time management and 1h) attitudes towards lecturer. The *educational practices and tendencies* consisted of seven subcodes: 2a) language education before university, 2b) examination in classroom environment, 2c) rule-based, multifaceted nature of L2 writing, 2d) cultural and parental tendencies, 2e) late or imprecisely given feedback, 2f) unclear evaluation criteria and 2g) limited time for teaching/learning. The *lecturer-based sources*, on the other hand, were divided into three subcategories: 3a) lecturer attitude, 3b) lecturer's teaching characteristics and 3c) expectations of lecturers (Tanyer and Susoy 37-38).

While this study was limited, contained a very small sample size, was constrained to only one university, and relied on student impressions of only one writing exam whose scores they received, it still points to numerous areas of further exploration that give direction for future research. For example, we see a multipronged set of issues, each that needs to be addressed in its context while still bearing on the larger context at hand. It also fits the larger narrative of the

difficulties the students face in writing at the university level (in the sense that high school students are unprepared due to low teacher writing competency). Of course, these findings rely heavily on extrapolation, and causation cannot be implied without further and more concrete research.

### **6.3 Alternative Teacher Training Pathway: The Pedagogical Certificate**

Earlier in this chapter, the alternative route towards ELT training for prospective English teachers was briefly discussed. Formally, this is known as the “pedagogical formation certificate.” These alternative teacher certification programs were created mainly in response to the severe teacher shortages (very relevant also to ELT), namely, a lack of qualified education graduates. However, as the university system has dramatically expanded, so has the supply of available teaching candidates. So much so, in fact, that supply now significantly outpaces demand across all teaching areas, and ELT teachers are no exception (Aksoy, 2017). That said, the program has remained until only recently (as of 2020), and in its structure, allowed for English majors to take this pedagogical certificate (which is not specific to English pedagogy) and qualify for English teaching (Taner, 19).

In this case, we see a type of training very similar to the American training system, where the most common pathways for teachers of English is through an English B.A. program, followed by subsequent pedagogical training (whether through a master’s or certificate program). These teachers are bound to have more writing and analysis-based training, just given the nature of their programs. These programs also differ from education programs, like ELT, because they are less standardized amongst universities (there are no official curriculums on the YOK website as there are for teaching programs like ELT).



Unfortunately, there have not been any significant studies comparing the quality of the alternatively certified teachers versus graduates of ELT faculties. One available measure is the KPSS exam, in which both alternatively educated teachers and education graduates have been analyzed to have almost identical success rates and scores (Taner). However, this says nothing for teacher evaluation. The KPSS is hardly a measure for this element, being a general civil service exam, that even non-teacher prospective government employees take. It can only be inferred that these teachers would possess a much higher level of writing skill due to the nature of their training, *but* due to the lack of training in linguistic instruction, they would fall short in this area. And as English writing competency does require a certain level of English competency on part of the students, it's unlikely that their training would be a significant game-changer for the students who are already struggling in language acquisition, as is the case in Turkey.

#### **6.4 The Teacher Practicum**

The teacher practicum is a defining component of ELT education in Turkey and is listed explicitly in the ELT curricular document released by YÖK (İngilizce Öğretmenliği Lisans Programı). The practicum, which exists in all teacher education programs in the country, is quite uniform across fields in its format. It is a year-long process split into two semesters that students undertake in their final year of university education. In the first semester, “pre-service teachers are obliged to attend classes in certain schools they are appointed to and observe and report the lessons to their supervisors” while in the second, students “...are required to plan, prepare, and implement lessons under the supervision of the university supervisor and with the guidance of mentor teachers whom pre-service teachers have observed in the first semester” (Ceylan, et al. 103). The first semester of the practicum, then, is mainly observatory, while the second is completely practical (Koksal 898). These practicum courses are completed in collaboration with

local Ministry of National Education schools (Yesilbursa 53). The practicum was also embedded in a condensed pace within the pedagogical certificate for those graduates of programs outside of ELT, namely English or American language and literature, linguistics or translation (Mirici and Olmez-Caglar 278).

While aimed at developing student teaching skills in the classroom, the teaching practicum, upon closer analysis, is deeply relevant for composition. In Turkey, the teaching practicum is heavily built on a reflective practice (RP) framework, something that also happens to be a dominant ELT methodology, and that is well-recognized for its role in helping “in-service and pre-service teachers to think more productively on their practice (Yesilbursa 50). As is seen from Ceylan et al.’s meta-synthesis on the ELT practicum in Turkey between 2008-2017, there has also been a significant degree of scholarly attention related to reflective practices in the ELT curriculum (Ceylan, et al. 108). While the exact reflective assignments obviously vary across universities, they are similar in the sense that they are aimed at prompting prospective teachers to reflect upon their experiences in the classroom.

Some examples taken from relevant literature can be studied to view the extent of these reflective experiences. In one Istanbul university, prospective teacher candidates were asked at the end of the practicum program to submit a portfolio which would include “...lesson plans, self-evaluations, peer evaluations, journal entries about their observations, reaction papers to the articles read in the practice teaching seminar course, and the certificates of the conferences or seminars they attended during the practicum” (Akcan 36). In another university, reflective journals were collected from students that pertained to their experiences at practice schools, which particularly focused on the “lesson observed, the mentor’s classroom management strategies, classroom context and language, blackboard use and error correction” (Ilin 1019).

The teacher practicum shows an emphasis on writing that can be of interest to practitioners of composition pedagogy. Most significantly, it shows that there is an emphasis on writing within teacher education that simultaneously fulfills the very practical concern of reflecting upon classroom activities as a means for competency building. Furthermore, the intent of these reflections is not to assess technical writing issues, but rather, to focus on content.

In principle, RP existent in the practicum directly correlates with a number of the “Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing” that the CCCC (Conference on College Composition and Communication) lays out clearly. For instance, the CCCC mentions that “Sound writing instruction recognizes writing processes as iterative and complex,” elaborating that writing takes place over time and improves through an extended process of feedback (Conference on College Composition and Communication). Because reflection takes place over an extended period of time (an entire year), this is certainly fulfilled. The CCCC also mentions that “Sound writing instruction depends upon frequent, timely, and context-specific feedback to students from an experienced postsecondary instructor”; RP is done under the supervision of university supervisors, who respond to student writing.

More so, the CCCC states that “Sound writing instruction supports learning, engagement, and critical thinking in courses across the curriculum,” and in the sense that the practicum is meant to be a culmination of the ELT curriculum, the RP supports this aim. We see that “Sound writing instruction provides students with the support necessary to achieve their goals,” which in the case of ELT students, is to improve their pedagogical skills through the usage of reflection. Additionally, we can even see that CCCC statement that “Sound writing instruction emphasizes relationships between writing and technologies” in the fact that there has been work in Turkish

universities relating to the usage of electronic technologies in practicum portfolios (Ayan and Seferoglu, Bener and Yildiz, Oner and Adadan).

Of course, there is certainly no explicit composition-focused attention nor emphasis on essential composition principles related to rhetoric and the theories of writing in the practicum. But what can be seen is that opportunity exists for teachers to develop their writing skills right before embarking on their careers as teachers.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the training and requirements that English teachers of the nation must cross before being deployed to schools. As is the case, writing education for most teachers is not all that stressed. Those who will have a considerable amount of writing training will be those who are alternatively trained (which already is a minority of students). Additionally, the system has no current way of screening teachers who are ultimately expected to carry on the respective curricular goals (which have much relation to composition). There is also lack of investigation into teacher competencies in general, but various problems have been found to exist regarding efficacy, anxiety, and training. At the same time, there are certainly opportunities in place within the official curriculum which cater to writing education, specifically, within the teaching practicum. The practicum includes an extensive RP component which presents an area for final-year student teachers to engage with writing in a way that fulfills various principles of sound writing pedagogy as articulated by the CCCC.

## 7 CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

A general overview of composition in Turkey was presented in this thesis. Getting a glimpse of composition education in the country was difficult in the sense that writing or composition instruction has not been singled out as an area of study by ELT, English, or Education scholars in the country at any significant level. This has various reasons to it, with the main one being that (L2) writing and competency building is secondary to the bigger issues existent, the main one being a lack of general English fluency in speaking. English composition and its instruction are not so much a scholarly area of study in Turkish academic circles, nor are there many practitioners of it within universities. Rhetoric & composition, which presents the framework of thought this thesis was conducted through, has yet to manifest itself in this new national context as an explicit scholarly interest.

Various points of attention and challenges pertaining to composition have become evident with this thesis, and I intend here to offer recommendations for addressing these points of concern. There is a long way to go in English composition education in Turkey, and the first step starts with acknowledging the importance of such education and then targeted policy. In this section, I will be putting forward the following challenges and subsequent recommendations, those being 1) ESL & Writing: Striking a Balance 2) Lack of research and study on composition across scholarship 3) The CEFR ideal standard versus the reality on the ground 4) The lack of curricular assessments 5) Turkish language education and 6) Teacher selection.

