

## An Investigation into ELT Professionals' Research Culture in Turkey

### Türkiye'deki İngiliz Dili Eđitimi Uzmanlarının Araştırma Kültürlerinin İncelenmesi

Diñçay KÖKSAL\* Salim RAZI \*\*

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

#### *Abstract*

This study aims to reveal English language academicians and postgraduate students' ambitions about involving in research studies in a developing country, Turkey. To collect data, a questionnaire was constructed and delivered to 159 ELT academicians and students to learn about their experiences in research and writing a research report, and perception of difficulty in different sections of a research report. Besides, semi-constructed interviews were also administered to 12 academicians. The results indicated significant differences between academicians and students. Besides, discussion was regarded as the most difficult part whereas writing references was the easiest. Although participants reported their experiences in constructing the skeleton of a research paper, they regarded themselves weak in long run studies.

*Keywords:* Research, research culture, academic writing, academic writing difficulties

#### *Öz*

İngiliz dilinin eđitimi alanında arařtırmacıların alıřmalarıyla ilgili tutum, istek, beceri, deneyim ve beklentilerini irdeleyen bir arařtırma henüz yapılmamıřtır. Bu nedenle, bu alıřma Türkiye gibi geliřmekte olan bir lkede ilgili anabilim dalında görev yapmakta olan akademisyenlerin ve lisansüstü öđrencilerinin arařtırma kültürlerini incelemeyi hedeflemiřtir. Veri toplama amacıyla arařtırmacılar tarafından geliřtirilen anket formu, lkemizdeki 34 farklı üniversitenin ilgili anabilim dallarına gönderilmiř ve toplam 159 katılımcıya uygulanmıřtır. Ayrıca, 12 katılımcıyla yarı yapılandırılmıř mülakat yapılmıřtır. Sonuçlar, akademisyenler ve öđrenciler arasında önemli farklara iřaret etmektedir. Katılımcılar en çok bir makalenin tartıřma bölümünü yazarken zorlandıklarını, kaynaka yazımınunsa bir akademik makalenin yazması en kolay bölümü olduđunu belirtmiřlerdir. Katılımcılar arařtırma ile ilgili deneyime sahip olduklarını bildirmelerine rađmen, vaka ya da aksiyon arařtırması gibi uzun soluklu alıřmalarla ilgili deneyim eksiklikleri bulunduđuna dikkat çekmiřlerdir.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* Arařtırma, arařtırma kültürü, akademik yazma, akademik yazma güçlükleri.

#### Introduction

Although research is considered to be essential in the field of foreign language (FL) teaching and professionals in this field are expected to conduct research studies; little is known about academicians' research culture due to the lack of sufficient research on this issue. Hiep's (2006) study aims to shed light onto the research culture of English language teaching (ELT) professionals in Vietnam; however, there is no intention of such an investigation in Turkish setting. Nevertheless, it is supposed to be possible to increase the professionals' awareness and encourage conducting

\* Prof. Dr. Diñçay KÖKSAL, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Faculty of Education ELT Department, Office: 0090 286 2171303 ext: 3002, Email: dkoksal@yahoo.com

\*\* Instructor Dr. Salim RAZI, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Faculty of Education ELT Department, Office: 0090 286 2171303 ext: 3052, Email: salimrazi@gmail.com

more research studies by means of such studies which deal with their research culture. To be able to reach this aim, their problems in conducting research studies should be identified by dealing with the factors of restrictions, feedback, and reinforcement. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the research culture of ELT professionals who work at universities in Turkey. Besides, post graduate ELT students also constitute the scope of this study as they are also expected to conduct research studies to complete their postgraduate courses. Hence, the present study aims to shed light onto these unknown issues in Turkey.

In a wide scope panoramic view, the great genius Einstein points out that “if we knew what we were doing it wouldn’t be research” and another genius Szent-Gyorgy defines research as “to see what everybody else has seen and to think what nobody else has thought”. Undoubtedly, such arguments add to the general understanding of research; however, in the field of language teaching Nunan (1992, p. 2) indicates that the process of research involves “(a) defining a problem, (b) stating an objective, and (c) formulating a hypothesis. It involves gathering information, classifying, analysis, and interpretation to see what extent the initial objective has been achieved”. It is vital to be disciplined to develop control at each step of the process in collecting information and to be critical for avoiding the sources of errors by reasoning (Suppes, 1978). Related to this, it can be claimed that research is a discipline framework in which an inquiry is conducted with a questioning manner toward the world. The word of *discipline* in definition of research concerns with how the researcher approaches to the hypothesis or research question (Shulman, 1988). By accepting or rejecting hypothesis and also answering research questions, then the researcher reveals contributes to the related field of study. Nunan indicates that the aim of research is finding solutions to problems, verifying the application of theories and suggesting new conception. During this process, research also illuminates not only researcher but also readers who are interested in the same topic as researcher.

