

FOURTH-YEAR ELT STUDENTS' WORD KNOWLEDGE IN ACADEMIC WRITING: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Language proficiency requires the mastery of four language skills such as listening reading, speaking and writing, but in addition to these language skills, vocabulary holds a distinct place in attaining communicative competence. The purpose of the presents study is to investigate the reflection of the fourth year Pre-service English Teachers' word knowledge on their academic writing. The study was conducted at the Department of English Language Teacher Education of a state university in Turkey. The participants are 10 pre-service teachers whose essay papers were randomly chosen among fourth –year Pre-service English teachers. In order to measure word knowledge of the participants in their academic writing VocabProfile (Laufer&Nation, 1995) which enables the data obtained to evaluate quantitatively was used. The analyses showed that the students mostly used different words (word range) and lexical density varies between 45% and 55%. Moreover, it is also observed that preservice English teachers mostly used words in the first 1,000 band (K1). The percentages range from 80 % and 89 %. It is seen that the students included in the study showed the similar results. However, when it comes to the using words that are included in 1001-2000 bands, only a few used them in their writings. Academic vocabulary is another dimension which was evaluated in this study. According to the results, seven out of ten students used nearly 10 % of the words from off-list words (out of 2,000 words).

Key words: Language teacher education, Pre-service English teachers, teaching academic writing, Word knowledge, Lexical Frequency Profile

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İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ 4. SINIF ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN KELİME BİLGİLERİNİN AKADEMİK YAZMAYA YANSIMASI: BİR DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

ÖZ

Bir dilde yeterlilik; dinleme, okuma, konuşma ve yazma gibi dört temel dil becerisin ayrı olarak değil birlikte geliştirilmesini gerektirir. Ancak, tüm becerilerin gerçekleşebilmesi kelime yeterliliği ile doğrudan bağlantılıdır. Bu düşünceden hareketle çalışmamızın amacı; bir devlet üniversitesi Yabancı Diller İngilizce öğretmenliğinde okuyan öğrencilerinin kelime bilgilerinin akademik yazmalara ne ölçüde yansıdığını araştırmaktır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları 10 İngilizce Öğretmenliği dördüncü sınıf öğrencisidir. Bu öğrencilerin yazılı metinleri dijital ortama aktarılmış ardından VocabProfile (Laufer&Nation, 1995) programı ile analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Öğrenci metinlerinin analizinden Kelime çeşitliliği, Kelime Yoğunluğu, birinci 1,000 bandı, ikinci 1001-2000 bandı, Akademik Kelimeler, ilk 2000 dışı kelimeler olmak üzere altı değişken dikkate alınmıştır. Sonuçlar çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerimizin metinlerinde farklı kelimeleri kullandıklarını göstermiştir. Öte yandan öğrencilerin metinlerde yer verdikleri kelimelerin yüzde 83-89 oranında birinci 1-1000 bandında yer alan kelimelerden oluştuğu; 1001-2000 arası ikinci banttan kelimeleri nadir olarak kullandıkları; biraz da yazdıkları metnin yapısı gereği fazla akademik kelime kullanmadıkları görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular; İngiliz Dil Eğitimi programlarının öğrencilerin kelime bilgisini akademik üretimlerinde kullanmalarını ne derece katkı sağladığı ya da yer verdiği konusunun yeniden değerlendirilmesinin önemini ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: İngiliz Dili Öğretmen Eğitimi, Kelime Bilgisi, Akademik yazma, Kelime Sıklık Profilleri,

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Introduction

Information comes from several sources, and it should be processed as quickly as possible in today's world. As Purpura (2016: 190) notes, we are supposed to read, listen and synthesize this information via multiple modalities; search for information; judge its accuracy; evaluate its applicability; and use communication technologies. In some situations these tasks are to be done in a second or foreign language (L2). For that reason efficient communication in a second or foreign language is part and parcel of modern life. In order to attain language fluency, there is a special emphasis on vocabulary learning and teaching from the very early stages of language learning (Kömür & Özdemir, 2015). Similarly, Thornbury highlights this point by saying "... much more attention is given to the grammar of words, to collocations and to word frequency" (2002:14). He also claims that this emphasis has been observed in the promotion of the coursebooks recently.

