



Comparison of Writing Approaches in Yeni Istanbul and Headway Coursebooks

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the writing approaches used in Teaching Turkish as a foreign language and English coursebooks to support the writing process and identify the differences and general trends between these books. For this purpose, the writing activities in the Yeni Istanbul Turkish coursebooks and the Headway English coursebooks were analyzed within the scope of assessment criteria determined for product, genre, and process-oriented writing approaches. In this study, Headway English and New Istanbul Turkish language textbooks were examined using qualitative research methods, specifically the descriptive analysis technique. As a result of the study, a comparison was made by determining which writing approaches were more emphasized in the examined textbooks. It was observed that in both series of books, the number of activities related to the product-oriented approach tended to decrease as the language levels increased, and completion activities were the most commonly used writing activity at all language levels. In the genre-oriented approach, it was observed that in both Yeni Istanbul and Headway coursebooks, the activities diversified as language levels increased, showing an increase from beginner levels to advanced levels. Additionally, different types of activities under the genre-oriented approach were observed in both book series. Finally, it was determined that process-oriented writing activities were fewer compared to other approaches. These analyses will contribute to generating new ideas about how writing approaches can be more effectively used in coursebooks. At the same time, this information aims to assist teachers in selecting the most suitable textbooks for enhancing students' writing skills and adopting the most appropriate approaches to support the writing process.

Keywords

Turkish as a Foreign language, Writing approaches, Writing activities, Headway English Coursebooks, Yeni Istanbul Turkish Coursebooks

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INTRODUCTION

With the rapid advancement of technology, interpersonal interactions among individuals are increasing, leading to a growing need for foreign language acquisition through interactions with different cultures. Writing, a crucial skill in language education, is a complex process that extends beyond being an individual activity, incorporating social and interactive dimensions. It plays a significant role in language instruction. As expressed by Bağcı and Başar (2013), the skill of writing requires an individual to enrich their vocabulary, use learned words in appropriate contexts, and understand the syntactic rules of the target language. To convey a message accurately, it is crucial to use language and its rules correctly. Therefore, the skill of writing should be understood and accepted not just as a simple mechanical process but also as a process that encourages critical thinking (Demirel, 2012). It is known that the skill of writing consists of specific stages, and these stages follow each other sequentially. When progressing through alphabet instruction, vocabulary teaching, sentence construction, paragraph writing, and text creation with appropriate methods, it becomes possible to reach the desired level of writing proficiency (Tiryaki, 2013, p. 43).

Textbooks and the writing approaches employed play a guiding role in the instruction of writing skills. Any approach developed for writing skills in a foreign language is based on complex processes and aims to make the writing ability more comprehensible, supporting its development over an extended period (Yaylı, 2014). One way to enhance written expression skills is to increase the learners' writing experience. In this process, providing sufficient feedback to students and monitoring them throughout the writing process is an effective way to boost their interest and motivation for writing. Encouraging students to think systematically and creatively during the writing process aims to improve their ability to express thoughts in a well-organized manner (Karatay, 2013, p. 23). Writing is one of the most effective methods for acquiring knowledge and ensuring the long-term retention of acquired information. The act of writing, which initiates the process of putting knowledge into practice in individuals, forms the foundation for the integration of knowledge into culture and becoming a part of human life. Writing contributes to the acceleration of language development, thereby enhancing individuals' self-confidence (Ungan, 2007, p. 469). Writing is not only an individual activity but also an action that involves social communication and cultural elements (Yaylı, 2014, p. 71). Through literary texts, learners gain the opportunity to better observe the community of their own language, societal events, and personal emotional contexts. (Keskin & Okur, 2013, p. 300).

In language education, there are various approaches to enhance writing skills both inside and outside the classroom. These approaches can be customized based on students' current levels and areas that need improvement. The fundamental goal of all these approaches is to instill a habit of writing in students (Harmer, 2007, p. 325). In this context, it is essential to be aware of the writing approaches employed in textbooks, and these approaches should be applied correctly, taking into account learners' language proficiency, language background and language needs. In the process of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, writing approaches are generally influenced and shaped by the approaches and theories developed in the process of teaching English as a foreign or second language (Yaylı, 2014). In this study, the most commonly used writing approaches, namely product, genre, and process-oriented writing approaches, have been discussed. The product-oriented approach is known for emphasizing accurate language use in the writing process. This approach largely focuses on the correct usage of words, sentences, and these elements in the writing process. The development of writing skills often involves a process carried out through a text model provided by the teacher (Badger & White, 2000). Approaching writing as a product requires focusing on the structural elements and

grammatical features of texts. Linguistic knowledge and skills, such as vocabulary choices, sentence patterns, and grammatical elements, form the core content of this approach. As a more structural perspective is brought to the writing process, communication content and meaning are addressed in later stages (Hyland, 2003, p. 3). Within this approach, writing activities include completion exercises, writing based on a listening text, visual-based writing, writing a question or answer, writing using key words, reordering, transformation, writing a sentence suitable for the expression, guided writing, rearrangement and correction. In the genre-focused approach, teaching writing skills related to different text types used in various social contexts becomes important (Hyland, 2003, p. 23-24). Within this approach, the text types included in the Turkish Language Course Curriculum of the Ministry of National Education have been taken into consideration. In this program, texts are categorized into three main forms: informative texts, narrative texts, and poetry. The text types contained within these forms are as follows:

