

THE EFFECT OF BLOG PEER FEEDBACK ON TURKISH EFL STUDENTS'
WRITING PERFORMANCE AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS

HATİME ÇİFTÇİ

YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY

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The thesis of Hatime Çiftçi

is approved by:

Assist. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Banu Koçođlu

(Advisor)



Prof. Dr. Ayşe S. Akyel



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Greta J. Gorsuch



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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated; (a) the effect of blog peer feedback on Turkish EFL students' writing performance, (b) the type and nature of blog peer feedback sessions, and (c) the perceptions of Turkish EFL students on the use of blogs in their writing classes.

Data were collected before, during, and after Spring 2008 term by using; a) Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey (adapted from Jones, 2006), b) interviews at the beginning and end of the term, c) first and second (or revised) drafts produced by the students, d) transcripts of peer feedback sessions, (e) End-of-semester Questionnaire (adapted from Jones, 2006). 30 first year Turkish EFL students in the Foreign Language Department at Yeditepe University participated in the study throughout the semester. The control group (15 students) attended in-class process approach integrated writing classes and utilized face-to-face oral discussions for peer feedback. The experimental group (15 students) attended classes in the computer laboratory and integrated blog peer feedback into their process oriented writing classes.

The results of mixed factorial analysis of variances (ANOVA) revealed the effect of blog peer feedback on Turkish EFL students' writing performance. The students both in the control and experimental group improved their writing in their second drafts. However, those in the experimental group showed higher performance in second (or revised) drafts. In task comparison, it was revealed that the students' writing performance in both groups was the same throughout four tasks. Additionally, the students both in the control and experimental group showed a significant improvement on the major aspects of writing such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use,

and mechanics. Moreover, no significant effect was found on the quantity of their writing as a result of word count analysis. Additionally, the analysis of peer feedback sessions indicated that the students in two groups benefitted from their peers' comments, and blog peer feedback comments were mostly about global issues while face-to-face peer comments mostly focused on local issues. Finally, the analysis of interviews and end-of-semester questionnaire indicated positive perceptions of Turkish EFL students on the use of blogs in their writing classes. They considered blogs as an effective tool for improving their writing skills.

The present study, which is one of the very few studies on instructional technologies in Turkey, has noteworthy contributions to the field. This study also provides educational researchers and EFL writing teachers with implications for the teaching of EFL writing and recommendations for further research.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma; (a) Blog kullanarak verdikleri akran geribildiriminin İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin yazma başarımındaki etkisini; ve (b) akran geribildirim oturumlarının çeşit ve niteliği, (c) İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin yazma dersinde Blog kullanmalarıyla ilgili anlayışlarını araştırdı.

Veriler; (a) İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk Öğrencilerin Yeterlik Ölçeği (Jones, 2006'dan uyarlanan), (b) dönem başında ve sonunda yapılan mülakatlar, (c) öğrencilerin yazdıkları ilk ve düzeltilmiş yazılar, ve (d) akran geribildirim oturumlarının suretleri, (e) Dönem Sonu Anketi (Jones, 2006'dan uyarlanan) kullanılarak, 2008 Bahar donemi başında, boyunca, ve sonunda olmak üzere toplandı. Bu çalışmaya, Yeditepe Üniversitesi'ndeki Yabancı Dil Bölümü'nde İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen 30 Türk öğrenci dönem boyunca katıldı. Kontrol grubu (15 öğrenci) sınıf içi süreç temelli yazma derslerine devam etti ve yüz yüze sözlü olarak verilen akran geribildirimlerinden faydalandı. Deney grubu (15 öğrenci) süreç temelli yazma derslerine bilgisayar laboratuvarında devam etti ve Blog kullanarak akran geribildiriminden faydalandı.

Karma faktöryel değişiklikler analizinin sonuçları, Blog kullanılarak verilen akran geribildiriminin İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerinin yazma başarımı üzerindeki etkisini gösterdi. Hem kontrol hem de deney grubundaki öğrenciler ikinci taslaklarda yazma becerilerini geliştirdi. Ancak, deney grubundakiler, ikinci taslaklarda kontrol grubundan daha iyi başarımlar gösterdiler. Ödevlerin kıyaslanması, iki gruptaki öğrencilerin de, dört ödevde de yazma başarımlarının aynı olduğunu ortaya çıkardı. İlâveten, öğrenciler içerik, organizasyon, kelime, dil kullanımı ve mekanik

beceriler gibi temel yazma unsurlarında gelişme gösterdi. Ayrıca, kelime sayma analizinin sonucunda yazım niceliğinde bir etki bulunmadı. Akran geribildirim oturumlarının analizi, iki gruptaki öğrencilerin de akran yorumlarından faydalandığını ve kontrol grubundaki akran yorumlarının çoğunlukla lokal konularla ilgili olmasına rağmen, blog akran yorumlarının çoğunlukla global konularda olduğunu ortaya koydu. Son olarak, mülakat ve dönem sonu anketinin analizi, İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerinin yazma derslerinde Blog kullanımlarıyla ilgili olumlu tutumlarını gösterdi. Öğrenciler, Blog sayfalarını yazma becerilerini geliştirmede etkili bir araç olarak gördüler.

Türkiye'de yapılan eğitici teknolojiler üzerindeki çok az sayıda çalışmalardan biri olan bu çalışma, alana kayda değer katkılarda bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, eğitimci araştırmacıları ve İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğreten yazma dersi öğretmenleri için çıkarımlar ve daha sonraki çalışmalar için öneriler içermektedir.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CMC	Computer-mediated Communication
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The advent of technology and Internet has made teachers and educational researchers find ways of using computer in language teaching. The application of computers in the field of language learning study has led to the emergence of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). Levy (1997) defines CALL as “the search for and study of applications on the computer in language teaching and learning” (p.1). Another definition provided by Egbert (2005) views CALL as “learners learning language in any context with, through, and around computer technologies” (p.4). Therefore, it is clear that what has made CALL possible is the invention and subsequent development of the technology (Levy, 1997).

Many researchers (Levy, 1997; Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Fotos & Browne, 2004; Meskill, 2005) review the role of CALL in second language (L2) learning in light of the historical context and changing paradigms on the use of computers. Kern & Warschauer (2000) present a clear parallelism between shifts in perspectives on language learning/teaching and developments in technology. The similarity between perspectives on language learning/teaching and the development of computer technology provides a sound theoretical rationale in the application of technology in language classes.

With the introduction of network-based technologies in education, such as Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), we have been experiencing the increasing focus on the social and collaborative view of learning. The relevance of Second

Language Acquisition (SLA) theories to CMC applications also makes this new medium of interaction a new aspect to be explored (Ortega, 1997).

Computer-mediated Communication provides students with a networked environment through which they communicate with each other in or outside the classroom. Therefore, CMC can be synchronous (real-time, or at the same time) or asynchronous (delayed communication, or at different times) mode through different tools (Warschauer, 1997, 1999; Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Murray, 2000).

Among the earliest applications of CMC for educational purposes are L1 composition teachers' use of computer conferencing among the students in a class to facilitate collaborative writing and the social production of knowledge. Similarly, the same technique has been used by English as a second language and English as a foreign language (ESL and EFL) teachers for the teaching of writing. CMC in ESL/EFL writing classes is favorable especially because of having equalizer effect in terms of students' participation (Warschauer, 1996a) and enhancing student motivation (Warschauer, 1996) as a less threatening means to communicate. In addition, ESL/EFL writing teachers consider CMC as giving more opportunities for writing practice, encouraging collaborative writing, and facilitating peer feedback.

Emphasizing the importance of writing process, Raimes (1991) expresses that there is a widespread acceptance of the notion that language teachers need to know about how writers produce a written product. This notion of process accounts for a communicative, task-based, and collaborative instruction and curriculum development. Greenia (1992) also asserts that EFL writing instruction assists the acquisition of a foreign language, and supports development of critical thinking skills. He believes that

the development of separate EFL writing courses must be seen as valuable in their own right, not as a service courses for grammar, literature, or culture classes in another form. Finally, the adoption of class activities and assignments including peer feedback is of great importance in EFL writing instruction and curriculum.

An effective integration of peer feedback into ESL/EFL writing course serves two important purposes. First of all, learners have a chance to improve by reading other's work, recognizing the problems and making further discussions with peers for the appropriate expression of weak points. Thus, learners are stimulated to find the solutions to their problems they have in ESL/EFL writing instead of depending on their teachers all the time. Moreover, the burden of reviewing compositions for each assignment on teachers can be released through the opportunity for autonomous learning (Fu-lan, 2006).

The studies in relation to computer-mediated feedback focus on different aspects of the issue and use different modes of CMC, either synchronous or asynchronous tools in comparison to face-to-face peer feedback. While Hewett (2000) gains insights into the use of peer ideas in CMC-generated peer feedback, other researchers (DiGiovanni & Nagasawami, 2001; Tuzi, 2004) investigate students' attitudes toward modes of peer feedback in their studies. However, an ample analysis of the effect of CMC-integrated peer feedback on students' improvement in writing skills is still needed. Although knowing the types and numbers of peer feedback, or whether they are revision-oriented or not, provides an opportunity to see the effectiveness of computer-mediated feedback, there is a growing need for observing if they influence students' writing abilities and performance after utilizing CMC over a period of time.

For this purpose, this study integrates a CMC tool into a Turkish EFL writing class and makes use of data on students' writing abilities after completing several tasks in relation to writing process approach.

Recent applications of integrating CMC into ESL/EFL writing classes reveal that one of the most favorable tools is Weblogs, or blogs (Barrios, 2003; Godwin-Jones, 2003). Even though researchers advocate the use of blogs in ESL/EFL writing classes because of the features such as commenting, editing, deleting, publishing, which are highly consistent with the writing process, there are few empirical studies that investigate its effect on students' writing improvement. One important study with respect to the use of blogs in ESL/EFL writing classes has been conducted by Jones (2006). In her doctoral studies, Jones (2006) has designed an action research to investigate how blogs improve her students' writing skills and what their perceptions are.

In Turkey, however, technology-enhanced studies are much more limited when compared with those all over the world because of the fact that many schools in the country do not have the related facilities. Especially the higher education institutions have a leading function since most of these institutions in Turkey have World Wide Web connections and computer laboratories. As for CMC in foreign language education, Özdener and Satar (2008) show that learners sharing the same native language use the language more in computer-mediated communication than they do in classroom situations. Investigating the views of pre-service teachers on blog use for instruction and social interaction, Kuzu (2007) considers blogs as one of the opportunities to train teachers. However, these studies do not provide information about

the instructional use of CMC or blogs. To the knowledge of the researcher, the only empirical study in Turkey has been conducted by Kızı1 (2007) on the effect of blog integrated process approach on Turkish EFL students' writing performance and their perceptions.

The present study aims to provide further explorations in the integration of blogs into EFL writing classes by focusing on the process students go through to complete the writing tasks. The main purpose is to investigate if the use of blog peer feedback improves students' writing skills. As a crucial part of a sound evaluation of the process, the study examines several drafts completed before and after peer feedback sessions, revising and editing. The use of analytic scoring also takes into consideration the aspects of writing skills such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Finally, this study provides insights into students' perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes.

1.1. The Purpose of the Study

This study, therefore, aims at investigating the effective use of technology in a language class in a Turkish university. Providing many opportunities for authentic language interaction, asynchronous CMC is used in this study and blogs are integrated into a Turkish EFL writing class at an undergraduate level. The research aims: 1) to investigate if blog peer feedback influences Turkish EFL writers' performance, and 2) to investigate Turkish EFL learners' perceptions of using blogs.

1.2. Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What is the effect of blog peer feedback on Turkish EFL students' writing performance?
 - a) Is there a significant improvement on the blog group's second drafts after receiving blog peer feedback in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
 - b) Is there a significant difference between the blog group's performance on the first and final task in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
 - c) Is there a significant improvement on the aspects of writing in the blog group's second drafts in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
 - d) Is there an effect of blog peer feedback on the quantity of the blog group's writing in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
2. What is the distribution of blog peer feedback comments in the area (global versus local) and in the nature (revision-oriented versus non revision-oriented) in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
3. What are the Turkish EFL writers' perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes?

1.3. Significance of the Study

The researchers emphasize the value of evolving technologies and the necessity of integrating computer-based learning into language classrooms (Underwood, 1984; Kern, 1995; Warschauer, 1996a; Warschauer, 1999; Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Braine, 2004; Fotos & Browne, 2004). Therefore, this study will investigate the effect of using an asynchronous CMC tool in a Turkish EFL writing class in terms of the learners'

writing performance. Finally, the present study will give an idea about the learners' reactions to using blogs in a Turkish EFL writing class.

Since designing technology-enhanced language classes is a new approach to the field of language education and many aspects of using technology in language classes still need to be investigated, this study is of great importance in terms of contributions to the teaching of EFL writing in Turkey. Usun (2003) states that although there is a great tendency toward Web-based instruction programs in higher education in Turkey, such as distance education, online certificate and degree programs, it is still in the infancy period, and sufficient data regarding the effectiveness and appeal of these courses is not available. The scarcity of related studies in Turkey is also a significant reason that makes this study valuable in the field.

1.4. Definitions of Terms

English as a second language (ESL) refers to a situation in which nonnative speakers resident in an English-speaking country use English outside their immediate family or ethnic community. The example for this situation is the nonnative speakers of English who reside in the United States or Great Britain (McKay, 1992).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to a situation in which students need to learn English in countries where it is not regularly spoken or written as a language of community. In other words, although English is an important educational language, it is not recognized officially. The examples are the learners in China, France, Japan (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

Peer feedback is an early key component of teaching writing as a process and embraces the idea of making students read and/or listen to each other's papers to

provide input for or to react to the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. It helps each other gain a sense of audience by indicating where the readers' needs or expectations have or have not been addressed (Kroll, 2001).

Writing performance means the successful completion of a given writing task which requires the effective use of writing skills and strategies. In order to have a strong sense of writing performance, students are involved in actual writing because the written product represents their performance of writing (Weigle, 2002).

Quasi-experimental research is constructed from situations which already exist in the real world. In this type of research design, subjects cannot be assigned to special groups for the purposes of research (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989).

1.5. Basic Assumptions

It is assumed that all the participants in this study answered the questions in the survey and questionnaires, and participated in the activities and tasks sincerely. In addition, it is assumed that the participants are capable of completing writing activities and tasks because they have already taken writing composition classes preceding the study.

1.6. Organization of the Study

This thesis has five chapters. The first chapter provides background information for the research and focuses on the role of CMC in second/foreign language classes. Chapter II presents the theory behind CMC, its effect on language classes, background information about writing process, and the studies in EFL/ESL writing classes making use of CMC tools and blogs. The next two chapters, Chapter III and IV, deal with Methodology and Results presenting the research approach, the setting, participants,

instruments, writing tasks, procedures, data collection tools and data analysis methods, and the findings in light of research questions. Finally, the last chapter presents the conclusion of the research referring back to literature review, implications for Turkish EFL teachers, recommendations for future research, and the limitations of the study.

1.7. Overview of Methodology

This study is a quasi-experimental research that benefits from mixed-methods design: qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments. 30 Turkish freshmen EFL students in the Foreign Language Department at Yeditepe University have participated in the study. The data comes from five instruments: (a) Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey (adapted from Jones, 2006, see Appendix A) to get demographic information about the participants, their level of technology and writing ability, and English proficiency; (b) pre- and post-interviews to explore students' experiences in writing in English and using technology in EFL writing (see Appendix B for interview questions); (c) writing performance tasks (first and second drafts produced by the students) to assess the effect of blog peer feedback (see Appendix C for sample essays); (d) transcripts of face-to-face peer feedback sessions and comments on the students' blogs; (e) End-of-semester Questionnaire (adapted from Jones, 2006, see Appendix D) to investigate students' perceptions of using blog websites in their writing classes.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The very first phase of CALL, which is termed behaviorist CALL, dominates the 1960s and 1970s and replicates a behaviorist model of language learning (Kern & Warschauer, 2000). Originating from the work in psychology that views the learning of behavior as being based on the notions of stimulus and response, the behaviorist view (Skinner, 1957) considers language learning as the formation of habits. According to this view, human beings are exposed to numerous stimuli in their environment and the response they give to those stimuli is reinforced if successful or if the desired outcome is obtained. A certain stimuli elicit the same response through repeated reinforcement over time, thus become a habit (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The main implication of this approach for language teaching is that learning occurs by imitating and repeating the same structures in time, which is the Audiolingual Method. Drawing on the theory of behaviorism, Audiolingualism is a linguistic, or structure-based, approach to language teaching, and consists of drill and pattern practice (Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Thus, CALL programs in structure-based frameworks provide unlimited drill, practice, tutorial explanation, and corrective feedback, in which computers completely follow the computer-as-tutor model (Kern & Warschauer, 2000). The behaviorist phase of CALL consists of primarily drill-and-practice programs that still exist for repeated exposure to vocabulary and grammar practice (Fotos & Browne, 2004). The drill and practice mode of delivery is entirely matched to the teaching of linguistic patterns advocated by the structural linguists and proponents of the audiolingual method of second language teaching (Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003).

In the next generation of CALL programs that are in harmony with cognitive view of learning, learners are provided with opportunities for problem solving, hypothesis testing, and making use of their existing knowledge to develop new understanding (Kern & Warschauer, 2000). Psychologists and educators have started to realize the importance of the individual in the learning process, thus CALL courseware has been adapted to a more humanistic design based on intrinsic motivation and interactivity. The emphasis on meeting the cognitive and academic needs of second/foreign language learners has made task-based and content-based teaching widely accepted pedagogical practices in second language teaching. Similarly, technology and second language acquisition theory and pedagogy have evolved in parallel directions with the advent of Internet resources, CD-ROM databases, simulation and authoring software, which supports task- and content-based instruction. The computer has become a powerful communication tool to support communication of both text and graphics, video, and sound, and to attach learners increasingly richer learning resources available via the World Wide Web. Language teachers and linguists have focused on the function of language and its communicative nature (Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003). Emphasizing the communicative use of the language rather than isolated forms, this period is called communicative CALL that provides programs for language games, reading and writing practice, text construction, cloze tests and puzzles (Fotos & Browne, 2004). The emergence of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the writing process approaches have led to the development of communicative uses of technology such as word processors, on-line databases, and computer-mediated communication, providing English language learners with a

collaborative learning environment, authentic audiences, and real-world tasks (Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003). Underwood (1984) discusses the premises and examples of communicative CALL, recalling the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to show how computers can be used in language teaching.

Sociocognitive approach to CALL has provided alternative contexts for social interaction and facilitated access to existing discourse communities and the creation of new ones. The development of computer networking has made the computer a tool for interactive human communication, focusing on meaningful interaction in authentic discourse communities (Kern & Warschauer, 2000).

In this chapter, issues related to computer-mediated communication and second/foreign language learning, approaches to second/foreign language writing, and computer-mediated communication and ESL/EFL writing classes will be discussed.

2.1. CMC and Second/Foreign Language Learning

CMC has become a widely used medium of communication to understand what language learners encounter inside and outside the classroom as a result of the fact that computer and related technologies are evolving so rapidly. Being used for many purposes, such as teacher-student exchange, long-distance email partnerships, and synchronous classroom discussion, CMC seems to be beneficial for students in several ways (Warschauer, 1999). However, there is still a need for descriptive and empirical research on CMC and language learning. Although CMC is a salient mode of communication, we need to understand and examine carefully its structure, use, and effects on various aspects and processes of ESL/EFL learning.

2.1.1. Definition and Description

Herring (1996) defines CMC as “communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers” (p.1). Including text-based modes of communication, CMC allows users to interact by means of the written word, such as messages read by others on their computer screens, either immediately (synchronous CMC) or at a later point in time (asynchronous CMC). While simultaneous or synchronous CMC, such as Internet Relay Chat (IRC) or multiuser dungeons or dimensions (MUDS) object oriented (MOOs), require real-time communication, asynchronous modes, such as email exchanges and discussion boards, do not require users to be on-line at the same time (Herring, 1996; Warschauer, 1997, 1999; Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Murray, 2000; Chapelle, 2001).

2.1.2. Theoretical Framework behind CMC

It is self-evident that the computer now, with its Internet and hypermedia capabilities, is powerful addition to second language teachers’ resources, utilizing a multisensory collection of text, sound, pictures, video, animation, and hypermedia. Technology provides not only comprehensible input that serves as a scaffold to support students as they study academically challenging subject matters but also meaningful contexts to facilitate comprehension. As a result, the use of computer-based multimedia leads to enhanced learning in relation to acquisition of content, development of skills, efficiency of learning, and satisfaction with instruction (Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003).

In order to understand the effectiveness of CMC, the next part attempts to show the theoretical framework that this new mode of communication highly draws upon.

2.1.2.1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The main purpose of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is to help students improve communicative competence in the target language. The structural and communicative aspects of language are emphasized and the use of language for purposeful communication is appreciated. The term communicative competence is used to differentiate between a language learner's mastery of isolated grammar rules and the more complex ability to negotiate meaning and interact with other students. It refers to both knowledge and skill in using this knowledge while learners are interacting in actual communication (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Savignon, 1991; Brown, 1994).

The theoretical framework for communicative competence proposes four areas of knowledge and skill: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is concerned with mastery of the language code (verbal-nonverbal), which incorporates features and rules of language like vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling and linguistic semantics. It emphasizes the knowledge and skill necessary to grasp and express correctly the literal meaning of utterances. Sociolinguistic competence refers to both sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse and addresses the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in divergent sociolinguistic contexts in relation to such factors as status of participants, purposes of interaction. Discourse competence is related to mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres. By genre, the type of text is meant such as oral and written narrative, an

argumentative essay, a scientific report, and unity of a text is accomplished through cohesion in form and coherence in meaning. Cohesion refers to the structural connection of utterances, and facilitates interpretation of a text through the use of cohesive devices like pronouns, synonyms, and parallel structures. Coherence means the relationships among the different meanings in a text, where these meanings can be literal meanings, communicative functions, and attitudes. Strategic competence consists of mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication and to enhance the effectiveness of communication (Canale&Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Brown, 1994).

Technology applications are well-matched to support communicative competence. Since computers are now communicative tools and knowledge environments, providing electronic collaborations via asynchronous and synchronous tools, they provide powerful contexts for communicative language. Learners are able to gain cultural literacy, and can interpret and create functional conversations and presentations as well as evaluating their communication in terms of social appropriateness. Computer-enhanced language learning environments also enable learners to complete authentic tasks and interact with authentic audiences through multiple opportunities (Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003).

