

A Comparative Research on Perceived EAP Competencies of Turkish Academics

Reyhan Ağçam

Department of Foreign Languages
Faculty of Education, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University
Kahramanmaraş, Turkey

M. Pınar Babanoğlu

Department of Foreign Languages
Faculty of Education, Mersin University
Mersin, Turkey

Abstract

English is presumed as the globally dominant language in the scientific world, and academics are expected to attain written and verbal competencies in academic English to a visible, accessible academic portfolio that represents them as individuals as well as their institutions. The present study was meant to investigate perceived English for Academic Purposes (EAP) competencies of Turkish academics. It exclusively aimed to reveal whether they significantly differ in their perceived EAP competencies regarding such variables as gender, length of academic experience, length of teaching experience and training received abroad. Data were collected via a five-point Likert-type scale developed by the researchers, and quantitatively analysed to explore similarities and differences across different groups of academics in relation to such variables as gender, length of experience in academia, academic titles, training experience received abroad, experience in teaching abroad, number of scientific publications and paper presentations in English (last five years). The findings revealed significant differences in academics' perceived competencies in EAP related to training experience received abroad and experience in teaching abroad regardless of its length and number of paper publications/ presentations in English over the last five years. Based on the findings, a positive correlation was established between the participants' EAP competency in speaking and other skills. The study is meant to contribute to the existing literature on EAP via and offer practical implications for EAP practitioners and non-native academics.

Keywords: Academic language skills, English for Academic Purposes, English as academic lingua franca, Turkish academics

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Introduction

The globalization of the economy and science has made English the language of research, education and technology (Cargill & Burgess, 2017). It is the world-wide means of written and oral communication in academia. Indeed, it is called “the academic lingua franca” (Mauranen, et. al., 2016, p. 183) or “English as an international language of science” (Tardy, 2004, p. 247) in the global academic community. It is the language with which researchers share their research with colleagues throughout the world, gaining academic visibility and accessibility. This puts pressure on non-native speakers in academia in all disciplines to publish in English (Burgess et al 2014, p. 72; Cargill and Burgess, 2017). In fact, according to Meneghini and Packer (2007):

English has become the modern lingua franca in a world that is economically, scientifically and culturally largely dominated by Anglo-American countries. Any scientist must, therefore, master English –at least to some extent- to obtain international recognition and to access relevant publications. But although this makes communication between scientists much easier, it also creates problems for non-English-speaking countries. Even if their scientists are able to read English publications, to reap the societal benefits, they must still translate this knowledge into a national context. (p.112)

Besides writing for publication, Basturkmen (2016) argues that spoken events based on or involving dialogic interaction in academic environments such as conferences and seminars play a significant role in professional communication with scholars, which makes academic speaking is a significant part of academic literacy.

English for academic purposes (EAP) refers to language research and instruction that focuses on the specific communicative needs and practices of particular groups in academic contexts (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002). It dates back to the 1960s when EAP training courses, generally lasting from four to 12 weeks, prevailed among British and American campuses as more international students appeared (Zhi-feng, 2015). Its purposes may range from “teaching international modules, chairing and participating in meetings, presenting a paper at an international conference, tutoring exchange students in clinical practice, to preparing articles for publication” (Gulden, 2008, p. 2017). Although academic writing is often the primary focus of EAP, in the 1990s second language acquisition (SLA) researchers began to pay more attention to speaking in EAP (Franks et al., 2018).

Karakaş (2012, p. 174) emphasizes that the use of English whether for written or communicational intentions is primarily based on practical vocational activities chiefly including research, and exchanging information or ideas concerning their fields of study with their colleagues from different countries, mainly from outer and expanding circle locations, through various communication tools or in person. According to Jingmei and Dewen (2014), more than 120 American universities offer degree courses in EAP on technical communication and magazines with indications on how to publish EAP research articles, and it is commonly offered for students attending Romanian and Hong Kong universities.

In the Turkish context, the British Council (2015) underlines that the teaching of academic English should be improved at all university levels (preparatory program, undergraduate and

graduate education, in-service program) and among academic staff within the framework of a state-funded program in Turkey. This could also be achieved through the encouragement of global collaboration in research, international student mobility, academic staff mobility, and revision of EFL preparation programs (Adams et al., 2011).