I acknowledge that some of my recommendations are policy-based and require top-down initiatives. I want to state my case for why this has a place in my (rhetoric & composition/English) Ph.D. thesis. Primarily, rhetoric & composition graduate programs are meant not only to train scholars of writing but also (more specific to the university level)

administrators of writing programs. In the Turkish context, the gateway into university education runs through composition or writing coursework, much like in the American one. I believe strongly that rhetoric & composition scholars should then engage at an interdisciplinary level and have a responsibility to do so. Who else but a writing scholar can truly guide effective policy on a curriculum that heavily emphasizes writing? In the US, organizations that engage in policy and relate to composition or writing education already exist in some forms. For example, the CCCC of the NCTE has precisely done this. In Turkey, I hope that this can ultimately take its own form, although it must be noted that unlike in the U.S., such an initiative would likely have to begin at the governmental level given its tremendous role in educational policy. While the list of challenges and their recommendations presented in this Chapter is by no means exhaustive, I firmly believe these first steps will allow for further developments and give ELT researchers and other scholars interested in the topic a place to start from for future investigation.

### **7.1 ESL & Writing: Striking a Balance**

ESL represents the primary methodology for English education in the country, as it was found in this thesis. Essentially, teaching English in the country is centered around TESOL/ESL standards, which are not focused on building writing competencies in and of themselves, at least in practice. Writing education can be considered a higher-level skill and secondary to spoken communication. And while the ESL curriculum based on CEFR standards does include a high degree of writing instruction, the lack of studies and scholarship related explicitly to CEFR writing objectives demonstrates that it is hardly a priority. This line, though, between composition and ESL scholarship is by no means something new. The scholar of L2 writing and Professor of English, Paul Matsuda, refers to this phenomenon as “A Disciplinary Division of

Labor.” His work is something I would like to summarize and then frame for a Turkey-specific recommendation.

Essentially, Matsuda speaks of how this “division of labor between composition specialists and ESL specialists was inadvertently created between the 1940s and the 1960s as a byproduct of the professionalization of TESL as well as of composition studies” (Matsuda 714). Essentially, during that period, ESL “professionalized” in its historical context, ultimately creating what can be expressed in simple terms as a gap between ESL and other allied scholarship (in our case, composition). ESL has developed into a unique profession with its own methodologies, frameworks, and recognized qualifications. The professionalization that occurred, as Matsuda wrote, had the proportional effect of distancing composition scholars from ESL, creating a sentiment of “the other” amongst composition scholars with regard to engaging in ESL-related initiatives (teaching, research). As can be inferred, “the division of labor has had a lasting impact on the relationship between the two professions” (Matsuda 714).

Masuda takes this further, referring to the “myth of transience” referenced by various scholars, that “ESL writing can be broken down neatly into a linguistic component and a writing component and that the linguistic problems will disappear after some additional instruction in remedial language courses” (Matsuda 715). Masuda points out that this is not the case, and ESL cannot substitute for composition, even if the ESL students in question get additional related language instruction. Why is this relevant here? Because even if not intentional, the Turkish national education system plays into this divide at all levels. It is even more complicated because composition studies is not a formal or recognized field within the country, in either ELT or English Departments. This divide is perhaps even more pronounced because English departments in the country do not engage with Preparatory Year and Academic English programs and

coursework. The Preparatory English frameworks are staffed by ESL/TESOL specialists and generally are based out of Foreign Language Departments. The English departments only serve to facilitate English majors later on, and the coursework revolves around traditional areas of language and literature (rhetoric & composition is not a part of English departments in the country).

The ELT departments also do not engage in collegiate teaching, as they are fully concerned with the teaching of prospective schoolteachers. Ultimately, this divide means that much expertise within these fields addressing crucial areas of English competency remains unexplored, which is detrimental. Indeed, the components of English competency at the higher level cannot be seen in a vacuum. Still, the professionalization approach adopted by Turkey has very much precisely done this, whether intentionally or not. Consequently, ESL professionals are burdened with a responsibility beyond what they are trained and qualified to do.

The proposed solution for this problem then could be obvious. On first look, since the professionalization of the fields has been a significant driver to this issue, it may be thought that the key to the problem lies in addressing this. Masuda addresses this directly, stating that “the solution to these problems does not lie in eliminating the division entirely, since both composition studies and second-language studies have established their institutional identities and practice...” (Matsuda 715). Instead, Matsuda suggests that “second-language writing should be seen as an integral part of both composition studies and second-language studies, and specialists in both professions should try to transform their institutional practices in ways that reflect the needs and characteristics of second-language writers in their own institutional contexts” (Matsuda 715).



Matsuda makes recommendations that reflect the composition-focused nature of his scholarship (naturally being a composition scholar), that composition specialists should begin to engage more with ESL research and ultimately engage with it more themselves. Additionally, composition specialists should pay more attention to L2-related perspectives, and graduate programs should do the same in training the next generation of composition scholars. On top of that, the respective writing program administrations should facilitate EFL learners (assigning teachers who are trained and familiar with EFL practices and methodologies).

In our case, the script must be flipped. As mentioned before, Turkey lacks an active scholarly community in rhetoric & composition in English studies. Thus, there is not much of a division of labor, as there is a reliance on one field (ELT) to take care of all the labor requirements. In that sense, I turn my attention to the ESL/ELT side, which must take this initiative given their sheer influence over the country's English educational curriculum and practice. It is ultimately up to them, in the short-term at least, to engage with rhetoric & composition related research and outreach. This relates to the first recommendation of the need for increased scholarship. But, more so than this, the training of rhetoric & composition scholars should be seen with more importance. This is not something so out of reach.

Turkey is a nation that has a robust scholarship system in place which funds students and scholars for study-abroad opportunities across disciplines. This infrastructure presents an excellent opportunity in a situation where Turkey can benefit from its future (and even current) academics and scholars attaining specialized training in composition studies. The nature of cross-national training in rhetoric & composition is nothing new and even affected American composition studies, which itself has its roots in the German education system, as Robert Connors speaks about. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Germany had a far higher level of educational

opportunity than the US did, leading prospective scholars (across disciplines, and Rhetoric being no exception) to go there for higher education. Eventually, composition studies in America became what it is now. Such an evolution will be the next step for composition education in Turkey, with its scholars taking their training from places with solid rhetoric & composition scholarship (especially the US) and then adapting this knowledge into the Turkish educational system.

The question that comes up is what value (English) rhetoric & composition presents for the Turkish scholar. In my opinion, the definition of the field, as an “academic discipline that informs all other fields in teaching students how to communicate their ideas and construct their arguments,” gives insight into the answer to this question (Lynn i). As practitioners of composition studies, we must understand that what is being said and conveyed is important. In an EFL approach to writing (rooted in process and discussed more in 7.2), these rhetorical considerations are lacking. My own scholarly journey to study rhetoric & composition was heavily influenced during a course that I took by chance during the final year of undergraduate study. The course, *Persuasion*, was taught by my now Ph.D. advisor in the field, Dr. George Pullman, and largely incorporated his text on the discipline, *Persuasion: History, Theory, Practice*. The course resulted in myself changing disciplines with a goal to one day instruct in the field. Rather than use the term of rhetoric in the text, Pullman uses the term “Persuasion,” given the misleading nature of the former term and its association with deceit (Pullman xxi). Pullman emphasizes the study of persuasion for benefits including self-promotion and self-defense, self-awareness, self-improvement, success at work, as and more effective decision making (Pullman). To Pullman, “if you want to be successful you have to be persuasive, and if

you want to be persuasive then you have to understand and be able to use rhetoric effectively” (Pullman xxiii).

Considering Turkey’s national goals to advance forward in science and technology and to reap the economic benefits associated with English, a study in effective communication, rather than simply learning how to communicate, is necessary. It must be made clear by and to policymakers and ELT/English scholars in the country that rhetoric & composition studies is a separate area of scholarship that is unique in its focus toward writing education. The importance of this is crucial, as it cannot be reasonably expected to put the burden of labor on ESL scholars whose discipline and training are different. Ultimately, the start of this change could be through hiring rhetoric & composition faculty into existing ELT programs and study-abroad opportunities bring offered to increase knowledge transfer.

## **7.2 Lack of Research and Study on Composition Across Scholarship**

One of the great challenges of this thesis was in finding relevant existent scholarship to work upon. Much of the resources used to craft this thesis and cited were not composition specific, but rather, components of other, broader works in ELT or ones that took an ELT approach to writing. It was not surprising that this was the case, as it served as the prime motivation for the creation of this thesis in the first place. It is hoped that this project presents any scholar wanting to examine more specific facets of writing and composition education in Turkey a strong basis which to work upon. Furthermore, I argue that this is an area of study that needs more attention from the increasing scholarship within the country. The importance of further research in the field is magnified when considering the national goals of Turkey, which view English education in terms of economic development.