2.1.2.2. Interactionist Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories

Several studies have attempted to explore the role of and relation among input, interaction, and output. Krashen (1985) has proposed the Input Hypothesis, claiming that the availability of input which is comprehensible to the learner is the only necessary condition for language learning to take place. Considering the exposure to

comprehensible input both necessary and sufficient for second language learning to occur, the hypothesis states that:

Humans acquire language in only one way-by understanding messages, or by receiving 'comprehensible input'... We move from i , our current level, to $i+1$, the next level along the natural order, by understanding input containing $i+1$.
(p.2)

Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis has led the researchers to examine more closely the characteristics of the language input made available to second language learners. As an extension of Input Hypothesis, Long (1983a) has proposed his Interaction Hypothesis, which reveals that the native-nonnative speaker pairs are more likely to make use of conversational tactics than native-native speaker pairs such as repetitions, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, or clarification requests. Such collaborative efforts are very useful for language learning as learners struggle to maximize comprehension, and negotiate their meaning when they have communication problems.

Pica's (1994) study places a considerable attention on the role of interaction, and negotiation of meaning in particular. The term 'negotiation' is defined as "the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility" (p.494). Pica (1994) maintains that negotiation of meaning, which is a particular way of modifying interaction, can complete much part of second language acquisition (SLA) because it helps learners make input comprehensible and modify their own output, and provides opportunities for them to access L2 form and meaning.

SLA researchers have also argued the function of L2 learners' production. Swain (1995) puts forward the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, which states that

learners need opportunities to produce comprehensible output, such as speech or writing which makes demands on them for appropriate use of L2. That is, learners can achieve second language acquisition not only by comprehensible input but also by modifying and approximating their production toward successful use of the target language.

The type of interaction described by interactionist theory can occur during computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and the Interaction Hypothesis provides plenty of suggestions for CALL pedagogy (Chapelle, 2005). The principles of task-based language learning such as using tasks, not texts, as the unit of analysis, promoting learning by doing, elaborating input, providing rich input, respecting developmental processes, and promoting cooperative and collaborative learning, which are based on cognitive and interactionist SLA theory can be used to guide decision-making for task development in CALL (Doughty & Long, 2003).

The perspectives and observations about interaction and its value for SLA are evident throughout the current research on CMC. Pellettieri (2000) investigates Spanish learners' negotiation of form and meaning while they are completing text chat tasks and working on a variety of tasks intended to produce such negotiations. The instance of text chat conversations reveal that the text chat seems to promote learners' attention to their language in ways that the interactionist theory suggests is positive for SLA. Blake (2000) also reports that chat conversations between nonnative speakers of Spanish show that participation in the chat seems to facilitate negotiation of meaning, which has an effect on their output, as well. He suggests using CMC in language classrooms in the following way:

...tasks appear to constitute ideal conditions for SLA, with the CMC medium being no exception. In the process, L2 learners heighten their metalinguistic awareness of where they are in their own L2 vocabulary development and where they still need to go in order to gain more target-like lexical control. Doing tasks in a CMC environment, then, generates apperceived input, which can subsequently be used to modify and improve their vocabulary. (p.131)

The use of interactionist perspectives for the study of CALL has helped to place CALL research on more solid grounding related to other areas of applied linguistics, and offers a beginning point theorizing the potential benefits for interactivity through CALL. However, much work remains to better understand how, when, and why interactivity can and should be realized in CALL (Chapelle, 2005).

2.1.2.3. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory

While explaining the interaction between learning and development, Vygotsky (1978) highlights the essential role of social interaction. In his view, "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice; first on the social level, and later on the individual level; the first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological)" (p.57). Thus, social learning precedes development. Sociocultural theory helps us understand interaction in creating an environment to learn language and emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning in order to enable students to advance through their zone of proximal development, which is the distance between what they could achieve by themselves and what they could achieve when assisted by others (Vygotsky, 1978). Such a difference between independent performance and aided performance, which is the performance of children cooperating with more knowledgeable others, will reveal the results of future performance (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1993). Vygotsky (1978) also discusses the importance of cultural tools that

people use to mediate their social environments. The most important of these tools is language, the semiotic system that is the base of human intellect.

Several features of CMC, such as text-based and computer-mediated interaction, many-to-many communication, time-and place-in-dependence, long distance exchanges and hypermedia links, cause it to be a powerful medium of human interaction and support sociocultural learning theory by providing learners with the opportunities to construct knowledge collaboratively (Beauvois, 1997; Warschauer, 1997, 1999, 2005).

The fact that human interaction now takes place in a text-based form encourages both interaction and reflection. CMC is easily transmitted, stored, archived, reevaluated, edited, and rewritten, which gives the opportunity to the learners to focus their attention on interaction. Thus, with the interactional and reflective aspects of language merged in a single medium, the distinction between writing and speech has been overcome (Warschauer, 1997, 1999, 2005). This process is described as effectively bridging the gap between written and oral expression for linguistically limited student who cannot express ideas adequately in the target language. Since the process of communication is slower and allows students to reflect and compose a message (similar to an 'utterance'), electronic interaction encourages the use of target language (Beauvois, 1997).

Another feature of CMC is that it allows many-to-many communication. This is significant in two aspects; first, learners have the chance to construct knowledge together, linking reflection and interaction, and second, the social dynamics of CMC is different from those of face-to-face discussion, in terms of turn-taking, interruption, consensus, and decision making (Warschauer, 1997, 1999, 2005).

CMC's time- and place-independent features enable users to write and receive messages at any time. Therefore, especially asynchronous CMC allows for more critical reflection. The long distance feature of CMC also creates opportunities for cross-cultural communication by making long distance exchanges faster, easier, less expensive, and more natural with interaction between different groups of students. Finally, through hypermedia links, CMC users can create their own publications and multimedia productions via World Wide Web (Warschauer, 1997).

2.1.3. CMC Tools

The world of collaborative opportunities introduced by the Internet is of great importance both for language on a large number of students through the web. As for the learners, they have widely available opportunities for autonomous language learning and self-assessment instead of being tied to particular institutions. They can also communicate with learners in other parts of the world through CMC, which occurs both asynchronously and synchronously (Chapelle, 2001).

2.1.3.1. Synchronous Tools

Chat rooms or MOOs provide language learners with a form of interactive online communication that allows students to have real-time conversations with other people who are online at the same time. It is quite possible to chat on the Internet via Web sites, using chat rooms, via instant messaging, or Internet Relay Chat (IRC) channels. Although chat rooms or MOOs can be a place for real collaboration and more participation than in face-to-face conversations, there is a clear weakness when compared to asynchronous tools that the users have to be a good and fast typist, which

might be a problem in L2 classes (Hata, 2003). (see Appendix E for a list of CMC resources, Godwin-Jones, 2003).

2.1.3.2. Asynchronous Tools

Being one of the most familiar tools, e-mail works successfully for tandem learning and classroom exchanges. Fu-lan (2006) states that forming the habit of writing emails in English is critical in removing the discomfort and anxiety in L2 writing. Students should be encouraged to make online pen friends internationally and write them in English regularly. Thus, by making writing in English an indispensable part of their life, they will consider the process of thinking, organizing, reasoning, expressing while writing in English as a natural, integrated whole.

Discussion boards, however, have recently become the principle tool for written exchanges among class members because of their ease of use and convenience. Discussion board refers to an interactive message board on the Web where users can post and read announcements or messages on topics of interest. Discussion boards or forums facilitate group exchanges and provide automatically a log of messages in a threaded, hierarchical structure, which makes it easy to navigate and respond to another person's message (Godwin-Jones, 2003; Hata, 2003).

Another collaborative environment is WikiWikiWeb (wiki wiki is Hawaiian for "quick") or Wikis, which feature a loosely structured set of pages, linked in multiple ways to each other and to Internet sources. Because of an open editing system, anyone can edit any page, using a simple set of formatting commands. It is not necessary to have knowledge of HTML. The main goal of Wiki sites is to become a shared

repository of knowledge, with the knowledge base accumulating over time (Godwin-Jones, 2003).

Blogs or Weblogs, drawing the most attention in recent years, are actually online journals that could be used in collaborative ways. Writers generally connect to what others have written on a topic or to resources on the web by using hypertext. The comment button after blog entries allows readers to write a reaction into the original text and to see all other comments. Many blog services enable multiple authors to contribute to a blog. Although it is possible to create group blogs, they are usually personal or journalistic. They serve well as on-line personal journals for students because they can upload and link files. Publishing the blog on the Internet makes students write for readers beyond classmates, and encourages ownership and responsibility on the part of students. It extends the collaborative space outside the classroom, giving students a chance to work together across time and space. At the same time, the blog records the process of collaboration. Thus, teachers can also observe, comment, and intervene as needed while students are reflecting on the process. Such aspects of blogs may cause students to be more careful about content and structure because they know they are writing for a real audience (Barrios, 2003; Godwin-Jones, 2003).

2.1.4. Studies in EFL/ESL on CMC

Since it is a newly emerged technology, CMC has been explored for the last two decades. The studies on this new medium of communication usually focus on the nature of interaction, and analyze the quantity and characteristics of the discourse (Kern, 1995); student participation (Warschauer, 1996a); discourse functions and syntactic

complexity (Sotillo, 2000); factors affecting native-nonnative speaker chat interaction (Okuyama, 2005); syntactical and lexical development in nonnative-nonnative speaker e-mail exchanges (Stockwell, 2005); knowledge construction through discussion groups (Schellens&Valcke, 2006); and meaning negotiation through task-based CMC (Cheon, 2003).

Kern (1995), using Daedalus InterChange, which is a local area network application, compares the quantity and characteristics of the discourse produced during InterChange sessions and oral discussions. Forty students in two sections of French classes at the University of California at Berkeley have participated in the study. The results reveal that InterChange offers more frequent opportunities for student expression and leads to more language production. Moreover, students produce more sophisticated language in terms of morphosyntactic features and the variety of discourse functions in Daedalus InterChange when compared to oral discussions.

In another study conducted by Warschauer (1996a), 16 students out of 20 enrolled in an advanced ESL composition class at a community college in Hawaii have participated. The comparison of two modes shows a tendency toward more equal participation in computer mode as well as positive attitudes toward and more complex language in electronic discussion.

Sotillo (2000), however, makes a comparison within CMC studying on two modes, synchronous and asynchronous. Two groups of university-level students, 13 students in group A and 12 students in group B, from two intact ESL academic writing classes that use computers as a part of the instructional program have participated in the study. The results reveal that while the discourse functions such as requests, responds,

apologies, greetings in asynchronous discussions are more constrained than those in synchronous discussions, learners are able to produce more complex language in the asynchronous mode because of its time-independent nature when compared with the synchronous mode.

2.2. Second/Foreign Language Writing

Teaching writing has long been a significant component of language teaching. Research has identified writing skills in different ways and there have been divergent approaches to writing skills that focus on several aspects of the issue. Each approach, at least as it emerges in the literature, has a distinctive focus.

2.2.1. Focus on Form

The first is a traditional, text-based approach, which is still used in many materials, and highlights the rhetorical and linguistic form of the text itself (Raimes, 1991). In this view, L2 writing considers writing as a product and encourages a focus on formal text units or grammatical features of texts. Learning to write in a foreign or second language requires linguistic knowledge and the vocabulary choices, syntactic patterns, and cohesive devices that comprise the essential building blocks of texts. Teachers who adopt this view regard writing as an extension of grammar, which is a means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation and testing learners' ability to produce well-formed sentences (Hyland, 2003). Teachers who focus on form usually present authoritative texts for students to imitate or adapt and so are the textbooks which give a good range of models. In such a context, one of the teacher's main roles is to provide correctness and conformity (Tribble, 1996).

2.2.2. Focus on Content

This approach to ESL/EFL writing teaching refers to substantive content; what students are required to write about (Raimes, 1991; Hyland, 2003). Such a conceptualization of writing involves a set of themes or topics of interest, establishing a coherence and purpose for the course and setting out the sequence of key areas of subject matter that students will address (Mohan, 1986). By having some personal knowledge of these themes, students will be able to write meaningfully about them. This is actually a popular way of organizing L2 writing courses and textbooks, and many teachers use such materials. In a content-based L2 writing instruction, teachers help learners acquire the appropriate cognitive schema or knowledge of topics and vocabulary they will need to create effective texts. Reading for main ideas in parallel texts, reacting to photographs, and various brainstorming tasks to generate ideas for writing and organizing texts are some schema development exercises (Hyland, 2003).

2.2.3. Focus on the Reader: The Genre Approach

This view of EFL/ESL writing is more socially oriented and focuses on the ways in which writers and texts need to interact with readers (Raimes, 1991; Tribble, 1996). Writing is seen as attempts to communicate with readers. The central belief is that “we don’t just write, we write something to achieve some purpose: it is a way of getting something done” (Hyland, 2003, p.18). In order to achieve our purpose such as to tell a story, request an overdraft, craft a love letter, describe a process, etc., we follow certain social conventions for organizing messages so that our readers recognize our purpose. The writer is seen as having certain goals and intentions, certain relationships to his or her readers, and certain information to convey, and the forms of a

text are resources to accomplish these. These socially recognized ways of using language for specific purposes are called genres. Teachers following a genre orientation in their writing classes can help their students to distinguish between different genres and to write them more effectively by a careful study of their structures (Hyland, 2003).

2.2.4. Focus on the Writer: Writing Process Approach

The original planning (generating ideas, organizing, and goal setting) –writing (putting ideas into visible language) –reviewing (evaluating and revising) framework by Flower and Hayes (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Flower, 1989) is probably the most widely accepted model of writing processes by L2 teachers. The process approach to teaching of writing emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of texts. It involves planning, drafting, revising and editing, and is recursive, interactive, and potentially simultaneous. All work can be reviewed, evaluated and revised before the text is produced (Hyland, 2003). In writing as a process approach, many new practices have replaced the previous ones such as writing as a goal oriented and contextualized activity, invention and pre-writing activities, multiple drafting with feedback from real audiences (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

As Figure 2.1. shows, the recursive and complex process of writing enables writers to revisit some of these stages many times before a text is complete. They can loop backwards or forwards to whichever of the activities involved in text composition at any time while preparing the text (Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1985). This “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process” is also used by L2 writers (Zamel, 1983, p.165). In other words, composing in L2 is similar to composing in L1 in terms of the processes writers go through. However, writing in ESL/EFL classes may be vulnerable to the

need to focus on language rather than content owing to the constraints of limited L2 knowledge. When compared to first language writing, ESL/EFL writing is inclined to be more difficult, more constrained, and less effective because ESL/EFL writers plan less, revise for content less, and write less fluently and accurately than first language writers (Silva, 1993). Similarly, Zamel (1983) observes that there are differences between skilled and unskilled L2 writers in that the least skilled writers stop very often, after they write small short bits of text because they are concerned with issues of grammatical accuracy rather than expressing themselves. The more skilled writers deal with surface level features towards the end of the process and are able to develop strategies to cope with lexical or syntactic problems so that the problems do not interfere with the composing process.

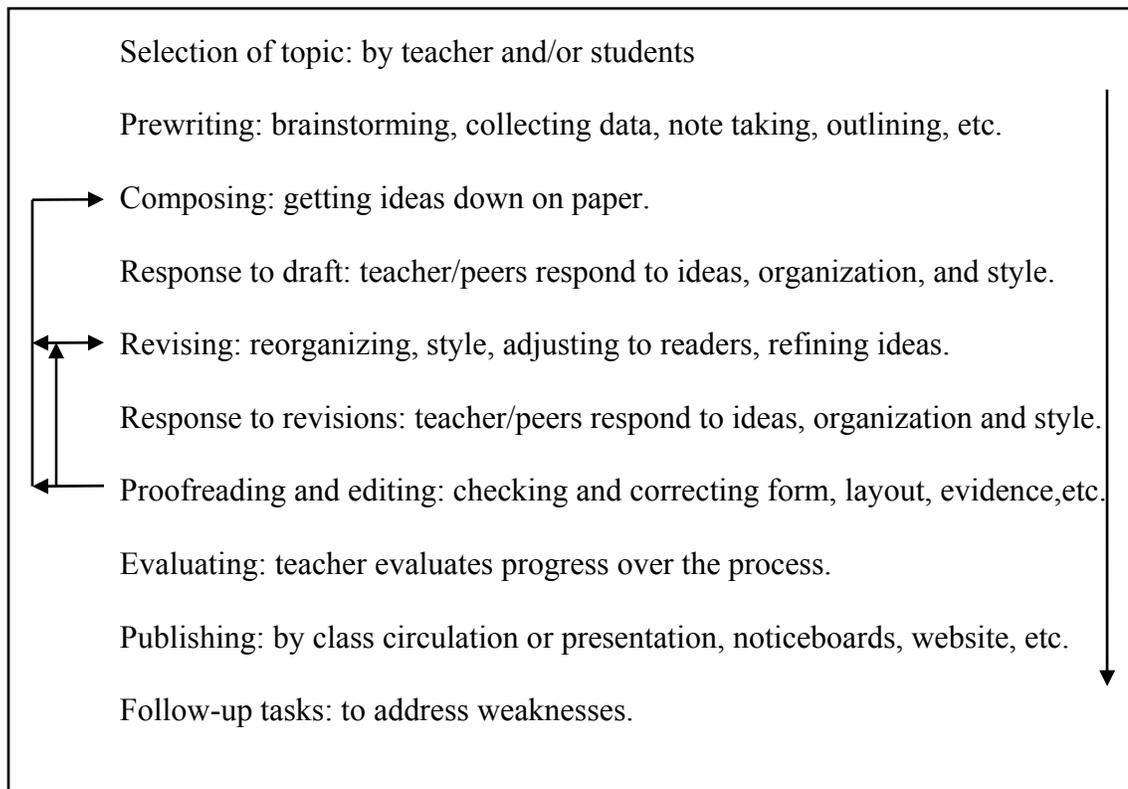


Figure 2.1. A process model of writing instruction (Hyland, 2003, p. 11).

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) propose two models of the writing process; knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming models. They especially put the emphasis on describing why and how skilled and less skilled writers compose differently. Knowledge-telling model describes how discourse production can go on, using only the sources of cues like topic, discourse schema and text already produced, for content retrieval. This model deals with the less skilled writer's knowledge of the topic of discourse and the literary genre. In knowledge-transforming model, the thoughts come into existence through the composing process and then take the form of fully developed thoughts by means of rethinking and restating. The interaction between text processing and knowledge processing makes this model much more complex than knowledge-telling model. Although the knowledge-telling process is still there, it is embedded in a problem-solving process that incorporates two different kinds of problem spaces; the content space and the rhetorical space. The problems of belief and knowledge are the concerns in the content spaces and the problems of achieving goals of the composition are worked at in the rhetorical space. Connection between two spaces shows output from one space that serves as input to other. Such an interaction shows the reflective thought in writing. Therefore, this model explains the difficulties that L2 writers sometimes experience because of task complexity and lack of topic knowledge, and the emphasis on reflective thought also shows the significance of the need for students to participate in a variety of cognitively challenging writing tasks to develop their skills and the importance of feedback and revision in the process of transforming both content and expression (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Hyland, 2003).

In order to understand the complex reality of writing, it would be more accurate to see each theory as complementary and overlapping perspectives, and understand them as curriculum options, each organizing L2 writing teaching around a different focus (Hyland, 2003). However, it is quite obvious that the process approach or cognitive models of the writing process have had the most widespread influence on the teaching of writing throughout the English speaking world (Tribble, 1996; O'Brien, 2004). Therefore, it is of great significance to discuss central issues related to writing process approach to second/foreign language writing instruction by elaborating on audience awareness and purpose, tasks in ESL/EFL writing classes, peer feedback, computer-mediated feedback, and writing performance assessment.

2.2.4.1. Audience Awareness and Purpose

One distinctive focus in approaches to L2 writing instruction that have been evident in the last 25 years is the demands made by the reader. A reader- or audience-dominated approach emphasizes the expectations of readers outside the language classroom and is characterized by the terms like 'academic demands' and 'academic discourse community'. Attention to audience was first drawn by the process approach but the focus was on known readers inside the classroom such as peers and teachers. However, English for academic purposes approach values the reader, as well-not as a specific individual but as the representative of a discourse community. The demands of the academic discourse community are significant in determining the nature of real writing and the topics that teachers assign. Such demands provide a set of standards for the expectations of readers of academic prose and teachers in academic setting (Raimes, 1991).

As Johns (1993) states, there are many ways to teach real writing for real audiences in composition classes. If ESL/EFL composition classes aim to prepare students for approaching a variety of rhetorical situations, teachers and researchers must examine critical writing tasks in specific communities, and they must use their insights from these studies to provide students with opportunities to write real texts for a variety of real audiences. In order to educate students for a breadth of communicative demands they will confront in English language contexts, they must understand the necessity of considering an audience as real. At every educational level, teachers must provide tasks for students in which these real audiences can be researched and real tasks and communities can be addressed. While forming the general concept of the reader, or audience, the parameters of audience influence should be considered to provide a more thorough account. These parameters are mainly the number of persons who are expected to read the text, the extent to which readers are known or unknown, the parameter of status, which changes according to whether the reader has a higher status, an equal status, or a lower status than the writer, the extent of shared background knowledge, and the extent of specific topical knowledge (Johns, 1993; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

Another central issue in writing is the purpose which can be defined as the representation of an attempt to communicate with the reader. However, the purpose for writing must be dealt with on the level of not only the concept of genre, or audience awareness, but also the functional purposes such as apology, invitation, or reprimand (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

2.2.4.2. Tasks in ESL/EFL Writing Classes

Prabhu (1987) defines a task as "an activity that requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process" (p. 17).

Nunan (1989) also defines a language task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (p.10). He provides a useful framework for task analysis in relation to task components; input (a text, film, dialogue, graphic, lyrics, etc. provided by materials for students to work on), goal (learning objective of the task, the immediate payoff of the activity related to overall goals), setting (the classroom arrangements implied in the task), roles (the parts teachers and learners play in task execution and the relationships between them), and activity (what the learners do with the input to accomplish the task).

Tasks are at the heart of a teaching unit because they show what learners actually required to do with the materials. Similarly, tasks, being fundamental in learning to write and represent a central aspect of the teacher's planning and delivery of a writing course, enable teachers to determine students' learning experiences and their success in developing an understanding of texts and a control of writing skills (Hyland, 2003).