Even though a great deal of research has been conducted on the significance and necessity of EAP worldwide, limited number of studies have been carried out with a focus on EAP competencies of academics in Turkey. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no research has previously covered Turkish academics' perceived competencies in English academic skills regarding such factors like gender, academic title, training/ teaching abroad experience, educational background, and publishing/ presenting scientific papers in English (for a given period). The term of perceived competency used in this research refers to the self-evaluation of the academics' skills in EAP. In order to bridge the research gap, and to contribute to the existing literature, the present study was motivated to reveal perceived EAP competencies of Turkish academics working at a state university in Turkey. It primarily sought answers to the following research questions:

1. Do Turkish academicians significantly differ in their perceived EAP competencies regarding gender?
2. Do Turkish academicians significantly differ in their perceived EAP competencies regarding the length of academic experience?
3. Do Turkish academicians significantly differ in their perceived EAP competencies regarding the type of academic title earned?
4. Do Turkish academicians significantly differ in their perceived EAP competencies regarding the length of training received abroad?
5. Do Turkish academicians significantly differ in their perceived EAP competencies regarding experience in teaching abroad?
6. Do Turkish academicians significantly differ in their perceived EAP competencies regarding the number of scientific publications in English (last five years)?
7. Do Turkish academicians significantly differ in their perceived EAP competencies regarding the number of paper presentations in English (last five years)?

Previous research

The review of literature has shown that most of the related studies have been carried out with a focus on the general EAP general competencies and pedagogy (Jingmei & Dewen, 2014; Chen & Zhang, 2015; Khamis et al., 2015; Solikhah, 2015; Zhi-feng, 2015; Li, 2017), and academic writing mainly with the participation of undergraduate students (Chou, 1998; Akyel & Özek, 2010; Kakh et al., 2012; Srikrai, et al., 2016; Nimako et al., 2018). Divergently, Araki and Rapahel (2018) studied the EAP speaking skills of Japanese undergraduate students, whereas Basturkmen (2016) emphasized EAP practices and dialogic interaction. Hitherto, as noted earlier, slightly less attention has been paid to EAP practices of academics, which constitutes the motivation of the present study. Buckingham (2008) conducted a study on academic writing competence Turkish scholars from various subject areas who regularly publish articles in English, and concluded that despite high exposure to English, participants still face linguistic difficulties in developing their own L2 scholarly writing abilities.

Karakaş (2012) remarks that Turkish academics need and use English in non-native contexts and mainly with non-native speakers of English for various reasons and purposes and that they experience a large number of misunderstandings and difficulties in the use of English for work-related purposes. Burgess et al. (2014), on the other hand, attempted to identify the needs of Spanish researchers in terms of research publishing skills in both English and Spanish and to learn about their attitudes, motivations, and experiences of research publication and writing training.

In a comparative study, Atai and Taherkhani (2018) explore the similarities and differences between language instructors' and content teachers' cognitions, and practices in teaching reading, speaking, writing, and listening at Iranian medical sciences universities. The researchers concluded that language instructors and content teachers are strongly recommended to work cooperatively to enhance the teachers' choice of methodological options in EAP instruction. They also highlighted that more systematic EAP teacher education programs are strongly needed to attain this objective. Finally, Durmuşoğlu-Köse et al. (2019) performed a needs analysis of the Turkish academics and graduate students studying different disciplines in Turkey. The findings indicated that the participants needed most of the competencies questioned in the survey, and their needs were language-skill specific rather than discipline-specific. The participants mostly emphasized academic writing competencies, which supports the assumption in the literature that productive skills are the most challenging skill to improve for learners.

Research Design

Sampling

The participants of the study were 90 non-English major Turkish academics working at a state university in Turkey (22 Females, 68 Males). They were selected through the purposive sampling method, which is “the process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population” (Gay et al., 2009) and in this way “the researchers can target attributes within a specific population and obtain a sample of individuals with those attributes” (Haegele & Hodge, 2015, p. 70). The demographic features of the population sample were varied and summarized in Table 1. Most participants held a doctoral degree (72%), fewer held a master's degree (21%), and even fewer a bachelor's degree (7%) in different disciplines ranging from engineering through health sciences to education and archaeology. Their academic titles ranged from the full professor and associate professor (44%), through assistant professor (27%) to research assistant (29%).

Table 1. *Demographic features of the participants*

Variables	Groups	N	%
Gender	Female	22	24
	Male	68	75
Educational Background	BA	6	6
	MA	19	21
	PhD	65	72
Academic Title	Professor	12	13
	Associate Professor	28	31
	Assistant Professor	24	26
	Research Assistant	26	28

Working Experience in academia	0-5 years	29	32
	6-10 years	20	22
	11-15 years	12	13
	16 + years	29	32
Length of training abroad	None	70	77
	Up to a year	13	14
	Over a year	7	7
Length of teaching abroad	None	69	76
	Up to a year	14	15
	Over a year	7	7
Papers published in English ¹ (last five years)	Yes	60	66
	No	30	33
Papers presented in English ² (last five years)	Yes	46	51
	No	44	48

¹ Paper publication in English is usually awarded a higher score than similar works published in Turkish while evaluating the associate professorship requirements in Turkish higher education.

