WRITING CENTERS AS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS IN WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

Research Article

Hacer Hande Uysal (iD)

Hacettepe University

uysalhande@yahoo.com

Batuhan Selvi (iD)

Firat University

batuhanselvi@outlook.com

Correspondence

Hacer Hande Uysal is currently a professor of English Language Teaching at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. She received her master's degree on English Education and her Ph.D. in Foreign Language/ESL Education from The University of Iowa. Her research interests are second language writing, intercultural rhetoric, academic discourse, early language teaching, and language planning and policy.

Batuhan Selvi is a research assistant at English Language Teaching department at Firat University. His research interests are second language writing, academic writing, and writing for publication.

WRITING CENTERS AS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS IN WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

Hacer Hande Uysal

uysalhande@yahoo.com

Batuhan Selvi

batuhanselvi@outlook.com

Abstract

Many scholars experience a number of troubles and difficulties in writing for publication processes. The continuous support and help given in writing centers may provide solutions for international scholars in terms of their academic publication problems. This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a writing center with regard to meeting the expectations and needs of scholars in academic writing in English for their publication purposes. In the study, a mixed-method research design was adopted, and the study was conducted in a writing and research center of a large scale state university in Ankara, Turkey. The institution was selected via the criterion sampling method. The data were collected using a satisfaction survey form. The findings revealed that almost all of the scholars who participated in the study were satisfied with the services offered in the writing center and would visit the writing center in the future. In addition, they also stated that they received valuable information as to the nature of writing a research paper in English as a result of one-on-one tutoring. However, it was also found that some aspects of the writing center needed improvement. The participants demanded more explanations as to the corrections, supplementary materials, and specialization of the tutors as well as longer sessions. It was concluded that writing centers, especially those focusing on improving English academic texts, may provide help to scholars in overcoming their problems in writing for the publication process

Keywords: Writing, academic publication, writing centers, scholars

1. Introduction

Scholarly publication is one of the most critical activities for researchers since publishing, especially in high-indexed journals, has turned out to be a commonly used indicator of academic success around the world. In order to gain reputation and attract international students, universities started to stipulate a number of publication requirements, which typically include publishing in highly reputable international journals, as part of scholars' employment, promotion, reward, and even doctoral graduation criteria (Canagarajah, 1996; Flowerdew, 1999a; Baldwin & Chandler, 2002; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Therefore, reflected in the 'publish or perish' principle, writing for publication has become a stressful and significant task for academics who are required to publish an increasingly growing number of papers in order to survive in the academic world (Cargill & O'Connor, 2006). For these reasons, scholarly publications have recently witnessed an exponential growth in a global sense, including more than 5.5 million scholars, 2,000 publishers, and 17,000 universities and research organizations all over the world (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Hyland, 2016).

The fact that most of the prestigious international journals in high-status international databases such as Web of Science Core Collection (Clarivate Analytics, 2016) and Scopus are

printed in English has paved the way for English to become the primary language of scholarly publication and international research (Swales, 1990; Flowerdew, 2000; Bardi, 2015). Statistics has shown that more than 90% of the reputable journals ranked in the International Scientific Indexing (ISI) database, 87% of journals indexed in Science Citation Index, 88% of journals included in Social Science Citation Index, and 65% of journals in Arts and Humanities Citation Index are published in English (Curry & Lillis, 2018; Hyland, 2015). Therefore, publishing in English has become a must for scholars who are required to meet the criteria set by the universities, disseminate their works and improve the chances of future academic success (Flowerdew, 1999). However, writing a research paper in English requires a number of linguistic, stylistic, and rhetorical skills, which most of the time pose significant challenges for international scholars and novice writers (Koyalan & Mumford, 2011). Thus, writers seeking publication in the international arena face a number of problems in writing for the publication process. One way to overcome such problems and challenges is writing centers. Writing centers offer insights, feedback, and support to students and academics for both improving their writing skills and increasing the publication activity. Scholars can consult academic writing centers and receive professional guidance throughout the publication process. The aim of this support is to help scholars overcome the problems they experience during the scholarly publication process and "shortcut the painful and lengthy processes of learning by experience" (Hyland, 2015).

Although writer centers are quite widespread and institutionalized in American, Canadian, and European universities (Devet, 2011; Moussu & David, 2015), it is a relatively new phenomenon for Turkish universities and academics. The first academic writing center in Turkey was opened at Middle East Technical University in 2001 (METU, 2020). Since then, universities, especially private ones, have established academic writing centers to provide assistance to scholars and students. Although the number of academic writing centers is gradually increasing, there is a lack of research as to the efficacy of the services provided by these centers, which may provide useful insights and guidance for the current centers and the centers to be opened in the future. In order to bridge this gap in the literature, the present study aims to examine the efficacy of an academic writing center in a state university. The academic writing center is unique in the sense that it was established as both a teaching and research center. Unlike regular writing centers that generally focus on student writing, the academic writing center that is under the focus of the current study aimed at improving English academic texts, such as articles and books, particularly for publishing purposes, and to support academic staff in their endeavors to publish internationally. Therefore, the academic writing center offers the opportunity to explore the perspectives of Turkish scholars on writing center applications. To achieve this purpose, this study uses a satisfaction survey with both closed and open items to find in-depth answers regarding the quality of the services delivered at the center in terms of meeting the expectations of the scholars regarding English academic writing for publishing purposes.

2. Problems of International Scholars with Writing for Publication Purposes

The dominance of English in writing for scientific publication has brought about a debate as to the problems and challenges experienced by international scholars. A group of researchers, on the one side of the debate, put native speakers of English in an advantageous position compared to international scholars who are required to invest more time, effort, and money to, first, learn and then publish in English (Flowerdew, 2008). Contrariwise, the others advocated that the problems faced by international scholars are actually a result of the socialization process in the academic community and are similar to those experienced by novice writers (Hyland, 2016). Apart from the debate, there is a consensus on the fact that international scholars suffer from a number of problems during the writing for publication.