Different types of research studies are discriminated from each other as either being *qualitative* or *quantitative*. According to Nunan (1992), the former deals with ungeneralisable single case studies as opposed to the latter one which deals with generalisable multiple case studies. However, the classification in this paper will primarily be based on Brown (1988) who advocates a distinction between primary and secondary research. To him, *secondary research* is derived from secondary sources such as library books about EFL learners whereas *primary research* is derived from primary sources of information such as dealing with a group of EFL learners.

In accordance with the aims of their study, researchers administer the correct procedure for their studies. After administering various instruments, researchers reach their own results; and they are required to report their findings in an appropriate style (Best & Kahn, 2006) that is called academic writing. As writers are expected to follow “rhetorical and organizational issues” Ruetten (1997, p. xix) it is also essential to organize academic papers skilfully. In this respect, the skeleton of an academic paper generally constitutes of the following sections.

In the field of ELT, the general tendency to write an academic paper is administering the rules provided by American Psychological Association (2001). Then, an academic paper is expected to begin with the title of the study, name of the author(s), and contact information (Mackey & Gass, 2005) along with institutional affiliation and running head. Then, abstract presents primary findings of it in limited words (Best & Kahn, 2006). Introduction defines statement of the problem whereas literature review provides background information about the study to associate it with the other studies (Nunan, 1992). Methodology deals with setting, participants, materials and instruments, and procedures to collect data and analyse data. Findings section presents the results and they are discussed in the discussion section. Then, conclusions are presented along with implications. These are followed by references which “consists all of the documents” referred in the study (Best & Kahn, 2006, p. 65). Finally, Mackey and Gass indicate that an academic paper ends with appendices which include “the examples of the actual materials used in the study, along with any other information” (p. 16).

This standard skeleton of a research report is instructed to undergraduate students in

Advanced Reading and Writing Course and then practised in Research Method Course at ELT departments in Turkey. Moreover, postgraduate ELT programmes also provide such practice opportunities. Although, undergraduate students may experience some problem in academic writing due to lack of adequate practice opportunities, it might be unreasonable to stigmatize them as novice writers since Academic Writing Course assists them to build basic academic writing skills. Moreover, such courses give them the opportunities to outline, search, take notes, revise drafts, edit, and proof-read which are regarded as essential components of academic writing process (Lester, 1971). Lester (1995) maintains that the organization of the academic paper can be provided in relation with *unity* and *coherence*. Apart from academic writing skills, Research Skill Course aims to equip students with basic statistical knowledge. Then, students are expected to be able to conduct their own research projects.

Razı (2010, p. 147) demonstrates the classification of research in the following figure below with reference to a number of various researchers (Bell, 1993; Brown, 1988; Burns, 2005; Chaudron, 1988; Harklau, 2005; Hatch & Farhady, 1981; Lazarton, 2005; Mackey & Gass, 2005; Nunan, 1992 & 2005; van Lier, 2005).