Tasks in L2 writing classes can differ in the extent to which they focus on language, content, context, rhetorical structure, and writing processes; in the cognitive and performance demands they make on learners; in the support they offer writer; and

in the emphasis they give to real-world or pedagogic goals. Therefore, the tasks commonly used in writing are related to different areas of writing knowledge (Hyland, 2003). Additionally, in ESL/EFL writing classes, it is possible to provide variety by manipulating the task components suggested by Nunan (1989). To exemplify, providing a range of environments, especially a balance of in-class and out-of-class, not only offers students different kinds of practice but also adds variety to a writing course. As well as the physical setting, the social setting can be arranged in varying ways. Students can work individually, in groups, or with peers. Pair and group work do not only have advantages in real-life rehearsal in negotiation and collaborative writing skills but also encourage the sharing of ideas, increasing the amount of interaction in planning, researching, and editing, with different opinions and contributions brought to the writing task. Teacher's and students' roles can also change from one task to another or from one stage of an activity to another. Such an ability to be flexible in moving between roles can contribute to the success of a class (Hyland, 2003).

2.2.4.3. Peer Feedback

The use of peer feedback is strongly supported by the theoretical stances such as process writing, collaborative learning theory, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and interactionist theories of L2 acquisition (Hansen & Lui, 2004). The research studies claiming that peer feedback has a great deal of positive effects in second/foreign language writing classes show that it gives more control and autonomy to learners because they are actively involved in the feedback process rather than passively rely on teachers' feedback, thus "reconceptualize their ideas in light of their peers' reactions" (Mendoca & Johnson, 1994, p.746). It also improves learners' critical

reading and analysis skills (Chaudron, 1984), and encourages them to focus on their intended meaning by taking into consideration others' views that lead to the development of ideas (Mangelsdorf, 1992). Using peer feedback in ESL/EFL writing classes brings a genuine sense of audience into the writing classroom (Keh, 1990). Therefore, it is believed that research on peer feedback is likely to produce useful results in how it might lead to greater independence. However, further work is still needed into what aspects students can revise without help from their teachers and which areas seem more accessible in peer feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In that aspect, this study will provide insights into the effect of peer feedback on students writing skills and the areas they show improvement.

Paulus (1999) reveals that 32% of the changes made to the students' second drafts of their essays are a result of peer feedback. A majority (63%) of these second draft peer-influenced revisions are meaning changes, which shows that students not only take their classmates' ideas seriously, but also use them to make meaning-level changes into their writing. Therefore, it is important to analyze what effect these changes might have on the overall improvement of students' essays.

Studies, however, have started to reassess the value of peer feedback for ESL/EFL writers and question L2 students' ability to offer useful feedback to each other and the extent to which they are prepared to use their peers' comments in their revisions (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Nelson and Carson (1998) investigate Chinese and Spanish-speaking students' perceptions of their interactions in peer response groups in an ESL composition class. The study indicates that both groups express the need for correction of word on early drafts and prefer negative comments that identify sentence-

level problems, which is more appropriate at the final stage of editing. They also prefer the teacher's comments over those of other students. Students may prefer teacher feedback to peer feedback because they may feel their peers are not qualified enough to critique their work and may distrust their recommendation (Zhang, 1995).

Despite such issues concerned with students' perceptions, peer feedback is still well-liked and teachers keep incorporating it in their courses and report students' positive experiences (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). According to Jacobs et al. (1998), a well-planned implementation is needed for the effectiveness of peer feedback sessions. In order to build positive attitudes toward peer feedback, teachers can share their own experiences with students, and emphasize where they have given or received feedback from peers. In addition, teachers can provide sample peer feedback forms for each assignment, model constructive comments in the feedback which they give on student writing, highlight the need for a balance between praise and criticism, critique students feedback, and share examples of useful peer feedback (Jacobs et al., 1998). To sum up, it is possible to improve the quality of peer feedback through careful training and preparation, and writing instructors can integrate peer feedback into the writing classes because this kind of feedback can be effective and used by many students while revising (Jacobs et al., 1998; Paulus, 1999; Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

2.2.4.4. Computer-mediated Feedback

Both the rapid advance of educational technologies and the increase in distance courses have caused students to read electronic feedback provided by an unseen tutor, by their peers, or by the computer itself. Being the most widely employed use of computers, computer-mediated communication (CMC) offers either synchronous

writing via discussion software on Local Area Networks (LANs) and Internet chat sites, or asynchronous writing via email, bulletin boards, blogs, etc. Educators have already started to realize that CMC can empower learners and make writing classes more collaborative (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Hewett (2000) investigates that revision from CMC-generated peer feedback group talk via Norton CONNECT includes more frequent direct use of peer ideas although revision from oral talk contains more frequent intertextual (imitative and indirect) and self-generated idea use. This mode of peer feedback has also such pedagogical advantages over oral peer feedback as writing exchange through file sharing and saving posted comments for later review. In relation to the number of comments, Lui and Sadler(2003) show that the overall number of comments, the percentage of revision-oriented comments, and consequently the overall number of revisions made by the students using CMC are larger than those by the traditional group. However, the percentage of revisions made based on revision-oriented comments was much higher for the traditional group (41% versus 27%) in comparison to technology-enhanced group, which means the comments made by the CMC group appear to be less effective overall although that group has a larger number of revisions.

Researchers also incorporate measures of students' attitudes towards modes of peer feedback in their studies. While DiGiovanni and Nagaswami (2001), and Schultz (2000) focus on synchronous CMC versus face-to-face peer feedback, Tuzi (2004) focuses on electronic feedback via a database-driven website versus oral feedback during face-to-face meetings. Although DiGiovanni and Nagaswami (2001) reveal that students find synchronous CMC more helpful, Shultz (2000) and Tuzi (2004) suggest

that students believe face-to-face discussions are more helpful and that they prefer oral discussions.

Because of the fact that the studies in relation to peer feedback using CMC have different foci (synchronous versus face-to-face, and asynchronous versus face-to-face), it is difficult to draw a conclusion. Therefore, more studies on the effects of computer-mediated feedback, students' perceptions, and the use of electronic feedback systems in naturalistic settings are needed (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). The mode as well as the nature of the task influences students' perceptions of the efficacy of CMC for peer feedback. It is suggested that comments generated in an asynchronous CMC mode may be easier to find, read, and use due to its time-independent feature. Asynchronous CMC might be a better mode than synchronous CMC because it gives students sufficient time to read others' writing, comments and to revise (Hansen, 2005). Thus, the present study makes use of asynchronous CMC in a writing class to complete the tasks at their convenience, read their peers' essay, and make comments several times before revising their drafts.

2.2.4.5. Writing Performance Assessment

Performance assessment usually refers to a type of testing procedure that emphasizes authentic and direct measures of abilities. This type of assessment is discussed in two contexts in terms of writing: in classroom and institutional assessments (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Weigle, 2002; Hamp-Lyons, 2003). For the purposes of this study, writing performance assessment will be discussed in the first context.

As Grabe and Kaplan (1996) state that students' in-class writing abilities are determined almost completely through assessments of students writing samples. Yet, the important thing is that the student should be provided with evaluative feedback of some kind which will lead to improved performance. There are numerous options that in-class writing assessment can be based on, such as a single writing task or a series of writing tasks; in-class writing or out-of-class writing; formal, rhetorical, content aspects of writing or language skills; assessment depending on teacher evaluation, student self-evaluation, or a negotiation between the two; assessment on mastery of certain skills and strategies (process and criterion-referenced) or on student performance compared with other student performances (norm-referenced); grading through a holistic score or a set of analytic scales.

In all cases, the most important consideration in assessing writing performance is test usefulness which is defined in six qualities: reliability, construct validity, authenticity, interactiveness, impact, and practicality. In-class writing assessment, teachers should make sure that their writing performance assessment tasks should reflect the writing goals of the course (construct validity), meet their students' needs for writing outside the classroom (authenticity), that students are engaged in the writing process (interactivity), and that the feedback will help them identify and improve on their weaknesses (impact). Although not as prominent as in large-scale assessment, teachers who are interested in in-class assessment should also take into consideration such aspects of test usefulness as consistency in giving grades (reliability) and supply of sufficient feedback without consuming extraordinary amount of time (practicality).

While it is impossible to maximize each quality of usefulness, teachers can determine an appropriate balance among the qualities for the specific situation (Weigle, 2002).

2.3. CMC and ESL/EFL Writing Classes

The pervasive influence of electronic media, including networking or CMC, has made it necessary for both researchers and teachers involved in teaching ESL/EFL writing to understand these media and the ways in which they impact L2 or foreign language writing classes. Although studies in the field are not conclusive because of varying results, they still give us ideas about the use and impact of both synchronous and asynchronous modes of CMC in ESL/EFL writing classes.

2.3.1. *Studies in ESL/EFL Writing Classes*

CMC or networked computer has become an important tool for ESL/EFL writing classes not only because of the authentic interaction but also because of such claims as providing more writing practice, encouraging collaborative writing, facilitating peer editing. In addition, composition teachers believe that CMC has an equalizing effect in terms of student participation (Warschauer, 1996a).

Adapting the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment (DIWE) to enhance process writing in English for use in beginning and intermediate French classes, Beauvios (1997a) suggests that such Local Area Networks (LANs) promote a dynamic environment for discussion and writing in the foreign language course; develop critical skills; and create a strong sense of community in the language classroom. Similarly, Braine (2004) reveals that the great number of student contributions is a common feature of LAN discussions in L2 and foreign language writing classes. Students' contributions over the LAN, as measured by a word count, are unusually high for ESL

and EFL classes. The transcripts of LAN peer feedback sessions also show numerous examples of insightful comments and suggestions. Another important feature of L2 LAN writing classes is the reduction of teacher talk. Thus, the use of LANs may be one of the most effective ways of reducing dominant teacher talk and increasing meaningful student interaction. Braine (2001) also compares the EFL undergraduate writing on a LAN and in traditional writing classes at Hong Kong University. The purpose of the study is to determine which context produces better writing and more improvement in writing. However, it simply shows that EFL student writers in Hong Kong who engage in face-to-face peer interaction in a classroom setting make greater gains and receive higher holistic scores on their final drafts than do students who engage in peer discussion via a LAN. Sullivan and Pratt (1996) make another comparison between two different modes in an ESL writing class. They suggest that students in the computer-assisted classroom demonstrate more interest in discussions and they are more focused on the tasks than those in oral classroom. However, there are no important differences in attitudes toward writing with the computer or writing apprehension.

In addition to the effects of synchronous CMC, Xu (2007) re-examines the effects and affects of asynchronous CMC in a first-year composition class. The study makes a comparison between a traditional versus a technology-enhanced asynchronous commenting. The results show that the change of mode in the study does not cause a significant difference in the in-text comment numbers and types.

Spiliotopoulos (2003) also examines if the reflection and interaction that the electronic bulletin board allows affect students' performance in academic writing. The positive impacts such as increased student participation, motivation, and confidence are

observed in writing on the electronic bulletin boards. However, the comparison of pre- and post-test scores using both an indirect (the standardized exam) and direct (academic essays) measure of writing do not strongly support the hypothesis that online interactive writing using an electronic bulletin board improves writing more than learning in a traditional, face-to-face classroom.

Investigating the use of wikis for collaborative writing in L2 academic writing workshops, Chetty (2006) suggests that it is important to first find out the students' integrated computer technologies (ICT) competence in order to provide appropriate help and support. The results show that experienced users of the Internet can work on several applications at the same time and do not have problems switching between different software tools. The study also explores that students have varying views of writing for public audience and that individuals from different cultures have different attitudes toward peer feedback. It is of great importance to prepare students for peer feedback in a collaborative environment by discussing and giving guidelines in order that they do not feel uncomfortable about giving feedback.

In relation to student motivation, Warschauer (1996) investigates the attitudes of 167 ESL and EFL students in 12 university academic writing courses in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the U.S. The study indicates that a wide range of students, whether they are male or female, skilled or unskilled, experienced or inexperienced in using computers, have a positive attitude toward using computers for writing and communication in the language classroom. The feeling of personal empowerment, the enhancement of learning opportunities, and the sense of achievement are the factors that influence students' positive attitude toward the benefits of computer-mediated

communication. Lastly, it is possible for teachers to enhance student motivation by helping them gain knowledge and skill about using computers. They can carefully integrate computer activities into the regular structure and purposes of the course so that students will be provided with the ample opportunity to use electronic communication.

Guardado and Shi (2007) also explore 22 ESL students' experiences of online peer feedback at a western-Canadian university. The findings suggest that e-feedback offers a text-only environment that makes students write balanced comments with an awareness of the audience's needs. However, the students express little confidence in peer commenting in general, which causes online peer feedback to turn into a one-way communication process and not to be addressed. Therefore, Guardado and Shi (2007) suggest that students should be trained and encouraged to interact with a reviewer and that the instructor should join such follow-up discussions.

2.3.2. Blogs and ESL/EFL Writing Classes

Researchers and teachers who use blogs express that students who know they are going to have an audience often produce higher quality of work than those who write only for the teacher or for others in the class. Barrios (2003) asserts that blogs are one way to get them in the habit of writing regularly. From his experience, Barrios (2003) suggests that the only way to develop the habit of blogging is to conscientiously blog for a few weeks. Then, the blog becomes a familiar resource which students turn to even when the class is over, creating a regular habit of communicating through writing.

Drawing our attention to the fact that writing classes ought to be set in realistic environment utilizing the writing aids of a computer, Johnson (2004) advises writing teachers to create classes making use of blogs that give students the opportunity to write and submit assignments because most universities have computer labs with Internet access. Table 2.1 presents how Johnson (2004) summarizes the advantages of blogs both for teachers and for students in an ESL/EFL writing class.

Lowe and Williams (2004) also suggest that it is worth using blogs for the writing process. Regarding the benefits of blogs as public writing, they express that students can easily share a journal, not just with a teacher, another class member, or the entire class, but potentially with any interested reader on the Internet. Their study reveals that student bloggers face “real” rhetorical situations on a regular basis in a very social, supportive setting by extending the discourse to a large community outside of the classroom.

Nelson and Fernheimer (2003) indicate that blogs can be effective tools for a collaborative writing project for small writing groups. They can be particularly useful in helping students work through the writing process because they characteristically consist of brief, frequent posts. In fact, a writing group blog is a space where individual work is shared and revisions are negotiated.

Table 2.1

Advantages of Blogs to Teachers and Students

Advantages to Teachers	The use of blog; -is a supplemental aid to the teacher for the weekly assignments or anything between students and the teacher -is affordable because of high speed Internet at schools -keeps teacher's notes viewable in chronological order -makes it simple to edit class materials or writing samples -gives a chance to provide individual or group feedback
Advantages to Students	The use of blog; -provides the option of previewing the class material before class and reviewing the material after class -enables them to have access to online English dictionaries -maximizes feedback and contact with the teacher because they read comments for the class as a whole and comments directed at them individually -helps them observe how their writing has changed over time

In their study, Fellner and Apple (2006) examine the improvements in writing fluency achieved by using blog freewrites among a group of low proficiency, low motivation students in a short intensive English CALL program. Supposing that writing

fluency refers the number of words produced in a specified time frame, the researchers examine both word counts and the number of lower frequency occurring words produced by the students from the beginning of the program until the end. Student blog entry word counts almost quadruple from an average of 31.5 on the first day to 121.9 on the final day of the program, and the average number of lower frequency words used per student also increases by nearly doubling from six to twelve. Therefore, Fellner and Apple (2006) conclude that students' writing fluency improve significantly throughout the duration of the program.

As for the EFL learners' reactions to peer feedback and teacher feedback in EFL composition class, Wu (2006) examines both the peer feedback and teacher feedback given and transmitted via the learners' blog websites. Despite the peer feedback session given in the class, almost none of the students follow the guide, and instead of commenting on thesis statement, topic sentences, organization, they give their hearty support and extravagant compliments. Students use peer feedback to offer mutual support, to show their general agreement, and to wish good luck to their classmates. Therefore, no traces of peer-influenced changes are found in their revised drafts. However, most teacher feedbacks are global comments on their thesis, topic/concluding sentence, organization, or ideas. But still, the average score of student revisions depending on the teacher feedback does not mean something significant in the research of L2 writing. Therefore, it seems that low-intermediate L2 writers in Taiwan can hardly make positive revisions with the help of peer review and teacher feedback.

Designing a case study in a community collage ESL writing class, Jones (2006) presents profound results with regard to how ESL students respond to the use of

Weblogs as a pedagogical tool for the writing process approach. In the study, blogging serves as an appropriate tool for the writing process and aids the instructional goals of the course because of specific aspects of blogging. These aspects are listed as easy word processing while writing, editing, and revising; tools such as commenting as a source that builds up critical thinking through suggestions for editing; public access of blogs for a broader audience and reader interaction; a platform to create a discourse community and content ownership; and a Web page format for text and visual expression for publishing. As for ESL writing students' perceptions and experiences, the results pertain to two main factors: cognitive and metacognitive factors, affective and motivation factors. In terms of the first group of factors, it is concluded that prior knowledge of technology use help the students adapt to blogging and blogging facilitate their critical thinking skills. Moreover, blogging influences students' quality of writing, facilitates meaningful learning for them, and gives them a purpose for writing. The results concerning affective and motivation factors can be summarized as promoting comfortable interaction for the students, publishing for an authentic audience motivated the students' writing and interaction, and solving some issues of the students' trust and confidence with editing and revising.

In Turkey, Kızıllı (2007) has conducted a study to investigate the effect of weblog integrated writing instruction on students' writing performance, autonomous learning, and perceptions. The students instructed in both traditional and weblog integrated classrooms has improved their writing performance significantly. However, blogging integrated writing instruction has proved to more effective than in class writing instruction when the post test results have been compared. Additionally,

blogging has influenced students' writing performance in the experimental group as a whole, and a positive impact has been found on the two components of their writings; content and organization. However, weblog use has not created a statistically significant difference between the components, language use, vocabulary and mechanics, both in the experimental and control group. As for students' level of autonomous learning, the treatment, weblog integrated process approach, has also proved to be effective. Among the autonomous learning features, mostly mentioned by the participants in connection with blogging are sense of ownership, feeling of responsibility, and individualized learning, through web materials referenced in the tutor blogs. However, blogging on its own cannot be strongly claimed to make fully autonomous learners, but can just be treated as an efficient aid to create an environment in which students find their ways towards learner autonomy. In terms of students' perceptions of blogging activities, they have showed a favorable perception of weblog use in their writings, perceiving that weblog use has positively affected their overall writing performance.

Based on the research on blogging in ESL/EFL writing classes, the present study will integrate blogs into an undergraduate writing course at a Turkish university. The present study will explore the effects of blogging for peer feedback on students' writing performance as well as their perceptions of using blogs through both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

2.4. Summary

This chapter has presented both the theoretical framework and empirical database for computer-mediated communication and its applications to the present study conducted on Turkish EFL writers' performance and their perceptions of using blogs as a CMC tool in the class. First of all, the theoretical framework has been presented through SLA theories, sociocultural learning theory, and Communicative Language Teaching that are considered to support the use of CMC in EFL/ESL classes (Vygotsky, 1978; Canale&Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Long, 1983a; Krashen, 1985; Savignon, 1991; Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1993; Brown, 1994; Pica, 1994; Beauvois, 1997; Warschauer, 1997, 1999; Doughty & Long, 2003; Chapelle, 2005; Warschauer, 2005). Secondly, CMC tools and the studies concerning the use of these tools in ESL/EFL have been summarized (Kern, 1995; Warschauer, 1996a; Sotillo, 2000; Barrios, 2003; Cheon, 2003; Godwin-Jones, 2003; Hata, 2003; Okuyama, 2005; Stockwell, 2005; Fu-lan, 2006; Schellens&Valcke, 2006). Then, since CMC is used in an EFL writing class in this study, approaches to ESL/EFL writing have been summarized and implications for EFL writing teaching have been discussed in detail (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1991; Hyland, 2003). Finally, studies and their results in relation to the use of CMC and blogs in ESL/EFL writing classes have been presented (Barrios, 2003; Nelson & Fernheimer, 2003; Johnson, 2004; Lowe & Williams, 2004; Fellner & Apple, 2006; Wu, 2006).

The next chapter will present the methodology, data collection procedure and methods, pilot study, and data analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effects of blog peer feedback on Turkish EFL students' writing performance, the type and nature of peer feedback sessions, and their perceptions of the use of blogs in writing classes.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What is the effect of blog peer feedback on Turkish EFL students' writing performance?
 - a) Is there a significant improvement on the blog group's second drafts after receiving blog peer feedback in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
 - b) Is there a significant difference between the blog group's performance on the first and final task in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
 - c) Is there a significant improvement on the aspects of writing in the blog group's second drafts in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
 - d) Is there an effect of blog peer feedback on the quantity of the blog group's writing in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
2. What is the distribution of blog peer feedback comments in the area (global versus local) and in the nature (revision-oriented versus non revision-oriented) in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?
3. What are the Turkish EFL writers' perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes?

This chapter includes the setting, participants, research design, data collection procedures and instruments, pilot study, data analysis, and summary.

3.1. Setting

This study took place at the Foreign Language Department of the Education Faculty at Yeditepe University in Istanbul, Turkey. The purpose of the program is to train teachers who have a high level of proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English, pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary for language teaching, and who aim at conducting research and improving themselves in the field.

The oral communication courses prepare students to communicate orally in both public and academic environments by getting involved in information gap activities, group work, and discussion groups.

The writing courses offered by the department are designed to help students write effective essays through inventing, revising, and collaborating with peers for specific audiences and purposes. They are also required to write academic reports in order to improve their skills to find and evaluate a resource in relation to academic writing rules.

Finally, the program provides students with the opportunities to learn a second foreign language, and to improve their personal skills in their interest of areas through the elective courses.

