

THE USE OF L1 AND L2 IN PREWRITING DISCUSSIONS IN EFL WRITING AND
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS L1 AND L2 USE IN PREWRITING
DISCUSSIONS

A Master's Thesis

by

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The Department of
Teaching English as a Foreign Language
Bilkent University
Ankara

July 2010

To my beloved family

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STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS L1 AND L2 USE IN PREWRITING
DISCUSSIONS

The Graduate School of Education
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ABSTRACT

THE USE OF L1 AND L2 IN PREWRITING DISCUSSIONS IN EFL WRITING AND
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DISCUSSIONS

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This study investigated the effectiveness of the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussion on EFL students' writing quality. The study also examined students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general, and having prewriting discussions in L1 and L2 in particular.

Data were collected in three phases with 30 sophomore Kurdish native speaker students in the English Language Department at Koya University in the north of Iraq. In the first phase, the students wrote four essays after prewriting discussions in either their native language (Kurdish) or their second language (English). In the study, the students wrote two essays in the first and fourth week after L1 discussions and they also wrote two essays in the second and third weeks after having L2 discussions. In the second step, data were collected through a questionnaire which focused on the students' attitudes towards prewriting discussion in general and the use of L1 and L2 in particular. Then, according to their writing test scores, four participants were chosen (two with the highest

and two with the lowest scores) and interviewed in order to know their in-depth feelings and attitudes towards prewriting discussions and using L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions in EFL writing classes.

The findings showed that the participants wrote better essays after the L2 prewriting discussions than after the L1 discussions. The findings also showed that the students generally responded positively to prewriting discussions as an effective technique in EFL writing classes; however they had mixed feelings about some points relating to the language choice in prewriting discussions. In other words, some of the participants believed that L2 use was more useful for English major students as they need to learn English, while other participants believed that the language choice in prewriting discussions should be determined according to students' level of second language proficiency. In brief, the results indicated that English language students should use the second language in all speaking class activities in all levels in order to help them learn English better, but lower level students should be allowed to use their native language when they cannot fully express their ideas in English.

Finally, this study presents some pedagogical recommendations such as using prewriting discussions together with other techniques in the second language writing process. It also recommends that the use of L1 alongside L2 in prewriting discussions should be allowed among EFL students, especially lower level students, in order to help them participate in class activities and make them feel less anxious while expressing their ideas, and also to help them to better understand the topics and improve their writing performance.

Key words: prewriting discussions, English as a foreign language, Kurdish, student attitudes, writing process.

ÖZET

İNGİLİZCE YAZMA DERSİ SINIFLARINDA YAZMA ÖNCESİ TARTIŞMA
AKTİVİTELERİNDE ANADİL VE YABANCI DİL KULLANIMI VE
ÖĞRENCİLERİN YAZMA ÖNCESİ TARTIŞMA AKTİVİTELERİNDE ANADİL VE
YABANCI DİL KULLANIMINA YÖNELİK TUTUMLARI

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Bu çalışma anadil ve yabancı dil kullanımının yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinde yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin yazma becerilerine olan etkisini araştırmıştır. Çalışma ayrıca, öğrencilerin genel olarak yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerine karşı olan tutumlarını, ve yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinde anadil ve yabancı dil kullanımına karşı olan tutumlarını incelemiştir.

Kuzey Irak Koya Üniversitesi İngilizce Dili Bölümünde anadili Kürtçe olan ve iki yıldır eğitim almakta olan 30 öğrenciden üç aşamada bilgi toplanmıştır. Birinci aşamada, öğrenciler, yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinden sonra anadilleri olan Kürtçe veya yabancı dil olarak öğrendikleri İngilizcede dört deneme yazısı yazmışlardır. Bu çalışmada, öğrenciler, anadillerindeki tartışma aktiviteleri sonrasında, birinci ve dördüncü haftalarda iki deneme yazısı yazmışlardır. Öğrenciler ayrıca, ikinci ve üçüncü haftalarda, yabancı dildeki tartışma aktiviteleri sonrasında iki deneme yazısı