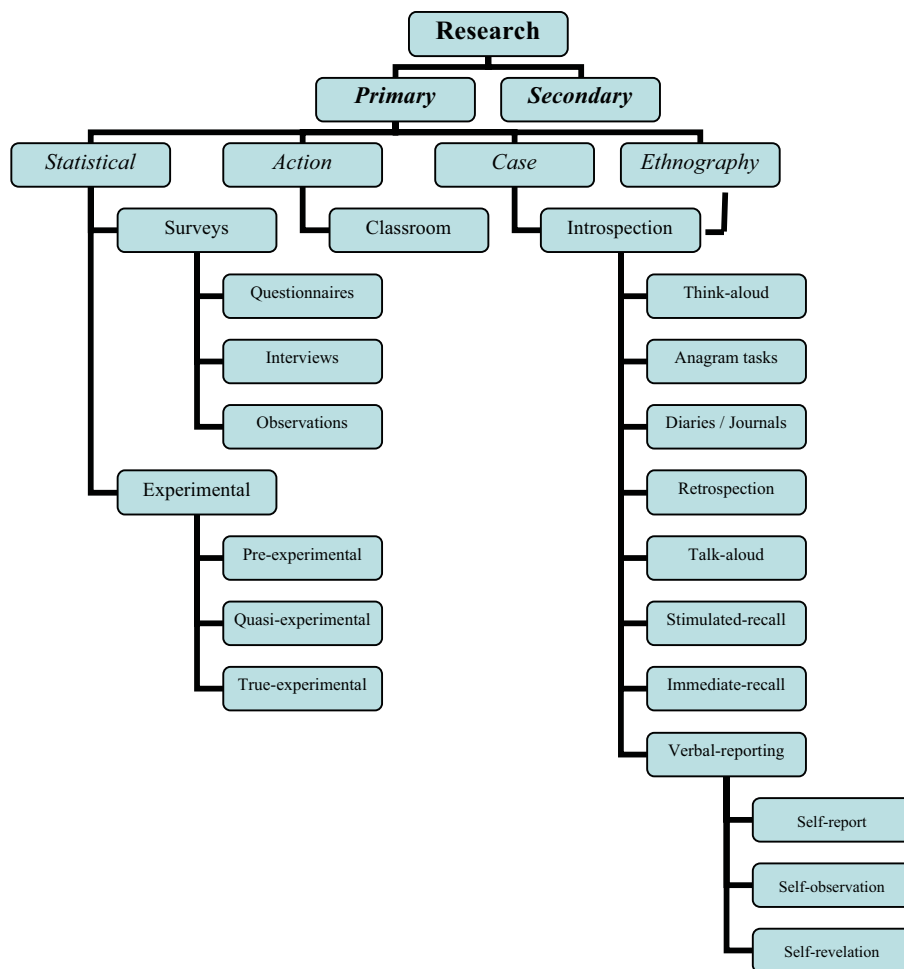


Figure 1. Types of Research

According to Freeman (1998, p. 6), “the teacher is a person and research is a process and teacher takes on a process that is different from teaching”. Boles and Anderson (1996) maintain that teachers’ roles get blurred. While the frontier between being a researcher and a teacher

starts to get blurred, teachers and researchers begin to get closer to one of them in accordance with their experiences. This unclear discrimination between being a researcher and a teacher might also be related with their purposes as researchers originate knowledge whereas teachers apply this knowledge in educational settings. For example, Freeman maintains that a teacher answers others' questions and do things so that others could learn; however, a researcher "asks questions, examines phenomena and documents understandings for why things happen" (p. 7). In this respect, the decision of being both a researcher and a teacher is determined not only by training that they receive in their own field but also other social and personal factors such as being encouraged and rewarded for their research by colleagues and the other experts in their field.

Moreover, feedback from colleagues is crucial not only to motivate and reward teacher researcher but also to provide a reflection for other research studies in the future. However, one of the problems which alienates teachers to research is that teachers are not prone to collaboration and are not eager to share their ideas with each other as indicated by Wallace (1998, p. 208) there are a number of reasons for these situations such as "pressure of work, lack of motivation, or reward for professional development, natural difference, professional insecurity and so on". Literally, this paper aims to find out and analyse these reasons by suggesting some solutions to such problems that might inhibit professionals to research in academic field.

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

The present study aims to investigate firstly the participants' knowledge of writing a research report, secondly the experiences of participants in conducting research studies and writing a research report and thirdly their order of difficulty in parts of an academic paper.

### *Setting*

As the present study aims to find out the research cultures of ELT department staff and postgraduate students in Turkey, it was conducted at the ELT department of 34 universities in Turkey.

### *Participants*

The total number of participants in this study is 159 constituting of 103 females and 56 males. As presented in Table 1, the participants involve a number of 84 professionals at ELT department and a number of 75 postgraduate ELT students in 34 different universities in Turkey. Their ages vary from 21 to 68 with the average of 34. A number of 49 of them hold BA, 77 of them hold MA, and 33 of them hold PhD degrees.

Table 1.

*The Number of Gender, Age and Degree Distribution of all Participants*

| Degree | n   | Age  |      |         | Gender |      | Position |         |
|--------|-----|------|------|---------|--------|------|----------|---------|
|        |     | Min. | Max. | Average | Female | Male | Staff    | Student |
| BA     | 49  | 21   | 49   | 29      | 33     | 16   | 15       | 34      |
| MA     | 77  | 22   | 68   | 34      | 52     | 25   | 39       | 38      |
| PhD    | 33  | 26   | 53   | 41      | 18     | 15   | 33       | 0       |
| All    | 159 | 21   | 68   | 34      | 103    | 56   | 87       | 72      |

### *Instruments*

Following some demographic questions such as age, gender, degree, background of research skills, and university; the participants were delivered a three-sectioned questionnaire that was developed by the researchers of this study to collect data about participants' experiences in research and writing a research report in Part 1 and perception of difficulty in different sections of a research report in Part 2. The items in first section were 5-scale Likert questions with the answers on the scale moving from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. However, the second section of the questionnaire required putting nine parts of an academic article in order of difficulty.

To establish validity for the instrument, it was delivered to three assistant professors in the field of ELT with the aim of investigating the items involved in the questionnaire. The questionnaire items, then, were reconstructed by the help of the feedback provided by these assistant professors. Besides, to establish reliability, the Cronbach's alpha value over 24 items was found as  $\alpha = .939$  that would allow the researchers to use the questionnaire in the study. In addition, to support the data collected by means of questionnaire, a semi-constructed 7-question-interview was conducted.