Language problems are among the most serious problems of international scholars in that poor language proficiency, most often, leads to the rejections of the manuscripts (Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008). It has been proved that international scholars use a fewer number of expressions and a less rich vocabulary (Flowerdew, 1999a). Moreover, they have problems in the correct use of grammar and hedges (Flowerdew, 1999b), using complicated syntactic features and clear modality (Flowerdew, 2001), using proper and accurate idiomatic expressions (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005), and the correct use of semantic and syntactic features (Mungra & Weber, 2010). Constantly trying to overcome language-related problems sets up serious barriers for international scholars, which may result in exclusion from the international research community (Ammon, 2012).

International scholars have also been found to suffer from connecting their local research into the research paradigm in the global arena. High-ranked journals require a manuscript to be closely connected to and contribute to the research context in the international community (Uzuner, 2008). Therefore, international scholars need to clearly specify that their locally-based studies are significant and worthwhile in terms of their results and implications in the international research community (Curry & Lillis, 2004).

Rhetorical problems are another problem for international scholars who are forced to adapt and conform to the Anglophone rhetoric in writing for the publication process (Bennett, 2011; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 2016). Rhetorical differences among languages and cultures lead to difficulties in issues such as the research article structure, clarity of ideas, and the degree of metadiscoursal marking (Flowerdew, 1999b). A large body of research revealed that the stylistic differences due to the differences across cultures constitute the leading causes for rhetorical problems of international scholars by precluding them from employing argumentative strategies which are expected by the mainstream international community (Swales, 1990; Flowerdew, 2001; Li, 2002; Li & Flowerdew, 2007; El Malik & Nesi, 2008).

Writing a research manuscript is an arduous task itself. The effort and troubles are even greater when this task is required to be completed in a different language since international scholars have to spend additional time and effort on reading and conducting research in their second/foreign language (Flowerdew, 2008). The studies revealed that in order to avoid this problem, international scholars often write their manuscripts in their native languages and then translate them into English (St. John, 1987; Gosden, 1996; Li, 2007). Furthermore, the laborious and onerous nature of writing a research paper in English leads to postponements in publications because of continuous editing and corrections and thus prevent international scholars from involving in future projects, which results in a decrease in their academic productivity (Flowerdew, 1999; Curry & Lillis, 2004).

A number of studies also proposed that not having contact with the mainstream academic communities hinders publication by international scholars and probably decreases the likelihood of involving in the research network (Casaneve,1998; Flowerdew, 2000; Curry and Lillis, 2004). Besides, the literature on writing for publication identified potential reviewer and editorial bias as one of the areas international scholars experience difficulty. It was found that most of the editors and reviewers prejudiciously treat submissions of multilingual scholars by asking them a native speaker check, which is, for most of the time, an impracticable request for them since only a relatively few groups of international scholars have native speakers within their reach (Li & Flowerdew, 2007). Finally, a lack of funding to carry out research activities is stressed as another problem for international scholars (Canagarajah, 1996). It was found that scholars from countries providing more funds to researchers secured more international publications (Man, Weinkauf, Tsang & Sin, 2004). It seems that financially less supported

scholars in peripheral regions have difficulty in conducting innovative studies, and thus their chance of publishing in reputable international journals decreases (Swales, 1997).

3. Writing Centers as a Possible Solution

The history of writing centers dates back to the 1930s, when the first writing labs were founded in the USA. The main principle of the writing labs at that time was to remediate the unprepared university students (Mazen, 2018). With the rapid increase in the number of immigrants whose English proficiency was not sufficient for carrying out the tasks in American universities and to the national literacy problems, writing labs underwent a significant transformation in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. They turned out to places where one-to-one tutoring and writing assistance was provided to incorporate and accommodate these students (Boquet, 1999). Nevertheless, writing centers of the 1970s was regarded as a place where students simply visit to correct their mistakes in a piece of writing (Harris, 1988). It was not until 1984 that a milestone in the philosophy of the writing centers took place with the publication of the article "The Idea of the Writing Center" by Stephen M. North. He advocated the idea that the writers themselves should be the focus of the writing center, not the product, by stating that the role of writing centers should be "to produce better writers, not better writing." Writing centers all around the USA rapidly adopted the concept and ideas expressed in the article and reshaped their practices (Boquet & Lerner, 2008).

The support in the writing center is delivered by writing center staff, often called tutors, via scheduled one-to-one sessions, group tutoring, or workshops. The working principle of writing centers usually depends on non-prescriptive and non-corrective approaches; that is, tutors do not adopt the role of an expert, and thus they do not edit, grade, correct, or fix the papers (Ianetta & Fitzgerald, 2016). On the contrary, tutors and consultants work on a piece of writing in a collaborative and communicative way to help students find out successful writing strategies and styles that are of particular interest to each student (Thonus, 2002). Although they share the same main purpose, which is "the development of general patterns of thinking and writing" (North, 1984 p. 435), the writing centers outside the USA have some differences in terms of practice and application as a result of the difference in the needs and context of the institutions (Turner, 2006). The most prominent differences include the language of the sessions and the staff. Both English and the local language are used as the language of the sessions and faculty members, rather than peers, work as tutors in the writing centers outside the USA (Johnston, Cornwell & Yoshida, 2008; Tan, 2010).

The effective services provided by writing centers that offered a solution to the problems in the U.S. paved the way for many universities to establish these centers. Now, a large number of colleges and universities throughout the world have writing centers to provide assistance and support for students and academics (Chang, 2013). This support is significant, especially for international scholars seeking publications in high-ranked international journals. Tailoring the writing centers to meet the needs of the international scholars may provide solutions to their problems writing for the publication process. In such writing centers, international scholars can ease their burdens, change main concerns, develop stylistic and rhetorical skills, gain self-confidence, and grow into better writers with the help of one-on-one consultations carried out with the experienced tutors (Davis, 2006).