² Paper presentation in English is usually awarded a higher score than similar works presented in Turkish while evaluating the associate professorship requirements in Turkish higher education.

The participants also differed regarding their professional experience. Namely, those with 0-5 years of experience and those with 16+ years of experience were equally represented in the sample (32.2%). The participants with 6-10 years and those with 11-15 years of professional experience constituted slightly over 22% and 13% of the population, respectively. More than three-fourths of the participants reported that they had not received training abroad (77.8%). Similarly, a large number of them reported no experience in teaching abroad at the time of data collection (76.7%). 14.4% and approximately 8% of them reported they had received training for less than a year and over a year in a foreign country, respectively. Likewise, slightly over 15% and less than 8% of them informed that they had taught in a foreign country up to a year and over a year, respectively. Lastly, 33% of the respondents reported having no publication in English, and approximately 50% reported having presented no paper in English over the last five years. The breakdown of these responses across academic titles is reported in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

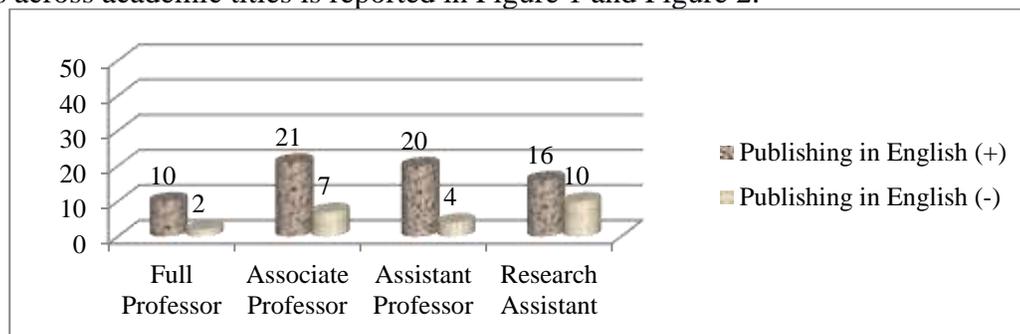


Figure 1. Number of paper publications in English (last five years)

As indicated in Figure 1, one-sixth of the full professors and one-seventh of the assistant professors reported that they had not published a paper in English for the last five years (17% in both cases), while a higher number of associate professors reported the same (25%). Lastly, 39% of the research assistants stated they had published no papers in English for the last five years.

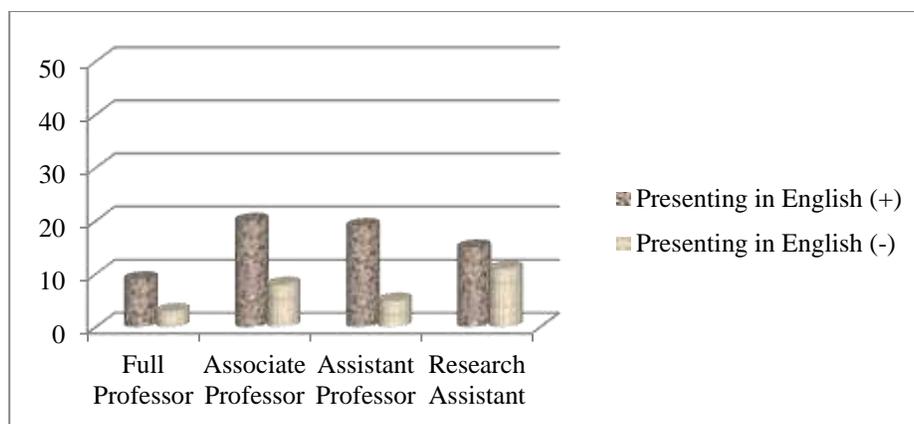


Figure 2. Number of paper presentations in English (last five years)

Figure 2 shows that the academics who reported they had presented at least one paper in English at the scientific events for the last five years outnumbered those who had not regardless of their titles. Namely, 75% of the professors, slightly over 71% of the associate professors, approximately 80% of the assistant professors and 58% of the research assistants appear to have delivered an oral presentation at international scientific events where English was identified as the common language. The data were gathered from them through a scale developed by the researchers, which is outlined in the following section.