yazmışlardır. İkinci aşamada, öğrencilerin genel olarak yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerine karşı olan tutumları ve yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinde anadil ve yabancı dil kullanımına yönelik tutumlarını belirlemek amacıyla anket uygulanmıştır. Ardından, yazma sınavından aldıkları notlara göre seçilen dört öğrenciyle (en yüksek notları alan iki öğrenci ve en düşük notları alan iki öğrenci) yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretilen yazma derslerinde yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerine ve bu tartışmalarda anadil ve yabancı dil kullanımına yönelik tutumlarını belirlemek amacıyla mülakat yapılmıştır.

Elde edilen bulgular, öğrencilerin anadilde yapılan tartışma aktivitelerine kıyasla, yabancı dilde yapılan yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinden sonra daha iyi deneme yazıları yazdıklarını göstermiştir. Bulgular, ayrıca, öğrencilerin yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinin yazma dersinde etkili bir yöntem olduğu yönünde olumlu tutumları olduğunu fakat öğrencilerin yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinde dil tercihi konusunda farklı görüşleri olduğunu göstermiştir. Diğer bir ifadeyle, katılımcılardan bazıları, yabancı dil kullanımının İngilizce bölümü öğrencileri için daha faydalı olduğuna inanırken, diğer katılımcılar yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinde dil seçiminin öğrencilerin yabancı dildeki yeterlik düzeylerine göre belirlenmesine inanmaktadırlar. Kısaca, sonuçlar, İngilizce bölümü öğrencilerinin, tüm yeterlik seviyelerinde ve tüm konuşma dersi aktivitelerinde, İngilizceyi daha iyi öğrenmelerini desteklemek amacıyla yabancı dili kullanmaları gerektiğini ve düşük seviyedeki öğrencilerin, düşüncelerini İngilizcede doğru olarak ifade edemediklerinde anadillerini kullanmalarına izin verilmesi gerektiğini ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Son olarak bu çalışma, ikinci bir dilde yazma sürecinde, yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinin diğer tekniklerle birlikte ele alınması gibi birtakım pedagojik öneriler sunmaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin, özellikle düşük seviyelerdeki öğrencilerin sınıf içi aktivitelere katılımlarını sağlamak, düşüncelerini ifade etmedeki tedirginliklerini azaltmak ve konuları daha iyi kavramalarına ve yazma becerilerini geliştirmelerine yardımcı olmak amacıyla, yazma öncesi tartışma aktivitelerinde, yabancı dilin yanı sıra anadil kullanmalarına da izin verilmesi gerektiğini önermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yazma öncesi tartışmalar, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, Kürtçe, Öğrenci tutumları, yazma süreci.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Writing is often perceived as one of the most difficult skills in second and foreign language classrooms. To ease students' difficulty in writing, researchers have recommended a process approach, which emphasizes a step-by-step practice, rather than a product approach, which emphasizes only the final product (Stapa & Abdul Majid, 2009). In the process approach, students go through a series of stages: prewriting, writing, evaluation, revising, and editing. The first stage, prewriting has been described by Lally (2000) as consisting of three activities: discussion, free-writing, and brainstorming. Prewriting discussion is one of the prewriting activities that is seen as important in the process of writing. In the last few decades, a number of studies (e.g. Kennedy, 1983; Lally, 2000; Lay, 1982; Meyer, 1980; Sweigart, 1991; Shi, 1998; Xianwei, 2009) have investigated the effects of prewriting discussions on students' composition practices, and have suggested that student writers write qualitatively better texts after discussing the topic. Furthermore, using the students' native language (L1) in prewriting discussions has been suggested as a positive factor for improving students' writing quality, organization of ideas, and coherence. For example, Lally (2000) investigated the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussion, but did not find a significantly different effect. At Koya University's English Language Department, teachers give students a topic and ask them to write a composition without giving students the opportunity to discuss the ideas in class and come up with useful ideas related to the given topic. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the

effect of prewriting discussions in EFL writing. In particular, the study aimed at investigating whether there are different effects of prewriting discussions in the L1 and the L2 (English) on the students' writing. The secondary purpose is to investigate students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in L1 and in L2. This study may help writing teachers recognize the potential value of using prewriting discussions in L1 and L2 in order to help students better understand the topic and improve their writing quality. In addition, the findings may assist curriculum developers considering the use of prewriting discussions in both the L1 and the L2 in writing classes.