In my journey of writing this thesis, I came across some invaluable resources despite the limitations. One was the “DergiPark” platform created by the Turkish Academic Network and Information Center. DergiPark is the database that hosts all the national journals in Turkey, numbering 2,015 journals in 2020. An advanced search engine is associated with the website, and many journals are also published in English. More so, even those published exclusively in Turkish have English abstracts. Many of the articles cited in this paper were published through DergiPark and would have been inaccessible otherwise.

Secondly was the assistance I received from Turkish scholars, often through informal discussions. I am a firm believer in the role that international collaboration and perspective has in context specific research (in our case, for my benefit as an American researcher of composition). In that light, I made sure to engage with the Turkish academic community in two ways, one, through engaging in Turkish ELT conferences (where I feel like I brought rhetoric & composition representation as the only one from the discipline at these meetings), and secondly, through the creation of academic relationships through personal networking (I had much success in this through the LinkedIn platform; but not much in through email). These conversations often helped lead me to resources or new ideas, which ultimately influenced this thesis.

Composition is central to Turkey’s long-term goals for its development. It goes hand in hand with national objectives, and this is evidenced in the wider aims in the push for quality that English education in Turkey is constantly experiencing. In today's globalized world, the discussion of the place of English is beyond dispute. Indeed, “The dominance of English used as a *lingua franca* in international business contexts is now seemingly beyond dispute” (Nickerson 367). This, of course, means that proper writing skills within this context will be especially important, and indeed, already are. That is why FYC is something so stressed in the U.S., as

writing is seen as an all too important skill and one that deserves special attention. In the Turkish context, the importance of written communication must also be stressed, and academics and policy makers will need to play a special and significant role in this. As I opine, an acknowledgement of the issue followed by targeted educational policy, such as ensuring ELT teachers get stronger training in writing and integrating the existing ESL educational model with composition elements, is the first step to this.

To elaborate, it is not to say that there is a lack of national research in writing itself, even within the English language. Much research has been dedicated to ELT/ESL writing, but those areas contrast from those that would be concentrated on in the FYC context (by rhetoric & composition scholars). I find the distinction observed by Jooyoung Lee at one U.S. university befitting to what I observed coming out of Turkish scholarship on writing, where an emphasis is given to an ESL academic writing methodology rather than an FYC methodology. FYC course objectives revolve around developing rhetorical knowledge competencies to enable students to analyze the purpose, audience, and context of the writing and adapt their own compositions accordingly (Lee 3). In contrast, these rhetorical situations are not given much attention in ESL courses, and the focus is mainly on the deductive structure, such as the five-paragraph essay (Lee 3).

The FYC framework recognizes that correctness and appropriateness may differ depending on genre, discipline, and occasion, while an ESL course curriculum may focus more on “common” grammatical and mechanical errors (Lee 3). As Matsuda alluded to, effective writing instruction does not lie in either discipline but rather in the middle of the two. Composition and ESL writing are not two separate things but simply two methodologies that work toward a common goal.

Based on this thesis, I believe that more qualitative studies observing the situation are important, particularly regarding rhetorical elements. These studies should address both the “what” and the “why” questions. It is important to continue investigating what issues in student writing are and why these issues exist.

I propose one way for how this may be done. Accessing writing samples submitted into the respective learning management systems that students use can provide primary source data that can be analyzed. This had been made easy by an opportunity afforded by the COVID pandemic era, where Turkey was forced to make a shift to online education without any thorough preparations (Akbulut et al. 31). The MoNE, at that point, chose to utilize an online platform known as EBA (Educational Informatics Network), which has been at the forefront of providing distance education at the K-12 level in the country (Ozer 1126). In essence, what before could have been a much more logistically complex task has become easier in the sense that students now submit their work electronically, and much work has already been digitized. In a more conventional environment, a university-high school framework like that discussed in 7.5 can be used to solicit student work and interview students (of course, with attention to appropriate research procedures). Such a collaboration can extend to the research atmosphere and lead to a fruitful scenario in which university instructors will have direct insight into the problems faced by the population that constitutes their future students.

### **7.3 CEFR & Reality**

As was discussed earlier in this thesis in the fourth chapter on secondary school composition, the CEFR is an integral part of the National English Curriculum in Turkey. The CEFR very much is a defining keystone of all the educational initiatives in the country, for the

reasons of its international recognition as well as Turkey's desire to integrate more with Europe and even attain membership within the EU.

It should be mentioned that the CEFR is not a framework that is meant to address academic writing directly. Instead, it measures language proficiency across various competencies, namely reading, speaking, listening, and writing. That being said, writing is a piece of this, and in my examination, it is addressed by the CEFR in a way that encompasses the goals of composition studies, at least outwardly. Unfortunately, not much research has been done on examining the bridge between CEFR and academic writing success. Thus, it is tough to glean the strengths and weaknesses of the scenario. The lack of research on the topic of CEFR and academic writing success (broadly and nationally) indicates the lack of emphasis by scholars and teachers in improvising the CEFR to deal with academic writing challenges. And, given the lack of training that the practitioners in the country already have in academic writing, there is already an impairment that can be seen.

However, this is where rhetoric & composition can play a role. As much as the CEFR is designed to promote the acquisition of multiple language-related competencies, so is the field of rhetoric & composition, which is certainly not constrained to just writing (although its association with Freshman Composition can lead some to think so). Indeed, rhetoric & composition is a field that informs all other fields in teaching students how to both communicate their ideas and construct their arguments (Lynn i). In "Teaching Composition in the ESL Classroom: What We Can Learn from Research in the Teaching of English," Vivian Zamel writes that composing a composition stretches beyond more than simply the ability to write but rather is a reflector of creativity and expression of ideas and thoughts in the second language (Zamel 68). It is needless to say that these two elements make up effective language usage.

Zamel argues that if the “experience of composing” in the ESL classroom could change taking this into account, it would lead to ESL students could beginning to appreciate “English as another language to use rather than just a second language to learn” (Zamel 74). Ultimately, this is the aim of the CEFR.

The CEFR broadly defines students’ expectations at each level of its predetermined language competency (i.e., B1, B2, C1, C2). From here, teachers are given the autonomy (to a certain degree) to work towards achieving these goals. But students do not reach these targets. In that sense, the objectives of the national curriculum are in a way disconnected from reality. Of course, this directly affects writing.

Because of the nature of Turkey’s educational system, changes and reforms are made at the top, and at a national (rather than local) level. These changes take effect across the nation, making the amount of effort needed to make them something that can be assumed to be quite high. And it is obvious that there must be significant justifications for these changes to occur before they are made. Ideally, the nation should adopt an approach of a unique and context-inspired curriculum, that has reasonable and realistic goals according to evidenced-based research and analysis. That being said, policy is hardly ever crafted under idealistic and free conditions. Per a brief on guidelines for writing policy recommendations by Conor Breen, making an effective recommendation is something that multifactorial, but one “which is based on strong evidence, is cost-effective to implement and takes account of international best practice has a better chance of being accepted and influencing policy debates” (Breen 2).

While the purpose of this thesis is not to propose policy, I consider it reasonable to express the need for long-term thought towards balancing the political/economic interests with the situational context. This could point to more structured adaptations of the existing curriculum



or setting the age for beginning English study earlier (as was discussed in Chapter Four, English is required as a subject from Grade Four onwards). Beginning English learning at an earlier stage could allow for taking advantage of the “critical period” that Johnson and Newport speak about, that as age progresses starting at infancy, the ability to acquire native proficiency also decreases. This can ultimately mean an extension of the time that students in the nation have to acquire the language, so that at higher levels, they can focus on more advanced competencies.

In the short term, small-scale initiatives and recommendations can be made. In the Turkish context, the work of Yazicilar and Bumen on curriculum adaptation by teachers in the country provide some direction. In their study, they analyzed how teachers of mathematics in rural high schools adapted their instruction to the needs of their students, in a way somewhat defying the rigid curriculum set in place with little flexibility. As the authors describe it:

Findings revealed that although teachers do not disclose it in their plans due to their lack of autonomy, they adapt the curriculum according to the perceived needs and attributes of students to ‘cross over the brick wall’ built by the Ministry of Education. It has been found that the observed adaptation patterns were ‘omitting’, ‘creating’, ‘replacing’, ‘covering superficially’, ‘using different sources/materials’, and ‘changing the allocated time’ (Yazicilar and Bumen 597).

The adaptation observed here is something that is very positive. But it is concerning that these teachers are left to their own devices to maneuver without support. The government should encourage teachers to adapt their curriculums accordingly to translate this into policy. This is especially relevant within the English classroom, where a “one-size fits all” policy is doomed to fail. In this, teachers should be made aware of the competencies relating to composition that students are ultimately expected to attain, and they should be given the freedom (and support,

through continuing education, which is already offered to teachers in the country) to be able to adapt towards these goals.

#### **7.4 Lack of Curricular Assessments**

In analysis of the current literature, there is a deficiency in curricular assessments of the revised MoNE curriculum, and even more so in composition or writing focused assessments. That is not to say there aren't any curricular assessments available, as scholars in the country (particularly within ELT) have engaged with the topic of curricular assessments broadly. However, writing-specific assessments are hard to come by.