4. Measuring the Efficacy of Writing Centers

It has been stated in the literature that, though there exist resistance and disagreement, writing centers ought to consider and concentrate on evaluating themselves and the services they provide on a regular basis (Bell, 2000). The first call for measuring the efficacy of the writing centers was issued in the 1980s (Hawthorne, 2006), and since then, researchers have

made use of various methods to investigate the effect or efficacy of writing centers (Huang, 2011). For example, Cushman, Marx, Brower, Holahan and Boquet (2005) used a focus group to evaluate the efficacy of writing centers. They provided some suggestions to improve the effectiveness of focus groups in evaluating the writing center and concluded that the focus group might offer significant qualitative insights into the evaluation process. In addition, Newmann (1999) used course grades to demonstrate the effectiveness and surmised that the students would have had lower grades if they had not visited the writing center. Similarly, Hyland, Howell, and Zhang (2010) measured the effectiveness of the writing center on the basis of the scores obtained in a writing proficiency exam. They compared the scores of writing proficiency exam students did in their first year, and scores students had in their fourth-year assessments. They reported a significant increase in Overall Scores and a significant correlation. Furthermore, Caroll and Bubloz (1985) compared the pre and post essays written in a semester-long program at a writing center and concluded that the quality of the students' writing improved. Besides, satisfaction levels and attitudes of students were used as indicators of the effectiveness of writing centers. For example, Carino and Enders (2001) investigated the satisfaction levels and reported a strong level of satisfaction among students who used writing centers. Similarly, Ady (1988) examined student perceptions as to the writing center and tutorials. He compared the perceptions of students before visiting the center and their perceptions after the sessions. They found that student perceptions changed in a positive direction as a result of the experience they had in the writing center.

In addition to the aforementioned methods, one of the most frequent assessment tools is exit surveys (Bromley, Northway, & Schonberg, 2013). In exit surveys, tutees are asked to complete a questionnaire or survey in order to evaluate the sessions and the effectiveness of the writing centers after the sessions (Neuleib, 1986). A comprehensive body of studies using exit surveys exists in the literature. For example, Bromley and Northway (2018) compared the satisfaction levels of L1 English and L2 English students using an exit survey. They found that both L1 and L2 students were satisfied with the services provided in the writing center by the same token, and nearly all of the participants stated that they would refer the writing center to another friend. Similarly, Kiedaisch and Dinitz (1991) used an exit survey and proposed that the writing centers particularly appeals to the students in their first year who can be regarded as novice writers. They also added that ESL students required a session time beyond the regular 60-minute sessions. Furthermore, Bromley et al. (2013) used an exit survey in which three types of questions were asked to investigate the efficiency of the writing center. They found that the participants in their study were pleased with their involvement in the writing center in most cases, and nearly all of the participants declared intention to visit the writing center in the future and refer it to a friend.

The brief literature review above shows that the issue of the effectiveness of the writing centers has been addressed by a number of researchers using a wide variety of methods and tools. It has been revealed as a result of these studies that writing centers play a significant role in improving the writing skills of the students. However, there is little research on the role of the writing center in writing for the publication process of international scholars. This study, therefore, tries to contribute to the writing for publication literature by examining the efficacy of a writing center regarding English academic writing for publishing purposes.

5. Method of the study

The study adopted mixed methods research deshign based on both quantitative and qualitative data. The details of the study method are as follows:

5.1. The Setting

The study was carried out at a state university in Ankara, Turkey. In the selection of the institution, the criterion sampling model was utilized, which was based on the following criteria: First, the university was one of the most prestigious universities in the rankings, implicating a high proportion of scientific output (Uysal, 2014). Second, it was one of the largest scale universities in Turkey, having 21 faculties, 7 undergraduate institutes, 41 research centers, and 3,726 academicians (YÖK, 2017). Third, it was announced as one of the ten research universities selected by the Higher Education Council. And finally, and most importantly, the university had an academic writing and research center which offers professional writing support to its academic staff regarding English academic writing for publishing purposes.

The academic writing center of the university offers instructional support and consulting assistance for academic members of the university during their writing for publication process by means of one-on-one tutorials. Established in 2015, the main aim of the academic writing center is to support the scholars to advance their academic writing abilities by enhancing their understanding of their writing progression and by tendering them the basic information and strategies in writing for publication in English. The tutors working in the academic writing center are qualified instructors of English who were trained in English academic writing and writing for publication purposes.

Scholars make an appointment for their manuscripts and visit the center where they work one-on-one with the tutors. During the sessions, each of which is 90 minutes, the tutors provide scholars with the essential information about the conventions in English academic writing, focus on their frequent mistakes, and aid them in improving their writing skills during the course of their own writing process. Therefore, the major purpose of the academic writing center is not only to enhance the quality of the manuscript but to improve scholars' awareness about English writing conventions, writing skills, mastery, and strategies by dint of their own writing.

5.2. The Instrument

The satisfaction survey used in the present study was adopted from Morrison and Nadeau (2003). The 17-item-survey consists of both closed and open items. The closed items were on a 5 point Likert scale. First, the participants were asked to give information about their visit and then evaluate the efficiency of the session and services delivered by the tutors. Then, they were requested to answer three open-ended items that aim at collecting in-depth information about their visit. The survey used in this study is presented in the appendix.

5.3. Data Collection

The data were collected between May 2015 and May 2017. After the completion of each paper, the scholars were asked to fill the online version of the survey. In most cases, the scholars were asked to complete the survey in the writing center where a computer was available for this purpose. However, there were instances when scholars had limited time and, therefore, did not complete the survey in the center. In such cases, the link to the survey was sent to them. The participation was on a voluntary basis, and consequently, a total of 168 participants took part in the present study.

5.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analyses and content analysis. First, descriptive statistics was used to calculate frequencies and percentages. Then, the inductive content analysis was used to examine the open-ended questions regarding the thoughts of the

participants and the efficacy of the writing center. Content analysis is a research method to analyze and describe text data in a systematic and objective way in order to discover the phenomena hidden in them (Cole, 1988; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Researchers use content analysis for investigating theoretical issues and improving the comprehension of the data with the intention of offering facts and novel understandings (Krippendorff 1980). In content analysis, words can be condensed into a smaller number of categories related to content. The underlying reason for this is that words and phrases have identical meanings if they are sorted into the same categories (Cavanagh, 1997). As a result, it becomes possible to achieve a more concise and comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon (Sandelowski, 1995). In the data analysis, the answers to open-ended questions were read several times by the researchers. Then, all of the comments and statements were categorized in relation to their content, and the main themes were identified.

6. Findings and Discussion

In order to identify the academic titles of the scholars who made use of the writing center, the participants were asked to state their academic titles. Below, Table 1 shows the distribution of the academic titles of the participants.