Background of the Study

Writing, like other language skills, plays a key role in the process of teaching and learning. As LaRoche (1993) states, "writing is a skill that can ensure student success in every aspect of learning and advancement" (p. 11). Within the area of English language teaching and learning the process approach to writing has attracted a great deal of attention and is considered as an effective way of teaching writing. Leki (1991 cited in Ho 2006) states that "the process approach is an approach to teaching writing that places more emphasis on the stages of the writing process than the final product" (p. 2). The process of writing as Mora-Flores (2009) describes, consists of five common stages; prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Lally (2000) has highlighted the fact that an essential component of process-oriented writing instruction is the prewriting or idea generation stage. Prewriting activities can help students discuss a topic, generate ideas, and organize what to write in order to improve the quality of their writing. Go (1994) points out "prewriting is a structured design that energizes student participation

in thinking, talking, group interaction, and skeletal writing such as building the components of a writing task” (p. 2).

Prewriting as the first stage of the process of writing includes some activities, which Lally (2000) describes as “talking, free-writing and brainstorming” (p. 229). There may also be other activities like planning, mind-mapping, and so on. Prewriting discussions can familiarize students with the topic, and can lead them to generate related ideas and also help students use the ideas to improve the overall quality of their writing. Several studies have been conducted on prewriting discussions’ effects on the overall quality of students’ writing. The studies that examined the effects of prewriting discussion have all suggested that students write better after talking about a topic (Kennedy, 1983; Lally, 2000; Meyer, 1980; Sweigart, 1991; Shi, 1998; Xianwei, 2009). Voss et al. (1980 cited in Zhang and Vukelich, 1998) also claim that students with high prior knowledge on the topic to be written about write qualitatively better texts.

These researchers have investigated the effects of prewriting discussion on the quality of students’ composition in various other ways. For instance, Sweigart (1991) investigated the effectiveness of prewriting discussions through comparing small-group discussion and whole class discussion. Sweigart found that small-group discussion was more effective than whole class discussion in students’ knowledge improvement. Shi (1998) in her study assessed whether peer talk and teacher-led prewriting discussions affect the quality of students’ writing. Like Sweigart, Shi found that prewriting discussion, especially peer-talk, affected students’ writing in terms of helping them produce longer texts and using more diverse vocabulary. In addition, Zhang and

Vukelich (1998) explored the role of prewriting activities on the writing quality of students with different gender and academic achievement across four grade levels. They found that females and advanced level students benefited more from prewriting discussions.

Many researchers have studied L1 use in the process of L2 writing (Akyel, 1994; Cumming, 1989; Edelsky, 1986; Friedlander, 1990; Lally, 2000; Lay, 1982; Li, 2008; Stapa & Abdul Majid, 2009; Wang & Wen, 2002; Wang, L. 2003; Weijen et al., 2009; Woodall, 2002; Yanqun, 2009; Xianwei, 2009), and they have all suggested that L1 can have an important effect on L2 writing. The purpose of L1 use in the process of L2 writing varies according to different studies; for instance, it has been shown that writing strategies can be transferred from L1 to L2 (Edelsky, 1986; Friedlander, 1990), or that L1 can be used to plan ideas (Akyel, 1994; Lay, 1982). Researchers like Wang & Wen (2002) used L1 in process-controlling, idea-generation, and idea-organizing activities. Stapa and Abdul Majid (2009) also investigated the effects of the use of L1 to generate ideas among low proficiency ESL learners. They found that using L1 in generating ideas produced a noticeable improvement in the quality of students' writing. However, these studies have not investigated whether there are distinct differences based on the language of the prewriting discussions (L1 or L2) in the writing produced by EFL students.