Proficiency in a second or foreign language requires communicative competence which consists of such competences as linguistic competence, strategic competence, socio-cultural competence, actional competence and discourse competence (see, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei&Thurrell, 1995). For linguistic competence a language learner should reach a certain level of vocabulary knowledge in the target language. Although vocabulary did not attract much attention in second or foreign language learning and teaching (Zimmerman, 1997; Decarrico, 2001), much more interest in research has been given to vocabulary teaching in recent years due to computerised databases of words and the development of new approaches and methods in language teaching and learning (Thornbury, 2002).

Needless to say that knowing the meaning of a word is not enough to use it effectively and appropriately in communication. Various aspects of a lexical item need to be attended to such as, primarily; forms, grammar, collocations, and different layers of meaning. Vocabulary knowledge has been defined differently by different scholars; for example it is defined as "the sum of interrelated subknowledges-knowledge of the spoken and written form, morphological knowledge, knowledge of word meaning, collocational and grammatical knowledge, connotative and associational knowledge, and the knowledge of social or other constraints to be observed in the use of a word" (Nation, 1990, 2001; Richards, 1976; Ringborn, 1987 in Laufer and Goldstein, 2004: 400). On the other hand Arıkan and Alemdari approach to vocabulary knowledge as "knowing the spelling, pronunciation, word category, antonyms, synonyms, contextual use, connotative and denotative meanings and register" (Arıkan, 2012: 25).

Understanding a word in a reading text or conversation does not necessarily mean using it automatically and appropriately in production. This situation is commonly observed problem among language learners. They can recognize academic words in a listening or reading passage and understand their meanings, but they are not able to use the same words effectively in their writings (Kömür & Özdemir, 2015). This might be due to the fact that words have different aspects to be acquired and most of them remain to be receptive vocabulary knowledge. In this context it is important to activate receptive vocabulary knowledge of learners in meaningful contexts. According to Richards (2000) receptive vocabulary knowledge is more relevant to the ability of understanding the meaning of a word in a listening or reading text. On the other hand, the ability to use a word in an appropriate way while speaking or writing is among the competences to be reached.

There are studies which have investigated size and depth of vocabulary knowledge of language learners. Size of vocabulary can be explained as the number of words a language learner knows at a certain level of language proficiency (Nation, 2001). Vocabulary size tests have commonly been administered in order to monitor the achievement levels of language learners in language skills (Laufer, 1997; Savile-Troike, 1984). They, therefore, are mostly used for placement and admission purposes in language teaching programs rather than depth or fluency tests. Moreover, as Laufer and Goldstein (2001) note, “size tests can be used as relatively simple and efficient research instruments providing us with vocabulary size of the participants at the very beginning of the treatment and showing the growth in vocabulary after an experimental intervention” (2001:402). For depth of vocabulary, Read (1993: 200) says that “it shows how well the language learner knows a word” while Quin refers to it “as a learner’s level of knowledge of various aspects of a given word, or how well a learner knows this word” (1999: 283).

In English language education several studies have been done to investigate vocabulary knowledge of language learners. For example, Nurweni& Read (1999) focused on the estimation of the vocabulary knowledge of the first year students of an Indonesian university. Akbarian (2010) aimed to explore the relationship between size and depth of vocabulary knowledge while Nation (2006) studied the size of the receptive vocabulary needed for comprehension of written and spoken English in activities such as reading a novel, reading a newspaper, watching a movie and taking part in a conversation and the distinction between passive and active knowledge of a word. Moreover, studies have been done in order to see the role of vocabulary knowledge in the assessment of individual language skills. Quin (2001) investigated the role of depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. Noro (2002-3) re-examined Quin’s (1999) empirical study with a new group language learners. Nation (2006) aims to see how large a vocabulary is needed for typical

language use like reading a novel, reading a newspaper, watching a movie, and taking part in a conversation. On the other hand, Baba (2009) investigated the impact of lexical proficiency of EFL students on their summary writing in English (L2) by controlling for the impact of a range of linguistic abilities in English and Japanese. In his study Muncie (2002) takes the subject of process writing and vocabulary development and he compared *Lexical Frequency Profiles* across drafts.

In their study Laufer and Nation (1995: 307) aims to see “the relationship between the vocabulary size of intermediate learners as reflected in their writing and a more direct measure of vocabulary size.” In the study a new measure of lexical richness, *Lexical Frequency Profile* (LFP) was presented. With LFP it is aimed to give the rate of high frequency general service and academic words in learners’ writing. As it is stated above, vocabulary knowledge is an important component of language proficiency. Moreover, the importance of vocabulary in writing cannot be denied since it is one of the four basic skills of a language and it requires a person to be linguistically competent. That’s why vocabulary teaching is thought to have a direct effect on writing skills. Considering all these studies and developments in vocabulary learning, the present study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

How varied and dense is the vocabulary in the texts produced by the Pre-service English teachers in their academic writing?