Table 1. *The distribution of the titles of the participants*

Title	Frequency	Percentage %
Prof. Dr.	11	6,5
Assoc. Prof. Dr.	42	25
Assis. Prof. Dr.	12	7,1
Dr.	23	13,7
Research Assistant	67	39,9
Lecturer	7	4,2
Specialist	6	3,6
Total	168	

It is seen that the group which made the most use of the writing center was the Research Assistants, followed by Associate Professors. This finding may be attributed to the fact that Research Assistants are novice writers, and thus, they need more support in writing for the publication process (Hyland, 2016). In addition, the university requires its graduate students to publish an article in an international journal as a part of the graduation requirement. Thus, Research Assistants, most of whom were also graduate students at various departments of the university, needed to publish a scientific article. The reason why the Associate Professors visited the writing centers more than other groups lies in the fact that they are required to meet some publication criteria to be promoted to full Professorship, which paved the way for them to be involved in the writing for the publication process.

The participants were asked to state their departments in the satisfaction survey. Table 2 demonstrates the department of the participants.

Table 2. *The departments of the participants*

Department	Number of the Participants
Engineering	30
Science	29
Health Sciences	21
Pharmacy	14
Education	27
Communication	12
Economics and Administrative Sciences	7
Sports	2
Medicine	15
Dentistry	5
Architecture	1
Informatics	5
Total	168

It can be seen that the writing center served the academics of hard sciences more than those of soft sciences This finding may be related to the proliferation of journals especially in the hard sciences (McNutt, 2016). The researchers in the hard sciences have more opportunities to publish in international indexed journals than those in the soft sciences (Storer, 1967). Furthermore, most of the hard science journals published two issues per month. On the other hand, there are fewer amount of journals in the soft sciences and they, most often, published four issues per year. Such a situation leads the researchers in the hard sciences to be involved in writing for the publication process more frequently. Another reason for this finding may be that it takes more time for researchers in soft disciplines to publish in an international journal (Boellstorff, 2011). In addition, the percentages of acceptance are higher in hard sciences, whereas lower in soft sciences (Björk, 2019). This often leads to learned helplessness and quitting the writing and publishing endeavors for scholars in soft disciplines (Witt, 1995). Finally, in hard sciences, the results are factual and firm, easy to report, but in social sciences, the results are dependent on how one writes, reports, and argues (Morgan, Reichert, & Harrison, 2016). Such a situation paves the way for researchers in social sciences to have less chance to compete with native speakers and publish.

The participants were also asked to state the piece of writing for which they visited the writing center. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the purposes of the visits.
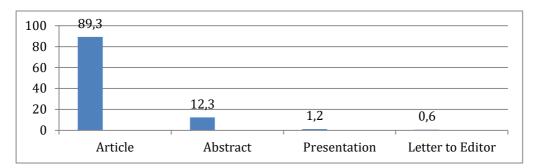
Figure 1: The purpose of the visit

It is seen that the scholars visited the writing center to get support substantially for their research articles. This finding may be explained by the importance of a research article in writing for the publication process. The research article is one of the primary indicators of the scientific output (Glanzel & Moed, 2002) as well as a critical criterion for both promotion and rewards (Bazerman, 1988). Therefore, scholars feel the need to publish research articles in order to survive in the academic world.

In order to examine how they became aware of the Writing Center, the participants were asked to state the means of how they learned about the Writing Center. Figure 2 demonstrates the means of how scholars learned about the Writing Center and its services.
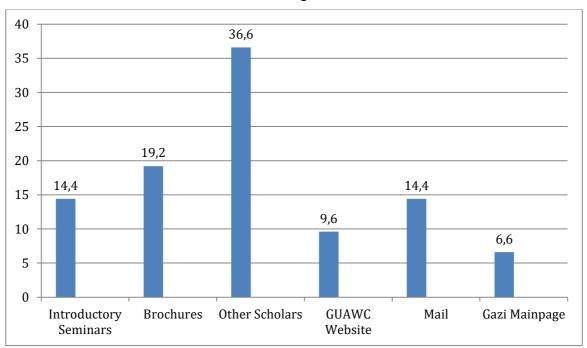

Figure 2: The means of getting information about the writing center

Peer suggestion stands out as the most frequent way of getting information about the writing center. Scholars also obtained information through seminars, brochures, websites, and emails. It can be anticipated that scholars who visited the writing center recommended the writing center among their acquaintances. Writing centers to be established in the future should also consider the effect of introductory seminars, brochures, and online tools.

In addition, the participants were asked to evaluate the support and help they had received at the writing center. Table 3 demonstrates the questions and the responses of the participants.

Table 3. *The efficacy of the writing center*

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage %
How would you rate the advice your tutor gave you during the session?	Very useful	142	84,5
	Useful	16	9,5
	Quite useful	0	0
	A little useful	6	3,6
	Not useful	4	2,4
How would you rate the clarity of your tutor's advice?	Very good	140	83,3
	Good	17	10,1
	OK	1	0,6
	Poor	6	3,6
	Very poor	4	2,4
How satisfied were you with the help you received from your tutor?	Very satisfied	142	84,5
	Somewhat satisfied	8	4,8
	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	8	4,8
	Somewhat unsatisfied	5	3
	Very unsatisfied	5	3
Did you learn something NEW to apply in your writing in the future?	Yes	166	98,8
	No	2	1,2
Will you seek help from the Writing Center in the future?	Yes	166	98,8
	No	2	1,2
Would you refer a friend to the Writing Center?	Yes	167	99,04
	No	1	0,6

A great majority of the participants found the advice and services provided in the writing center very useful and useful. Similarly, 157 participants stated that the clarity of the advice offered in the writing center was very good and good. Furthermore, 89.3% of the participants were

satisfied with the help provided in the writing center. In addition, 98.8% of the participants stated that they learned something new during the sessions and that they would visit the writing center for another paper in the future. Finally, all of the participants, except for one scholar, expressed that they would recommend the writing center to another colleague. These findings suggest that the services offered in the writing center were quite effective, and the writing center provided help and support to the scholars in their writing for the publication process.