Data Collection & Analysis

Data were collected via a five-point Likert scale developed by the researchers. In the first place, the scale created by Berman and Cheng (2001) to elicit academic writing proficiencies of international students in America was adapted into Turkish, and the expert opinion of two faculty members specialized in educational measurement and evaluation was received on the suitability of the "scale" to the research objective and research question(s). They found the "scale" inadequate in addressing our research objectives due to the fact that it was primarily designed to evaluate perceived EAP difficulties of non-native undergraduate and graduate students living in Canada. Subsequently, a pool of 35 Likert-type items were created by the researchers to evaluate perceived EAP competencies of Turkish academics, and each item was pointed from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) (Cronbach's alpha .98). Likewise, sub-dimensions of the scale were measured highly reliable (Speaking .96; Reading .95; Writing .97 & Listening .93), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics of EAP scale sub-dimensions*

Sub-dimensions	\bar{x}	sd	skb
Speaking	3,26	1,08	-0,46
Reading	3,93	0,91	-0,72 ¹
Writing	3,67	1,17	-0,80
Listening	3,46	1,14	-0,58
EAP	3,59	0,99	-0,85

¹ After inverse and square root transformation ($-1*\sqrt{6-\text{reading}}$)

As indicated in Table 2, all sub-dimensions of the scale except speaking and overall EAP skills were calculated as high (Reading: $3,93\pm 0,91$; Writing: $3,67\pm 1,17$; Listening: $3,46\pm 1,14$; general EAP skills: $3,59\pm 0,99$) (5-1=4/5=0,80; 1-1,80: very low; 1,81-2,60: low; 2,61-3,40: moderate; 3,41-4,20: high; 4,21-5,00: very high). With this finding in mind, the scale was administered to the participants who were visited at their office. Their responses to the scale items were quantitatively analysed through SPSS 15.0.

Results and Discussion

The first research question of the study was meant to reveal whether the participants significantly differed in their perceived competence in EAP concerning gender. The independent t-test results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Academics' perceived EAP competencies based on gender*

Sub-dimensions	Gender	n	\bar{x}	sd	t	p
Speaking	Female	22	3,29	1,15	0,13	0,896
	Male	68	3,26	1,07		
Reading	Female	22	3,71	1,26	-1,31	0,194
	Male	68	4,00	0,77		
Writing	Female	22	3,63	1,32	-0,21	0,834
	Male	68	3,69	1,12		
Listening	Female	22	3,33	1,26	-0,59	0,555
	Male	68	3,50	1,11		
EAP	Female	22	3,51	1,20	-0,45	0,655
	Male	68	3,62	0,92		

As shown in Table 3, no significant difference was found among the participant academics' in terms of perceived competencies between genders ($p>0,05$).

Table 4 presents the findings across types of educational backgrounds.

Table 4. *Academics' perceived EAP competencies across educational backgrounds*

Sub-dimensions	Educational background	n	\bar{x}	sd	F	p
Speaking	BA	6	3,33	0,92	0,21	0,811
	MA	19	3,12	1,13		
	PhD	65	3,30	1,09		

Reading	BA	6	4,24	0,52	0,97	0,383
	MA	19	3,71	1,18		
	PhD	65	3,97	0,85		
Writing	BA	6	3,83	0,99	0,19	0,829
	MA	19	3,54	1,35		
	PhD	65	3,69	1,14		
Listening	BA	6	3,61	0,90	0,06	0,940
	MA	19	3,42	1,22		
	PhD	65	3,46	1,16		
EAP	BA	6	3,77	0,66	0,35	0,706
	MA	19	3,44	1,14		
	PhD	65	3,62	0,97		

The statistical results suggest that the participant academics who held BA, MA and Ph.D. at the time of the study do not significantly differ from each other in their overall perceived EAP competency and sub-competencies in EAP ($p>0.05$). Table 5 illustrates the test results related to the academics' perceived EAP competency concerning their academic title.

Table 5. Academics' perceived EAP competencies based on the academic title

Sub-dimensions	Academic title	n	\bar{x}	sd	F	p
Speaking	Full Prof.	12	3,24	0,91	0,44	0,723
	Assoc. Prof.	28	3,43	1,14		
	Assist. Prof.	24	3,08	1,20		
	Res. Assist.	26	3,27	1,00		
Reading	Full Prof.	12	4,08	0,69	0,36	0,785
	Assoc. Prof.	28	4,03	0,79		
	Assist. Prof.	24	3,84	1,01		
	Res. Assist.	26	3,85	1,06		
Writing	Full Prof.	12	3,83	0,99	0,48	0,696
	Assoc. Prof.	28	3,80	1,15		
	Assist. Prof.	24	3,45	1,22		
	Res. Assist.	26	3,66	1,25		
Listening	Full Prof.	12	3,44	0,97	0,12	0,951
	Assoc. Prof.	28	3,50	1,22		
	Assist. Prof.	24	3,35	1,21		
	Res. Assist.	26	3,53	1,13		
EAP	Full Prof.	12	3,67	0,81	0,38	0,771
	Assoc. Prof.	28	3,72	1,00		
	Assist. Prof.	24	3,43	1,04		
	Res. Assist.	26	3,57	1,02		