3.1.1. The Writing Course

The present study aimed at improving the students' academic writing skills through the writing process, and enabling them to experience a collaborative environment via a CMC tool; blogs. The course was integrated into 'Oral Communication' classes, and the data was collected during one class hour in each

section each week. Since the students took a 'Writing Composition' class in the previous term, they were only involved in task completion for data collection purposes. The classes were conducted in a recursive process of generating ideas, drafting, giving and receiving peer feedback, editing, revising and publishing their drafts. In other words, the writing course enabled the students to revisit some of these stages before their essay is complete. They could move backwards or forwards to the activities involved in composition (Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1985). To illustrate, when they were told that they wrote an incomplete essay and that they had problems with the essay, they started to produce sufficient ideas again and wrote another draft. Moreover, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) state that patterns of organization are important for the logical development of informational writing and that these patterns of organization are intended to provide the writer with an efficient way to address different types of issues and concepts. Therefore, the topics for writing instruction in this writing course centered on the set of patterns of organization which were means for organizing information or their ideas within a number of genres and text types. Therefore, the students had several writing assignments that required them to write and enabled them to practice descriptive, narrative, for and against, compare and contrast, and opinion essays. However, for internal validity concerns, only the opinion essays that they wrote during the last five weeks of the study were analyzed. In other words, in order not to let the essay type interfere with the results, the same type of essays were analyzed, and the other assignments were considered as practice for writing, giving peer feedback, and blogging.

3.1.2. Writing Performance Assessment

As discussed in the literature review part, this study took into consideration the concerns in relation to in-class writing performance assessment. Among the options suggested by Grabe and Kaplan (1996), a series of writing tasks was evaluated instead of one single task given at the beginning and end of the term, and both in-class and out-of-class essays were produced by the students. As a method to responding to the students' writing, peer feedback sessions in face-to-face oral discussions and comments on their blogs were utilized by the students. The scores of first and revised drafts of four opinion essays and comparison of the scores in groups were considered to provide information about the effect of blog peer feedback on the students' writing performance. In addition, an analytic scoring scale (Tribble, 1996, see Appendix F) was used to gain insights into five major aspects of writing that the students showed improvement such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. In order for reliability concerns, all the drafts were checked by two different EFL writing teachers and a portion of them was checked two times by the same teachers to provide intrarater reliability .

3.2. Participants

In this study, 30 first year Turkish EFL students in the Foreign Language Department at Yeditepe University participated because they completed a composition course in the previous term and enrolled in the second term, Spring 2008. For ethical considerations, the students were explained the purpose and scope of the study and that their real names would not be used. As student teachers, they all volunteered to participate in the study except for the two of 32 registered students. The two already

existing sections of the participants were given Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey (adapted from Jones, 2006) that pertained to demographic information, technology ability, writing ability, and English proficiency. In addition to students' opinions on their technology and writing skills, and language proficiency, the students were also interviewed about their technology and writing experiences.

3.3. Research Design

This study had a quasi-experimental design which made use of mixed methods. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analyzed in order to answer the research questions (Mertens, 2005). In order to make sure that participants formed a homogenous group and had no variances in relation to their writing and technology abilities, survey results and interview at the beginning of the term were used. Since these two sections were already existing classes in the department, one possible problem might have been the interference of such variables with the treatment or study. The study included two groups; the control and experimental group. The first group was instructed in traditional classroom environment while the experimental group attended the classes in computer laboratory. The first research question, the effect of blog peer review on Turkish EFL students' writing performance, was investigated through assessment of first and second (or revised) drafts, task comparison, analysis of major aspects of writing, and word count analysis of the essays. Therefore, the quantitative analysis was based on pre-test and post-test comparison in order to investigate the effect of blogs on students' writing performance, and the comparison of the students' writing performance in Task 1 and 2, Task 1 and 3, and Task 1 and 4. Additionally, major aspects of writing that were evaluated via analytic scoring scale

(Tribble, 1996) were analyzed in order to find out in what aspects of writing the students showed improvement as well as the word count analysis. As for the second research question, the distribution of blog peer feedback comments in the area and nature, both face-to-face peer feedback sessions and blog comments were also analyzed in order to investigate the type and nature of these sessions on their writing. The third research question, the EFL Turkish writers' perceptions of using blog websites in their writing classes, was investigated through both qualitative and quantitative data.

3.4. Data Collection

3.4.1. Data Collection Instruments in the Study

The data in this study has been collected by using five instruments: (1) Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey (adapted from Jones, 2006, see Appendix A) to get demographic information about the students, their technology and writing skills, as well as English proficiency, (2) interviews to explore students' experiences in writing in English and using technology in EFL writing before and after the study (see Appendix B for interview questions), (3) writing performance tasks (first and second drafts produced by the students) to assess the effect of face-to-face peer feedback and blog peer feedback (see Appendix C for sample essays); (4) transcripts of face-to-face peer feedback sessions and comments on the students' blogs; (5) End-of-semester Questionnaire (adapted from Jones, 2006, see Appendix D) to investigate students' perceptions of using blog websites in their writing classes.

3.4.1.1. Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey

The survey consisted of four parts: Demographic information part, technology ability, writing ability, and English Proficiency. The demographic information part

included questions about purpose for studying English, age range, and educational experience. In technology ability part, participants chose the appropriate one among three labels: novice, some experience, and expert. In writing ability and English proficiency part, participants considered themselves fairly good, good, or very good, depending on the explanation for each. The original survey was used as one of the components in selection process of participants by Jones (2006) in her doctoral thesis. Similarly, it was used together with interview results at the beginning of the present study to make sure that participants had the same or similar abilities in relation to technology, writing, and English proficiency. However, for the purpose of this study, the part requiring information about nationality was removed because all the participants were Turkish as stated in the research questions. Additionally, the students were only required to write their ages instead of choosing an age range among the given options as it was in the original survey because these ranges were considered to be unnecessary for the group in the present study.

3.4.1.2. Interviews

Interviews were conducted both at the beginning and at the end of the semester as individual and group interviews. All the interviews were designed to be open-ended and semi-structured. The questions were produced by the researcher, under the guidance of Assist.Prof. Zeynep Koçoğlu, who is specialized in computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and each session was video-taped.

3.4.1.3. Writing Performance Tasks: First and Second Drafts Produced by the Students

First and second drafts of students' essays were collected each week both in the control and experiment group. After students completed their first drafts, they gave peer

feedback on each other's papers after being trained in the earlier weeks of the term. This process will be explained in detail in the procedure section. Then they revised their essays depending on peer feedback they received. Both first and revised drafts produced by the participants in the control group were submitted to the researcher in pen-and-paper format. They did not use computer any way in order not to let them benefit from MS Word or similar programs because of the fact that it might influence their performance in their second draft. The drafts produced by the experiment group were collected via the participants' blogs.

3.4.1.4. Transcripts of Face-to-face Peer Feedback Sessions and Comments on the Students' Blogs

Face-to-face peer feedback sessions in the control group were video-taped each week. However, because of time limitations, ten sessions in each group were video-taped and then transcribed. In the experimental group, comments on the students' blogs about their essay were saved by the instructor.

3.4.1.5. End-of-semester Questionnaire

End-of-semester questionnaire (adapted from Jones, 2006) explored the experiences and perceptions of participants in the experimental group after they used blogs to give feedback to each other. The original version of the questionnaire was used by Jones (2006), but a number of changes were made for the purposes of this study. First of all, the questions on blog peer feedback in the first part were converted into statements. Similarly, Yes/No questions about students' blog peer feedback experiences were converted into statements and adapted into 5 point likert-scale. Finally, the questions in the last part were eliminated because similar questions were used in the

interviews. As a result, the adapted version of the questionnaire included 5 point likert-scale items with anchors at “1- strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree”. The students read 16 statements and chose the appropriate number in this part of the questionnaire. Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire in this study was 0.778.

3.4.2. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in January 2008 with 10 EFL preparatory students at Yeditepe University to assess the reliability of end-of-semester questionnaire. The students used their blog websites for four weeks to give feedback about each other’s paragraphs. After completing three assignments, they were given end of semester questionnaire to reflect their experiences and perceptions on using technology and blogging in their classes. The Cronbach alpha for end-of-semester questionnaire was 0.831. After the pilot study, it was considered to be necessary to spend a few weeks to train students on giving peer feedback and using blogs.

3.4.3. Procedure

For the purpose of this study, the data were collected in several phases together with the related training sessions on how to give peer feedback and use blogs to do that. Figure 3.1 presents the procedure of the main study.

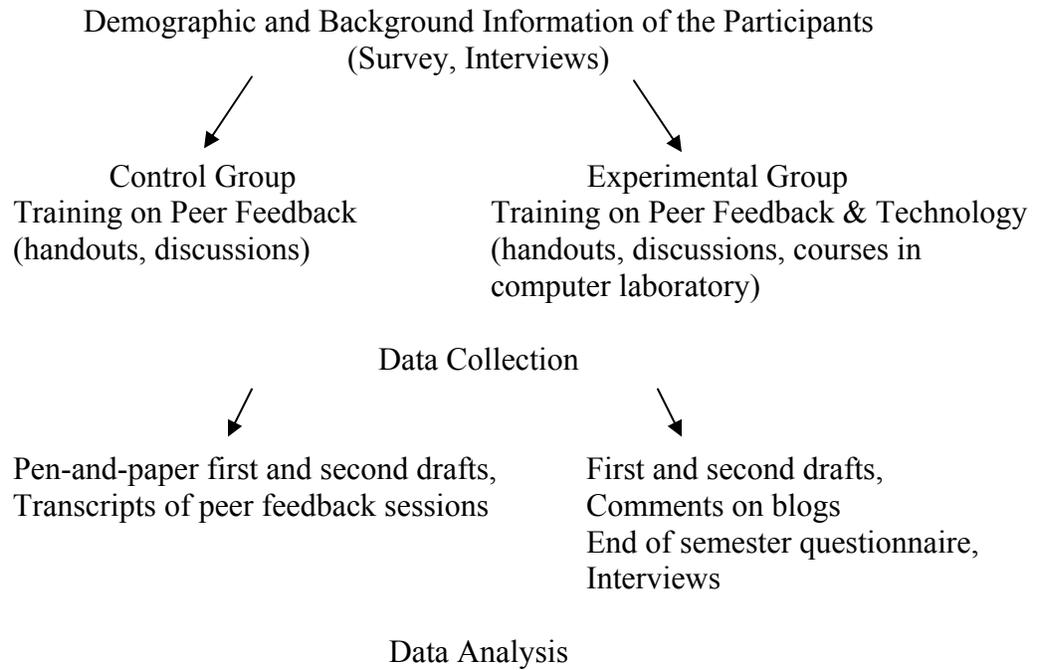


Figure 3.1. The procedure of the main study

3.4.3.1. Collecting Pre-study Data

The first step of data collection procedure started in February 2008, before the writing course started. The researcher, who was the instructor in both control and experiment group, organized a meeting with the students. In the meeting, the students were explained that the purpose of the study was to help them improve their writing skills and a writing course would be integrated into their Oral Communication class as extension of the writing course they took the previous semester. Since two students did not want to participate in the study, they were assigned a project by the other instructor of the class. The participants were told that they would be evaluated according to the submission of drafts and participation in peer feedback sessions, and that their grades would be integrated into overall course assessment. After the researcher made sure that all the information gained from surveys, interviews, and questionnaires would be

confidential, the students agreed to participate, and expressed that it would be a good practice to improve their writing skills. Then the students were given Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey, and interviewed in order for the researcher to get idea about their writing, technology, and language abilities. The results, which will be presented in the next chapter, reassured that the participants' abilities were close to each other.

Since there were two groups, the researcher came together with each group one hour and sometimes two hours a week depending on the need. While the control group gathered in traditional classroom settings on Tuesdays, the experimental group took the classes in computer laboratory at the Faculty of Education on Fridays. In the first week, both groups were given handouts (see Appendix G) about how to give peer feedback and the course syllabus (see Appendix H). Handouts included a peer feedback introduction sheet (Hyland, 2003), general directives (Hyland, 2003), and peer feedback questions (adapted from Jones, 2006) to be followed by the students while giving feedback to each other. In Jones (2006), the questions were based on paragraph writing, but since the students were expected to write essays, the guideline was revised and made appropriate for evaluating each other's essays. After examining guidelines and related information on the handouts, follow-up discussions were held among the students and with the researcher.

Different from the control group, the experimental group started to be trained on blogging. Before the students created an account in order to get a blog website, the researcher examined different free blog sites such as Blogger, Livejournal, MO'TIME, tBlog!, and SchoolBlogs. Although they had similar features, Blogger was chosen

because it was user-friendly in that it allowed users to publish their posts easily, add videos and photos, access to archived entries, and customize their templates. The students were also able to use editing and deleting features as well as viewing their sites. They followed the steps on www.blogger.com/start. They first created an account, then named their blogs and chose a template, and finally clicked on ‘create your blog now’ icon. After having their individual blogs, the students started to investigate the features in order to use their blogs effectively. Figure 3.2. shows the steps that were followed by the students.



Figure 3.2. Steps for creating a blog

Instead of having one blog for the whole class, which is called a class blog, the students were made to have individual blogs to enable them to preserve the ownership of their own blogs.

At the end of the first two weeks, both the control group and experimental group were taught to give meaningful and critical feedback to their peers. The experimental group, in addition, was taught to present their writing assignments and write comments on the blogs. Additionally, they were trained on using other features of blogs such as

editing, deleting, viewing, forming groups. The peer groups were assigned randomly as the students agreed to do so.

3.4.3.2. Collecting Data during the Study

Once the readiness of the students for giving peer feedback and using their blogs was reassured, they were involved in several writing tasks (giving peer feedback, revising and editing, publishing) and nine writing assignments (descriptive, narrative, for and against, compare and contrast, and opinion essays). Whereas the control group completed the tasks in traditional classroom settings and provided each other with oral face-to-face peer feedback, the experimental group used their blogs to publish their first drafts, write comments, revise and publish second drafts in the computer laboratory or outside the class. The control group submitted pen-and-paper first and revised drafts, and was video-taped during the peer feedback sessions. The students in the experiment group used the commenting feature to give and read their feedback, and used the editing feature to revise their essays.

All the students repeated the same process each week because they were required to complete nine assignments throughout the semester. During the semester, 540 essays including both the first and second drafts were evaluated by two experienced EFL writing instructors, but for the validity concerns, only four tasks which are the same type of essays were analyzed. All the essays were double-checked using an analytic scoring scale (Tribble, 1996). Interrater and intrarater reliability was accounted for 100 drafts by using the formula below:

$$\text{Percentage of agreements} = \frac{\text{Number of agreements}}{\text{Number of agreements} + \text{Disagreements}} \times 100$$

Agreements on the formula referred to the number of agreements of the evaluators on the same draft or the number of agreements of the same evaluator on his/her evaluation at two different times. Disagreements referred to the number of disagreements of evaluators on the same draft or the number of disagreements of the same evaluator on his/her evaluation at two different times (Van der Mars, 1989).

Since the interrater (96%) and intrarater (95% for the first rater and 96% for the second rater) reliability for these drafts were quite high, the same instructors went on double-checking all the first and second drafts. Since agreements or disagreements were decided by a 10-point discrepancy, when there was a more than 10-point discrepancy among two grades, the instructors came together in order to reach a consensus.

3.4.3.3. Collecting Post-study Data

At the end of the semester, both groups were interviewed and the experimental group was given End-of-semester Questionnaire. For the purposes of this study, interviews and questionnaires in the experimental group were analyzed.

3.5. Data Analysis

Firstly, in order to get demographic information, technology and writing abilities, and English language proficiency, the survey was analyzed through descriptive statistics that computed the mean scores and standard deviation together with the total frequency and percentages of each part in the survey. Interviews at the

beginning of the term were analyzed through the chunks in the questions and common words uttered by the participants. The transcribed interviews were coded according to themes that coincided with the major areas of questions. Five broad areas of the themes are presented in the result section.

Secondly, the data coming from the writing tasks were analyzed by using the SPSS 13.0 version for Windows. In order to answer the first research question relating to the effect of blogs on Turkish EFL students' writing performance, pre- (first draft) and post-test (second draft) grades were analyzed by means of mixed factorial analysis of variance (mixed factorial ANOVA) including both the tests of between- and within-subjects effects, and the simple main effects analysis. The reason for choosing mixed factorial ANOVA was that it had some advantages over other possible inferential statistics such as one-way ANOVA and Paired Samples *t*-test because the first one analyzed the whole data in one step minimizing the level of error. That is, one-way ANOVA and paired samples *t* test analysis methods involved first making comparisons between the means of two groups, then between the pre-test scores of groups, and finally between the post-test scores, which divided the data into several pieces. In addition to overall analysis of pre- and post-test scores, an analysis of four tasks and a comparison of tasks were made to get detailed information about the effect of blogs over a period. For the statistical analysis of the first research question, alpha was set at $p < .05$. Additionally, word count analysis and analysis of major aspects of writing in the analytic scoring scale (Tribble, 1996) were conducted. A paired-samples *t* test was computed to evaluate if the students showed significant improvement in their second drafts in terms of these aspects of writing. As a further analysis, the transcripts of face-

to-face peer feedback and written corrections or suggestions in the control group and comments on blogs in the experimental group were analyzed in order to investigate the distribution of the comment in nature and type.

Finally, End-of-semester Questionnaire and interviews were analyzed to gain insights into EFL students' perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes. End-of-semester questionnaire was analyzed by descriptive statistics that computed the mean scores, standard deviation, frequency and percentages of each item. Interviews were analyzed in the same way with those at the beginning of the study. The analysis of data ended at the beginning of November 2008.

3.6. Summary

In this chapter, issues regarding the methodology such as setting, participants, research design, data collection instruments, pilot study, procedure, and data analysis have been presented.

As for demographic information as well as technology and writing abilities, the participants were given Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey and interviewed at the beginning of the semester. While the survey was analyzed through descriptive statistics, interviews were analyzed according to the ways suggested by Mertens (2005) and Seliger and Shohamy (1989).

Writing performance tasks including the students' pre- and post-test scores were analyzed by means of mixed factorial ANOVA. After overall analysis of the effects of blogs on the students' writing performance, the data were analyzed task by task to see the effect during the whole process. Additionally, task comparison in terms of writing performance, overall analysis of word counts, the major aspects of writing, and peer feedback sessions and comments were conducted.

Finally, the data coming from End-of-semester Questionnaire and interviews were analyzed to explore the students' perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes. Whereas the first one was analyzed through descriptive statistics, the latter was analyzed in the same way with the interviews at the beginning of the semester.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present chapter presents the results of the data gathered through; a) Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey, b) scores in writing performance tasks including first and revised drafts produced by the students, c) transcripts of peer feedback sessions, d) End-of-semester Questionnaire, e) interviews at the beginning and at the end of the semester. First, characteristics of the participants are presented, and then the results in relation to the following research questions are reported.

Research Question 1: What is the effect of blog peer feedback on Turkish EFL students' writing performance?

a) Is there a significant improvement on the blog group's second drafts after receiving blog peer feedback in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

b) Is there a significant difference between the blog group's performance on the first and final task in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

c) Is there a significant improvement on the aspects of writing in the blog group's second drafts in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

d) Is there an effect of blog peer feedback on the quantity of the blog group's writing in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

Research Question 2: What is the distribution of blog peer feedback comments in the area (global versus local) and in the nature (revision-oriented versus non revision-oriented) in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

Research Question 3: What are the Turkish EFL writers' perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes?

4.1. Characteristics of Turkish EFL Students in the Present Study

This section provides demographic information about the participants, and their abilities and experiences in technology, writing, and English language learning. The data was gathered through Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey and interviews, and the purpose was to assure that the participants had similar experiences or abilities in terms of technology, writing in English, and English language proficiency.

30 Turkish EFL students who registered for first-year classes in the Foreign Language Department at Yeditepe University participated in this study. According to the survey results, the area of study for all of them is English Language Teaching (ELT) and they are all under the age of 25. The results revealed that 10.0% (3 students) considered their technology abilities as novice, whereas 46.7% (14 students) expressed that they had some experience and 43.3% (13 students) regarded themselves as experts. With reference to their writing abilities, nobody defined themselves as being fairly good. 63.3% (19 students) believed that they were good at writing and 36.7% (11 students) considered themselves as having very good writing abilities. They, however, had various ideas about their English Language Proficiency. 30.0% (9 students) thought their English was 'fairly good'. While 43.3% (13 students) supposed that their English proficiency was 'good', 26.7% (8 students) considered it as 'very good'.

Similarly, the students were asked about their experiences in learning English, writing in English, and technology use in their classes. The students expressed that they started to learn English in primary school through pictures, songs, numbers, colors, which made it enjoyable for them. However, in relation to their writing experiences, they mentioned that their experiences in writing in English started in high school, even

at college, through separate writing courses. That is why, they believed that they had some problems with their writing improvement at the beginning and needed more practice. In addition, the students told that they experienced the patterns of organization such as different essay types after attending the writing courses in preparatory school or in their department. In terms of their abilities in writing, all of them thought that they could write better despite some minor problems such as grammar, vocabulary, or their insistence on translation from Turkish. Yet, they felt that they were improving through the courses they took and managed to be good writers. In terms of technology use, they expressed that they only use Messenger (MSN), Internet, and emails for social needs. Although most of them are good at technology, they had never used it in their classes, yet, and they had no idea about blog websites.

4.2. Results Related to the Research Questions

This section presents the results for the first research question related to the effect of blogs on Turkish EFL students' writing performance, and continues with the results with reference to the second research question in relation to the Turkish EFL students' perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes.

4.2.1. Results Related to the Research Question 1

The scores in Turkish EFL writing students' first and second (or revised) drafts after the peer feedback sessions were analyzed (in both control and experimental group) to investigate if blogging had any effect on their writing performance. Mixed factorial ANOVA was performed to find out the effect of blogging by means of the tests of between- and within-subjects effects, and the simple main effects analysis for overall results. In order to conduct mixed factorial ANOVA, it is necessary to have two factors

and a dependent variable. While the dependent variable describes cases (students) on a quantitative dimension, each factor divides these cases into two or more levels (Green and Salkind, 2003). In the present study, the dependent variable was the students (or cases) and the two factors were time (pre- and post-test scores) and groups (control and experimental). Thus, overall tests of the main and interaction effects evaluated if the means on the dependent variable were the same across the levels of the first factor (pre- and post-test scores) and averaging across the levels of the second factor (the control and experimental group), and if the differences in the means on the dependent variable among the levels of the first factor (pre- and post-test scores) were the same across the levels of the second factor (the control and experimental group). A closer look at the data required task by task analysis, as well. Similarly, as a component of the first research question, a comparison of the students' performance among tasks was conducted through mixed factorial ANOVA, which required a third factor (Tasks-Task 1&2; Task 1&3; Task 1&4). Furthermore, scores on the components of the analytic scoring scale (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics) were analyzed by computing paired samples *t* test in order to investigate in what aspects the students showed improvement. Finally, a word count analysis was conducted in order to explore the impact of blog peer feedback on the quantity of students' writing.