What is representation of four groups of words such as the first 1,000 (K1), the second 1,000 (K2), academic word list (AWL) and off-list words (out of 2,000 words) in the texts of the pre-service English teachers?

Method

The purpose of the presents study is to investigate the word knowledge and performance of the fourth year Pre-service English Teachers’ word knowledge in their writing. The study was conducted at the Department of English Language Teacher Education of a state university in Turkey. Dörnyei notes that through qualitative research it is possible to see “almost every aspect of language acquisition and use is determined and significantly shaped by social, cultural and situational factors, and qualitative research is ideal for providing insights into such contextual conditions and influences” (2007: 36). For that reason content analysis was adopted in the process of data collection and analysis. Thorough content analysis it is aimed to portray and explicate the relationships between phenomenon, objects, individual and several variables under inquiry.

Participants

The participants are 10 pre-service English teachers from the department of English Language Teacher Education. They are fourth year-students who took the elective course titled “*Selections from Contemporary American Literature.*” One of the researchers of this study is the course instructor. These ten students were randomly chosen from among 50 students as the inclusion of academic writings of 50 students would exceed the scope of the present study. These students’ first year education focuses mainly on improvement of the four language skills. In the second, third and fourth years, some literature and ELT teacher training courses are incorporated into the program.

Data collection tools

Ten randomly-chosen final exam papers were used to collect data for the present study. During the semester, the participants of the study studied *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and two short stories by Edgar Allan Poe: “Black Cat” and “The Tell-Tale Heart”. For the final test, the students were asked to write two short essays answering one question about *The Great Gatsby* and one question about Poe’s short stories out of six questions. The types of questions were especially selected to elicit answers containing the students’ own interpretations and comments. To be able to get desired grades, the students had to demonstrate their knowledge of the texts as well as their original thinking in writing.

Context of the study

This course was designed to familiarize the students with the general characteristics of American literature by reading and discussing selected literary texts. The selected works were F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and two short stories by Edgar Allan Poe. *The Great Gatsby* was selected because it is considered one of the greatest novels of all times with its tragic story, narrative style and depiction of American Dream. Students generally respond enthusiastically to the characters of Gatsby and Daisy and find the plotline interesting. Also during this class, students read two short stories of Edgar Allan Poe. These stories also attracted the attention of the students and they participated in the class discussions about the symbols, themes, characters and gothic elements in these texts. Every week the students were asked to read the assigned chapters of the book or the story and come to class ready to discuss the elements of fiction such as plot, character development, setting, point of view and theme. They were encouraged to talk about their own ideas and feelings towards the text.

Data Analysis

In the study the exam papers of ten fourth-year students were analyzed through *Vocabprofile* English program. The results obtained from the analyses were given as word range, lexical density, first 1-1,000 band (K1), second 1001-200 band (K2), Academic World List (AWL), and Off-list (OL) (out of 2,000 words).

VocabProfile

The term vocabulary profile is used as “the relative proportion of vocabulary items a learner uses at different vocabulary levels in her writing-or, put differently, relative proportion of words frequency levels” (Laufer& Nation, 1995: 311). *VocabProfile* is an online database used to analyze texts. It works on word frequency profiles created by Heatley, Nation and Coxhead (2002; in Bardakçı, 2016: 242). In this program a text is fed into input screen, and the words are classified into groups based on the frequency levels of each lexical item in the text. “For each text the profiler calculated the type /token ratio (TTR), the first 1.000 (K1), the second 1,000 (K2), academic word list (AWL), off-list words (OL) and function words (F)” (Morris & Cobb, 2004: 81). It is also suggested that the LFP is only stable on the text of over 200 words. It is further claimed by Laufer and Nation (1995) that there is no need to make any further adjustment to length of the texts involved. The results of words range and lexical density in the text were also presented in our study. According to (Thornbury, 2002: 136) lexical density is the measure of the proportion of content words to function words while lexical variety means the high proportion of different words, which is the indicator of extensive vocabulary knowledge. Meara (2005: 32) says that vocabulary frequency bands are commonly used as a fairly standard practice in L2 vocabulary studies

Results and Discussion

The exam papers of ten students were randomly chosen from among 50 students and they were analyzed through *Vocabprofile* English program in order to seek answers to the research questions.