#### *Procedures for Data Collection*

The copies of the questionnaire were posted to the head of ELT departments in 34 universities and they were distributed to the participants. Afterwards, they were posted back to the researchers. Furthermore, an interview which aimed to find out the difficulties and rewards while writing an article was conducted with 12 participants at the ELT Department of ÇOMU with 20-minute interview sessions for each participant.

#### *Procedures for Data Analysis*

Participants' responses to the questionnaire items were fed into a computer through the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, 15.0) data editor. The study results were analysed by descriptive and frequency statistics for the demographic questions. The differences between groups were analysed by means of post hoc Scheffe test, descriptive statistics, and independent sample T-tests. Moreover, to analyse the second part of the questionnaire, participants' each response was given a numeric value between 1 and 9. On this scale, the number 1 represented the least difficult item whereas the number 9 represented the most difficult one. Then, mean values were calculated for each part of writing a research paper.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Part 1: Analysing Participants' Experience in Academic Research*

24-questioned second part of the instrument aims to reveal participants' experiences in research which are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2.  
*Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Experience in Research*

| Items in Part I  | Mean   | SD      |
|--|--------|---------|
| 18 identifying a problem                               | 3.8742 | .97268  |
| 14 writing research questions                          | 3.7862 | 1.10445 |
| 22 collecting data                                     | 3.7170 | 1.09158 |
| 20 reviewing relevant literature.                      | 3.6667 | 1.02294 |
| 13 writing research questions.                         | 3.6604 | 1.01775 |
| 18 developing a plan                                   | 3.6541 | .99992  |
| 17 identifying a problem                               | 3.6164 | .98597  |
| 5 conducting multisite/multiscale/large scale studies. | 3.5597 | 1.05897 |
| 21 selecting appropriate procedures.                   | 3.5409 | .99201  |
| 15 adapting instruments                                | 3.5031 | 1.07252 |
| 24 interpreting the data.                              | 3.3522 | 1.12023 |
| 16 preparing my own instruments                        | 3.2830 | 1.15360 |
| 12 conducting classroom centred research               | 3.1069 | 1.24571 |
| 6 conducting survey studies.                           | 3.0566 | 1.17595 |
| 2 conducting quantitative research                     | 2.9686 | 1.11617 |
| 1 conducting qualitative research                      | 2.9623 | 1.12445 |
| 23 using software such as SPSS. MATLAB and others.     | 2.8868 | 1.22206 |
| 8 conducting experimental studies.                     | 2.8239 | 1.21455 |
| 10 conducting empirical studies.                       | 2.7610 | 1.19312 |
| 4 conducting correlational studies                     | 2.7547 | 1.12349 |
| 3 conducting both qualitative & quantitative           | 2.7484 | 1.07308 |
| 11 conducting action research                          | 2.7296 | 1.18901 |
| 9 conducting case studies                              | 2.5786 | 1.20328 |
| 7 conducting ethnography studies                       | 2.0881 | 1.03351 |

Table 2 presents that participants have experience the most in 'identifying a problem' which is an item to be done at the beginning of any research study. Secondly, participants report that they are also experienced in 'writing research questions'. It is interesting to note that the first two steps of conducting research studies are placed in accordance with their natural order in research. Furthermore, 'collecting data' receives the highest third rank in the scale. Therefore, it might be possible to argue that the first steps of research studies are better practised by the participants.

On the other hand, Table 2 shows that participants think they are lack of experience in 'conducting an ethnographic study' which aims to collect data about individual pieces of language learning like a jigsaw rather than the whole puzzle (Nunan, 1992). The second lowest item indicates that the participants do not have enough experience in conducting 'case studies' which focus on only a single individual or limited number of individuals and investigate some aspect of their language development generally in extended time (Brown, 1988). Thirdly, the participants report that they are not experienced enough in conducting 'action research' which begins with a specific problem is conducted to decide what the researcher's future practice should be by means of systematic collection of data on daily practice (Wallace, 1998). According to the results in Table 2, it can be inferred that participants do not prefer longitudinal studies which are specifically conducted with an individual or a small group of participants. This might be due to natural differences in researchers, pressure of work or lack of motivation for such a long process.

Independent sample t-test in Table 3 compares ELT professionals' responses to postgraduate students' in Part 1.

Table 3.