4.2.1.1. Overall Results Related to the Research Question 1

Following the initial training and practice on peer feedback and the use of blogs, the students completed nine tasks. However, for internal validity concerns, only the same types of essays were analyzed in order not to let the essay type influence the results. Therefore, since the tasks that were completed in Week 10, 12, 13, and 14 were

all opinion essays, only these four essay types were analyzed. Those that were assigned and completed in the previous weeks and in Week 11 were considered as practice for both face-to-face and blog peer feedback. Each task consisted of producing a draft, giving feedback to each other in face-to-face oral discussions and on blogs, revising and editing, producing the second draft.

The means and standard deviations of the total writing scores for both the control and experimental groups are given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for Overall Writing Scores

	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Total	control group	63.47	6.91	60
Pre-test	Experimental group	65.57	5.19	60
Scores	Total	64.52	6.17	120
Total	control group	66.87	7.71	60
Post-test	Experimental group	72.82	4.30	60
Scores	Total	69.84	6.89	120

A 2 (Time – Pre-test and Post-test) x 2 (Groups – The Control and Experimental Group) mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the difference between the control and the experimental groups’ total writing scores in both pre- and post-test. A mixed factorial ANOVA results revealed that the main effect for Groups was significant, $F(1, 118) = 13.13, p < .05, \text{Eta-squared} = .100$. Thus, there was a significant difference between the overall total writing scores of the control group ($M = 65.17$) and the experimental group ($M = 69.19$). Additionally, a significant main effect for Time (pre- and post-tests) was obtained, $F(1, 118) = 772.67, p < .05, \text{Eta-squared} = .868$. Total writing scores in post-test ($M = 69.84$) were significantly higher than the writing scores in pre-test ($M = 64.52$). Similarly, a significant interaction effect was obtained between

Time x Groups, $F(1, 118) = 100.98$, $\eta^2 = .461$. Table 4.2 presents the results of tests of between- and within-subjects effects.

Table 4.2

The Tests of Between- and Within-subjects Effects

	Between-subjects			Within-subjects					
	Groups			Time			Time*Groups		
	F	PES	p	F	PES	p	F	PES	p
Overall	13.13	.100	.000	772.67	.868	.000	100.98	.461	.000
Task 1	4.08	.127	.053	218.09	.886	.000	31.31	.528	.000
Task 2	1.87	.063	.182	316.36	.919	.000	37.66	.574	.000
Task 3	2.53	.083	.123	216.16	.885	.000	28.41	.504	.000
Task 4	5.69	.169	.024	100.31	.782	.000	13.04	.318	.000

The Time by Groups interaction effect was analyzed using a simple main effects analysis (see Table 4.3). The simple main effects analysis demonstrated a significant increase in total scores of both the control (pre-test $M = 63.47$; post-test $M = 66.87$), $F(1, 118) = 157.50$, $p < .05$, and experimental group (pre-test $M = 65.57$; post-test $M = 72.82$), $F(1, 118) = 716.14$, $p < .05$, in post-test when compared to pre-test. That is, both groups produced better writing in their second drafts. Moreover, the simple main effects analysis demonstrated no significant difference between the control ($M = 63.47$) and the experimental group ($M = 65.57$) in pre-test, $F(1, 118) = 3.55$, $p < .05$. However, a significant difference was found in total writing scores between the control ($M = 66.87$) and the experimental group ($M = 72.82$) in post-test, $F(1, 118) = 27.28$, $p < .05$. The total

means for interaction between Time (pre- and post-tests) and Groups (control and experimental) were demonstrated in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.3

The Simple Main Effects Analysis

	Within-groups				Between-groups			
	Pre- vs Post-test				Pre-tests		Post-tests	
	Control		Experimental		F	p	F	p
	F	p	F	p				
Overall	157.50	.000	716.14	.000	3.55	.000	27.28	.000
Task 1	42.07	.000	207.32	.000	1.45	.239	7.48	.011
Task 2	67.86	.000	286.17	.000	.21	.653	5.52	.026
Task 3	43.93	.000	200.64	.000	.36	.555	6.41	.017
Task 4	20.51	.000	92.84	.000	2.46	.128	9.24	.005

In conclusion, overall analysis of the writing scores revealed that both control and experimental group showed improvement in their post-test scores. That is, their scores in the second drafts were significantly higher than those in their first drafts. Additionally, the pre-test performances of these two groups were similar because there was no significant difference between them. However, the post-test scores in the experimental group were significantly higher than those in the control group. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of blogs and blog peer feedback in the experimental group helped the students perform better in their second drafts. As Johnson (2004) explains it, blogs provide the students with the option of previewing the material before and after the class, and maximizes the feedback.

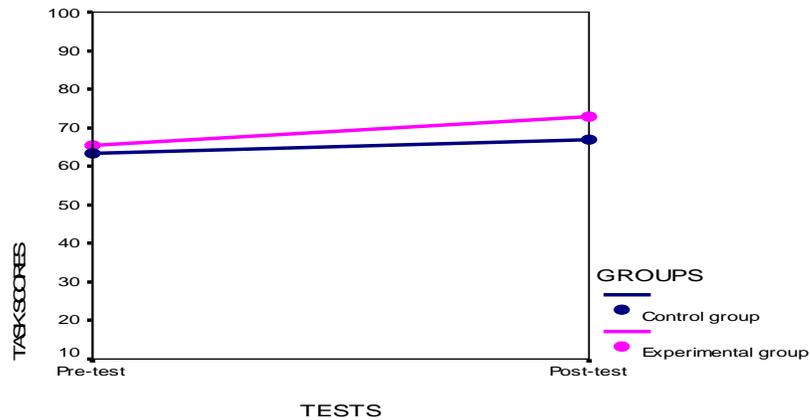


Figure 4.1. The Time by Groups interaction for overall writing scores

4.2.1.2. Results Related to Task 1

In order to complete Task 1, the students wrote an opinion essay in which they presented their ideas/reasons about the statement ‘Foreign language instruction should start in kindergarten. Do you agree or disagree?’

The means and standard deviations of Task 1 scores for both the control and experimental group are given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics for Task 1

	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Task 1 Pre-test	control group	62.0667	7.51633	15
	experimental group	64.8667	4.96943	15
	Total	63.4667	6.42051	30
Task 1 Post-test	control group	65.4000	8.76519	15
	experimental group	72.2667	4.21675	15
	Total	68.8333	7.60709	30

A 2 (Time) x 2 (Groups) mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted and the results of the analysis demonstrated no significant main effect for Groups, $F(1, 28) = 4.08, p > .05, \text{Eta-squared} = .127$. Thus, there was no overall difference in Task 1 scores

of the control group ($M= 63.73$) compared to the experimental group ($M= 68.57$).

However, a significant main effect for Time was obtained, $F(1,28)= 218.09$, $p<.05$, $\text{Eta-squared}= .886$. Overall Task 1 scores in post-test ($M= 68.83$) were significantly higher than in pre-test ($M= 63.47$). Similarly, a significant Time x Groups was also obtained, $F(1, 28)= 31.31$, $p<.05$, $\text{Eta-squared}= .528$ (see Table 4.2).

The Time by Groups interaction effect was analyzed using a simple main effects analysis (see Table 4.3). The simple main effects analysis showed a significant increase in Task 1 scores of both the control (pre-test $M= 62.07$; post-test $M= 65.40$), $F(1, 28)= 42.07$, $p<.05$, and experimental group (pre-test $M= 64.87$; post-test $M= 72.27$), $F(1, 28)= 207.32$, $p<.05$, in post-test when compared to pre-test. Additionally, the simple main effects analysis also demonstrated no significant difference between the control ($M= 62.07$) and experimental groups ($M= 64.87$) in pre-test, $F(1, 28)= 1.45$, $p>.05$. However, a significant difference was found in Task 1 scores between the control ($M= 65.40$) and experimental group ($M= 72.27$) in post-test, $F(1, 28)= 7.48$, $p<.05$. Therefore, there was no difference between groups in their pre-test performances, which verified the results of survey and interview in that they had the same abilities in respect to writing and English proficiency. In addition, both groups showed significant improvement in their second drafts. However, the experimental group had significantly higher scores in their second drafts than those in the control group. The Task 1 means for interaction between Time and Groups were demonstrated in Figure 4.2.

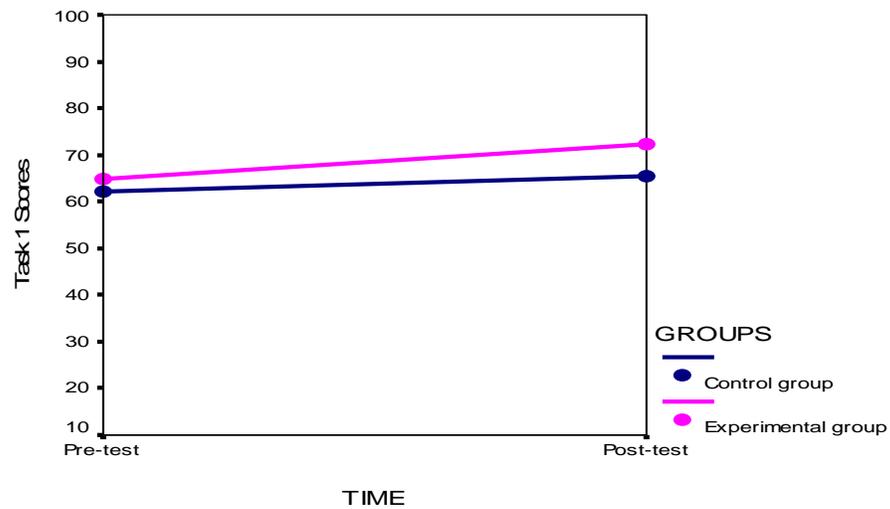


Figure 4.2. The Time by Groups interaction for Task 1.

4.2.1.3. Results Related to Task 2

As for Task 2, the students wrote an opinion essay on the statement ‘It is important to follow fashion. Do you agree or disagree?’.

The means and standard deviations of Task 2 scores for both the control and experimental groups are given in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Descriptive Statistics for Task 2

	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Task 2 Pre-test	control group	66.4667	6.90617	15
	experimental group	67.5333	5.92653	15
	Total	67.0000	6.34633	30
Task 2 Post-test	control group	70.2000	6.81595	15
	experimental group	75.2000	4.63219	15
	Total	72.7000	6.26512	30

A 2 (Time) x 2 (Groups) mixed factorial ANOVA demonstrated that the main effect for Groups was not significant, $F(1, 28) = 1.87, p > .05, \text{Eta-squared} = .063$. So, there was no overall difference in Task 2 scores of the control group ($M = 68.33$) and

experimental group ($M= 71.37$). However, a significant main effect for Time was obtained, $F(1, 28)= 316.36$, $p<.05$, $\text{Eta-squared}= .919$. Task 2 scores in post-test ($M=72.70$) were significantly higher than in pre-test ($M=67.00$). Similarly, a significant Time x Groups interaction effect was also obtained, $F(1, 28)= 37.66$, $p<.05$, $\text{Eta-squared}= .574$ (see Table 4.2).

The Time by Groups interaction effect was analyzed using a simple main effects analysis (see Table 4.3). The simple main effects analysis demonstrated a significant increase in Task 2 scores of both control (pre-test $M= 66.47$; post-test $M= 70.20$), $F(1, 28)= 67.86$, $p<.05$, and experimental group (pre-test $M= 67.53$; post-test $M= 75.20$), $F(1, 28)= 286.17$, $p<.05$, in post-test when compared to pre-test. However, the simple main effects analysis demonstrated no significant difference between the control ($M= 66.47$) and experimental groups ($M= 67.53$) in pre-test, $F(1, 28)= .21$, $p>.05$. But, a significant difference was found in Task 2 scores between the control ($M= 70.20$) and experimental group ($M= 75.20$) in post-test, $F(1, 28)= 5.52$, $p<.05$. In other words, Task 2 scores of experimental group in post-test were found significantly higher than those in the control group after the experiment. The Task 7 means for interaction between Time and Groups were demonstrated in Figure 4.3.

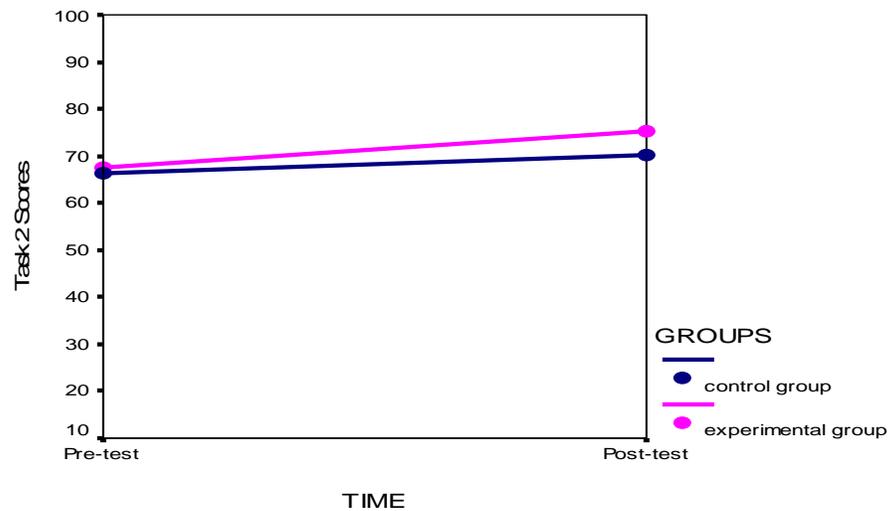


Figure 4.3. The Time by Groups interaction for Task 2

The fact that the effect of using blogs was observed in Task 2, like Task 1, supported that the students in the experimental group started to make the most of blog peer feedback and that kind of peer feedback was more effective for the students with respect to the significant difference in their post-test writing performance when compared to that of the control group.

4.2.1.4. Results Related to Task 3

In Task 3, the students wrote an opinion essay on the following writing rubric: ‘The death penalty is just a punishment and can be deterrent for especially heinous crimes. Do you agree or disagree? Give your reasons.’

The means and standard deviations of Task 3 scores for both the control and experimental groups are given in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Descriptive Statistics for Task 3

	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Task 3 Pre-test	control group	63.9333	5.93376	15
	experimental group	65.1333	5.02660	15
	Total	64.5333	5.43763	30
Task 3 Post-test	control group	67.3333	6.61888	15
	experimental group	72.4000	4.03201	15
	Total	69.8667	5.96966	30

A 2 (Time) x 2 (Groups) mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted, and the results demonstrated that the main effect for Groups was not significant, $F(1, 28) = 2.53$, $p > .05$, Eta-squared = .083. So, there was no overall difference in the Task 3 scores of the control group ($M = 65.63$) and experimental group ($M = 68.77$). However, a significant main effect for Time was obtained, $F(1, 28) = 216.16$, $p < .05$, Eta-squared = .885. Task 3 scores in post-test ($M = 69.87$) were significantly higher than in pre-test ($M = 64.53$). Similarly, a significant Time x Groups interaction effect was also obtained, $F(1, 28) = 28.41$, $p < .05$, Eta-squared = .504 (see Table 4.2).

The Time by Groups interaction effect was analyzed using a simple main effects analysis (see Table 4.3). The simple main effects analysis demonstrated a significant increase in Task 3 scores of both control (pre-test $M = 63.93$; post-test $M = 67.33$), $F(1, 28) = 43.93$, $p < .05$, and experimental groups (pre-test $M = 65.13$; post-test $M = 72.40$), $F(1, 28) = 200.64$, $p < .05$, in post-test compared to pre-test. Additionally, the simple main effects analysis demonstrated no significant difference between the control ($M = 63.93$) and experimental groups ($M = 65.13$) in pre-test, $F(1, 28) = .36$, $p > .05$. In contrast, a significant difference was found in Task 3 scores between the control ($M = 67.33$) and experimental group ($M = 72.40$) in post-test, $F(1, 28) = 6.41$, $p < .05$. Thus,

Task 3 scores of the experimental group were found significantly higher than the control group after the experiment. The Task 3 means for interaction between Time and Groups are demonstrated in Figure 4.4.

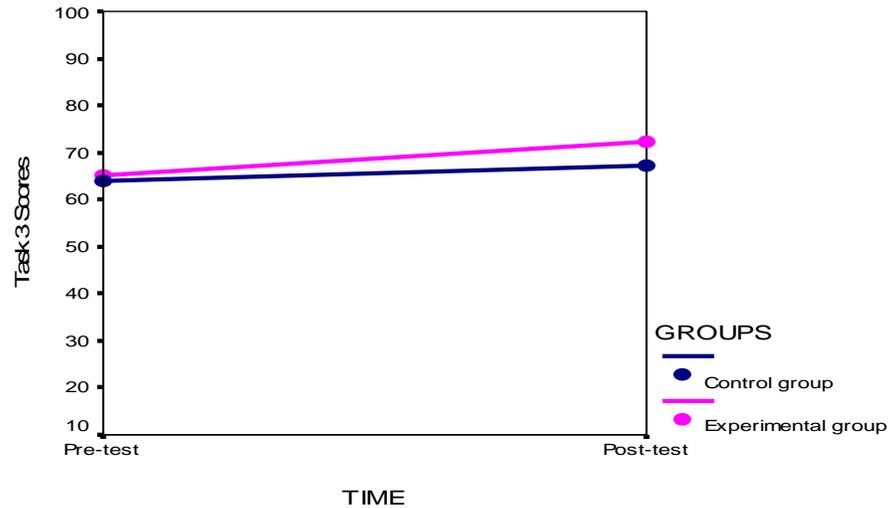


Figure 4.4. The Time by Groups interaction for Task 3.

4.2.1.5. Results Related to Task 4

As the last task, the students wrote an opinion essay on the following statement: ‘Advertisements should be limited to a certain number because they manipulate people. Do you agree or disagree?’

The means and standard deviations of Task 4 scores for both the control and experimental group are given in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Descriptive Statistics for Task 4

	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Task 4 Pre-test	control group	61.4000	6.71672	15
	Experimental group	64.7333	4.75795	15
	Total	63.0667	5.96503	30
Task 4 Post-test	control group	64.5333	7.92705	15
	Experimental group	71.4000	3.69942	15
	Total	67.9667	7.00976	30

A 2 (Time) x 2 (Groups) mixed-factorial ANOVA was conducted, and the results demonstrated a significant main effect for Groups, $F(1, 28) = 5.69$, $p < .05$, Eta-squared = .169. There was an overall difference in the Task 4 scores of the control group ($M = 62.97$) compared to the experimental group ($M = 68.07$). The scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than those of the control group. Similarly, a significant main effect for Time was obtained, $F(1, 28) = 100.31$, $p < .05$, Eta-squared = .782. Overall Task 4 scores in post-test ($M = 63.07$) were significantly higher than in pre-test ($M = 67.97$). Additionally, a significant Time x Groups interaction effect was also obtained, $F(1, 28) = 13.04$, $p < .05$, Eta-squared = .318 (see Table 4.2).

The Time by Groups interaction effect was analyzed using a simple main effects analysis (see Table 4.3). The simple main effects analysis showed a significant increase in Task 4 scores of both the control (pre-test $M = 61.40$; post-test $M = 64.53$), $F(1, 28) = 20.51$, $p < .05$, and experimental group (pre-test $M = 64.73$; post-test $M = 71.40$), $F(1, 28) = 92.84$, $p < .05$, in post-test when compared to pre-test. Besides, the simple main effects analysis also demonstrated no significant difference between the control ($M = 61.40$) and experimental groups ($M = 64.73$) in pre-test, $F(1, 28) = 2.46$, $p > .05$. However, a significant difference was found in Task 4 scores between the control ($M =$

64.53) and experimental group ($M= 71.40$) in post-test, $F(1, 28)= 9.24$, $p<.05$. The Task 4 means for interaction between Time and Groups are demonstrated in Figure 4.5.

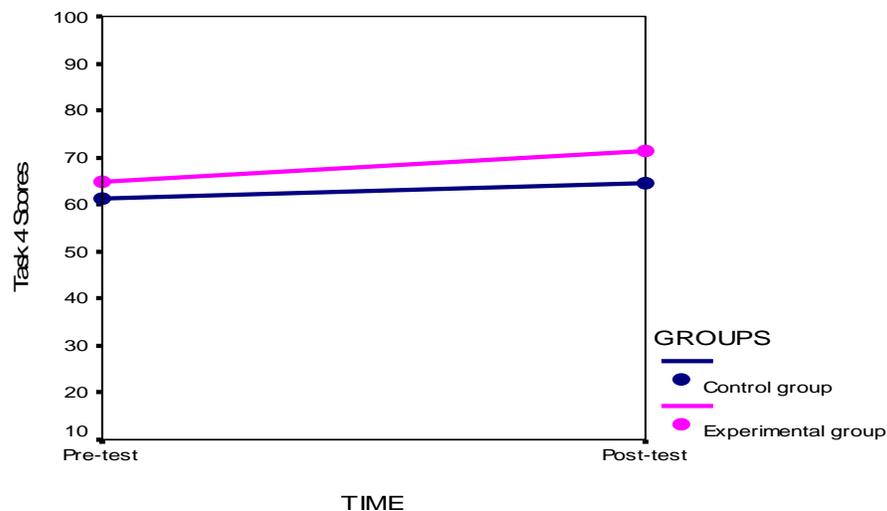


Figure 4.5. The Time by Groups interaction for Task 4.

Overall, the analysis of pre- and post-test scores of both the control and experimental group in this section indicated that the effect of using blogs in a Turkish EFL writing class at undergraduate level was observed in the students' drafts. First of all, an overall analysis of the students' writing performance revealed that the students both in the experimental and control group showed similar performance in their first draft and improved significantly in their second drafts. Secondly, a further analysis of tasks revealed that both groups made the most of peer feedback sessions and produced better drafts after the sessions. Nonetheless, those in the experimental group had significantly higher scores in their second drafts, which meant that the use of blogs as an instructional tool made a difference and enabled them to improve their writing skills more. As discussed in the literature review part, the features of blogs such as visual aids, viewing drafts several times, word processing, editing and deleting, publishing,

and having real audiences apart from their friends and teacher, ownership of a blog website, provided an authentic environment and a real purpose for the students to write.