The participants did not significantly differ in their perceived EAP competencies across academic titles ($p>0.05$). Subsequently, they were compared through the ANOVA test to figure out whether

their academic experience significantly influences their perceived competencies in EAP. The statistical results are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6. *Academics' perceived EAP competencies based on experience*

Sub-dimensions	Experience	n	\bar{x}	sd	F	p
Speaking	0-5 years	29	3,01	0,96	0,87	0,460
	6-10 years	20	3,29	1,00		
	11-15 years	12	3,44	1,06		
	16+ years	29	3,43	1,25		
Reading	0-5 years	29	3,81	0,77	0,88	0,454
	6-10 years	20	3,93	0,92		
	11-15 years	12	4,31	0,84		
	16+ years	29	3,90	1,07		
Writing	0-5 years	29	3,49	1,15	0,49	0,687
	6-10 years	20	3,73	1,08		
	11-15 years	12	3,96	1,19		
	16+ years	29	3,69	1,26		
Listening	0-5 years	29	3,37	1,06	0,39	0,760
	6-10 years	20	3,48	1,14		
	11-15 years	12	3,78	1,18		
	16+ years	29	3,40	1,24		
EAP	0-5 years	29	3,41	0,84	0,67	0,573
	6-10 years	20	3,62	0,94		
	11-15 years	12	3,88	0,97		
	16+ years	29	3,64	1,16		

As seen in Table 6, academics' experience ranged from less than a year to more than 16 years; however, these differences do not appear to influence their perceived competencies in EAP skills. In other words, no statistically significant difference was measured among the participant academics across different durations of their experience ($p>0.05$).

The academics' perceived EAP competencies were also compared through the t-test in terms of their background training received abroad. The test results are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7. *Academics' perceived EAP competencies based on training abroad experience*

Sub-dimensions	Study abroad	n	\bar{x}	sd	t	p
Speaking	Yes	20	3,84	1,01	2,77	0,007
	No	70	3,10	1,05		
Reading	Yes	20	4,28	0,52	1,89	0,062
	No	70	3,83	0,98		
Writing	Yes	20	4,19	0,78	2,32	0,022
	No	70	3,52	1,22		
Listening	Yes	20	3,97	0,84	2,30	0,024

	No	70	3,31	1,18		
EAP	Yes	20	4,08	0,72	2,57	0,012
	No	70	3,45	1,01		

Table 7 illustrates that perceived EAP competences of the participant academics were largely counted high and very high (5-1=4/5=0,80; 1-1,80: very low; 1,81-2,60: low; 2,61-3,40: moderate; 3,41-4,20: high; 4,21-5,00: very high). Nonetheless, the t-test results showed that the academics considerably differed in their degree of perceived EAP competence about their training abroad experience. Namely, those who stayed abroad for training purposes appeared to be more competent in all EAP skills except reading [Speaking ($t=2,77$; $p<0,05$); Writing ($t=2,32$; $p<0,05$), Listening ($t=2,30$; $p<0,05$); & Reading ($t=2,57$; $p>0,05$)]. Based on this finding, it could be stated that training abroad contributes to their perceived competencies in interactive skills such as listening and speaking as well as writing.

The t-test results related to the academics' perceived EAP competencies and the length of training they received abroad are demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 8. *Academics' perceived EAP competencies based on the duration of training abroad*

Sub-dimensions	Duration of study abroad	n	\bar{x}	sd	t	p
Speaking	1 year and less	13	3,80	1,09	-0,21	0,840
	1+ years	7	3,90	0,94		
Reading	1 year and less	13	4,34	0,56	0,67	0,510
	1+ years	7	4,17	0,47		
Writing	1 year and less	13	4,33	0,77	1,04	0,312
	1+ years	7	3,95	0,80		
Listening	1 year and less	13	4,05	0,87	0,60	0,556
	1+ years	7	3,81	0,84		
EAP	1 year and less	13	4,13	0,74	0,41	0,684
	1+ years	7	3,99	0,72		

As indicated in Table 8, the participants' perceived competencies in EAP skills were measured high and very high regardless of the duration of their training stay abroad (5-1=4/5=0,80; 1-1,80: very low; 1,81-2,60: low; 2,61-3,40: moderate; 3,41-4,20: high; 4,21-5,00: very high). Similarly, the statistical results showed that they do not significantly differ in their perceived EAP competence concerning the duration of their study abroad ($p>0,05$). Thus, no difference was found between those who stayed abroad for educational purposes less and more than one year, respectively concerning their perceived competencies in EAP.