*T-test for Occupation of Participants for Part I*

| Groups  | N  | $\bar{X}$ | S.D.   | t     | df  | Sig. |
|---------|----|-----------|--------|-------|-----|------|
| Staff   | 84 | 3.4097    | .64247 | 4.227 | 157 | .000 |
| Student | 75 | 2.9544    | .71579 |       |     |      |

Table 3 gives the mean values of Part 1 and indicates significant differences between postgraduate students and ELT department staff [ $t = 4.227$   $p = .000$ ] with medium effect size ( $d = .67$ ;  $r = .31$ ). It shows that participants who take part in teaching process actively feel more experienced. It can be claimed that academicians expose to some difficulties in real life teaching conditions and they feel eager to conduct research studies to find solutions to their problems. As they are more ambitious than postgraduate students to share their experiences with other professionals, they gain more experience in the vicious circle of research.

Independent sample T-test in Table 4 compares male participants' responses in Part 1 to females'.

Table 4.

*T-test for Gender of Participants for Part I*

| Gender | N   | $\bar{X}$ | S.D.   | t    | df  | Sig. |
|--------|-----|-----------|--------|------|-----|------|
| Female | 103 | 3.1970    | .70935 | .049 | 157 | .961 |
| Male   | 56  | 3.1912    | .72691 |      |     |      |

Table 4 gives the mean values of Part 1 and does not indicate significant differences between males and females [ $t = .049$   $p = .961$ ] with a very small effect size ( $d = .01$ ;  $r = .004$ ).

Independent sample t-test in Table 5 compares participants who had taken Research Methods Course to the ones who had not taken in terms of their responses in Part 1.

Table 5.

*T-test for Taking Research Skills Course for Part I*

| Research Skills Course | N   | $\bar{X}$ | S.D.   | t    | df  | Sig. |
|------------------------|-----|-----------|--------|------|-----|------|
| Received               | 121 | 3.1990    | .70114 | .128 | 157 | .898 |
| Did not receive        | 38  | 3.1820    | .76028 |      |     |      |

Table 5 gives the mean values of Part 1 and does not indicate significant differences between participants who had taken Research Methods Course and who had not taken [ $t = .128$   $p = .898$ ] with a very small effect size ( $d = .02$ ;  $r = .01$ ). In the light of the results it can be claimed that taking research methods course do not affect participants' experience in research.

Descriptive statistics and ANOVA Post hoc Scheffe test in Table 6 and Table 7 compare participants' responses in Part 1 in accordance with their degrees. An ANOVA test indicated that the differences observed among three degree groups were statistically significant [ $F(2, 156) = 14.488$ ,  $p = .000$ ] according to their scores in Part 1. Group differences were examined through a post hoc Scheffe Test the results of which are illustrated in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6.  
*Clusters of Different Degree Holders for Part I*

| Intact Classes | YDS (Mean) | N   | SD     | Minimum | Maximum |
|----------------|------------|-----|--------|---------|---------|
| BA (A)         | 2.8861     | 49  | .55790 | 1.54    | 4.17    |
| MA (B)         | 3.1818     | 77  | .79339 | 1.17    | 4.83    |
| PhD (C)        | 3.6843     | 33  | .39584 | 2.88    | 4.58    |
| Total          | 3.1950     | 159 | .71329 | 1.17    | 4.83    |

Table 7.  
*Part I Score Differences among Three Clusters*

|                | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig. | Direction of differences |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|--------------------------|
| Between Groups | 12.592         | 2   | 6.296       | 14.488 | .000 | A<C $p=.000$             |
| Within Groups  | 67.794         | 156 | .435        |        |      | B<C $p=.002$             |
| Total          | 80.387         | 158 |             |        |      |                          |

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Post hoc Scheffe test reveals that there are significant differences between the sets of BA-PhD ( $p=.000$ ) and MA-PhD ( $p=.002$ ). The mean values among the three groups indicate that PhD degree holders are more experienced than both MA and BA degree holders. Moreover, MA degree holders are also more experienced than BA ones. It might be possible to interpret that as postgraduate courses require conducting research studies this assists them to gain experience.

#### Part 2: Analysing Participants' Order of Difficulty in an Academic Paper

The second part of the questionnaire asks participants to put the nine parts of writing a research report into order of difficulty. These parts include abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, conclusion, and references. Participants' responses were analysed in consideration with their gender, position, degrees, and research methods course in Table 8 and illustrated in Figure 2.



Table 8.