In order to examine the areas the participants benefitted the most in-depth and to obtain their opinions of and suggestions for the writing center, three open-ended questions were asked to the participants. First, they were requested to state the most useful activity they did during the sessions. The themes and categories related to the most useful activity are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Themes and categories related to the most useful activity*

Theme	Category	Extract
Linguistic Elements	Editing	"The most useful activity was the editing of the article text."
	Academic Grammar	"I was informed about replacing the English words we normally use with appropriate synonyms used in the academic language."
	Academic Vocabulary	"I learned that some conjunctions are not suitable for academic language."
Rhetorical Elements	The organization of the paragraphs	"The most useful activity was writing an introductory sentence for paragraphs."
	Research article genre	"I learned that the purpose of our article should be expressed at the end of the introduction."
	Making an argument	"Our work on expressing the discussion part of the article in a more effective language."
One on One tutoring	Providing Explanations for the mistakes	"The tutor informed me about the reason for the changes."
	Providing alternatives	"The tutor got me thinking about a detailed plan b on a sentence."
	Collaboration on the paper	"Working one-on-one on our article with the tutor was very useful and educational."

The participants expressed that the support they received in the writing center provided help to overcome their problems, especially in three dimensions: linguistic, rhetorical, and the nature of English academic writing. The scholars stated that the tutors informed them about the English academic writing conventions both at the linguistic and rhetorical levels. This finding is important in terms of the fact that academic writing in English demands a special set of linguistic and rhetorical rules. The papers submitted to journals need to conform to these linguistic and rhetorical norms (McKinley & Rose, 2018); otherwise, these papers are most

likely subjected to a substantial revision process or are rejected by the journal editors or reviewers (Li, 2005). Therefore, with the support and help provided by the writing center, scholars may be able to find an opportunity to understand the often hidden English rhetorical conventions and enhance the quality of their papers.

In addition, the participants in this study expressed the importance of one-on-one tutoring in the writing center. They stated that the tutors provided explanations and alternatives for their mistakes, and they collaborated while revising the paper, which paved the way for them to develop confidence. As mentioned before, writing is a burdensome and time-consuming activity, which is one of the problems international scholars suffer from due to the constant editing and corrections requested by the journal editors or reviewers (Curry & Lillis, 2004). However, it can be argued that the support and help provided in the writing center assisted the participants in this study to overcome these problems as they received professional help and find the possibility to improve their papers before submitting them to a journal.

Second, the participants were asked to put forward recommendations for the tutors to implement in their next sessions. Table 5 shows the themes and categories related to these recommendations.

Table 5. *Themes and categories related to the recommendations*

Theme	Category	Extract
Tutors	Specialization of the Tutors	"It is important that the trainers are constantly employed at the center. It is a very important problem that an instructor who you are satisfied with and who has knowledge of the field you are working cannot be present at your next visit because he is assigned to another unit." "There should be tutors specific to the field, such as tutors for health."
	Providing More Explanation	"Some tutors say the sentence is wrong, but if they explain why it is wrong, we will also learn to avoid making the same mistakes later." "It would be better for tutors to first ask what we want to say in our sentences. Otherwise, we will only see what changes the tutors have made on his computer on the next screen. So we just accept those changes without understanding what they changed and why."
	Preliminary Control of the Papers	"Sometimes, corrections and revisions can be too much. Since the articles are sent earlier than the appointment time, it may be more appropriate if the working time is arranged after pre-check." "It may be helpful for the tutors to read and comment on the text before."
Sessions	Duration of the Sessions	"A little further extension of the working time. When the session is interrupted, the concentration decreases, and the revision takes more time." "Depending on the length and density of the text brought, the given unit time may not be sufficient. Two consecutive appointments may be considered for the required texts."
	Providing Supplementary Materials	"The tutors can compile the mistakes faced by the academicians using the office and give them to us as a mini booklet." "The tutors can organize article writing workshops."

The recommendations of the participants focused on two aspects: the tutors and the sessions. First, the scholars demanded from the tutors to be specialized in a specific discipline, provide

more explanations on their paper, and control their papers prior to the appointment. Since there exists disciplinary variation in academic writing (Biber & Conrad, 2009), the participants' request regarding the specialization of tutors is quite expectable. In this sense, specialized tutors may provide more support to scholars during their writing for the publication process (Dinitz & Harrington, 2014). Therefore, the writing centers should consider employing tutors, having specific knowledge of particular disciplines. In addition, the participants asked for more collaboration on the paper by demanding explanations for their errors and suggestions from the tutors. Such a request was also identified in the writing center evaluation studies carried out with international students who were found to prefer a more directive approach and a focus on grammar, punctuation, and word usage (Cogie, 2006). One of the main aims of the writing centers is to help scholars grow into robust, self-confident, and autonomous writers (Harris, 1995). In line with this aim, the tutors need to explain their suggestions and comments on the paper in a clear and detailed way. In addition, since the needs of each paper and scholar may vary, the tutors are required to respond to each paper and scholar in a unique way (Reigstad & McAndrew, 1984). Therefore, the tutors in the writing centers should be encouraged to provide convincing and satisfactory explanations for their comments and suggestions.

Third, the participants made recommendations as to the sessions. They found the duration of the sessions inadequate and requested longer durations. In the Academic Writing Center, each session is 90 minutes, and, as a principle, the next appointment is arranged only after the end of the session, which means that the scholars cannot arrange two appointments at the same time. The rationale behind this principle lies in the fact that scholars need to revise their papers after each session, and thus they need time for revisions. However, it seems that the scholars preferred completing their papers as soon as possible. Sessions in the writing centers around the world are usually 45-60 minutes in length (Kiedaisch & Dinitz, 1991; Winder, Kathpalia & Koo, 2016), and therefore 90 minutes can be regarded as a sufficient amount of time. Besides, scheduling longer sessions may be impractical in that fewer numbers of appointments may be arranged per day if their duration becomes longer. Furthermore, the participants asked for supplementary material during the sessions. Providing supplementary materials, such as handouts, booklets, or books, may help scholars improve their academic writing skills. Therefore, writing centers should take this demand of the scholars into consideration and prepare supplementary materials to be provided during or after the sessions.