Table 1

The analysis of the written text of S1

No. of words in text	No. of different words (word range)	Lexical density (content words) %	K1 words(1-1000)		K2 words (1001-2000)		AWL Words (academic)		Off-list words (out of 2000 words)		
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
182	102	49	167	88.36	0	0	0	3	1.59	19	10.05

As it is in Table 1, the text written by S1 totally consists of 182 words. The results of the analysis show that the range of vocabulary consists of 102 and the percentage of the content words is 49%. It is an interesting result that most of the words come from K1 band (167). Moreover, there are no words in 1001-2000 bands whereas it is also notable that the student used only three words from AWL in addition to 19 words from OL (10.5%).

Table 2

The analysis of the text produced by S2

No. of words in text	No. of different words (word range)	Lexical density (content words) %	K1 words(1-1000)		K2 words (1001-2000)		AWL Words (academic)		Off-list words (out of 2000 words)		
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
303	126	54	225	84.16	10	3.30	3	1.98	32	10.56	

Table 2 displays the text analysis of S2. The results show that the student produced 303 words which are higher when compared to S1. S2 used 126 words classified as word range while lexical density (proportion of content words to function words) is found to be 54%. The words included in 1-1000 band are 225 and they represent 84.1% of the total number. Compared with S1, S2 used 10 words from the second band (1001-2000) and three words from AWL. Here it is obvious that S2 used 32 off-list words (which are out of 2000 words).

Table 3

The analysis of the text produced by S3

No. of words in text	No. of different words (word range)	Lexical density (content words) %	K1 words(1-1000)		K2 words (1001-2000)		AWL Words (academic)		Off-list words (out of 2000 words)	
			No.	%	No.	%				
							No.	%		
									No	%
171	92	54	153	89.47	2	1.17	0	0	16	9.36

S3 produced fewer words than the previous two students with 171 total words. Of 171 words, 92 represent words variety, and the lexical density is 54%. It is obvious that the student used 153 words from the first band of 1-1000 and they represent 89.4% of the total words. No words are listed in Academic word list. Only 16 (9.3%) are categorized as off-list words (out of 2000 words).

Table 4

Table 4 shows the analysis of the text by S4

No. of words in text	No. of different words (word range)	Lexical density (content words) %	K1 words(1- 1000)		K2 words (1001-2000)		AWL Words (academic)		Off-list words (out of 2000 words)	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
No	%									
325	121	51	286	88.00	6	1.85	6	1.85	27	8.31

S4 has written 325 words and word range consists of 121 words. Lexical density is 51%. 286 words are included in the first band of 1-1000. There are only six words in the second band of 1001-2000. Six words are in the academic list and there are 27 words in off-list which is out of 2000 words.

Table 5

The presentation of the analysis of the text produced by S5

No. of words in text	No. of different words (word range)	Lexical density (content words) %	K1 words(1-1000)		K2 words (1001-2000)		AWL Words (academic)		Off-list words (out of 2000 words)	
			No.	%	No.	%				
							No.	%		
			No	%						
280	144	52	239	85.00	9	3.21	10	3.57	22	7.86

S5 produced 280 words totally. Of these words, the student used 144 different words. 239 words are in the first band and the percentage of these words is 85%. There are only 9 words in K2 band. It is interesting in note that the student used 10 from AWL. It is also obvious here that 22 words are from OL band.

Table 6

The analysis of the text by S6

No. of words in text	No. of different words (word range)	Lexical density (content words) %	K1 words(1-1000)		K2 words (1001-2000)		AWL Words (academic)		Off-list words (out of 2000 words)	
			No.	%	No.	%				
							No.	%		
									No.	%
424	200	45	377	88.92	11	2.59	8	1.89	28	6.60

S6 is one of the students who produced more words among the students who were included in the present study. Nearly half of the words are in different words group, but the lexical density (45%) is lower than the students whose texts have been analyzed so far. 88.9% of the words are in the first band of 1-1000. And there are only 11 words from K2 band and 8 words in AWL and 28 words are from off-list words.

Table 7

Table 7 presents the text analysis of S7

No. of words in text	No. of different words (word range)	Lexical density (content words) %	K1 words(1-1000)		K2 words (1001-2000)		AWL Words (academic)		Off-list words (out of 2000 words)
			No.	%	No.	%	No. %		
							No.	%	

									No	%
203	106	51	171	84.24	7	3.45	4	1.97	21	10.34

S7's text is composed of 203 words and word range is 106, which is nearly 50%. There are 171 words in K1 band, which represents 84.2%. Only seven words are included in the second band (1001-2000). There are only four words in AWL. 21 words are from the off-list words.