1. Informative Texts: Memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, blogs, petitions, ephemera and brochures (lists, diagrams, tables, graphics, sketches, maps, posters, etc.), emails, daily news texts, advertisements, postcards, guides (instruction manuals, recipes, instructions, etc.), travel writing, articles/columns/interviews/essays, letters, proverbs (proverb, saying, wall writings, slogans, etc.), social media messages.
2. Narrative Texts: Comic book, fable, story, cartoon, fairy tale/legend/epic, humorous anecdote, novel, play.
3. Poetry: Mânî (a form of Turkish poetry with a particular structure)/lullaby, song, poem, nursery rhyme/riddle. (Ministry of National Education, 2019).

The process approach is an approach that focuses on the stages and cognitive aspects of the writing process. This approach aims to target the use of a set of skills by focusing on the stages of pre-writing preparation, organizing, revising, and creating a final product. Particularly, the stages of editing and revising are crucial when writing in a foreign language, as these stages focus on the nuances of language and deepening the meaning (Harmer, 2007, p. 326). In the process-oriented approach, writing involves specific stages of an inductive and exploratory process. At the same time, the act of writing represents an internal journey, encompassing critical thinking and higher cognitive skills (Hyland, 2004, p. 19). Within the process-oriented approach, writing activities to be assessed are expected to include the stages of pre-writing preparation, planning, revision, and editing. Students often find writing activities more challenging compared to other language skills. Therefore, it is essential to accurately identify the factors hindering the successful learning of writing skills and employ various techniques to overcome them. In this context, the process writing approach is considered a beneficial method (Bayat, 2014).

The primary aim of this study is to highlight the similarities and differences in writing approaches between two different language teaching materials and to provide ideas on how this information can be utilized to enhance the writing skills of foreign language students. It is known that there is a limited number of studies in the field of writing approaches. Given this need, a detailed examination of the writing approaches used in Turkish teaching textbooks is required. This research aims to compare the writing activities in textbooks used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language with those in English textbooks, focusing on product, genre, and process-oriented writing approaches. The goal is to reveal the similarities and differences in the writing activities in both sets of teaching materials. In the study conducted for this purpose, the most and least frequently used writing approaches in the writing

activities of Yeni Istanbul Turkish textbooks used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language and New Headway textbooks used in teaching the English language were identified. The numerical distribution of writing activities used within these approaches is presented according to language proficiency levels. Existing studies in the field of teaching Turkish to foreigners cover a wide range of topics, from the content of textbooks to research on writing skills. When examining academic studies in this field, it is observed that the number of studies conducted in the area of writing approaches is insufficient.

Especially in the doctoral thesis conducted by Akbulut (2022), the process-genre focused writing approach and structured multilayered text writing processes of Turkish language teacher candidates were examined. Additionally, in the master's thesis conducted by Kurt (2019), the impact of the process-based writing approach on sixth-grade students' genre-focused writing skills was addressed. Furthermore, in the study conducted by Tekin (2023), the writing approaches of the Turkish C1 textbook for Yeni Istanbul International Students were considered. However, it is generally observed that the number of studies in this field is limited, and there is a need for further research. The comprehensive analysis of writing approaches in English textbooks and Turkish language teaching textbooks used for teaching Turkish as a foreign language is thought to guide educators and textbook designers in improving instructional processes.

Problem

What types of writing approaches are presented in the Turkish language textbooks for Yeni Istanbul International Students and the English language textbooks in New Headway, respectively

1. What are the writing activities related to a product-based approach in the Yeni Istanbul Turkish language textbooks?
2. What are the writing activities related to a product-based approach in the Headway English language textbooks?
3. What are the writing activities related to genre-based approach in the Yeni Istanbul Turkish language textbooks?
4. What are the writing activities related to a genre-based approach in the Headway English language textbooks?
5. What are the writing activities related to a process-based approach in the Yeni Istanbul Turkish language textbooks?
6. What are the writing activities related to a process-based approach in the Headway English language textbooks?

METHOD

Research Model

The qualitative research method was employed in this study with a particular focus on descriptive analysis. Descriptive research aims to objectively describe a situation. Such studies serve as the foundation and starting point for more in-depth analyses and further research by providing a comprehensive overview (Büyüköztürk, et al., 2014 p. 22). In this study, document analysis technique was used as the data collection technique. Document analysis is a method of collecting data through analysis of existing records and documents. (Karasar, 2014, p. 183).