Finally, the participants were asked to state their opinions on what should be changed in the writing center. Table 6 demonstrates the possible changes suggested by the participants.

Table 6. *Themes and categories related to the suggested changes*

Theme	Category	Extract
The Services	The arrangement of the appointments	"We should make an appointment online."
		"There were times I lost weeks in between because I couldn't print the next appointment before. For long texts, it would be good to have the opportunity to book the next appointment before my next appointment."
	The working time	"In summer, I needed a tutor, but the center did not work then. I think many researchers need the help of the center in summer."

		"Working hours may be increased."
	Accreditation of the Center	"Providing an official letter that can certify the competence of the center and indicate that the control has been made."
		"Documentation of control at native speaker level, competency certificate to be sent to the journal when necessary."
The Physical Conditions	The need for more space	"Some of the basic deficiencies that the center should have in an office can be completed. Tutor offices can be separated by partitions."
		"The environment can be divided into small offices. Because if more than one person works at the same time, it may not be efficient."
	Heating system	"the room was cold."
		"heating system could be better."

Their suggestions can be divided into two themes: the services and physical conditions. Regarding the services, the participants called for improvements in the arrangement of appointments, the working time as well as demanding the accreditation of the center. In the academic writing center, scholars can arrange an appointment either by calling or visiting the center. However, the participants stated that there should be a variation in the means of the arrangement of the appointments, stating that they should be able to make appointments online. They also wanted the principles of appointments to be changed and thus be able to make more than one appointment at once. Another category was working time. The academic writing center is not open during the mid-term and summer vacation. However, participants thought that this principle should be changed, and the writing center should be open during the vacations as they had more opportunities to work on their papers during these times. However, as in many of the European and Asian writing centers, faculty members work as a tutor in the academic writing center. Therefore, it may not be possible to convince the tutors to work in the summer. However, providing that there is a sufficient number of tutors, the writing centers may provide a limited-service during these periods. The last request of the participants was the accreditation of the center. Since they often face the necessity of a native speaker check (Miguel, 2007), such a request makes sense. However, there is a great number of burdensome and strict criteria that need to be fulfilled in order to accredit a writing center, especially, in international terms (Baker, 2017). Furthermore, such an attempt is beyond the authority and contingency of writing center administrators. Therefore, accreditation of the center may not be possible for a large number of universities.

The participants also called for changes in the physical conditions of the writing center. Although the academic writing center was located in the center of the campus, the physical conditions of the center were relatively poor as the place was formerly used as a bank. It consisted of two offices: one small office for the director and a large office for the tutors and consultants. Therefore, there was not much space among the tutors' spots. In addition, since it was on the ground floor and was surrounded by glass walls rather than thick walls, the heating

system may fail to warm the place, especially on cold days. These deficiencies in the writing center were reflected by the participants who clearly preferred more comfortable places. However, this situation is not specific to the academic writing center as, on many occasions, the physical conditions of writing centers are quite limited (Leahy, 1990). nevertheless, the university and writing center administrators should try their best to provide an optimal environment for the tutors and consultants.

7.CONCLUSIONS

Writing for publication has become a significant challenge for international scholars. Researchers need to publish in reputable journals in order to meet the hiring, promotion, and reward criteria as well as to survive in the academic world. They experience a number of difficulties in writing for the publication process. Writing centers may play a role in assisting scholars in dealing with their problems in this process. This study examined the efficiency of a writing center using a satisfaction survey. The findings showed that a great majority of the participants were satisfied with the help and support provided in the center and learned something new to apply in their writing. In addition, they stated that they would visit the center in the future and refer it to a friend. The answers to open-ended questions showed that the writing center was useful in providing help to overcome the linguistic and rhetorical problems of the participants. However, the present study revealed that there were some issues that need to be improved in the writing center. First, it was revealed that the scholars preferred the tutors to be specialized in a particular discipline and provide more explanations regarding their comments and suggestions. Second, they demanded longer working hours, more frequent appointments, and continuous help and support. Third, they called for a variety in the arrangement of the appointments. Fourth, they stated that supplementary materials should be provided by the tutors. Last but not least, they wanted the physical conditions of the center to be improved. The present study offers significant conclusions and insights for both the operating and future writing centers. The writing centers can benefit from the findings of this study and improve their services in light of the needs and recommendations of the scholars. However, this study is not without its limitations. It was carried out on only one writing center. Future studies should include more writing centers. In addition, the efficiency of the writing center was evaluated using only one instrument. Therefore, future studies should use multiple instruments to examine writing centers.

References

Ady, P. (1988). Fear and Trembling at the Center: Student Perceptions about the Tutorial. *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, *12*(8) 11–12.

Ammon, U. (2012). Linguistic inequality and its effects on participation in scientific discourse and on global knowledge accumulation–With a closer look at the problems of the second-rank language communities. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *3*(2), 333-355.

Baker, L. B. (2017). What writing center directors need to know about regional accreditation? *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, *41*(5-6).

Baldwin, C., & Chandler, G. E. (2002). Improving faculty publication output: the role of a writing coach. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, *18*(1), 8-15.

Bardi, M. (2015). Learning the practice of scholarly publication in English–A Romanian perspective. *English for Specific Purposes*, *37*, 98-111.

Bazerman, C. (1988). Shaping written knowledge: The genre and activity of the experimental article in science (Vol. 356). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Bell, J. H. (2000). When hard questions are asked: Evaluating writing centers. *The Writing Center Journal*, *21*(1), 7-28.

Bennett, K. (2011). *Academic writing in Portugal: I-discourses in conflict*. Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra/Coimbra University Press.

Berkenkotter, C., & Huckin, T. N. (2016). *Genre knowledge in disciplinary communication: Cognition/culture/power*. Routledge

Biber, D., & Conrad, S. (2009). *Register, genre, and style*. Cambridge University Press.

Björk, B. C. (2019). Acceptance rates of scholarly peer-reviewed journals: A literature survey. *El profesional de la información*, *28*(4).

Boellstorff, T. (2011). Submission and acceptance: where, why, and how to publish your article. *American Anthropologist*, *113*(3), 383-388.