*Descriptive Statistics of All Participants' Order of Difficulty*

| Parts of a research report |      | All     | Gender  |         | Degree  |         |         | Position |         | Research Course |          |
|----------------------------|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|-----------------|----------|
|                            |      |         | Female  | Male    | BA      | MA      | PhD     | Staff    | Student | take            | not take |
| Abstract                   | Mean | 3.4591  | 3.5825  | 3.2321  | 3.8163  | 3.2338  | 3.4545  | 3.5476   | 3.3600  | 3.3223          | 3.8947   |
|                            | SD   | 2.57727 | 2.51865 | 2.68999 | 2.79638 | 2.42192 | 2.61116 | 2.75246  | 2.38032 | 2.47391         | 2.87383  |
| Intro.                     | Mean | 5.0252  | 5.1845  | 4.7321  | 4.7755  | 5.0260  | 5.3939  | 5.1667   | 4.8667  | 4.9917          | 5.1316   |
|                            | SD   | 2.33561 | 2.26113 | 2.46053 | 2.21985 | 2.33381 | 2.52413 | 2.42394  | 2.23808 | 2.31839         | 2.41807  |
| Lit. Rev.                  | Mean | 5.7862  | 5.8058  | 5.7500  | 5.6735  | 6.1558  | 5.0909  | 5.5357   | 6.0667  | 5.7355          | 5.9474   |
|                            | SD   | 2.37967 | 2.46170 | 2.24216 | 2.50323 | 2.33433 | 2.18466 | 2.34108  | 2.40682 | 2.39363         | 2.35897  |
| Meth.                      | Mean | 5.8491  | 5.4466  | 6.5893  | 5.6531  | 6.0779  | 5.6061  | 5.8333   | 5.8667  | 5.6777          | 6.3947   |
|                            | SD   | 2.33896 | 2.34198 | 2.16398 | 2.39401 | 2.29282 | 2.38405 | 2.40899  | 2.27402 | 2.32456         | 2.33122  |
| Findings                   | Mean | 5.9937  | 5.8835  | 6.1964  | 5.9184  | 6.2078  | 5.6061  | 5.6429   | 6.3867  | 6.0992          | 5.6579   |
|                            | SD   | 2.13024 | 2.25049 | 1.89180 | 2.21582 | 2.09220 | 2.09074 | 2.07476  | 2.13651 | 2.15795         | 2.03053  |
| Discussion                 | Mean | 6.9371  | 6.9320  | 6.9464  | 6.6531  | 6.8701  | 7.5152  | 7.0357   | 6.8267  | 6.9752          | 6.8158   |
|                            | SD   | 1.83733 | 1.82715 | 1.87248 | 2.24120 | 1.64117 | 1.50252 | 1.74554  | 1.94084 | 1.82785         | 1.88673  |
| Conclusion                 | Mean | 4.6478  | 4.7476  | 4.4643  | 4.4286  | 4.4805  | 5.3636  | 4.9643   | 4.2933  | 4.6860          | 4.5263   |
|                            | SD   | 1.98456 | 2.06140 | 1.83862 | 1.81430 | 2.09392 | 1.85098 | 1.97848  | 1.94362 | 1.99597         | 1.96918  |
| Implications               | Mean | 5.4340  | 5.4951  | 5.3214  | 6.1020  | 5.0779  | 5.2727  | 5.4405   | 5.4267  | 5.5289          | 5.1316   |
|                            | SD   | 1.95690 | 2.02375 | 1.84003 | 1.69859 | 2.01159 | 1.98860 | 2.00812  | 1.91137 | 1.96670         | 1.91962  |
| References                 | Mean | 1.8868  | 1.9515  | 1.7679  | 2.0408  | 1.8571  | 1.7273  | 1.8452   | 1.9333  | 1.9917          | 1.5526   |
|                            | SD   | 1.72098 | 1.94220 | 1.22089 | 2.00997 | 1.52794 | 1.71888 | 1.61688  | 1.84049 | 1.88191         | 1.00532  |



In the light of the results, writing discussion part of an academic paper appears as the most difficult part for all participants. It shows that both academicians and postgraduate students experience some difficulties in compounding relevant literature with their own study regardless of gender, degree, position, and research methods course. Moreover, overall results show that participants regard writing findings as the next difficult part in writing a research report. However, males, BA degree holders, academicians, and the participants who did not take research method course relegate the difficulty of writing findings. It is interesting to note that all participants place either writing findings or methodology into second place apart from BA holders. Thirdly, in relevance with the second rank, the overall results highlight the difficulty of writing methodology of any research study. Fourthly, overall results indicate literature review as the fourth difficult section. This is followed by writing implications in the fifth place and then comes introduction sixthly. Writing conclusion is regarded as the seventh most difficult part in accordance with the overall results. Besides examining the results in groups reveals that almost all groups apart from PhD holders agree on its place on the scale; however, PhD holders assume conclusion to be more difficult than the others. The indisputable two items on the last two ranks of the difficulty scale are writing abstract and references.

#### *Analysis of the Semi-Constructed Interview*

A seven-questioned semi-constructed interview was conducted with 12 ELT professionals. At the beginning of the interview, academicians were asked about their background in writing academic papers and in relation with their articles they were required to express the problems in writing and publishing articles. They were also encouraged to explain the obstacles which prevent them from conducting research studies and also reporting them academically. Moreover, participants were also asked if they had ever been encouraged and rewarded for their research studies and reports by their superiors and/or institutions. The detailed explanation of interviewees' responses will be provided in 'conclusion and implications' below.