Data Collection

The works examined in the study are Turkish textbooks for foreign students and English textbooks. The materials selected for analysis are the 2021 edition of "Yeni Istanbul Turkish Coursebooks (1st edition)" and the 2019 edition of "Headway English Teaching Coursebooks (5th edition)." Yeni Istanbul International Students Turkish Coursebooks analyzed in the research include levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1/+. Headway English Teaching Coursebooks cover levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2.

The writing activities in Headway English and Yeni Istanbul Turkish textbooks were examined in terms of writing approaches and criteria determined for these approaches in the study. The criteria to be used for each writing approach were determined through the examination of relevant books and articles written in this field. The study focused on product, genre, and process-oriented writing approaches. The criteria to be examined were established by identifying and compiling the distinctive features mentioned by relevant authors (Badger & White, 2000; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Harmer, 2007; Hyland, 2002a, Hyland, 2003b; Nunan, 1991; Demirel, 2012) in their works on writing approaches. The writing activities in the textbooks were examined in terms of product, genre, and process-oriented writing approaches, and the data obtained were quantified and presented in tables at all levels according to these approaches. Finally, the data obtained from the two different teaching sets were compared and interpreted.

Ethical Principles

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FINDINGS

The evaluation of writing activities in Yeni Istanbul Turkish coursebooks in terms of the product-based approach

The variation of writing activities in the New Istanbul Turkish coursebooks concerning the product-based approach is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Evaluation of Writing Activities in Yeni Istanbul Turkish Coursebooks in terms of Product-Based Approach

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
Completion	48	55	56	36	40
Writing based on a listening text	14	8	4		2
Visual-based writing	6	2			
Writing a question or answer	9	3	1	2	2

Writing using key words	9	3		2	
Reordering	2	1	1		
Transformation	1	4	5	19	6
Writing a sentence suitable for the expression	7	3	5	1	2
Guided writing	1	6	5	1	
Rearrangement and correction	1		1	2	

When Table 1 is examined, a decrease in the number of controlled writing activities from the beginner level to the advanced levels is observed in the New Istanbul Turkish coursebooks. Reordering, rearrangement and correction activities are given very little space. It is determined that in each level of Yeni Istanbul Turkish coursebooks, there are activity types such as writing a question or answer, transformation and writing a sentence appropriate to an example or expression. Activity types such as visual-based writing, writing using key words, rearrangement, guided writing, swapping, and correction are not observed in the coursebooks at the A2, B1, B2, and C1 levels. It is noted that completion exercises are the most numerous, while rearrangement and correction activities are the least numerous.

The evaluation of writing activities in Headway coursebooks in terms of the product-based approach

The variation of writing activities in the Headway English coursebooks concerning the product-based approach is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Evaluation of Writing Activities in Headway English Coursebooks in terms of Product-Based Approach

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Completion	40	45	27	24	22	19
Writing based on a listening text	23	16	12	10	8	1
Visual-based writing	2	2	2			
Writing a question or answer	2	1	3		2	1

Writing using key words	1		1	1	2	
Reordering	2			1	2	2
Transformation		4		4	6	5
Writing a sentence suitable for the expression	1			3		
Guided writing	4	3	2	1	2	
Rearrangement and correction	1		6	2	6	1

In Headway English coursebooks, completion activities are identified as the most common type of activity across all language levels. The second most common type of activity is writing activities based on listening texts. Writing a sentence appropriate to an example or expression, writing using key words, and writing based on visuals are determined as the least implemented activity types. It is observed that the least presented activity type in Headway English coursebooks is writing a sentence suitable for the expression. At the A2 level, there is no place for activities like writing using key words, reordering, writing a sentence suitable for the expression, rearrangement and correction. At the B1 level, there are no activities like reordering, transformation and writing a sentence suitable for the expression. In B2 and C1 levels, there is no writing based on visuals activity.

The evaluation of writing activities in Yeni Istanbul Turkish coursebooks in terms of the genre-based approach

The variation of writing activities in Yeni Istanbul Turkish coursebooks concerning the genre-based approach is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Evaluation of Writing Activities in Yeni Istanbul Turkish Coursebooks in terms of Genre-Based Approach

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
Informative texts	2	2	5	12	10
Narrative texts		2		1	1
Poetry/Song				1	1
Personal writings	2				1

Ephemera	1		1	
Digital communication texts	2	1	3	
Official writing genres				2
Letter				
Brochure		2		
Postcard guides		1		
Travel writing		1		1
Speech texts		1	1	
Proverbs				

In Yeni Istanbul textbooks, there is an increase in genre-based writing activities from the beginner level to advanced levels. Among the activity types evaluated in terms of genre-focused approach, it is observed that informative text types are used the most. While the least emphasis is placed on official writing genres, poetry/song, ephemera, travel writing, brochure, speech text, personal writings, and postcard guide types, there is no inclusion of writing activities in the letter and proverbs genres at any language proficiency level.