Boquet, E. H. (1999). "Our little secret": A history of writing centers, pre-to post-open admissions. *College Composition and Communication*, *50*(3), 463-482.

Boquet, E. H., & Lerner, N. (2008). After "The idea of a writing center". *College English*, *71*(2), 170-189.

Bromley, P., & Northway, K. (2018). L2 student satisfaction in the writing center: A cross-institutional study of L1 and L2 students. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, *16*(1), 20-31.

Bromley, P., Northway, K., & Schonberg, E. (2013). How important is the local, really? A cross-institutional quantitative assessment of frequently asked questions in writing center exit surveys. *The Writing Center Journal*, *33*(1), 13-37.

Canagarajah, A. S. (1996). "Nondiscursive" requirements in academic publishing, material resources of periphery scholars, and the politics of knowledge production. *Written Communication*, *13*(4), 435-472.

Cargill, M., & O'Connor, P. (2006). Developing Chinese scientists' skills for publishing in English: Evaluating collaborating-colleague workshops based on genre analysis. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *5*(3), 207-221.

Carino, P., & Enders, D. (2001). Does frequency of visits to the writing center increase student satisfaction? A statistical correlation study—or story. *The Writing Center Journal*, *22*(1), 83-103.

Caroll, B. & Bubloz, T. (1985). Evaluating Students' Achievement in a Writing Center. *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, *9*(8) 10–14.

Casanave, C. P. (1998). Transitions: The balancing act of bilingual academics. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *7*(2), 175-203.

Cavanagh, S. (1997). Content analysis: concepts, methods and applications. *Nurse Researcher*, *4*(3), 5-16.

Chang, T. S. (2013). The idea of a writing center in Asian countries: A preliminary search of models in Taiwan. *Praxis: a writing center Journal*, *10*(2), 1-9.

Clarivate Analytics. (2016) Journal Selection Process. (n.d.). Retrieved December 05, 2017, from https://clarivate.com/essays/journal-selection-process

Cogie, J. (2006). ESL student participation in writing center sessions. *The Writing Center Journal*, *26*(2), 48-66.

Cole, F. L. (1988). Content analysis: process and application. *Clinical Nurse Specialist*, *2*(1), 53-57.

Curry, M. J., & Lillis, T. (2004). Multilingual scholars and the imperative to publish in English: Negotiating interests, demands, and rewards. *TESOL quarterly*, *38*(4), 663-688.

Curry, M. J., & Lillis, T. (2018). *Global academic publishing. Policies, Perspectives and Pedagogies*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Cushman, T., Marx, L., Brower, C., Holahan, K., & Boquet, E. (2005). Using focus groups to assess writing center effectiveness. *Writing Lab Newsletter*, *29*(7), 1-5.

Davis, K. (2006). The writing center as the last best place: Six easy pieces on Montana, bears, love, and writing centers. *The Writing Center Journal, 26*(2), 31-41.

Devet, B. (2011). What teachers of academic writing can learn from the writing center. *Journal of Academic Writing*, *1*(1), 248-253.

Dinitz, S., & Harrington, S. (2014). The role of disciplinary expertise in shaping writing tutorials. *The Writing Center Journal*, *33*(2), 73-98.

Downe-Wamboldt, B. (1992). Content analysis: method, applications, and issues. *Health care for women international*, *13*(3), 313-321.

Duszak, A., & Lewkowicz, J. (2008). Publishing academic texts in English: A Polish perspective. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *7*(2), 108-120.

El Malik, A. T., & Nesi, H. (2008). Publishing research in a second language: the case of Sudanese contributors to international medical journals. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *7*(2), 87-96.

Flowerdew, J. (1999a). Problems in writing for scholarly publication in English: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *8*(3), 243-264.

Flowerdew, J. (1999b). Writing for scholarly publication in English: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *8*(2), 123-145.

Flowerdew, J. (2000). Discourse Community, Legitimate Peripheral Participation, and the Nonnative‐English‐Speaking Scholar. *TESOL quarterly*, *34*(1), 127-150.

Flowerdew, J. (2001). Attitudes of Journal Editors to nonnative speaker contributions. *TESOL Quarterly*, *35*(1), 121-150.

Flowerdew, J. (2008). Scholarly writers who use English as an Additional Language: What can Goffman's "Stigma" tell us?. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *7*(2), 77-86.

Glänzel, W., & Moed, H. F. (2002). Journal impact measures in bibliometric research. *Scientometrics*, *53*(2), 171-193.

Gosden, H. (1996). Verbal reports of Japanese novices' research writing practices in English. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *5*(2), 109-128.

Harris, M. (1988). SLATE (Support for the learning and teaching of English) statement: The concept of a writing center. *The National Council of Teachers of English*. Retrieved from https://archive.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/15402/Writing_Center_Concept.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d

Harris, M. (1995). Talking in the middle: Why writers need writing tutors. *College English*, *57*(1), 27-42.

Hawthorne, J. (2006). Approaching assessment as if it matters. In C. Murphy & B. L. Stay (Eds.) *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book* (pp. 237–248). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Huang, L. S. (2011). Are We Having the Effect We Want? Implementing Outcomes Assessment in an Academic English Language-Support Unit Using a Multi-component Approach. *WPA: Writing Program Administration-Journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators*, *35*(1), 11-44.

Hyland, K. (2015). *Teaching and researching writing*. Routledge.

Hyland, K. (2016). Academic publishing and the myth of linguistic injustice. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *31*, 58-69.

Hyland, T. A., Howell, G., & Zhang, Z. (2010). The effectiveness of the writing proficiency assessment (WPA) in improving student writing skills at Huron University College. *Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario*.

Ianetta, M., & Fitzgerald, L. (2016). *The Oxford guide for writing tutors: Practice and research*. Oxford University Press.

Johnston, S., Cornwell, S., & Yoshida, H. (2008). Writing centers in Japan. *Osaka Jogakuin Daigaku Kenkyuu Kiyou*, *5*, 181-92.

Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf Jr, R. B. (2005). Editing contributed scholarly articles from a language management perspective. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *14*(1), 47-62.

Kiedaisch, J., & Dinitz, S. (1991). Learning more from the students. *The Writing Center Journal*, *12*(1), 90-100.