4.2.1.6. Results Related to the Comparison between Task 1 and Task 2

A 2 (Tests-Pre-test & Post-test) x 2 (Groups-Control & Experimental) x 2 (Tasks-Task 1 & Task 2) mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted, and means and standard deviations for both the control and experimental groups were given in Table 4.8. The results of the analysis showed no significant main effect for Groups, $F(1, 28) = 4.08$, $p > .05$, Eta-squared = .127. There was no significant difference between the control ($M = 66.03$) and experimental group ($M = 69.97$) if other two variables (Tasks and Tests) were ignored. However, the results demonstrated a significant main effect of Tasks, $F(1, 28) = 8.94$, $p < .05$, Eta-squared = .242. The scores of Task 1 ($M = 66.15$) were significantly lower than the scores of Task 2 ($M = 69.85$). The results showed no significant interaction effect of Tasks x Groups, $F(1, 28) = .529$, $p > .05$, Eta-squared = .019. The scores of the control group (Task 1- $M = 63.73$, Task 2- $M = 68.33$) were not different than those in the experimental group (Task 1- $M = 68.57$, Task 2- $M = 71.37$) in two tasks.

Table 4.8

Descriptive Statistics for Task 1 & Task 2

		Groups	Mean	SD	N
Task 1	Pre-test	control group	62.07	7.52	15
		experimental group	64.87	4.97	15
		Total	63.47	6.42	30
	Post-test	control group	65.40	8.77	15
		experimental group	72.27	4.22	15
		Total	68.83	7.61	30
Task 2	Pre-test	control group	66.47	6.92	15
		experimental group	67.53	5.93	15
		Total	67.00	6.35	30
	Post-test	control group	70.20	6.82	15
		experimental group	75.20	4.63	15
		Total	72.70	6.27	30

Additionally, the results of the analysis showed a significant main effect of Tests (Pre-test & Post-test), $F(1, 28) = 432.49$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .939$. Overall scores in pre-test ($M = 65.23$) were significantly lower than the scores in post-test ($M = 69.85$). The results also showed a significant interaction effect of Tests x Groups, $F(1, 28) = 56.52$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .669$. The scores of the control (pre-test- $M = 64.27$, post-test- $M = 67.80$) and experimental group (pre-test- $M = 66.20$, post-test- $M = 73.73$) were significantly different in pre-test and post-test.

Moreover, the results of the analysis showed no significant interaction of Tasks x Tests, $F(1, 28) = .60$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .021$. The scores of Task 1 (pre-test- $M = 63.47$, post-test- $M = 68.83$) and Task 2 (pre-test- $M = 67.00$, post-test- $M = 72.70$) were not significantly different in pre-test and post-test.

Finally, the results of the analysis demonstrated no significant interaction of Tasks x Tests x Groups, $F(1, 28) = .02$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .001$. Therefore, the fact that there was not a significant interaction among these three factors showed that the

students' writing performances both in the control and experimental group were similar in Task 1 and 2 concerning their pre- and post-test scores.

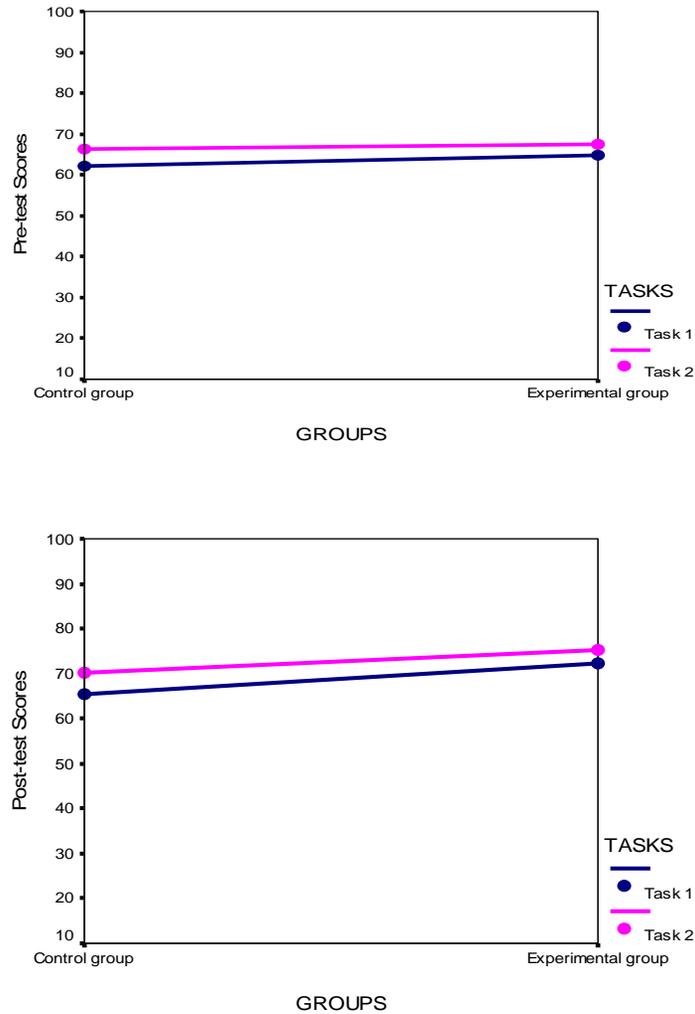


Figure 4.6. The Tasks by Tests by Groups interaction effect for Task 1 and Task 2.

4.2.1.7. Results Related to the Comparison between Task 1 and Task 3

A 2 (Tests-Pre-test & Post-test) x 2 (Groups-Control & Experimental) x 2 (Tasks-Task 1 & Task 3) mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted, and means and standard deviations for both control and experimental groups were given in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Descriptive Statistics for Task 1 & Task 3.

		Groups	Mean	SD	N
Task 1	Pre-test	control group	62.07	7.52	15
		experimental group	64.87	4.97	15
		Total	63.47	6.42	30
	Post-test	control group	65.40	8.77	15
		experimental group	72.27	4.22	15
		Total	68.83	7.61	30
Task 3	Pre-test	control group	63.93	5.93	15
		experimental group	65.13	5.03	15
		Total	64.53	5.44	30
	Post-test	control group	67.33	6.62	15
		experimental group	72.40	4.03	15
		Total	69.87	5.97	30

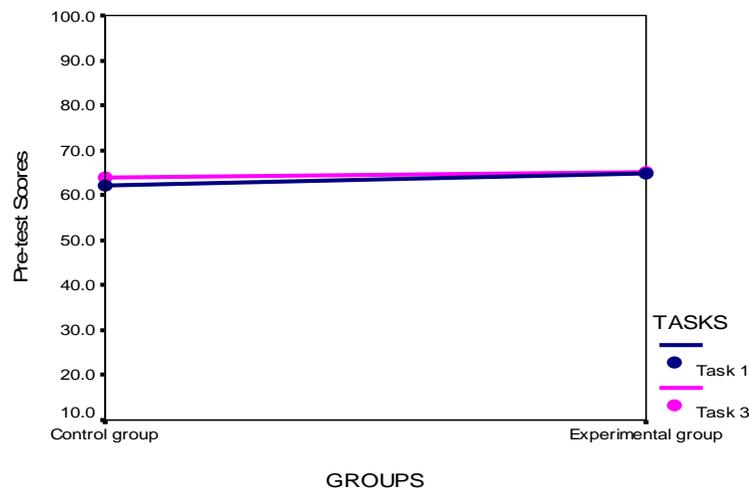
The results of the analysis showed a significant main effect for Groups (the control and experimental), $F(1, 28) = 4.69$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .144$. There was a significant difference between the control ($M = 64.68$) and experimental group ($M = 68.67$) if other two variables (Tasks and Tests) were ignored. The results also demonstrated no significant main effect of Tasks (Task 1 and Task 3), $F(1, 28) = .77$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .027$. The scores of Task 1 ($M = 66.15$) were similar to Task 3 ($M = 67.20$) (if other variables “Tests and Groups” ignored). Finally, the results showed no significant interaction effect of Tasks x Groups, $F(1, 28) = .51$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .018$. The scores of the control group (Task 1- $M = 63.73$, Task 2- $M = 65.63$) were not different than the experimental group (Task 1- $M = 68.57$, Task 2- $M = 68.77$) in two tasks (if “Tests” were ignored).

Additionally, the results of the analysis showed a significant main effect of Tests (pre-test and post-test), $F(1, 28) = 309.96$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .917$. Overall scores in pre-test ($M = 64.00$) were significantly lower than the scores in post-test ($M =$

69.35) (if other variables “Tasks and Groups” ignored). In addition, the results showed a significant interaction effect of Tests x Groups, $F(1, 28) = 45.60$, $p < .05$, Eta-squared = .603. The scores of the control (pre-test-M=63.00, post-test-M= 66.37) and experimental group (pre-test-M= 65.00, post-test-M= 72.33) were significantly different in pre-test and post-test (if “Tasks” were ignored).

Moreover, the results of the analysis showed no significant interaction of Tasks x Tests, $F(1, 28) = .01$, $p > .05$, Eta-squared = .000. The scores of Task 1 (pre-test-M= 63.47, post-test-M= 68.83) and Task 3 (pre-test-M= 64.53, post-test-M= 69.87) were not significantly different in pre-test and post-test (if “Groups” were ignored).

Finally, the results of the analysis demonstrated no significant interaction of Tasks x Tests x Groups, $F(1, 28) = .06$, $p > .05$, Eta-squared = .002. Figure 4.7 demonstrates the interaction among three variables. Similarly, the students in both groups showed no significant difference in relation to their performances in pre- and post-test scores of Task 1 and 3.



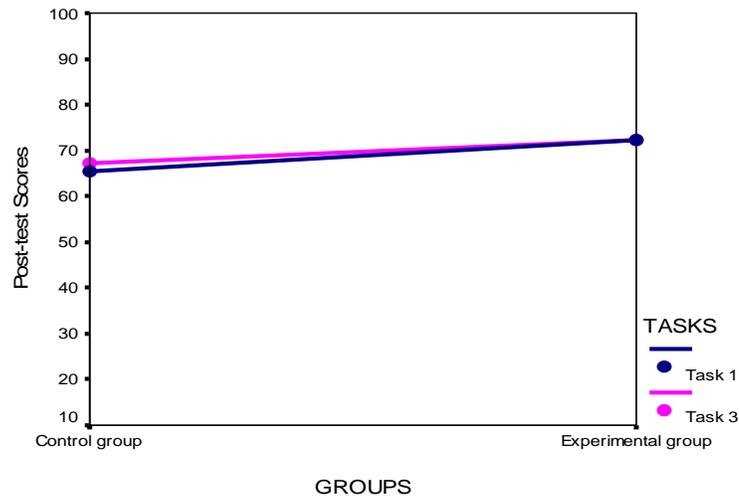


Figure 4.7. The Tasks x Tests x Groups interaction effect for Task 1 & Task 3.

4.2.1.8. Results Related to the Comparison between Task 1 and Task 4

A 2 (Tests-Pre-test & Post-test) x 2 (Groups-Control & Experimental) x 2 (Tasks-Task 1 & Task 4) mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted and means and standard deviations for both control and experimental groups were given in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Descriptive Statistics for Task 1 & Task 4.

		Groups	Mean	SD	N
Task 1	Pre-test	control group	62.07	7.52	15
		experimental group	64.87	4.97	15
		Total	63.47	6.42	30
	Post-test	control group	65.40	8.77	15
		experimental group	72.27	4.22	15
		Total	68.83	7.61	30
Task 4	Pre-test	control group	61.40	6.72	15
		experimental group	64.73	4.76	15
		Total	63.07	5.97	30
	Post-test	control group	64.53	7.93	15
		experimental group	71.40	3.70	15
		Total	67.97	7.01	30

The results of the analysis showed a significant main effect for Groups (control and experimental), $F(1, 28) = 7.52$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .212$. There was a significant difference between the control ($M = 63.35$) and the experimental group ($M = 68.32$) if other two variables (Tasks and Tests) were ignored. The results also demonstrated no significant main effect of Tasks (task 1 and task 4), $F(1, 28) = .21$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .008$. The scores of Task 1 ($M = 66.15$) were similar to Task 4 ($M = 65.52$) (if other variables “Tests and Groups” were ignored). Lastly, the results showed no significant interaction effect of Tasks x Groups, $F(1, 28) = .01$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$. The scores of the control group (Task 1- $M = 63.73$, Task 4- $M = 62.97$) were not different than those in the experimental group (Task 1- $M = 68.57$, Task 2- $M = 68.07$) in two tasks (if “Tests” were ignored).

Additionally, the results of the analysis showed a significant main effect of Tests (pre-test and post-test), $F(1, 28) = 277.84$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .908$. Overall scores in pre-test ($M = 63.27$) were significantly lower than the scores in post-test ($M = 68.40$) (if other variables “Tasks and Groups” were ignored). The results also showed a significant interaction effect of Tests x Groups, $F(1, 28) = 38.06$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .576$. The scores of the control (pre-test- $M = 61.73$, post-test- $M = 64.97$) and experimental group (pre-test- $M = 64.80$, post-test- $M = 71.83$) were significantly different in pre-test and post-test (if “Tasks” were ignored).

Furthermore, the results of the analysis showed no significant interaction of Tasks x Tests, $F(1, 28) = .60$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .021$. The scores of Task 1 (pre-test- $M = 63.47$, post-test- $M = 68.83$) and Task 4 (pre-test- $M = 63.07$, post-test- $M = 67.97$) were not significantly different in pre-test and post-test (if “Groups” were ignored).

Finally, the results of the analysis demonstrated no significant interaction of Tasks x Tests x Groups, $F(1, 28) = .17, p > .05, \eta^2 = .007$. Figure 4.8 demonstrates the interaction among three variables. As in the previous task comparisons, there was not a significant difference between the students' performances in Task 1 and 4 in relation to groups and tests.

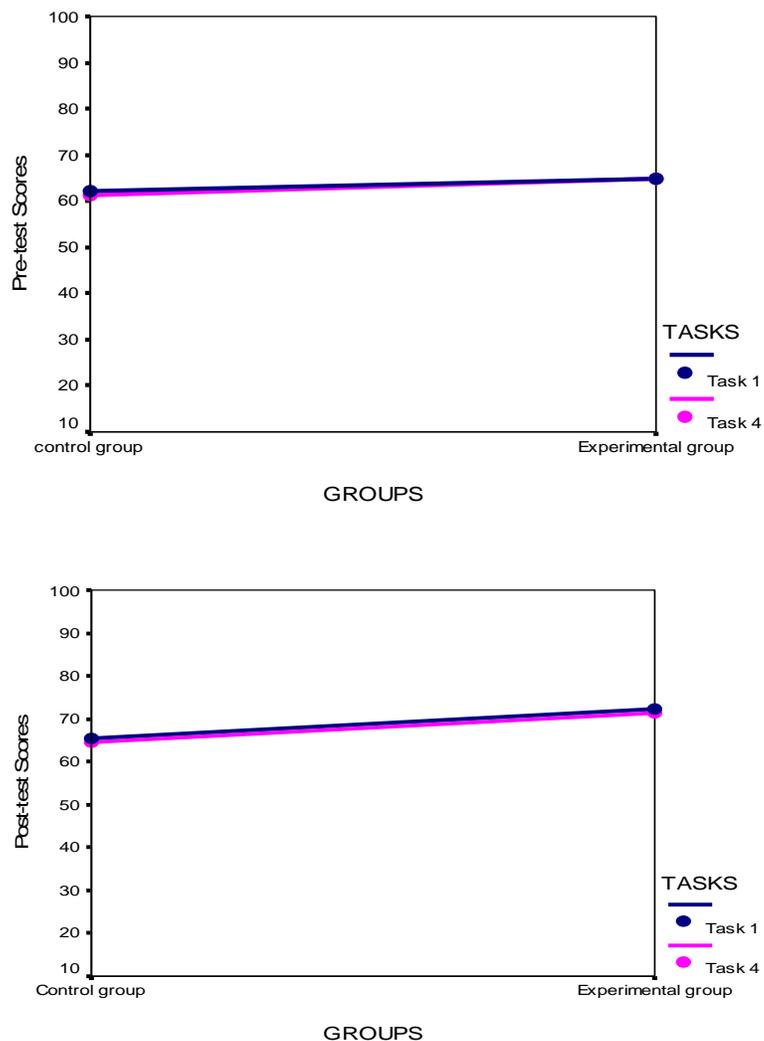


Figure 4.8. The Tasks x Tests x Groups interaction effect for Task 1 & Task 4.

In conclusion, the results related to the comparison of Task 1 and 2, Task 1 and 3, and finally Task 1 and 4 revealed that there was not a significant difference between these tasks in terms of the students' writing performances in pre- and post-test scores both in the control and experimental group. In other words, both groups showed the same performance in their pre- and post-tests throughout four tasks. In fact, the expected result by the researcher was a significant difference between Task 1 and Task 4 in terms of the students' writing performance in two groups especially in their post-test scores. A possible explanation for this situation might be that since the topics in these four opinion essays were different, topic knowledge is considered a confounding factor in this study and likely to interfere with the results. In order to get an idea about the students' confidence and interest in the topics, a short 5-point likert scale follow-up survey was given to the students after the study was completed. 21 students out of 30 participants in the study were available and completed the survey. For each topic in the tasks, they expressed if they feel confident to write about and if they are interested in the topic. As the results suggest, the students mostly feel confident in four opinion essay topics (M= 4.0 for the first topic; M= 3.8 for the second topic; M= 3.4 for the third topic; M= 3.4 for the fourth topic). As for their interest in the topics, the results show that they are interested in the topics at a certain level (M= 3.8 for the first topic; M= 3.8 for the second topic; M= 2.9 for the third topic; M= 3.0 for the fourth topic). However, in order to understand this issue in detail, it is necessary to conduct a further and detailed study on topic knowledge because it is beyond the purposes of this study.

4.2.1.9. Results Related to the Major Aspects of Writing

As the overall analysis of pre- and post-test scores in the previous section revealed, both the control and experimental group showed improvement in their post-test scores. However, the scores in the latter group were significantly higher than those in the first one. That is, the use of blog peer feedback in their writing classes helped the students perform better in writing skills. In order to understand in which aspects the improvement was, a further analysis through descriptive statistics on the components described in the analytic scoring scale was conducted. These major aspects of writing included content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. As the rubric in the analytic scoring scale defined, the first three components (content, organization, and vocabulary) were evaluated out of 20 points each where as language use was assessed out of 30 points. The remaining 10 points were given to mechanics.

A paired-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether the students in the control and experimental group produced better writing in their second drafts in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Table 4.11 and 4.12 present the paired samples *t* test results in two groups.

Table 4.11

Paired Samples t Test Results for Aspects of Writing in the Control Group

Aspects of Writing	Control						
	1 st Draft		2 nd Draft		df	t test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		t	p
Content (out of 20)	14.52	1.42	15.05	1.55	14	-6.87	.000
Organization (out of 20)	13.25	1.28	13.83	1.48	14	-7.49	.000
Vocabulary (out of 20)	12.45	.324	12.93	1.16	14	-7.85	.000
Language Use (out of 30)	16.29	1.80	17.85	2.03	14	-10.73	.000
Mechanics (out of 10)	6.89	.76	7.32	.82	14	-5.70	.000

Table 4.12

Paired Samples t Test Results for Aspects of Writing in the Experimental Group

Aspects of Writing	Experimental						
	1 st Draft		2 nd Draft		df	t test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		t	p
Content (out of 20)	14.26	.73	15.56	.59	14	-17.96	.000
Organization (out of 20)	13.50	.75	15.08	.54	14	-17.14	.000
Vocabulary (out of 20)	13.38	.97	14.40	.92	14	-15.05	.000
Language Use (out of 30)	17.35	1.41	19.99	1.04	14	-18.50	.000
Mechanics (out of 10)	6.97	.44	7.53	.47	14	-11.24	.000

The results indicated that the mean score for content in post-tests of the control (M= 15.05, SD= 1,55) and the experimental (M= 15.56, SD= ,59) group were significantly higher than the mean score for content in pre-tests of the control (M=14.52, SD= 1,42), $t(14)= -6.87, p < .01$ and the experimental (M= 14.26, SD= ,73), $t(14)= -17.96, p < .01$ group. Similarly, in terms of organization, both the control (post-test M= 13.83, SD= 1,48) and the experimental (post-test M= 15.08, SD= ,54) group performed better in their post-tests when compared with their pre-tests (control pre-tests M= 13.25, SD= 1,28, $t(14)= -7.49, p < .01$; experimental pre-tests M= 13.50, SD= ,75, $t(14)= -17.14, p < .01$). Additionally, the mean score for vocabulary in post-tests of the control (M= 12.93, SD= 1,16) and experimental (M= 14.40, SD= ,92) group were significantly higher than the mean score for vocabulary in pre-tests of the control (M=12,45, SD= 1,02), $t(14)= -7.85, p < .01$ and experimental (M= 13.38, SD= ,97), $t(14)= -15.05, p < .01$ group. As for language use, both the control (post-test M= 17.85, SD= 2,03) and the experimental (post-test M= 19.99, SD= 1,04) group showed a significant increase in their post-tests when compared with their pre-tests (control pre-tests M= 16.29, SD= 1,80), $t(14)= -10.73, p < .01$; (experimental pre-tests M= 17.35, SD= 1,41), $t(14)= -18.50, p < .01$. Finally, the mean score for mechanics in post-tests of the control (M= 7.32, SD= ,82) and the experimental (M= 7.53, SD= ,47) group were significantly higher than the mean score for vocabulary in pre-tests of the control (M=6,89, SD= ,76), $t(14)= -5.70, p < .01$ and the experimental (M= 6.97, SD= ,44), $t(14)= -11.24, p < .01$ group. Consequently, the students both in the control and experimental group showed a significantly higher performance in all aspects of writing in their second drafts.

4.2.1.10. Results Related to Word Count Analysis

The words on each student's first and second drafts were counted and then averages for each student for each task were calculated. In order to get the overall average scores for each task, the average scores for tasks in both control and experimental group were calculated again. Table 4.13 presents the overall task by task word counts in the control and experimental group.

Table 4.13

Task by Task Word Counts in Groups

	T1	T2	T3	T4	Total
Control	288	287	300	285	290
Experimental	280	290	313	250	283

The results of word counts showed that both the experimental group (M=283) and control group (M=290) produced almost the same amount of writing. That is, the use of blogs had no effect on the quantity of EFL students' writing. A possible explanation for the results of word counts might be the fact that the students are producing between 250-350 words, which is the expected limit for essay writing for academic purposes.