The independent samples t-test results related to the academics' perceived EAP competencies and experience in teaching abroad are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9. *Academics' perceived EAP competencies based on teaching abroad experience*

Sub-dimensions	Teaching abroad	n	\bar{x}	sd	t	p
Speaking	Yes	21	3,71	1,27	2,23	0,029
	No	69	3,13	0,99		
Reading	Yes	21	4,22	0,70	1,66	0,100
	No	69	3,85	0,96		
Writing	Yes	21	4,05	1,05	1,73	0,087
	No	69	3,55	1,18		
Listening	Yes	21	3,79	1,24	1,54	0,127
	No	69	3,36	1,10		
EAP	Yes	21	3,96	0,98	2,00	0,049
	No	69	3,48	0,97		

As seen in Table 9, academics have high perceived competencies in EAP regardless of their teaching abroad experience. However, those who taught abroad tend to have significantly higher perceived competencies in overall EAP and speaking skills as opposed to those who did not [Speaking ($t=2,23$; $p<0.05$), Overall ($t=2.00$ $p<0,05$)]. This particular finding might be interpreted that teaching abroad significantly contributes to the improvement of overall EAP skills as well as speaking academic English of the academics.

The statistical results related to the academics' perceived EAP competencies and length of teaching abroad experience are provided in Table 10.

Table 10. *Academics' perceived EAP competencies based on the duration of teaching abroad*

Sub-dimensions	Duration of teaching abroad	n	\bar{x}	sd	t	p
Speaking	1 year and less	14	3,54	1,26	-0,91	0,377
	1+ years	7	4,07	1,32		
Reading	1 year and less	14	4,15	0,71	-0,60	0,555
	1+ years	7	4,35	0,73		
Writing	1 year and less	14	3,93	1,16	-0,76	0,455
	1+ years	7	4,30	0,80		
Listening	1 year and less	14	3,69	1,26	-0,53	0,603
	1+ years	7	4,00	1,28		
EAP	1 year and less	14	3,84	0,99	-0,80	0,432
	1+ years	7	4,21	0,99		

As shown in Table 10, the participant academics' perceived EAP competencies were high and very high (5-1=4/5=0,80; 1-1,80: very low; 1,81-2,60: low; 2,61-3,40: moderate; 3,41-4,20: high; 4,21-5,00: very high). However, no statistically significant difference emerged among the academics who had previously taught abroad in terms of their perceived EAP competence about the different duration of their stay abroad for teaching purposes ($p>0.05$). The statistical findings on the academics' perceived EAP competencies and having published in English for over five years are shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Academics' perceived EAP competencies based on publishing in English (last five years)

Sub-dimensions	Publication in English		n	\bar{x}	sd	t	p
	Yes	No					
Speaking	Yes	60	3,45	0,99	2,32	0,023	
	No	30	2,90	1,17			
Reading	Yes	60	4,10	0,74	2,43	0,017	
	No	30	3,60	1,13			
Writing	Yes	60	3,96	1,03	3,56	0,001	
	No	30	3,09	1,22			
Listening	Yes	60	3,74	1,02	3,48	0,001	
	No	30	2,90	1,19			
EAP	Yes	60	3,81	0,84	3,08	0,003	
	No	30	3,16	1,13			

As indicated in Table 11, those who had published at least one paper within the identified period displayed significantly higher perceived competencies in overall and sub-skills of EAP than those who had not [Speaking ($t=2,32$; $p<0,05$), Reading ($t=2,43$; $p<0,05$), Writing ($t=3,56$; $p<0,05$), Listening ($t=3,48$; $p<0,05$) & Overall ($t=3,08$; $p<0,05$). This result might also be evaluated that publishing papers in English considerably improves perceived EAP competences of the academics.

The statistical results related to the academics' perceived EAP competencies and having delivered oral presentations in English during scientific events for over five years are portrayed in Table 12.