In that sense, I state this need with the practical reasoning that English composition is already a major part of the Turkish national curriculum (evidenced in the CEFR standards) and is explicitly stated. Curricular assessments offer tremendous room for assessment opportunity and can do so in various ways. Peter Wolf, Art Hill, and Fred Evers, expound on the importance of curricular assessments as a means (Wolf, et al. 3):

- To identify aspects of a curriculum that are working and those that need to change
- To assess the effectiveness of changes that have already been made
- To demonstrate the effectiveness of the current programme
- To meet regular programme review requirements
- To satisfy professional accreditations

Given that the curriculums in Turkey consistently evolve through policy changes from the top, it is important to step back and assess their respective efficacy to see if they are predetermined goals. It is clear is curricular assessments can allow stakeholders to review their curriculums critically with regard to larger national objectives. Curricular changes can be extremely costly, and this is especially exemplified in Turkey, where any change immediately

affects every student and school. I recommend both micro and macro-scale curricular assessments designed around the premise that writing is a crucial core skill in the government's goals for English policy. These curricular assessments need to begin with the most critical questions, with the most prominent being: Is this curriculum, on average, fulfilling its set objectives with regard to writing? If not, what are the problems and roadblocks from the eyes of teachers and students (and other stakeholders)? It would be helpful to define measurement and evaluation standards, which is an essential prerequisite to assessment.

Furthermore, universities and teaching faculties with more autonomy in instruction can employ curricular assessments within their respective course offerings. This can allow for more effective course delivery. And because of the specificity of such assessments (concentrating on a very particular department/course/student demography), this can mean a more robust analysis.

### **7.5 University - High School Collaborations**

Models of university-secondary school collaboration exist in the United States pertaining to composition education. These are generally present in one of two ways: teacher training, and the other being student-facing initiatives (i.e., a university-affiliated writing center in a school, for example). Of course, these are not exclusive of one another, and it has not been uncommon to even observe a combination of the two. One high school-college initiative, “Looking Both Ways” (LBW), a former collaborative effort of the City University of New York (CUNY) and New York City Public Schools, is a phenomenal example of such an endeavor. The LBW program was one particularly focused on faculty development, and the program was documented through teacher reflections in its publication with the same name<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Otte, George. *Looking Both Ways: High School and College Teachers Talk about Language and Learning*. Division of Adult & Continuing Education, Office of Academic Affairs, City University of New York, 1999.

In summary, the LBW program created a synergy between instructors of introductory English (composition) courses at universities and high school English teachers. It was designed in a way such that it would be “democratic and inclusive in its knowledge-making and not a project where the intellectual power and control resided solely with college faculty” (Wolfe 4). This allowed teachers who were naturally indulged in the environment of practice to have a voice, rather than all instruction being centered in the hands of the stereotypical academic, locked away in distant offices and away from the “field.” At the same time, it created a model to discuss the respective theoretical components within this same environment, making what turned out to be a very effective marriage of theory and practice. The topics discussed in the few months-long seminars ranged from student motivation to discussions on common writing errors and ESL writing to testing. More so than anything, the initiative was unique in that it was directly focused on addressing the specific contextual issues relevant to the teachers and topic. In this case, this was addressing writing education (across disciplines) in New York City. Elements such as the policy recommendations emanating from the initiative (which was a topic of discussion) were very much of a reflection of a genuine set of experiences rather than something disconnected from the realities on the ground.

In the book, *The high school writing center: Establishing and maintaining one*, the Chapter *High School-College Collaboration* by Henry A. Luce offers some insights into another example of bridging the high-school – university gap. To address what is spoken about regarding “the writing crisis” at the university level, the solution offered is collaboration, given that both levels of education (secondary and tertiary) are facing issues in composition-related education (as evidenced by student preparedness). Luce says it well, in that “A high school English department cannot effectively prepare its students for the demands of college writing unless it

knows what colleges expect from incoming freshmen. Similarly, a college cannot design its program well unless it knows how high schools have prepared students. Collaboration between the sectors, then, becomes the means for bridging the gap between high school and college, for ensuring the continuity of excellence throughout the system” (Luce 129).

The collaboration model offers numerous opportunities because high school preparation is crucial to university success. It allows for universities to be involved in high school student education, and in that sense, give them what would be an extended education in composition (beyond the traditional first-year composition, and in Turkey’s case, a year of academic writing). There have been various examples of this in practice, the most significant being delivered via the National Writing Project which promotes professional development (with regard to the teaching of writing) for schoolteachers through a university/K-12 partnership model which is in place in localities across the United States. I believe that there are parallels existent that make this application relevant to the Turkish scenario. Indeed “American institutions of higher education have traditionally had very little to do with secondary education, especially since World War II” (Luce 129). The case of secondary education being hardly realized in higher education seems to be the case in Turkey as well, where such a collaboration is hardly existent across the board. Of course, this has certain exceptions, like sending teacher candidates to various public schools for their internships, but this is mainly observational where these students act as assistants to teachers within the existing curriculum models.

To describe what is present in the US, one model that has been deployed across various universities has been that of writing center collaboration. One example, described in the Chapter by Luce, was that existent at the Kenmore High School in Akron, OH. This model is of special interest for this thesis (and the Turkish case), because it began as nothing more than a simple

observership program offered for students at the University of Akron (UA) program in English Education, where was initiated by Dr. Harold Foster, an Associate Professor of English Education (Luce 130). As part of the requirements for his course "Instructional Techniques in English," Dr. Foster placed the Akron teacher candidate students for one hour per week with an experienced English teacher at Kenmore High School (Luce 13). According to Luce, those students who couldn't be accommodated by teachers, but still wanting to engage in the program, were given the opportunity to act as writing tutors to the high school students (Luce 130). This eventually morphed into the Kenmore Writing Lab, a university-level writing center placed within a high school. Luce describes that this was truly a "win-win" situation for all. The college students, in their preparation as teachers; the high school students, in receiving college preparatory writing instruction; the high school faculty, in receiving valuable assistance and exposure to the latest composition techniques and research; and the university, in attracting top students to its department (Luce 131). This model is clearly something beneficial to all parties. Most importantly, it bridges the gap between secondary school and college, something that is crucial in composition studies (not just in Turkey, but around the world).

So how can this be applied to Turkey? In Turkey, most student teachers spend two semesters at schools doing precisely the same things as the Akron students, observing teachers and serving as teaching assistants. That infrastructure is already in place, and these observership students by the design of the degree program, are in their final year of studies and by this time, have gone through the required composition training as well as pedagogical coursework. In that case, the issue of aspects such as funding are not significantly problematic, and, an opportunity exists for a more effective university-secondary school partnership. The students can transfer innovative research into the high school classroom, just like in the University of Akron example.

Of course, there are limitations to this. For one, this means that teacher preparatory programs must ensure that their students have adequate preparedness to tutor composition at an appropriate level. The second, and more pressing one, is that in such a case, many high schools will be left out, as typically school observerships for university teacher candidates occur only in cities where a university where an ELT program is present. An observership model like this allows for an experimental partnership model without high costs, which, if successful in the context, can be a setting stone for new initiatives.

## **7.6 Turkish (L1) Composition Education**

Tertiary and secondary education with regard to English composition education was extensively analyzed in this thesis. Whilst not the point of this study, getting a glimpse of writing education provided at the L1 level (in this case, Turkish) is an important piece of the larger story. This is primarily because L1 plays a significant role in L2 development, as was talked about in the literature review section on Contrastive Rhetoric & L2 Writing Composition Education. Indeed, writing is a skill is one that carries across contexts, and indeed, “skilled writers in their first language (L1) have been found to be skilled writers in their second language (L2), and less skilled writers in their L1 tend to be less skilled in their L2 as well” (Kobayashi and Rinnert 91). This brings up an important discussion point. That is particularly that since there is a relationship between L1 and L2 writing competencies, if L1 writing competencies aren’t built, then ultimately, L2 writing will not be able to reach the standards that we aim for as writing scholars and instructors for our students.

In this endeavor, I see room for opportunity. That opportunity lies in the fact that a certain synergy exists in both L1 and L2 writing instruction in Turkey, which fits well because the National Curriculum for both areas have significant space dedicated to writing competencies.

The goals and outcomes are not all that different, and thus, a way to integrate instruction and work towards these common goals together can be sought. In my observation of the Turkish K-12 educational system at current, such an interdisciplinary mode of collaboration doesn't exist. Teachers of the Turkish language focus on their designated subject of study, as do teachers of English. Here, we also see an example of a "division of labor" that, in some ways, causes the commonalities (in our case, writing competency) to suffer. Why? Because writing education across languages possesses many similarities. Ultimately, both practitioners (the Turkish and English teachers) are working towards the same goal.