The studies that have investigated L1 and L2 use in prewriting discussions are very few. Among them, Lally (2000) investigated L1 use in prewriting discussions in comparison to L2 use before writing in L2 (French). The study participants were English

native speakers majoring in French. Their assignment was to discuss photographs first in the L1 before writing in the L2, and then on another occasion in the L2 before writing in the L2. Lally did not find a significantly different effect of prewriting discussions in the L1 (English) and the L2 (French) on students' text quality. Neither did Lally choose to investigate students' attitudes towards using the L1 in comparison to the L2 in prewriting discussions, to see whether there might be preferences for one over the other even though no quality difference was found. In a somewhat similar investigation, a recent study conducted by Xianwei (2009) examined the effects of prewriting discussions in different languages on the language quality of argumentative compositions among 24 freshman Chinese students majoring in English. Participants in the study were divided into four different groups (prewriting discussion in English, prewriting discussion in Chinese, prewriting discussion in English and Chinese, and brainstorming individually before starting to write). Although the study examined L1 versus L2 use in prewriting discussions, its findings showed that there was no statistically significant difference between any of the four groups. Like Lally, Xianwei did not choose to look at students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in different languages. Therefore, the current study aims at investigating both whether prewriting discussion in L1 or L2 is more effective in EFL writing as well as students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in L1 and L2.

Statement of the Problem

Several research studies have been conducted on the effects of prewriting discussion on students' compositions. These studies (Meyer, 1980; Kennedy, 1983;

Sweigart, 1991; Shi, 1998; Lally, 2000; Xianwei, 2009) claim that students write better after discussing a topic. Looking at writing from another perspective, using the first language can be sometimes useful in the process of second language writing. Several studies have documented improvement in the quality of students' writing using this strategy (e.g. Lay, 1982; Edelsky, 1986; Cumming, 1989; Friedlander, 1990; Akyel, 1994; Lally, 2000; Woodall, 2002; Wang & Wen, 2002; Wang, L. 2003; Li, 2008; Stapa & Abdul Majid, 2009; Weijen et al., 2009; Xianwei, 2009; and Yanqun, 2009).

However, studies that have investigated L1 use in comparison to L2 use in prewriting discussions are very few. For example, researchers like Lally (2000) and Xianwei (2009) investigated the influence of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussion on students' writing. Neither found significant effects of prewriting discussions in L1 and L2 on students' compositions, and neither investigated students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in L1 and L2.

In the English Language Department at Koya University, writing tasks are carried out individually. In other words, in the writing classes, teachers give students a topic and ask them to write a paragraph or an essay about it without any prewriting activities such as prewriting discussions with peers or teacher-led class discussions. Students often face problems in writing classes, such as having difficulty finding and developing proper ideas about the topic, or knowing how and what to write. Perhaps as a result of having no prewriting discussions in which to generate and develop their ideas, students may not pay adequate attention to the content and organization of ideas in their writing, which may lead them to write poorer quality texts. Thus, this study intends to

investigate the effects of L1 and L2 use in prewriting class discussions before writing in L2, and to what extent these two approaches help students develop their ideas and produce better quality compositions. In addition, this study explores students' attitudes towards prewriting discussion in L1 and L2.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the differences in students' L2 writing after being exposed to the conditions of prewriting discussions in the L1 and prewriting discussions in the L2?
2. What are students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general and towards prewriting discussions in L1/L2 in particular?

Significance of the Study

Since prewriting discussions have been shown to play a key role in the process of writing and help produce better writing quality, in the last few decades many studies have investigated empirically its effects on students' writing both in their native languages and in a second language, particularly in an ESL context. Such studies are rarer in the field of EFL writing, and the few that exist have not taken students' attitudes into question. Therefore, additional studies are necessary to investigate whether EFL students can benefit more from discussions in their native or second language, and what they feel about the whole idea of prewriting discussions and the use of their native

language or second language. Thus, the findings of this study may contribute to the literature in evaluating the effects of prewriting discussions in both the L1 and L2, and also revealing students' perspectives.