#### Conclusion and Implications

Research is supposed to be one of the most fundamental issues of language teaching therefore ELT professionals are expected to share their findings with other colleagues. It is possible to increase their awareness to conduct more beneficial research studies.

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to reveal the experiences of ELT professionals' in writing a research report and the results indicated that there were significant differences between academicians and postgraduate students along with the significant differences between PhD holders and MA/BA holders. Furthermore, the second part of the present study also revealed that writing discussion was regarded as the most difficult part of an academic article. In the rest of the paper it is aimed to relate the findings of the self-report questionnaire with that of interview.

The first question of the semi-constructed interview asked whether conducting research studies and reporting them in academic journals is more important than training ELT teachers for an ELT department academician in Turkey. The general consensus among participants was that they could not discriminate their teaching profession from researching. Due to their vast amount of teaching hours, 7 of the participants regarded training ELT teachers as their priority whereas two of them regarded research studies as their priority. However, three of the participants could not discriminate teaching from researching.

The second question tried find out the probable number of articles that could be written by an academician in a period of a year. All participants indicated that an academician can write either a single article or two in a period of year. However, 2-article was regarded as the top-limit of an academician which required excessive study.

The third question reveals the reasons of writing academic articles. Almost all interviewees

indicated that they write academic papers to provide criteria for their occupation and to be promoted to a higher position. However, there were also some other factors that triggered them to research such as finding solutions to problems and sharing them with others, bringing new perspectives to the area, and to develop themselves. Moreover, writing academic papers also contributes to maturation process as they feel competent by sharing their studies with others.

The fourth question investigated whether they had been encouraged to conduct research studies by other colleagues. Although half of the colleagues clarified that they were not being encouraged, the rest provided some evidence of encouragement. One of the interviewees indicated that they were supposed to be encouraged but not explicitly. Specifically, one of them was rewarded for his article when he was working in the UK but he has not been rewarded for any of his studies in Turkey yet. Actually, publishing an article in a journal was regarded as 'well done' due to their intrinsic motivation. In this respect, one of the colleagues regarded attending conferences as a motivator along with reading relevant literature since it provides opportunity to talk to colleagues.

The fifth question aimed to conceive whether the participants had ever been rewarded for any of their research studies/articles. Only three of the interviewees indicated that they had been rewarded for their articles by the university's Scientific Research Projects Department and they regarded this as a miraculous motivator. Such promotions were also regarded as beneficial by the rest of the interviewees; however the amount of the perks were supposed to be below their expectations.

The sixth question searched the problems that they had experienced while conducting research studies and/or writing academic articles. The general tendency was that the interviewees regarded themselves sufficient to overcome the problems that they might encounter if they had had enough time. In this respect, huge teaching hours were prominently accused. However, almost all of them complained about insufficient library sources for the literature of the study. Being unable to reach any sources they need steered them to use secondary sources in their papers. Designing the methodology of the study, the difficulty of attaining participants randomly into experimental groups at schools since teachers already have curriculum to follow with them, analysing the data, and waiting process for reviews from specifically Turkish journals were the other problematic aspects.

The seventh question inquired their proposals to encourage ELT academicians to conduct more research studies and to publish more articles. The featured problem was regarded as huge teaching hours along with administrative and paper work; therefore, the interviewees demanded a decline in this. In addition, Research Skills Course content and teaching hours should be revised along with Advanced Reading and Writing course content and teaching hours. Such courses should focus on research along with the other courses. Moreover, the university's Scientific Research Projects Department should provide more financial support in accordance with the rate that is paid for extra teaching hours. Besides, interviewees were expecting more supplementary materials from this department for their projects. Furthermore, in-service training such seminars with colleagues at ELT department stimulates cooperation among academicians along with its contribution to novice colleagues which in turn results in team works to direct academicians to conduct more research studies. In this respect, professional academic assistance should be provided to orient researchers to the optimum supervisor. Such assistance may also be provided abroad by allowing academicians to visit and study in a foreign university for a three-month period.