Meixiu Zhang's research on collaborative writing in L1 & L2 writing within an EFL context is just one example of how the two required curricular elements (Turkish & English language) might be integrated in some ways. Zhang found that "L1 interaction facilitates the production of lexical and phrasal features typical of academic prose in learners' co-constructed essays" (Zhang 16). This is precisely what those who engage professionally in academic writing instruction intend for, whether through the ESL/ELT or rhetoric & composition disciplines. Other ways to create this interaction between the teachers can be joint teacher training initiatives and discussions (like LBW).

Another point worth mentioning is that within Turkish Education and Turkish Language & Literature, rhetoric & composition is also apparent. All university students in the country, whether in EMI or TMI, must take a sequence of courses such as "Yazılı ve sözlü anlatım" (Written and Verbal Expression), "Kompozisyon" (Composition) or "Türk Dili" (Turkish Language), which can be seen in any degree curriculum across any university. These courses contain elements of rhetoric & composition as an FYC instructor may recognize. Coming across detailed syllabi for these courses is challenging due to the absence of an organized online



database, which is a problem existent across most universities in Turkey. Even when syllabi are available, they do not mention specific content beyond stressing that composition is taught. Similarly, in searching DergiPark, there is a representation of some topics related to rhetorical theory (although hardly anything explicit with regard to composition studies), showing a bias towards Literature (which yields far more search results).

Additionally, there is no such thing as a “rhetoric & composition” track in Turkish Language or Education graduate programs, as I came to know by exploring various graduate program websites. Since there seems to be a deficiency in work related to Turkish rhetoric & composition, particularly in teaching writing, this points towards an area of exploration in that field for which researchers of English rhetoric & composition can engage and collaborate with. Engagement between academics from both language disciplines has the potential to yield many insights given the L1-L2 dynamics written about before, as well as lead to join initiatives that can benefit students of both fields (English and Turkish writing), such as teacher training in composition and so forth.

### **7.7 Teacher Selection: A Composition Focused Proposal**

Teacher selection in Turkey relies on a heavily examination-based model from the beginning of the educational process until the teachers begin their respective careers. Because of this significance, it is essential to scrutinize this process. Teachers are the drivers of education, and ultimately, students are reliant on them to a large degree in their success.

In the report *How the world's best-performing schools systems come out on top*, Barber and Mourshed write about teacher selection in detail, particularly how it relates to top-performing schools. They note that “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.” The relationship between educational system quality and teacher selection is

important to realize in the context of composition and stresses the importance of writing instruction for teachers. Whilst the Barber and Mourshed report makes these points on a much larger scale and through looking at educational systems across countries broadly (through measures such as the Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA), I make the argument that the same issues also directly affect composition. Ultimately, English teaching in Turkey, including composition instruction, is affected greatly by national policy.

According to Barber and Mourshed, two types of procedures exist regarding teacher selection throughout the world. The first model selects people before they start their teacher training and limits places in the training program to those who are selected (Barber and Mourshed 21). The second model leaves the selection process until after the prospective teachers have graduated from teacher training and then selects the best graduates to become teachers (Barber and Mourshed 21).

As the authors of the study write, the most successful educational systems are those that screen teachers through some variation of the first option. Turkey, however, falls under the second option and is perhaps an example case study of what this would look like in terms of how much it is reliant on a single exam for teacher placement. Barber and Mourshed speak of issues that are caused by the second option, such as an oversupply of teacher candidates, quality of educational experience, and turning teaching into a “low-status profession” (Barber and Mourshed 21). On the other hand, countries that use the first option (significantly Singapore and Finland) limit teacher entry from the very beginning, and tend to be extremely selective and ultimately, high-status professions (Barber and Mourshed 21).

As I see it, English education in Turkey has two major deficiencies with regard to teacher training. One is the fact that its teacher selection mechanisms from the get-go aren't sufficient for

foreign language teachers, in that their English is not assessed in a critical enough manner to determine teaching level proficiency. While the Preparatory Year addresses this somewhat, it is still insufficient given the high level of language needed for topics advanced-level writing instruction down the road.

The second is that after completion of the teaching program, even candidates who score high enough in the KPSS to secure teaching placement have not proved themselves in the core competencies to be an English teacher (a written component would be a vital part of such an assessment). So, even in the absence of a teacher selection model that follows the evidence-based tenants for success (option one), the option two framework in place is flawed.

Sabahattin Yesilcinar and Abdulvahit Cakir, in their paper “Suggesting a Teacher Assessment and Evaluation Model for Improving the Quality of English Teachers,” write in detail about the current teacher assessment and evaluation (TAE) model which is in place. As they see it, the current model is severely limited in many ways, specifically regarding equity, fairness, and effectiveness. In the paper, the authors mention that “the most problematic area of the current TAE model is its lack of performance-based scoring” (Yesilcinar and Cakir 385). Thus, any solution must address this. In the paper, the authors propose an alternative model that intends to address the deficiencies in the existing one. In summary, this model is one “taking into account the prospective teachers’ teaching ability, their attitudes, and their personality traits” (Yesilcinar and Cakir 384). From their recommendation, they propose “TOEFL- or IELTS-like exams” (Yesilcinar and Cakir 385). Such an assessment mechanism be less dependent on a one-day, consequential exam, but rather, “the use of candidates’ practicum scores and scores they get in certain courses or practices (e.g., micro-teaching of school experience, material development, and evaluation)” (Yesilcinar and Cakir 385).

Here is where composition plays a prominent role: both the TOEFL and IELTS have significant writing portions built in. They are recognized as significant tests for university admissions and even elements such as career and national residency applications worldwide. The importance of writing, of course, is contextual (someone applying for graduate study in mathematics would not be expected to possess the same score as a prospective English language student). However, for the advancement of future English teachers expected to teach writing, the standard would be high. Such an assessment can occur in two ways: integrating a writing portion in the existing exams or the same within a completely revamped TAE system. The justification for this is already clear, in that students, according to the English national curriculum, are expected to be writing compositions at a certain predetermined (B2) level. It is unreasonable to expect students to do the same without vetting teachers to see if they possess the appropriate degree of writing contexts.

There is evidence that this theoretical proposal of using a different teacher selection model that considers writing can work. In a study by Llosa and Malone on students' performance on TOEFL writing tasks versus that on actual academic writing tasks on 103 international (non-native) undergraduate students in the U.S., it was found that the TOEFL Writing section would be an effective tool for decisions regarding whether test-takers would be prepared for university writing courses (Llosa and Malone 254). As the authors mentioned, "performance on the TOEFL Writing section was found to be at least somewhat associated with all dimensions of writing quality in academic writing tasks in a required writing course, but it was most strongly associated with students' grammatical and cohesive control in their writing and with the writing they can do in first drafts" (Llosa and Malone 254). Given that this example tracked non-native students in academic writing coursework, extrapolation can be made to the Turkish context.

Composition and writing scholars do have a vested interest in this topic, since ultimately, the secondary school students will come through the university system, and their writing education from that point on will be regulated to higher education. As composition scholars, we are trained precisely for this, and play significant roles in both the university education system itself, as well as the secondary to university bridge that occurs in the first year (or two) of university study. Writing professionals should be part of assessment design and consultation, particularly regarding aspects such as essay prompts and fair grading practices.

## **7.8 Conclusion**

In the preceding chapter, certain problems and potential solutions related to composition and writing education in Turkey (specifically at the secondary school level), were discussed. The larger idea of academic writing, whilst prevalent in the country across its educational system, remains in its infancy as far as in its adaptation its own unique context. The suggestions then that were outlined in this chapter were meant to address this and offer a more constructive analysis in its own context. These suggestions, related to increasing composition research and interdisciplinary collaboration across related fields, teacher selection, and education, are ways that I see as effective first steps in the larger vision to increase writing competencies across the country. These observations once again, are by no means complete, but serve as a guide for future research and work and allow for a more focused path forward in the realm of writing education.

## 8 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The findings of this thesis are by no means meant to be conclusive. Rather, it is hoped that this study will be viewed as an introduction to those interested in composition education in a different geographic environment, specifically Turkey. In my background as a composition academic in training within a U.S. institution, I have found that composition is almost always spoken about in the national context, and the international component is reserved for issues related to EFL, such as L2 writing. Rhetoric & composition departments and education are unique to the U.S, and studies pertaining exclusively to composition education in other countries are almost non-existent. It is not surprising then that the EFL bias exists. Of course, this is not something that has any ill-intent to it, but rather exists due to the practicality the ESL methodologies have in other contexts such as Turkey, alongside the relative infancy of composition studies compared to other fields.

Several observations were brought forth from this study. For one, composition education in Turkey is intertwined with its history as a nation. From the times of its empires, foreign language education, regardless of the language, was always something that was, in many ways, political and policy-based in nature. At one point, this was due to its complex alliance system, and today, it is due to national goals in economic and scientific progress. Since the founding of the modern Republic in 1923, Turkey has had a very central and nationalistic approach towards its respective English policy. Due to this, the educational policy changes in the country are magnanimous in nature and occur often. As I observe, there will continue to be significant evolutions in all facets, be it curriculums, methodologies, and teacher training related elements.