Table 8

The analysis of the text by S8

No. of words in text	No. of different words (word range)	Lexical density (content words) %	K1 words(1-1000)		K2 words (1001-2000)		AWL Words (academic)		Off-list words (out of 2000 words)	
			No.	%	No.	%				
							No.	%		
									No	%
249	120	49	207	83.13	13	5.22	4	1.61	25	10.28

S8 produced total 249 words. Of these total words, 120 represent different words (word range) in the text and lexical density is 49%. There are 207 words which are included in K1 band. The percentage is 83.1 and there are 13 words in K2 band. It is seen that there are only four words from in AWL. 25 words come from off-list words.

Table 9

Table 9 displays the analysis of the text written by S9

No. of words	No. of different words	Lexical density (content	K1 words(1-1000)	K2 words (1001-2000)	AWL Words (academic)	Off-list words (out of 2000
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in text	(word range)	words) %	No.	%	No.	%			words)	
							No.	%		
									No	%
238	128	50	200	84.03	2	0.84	2	0.84	34	14.29

There are 238 words in the text of S9. 128 represent the word range of the text. Lexical density is 50%. There are 200 words in K1. Only two words are in K2. Two words are included in AWL. It is interesting to note here that 34 words are included in off-list words.

Table 10

Table 10 shows the text analysis in terms of vocabulary knowledge of S10.

No. of words in text	No. of different words (word range)	Lexical density (content words) %	K1 words(1- 1000)		K2 words (1001- 2000)		AWL Words (academic)		Off-list words (out of 2000 words)	
			No.	%	No.	%				
							No.	%	No	%
239	129	46	202	84.52	7	2.93	4	1.67	26	10.88

The last student in the study, S10, wrote 239 words. Nearly half of the words in the text are classified as different words (word range), but lexical density is 46%. There are 202 words in K1 while only seven words are included in K2. The student used only four words from the AWL. In this text are only 26 words from off-list words (out of 2000 words).

When lexical density of the texts created by the students is evaluated (ranging from 45% to 55%), it can be seen that the percentages were close to those given for the native speakers. Morris & Cobb suggest that “in the case of native speaker written production, function words account for somewhere between 48% (academic writing)

to roughly 50% (informal writing of the total numbers of the words used” (2004: 77). In another study Morris & Tremblay (2002) argues that the percentage of function words in texts written by language learners can be seen as a sign of the proficiency level.

It is seen in our study that nearly all texts produced by the students have the word percentages in K1 (1-1,000 band between 83%-89%. Moreover, the texts have fewer numbered words in the second band of 1001-2000 words. It is notable from the findings that they produced fewer words which can be included in AWL. The present study also shows that fourth-year Pre-service English teachers highly used words from K1 band of 1,000 most frequent words in their writing in the study. As Bardakçı (2016: 248) notes, “learners with higher vocabulary size show aslight tendency towards the post-1,000 frequency zones while learners with higher depth of vocabulary knowledge seem to be significantly more independent of the first 1.000 band.” It can be noted here that an ideal vocabulary profile should give K1 scores less than 85 % and the AWL scores of over 5% (Morris and Cobb, 2004).

In our Turkish context Şener’s (2003) study investigated the first and fourth-year student teachers’ use of academic vocabulary. The findings showed difference in favour of fourth year students but for less frequently used word and 5000 words there is no increase in favour of fourth-year students. In his study, Muncie (2002) studied the impact of process writing approach on vocabulary growth of students at a Japanese university. According to Muncie, “process writing can be useful means for helping students to stretch their vocabulary, although it is suggested that explicitly concentrating on vocabulary in pre-writing stage may encourage even greater vocabulary development” (2002: 226). Studies in ELT field show that a lack of vocabulary poses difficulties for writing in a foreign language. Thus, vocabulary proficiency can be the best indicator of overall composition quality (see, Muncie, 2002: 226).

In order to see lexical diversity between writing and speaking tasks by the same participants Yu (2009: 236) conducted a study and found that “the different writing topics also had significant effects on lexical diversity-especially the topics that learners are highly familiar with.” It was further suggested that the lexical diversity of the participants show similarities over their writing and speaking performances. On the other hand, In another study Baba (2009: 191) found that “different aspects of L2 lexical proficiency have a differential effect on EFL learners’ summary writing, and that two factors in particular structure of semantic network of words, and the ability to metalinguistically manipulate words) may constitute the construct of summary writing in L2.”