Writing teachers in the English Language Department at Koya University do not currently provide students with prewriting discussion activities during writing exercises and examinations. This study may help teachers to recognize the potential value of using different types of prewriting discussions in writing classes in order to help students better understand the topic, and to help them generate more ideas related to the topic in order to write better quality paragraphs and essays. In addition, the findings of this study can be regarded as a proposal for curriculum developers at Koya University to implement prewriting discussions in writing classes.

Conclusion

This chapter gave a short introduction to the issues relating to prewriting activities in general and prewriting discussions with L1 and L2 use in particular. It also presented the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, and the significance of the study. The following chapter is a review of previous studies on prewriting discussions in general and on the specific use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions. It also provides a review of the literature on students' and teachers' attitudes towards prewriting discussion and the use of L1 and L2 in this technique. The third chapter is devoted to information about the study participants, setting, data collection, and data collection procedures. In the fourth chapter, the results

of the study are presented. The fifth chapter presents a summary and discussion of the findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and future research suggestions.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Writing, like other language skills, has a key role in helping language learners to learn a foreign language. Writing has been viewed as a support skill for many years and used as a tool to strengthen the understanding of grammar and other skills of language like reading. Writing is considered as a productive skill rather than a receptive skill. In other words, students *produce* writing *gives* information (like speaking) rather than *getting* information as in listening and reading skills. Although it is an important skill among language skills, writing has been deemphasized in language learning programs for many years. Fortunately, more recently it has become one of the important parts of every curriculum and language courses, taught either as a single skill or frequently integrated with reading. Researchers believe that by writing, the gap between the knowledge someone already has and the new knowledge that she or he encounters, can be bridged. As Akmenek (2000) pointed out, writing gives people the ability to make a link between old and new information, and provides writers with the opportunity to learn how to judge and think over the information already available to them, and the new information they encounter by finding similarities and differences between them (old and new information). From her point of view, by writing, someone can understand their way of thinking about the world. Thus, writing can cause a better understanding of our views and of others' as well.

Writing has also become the focus of research in the fields of language teaching, linguistics, and second language acquisition. In the last few decades, a series of studies on a range of topics related to writing has been conducted by various researchers. These have included investigations of writing theory, practice, and approaches to writing, and the teaching and learning of writing in various language learning programs and settings. Some researchers consider writing as a challenging and difficult skill for L2 learners, and even for most of the native speakers of a language. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1983, cited in Derakhshan, 1996) claim that “writing a long essay is probably the most constructive act that most human beings are ever expected to perform” (p. 4). Writing is also considered as one of the important skills that plays an important role in language learning and comprehension: “Sometimes learning to write is regarded as the acquiring of skills on which other, later, and probably more important skills can be built and without which further education may be largely impossible” (Freedman et al., 1983 cited in Derakhshan 1996, p. 9). All of these factors mean that there are many challenges in writing classes, especially in EFL contexts. Fortunately, it has been suggested that writing difficulties can be solved if instruction in writing courses focuses on the process of writing rather than just focusing on the finished piece of writing. Stapa and Abdul Majid (2009) write that “the fear of writing may be caused by the Product Approach that emphasizes the product alone and not on the processes of writing. The application of the Process Approach is recommended because it presents solutions to writing problems” (p. 41).

Process and Product Approaches to Writing

For many years, writing instruction has placed focus primarily on the writing product – a finished draft of writing. Writing teachers gave students a topic and asked them to write a paragraph or an essay without giving them any time and guidance to think about the topic, to generate ideas, or to develop their ideas in an organized way while composing. Then the teacher waited for the finished piece of writing. In recent decades, however, the attention of most curriculum designers and program developers has shifted to the process approach of writing. In other words, the focus has changed to “invention – the creation of a piece of prose from notes to draft, and editing – the polishing and revision of a piece of writing” (Yoshida, 1983, p. 19). Thus the “Product Approach to Writing” is defined as a traditional approach, in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, which is usually presented and analyzed at an early stage (Steele, 2004). Conversely, the “Process Approach to Writing” is defined by its practice, namely focusing more on the varied classroom activities which promote the development of language use such as brainstorming, group discussion, and re-writing (Steele, 2004). Furthermore, a Process Approach to Writing has been regarded as a positive means of writing instruction that provides students with ample opportunity to work interactively with their teachers and peers, and develop writing in a meaningful way. As Grabe and Kaplan (1996) state, “the process approach is frequently discussed as a wholly positive innovation allowing teachers and students more meaningful interaction and more purposeful writing” (p. 87). Mingming (2005) divides writing process into three stages: prewriting, drafting, and rewriting.