Today, Turkey has not yet reached a point where its populace competently speaks English, complicating the analysis of composition because more advanced topics such as

composition and academic writing can often be irrelevant. The situation in Turkey contrasts from the American composition classroom, where a level of proficiency is assumed, the purpose of the course is fully dedicated to composition, and where instruction is aimed solely at giving students the tools to express themselves effectively in written form. In Turkey, there seems to be a disconnect between national policy and the reality on the ground, where the national objectives aim for a much higher level of English competency (including writing competency) than is developed. Speaking of composition, this disconnect points to the need for region-specific scholarship that engages with the relevant context. The “proficiency problem” of Turkey cannot be centered on a singular reason, and more interdisciplinary collaboration and study are necessitated. In that effort, writing professionals must be active participants.

It is hoped that this thesis serves as a base for further investigation on the broader topic of composition studies to be done. One of the most prominent recommendations of this study is a call for more research specifically related to qualitative and observational studies on curricular effectiveness and outcome achievement.

I firmly believe that scholars within rhetoric & composition in the U.S. should consider the international component of the discipline. In contexts outside the U.S., like Turkey, composition pedagogy is often the beneficiary of the significant American influence over the discipline. Given that the field of composition studies (and pedagogical theory in particular) is so heavily rooted in the U.S., scholars within the nation truly have an international audience. Secondly, even within the U.S., composition is by no means constrained to its geography. The transit of ideas, thoughts, and frameworks within writing education has transcended borders and boundaries and will continue to do so.

I want to note that there has been a tremendous increase in interest in writing related topics amongst scholars in Turkey<sup>5</sup>. The fact that writing is being seen with more interest is not surprising, as this has also been a trend internationally<sup>6</sup>. In the Turkish context, this has been recent in nature, and almost always by ELT scholars. I anticipate, albeit at a slow pace, that research on the topic will increase, and new insights into the issues discussed in this thesis will be gleamed. In that sense, this thesis is not a final word but a work in progress in constant need of updating. Turkey's educational policies change constantly, and so do its respective foreign language policies with their aims, objectives, and frameworks.

So, what did this thesis find? To summarize, Turkey possesses an infrastructure that is conducive to more advanced education in writing and composition. That is encouraging. The university system (for EMI universities/programs) includes a year of academic writing education built in, similar to FYC (on paper) in its goals, aims, and objectives. With students getting one year of a preparatory level English education followed by one year of academic writing education, there is a system to work towards competency building in composition. However, from the various available information, composition education in the country still has a long way to go in terms of developing a more practical and targeted system.

At the secondary level, the curriculum in both L1 and L2 has addressed writing in a detailed way. After that, English medium institutions or degree programs in English include a year of required academic writing built into curriculums beyond the Preparatory Year. Writing is seen as an essential skill, expressed through the curricular goals and required coursework at both the secondary and tertiary levels.

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<sup>5</sup> Evidenced by keyword searches related to the teaching of writing on DergiPark with filters set to a five-year time-frame.

<sup>6</sup> This was found through entering keywords, such as *composition studies* and *academic writing* to the website Dimensions.ai, which projected a graph of associated citations through the years.



At the same time, however, major issues existent in the delivery of these goals. The various national goals regarding writing are ambitious, but not realistic and require evaluation. The CEFR is the standard framework guiding English instruction across all competencies (speaking, writing, listening), which starts at grade four and continues until the end of high school at the minimum. By this time, the curriculum intends for students to be at the B2 level. But this is just not the case. Indeed, even the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO's) of the secondary school English curriculum were designed with the students' lower-order skills in mind, despite the intended EFL proficiency level (B2) being something for which higher skills are necessary (Agcam and Babanoglu 14).

For this reason, the university preparatory programs expect a B1 level at the *end* of their respective course of study, recognizing the problem at hand (according to Tosuncuoglu and Peaci, most of the students start preparatory classes at the level of A1) (121). Thus, teachers are put in a difficult situation, especially when considering composition. Writing is not an easy skill to pick up, even at the native (L1) level. For effective instruction, students need to have a baseline English level. The dilemma is apparent then. Teachers can only engage with the official curriculum within their given contextual constraints, which are tremendous.

Secondly, teacher training has yet to make writing a main focus. It must be recognized that high school and university are not separate entities but a continuum. Great opportunity exists to improve composition instruction in realizing the bridge between both levels. Teachers are always the most central part of any curricular change, and in Turkey's case, given the ambition of its national goals, this is even more exemplified. It is a positive sign that the training of English teachers (through ELT) is a high priority field and area of research, and that an infrastructure of evidence-based education is existent. Of course, the recommendation remains

that the ELT curriculum at universities must consider the high composition focuses and objectives in the secondary school, CEFR based curriculum.

In Turkey, the relevance of high school seems to be rooted in the “determine all” college entrance exam that will determine students’ futures from that point on. While serving the purpose of pursuing an equitable student selection mechanism into the limited number of university seats, the exam is not a reflection of competency on the National Curriculum (in our case, for the English language). Students are incentivized to pass this exam rather than develop other skills, and even the most rigorous universities use the exam in student selection. While the issue of exam-based studying may seem like a problem that would be remedied at the university level, the truth is that this culture of reliance on exams continues to persist through students’ educational journeys. Most crucially, such reliance affects the teaching profession and, ultimately, the training of composition instructors. The incentive to promote writing competencies for teacher candidates is not there.

Where exactly does Turkey stand as far as composition studies go? The nation has clear objectives for its citizens regarding English writing competence. The infrastructure and frameworks are in place to accomplish this, but composition has a long way to go in terms of really asserting itself as a priority and developing in its own context. For that, a much more in-depth, top-down level assessment is needed (given the centralized nature of Turkey’s educational system across all educational levels).

From the available evidence generally in the form of smaller-scale qualitative studies, various inferences can also be made. It is encouraging to see scholarly attention emerging (albeit slowly) on writing. However, more needs to be done, and more attention should be given. Additionally, Turkey has always been a nation whose English education has been framed within

a TESOL/ESL context. The TESOL methodology that guides English education in the country makes sense given its contextual situation. However, this approach is limited in its focus on writing, which is why there is a need for rhetoric & composition scholarship concerned with the national context. That is not to say that ESL professionals cannot teach composition and academic writing (to both prospective teachers and students). Still, it does mean that a discipline that is primarily devoted to the study of writing has been untapped. Rhetoric & composition does not have much recognition in the country due to the element of professionalization of the fields, with even traditional English departments not being involved in cross-disciplinary training.

I have done my best to contribute to this disconnect with the production of this thesis. I am glad that in my position as a rhetoric & composition graduate student and aspiring academic and scholar, I could offer this contribution to the wider community interested in research on writing-related topics, whether they be from ELT or English departments (in Turkey) or rhetoric & composition scholars outside the country. As I see it, a researcher can access this project and get a comprehensive survey of the topic in its current standing, put together through an analysis of the majority of (multi-disciplinary) literature on the topic. That said, my observations are naturally influenced by my own professional bent (rhetoric & composition). I see it as positive that this project engaged with topics of importance to those in ELT/ESL departments in Turkey (teacher selection, secondary school English policy) and university preparatory programs (tertiary writing success), from the lens of my own field, rhetoric & composition.

Additionally, as I write this project, I have actively been engaged with doing my best to find ways to engage with the field of ESL in the country, involving myself in various national conferences and reaching out to scholars in the country over topics of mutual research collaboration. I hope that in doing this, I can contribute in a positive way to the betterment of

writing education in the country. Furthermore, as I prepare to begin my career, I intend to stay active in research related to rhetoric & composition (particularly expounding on the areas I explored in this thesis) and incorporate international approaches in composition studies within my teaching.

In discussing some of the other problems that jumped out to me when writing this thesis, the most obvious was a lack of curricular assessments (even at the small-scale level). Because of Turkey's centrally standardized system of education administered through the MoNE (for secondary school), any change is naturally magnified in its significance. A curricular assessment is of utmost importance to know whether Turkey is meeting its targets for its student's composition abilities, and its results should also be made available for researchers outside of the government. A larger-scale assessment would certainly pinpoint areas of common concern, allowing for either 1) adjustment of the curriculum to more realistic and context-specific targets and/or 2) a revaluation of strategies to ensure students are given the resources to attain these targets.

One of the themes I attempted to stress in this thesis was the idea that any study of tertiary level composition should never be disconnected from its wider educational context, specifically the secondary school period. As an instructor, I spoke from my perspective of sitting on my respective side of the fence, but very much influenced and inspired by the various secondary – university collaborations in the U.S., like the LBW program. Coming into my doctoral program, I also saw the career of one of my committee members, Dr. Renée Schatteman, as a source of inspiration, with her beginning her career as a high school teacher and later transitioning to academia. Dr. Schatteman has been extensively involved with the English department's efforts in training future teachers.