Table 12. Academics' perceived EAP competencies based on presenting in English (last five years)

Sub-dimensions	Pres. in English		n	\bar{x}	sd	t	p
	Yes	No					
Speaking	Yes	46	3,68	0,84	4,04	0,000	
	No	44	2,83	1,14			
Reading	Yes	46	4,21	0,74	3,09	0,003	
	No	44	3,65	1,00			
Writing	Yes	46	4,20	0,88	4,95	0,000	
	No	44	3,12	1,19			
Listening	Yes	46	3,90	0,96	4,03	0,000	
	No	44	3,00	1,15			
EAP	Yes	46	4,00	0,74	4,38	0,000	
	No	44	3,17	1,04			

The statistical findings in Table 12, show that the academics significantly differed in their perceived competency related to EAP in general ($t=4,38$; $p<0,05$) as well as speaking ($t=4,04$; $p<0,05$), reading ($t=3,09$; $p<0,05$), writing ($t=4,95$; $p<0,05$), and listening ($t=4,03$; $p<0,05$) depending on whether or not they had presented a paper in English for the last five years. In other words, the academics who have delivered an oral presentation in English for the last five years

reach significantly higher scores than those who have not. Subsequently, the Pearson correlation analysis was administered to the results obtained from the scale.

Table 13. Pearson Correlation Analysis Results: Sub-dimensions

Sub-dimensions	2	3	4	5
1-Speaking	0,72**	0,81**	0,85* *	0,92**
2-Reading ¹		0,87**	0,76* *	0,91**
3-Writing			0,88* *	0,96**
4-Listening				0,92**
5-EAP				1

** p<0.01 ¹Converted normal scores

As shown in Table 13, a positive and meaningful correlation was found between speaking and reading ($r=0,72$; $p<0,05$), EAP speaking and EAP writing ($r=0,81$; $p<0,05$), and EAP speaking and EAP listening ($r=0,85$; $p<0,05$). These results could be interpreted that the academics with high perceived competence in EAP speaking tend to have higher perceived competence in EAP reading, writing and listening. A similar correlation was found between the academics' perceived competency in EAP reading and EAP writing ($r=0,87$; $p<0,05$), EAP reading and EAP listening ($r=0,76$; $p<0,05$), and EAP writing and EAP listening ($r=0,88$; $p<0,05$). To put it differently, those with high perceived competence in EAP reading tend to have high perceived competence in EAP writing and EAP listening, and those with high perceived competence in EAP writing tended to have high perceived competence in EAP listening.

Conclusion

The current research primarily probed perceived EAP competencies of Turkish academics working at a state university in Turkey. The data were gathered through a five-point Likert scale developed by the researchers, which was proved highly reliable (Cronbach's alpha scores: Overall .98; Speaking .96; Reading .95; Writing .97 & Listening .93).

The research has indicated no statistically significant difference among the participant academics' perceived competencies in EAP skills regarding such variables as gender, experience in academia, duration of training abroad experience, and duration of the study and teaching abroad experience. However, the findings have shown that the academics significantly differ in their perceived competencies in EAP concerning training abroad experience (especially in EAP listening, EAP speaking and EAP writing), teaching abroad experience (especially in EAP speaking and overall EAP), publication/ presentation of a paper in English for the last five years (all skills). The research also investigated the relationship among the academics' perceived EAP sub-competencies. The statistical findings have yielded a positive correlation between their perceived competencies in EAP speaking and EAP reading, EAP writing, and EAP listening. This suggests that EAP speaking competency may positively influence the competencies in other EAP skills. Besides, the academics' perceived EAP competency in reading was found in a positive correlation with their perceived EAP competencies in writing and listening. A similar correlation was also found between their perceived EAP writing and EAP listening competencies.

The results suggest that training and teaching abroad experience may have a positive impact on Turkish academics' perceived EAP competencies regardless of the duration of their experience. Namely, those who reported no training and/ or teaching experience abroad tended to have lower perceived competencies in all EAP skills except reading. In light of this particular finding, they could be encouraged to participate in exchange programs and/ or to involve in international projects where the communication is established and maintained via English.

Another finding of the research is that publishing articles and presenting papers in English have positive influence on Turkish academics' EAP skills regardless of their frequency. Therefore, academics should be encouraged to publish their works in international journals and to participate in international scientific events –if possible.

Considering the findings that the EAP speaking competency positively influences competencies of other EAP skills, and that EAP reading competency seems to have a similar influence on EAP writing and listening skills, the organization of courses and seminars on EAP could be recommended to improve EAP skills of non-native academicians and graduate students. Likewise, especially to improve their EAP speaking competency, speaking clubs could be organized under the guidance of academics whose majors are English. The academics in concern should also be encouraged to read and write research papers instead of falling back on the translation by others. Through first-hand experience, their understanding and writing, and especially their field knowledge will increase more in quality and quantity (Karakaş, 2012). As noted in Olkun (2006), general to specific scientific writing should be integrated into courses from primary education onwards in Turkey. From the perspective of higher education, program developers should be informed about the significance of EAP and encouraged to design discipline-specific academic English programs and courses. Introducing these into higher education curriculum, especially as a compulsory part of the related program, is strongly believed to improve EAP competencies of degree students particularly at the tertiary level.