Prewriting Phase

Prewriting is the beginning phase of the writing process. According to Mingming (2005) “[prewriting] helps writers recall ideas, relate old and new information, assess what the reader expects of them, and generally explore the problem from many angles” (p. 46). In other words, the prewriting stage enables students to communicate with the writing topic, and encourages them to find, generate, organize, and develop ideas in order to use them in their compositions. In addition, prewriting guides students in the early stages of the writing process to learn how to understand a topic, and assist them to generate, organize, and develop proper ideas through practicing. Furthermore, according to LaRoche (1993) prewriting facilitates both the process and the product of writing. Students frequently approach writing tasks with confusion and frustration; they may feel they have nothing to offer on the topic. To illustrate, student writers, especially in EFL contexts, often face problems in writing classes, such as having difficulty starting writing, generating ideas, organizing them, and developing the generated ideas on the paper. This may be because of having little information about the topic.

Within this phase of writing, however, a number of activities are often used that can help students generate their ideas and develop their thoughts by exchanging their ideas and commenting on each others’ ideas, or even support the generated ideas so as to allow students to start writing without feeling frustration and confusion. This phase includes such activities as those described by McGlann and McGlann (1990): “brainstorming, freewriting, branching, discussing, and asking questions that allow students to try various approaches to a topic without the interference of critical

judgment” (pp. 2-3). Go (1994), in a study focused on prewriting activities in writing classes, explained that prewriting activities help students to acquire the target language more effectively, interact with others, think about a topic, and plan ideas in order to use in related fields. Further, Go (1994) claimed that “prewriting is more than just a gimmick, as cynics claim, but a structured design to energize student participation in thinking, talking, group interaction, and skeletal writing such as building the components of a writing task” (p. 2). LaRoche (1993), who also investigated the effects of prewriting activities on writing, claimed that “when faced with a writing assignment, students often experience writer’s block” (p. 7). Since “writer’s block” may occur because of lack of knowledge about the topic-area, LaRoche suggests that by providing students with various skills or prewriting strategies in the prewriting sessions, students can overcome the obstacles they come across in writing activities.

In a study conducted by Zhang and Vukelich (1998), the researchers examined the effects of prewriting activities on the quality of writing among students of different genders and varying academic achievements. Participants were from four different levels, and were divided into two groups, one which was exposed to prewriting activities, and another which wrote assignments without prewriting activities groups. Students’ compositions were analyzed holistically, as well as assessing five specific aspects of writing: sentence formation, mechanics, word usage, development, and organization. On average, students from the prewriting activities group performed better than those who were not. However, in grade 9, students who had no prewriting activities earned higher scores. The study also discovered that students’ gender, academic

achievement level, and their interactions had strong influences on the effectiveness of prewriting; for instance, female students consistently scored higher than males. The researchers maintained that giving students the opportunity to collect topic related information through prewriting techniques for organizing ideas into a draft has positive effects on students' writing performance.

In a somewhat similar study but with different students, Schweiker-Marra and Marra (2000) investigated the role of prewriting activities in at-risk elementary students with poor writing skills, especially in improving their writing ability and reducing their writing anxiety. They found that writing anxiety was lowered for the experimental students, and concluded that writing anxiety can be decreased by using prewriting activities in writing classes.

In conclusion, prewriting activities encourage students to think about a topic, plan their text, have discussions to generate ideas, and develop those ideas to produce a well-organized written text. In prewriting activities, especially prewriting discussions, students have the opportunity to discover ideas through asking their peers, the whole class, or the teacher. Such interaction can help them generate new ideas and remember prior knowledge, and also help develop those generated ideas on paper.