It was Dr. Schatteman who encouraged me to consider this bridge between high school and university composition and consider the already existent examples of collaboration. In the Turkish context, I proposed collaborations between the two levels of education methods such as extending the already required observership partnerships that universities have with secondary schools for teacher training in the country. Given the infrastructure already in place, this represents an opportunity for small-scale studies on potential initiatives such as high school writing centers. Additionally, due to the sheer amount of evidence standing behind the influence of L1 writing on L2 writing, there is great potential for joint teacher professional development and other types of collaboration between instructors of both fields required in the national curriculum (Turkish & English language). The MoNE already has professional development programs in place for teachers, and topics addressing writing facilitated in a LBW-like environment that democratizes all voices equally, could be an example of a way forward.

It should be mentioned that this thesis, whilst meant to be a survey of composition education in the country, is by no means complete. Like any system, there are many nuances involved; one of the biggest ones is a big private secondary school infrastructure in the country with major variations in its own English teaching practice. Additionally, Turkey is a country where, by nature, major and random change is a fact of life. Such change is most relevant here when talking about curriculum overhauls, but it can be seen in other aspects that affect academic practice, for example in staff mobility in universities, where it is not very common for faculty to be at one university for an extended period.

Most significantly, Turkey is a nation where, while possessing a functioning, active, and vibrant democracy, is deeply polarized as far as party politics are concerned. To simplify, a government change can completely change the educational system in all its facets. So, for any

scholar, researcher, academic, or interested reader reading this thesis to gain more insight on the broader topic of composition studies in Turkey, this too should be considered. What is written is valid for today but may not be tomorrow. Naturally, no change would suddenly alter the situation on the ground as far the core problems students are facing with their writing abilities and how faculty at universities must adapt to these problems, but this should still be recognized.

I personally see tremendous potential for the future of writing education in Turkey. As a researcher, my job is to find out where both success and failure lie. Ultimately, in this profession of rhetoric & composition, what drives us is the desire to improve writing and the belief that doing this is truly possible. In the Turkish case, we certainly do not look at a context where writing has been neglected; in fact, quite the opposite. Writing is an integral part of the secondary and tertiary curriculum. However, we see that the respective goals and outcomes of writing education are tied to broader (and often decontextualized) frameworks, causing them to become overshadowed.

Additionally, the nation has not yet reckoned with rhetoric & composition as a discipline within the larger academic discourse. In writing this thesis, I firmly believe in my discipline and its importance in writing education that other fields, specifically ELT, just cannot address in addressing Turkey's composition problems. I agree that "...as composition research has developed it has come to see itself as the study of writing in general, and academic writing in particular. In those terms it might be of interest beyond universities in the United States and Canada. But when it is exported, it changes meaning and serves different needs in the context..." (Muchiri, et al. 176). I argue that it is time for an effort to be made to allow for rhetoric & composition studies, research, and knowledge to disseminate into the Turkish context and take its own form.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Sample Syllabi

#### *Appendix A.1: Ankara University (Public)*

##### COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title	Code	Semester	L+U Hour	Credits	ECTS
DEVELOPMENT OF READING AND WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH I	ENG101	1. Semester	4 + 0	4.0	2.0
Prerequisites	None				
Language of Instruction	English				
Course Level	Bachelor's Degree				
Course Type	Compulsory				
Office Day-Hours					
Course Coordinator					
Instructors	Bahar Burcu DEMİRTOLA				
Assistants					
Goals	Consolidation of what have been learned in English Preparatory School. Grammatical and lexical improvement of students who have completed English Preparatory School. improvement of Reading Comprehension skills.				
Course Content	Text analysis using Intermediate level grammatical structures and vocabulary.				
Course Learning Outcomes	1) Students will have intermediate level of vocabulary. 2) Can use basic English structures creatively and form full and correct sentences. 3) Students will be able to comprehend intermediate level reading texts, answer questions and make inference about the text.				

##### WEEKLY COURSE FLOW

Week	Topics	Learning Activities	Instruction Methods, Technics and Approaches
1. Week	Adjective Clauses, reductions	Homework Presentation (including Preparation Time)	Lecture Brainstorming; Opinion Pool Problem Based Learning
2. Week	Adjective Clauses, reductions	Homework	Question Answer Brainstorming Project Based Learning
3. Week	Adjective Clauses, reductions	Homework	Lecture Brainstorming Project Based Learning
4. Week	Noun Clauses, subject verb agreement	Homework	Lecture Brainstorming Project Based Learning
5. Week	Noun Clauses, subject verb agreement	Homework	Question Answer Opinion Pool; Debate Storyline
6. Week	Adjective & Noun Clauses	Homework Presentation (including Preparation Time)	Lecture; Question Answer Debate Project Based Learning
7. Week	Midterm Exam	Presentation (including Preparation Time)	Question Answer

8. Week	Finding (negative) factual information on texts (+vocabulary)	Homework	Lecture Brainstorming Project Based Learning
9. Week	Finding (negative) factual information on texts (+vocabulary)	Homework	Lecture Brainstorming Project Based Learning
10. Week	Making Inferences on texts (+vocabulary)	Homework	Lecture Brainstorming Problem Based Learning
11. Week	Making Inferences on texts (+vocabulary)	Project (Including Preparation and presentation Time)	Lecture Brainstorming Project Based Learning
12. Week	Reading texts - Finding/matching the main idea or title of a text (+vocabulary)	Homework Seminar	Question Answer Brainstorming Project Based Learning
13. Week	Reading texts - Finding/matching the main idea or title of a text (+vocabulary)	Homework	Lecture; Question Answer Brainstorming; Six Hats Thinking Project Based Learning; Problem Based Learning
14. Week	General revision	Homework	Lecture; Question Answer  Project Based Learning; Problem Based Learning
15. Week	General revision	Homework	Lecture; Question Answer Brainstorming
16. Week	Final exam	Homework	Question Answer

#### SOURCES USED IN THIS COURSE

Recommended Sources
Developing Skills for the Toefl IBT (Intermediate) - Second Edition. Paul Edmunds, Nancie McGinnon, Jeff Zeter. Compass Publishing, 2009.
Ders Notları
Dinleme- anlama alıştırmaları ( Listening exercises)
Farklı İngilizce Gramer kitapları ( Heinemann, Longman etc.)

#### RELATIONS WITH EDUCATION ATTAINMENT PROGRAM COURSE COMPETENCIES

\*DK = Course's Contribution.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Level of contribution	None	Very Low	Low	Fair	High	Very High

#### MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION / ECTS CREDITS AND COURSE WORKLOAD

Event	Quantity	Duration (Hour)	Total Workload (Hour)
Course Duration (Total weeks*Hours per week)	14	2	28
Midterm Exam	1	1	1
Time to prepare for Midterm Exam	1	10	10
Final Exam	1	1	1
Time to prepare for Final Exam	1	10	10
Total Workload			50
Total Workload / 30 (s)			1.67
ECTS Credit of the Course			2



## Appendix A.2 Bilkent University (Private)

### Syllabus of ENG 101 - English and Composition I

**Department:** Faculty Academic English Program

**Credits:** Bilkent 3, ECTS 5

**Course Coordinator:** Hakan Güven

**Semester:** 2020-2021 Fall

**Contact Hours:** 5 hours of lecture per week

**Textbook and Other Required Material:**

**Catalog Description:**

The central basis of ENG 101 is to introduce students to an academic approach to thinking, reading, speaking and writing in an integrated, meaningful manner such that they are able to apply the skills learnt to their departmental studies. In addition, the ENG 101 course aims to further develop the students' linguistic accuracy and range in English.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

**Assessment Methods:**

	Type	Label	Count	Total Contribution
1	Academic Essay 1	Academic Essay 1	1	20
2	Academic Essay 2	Academic Essay 2	1	25
3	Oral Presentation	Oral Presentation	1	8
4	Student Led Discussion	Student Led Discussion	1	7
5	Academic Summary and Critical Response Task	Academic Summary and Critical Response Task	1	10
6	Self-progress Reflection Task	Self-progress Reflection Task	1	5
7	Final Exam	Final Exam	1	25

**Minimum Requirements to Qualify for the Final Exam:**

90% Attendance and 30 points out of 75 available before final exam

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

Course Learning Outcome	Assessment
Can critically analyse and evaluate academic texts to understand and record both their meaning and potential value	Academic Essay 1 Oral Presentation Student Led Discussion Final Exam
Can critically analyse and evaluate spoken input to understand and record both their meaning and potential value	Oral Presentation Student Led Discussion Self-progress Reflection Task
Can develop well-reasoned written arguments that are supported by valid and reliable evidence	Academic Essay 1 Final Exam
Can develop well-reasoned spoken arguments that are supported by valid and reliable evidence	Oral Presentation Student Led Discussion Academic Summary and Critical

	Response Task Self-progress Reflection Task
Can write focused, coherent, thesis driven academic essays	Academic Essay 1 Final Exam
Can incorporate citation skilfully and accurately, and distinguish between own and others' voice	Academic Essay 1 Final Exam
Can effectively communicate with others orally in the form of formal presentations and discussions/debates	Oral Presentation Student Led Discussion
Can use the language accurately and appropriately	Academic Essay 1 Oral Presentation Student Led Discussion Academic Summary and Critical Response Task Self-progress Reflection Task Final Exam