Conclusion

It is obvious in the present study that the students mostly used words included in the first 1000 words of general service vocabulary. The percentages vary between 83% and 89%. At this point it is acceptable that more or less every student showed similar results. However, when it comes to using words that are included in 1001-2000 groups, only a few used them in their writings. Academic vocabulary is another dimension which was evaluated in this study. It is observed that the percentages and numbers are lower when compared. It can be argued that the structure of the course and the exam question did not allow students to use more academic words. There are also some students who used academic words more frequently within the study group. One of the students, an Erasmus student who took this course and was included in the study, is seen to have used the academic and off-list vocabulary comparatively higher than the rest of the students. When the results of lexical density are considered, the students show similar results (45-55 %), but lexical variety varies from one student to another.

Another problem is to what extent student teachers use these words appropriately. As we have already noted, we need further students that involve all levels and grades from ELT departments. For that reason, it requires an integrated approach. Oral discourses of these students' teachers should also be studied in connection with written productions. After these results as a second stage of the present study, this focus group will be given an interview which consists of both open-ended and semi structured items. Through this interview it is aimed to explore student teachers' perceptions and practices they usually make in order to develop their vocabulary.

This study is not without limitations. It can be accepted that only ten students were included in the study and the results cannot be generalized. One thing can be suggested here that it is initial study which portrays student teachers' use of words in their writings. If an English language teacher education program cannot be supplemented or supported by an extensive reading activities and if students are not exposed to some awareness-raising activities in terms of vocabulary growth, it seems unrealistic to expect students to use more academic and off-list words in their writings.

In conclusion to become effective English teachers proficiency in writing skills cannot be neglected during their teacher training processes since it is necessary for each language teacher to possess required level of vocabulary knowledge for expressing their thoughts in their writings without having difficulties.

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Appendix 1

The excerpt of Student 1:

“American dream is about finding the happiness with its all aspects or discovering yourself and how to be pleased with your life.

In the novel, as for Gatsby American dream means wealth and luxurious life with Daisy. Because these are the things that can make him the happiest person in the world. Not only the money, but also Daisy have to be in his life. Otherwise his American dream will stay as just a dream. Gatsby thought that Money could give him anything including Daisy. Therefore he believes that he needs to be rich to make his American dream come true, by this way he can also have Daisy. However he is so obsessed with money and Daisy, he cannot see the reality that money cannot bring happiness or give him all his desires. On the contrary, it can deteriorate his life and people around him. Because moral values become less important and people become more careless about life. They have no expectations from their life. Of course, in a world like this, Gatsby’s American dream cannot be fulfilled as he expects. Finally his American dream becomes his end.”

The excerpt of Student 2:

“American dream represents the 1920’s America. During this period American’s life is the most joyful and bring than any other country’s and nations. Americans loved enjoying, giving big parties, and drinking in this period. With the being illegal of the alcohol, just contrary to the rules, the number of using alcohol and drugs increased rapidly. And contrary to the rules, they started to drink lots of alcohol and use alcohol in parties. They loved giving big parties and enjoying very much. So, it is called the ‘American dream’. But, On the other hand, contrary to the how it looked, American’s were decaying in terms of morality. As their parties becoming more enjoyable, their values of morality were destroying and decaying gradually. They were not, as the everybody see and want to be. They lost and forgot their values in their parties.

So, as to the Gatsby, he represents the American Dream in the way that giving big parties. He has a huge mension and he is very very rich man. He gives really big parties and he gives these parties almost everyday. There is very type of joy in Gatsby’s parties. There are lots of alcohol, lots of drug, dancers, games, etc. and etc. People enjoy so much in Gatsby’s parties and these are really big, good and enjoyable parties for the people. This represents the ”bright” side of the American dream.

On the other hand, actually Gatsby gives these parties because he wants to see his ex love, Daisy. He everyday gives huge and enjoyable parties hoping that one day Daisy will come and he will be able to see Daisy. Actually he is very sad about Daisy. So I think this represents the dark side of the American Dream. It means that the brilliant American dream is not as it looks.”

The excerpt of Student 3:

“The Great Gatsby is one of the greatest novels of all times, because the story represent today’s problems, ideas, characters. All of the happenings in the story can be lived in our day. Gatsby’s love, Daisy’s husband’s betray, Daisy’s behaviors, and so on... These all things are familiar. So the story can be read all times. In every times, people can enjoy with reading the novel.