4.2.2. Results Related to the Research Question 2

The framework for analysis of blog and face-to-face peer feedback is based on a part of data analysis and interpretation in Liu and Sadler (2003). Therefore, the analysis and interpretation in this study focused on the distribution of the comments by the students in global areas, which refers to feedback with regards to the idea development, audience and purpose, and organization of writing, and in local areas, which means

feedback related to editing such as wording, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. In addition, the nature of comments in each area and group was analyzed together with the number of revisions made by the students depending on their peers' comments. Table 4.14 presents the results related to the nature of peer feedback comments in two groups.

Table 4.14

Results Related to the Nature of Peer Feedback Comments

	The Nature of Comments			
	Revision-oriented		Non Revision-oriented	
	N	%	N	%
Control	93	88.5	12	11.4
Experimental	107	95.5	5	4.4

As Table 4.14 shows, 95.5% of blog peer feedback comments in the experimental group were revision-oriented, and 4.4% of their comments were non revision-oriented. The control group had 88.5% revision-oriented, and 11.4% non revision oriented peer comments as a result of the sessions analyzed. Therefore, a considerably larger percentage of revision-oriented comments in both groups verify the significant improvement that the students showed in their second drafts. Additionally, although revision-oriented blog peer feedback comments are only 7% larger than those in the control group, it might have a role in the significantly different writing performance of the students in the experimental group in their second drafts, compared to the control group.

In order to investigate the number of global and local peer feedback comments both in the traditional and blog group, revision-oriented comments were counted again, and considered in the appropriate area. Table 4.15 presents the results related to the areas of peer feedback comments in two groups.

Table 4.15

Results Related to the Areas of Peer Feedback Comments

	<u>The Areas of Comments</u>							
	Global				Local			
	N	%	R*	%	N	%	R*	%
Control	36	38.7	26	72.2	57	61.3	47	82.4
Experimental	69	64.4	60	86.9	38	35.6	31	81.5

R* number of revisions made by the students depending on peer feedback

As Table 4.15 indicates, 64.4% of revision-oriented blog peer feedback consisted of global comments, and 35.6% were local comments. However, the percentage of global comments in the control group was 38.7 while it was 61.3% for local comments. Depending on the researcher's observation and the format of the blog peer feedback comments, a possible explanation for these results might be that the students in the experimental group kept following the peer feedback guidelines and questions introduced at the beginning of the semester although those in the control group never used them after the training sessions. Thus, because of the fact that peer feedback questions were mostly about global issues in writing, those in the experimental group had more global comments about their writing from their peers. In

fact, these results also revealed that the students in the experimental group were more concerned about the instructions and task requirements.

4.2.3. Results Related to the Research Question 3

In order to investigate Turkish EFL students' perception of using blogs in their writing classes, End-of-semester Questionnaire and interviews were analyzed.

Descriptive statistics were computed to calculate the mean scores, standard deviations, frequency and percentage of the items in the questionnaire. As for the interviews, they were first transcribed, and then analyzed through already existing categories in the questions. The segments were selected and sorted according to these categories (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989).

4.2.3.1. Results Related to End-of-semester Questionnaire

A set of descriptive statistics was utilized to analyze End-of-semester Questionnaire about students' perceptions. Table 4.16 presents the overall means of each item in the questionnaire.

Table 4.16

Overall Means of the Items in End-of-semester Questionnaire

Items	Mean	SD	N
1. It was a good experience to use blogs and work with peers to review my paper.	3,2667	1,03280	15
2. I felt my writing improved at the end of the semester	3,4667	1,06010	15
3. Blog peer feedback was helpful in helping me make changes on my papers.	3,8667	,74322	15
4. It was easy to use and explore the features of blog websites.	3,8000	,94112	15
5. I felt blog writing assignments were good.	3,3333	,89974	15
6. I felt confident about reading and commenting on my peer's papers on his/her blog.	3,1333	,83381	15
7. I felt my technology ability improved at the end of the semester.	3,8667	,83381	15
8. I felt my writing ability was better at the end of the semester.	3,6667	1,04654	15
9. I felt my ability to comment on my peer's papers improved after using blogs.	3,4000	,82808	15
10. I felt embarrassed with a peer doing review and getting feedback.	1,2667	,59362	15
11. I would take another writing course using blogs.	3,6000	1,12122	15
12. I would recommend this writing course with the use of blogs to the other students.	4,1333	,74322	15
13. I think that blogs can help me improve my English.	4,3333	,72375	15
14. I think blogging can help writers.	4,0000	,75593	15
15. I think blogging can help readers.	2,9333	,79881	15
16. I will continue to use my blog after the writing class.	3,6667	,72375	15

The results revealed that the highest mean score (M=4,33) was observed in Item 13, which showed that students thought blogs could improve their English. The second highest mean score (M=4,00) indicated that they thought blogging could help writers. The students also thought that blog peer feedback was helpful for them to make changes on their papers (M= 3,86), and their technology ability improved at the end of semester. The mean score (M=3,80) for Item 4 revealed that it was easy for them to use

and explore the features of blog websites. In addition, the students agreed that their writing ability was better at the end of semester ($M=3,66$), and that they would take a similar course ($M=3,60$) and continue to use blogs ($M=3,66$). However, most of the students neither agreed nor disagreed that they felt confident about reading and commenting on their peer's papers on blogs ($M=3,13$), and that blogging could help them as readers ($M=2,93$). As for the reverse-scale item in the questionnaire, the mean score ($M=1,26$) showed that they didn't feel embarrassed working with a peer.

For a detailed analysis, the frequency and percentage of each item on this 5 point Likert-scale questionnaire were also calculated. As for the most frequent item, 13 students (86,70%) agreed and strongly agreed that blogs could help them improve their English, and 12 students (80,01%) agreed and strongly agreed that they would recommend their writing course with the use of blogs to the other students. Similarly, 11 students (73,30%) agreed and strongly agreed that it was easy to use and explore the features of blog websites and that blogging could help writers. Being the only reverse item in the questionnaire, the statement in item 10 was disagreed or strongly disagreed by 14 students (93,30%), which showed that they did not feel embarrassed with a peer doing review and getting feedback. Table 4.17 presents the frequency and percentage of each item on this 5 point Likert-scale questionnaire.

Table 4.17

Frequency and Percentage of Questionnaire Items

Items	5 Point Likert-scale										N
	1		2		3		4		5		
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
1	1	6,7	1	6,7	8	53,3	3	20,0	2	13,3	15
2	1	6,7	1	6,7	5	33,3	6	40,0	2	13,3	15
3	-	-	-	-	5	33,3	7	46,7	3	20,0	15
4	-	-	2	13,3	2	13,3	8	53,3	3	20,0	15
5	-	-	2	13,3	8	53,3	3	20,0	2	13,3	15
6	-	-	4	33,3	5	33,3	6	40,0	-	-	15
7	-	-	-	-	6	40,0	5	33,3	4	26,7	15
8	-	-	2	13,3	5	33,3	4	26,7	4	26,7	15
9	-	-	2	13,3	6	40,0	6	40,0	1	6,7	15
10	12	80,0	2	13,3	1	6,7	-	-	-	-	15
11	1	6,7	1	6,7	4	26,7	6	40,0	3	20,0	15
12	-	-	-	-	3	20,0	7	46,7	5	33,3	15
13	-	-	-	-	2	13,3	6	40,0	7	46,7	15
14	-	-	-	-	4	26,7	7	46,7	4	26,7	15
15	-	-	5	33,3	6	40,0	4	26,7	-	-	15
16	-	-	-	-	7	46,7	6	40,0	2	13,3	15

4.2.3.2. Results Related to Interview

In addition to End-of-semester Questionnaire, the participants were also interviewed both in group and individually at the end of the semester to gain an insight into their perceptions of using blogs in the writing class. The interview data were transcribed first, and then analyzed according to the categories in the questions each of which addresses a theme concerning their perceptions and experiences.

Blogs as a teaching tool for EFL writing: The most common words used by the students to describe blogs as a teaching tool for their writing were ‘good’, ‘enjoyed’, ‘fun’, and ‘improved’. They expressed that it was a good experience for them, and although it was the first time they used technology, they felt that creating a website for

themselves and using it for writing classes were very enjoyable. One of the students also drew her friends' attention to the resources or materials that they could benefit from while completing their drafts. She summarized her feelings and experiences in the following way:

... I think it is fun because in our blogs we can use some pictures we may use colorful writing style. By using this we make learning more enjoyable. On behalf of myself, I didn't get bored while doing the blog, but I can be bored if I do the manual type.

However, another student conveyed her feelings emphasizing that although it was a nice experience and more realistic than using pen-and-paper because they use technology and Internet everyday, she had difficulty in considering Internet as a learning tool. Therefore, she thought computers or Internet for teaching EFL writing was not effective for her because she couldn't get used to the idea that they are using it for academic purposes.

Difficulties they faced while using blogs: The data showed that as a tool, it wasn't difficult for the students to use blogs because they were using the computer or Internet almost everyday. They clearly expressed the user-friendly aspect of blogs by saying that it took only ten minutes to get an account in three steps. One student said, "It is much easier than I thought because I like using computers. Also, it seems better than the handwriting. We can use a tool similar to word processing, read comments easily, and then edit our essay. I think it is not difficult...", which refers to several aspects of blogging. However, two students mentioned the problems with Internet connection that they sometimes experienced. In addition, the following excerpt showed the process one of these two students went through:

At the beginning of the term, I had troubles with adapting to the weblogs. In the middle, I got used to, and at the end of the term, it was good. I think it will be easy for people who know how to use the internet a lot, or have had experience in using blogs. For me, it was difficult in the beginning...

These ideas are actually closely related to the importance of training sessions as they had at the beginning of the term. Although the students were used to computers or Internet, blogs were something new to them and they used the tool for academic purposes for the first time.

The effect of blogging on the students' EFL writing: While the students were talking about the effect of blogging, their ideas or feelings centered around 'being a writer'. They clearly expressed that they felt themselves as a journalist because not only teacher but also other people or friends in the class were reading each other's essays. One student called herself 'a real writer' because she knew other people could read what she wrote. Another student added that it was a good experience to publish their essay on their blogs because she knew that some people would read her essays. Considering themselves as 'real writers', the students also mentioned the effectiveness of getting peer feedback via tools. As the following extract shows, the students did not mind having negative comments, but appreciated their peers' positive ideas:

I think it will improve our writing and English, also technology use. Peer feedback has helped me a lot. I saw my errors and with my peer's comments, I corrected myself.... I didn't feel bad when I got negative feedback because feedbacks were for my improvement. It affected my skills in a good way. It was a good experience.

The students agreed with each other that blogging 'affected them positively both in writing and reading' because they had to read and write feedback about what they read. However, two students were against the idea of making use of peer feedback in writing

classes because they believed that teacher feedback was better and their peers could not know better than them.

Differences between blog writing classes and traditional writing classes: The most common difference expressed by the students was that they did not have to use pen-and-paper to write their drafts because they felt at ease in using technology and their blog websites. The students also mentioned one important feature of CMC, time-independence, by agreeing upon one of their friends' ideas in the following quote:

In traditional classes, you have maybe no time to do everything. If you are in traditional classes, you have maybe one hour to finish many things, and it is too loud because everyone is speaking. But, at home with computer, you are silent and have a lot of time...

Although the students believed that their reading and confidence in writing was getting better because of blogs, one student expressed her preference for traditional classes by saying, "But face-to-face is better, I think, because you learn something at that time, and you clearly make your essay".

The use of blogs in the future: The data showed that the students had mixed perceptions of using their blogs in the future. Whereas they regarded using blogs as 'reliable', 'practical', 'fast', and 'useful', they accepted that it required time and effort. Moreover, one student mentioned the fact that not every school in Turkey has such technological support as Internet or a language laboratory by saying, "I think it is a good idea. If we have computers and Internet at schools, we will definitely integrate it into our classes in the future." The final remark related to the future plans for using blogs came from a very enthusiastic student as in the following extract:

Yes, because we used computers effectively and it improved our writing. It is fast and reliable. I does not bother students like other normal assignments....I

liked using blog website. I think everything was perfect. I was very happy and content. In the next years, I would like to do the same things that I did in this year as my reading, writing, and confidence in writing improved very much.

In summary, almost all the students revealed their perceptions by referring to different aspects of using blogs in their EFL classes such as being user-friendly and time-independent, feeling like a real writer and having an audience rather than a teacher, using photos and other online materials or resources to make their essays richer.

4.3. Summary

This chapter has presented the results and discussion of the data gathered by means of; (a) Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey, (b) interviews at the beginning and end of the semester, (c) writing tasks (first and second, or revised, drafts), (d) transcripts of peer feedback comments, (e) End-of-semester Questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and a mixed factorial ANOVA were computed to find out the characteristics of the participating students, and if there was an effect of using blogs in a Turkish EFL writing class. In addition, paired samples *t* test was computed for the analysis of improvement in the major aspects of writing and word count analysis was conducted to investigate the effect of blogging on the quantity of writing. As for the distribution of peer feedback comments in the area and nature, both blog and face-to-face peer feedback comments were grouped according to their being revision-oriented or nonrevision oriented, and global versus local. Finally, in order to gain insights into the students' perceptions of using blogs, a set of descriptive statistics were utilized again for the analysis of End-of-semester Questionnaire, and the interviews were analyzed in the order of questions.

Descriptive statistics for survey and interview analysis demonstrated a similarity in relation to the students' abilities in writing, technology, and English proficiency as well as demographic information. A mixed factorial ANOVA revealed that there was an effect of using blogs in the experimental group when compared to the control group. In other words, those in the first group performed better than those in the second group in terms of their second drafts. However, there was not a significant difference in terms of the students' writing performance in Task 1 and 2, Task 1 and 3, Task 1 and 4

considering the groups, pre- and post-tests. Additionally, the students in two groups showed a significant improvement in their second drafts in terms of aspects of writing. Word count analysis also indicated that the students in both groups produced the same amount of words on average. As a further analysis, the analysis of peer feedback comments resulted in that those in the experimental group were more concerned about global rather than local issues in writing. Finally, the analysis of End-of-semester Questionnaire and interviews indicated that most of the students having used their blog websites in their writing classes had positive feelings and perceptions.

The next chapter includes the conclusion, implications, limitations, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The present study had the following research questions;

1. What is the effect of blog peer feedback on Turkish EFL students' writing performance?

a) Is there a significant improvement on the blog group's second drafts after receiving blog peer feedback in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

b) Is there a significant difference between the blog group's performance on the first and final task in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

c) Is there a significant improvement on the aspects of writing in the blog group's second drafts in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

d) Is there an effect of blog peer feedback on the quantity of the blog group's writing in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

2. What is the distribution of blog peer feedback comments in the area (global versus local) and in the nature (revision-oriented versus non revision-oriented) in comparison with the face-to-face peer feedback group?

3. What are the Turkish EFL writers' perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes?

In relation to the first research question, the use of blogs in a Turkish EFL writing class helped the students perform better in their writing classes and work collaboratively throughout the writing process. Blogs served as an appropriate tool for the writing process and matched well with the instructional goals of the writing course because of particular features of blogging such as drafting, commenting, editing, and

publishing. In that sense, this study supports the findings in the previous studies (Nelson & Fernheimer, 2003; Jones, 2006; Kızı1, 2007) on blogging in writing classes. In addition, an overall analysis of the writing scores revealed that although both groups showed improvement in their post-test scores, the students in the experimental group had a better writing performance in their second drafts because their post-test scores were significantly higher than the control group. Therefore, the use of blogs in a Turkish EFL writing class enabled the students to get higher scores, and to show better writing skills than those who were involved in face-to-face peer feedback sessions in traditional classroom settings.

The task by task analysis of first and second drafts produced by the students in the control and experimental group also indicated that they benefited from peer feedback sessions regardless of the mode. Whether through blogs or face-to-face oral discussions, peer feedback sessions helped them improve their drafts and produce better second drafts. Thus, the results corroborate what is claimed by Chaudron (1984), Keh (1990), Mangelsdorf (1992), Mendoca and Johnson (1994), in relation to the positive effects of peer feedback in writing classes. However, task analysis revealed that the students who used blogs for peer feedback were more successful because their scores in second drafts were higher than those who gave feedback each other through face-to-face oral discussions. A possible explanation for this result might be the recording aspect of blogs for later reviews that may cause students to become more careful about what they are writing as discussed in the literature review part (Barrios, 2003; Godwin-Jones, 2003).

The comparison of Task 1 and 2, Task 1 and 3, and finally Task 1 and 4 also indicated that the students' writing performance in both groups was the same in the tasks, considering pre- and post-test scores. In other words, their writing performance in Task 1 was not different from what they did in Task 4 with regard to groups (the control and experimental) and tests (pre- and post-tests). One important reason for this situation could be topic knowledge or familiarity of the students. Since the only difference was in the essay topics, it was considered a possible confounding factor in the study, which is possible to result in that. In order to fully understand this, it is necessary to conduct a detailed study on topic knowledge, which is not the scope of this study.

In terms of the aspects described by the analytic scoring rubric, the results indicated that the students' writing significantly improved in all aspects, which is in harmony with the results of pre- and post-test scores, suggesting that both groups benefitted from peer feedback sessions. Additionally, word count analysis provided information on the overall quantity of writing in groups. The students both in the control and experimental group produced the same quantity of writing on average. Therefore, unlike Braine (2004), the use of CMC had no influence on the quantity of EFL Turkish students' writing.

As for the second research question, the analysis of the distribution of blog and peer feedback comments in nature indicated that the percentages of revision-oriented peer feedback comments were 88.5% in the control group and 95.5% in the experimental group. Therefore, a great number of comments in both groups were produced in order to help peers in their writing. In relation to the areas, the

experimental group was more focused on global issues such as idea development and organization while the control group was mostly concerned about local issues in their papers. Lastly, the percentages of revisions made by students depending on their peers' comments showed that the students in both groups considered their peers' comments and made changes accordingly in their second drafts at a considerable degree, which is also parallel to the result related to the significant improvement in the students' writing performance in their second drafts.

Finally, the results of End-of-semester Questionnaire and interview revealed that the students had positive perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes. They agreed that blogging improved their writing in English and blog peer feedback was useful for them to make changes on their papers. They also expressed that blogs were easy to use and explore the features and that they didn't feel embarrassed while working with a peer. However, the students were not sure if they felt confident about reading and commenting on their peer's papers on blogs. In that sense, the results confirmed the results of the previous studies (Warschauer, 1996; Jones, 2006; Guardado & Shi, 2007; Kızıllı, 2007). Finally, another important result of this study concerning the students' perceptions was that the use of blogs in their writing classes was a nice experience for them and more realistic than using pen-and-paper because of the fact that they used technology and Internet almost everyday as it was proposed by Johnson (2004).

In conclusion, the findings of the present study contribute considerably to our understanding of the use of blogs in EFL writing classes, its effect on students' writing

skills, including quality and quantity, as well as their perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes.

5.1. Implications

The present study has several implications for both educational researchers and EFL writing teachers. To start with, the results of both research questions provided insights into the use of asynchronous CMC in EFL writing classes designed according to writing process approach. The results which indicated improvement in the students' second drafts after receiving feedback from their peers provided evidence for Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development. Therefore, teachers should integrate collaborative study into their writing classes. Similarly, regardless of the mode, peer feedback proved to be an effective way for responding to students' writing and teachers should benefit from peer feedback sessions in their EFL writing classes by making students read, response, and edit their peers' essays. Furthermore, the results which revealed higher performance in blog peer feedback group contributed to the rationale for the use of asynchronous CMC in EFL writing classes through a carefully designed course, and the blogs were proved to be an effective tool for process-oriented writing classes. In this study, the students were not only trained for giving peer feedback through guidelines but also taught how to use their blogs effectively for instructional purposes. The guideline and discussions for giving peer feedback at the beginning of the term as well as training on technology use fostered the effectiveness of sessions. Moreover, the results related to the aspects of writing in which the students showed improvement indicated that writing did not mean only grammar to the students. Improvements in five major components of writing (content, organization, vocabulary,

language use, and mechanics) showed the complex nature of writing skills and how they were realized with the help of face-to-face oral discussions and blog peer feedback comments. Additionally, making students aware of these aspects was considered helpful. To sum up, the results of this study can help EFL writing teachers to plan a blog-integrated writing class in order to improve their students' writing skills.

Secondly, the present study provided insights into the students' perceptions of using blogs in their writing classes. The results that showed positive attitudes toward the use of blogs for giving feedback on each other's writing formed a basis for integrating asynchronous CMC into EFL writing classes. The study provided evidence for Turkish EFL students' acceptance of being involved in technology integrated writing classes, their ability to handle it through training sessions and then to use it effectively, and finally their consideration of blogs as a helpful tool for their writing skills. The use of blogs provided them with real audience rather than the teacher as the only one to read their compositions. They had a purpose to write. In this respect, the study underlined the importance of motivating students by providing them with real-life situations and variety in their writing classes because technology is in the centre of their life especially for the last few years in Turkey.

5.2. Limitations

It is necessary to mention several limitations in the present study. First of all, since the main focus was on the use of technology, the situation might be quite different in some parts of the country. In addition, the number of participants was limited to 30 first-year students in the department. Therefore, the results are not generalizable to other EFL setting. Another limitation of the study is concerned with the fact that topic

knowledge is a confounding factor which is likely to influence the results related to task comparison. Finally, some students had problems with their Internet connection, and expressed the difficulty in having access to Internet outside the laboratory. In spite of these limitations, the present study is important for the use of technology in EFL writing classes because it provides basis for further research.

5.3. Recommendations for Further Research

The present study has several recommendations for further research. Firstly, as discussed in the literature review part, the use of technology in EFL writing classes is in its beginning period. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct similar studies in different parts of Turkey because there is a difference between the familiarity to and understanding of Internet in Istanbul and in other parts of the country. In addition, since the design of tasks, materials, activities influence the effectiveness of EFL writing classes and the use of technology, the study should be replicated in different contexts. In that sense, it would be helpful to make comparisons between the effect of CMC integrated EFL writing classes not only in Turkey but also in different cultures. Additionally, the beliefs and attitudes of EFL writing teachers toward the use of technology and CMC in Turkey should be investigated because they directly influence the implementations in their classes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey

TURKISH EFL STUDENTS' BACKGROUND SURVEY

Please complete or put a tick in the appropriate blanks.