The evaluation of writing activities in Headway English coursebooks in terms of the genre-based approach

The variation of writing activities in Headway English coursebooks concerning the genre-based approach is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Evaluation of Writing Activities in Headway English Coursebooks in terms of Genre-Based Approach

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Informative texts	1		2	2	3	2
Narrative texts				2	1	2
Poetry/Song		1			2	
Personal writings		3	1	2	1	2

Ephemera	1		1			
Digital communication texts		4	2	4	1	3
Official writing genres			1		3	1
Letter						
Brochure						
Postcard guides				1		
Travel writing						
Speech texts	1		3	2	2	3
Proverbs						

In Headway English textbooks, the number of genre-based writing activities increases from the beginner level to advanced levels. According to the research results, among different types of writing activities, digital communication text type stands out as the most frequent. However, there is also a notable frequency of including writing activities in the speech text genre. There are fewer writing activities in the poetry/song, ephemera, and postcard guide genres. Additionally, no writing activities are included in the letter, brochure, and proverbs genres at any proficiency level.

The evaluation of writing activities in Yeni Istanbul Turkish coursebooks in terms of the process-based approach

The variation of writing activities in Yeni Istanbul Turkish coursebooks concerning the process-based approach is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Evaluation of Writing Activities in Yeni Istanbul Turkish Coursebooks in terms of Process-Based Approach

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
The stages of the writing process (Planning, drafting,, revising, editing)			1		1

Yeni İstanbul Turkish coursebooks include only 2 process-focused writing activities.

The evaluation of writing activities in Headway English coursebooks in terms of the process-based approach

In Headway textbooks, there is no writing activity specifically focused on the process-oriented approach.

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the evaluation of the Yeni İstanbul Turkish and Headway English textbooks in terms of the product-focused writing approach, a decreasing trend in the number of controlled writing activities according to language levels is observed, while completion activities are found to be the most common across all language levels. Demir (2020) explained in her thesis that completion activities were more numerous in Turkish textbooks for foreigners in İstanbul and İzmir textbooks. This result supports the findings of the current study. Writing activities such as writing a sentence suitable for the expression, writing using keywords, and visual-based writing are observed to be the least included activity types in both textbook series. Turkish language teaching textbooks for foreigners should include not only completion and listening-based writing activities related to the product-based approach but also other controlled writing activities.

When examined in terms of the genre-focused writing approach, both instructional sets show an increase in the variety of genre-focused writing activities as language levels advance, with a progression from beginner to advanced levels. It is observed that the number of writing activities within the genre-focused approach is limited. Both textbook series offer activities suitable for language levels, but it is evident that the types of activities presented within the genre-focused approach differ. In Yeni İstanbul textbooks, there is a predominant emphasis on informative texts as the most common activity type, while specific genres like letters and proverbs are not included at any language level. In the Headway English textbooks, a significant emphasis is placed on the genre of digital communication and speech texts.

It has been determined that writing activities related to digital communication texts are more frequently included than other types, while genres such as letters, brochures, travel writing, and proverbs are not included at all. Through a detailed examination of textbooks in two different languages, it has been observed that writing activities related to the process-based approach are almost nonexistent. A study by Geçici (2022) suggests the need for process-focused writing activities in Yeni İstanbul textbooks. This finding aligns with the research by Müldür and Çevik (2020), emphasizing the inadequacy of activities related to the process-focused approach in writing instruction. Additionally, Demir Atalay (2015) revealed the inadequacy of pre-writing, during-writing, and post-writing activities in the textbooks examined.

In today's era where digital communication methods are gaining importance, it is essential to include sufficient examples of digital communication genres in Turkish language teaching textbooks for the teaching and reinforcement of these types of writing. In the future Turkish language teaching

textbooks, more emphasis should be placed on writing genres that are less highlighted, such as digital communication text, letter, personal writing, brochure, speech text, travel writing, and proverbs.

The research indicates that process-based writing activities are not adequately represented in current textbooks. Therefore, there is a need for a greater emphasis on process-based approaches, and more space should be allocated to such activities in textbooks across various proficiency levels.

In this study, Yeni İstanbul Turkish and Headway English textbooks were compared in terms of product, genre, and process-based writing approaches. Future research could expand the scope by considering different textbooks in Turkish for Foreigners courses, providing a more comprehensive examination. These studies could offer a deeper understanding of the approaches adopted by various textbooks in the writing activities they include. This study focused solely on textbooks; however, future research could take into account teacher and student perspectives to obtain a more holistic perspective.

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All authors contributed equally to the article.

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