Prewriting Discussion

Prewriting discussion is one of the prewriting techniques that leads students to discuss a specified topic, express and share their ideas on the topic, either in a whole-class context or in small groups. Prewriting discussion helps to invoke new thoughts

among students. McGlann and McGlann (1990) state that prewriting discussions can help writers see the quality and quantity of the materials, and can help them to ask questions that will prompt thinking and develop ideas. During these prewriting discussions, students can share ideas and generate more ideas related to the given topic. Moreover, during discussions, students can talk about their ideas and by doing this, help others think more and generate their own ideas. Thus, it helps everyone write better texts.

Prewriting discussion can also help student writers familiarize themselves with the topic to be written about and activate their prior knowledge about the content. McGlann and McGlann (1990) write that the more writers know about the topic, the better they are prepared to write. Prewriting discussion can help students become more familiar with the given topic, by expressing ideas, exchanging ideas, and connecting previous knowledge to the newly generated ideas while discussing a topic. Thus, students can use better ideas in their compositions. As Lachman et al. cited in Akmenek (2000) states, “stimulating students to think over a topic can be helpful for them to build that system of relationships, which may lead to thoughtful writing” (p. 13).

Furthermore, several studies have looked at the effects of prewriting discussions on the quality of students’ writing. Many of the studies that investigated the effects of prewriting discussion (Kennedy, 1983; Meyer, 1980; Sweigart, 1991; Shi, 1998) have suggested that students produce better written drafts after talking about the topic. The studies that investigated prewriting discussion looked at a variety of different kinds of prewriting discussions, including small groups, peer talk, and whole class discussion.

They investigated prewriting discussions in comparison to no prewriting discussion as well. For example, Bossio (1993 cited in Shi, 1998) conducted a study in an ESL context to investigate the effects of discussions on writing. He found that prewriting discussions help students produce better texts than when writing without having prewriting discussions.

Sweigart (1991) looked at the question from the perspective of what *kinds* of prewriting discussions were more effective. He conducted a study with 58 college-preparatory twelfth-grade students and an English teacher to see whether student-led small group discussion were more effective than participation in whole-class discussions or a lecture by the teacher. Sweigart's findings showed that small-group discussion "peer group talk" was significantly helpful for students to improve their knowledge before starting to write. In addition, attitude measures revealed that participants preferred talking before writing, because this kind of technique allowed them to talk when developing their understanding of complex ideas.

Another study, conducted by Shi (1998), examined whether peer talk and teacher-led prewriting discussions conditions affected the quality of students' writing, by comparing them to essays written by students not having discussions before writing. The participants were forty-seven adult ESL students from three pre-university writing classes. Each student wrote three opinion essays under the three conditions prior to writing. Shi found that there were no statistically significant differences in the written products in the three conditions. In addition, participants with no prewriting discussion wrote drafts that were longer but lower in quality. Participants produced written texts

with more various verbs after peer talk, and shorter drafts in the teacher-led discussion. Shi noted that teachers can help to facilitate students' "conceptualiz[ing of] their ideas". Shi concluded that although talking before writing might not immediately influence students' writing scores, it can eventually affect students writing in terms of the length of essays and use of vocabulary. However, this study was conducted in an ESL context, and it cannot be assumed that the results of this study can be extended to EFL students. In addition, the three prewriting types were done by different teachers alternatively instead of the same teacher.