And also, the novel has a good organization. Events, characters, places are well organized. The most important thing is the novel has secret things. It has many meanings indeed. For example, nobody shouldn’t give himself/herself to somebody like Gatsby. Because Gatsby lived bad things because of the fact that he loves Daisy very much. For example, Daisy became between her husband and Gatsby.

On the other hand, the story shows many different people who has different characteristics qualifications. So the story can be good for many people to read. These things are enough to being one of the greatest novel according to me”

The excerpt of Student 4:

“One of the important theme in the novel is difference between West and East Egg.

In west party of the city Gatsby lives. In this part, there are newly rich people. Gatsby is one of them. People who are living here, are famous for their lavish parties. They drink alcohol and do whatever they want. And in East Egg, Tom and Daisy live. They are very rich and have aristocratic families. They are not newly rich. Their lifestyle is also different from the people who are in West egg. They don’t like levish parties and humiliate others. And in my opinion, in West Egg people are more sincere than the people in East Egg. Gatsby and Daisy’s relation shows this clearly.

Another important theme is “American dream”. People think that America will make their life better. Because it fascinates people with its good looking. People are rich, happy and do whatever they want. So this affect people and come there with lots of hopes to achieve. But the real life is different. It is true that people are rich, they

get money from bootlegging and some criminal activities. It is true that they are happy but this happiness is due to the alcohol. So this American dream is not provide everything to everybody.

And the last theme is poverty and richness in the novel. In West and East Egg and New York city people live in better conditions. They are rich and they get whatever they want. But in the Valley of Ashes, between New York City and East and West Egg, people are very poor. They are not happy and they want to escape from this part. But they can't escape. This shows me that people in New York city or East-West Egg achieve their "American Dream" but in the Valley of Ashes, there is no "American Dream." The novel shows the sharp line between the poor and rich people effectively."

The excerpt of Student 5:

"The American Dream is an idea and also an ideal signing and influencing the amarican way of life since it is known as a country settled by people from all over the world but mainly Europe. It mainly says, that everyone in society can reach his goals and be successful by trying hard enough. By proclaiming this idea the American Dream promises the equality of everyone without mattering his social background. Another main topic of the AD is the pursuit of happiness which is also related to the main one.

People should try and do everything to reach happiness for their life. Behind the AD there is the idea of America as a unique nation, a big patriotism made up by people from all over the world (Melting Pot) seeking for success and happiness in this country and hand in hand. Well, how is the AD represented by Gatsby? At least, the whole book deals with Gatsby's unrestrated pursuit of being a successful member in the American upper class, reflected by his love for Daisy. Grown up in a powerished family, he begins very early to make the goal of wealth and success his life's duty and creates a new image of himself. Well, he gets successful even with criminal businesses and falls in love with Daisy, a rich girl from the upper class. He wants to be worth for her, so at least all he's doing, he is doing for her. Even she rejects him, Gatsby owns an undestroyable hope and belief in his dreams of being with her comparable to the AD's ideal. This strong belief lasts until his death, also Daisy decides for her husband Tom."

The excerpt of Student 6:

"In the novel, Gatsby is depicted as a man who can do anything else to reach his goals. He had a lover once upon a time because of some unexpected conditions

occurred and they had to separate their ways. Gatsby went to war and he lost his love when he is gone. This incident made him to put much more effort to get what his back. After the war he needed to have a place in the community. Because he came from a low social background. In 1920's America also was open to every man who was trying to catch opportunities to get rich and live the American Dream. Gatsby was one of them. He met a man who was rich and had a yacht. One day they set sail to the ocean in a stormy night. The man was about to die and Gatsby saved his life. The man left some of his inheritance to Gatsby. Anyhow Gatsby couldn't get the money because of the man's ex-wife. After that he tried to get involved in illegal business such as bootlegging and drug dealing around the country. In 1920's it was so popular doing such kinda illegal businesses. He made a great deal of money from it. He became rich. He was getting closer to his lover Daisy. After all these years he never lost his faith to find her. As we see in the novel he dared to do whatever it takes to get her back. The mansion was just opposite of the place where Daisy lives. He wanted to be closer to her. Every night he was walking on the shore, because there was a green light at Daisy's marina, it was representing Gatsby's hope for future with Daisy, he was trying to catch the light .Because he always believed her to come back him, after all these years. But he couldn't figure out how money and wealth can make people someone different than they used to be. Gatsby couldn't see the truth. He fooled himself and he caused his death at the end of the story. His efforts to be someone and to get what he wants is a great part of his character. I'm really impressed with that but his eagerness made him blind and it was inevitable for him to have a tragic end. I felt sorry about the end because he didn't deserve it at all. He was strong to take care of everything but you know, human beings never feel satisfied"