#### Weekly Syllabus:

1. Introduction to the course + Diagnostic reading and writing task + Student learning outcomes activity
2. Analysis and discussion of readings for academic essay 1 + Input and practice on academic summary and critical response
3. Analysis and discussion of readings for academic essay 1 + Input and practice on academic summary and response + Input on writing introductions
4. Input on outlining an academic essay + Input on organizing academic essay + Input and practice on writing body paragraphs + Analysis and discussion of readings for academic essay 1
5. Input on writing conclusion paragraphs + Brainstorming and outlining for academic essay 1 + In-class draft writing + Input on student led discussions
6. Tutorials on academic essay 1 + Input on in-text and end-text citations and essay format + Academic essay 1 final draft + Student led discussions
7. Tutorials on academic essay 1 + Analysis and discussion of readings for academic essay 2 + Feedback on academic essay 1 + Input on writing a clear and well developed argument
8. Analysis and discussion of readings for academic essay 2 + Input on academic register + Input on clarity, concision and readability + Input on providing effective text based evidence
9. Analysis and discussion of readings for academic essay 2 + Input on self-progress reflection task
10. Brainstorming and outlining for academic essay 2 + In-class writing of academic essay 2 + Self-progress reflection
11. Feedback on academic essay 2 + Input on logical fallacies + Input on common language mistakes and editing + Analysis and discussion of readings for oral component
12. Analysis and discussion of readings + Feedback on academic essay 2 + Input on delivering effective presentations
13. Brainstorming and outlining for oral component
14. Student presentations + Revisiting student learning outcomes + Recap on the course topics, critical reading and academic essay writing

#### ECTS - Workload Table:

Activities	Number	Hours	Workload
Homework	14	2	28
Project (including preparation and presentation if applicable)	3	8	24
Individual or group work	10	1	10
Course hours	14	5	70
Preparation for Final exam	1	5	5
Presentation (including preparation)	2	6	12

Final exam	1	3	3
Total Workload:	152		
Total Workload / 30:	152 / 30		
	5.07		
ECTS Credits of the Course:	5		

**Type of Course:** Skills based - Input on academic skills - Guided learning - Hands on - One-on-one tutorials

**Course Material:** Authentic academic texts - Documentaries - Academic videos (TED Talks)

**Teaching Methods:** Hands on Activities - Independent study - Input sessions - Student presentations - One-on-one tutorials - Essay writing workshops - Class discussions - Academic text analysis - Self and peer evaluation

## Appendix A.1: Middle East Technical University (METU) (Public)

### ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES I (ENG 101) COURSE OUTLINE



Course Code : 6390101  
 Instructor's Name :  
 Email :  
 Office :  
 Office Hours :

#### • COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 101 is a learner-centered, integrated-skills based course that will develop students in the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in an academic context. Tasks involving higher order thinking skills will require students not only to understand, but also to combine and evaluate information, ideas and judgments as well. The variety of texts and perspectives presented through themes in and outside the class will facilitate their critical thinking process and thus enable students to become active and autonomous learners.

#### • COURSE AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this course is to develop **students'** academic writing skills through reading, listening and speaking, which serve as input for writing.

#### WRITING

Students will:

1. identify the distinguishing features of academic writing
2. use appropriate style, language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers in academic context
3. respond to prompt(s) in academic context
4. follow the stages in process writing approach while writing paragraphs
5. produce academic, documented paragraphs
6. identify reference information
7. practise using APA citation rules
8. practise borrowing ideas by quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing

#### SPEAKING

Students will practise:

1. expressing and justifying their opinion in class discussions
2. reacting to different ideas
3. synthesizing information from different sources
4. justifying their opinions/arguments by providing supporting details

#### READING

Students will practise:

1. pre-reading strategies (i.e. skimming, scanning, previewing)
2. identifying points of reference
3. guessing the meaning of unknown words
4. making inferences from a reading text
5. identifying key ideas in a text
6. recognizing the relationship between ideas in and among texts
7. identifying the writer's technique
8. evaluating information by adopting critical reading skills
9. reflecting on and reacting to the ideas in a text

#### LISTENING

Students will practise:

1. listening for a specific purpose
2. listening for main ideas
3. listening for supporting ideas/details
4. listening for implied ideas
5. listening and note-taking
6. recognizing the relationship between a recording/video and a reading text
7. reflecting on and reacting to ideas in a recording/video
8. evaluating ideas in a recording/video

- **COURSE MATERIAL**

- Gülcü, M., Gülen, G., Şeşen, E., & Tokdemir, G. (2015). *The compass: Route to academic English* 2. Nüans Press.
- Booklet available on Odtuclass.
- CBT material provided by the instructor.

- **GRADING**

- Speaking : 15%
- Writing 1 : 10%
- Writing 2 : 20%
- Quiz/Task Sheet : 20%
- Final Exam : 25%
- Participation : 10%

**Letter Grades**

90- 100	85- 89	80- 84	75- 79	70- 74	65- 69	60- 64	50- 59	0- 49
AA	BA	BB	CB	CC	DC	DD	FD	FF

- **REMINDERS**

- **Writing Assignments:**

- Turnitin submission is required for the writing assignments.
- If you fail to upload your assignment on Turnitin, it will not be graded. You will receive **0** (zero) for the assignment.

- **Final Exam:**

- Turnitin submission is required for the final exam.
- You will not be given a make-up for the final exam unless you have an official medical report.
- Not taking the final exam will result in an **NA** grade.

- **ATTENDANCE**

It is your own responsibility to catch up with the class and to make up for any work done during your absence. Missing class does not excuse you from not turning in assignments. You will not be given a make-up if you miss any in-class graded task without a medical report.

- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

It is the responsibility of students to avoid unethical practices. Students who engage in unethical practices; who cheat in examinations, essays or any other assessable work; and who conspire with others to procure such a result will become subject to disciplinary procedures.

If Turnitin detects plagiarism in your assignments, you will be penalized based on the plagiarism policy of Department of Modern Languages.

(See <http://www.mld.metu.edu.tr/node/202> for more information).

For announcements and more information on **ENG 101 English for Academic Purposes I**, please visit <http://www.mld.metu.edu.tr>.

WEBSITE



MLD PLAGIARISM POLICY



## **Appendix B: Writing Centers in Turkey**

In this section, I want to list the current writing centers that are known to exist within the country in both public and private universities. The writing center is an important piece of composition education at the university level including and beyond FYC. Writing centers allow for a different type of educational opportunity for students, faculty, and others engaging in any type of writing at the university. It allows for its beneficiaries to get more targeted consultation/mentorship specific to their own individual needs. It is positive to see that the writing center, a concept with origins in American universities (at least existing since the 1930s per Stephen North) have found their way into the Turkish context (North 436). Of course, great differences exist because rhetoric & composition trained consultants are replaced by ESL professionals, meaning that the overall experience is different.

The fact that ESL professionals are the ones engaged most prominently with writing centers is not completely detrimental, as “L2 conferencing proficiency, like L2 writing proficiency, comes slowly, over time and with experience” (Powers and Nelson 128). According to Powers and Nelson, who conducted their study at writing centers in the U.S. surveying L2 graduate-level writers, stated in their analysis that “this ability (experience) is especially important in L2 tutoring since L2 writers bring a wide range of cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic backgrounds to conferences and because these backgrounds are likely to be unfamiliar to tutors with whom they work” (Powers and Nelson 128-129). Of course, in a fully L2 context like Turkey, these writing centers are fully staffed by tutors who possess this experience and even generally the same backgrounds (foreign staff being a minority). The recommendation made in Chapter 5 regarding a need for more composition scholarship in the country, however, rings relevant here.

## List of Writing Centers

1. Atılım University Writing Center  
<https://www.atilim.edu.tr/en/awac/event/list>
2. Bilkent University Writing Center  
<http://bilwrite.bilkent.edu.tr/>
3. Bogazici University Online Writing Laboratory  
<http://www.buowl.boun.edu.tr/>
4. Fatih Sultan Mehmet University  
<http://yazmaeserler.fsm.edu.tr/>
5. Gazi University Writing Center  
[http://writing.gazi.edu.tr/?language=en\\_US](http://writing.gazi.edu.tr/?language=en_US)
6. Istanbul Technical University Writing Center  
<http://ilc.itu.edu.tr/>
7. Izmir Economics University Academic Writing Centre (AWC)  
<https://sfl.ieu.edu.tr/tr/akademik-yazma-merkezi>
8. Kadir Has University Writing Center  
<https://sfl.khas.edu.tr/en/academic-programs/writing-center/faculty-support>
9. Koc University English Language Center  
<https://writingcenter.ku.edu.tr/academic/english-language-center/>
10. Yaşar University Writing Center  
<https://writingcenter.yasar.edu.tr/>
11. Özyeğin University Writing Center  
<https://www.ozyegin.edu.tr/tr/yabanci-diller-yuksekokulu/ozu-yazma-merkezi>

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