- Purpose for Studying English Credit (degree seeking) Non credit
(practicing English skills)
- Age
- Educational Experience Secondary/High School
 College: Area of Study _____
 Post College: Area of Study _____
- Technology Ability Novice: little experience or no experience with computers.
- Some experience: word processing typing and using the Internet to search, and e-mail.
- Expert: word processing, word processing special tasks (bullets, boxes, clip art, etc) Internet skills- researching, comparing products, shopping online, etc.
- Writing Ability After several drafts of writing, I would consider myself:
- Fairly Good: I can write, but with many problems in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Good: I can write, but with a few problems in grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- Very Good: I can write, but with minimum problems in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- English Language Proficiency As an advanced student, I can express myself speaking and in writing:
- Fairly Good: I can discuss my writing and my views with others, but with some difficulty.
- Good: I can discuss my writing and my views with others with clarity most of the time.
- Very Good: I can discuss my writing and my views with others with clarity

Name: _____ (Information will be confidential and will not affect your grades)

Appendix B
Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions about Turkish EFL students' English proficiency, technology and writing abilities and experiences:

1. When did you start to learn English? Why did you prefer to study English?
2. How much do you think you are proficient in English?
3. When did you start writing in English?
4. Do you think you can write easily in English? What is the most difficult thing for you while writing in English?
5. What do you think about the use of technology in writing classes? Do you have any experiences?

Questions about Turkish EFL students' perceptions on the use of blogs in their writing classes:

1. What do you think about using blogs as a teaching tool for EFL writing?
2. Was it easy or difficult for you to use blogs? In what aspect?
3. What do you think is the effect of blogging on your EFL writing?
4. How useful do you think blogs are for you in terms of any writing classes that require pen-and-paper and traditional ways of communication?
5. Would you continue to use your blog site after the semester? If yes, for what purposes?

Appendix C
Sample Essays

SAMPLE ESSAYS

(FirstDraft)

Topic: "Foreign language instruction should begin in kindergarten. Discuss!"

AN ENLIGHTENED PERSON

Learning a foreign language is ^a very important issue in our century. Nowadays, many people try to learn another language eagerly, especially conscious families give importance to instruct their children when they are young. They think that if their children learn a foreign language in kindergarten, they can obtain many advantages. However, some people argue that it is unnecessary because firstly children should know their own language. Consequently, there is a disagreement about this topic between people.

One of the ^{to} strongest arguments in favour of children should ~~be~~ ~~instructed~~ when they are very young as it is ^{is} good for them to know various cultures. When they are aware of the existence of ^{other} ~~foreign~~ cultures, they will grow up more consciously. Therefore, their view of world will be more intellectual.

Another advantage is that, if they start to learn foreign language in kindergarten, their thinking ability will definitely improve. Even if they are only little boys or girls, they will be broad-minded. Also, they can think more critically. Besides, it's well known that if the training begins in the early age, the knowledge will be more permanent. So, learning language will be also easier for children.

On the other hand, some people believe that, foreign language instruction should not be ~~begin~~ in kindergarten because this is unnecessary for them and also hard to cope with. They think that this application would be boring for children who are only 5 or 6. They support that if they try to learn another language in their ~~early years~~ ^{the early} ~~ages~~ they would forget ~~something~~ in the future. However, spending time to deal with a language age is both funny and useful. Nobody can deny that knowing more than one language is ~~at~~ a good thing whatever their ages are.

On balance, I'm in favour ^{beginning} of foreign language instructions ~~should~~ ^{begin} in young age. This will help children to improve themselves in a positive way. They will be more confident and enlightened people in this way.

Peer Comments on the First Draft:

S1: I liked your introduction, body paragraphs and your conclusion. Again, your vocabulary is very good. I really enjoyed reading it. But, I think your thesis statement is not clear. I mean you should say your ideas. Also, there are a few mistakes, and I will show them to you.

S2: Ok.

S1: Here, your title should be 'an enlightened person', I think.....(the student is reading the essay)...Here, I think you shouldn't use 'firstly' like this, and here I think you should say 'arguments', 's', and you should say 'one of the..... is'. Also, I think there is a problem here with 'another', you should use 'other cultures'. Here, 'if the training begins'.. and 'the knowledge'. After 'so', you can use comma.....(the students is reading the essay)...and here, I think the past form of begin is 'begun'.....Also, you should say 'it' instead of 'something' here. This is wrong, I think, we don't separate words in English. I think here you want to say 'that'and 'their ages are'. Also, you should say, in favor of foreign language instructions beginning in young age.' And, mmm, that is all, I think. Generally, it is ok, but you should revise it. Yes, that is it.

S2: Ok, thank you very much.

(Second Draft)

Topic: Foreign language instruction should begin in kindergarten. Discuss.

= AN ENLIGHTENED PERSON =

Learning a foreign language is a very important issue in our century. Nowadays, many people try to learn another language especially, especially conscious families give importance to instruct their children when they are young. They think that if their children learn a foreign language in kindergarten they can obtain many advantages. However, some people argue that it is unnecessary because firstly children should know their own language. Consequently, there is a disagreement about this topic between people. *Your opinion?*

One of the strongest arguments in favor of children are instructed when they are very young as it is good for them to know various cultures. When they are aware of the existence of other cultures, they will grow up more consciously. Therefore, their view of world will be more intellectual.

Another advantage is that if they start to learn foreign language in kindergarten, their thinking ability will definitely improve. Even if they are only little boys or girls, they will be broad-minded. Also, they can think more critically. Besides, it's well known that

if the training begins in the early age, their knowledge will be more permanent. So, learning language will be also easier for children.

On the other hand, some people believe that foreign language instruction should not be begun in kindergarten because this is unnecessary for them and also hard to cope with. They think that this application would be better for children who are only 5 or 6. They support that if they try to learn another language in the early ages, they would forget it in the future. However, spending time to deal with a language is both funny and useful. Nobody can deny that knowing more than one language is a good thing whatever their ages are.

On balance, I'm in favour of foreign language instruction, beginning in a young age. This will help children to improve themselves in a positive way. They will be more confident and enlightened people in this way.

(First Draft)

Foreign language instruction

Since a few years many education systems and their countries are discussing the question when foreign language instruction should begin. In previous years the teaching of a foreign language started with the first high-school year. Now it is common that children learn a foreign language when they are in the primary school.

Although they are too young for being confronted with a new language, which they never had heard before, statistics show that early age learners become more successful in learning a foreign language than later learners. Doctors say that this has to do with the cognitive abilities of a child. "The younger they are the more they can learn" is a thesis argued by doctors and psychologists.

Therefore i believe that establishing foreign language instruction in kindergarten will be more lucrative for our children. In kindergarten they will learn by playing, which is an important factor of motivation. Motivation, it think, is the biggest problem we have in high-schools. Pupils are not able to learn because they are unmotivated. Every lesson passes in the same way. While the teacher writes something on the board, the pupils have to copy it into their exercise books. There is no action in it. Therefore i believe that the more a child is motivated for learning a new language, the better it will learn it.

I do not argue that they should learn grammar, syntax and other difficult things. They can start learning words by looking at pictures, which will help them to establish a vocabulary. Such a training will effect their speaking in school because then a foreign language will not be totally strange to them. For these reasons i think it is not expecting too much of children.

Peer Comments on the First Draft:

S1:1. I think your thesis statement is not clear. It is a normal sentence, but you don't say your idea. You can say, for example, I agree or I don't agree.

2. I think your thesis is the last sentence of the introduction. You can write it clearly.

3. I think the content is clear. I can understand paragraphs. But, you maybe write another paragraph for opposites.

4. You can write opposite ideas. This is lacking, I think, because I wrote about in my essay, and we were done last term.

5. I think paragraphs are clear and have a focus. You should add some ideas to your first body because it is not clear. Maybe, you should say 'firstly' or so. But, I liked examples 'motivation' paragraphs.

6. Additional comments: I think your essay is ok, generally. In your first sentence, you should use 'have been discussing' because you say 'since' at the beginning. Your conclusion is ok, I think.

S2: Thank you, my dear.

(Second Draft)

Foreign language instruction

Since a few years many education systems and their countries have been discussing the question when foreign language instruction should begin. In previous years, the teaching of a foreign language started with the first high-school year. Now, it is common that children learn a foreign language when they are in the primary school. Like many people, I agree with the idea that foreign language instruction should start in kindergarten.

Although they are too young for being confronted with a new language, which they never had heard before, statistics show that early age learners become more successful in learning a foreign language than later learners. Doctors say that this has to do with the cognitive abilities of a child. "The younger they are the more they can learn" is a thesis argued by doctors and psychologists. Therefore i believe that establishing foreign language instruction in kindergarten will be more lucrative for our children.

In addition, motivation is another important point. In kindergarten they will learn by playing, which is an important factor of motivation. Motivation, it think, is the biggest problem we have in high-schools. Pupils are not able to learn because they are unmotivated. Every lesson passes in the same way. While the teacher writes something on the board, the pupils have to copy it into their exercise books. There is no action in it. Therefore, I believe that the more a child is motivated for learning a new language, the better he will learn it.

I do not argue that they should learn grammar, syntax and other difficult things. They can start learning words by looking at pictures, which will help them to establish a vocabulary. Such a training will effect their speaking in school because then a foreign language will not be totally strange to them. For these reasons I think it is not expecting too much of children.

Appendix D
End-of-semester Questionnaire

END-OF-SEMESTER QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain insights into your perceptions of the use of blogs in your EFL writing classes. Please read the statements below and choose the appropriate response that suits best to your ideas and experiences. Your answers are confidential.

*(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree or disagree (4) Agree
(5) Strongly agree*

1. It was a good experience to use blogs and work with peers to review my paper.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I felt my writing improved at the end of the semester.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Blog peer feedback was helpful in helping me make changes on my papers.

1 2 3 4 5

4. It was easy to use and explore the features of blog websites.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I felt blog writing assignments were good.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I felt confident about reading and commenting on my peer's papers on his/her blog.

1 2 3 4 5

7. I felt my technology ability improved at the end of the semester.

1 2 3 4 5

8. I felt my writing ability was better at the end of the semester.

1 2 3 4 5

9. I felt my ability to comment on my peer's papers improved after using blogs.

1 2 3 4 5

10. I felt embarrassed with a peer doing review and getting feedback.

1 2 3 4 5

11. I would take another writing course using blogs.

1 2 3 4 5

12. I would recommend this writing course with the use of blogs to the other students.

1 2 3 4 5

13. I think that blogs can help me improve my English.

1 2 3 4 5

14. I think blogging can help writers.

1 2 3 4 5

15. I think blogging can help readers.

1 2 3 4 5

16. I will continue to use my blog after the writing class.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix E

A List of Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) Resources

A LIST OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION (CMC) RESOURCES*

Computer-Mediated Communication

- What is Computer-Mediated Communication? by Gerry Santoro
- Online / Virtual Learning Environments from Teresa d'Ea
- Digital Divide Network
- Using Web-Based course Management Tool to Support Face-to-Face Instruction

Chat and Discussion Forums

- Adjusting to Moos by Nick Carbone
- To Chat or Not to Chat in the ESL Classroom from Teresa Almeida d'Ea
- Introducing EFL Students to Chat Rooms by Jo Mynard

Blogs

- InstalPundit.com well-known blog by Glenn Reynolds
- Seb's Open Research on how to make weblogs work, from Sbastien Paquet
- Publishing a Project Weblog article describing creation and use of a weblog
- Weblog Diffusion Index shows popularity of specific Weblog pages (from MIT)
- Jim Duber on CALL blog dealing with language learning
- BLOGGER tool for creating blogs
- Audioblogger creation tool for voice-based blogs
- Pitas blog creation tool
- Asia pacific Information Systems example of blog
- Educational Technology blog
- Weblogs for Use with ESL Classes by Aaron Patric Campbell
- Writing with Web logs by Kristen Kennedy
- What is Manila popular blog creation tool
- Courses Using Weblogs

RSS

- RSS explanation of "Really Simple Syndication"
- What is RSS from XML News
- Syndic8 directory of 10,000 publicly available RSS feeds
- News that Comes to You on RSS and Weblogs, from the Online Journalism Review

Wikis

- PM Wiki Philosophy rationale and theory behind wikis
- Wiki Wiki Web information about wikis
- Wanna Wiki Wiki? An introduction to Wiki Wiki web and Comparison of Wiki Clones, by Awaji Yoshimasa
- Journalism 1 at HCRHS example of blog used in a secondary school
- Literacy Writing Project example of wiki for educational use

* Godwin-Jones, R. (2003). Emerging technologies-blogs and wikis: environments for on-line collaboration. *Language Learning & Technology*, 7(2), 12-16. Retrieved in September 15, 2007, from <http://llt.msu.edu/vol7num2/emerging>

Appendix F
Analytic Scoring Scale for Writing

ANALYTIC SCORING SCALE FOR WRITING*

Area	Score	Descriptor
Content	20-17	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> Excellent to very good treatment of the subject; considerable variety of ideas or argument; independent and thorough interpretation of the topic; content relevant to the topic; accurate detail
	16-12	<i>Good to average:</i> Adequate treatment of topic; some variety of ideas or argument; some independence of interpretation of the topic; most content relevant to the topic; reasonably accurate detail
	11-8	<i>Fair to poor:</i> Treatment of the topic is hardly adequate; little variety of ideas and argument; some irrelevant content; lacking detail
	7-5	<i>Very poor:</i> Inadequate treatment of the topic; no variety of ideas or argument; content irrelevant, or very restricted; almost no useful detail
	4-0	<i>Inadequate:</i> Fails to address the task with any effectiveness
Organization	20-17	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> Fluent expression, ideas clearly stated and supported; appropriately organized paragraphs or sections; logically sequenced (coherence); connectives appropriately used (cohesion)
	16-12	<i>Good to average:</i> Uneven expression, but main ideas stand out; paragraphing or section organization evident; logically sequenced (coherence); some connectives used (cohesion)
	11-8	<i>Fair to poor:</i> Very uneven expression, ideas difficult to follow; paragraphing/organization does not help the reader; logical sequence difficult to follow (coherence); connectives largely absent (cohesion)
	7-5	<i>Very poor:</i> Lacks fluent expression, ideas very difficult to follow; little sense of paragraphing/organization; no sense of logical sequence (coherence); connectives not used (cohesion)
	4-0	<i>Inadequate:</i> Fails to address this aspect of the task with any effectiveness

Vocabulary	20-17	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> Wide range of vocabulary; accurate word/idiom choice and usage; appropriate selection to match register
	16-12	<i>Good to average:</i> Adequate range of vocabulary; occasional mistakes in word/idiom choice and usage; register not always appropriate
	11-8	<i>Fair to poor:</i> Limited range of vocabulary; a noticeable number of mistakes in word/idiom choice and usage; register not always appropriate
	7-5	<i>Very poor:</i> No range of vocabulary; uncomfortably frequent mistakes in word/idiom choice and usage; no apparent sense of register
	4-0	<i>Inadequate:</i> Fails to address this aspect of the task with any effectiveness
Language Use	30-24	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> Confident handling of appropriate structures; hardly any errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning never obscured
	23-18	<i>Good to average:</i> Acceptable grammar-but problems with more complex structures; mostly appropriate structures; some errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning sometimes obscured
	17-10	<i>Fair to poor:</i> Insufficient range of structures with control only shown in simple constructions; frequent errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning sometimes obscured
	9-6	<i>Very poor:</i> Major problems with structures-even simple ones; frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning often obscured
	5-0	<i>Inadequate:</i> Fails to address this aspect of the task with any effectiveness
Mechanics	10-8	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> Demonstrates full command of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, layout
	7-5	<i>Good to average:</i> Occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, layout
	4-2	<i>Fair to poor:</i> Frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, layout
	1-0	<i>Very poor:</i> Fails to address this aspect of the task with any effectiveness

* Tribble, C. (1996). *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendix G

Handouts (A Peer Feedback Introduction Sheet, General Directives on Peer Feedback Strategies, Peer Feedback Questions for Academic Writing)

A PEER FEEDBACK INTRODUCTION SHEET

What is Peer Feedback?

Peer feedback means responding with appreciation and positive criticism to your classmates' writing. It is an important part of this course because it can:

- Help you become more aware of your reader when writing and revising.
- Help you become more sensitive to problems in your writing and more confident in correcting them.

Rules for peer feedback:

- Be respectful of your classmate's work
- Be conscientious – read carefully and think about what the writer is trying to say
- Be tidy and legible in your comments
- Be encouraging, make suggestions, and be specific with comments

Remember: You don't need to be an expert at grammar. Your best help is as a reader and that you know when you have been interested, entertained, persuaded, or confused.

GENERAL DIRECTIVES ON PEER FEEDBACK STRATEGIES

1-What to look for when reading your partner's draft:

- Clarity – Are you given all the information you need in a clear order?
- Interest – Does the paper interest you?
- Effectiveness – Does the paper make an impact on you?
- Accuracy – Are there any errors of spelling, grammar, definitions?

2- Try to answer these questions as you read:

- What is the main idea that the writer is trying to express in this paper?
- Are there any parts that do not relate to the main idea?
- Which parts of the paper do you like the best?
- Find two or three places where you would like more explanations, examples, or details.
- Did you lose the flow of writing at any point or find places where the writer jumped suddenly to another idea?
- Did the beginning capture your attention and make you want to read on? Why or why not?

PEER FEEDBACK QUESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

1. Is there a CLEAR Thesis Statement (TS) with the Focused Topic (FT)? What do you suggest for improvement if the TS is missing or incorrect?
2. Underline and read the Thesis Statement (TS). Explain or Discuss how to improve the presentation of the topic.
3. Is the content clear? Can you read the paragraphs and understand them? Is the organization clear? Does each paragraph have sufficient examples? How could the organization be improved?
4. Are there any categories/paragraphs which lack supporting ideas/ details/ examples? Discuss the sentences/details/examples that are lacking.
5. Does each paragraph have focus? Are there any unrelated sentences in the paragraphs? If so, identify them. If not, make any other comments about the paragraphs/sentences that are unclear.
6. Additional comments.

Appendix H
EFL Writing Course Syllabus

EFL WRITING COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Hatime Çiftçi
Email: hatimeciftci@gmail.com
2007-2008 Spring Term

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, the students will be able to;

- produce multiple drafts to complete writing tasks,
- read each other's writings critically,
- give feedback to his/her peer through face-to-face oral discussions/blog websites,
- revise and edit their first drafts depending on feedback they receive/comments on their blogs,
- submit their revised drafts to the teacher/publish their revised drafts on their blogs,
- (blog group) use the features of blogs such as editing, commenting, adding videos and photos.

Task Description: The students will complete nine tasks throughout the semester. Each task will require them to go through several activities and steps in accordance with writing process approach, such as producing drafts, giving feedback to each other, revising their drafts, and completing the second drafts. While the students in one group give feedback to each other in face-to-face oral discussions, those in the other group will create and use their blogs to provide comments on each other's drafts. Those in the second group will also be using word processor, Microsoft Word. However, there will be no use of technology in the first group.

Evaluation:

Submission of Essays (blog postings & pen-and-paper essays including first and second drafts)	%40
Attendance & Participation (in the peer feedback sessions)	%40
Participating in the peer feedback and technology training sessions	%20

Weekly Schedule:

Face-to-face Group	2 contact hours, on Tuesdays, South Prep School, 2 nd floor
Blog Group	2 contact hours, on Fridays, The Faculty of Education, Computer Lab, 2 nd floor

Week 1 4-8 February	Interviews and Turkish EFL Students' Background Survey (explaining the study, purpose, getting demographic information, and information on their technology, writing, and language skills)
Week 2 11-15 February	Training on peer feedback (guidelines, handouts, discussions)

Week 3 18-22 February	Training on peer feedback (guidelines, handouts, discussions)
Week 4 25-29 February	Training on blogs (only blog group) (introduction, creating their own blogs, giving the URL to the instructor, posting first entries about their ideas on peer feedback, exploring the other features)
Week 5 3-7 March	Describing a person (drafting, reading and giving feedback to each other's first drafts) Assignment: Revising and editing their first drafts, producing the second drafts, and submitting to the instructor/publishing on their blogs before the next class.
Week 6 10-14 March	Narrating (the most exciting/frightening/amusing, etc. event) (drafting, reading and giving feedback to each other's first drafts) Assignment: Revising and editing their first drafts, producing the second drafts, and submitting to the instructor/publishing on their blogs before the next class.
Week 7 17-21 March	Describing a place (drafting, reading and giving feedback to each other's first drafts) Assignment: Revising and editing their first drafts, producing the second drafts, and submitting to the instructor/publishing on their blogs before the next class.
Week 8 24-28 March	Spring Break- no classes
Week 9 31 Mar.-4 April	Comparing and Contrasting (working individually and in groups) (drafting, reading and giving feedback to each other's first drafts) Assignment: Revising and editing their first drafts, producing the second drafts, and submitting to the instructor/publishing on their blogs before the next class.
Week 10 7-11 April	Expressing Opinions (Foreign language instruction should start in kindergarten. Discuss.) (drafting, reading and giving feedback to each other's first drafts) Assignment: Revising and editing their first drafts, producing the second drafts, and submitting to the instructor/publishing on their blogs before the next class.
Week 11 14-18 April	For and Against (the advantages and disadvantages of using computers/Internet) (drafting, reading and giving feedback to each other's first drafts) Assignment: Revising and editing their first drafts, producing the second drafts, and submitting to the instructor/publishing on their blogs before the next class.
Week 12 21-25 April	Expressing Opinions (It is important to follow fashion. Discuss.) (drafting, reading and giving feedback to each other's first drafts) Assignment: Revising and editing their first drafts, producing the second drafts, and submitting to the instructor/publishing on their blogs before the next class.

<p>Week 13 28 Apr.-2 May</p>	<p>Expressing Opinions (The death penalty is just a punishment and can be a deterrent for especially heinous crimes. Do you agree or disagree? Give your reasons.) (drafting, reading and giving feedback to each other's first drafts) Assignment: Revising and editing their first drafts, producing the second drafts, and submitting to the instructor/publishing on their blogs before the next class.</p>
<p>Week 14 5-9 May</p>	<p>Expressing Opinions (Advertisements should be limited to a certain number because they manipulate people. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.) (drafting, reading and giving feedback to each other's first drafts) Assignment: Revising and editing their first drafts, producing the second drafts, and submitting to the instructor/publishing on their blogs before the next class.</p>
<p>Week 15 12-16 May</p>	<p>Interviews and End-of-semester Questionnaire (perceptions of using blogs)</p>
<p>Week 16 19-23 May</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>