Koyalan, A., & Mumford, S. (2011). Changes to English as an Additional Language writers' research articles: From spoken to written register. *English for Specific Purposes*, *30*(2), 113-123.

Krippendorff, K. (1980). Validity in content analysis. In E. Mochmann (Ed.), *Computerstrategien für die Kommunikationsanalyse* (pp. 69-112). Frankfurt, Germany: Campus. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/291

Leahy, R. (1990). What the College Writing Center Is—and Isn't. *College Teaching*, *38*(2), 43-48.

Li, Y. (2002). Writing for international publication: The perception of Chinese doctoral researchers. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, *12*, 179-193

Li, Y. (2005). Multidimensional enculturation: the case of an EFL Chinese doctoral student. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, *15*(1), 153-170.

Li, Y. (2007). Apprentice scholarly writing in a community of practice: an intraview of an NNES graduate student writing a research article. *TESOL Quarterly*, *41*(1), 55-79.

Li, Y., & Flowerdew, J. (2007). Shaping Chinese novice scientists' manuscripts for publication. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *28*(3), 100-117.

Lillis, T. M., & Curry, M. J. (2010). *Academic writing in global context*. London: Routledge.

Man, J. P., Weinkauf, J. G., Tsang, M., & Sin, D. D. (2004). Why do some countries publish more than others? An international comparison of research funding, English proficiency and publication output in highly ranked general medical journals. *European Journal of Epidemiology*, *19*, 811-817

Mazen, I. M. H. (2018). *The Role of Writing Center Tutorials of ESL Students: Exploring Tutors, Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions*. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). University of Arkansas

McNutt, M. (2016). New members of the family. *Science*, *351*(6268), 7. doi: 10.1126/science.aaf1338

McKinley, J., & Rose, H. (2018). Conceptualizations of language errors, standards, norms and nativeness in English for research publication purposes: An analysis of journal submission guidelines. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *42*, 1-11.

Middle East Technical University. (2020). AWC Info Booklet. Retrieved from https://awc.metu.edu.tr/awc-info-booklet-0

Miguel, F. M. (2007). Review of Reflections on Multiliterate Lives Edited by Diane Belcher and Ulla Connor. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, *6*(1), 134-135.

Morgan, S., Reichert, T., & Harrison, T. R. (2016). *From numbers to words: Reporting statistical results for the social sciences*. Routledge.

Morrison, J. B., & Nadeau, J. P. (2003). How Was Your Session at the Writing Center? Pre- and Post-Grade Student Evaluations. *Writing Center Journal*, *23*(2), 25-42.

Moussu, L., & David, N. (2015). Writing centers: Finding a center for ESL writers. In Evans, N. W., Anderson, N. J., & Eggington, W. G. (Eds.). *ESL readers and writers in higher education: Understanding challenges, providing support* (pp. 63-77). Routledge.

Mungra, P., & Webber, P. (2010). Peer review process in medical research publications: Language and content comments. *English for Specific Purposes*, *29*(1), 43-53.

Neuleib, J. (1986). Evaluating writing centers: A survey report. *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, *11*(4), 1-4.

Newmann, S.(1999). "Demonstrating Effectiveness." *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, *23*(8), 8–9.

North, S. M. (1984). The idea of a writing center. *College English*, *46*(5), 433-446.

Reigstad, T. J., & McAndrew, D. A. (1984). *Training Tutors for Writing Conferences*. National Institute of Education.

Sandelowski, M. (1995). Sample size in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing & Health*, *18*(2), 179-183.

John, M. J. S. (1987). Writing processes of Spanish scientists publishing in English. *English for Specific Purposes*, *6*(2), 113-120.

Storer, N. W. (1967). The hard sciences and the soft: Some sociological observations. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, *55*(1), 75.

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M. (1997). English as Tyrannosaurus rex. *World Englishes*, *16*(3), 373-382.

Tan, B.H. (2010). *Writing Center Approach: Theory, Practice and Applicability to Tertiary ESL/EFL Education*. VDM Publishing.

Thonus, T. (2002). Tutor and student assessments of academic writing tutorials: What is "success"?. *Assessing Writing*, *8*(2), 110-134.

Turner, A. (2006). Re-engineering the North American writing center model in East Asia. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, *3*(2).

Uysal H.H. (2014) Turkish Academic Culture in Transition: Centre-Based State Policies and Semiperipheral Practices of Research, Publishing and Promotion. In: Bennett K. (eds) *The Semiperiphery of Academic Writing* (pp. 165-188). Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137351197_10

Uzuner, S. (2008). Multilingual scholars' participation in core/global academic communities: A literature review. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *7*(4), 250-263.

Winder, R., Kathpalia, S. S., & Koo, S. L. (2016). Writing centre tutoring sessions: addressing students' concerns. *Educational Studies*, *42*(4), 323-339.

Witt, P. A. (1995). Writing for publication: Rationale, process and pitfalls. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, *13*, 1-9.

Yükseköğretim Kurulu. (2017). Yükseköğretim Bilgi Yönetim Sistemi. Retrieved from https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/

Appendix

Academic Writing Center Satisfaction Survey

1. Title:

2. Department:

3. Gender:

4. Date of visit:

5. Reason for your visit:

6. How did you learn about the Writing Center and its services?

7. How many times have you been to the Writing Center this semester?

8. What was the name of your tutor?

9. How would you rate the advice your tutor gave you during the session?
   1. Very useful   2. Useful   3. Quite useful 4. A little useful   5. Not useful

10. How would you rate the clarity of your tutor's advice?
   1. Very good   2. Good   3. OK   4. Poor 5. Very poor

11. How satisfied were you with the help you received from your tutor?
    1. Very satisfied   2. Somewhat satisfied   3. Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
    4. Somewhat unsatisfied   5. Very unsatisfied

12. Did you learn something NEW to apply in your writing in the future?
    1. Yes   2. No

13. Will you seek help from the Writing Center in the future?
    1. Yes   2. No

14. Would you refer a friend to the Writing Center?
    1. Yes   2. No

15. What was the most useful activity you did with your tutor?

16. What would you recommend to your tutor to make your next tutoring session better?

17. Is there anything about the writing center that you think should be changed?