This study was limited to the investigation of perceived EAP competencies/ difficulties of restricted sample size (90 non-English major academics working at a state university in Turkey). Hence, further studies could be conducted with the participation of non-English major academics resided in other countries to compare its findings with the ones reported here. Future studies could also explore perceived EAP competencies and/ or difficulties of academics working at different departments to see whether they significantly differ in terms of their major.

About the authors:

Reyhan Ağçam obtained her MA and PhD in ELT from Çukurova University, Turkey. She currently works as an assistant professor at Faculty of Education, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Turkey. Her research interests include language teaching, second language acquisition, academic writing and corpus linguistics.
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5445-9031>

Muzaffer Pınar Babanoğlu (Ph.D.) currently works as faculty member at the Department of Foreign Languages, English Language Teaching, Mersin University, Turkey. Her research

interests are , English as a Foreign Language Learning/Teaching, English for Academic Purposes, English as a Lingua Franca, Second Language Acquisition, Learner Corpus.
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8166-974X>

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Appendix A.

EAP COMPETENCY SCALE FOR NON-ENGLISH MAJOR ACADEMICS

Dear Colleagues,

This survey was motivated to reveal Turkish academics’ perceived competencies in EAP. The findings to be elicited here will be orally presented during a scientific event. We hereby acknowledge that your personal information will not be shared with third parties. Thank you very much for your invaluable contribution.

Researchers

Academic Title: _____ Academic Experience: _____ (Year) Educational Background: _____

Age: _____ Gender: () F () M

Did you receive training abroad? () Yes () No Length of training abroad (if you did): _____

Did you teach abroad? () Yes () No Length of teaching abroad (if you did): _____

Number of papers published in English for over 5 years _____

Number of papers presented in English for over five years _____

Please choose the option that best describes your opinion.

[1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Undecided; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree.]

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I can communicate effectively with attendees in a scientific event.					
2.	I can speak fluently about familiar topics.					
3.	I can use stress, tone and intonation to convey meaning clearly.					
4.	I can participate in an academic debate.					
5.	I can give spoken explanations and prepare and present academic presentations using visual aids.					
6.	I can participate in tutorials and understand the rules of turn-taking, interrupting and preventing interruptions, suggesting, and accepting and rejecting ideas.					

7.	I can discuss a wide variety of issues, clearly expressing their opinions and reasons for those opinions.					
8.	I can participate in an informal debate, refuting, exemplifying and requesting further information.					
9.	I can make academic requests and replies.					
10.	I can establish written communicate with formal and informal institutions and organizations in English (e.g. e-mail).					
11.	I can use persuasive language to convince others to adopt their point of view.					
12.	I can use skimming and scanning techniques to get the gist of a text and find specific information in complex texts.					
13.	I can critically read and analyse a variety of complex texts.					
14.	I can identify genre, purpose, tone, bias, and author's stance in a text and understand the role of style in relation to these.					
15.	I can identify and follow the stages of a written text.					
16.	I can evaluate the reliability and credibility of a variety of texts, including those found on the Internet.					
17.	I can and synthesize information for use as evidence of supporting ideas in research.					
18.	I can understand and expand on a wide range of academic vocabulary.					
19.	I can write correctly-structured and cohesive paragraphs for inclusion in essays or research reports, using topic sentences, supporting ideas and relevant evidence.					
20.	I can plan, draft and edit a piece of writing in English.					
21.	I can write a well-structured and cohesive argument essay with a clear thesis and logical development of that thesis, including a refutation of the opposing point of view.					
22.	I can identify the purpose of a research report and analyse the parts and functions.					
23.	I can formulate and administer a questionnaire for the purpose of creating a report from this research.					
24.	I can generate graphs and tables using research results, and interpret them.					
25.	I can synthesise primary and secondary research into appropriate discussion sections and paraphrase ideas.					
26.	I can reference any research cited in their writing.					
27.	I can create all sections of a report, including executive summary, introduction, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion and recommendations.					
28.	I can listen for signals and discourse markers in lectures which indicate important ideas etc.					
29.	I can use several techniques for listening and note-taking e.g. symbols and abbreviations, using lecture notes and PowerPoint slides, spider diagrams, linear method, tables, Cornell Method etc.					
30.	I can take notes from detailed explanations and write summaries from such notes.					