The excerpt of Student 7

"Gatsby is a man who managed his own American dream. He is dec. and ambitious at the very beginning, escapes from the home and goes for his ideal world. Priorities in this ideal world make his story a subject for a novel. Firstly, he wants to be rich man, for all costs. A good family is secondary and this family is not his own. They aren't good enough for this dream so he creates a new one, a never existed family. Being a war hero, and being a educated man are important in his dream so he acquires a honour medal and a certificate from Oxford somehow. His deep love for Daisy first looks like passion but in ongoing times it appears that Daisy is also a part of his ideal world. Not in the center but a part in which Gatsby failed, Gatsby's interest or passion to Daisy is an attempt to accomplish that failure rather than a deep love. On the other hand, daisy is not a woman for a deep love and from this point of view, she shares the same feeling like Gatsby. As a result, both Daisy and Gatsby represent the American Dream from a different angle."

The excerpt of Student 8:

“Gatsby is so ambitious person thanks to his ambitions he gain lots of things but again due to his ambitions, he lost his life. At first, he was a real lover. He loved Daisy very much but Daisy got married with Tom, but Gatsby didn’t give up. He tried very hard to become rich and meet with Daisy. He started to work on ship at the beginning and became a millionaire thanks to Don Cody. Because he learnt many things from her. He became millionaire but not in right way. I think this is his weakness Gatsby’s loving Daisy was both strength and weakness of him. I can say he was very planned person. We learned it when Nick found his plans after his death. Also this feature is the result of his ambition again. He tried to achieve his dream so he did many things. His dream was also Daisy. And due to Daisy, he was killed. I think his weakness is Daisy again. To achieve Daisy, he became alone. He had no friends except Nick. He did everything for Daisy such as big parties. If a man gives huge parties, I think this man should be sociable but he wasn’t. People in the parties even didn’t know who is Gatsby. To sum up, he was Great Gatsby because he followed his dreams. But the exaggeration of it was very harmful. His strengths were his ambition and love. But his weakness was his exaggerated love.”

The excerpt of Student 9:

“Gatsby is a protagonist of the story. His real name is James Gatz. He was born North Dakota, he wants to be rich especially after meeting Don Cody who is a rich man. Gatsby is fascinated by richness of Cody and his life style. Gatsby falls in love with Daisy while he is in army. Gatsby is an officer and very handsome boy but he is not from an aristocratic family. Daisy is from an aristocratic family so she does not wait Gatsby and decides to marry to Tom who is rich and he is from an aristocratic family. Strengths: Gatsby is a stubborn man who dedicated his life to going Daisy again. He doesn’t lose his hopes. He thinks that they will begin a good life in the future. He makes the best to regain her. He knows that if he became rich there will no problem. He becomes a rich person. Every Saturday night he arranges fascinating parties his home maybe one day Daisy can come. He bought a home across Daisy’s home. He looks at Daisy’s home every night and sees a green light which associates him that Daisy and himself will be happy in the future as the old days. He becomes rich because he takes place in illegal activities like bootlegging. The reason of his being rich shows that how he loves Daisy so much and he does everything to gain her.”

The excerpt of Student 10:

“Jay Gatsby is self-made man, since his childhood, he’s dreamed up to have luxurious life style. He wanted to be rich one day. When we look at his character in terms of Nick Caraway’s viewpoint, he can say that he is friendly and trustable guy. Additionally he is sincere, because he opens the door of his heart to Nick Caraway. His biggest obsession and weakness is Daisy. To get her heart, Gatsby is ready to do everything we can also say that, getting his wealth with the way of bootlegging is his weakness. Because this is illegal thing. If he had welfare, he would have gained his money by working hard. But he chose the easy way and did wrong things. When we look at the things which make him great for Nick Carraway, he was a nice and friendly guy, making him great. For Daisy, he had everything a woman may want to, so Gatsby was great. For the writer this greatness tells us that there is an irony here. Because Gatsby didn’t get his money legally and honestly, so this greatness was fake. He hadn’t been a part of American Dream. I think to be great is based on doing well everthing in each step of the life. But he said lies and cheated people who trust him. He even lost the love of Daisy, so the greatness of him is not true.”