#### References

- American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Bell, J. (1993). *Doing your research project*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Best, W. B., Kahn, J. V. (2006). *Research in education*. New York: Pearson Publishing.
- Boles, K., & Anderson, M. (1996). *Spanning boundaries*. Papers given at the American Educational Research Association.
- Brown, J. D. (1988). *Understanding research in second language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A. (2005). Action research. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 241-256). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Chaudron, C. (1988). Teacher talk in second language classrooms. In C. Chaudron (Ed.), *Second language classrooms* (pp. 50-89). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Freeman, D. (1998). *Doing teacher research*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Harklau, L. (2005). Ethnography and ethnographic research on second language teaching and learning. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language learning and teaching* (pp. 179-194). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hatch, E., & Farhady, H. (1981). *Research design and statistics for applied linguistics*. Tehran: Rahnama Publications.
- Hiep, P. H. (2006). Researching the research culture in English language education in Vietnam. *TESL-EJ*, 10 (2).
- Lazarton, A. (2005). Quantitative research methods. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language learning and teaching* (pp. 209-224). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Lester, J. D. (1971). *Writing research papers: A complete guide*. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman.
- (1995). *Writing research papers: A complete guide* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (2005). Classroom research. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language learning and teaching* (pp. 225-240). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Razi, S. (2010). *Effects of a metacognitive reading program on the reading achievement and metacognitive strategies*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir. Turkey.
- Ruetten, M. K. (1997). *Developing composition skills: Rhetoric and Grammar*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Shulman, L. (1988). Disciplines of inquiry in education: An overview. In R. M. Jager (Ed.). *Complementary methods for research in education* (pp. 3-17). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Suppes, P. (ed.). (1978). *Impact of research on education*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Education.
- van Lier, L. (2005). Case study. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language learning and teaching* (pp. 195-208). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Wallace, M. (1998). *Action research for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### Appendix A: Semi-constructed interview questions

Gender: Male / Female

Age:

Degree: BA / MA / PhD

Received research methods course: Yes / No

Position:

| <b>Interview Questions</b>   |
|--|
| 1. Is conducting research studies and reporting them in academic journals more important than training ELT teachers for an ELT department academician in Turkey?   |
| 2. How many articles do you think can an academician write in a period of a year?  |
| 3. What are your reasons to write academic articles?   |
| 4. Are you encouraged to conduct research studies by other colleagues?   |
| 5. Have you ever been rewarded for any of your research studies/articles? How did being rewarded or not being rewarded affect your attitude towards conducting research studies and writing academic articles?                                       |
| 6. What were the problems that you had experienced while conducting research studies and/or writing academic articles? How did the problems affect you? Were you able to overcome the problems or did they stop you from researching and/or writing? |
| 7. What should be done to encourage ELT academicians to conduct more research studies and to publish more articles?  |

#### **Appendix B: Questionnaire**

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is a part of survey in which you will indicate your own research experience. Before responding to the statements, please specify demographic information below. Keep in mind that the information collected through this questionnaire will be used only for research purposes. The questionnaire includes 48 statements in three sections on research skills and academic writing. While responding to the statements, choose the statement that best indicates your attitude towards it in the first two sections. For the last section, please put the parts of an academic paper in order of difficulty. Please, read each statement carefully and feel free to give your real opinions on the matter.


Thank you for your contribution to the study.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| I hold a(n) BA / MA / PhD degree in ELT and            |     |
| I am working at ..... University.                      |     |
| Faculty / Institution of .....                         |     |
| Department of .....                                    |     |
| I am a(n) MA / PhD student at ..... University.        |     |
| Faculty / Institution of .....                         |     |
| Department of .....                                    |     |
| I have / had Research Methods Course in BA / MA / PhD. |     |
| Gender   | Age |

| PART I | Please, specify the degree of your experience.<br><br>I have had a lot of experience in | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--------|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
|        |   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 1      | conducting qualitative research designs.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 2      | conducting quantitative research designs.   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 3      | conducting mixed research designs (both qualitative and quantitative)                   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 4      | conducting correlational studies.   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 5      | conducting multisite / multiscale / large scale studies.                                | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 6      | conducting survey studies.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 7      | conducting ethnography studies.   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 8      | conducting experimental studies.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 9      | conducting case studies.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 10     | conducting empirical studies.   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 11     | conducting action research.   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 12     | conducting classroom centred research.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 13     | writing research questions.   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 14     | following the appropriate style (APA, MLA, or others).                                  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 15     | adapting instruments for research.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 16     | preparing my own instruments for research.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 17     | identifying a problem for research purposes.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 18     | developing a plan to carry out the research.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 19     | reviewing relevant literature.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 20     | restating the problem in the form of a hypothesis or research question.                 | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 21     | selecting appropriate research procedures.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 22     | collecting the data.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 23     | analysing the data by using software such as SPSS, MATLAB and others.                   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| 24     | interpreting the data.  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

PART II: You will find nine sections of an academic article below. Please, put writing the parts of a research paper into order of difficulty by writing each one into the table.

**Abstract/Introduction/Literature Review/Methodology/  
Findings/Discussion/Conclusion/Implications/References**

| Difficulty level | Please write the sections a research paper below. |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| 1                |   | <p>The most difficult</p>  <p>The least difficult</p> |
| 2                |   |  |
| 3                |   |  |
| 4                |   |  |
| 5                |   |  |
| 6                |   |  |
| 7                |   |  |
| 8                |   |  |
| 9                |   |  |