Another group of studies examined the differences between prewriting discussion and various other types of prewriting instructional techniques. Meyers (1980) investigated whether prewriting discussions had a more positive effect on students writing performance than conventional methods of instruction. The participants were freshman composition students at a community college in Maryland. Four classes totaling 58 students were randomly divided into an experimental and a control group. The experimental group used the talk-write method; the students in pair would talk over their writing plans, while the control group was been instructed in grammar, punctuation, and outlining. Students wrote narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative essays, and their essays were rated according to the areas of general merit, mechanics, and total evaluation. The results revealed significant differences favoring the experimental group, especially in the area of general merit. A limitation of the study however, was that the written tasks were not finished in class; students were allowed to complete their essays at home, which might have influenced students' essays

in terms of length, quality, and organization. In addition, the study was conducted in an L1 context with students writing in their native language, not with L2 students, making it difficult to generalize for all language writers. Also the study looked at the effect of these prewriting techniques on four different types of discourse (expository, argumentative, descriptive, and narrative), meaning that the tasks were quite different, and therefore valid comparison is difficult.

Another study by Kennedy (1983) examined the effectiveness of prewriting discussion on students' writing. The participants were one hundred college remedial writing students, divided into experimental (speak/write) and control (write only) groups. Students from both groups watched a film, and then participants from the experimental group were interviewed individually on the subject of the film. After interviewing they were asked to write an essay in 30 minutes about a general topic generated by the film they watched. On the other hand, participants from control group were asked to write a 30-minute essay without any prior conversation. Students' compositions were evaluated for quantifiable variables (words, T-units, subordinate clauses, and propositions) and were also rated holistically. The results of the study revealed that the speak/write technique improved the writing of the experimental subjects. According to Kennedy, not only did their fluency in the use of some quantifiable variables prove to be greater than that of the control group, but their essays were holistically judged as qualitatively better in terms of sophistication and number of ideas expressed, developed, and organized. In addition, the researcher discovered that the speaking they did before writing helped to stimulate their thinking and facilitate their

organization. Thus, the results of this study are significant evidence to support the effectiveness of prewriting discussion on idea generation, development, and on the overall quality of students' writing.

To conclude, these studies have all suggested that prewriting discussion affects students' writing in a positive way. Some researchers claim that the time allocated to prewriting may affect students writing. Others believe that peer discussion is more effective than teacher-led class discussion. In brief, however, all the studies mentioned above found that prewriting discussions affect students writing quality positively.

The Issue of Language in the Process of Writing

Language teachers and researchers have been arguing for many years about whether to allow the use of the first language in second language instruction or not. Although some early researchers criticized it because of the risk of "L1 interference" (Arapoff, 1967; Lado, 1979, Rivers, 1981 cited in Akyel 1994), in the last two or three decades, many studies (e.g. Akyel, 1994; Akyel and Kamisli, 1996; Cumming, 1989; Edelsky, 1986; Friedlander, 1990; Lally, 2000; Lay, 1982; Li, 2008; Stapa & Abdul Majid, 2009; Wang & Wen, 2002; Wang, L. 2003; Weijen et al., 2008; Weijen et al., 2009; Wolfersberger, 2003; Woodall, 2002; Xianwei, 2009; Yanqun, 2009) have been conducted on L1 use in the process of L2 writing, and have suggested that L1 writing may have important and potentially positive effects on L2 writing.

Various studies investigating the use of L1 in the process of L2 composing have done this for different purposes and had various aims. Firstly, some studies centered

their attention on the question of transfer from L1 to L2 in writing (Edelsky, 1982; Friedlander, 1990; Wolfersberger, 2003). Edelsky (1986) examined the development of writing of 27 English/Spanish bilingual students. He concluded that L1 knowledge and writing skills transfer to L2 writing, especially knowledge of spelling and manipulation of style. Friedlander's (1990) findings support the L1 knowledge transfer into L2 writing. In his study, Friedlander examined the hypothesis that ESL writers would be able to plan more effectively and write better texts as they plan in the language related to the acquisition of topic-area knowledge. The participants were 28 ESL native speakers of Chinese at Carnegie Mellon University. As they responded to two letters, they planned for one in Chinese and for the other in English prior to writing in English. To develop plans, participants were taught to generate ideas on the given topic and organize the generated ideas for their essays. The results indicated that students produced better content when they used the language (Chinese or English) that they associated with the topic knowledge during the planning process. Friedlander believes that paying attention to the relationship between the language used and the topic can enhance students' writing ability, and help produce better texts. In addition, Wolfersberger (2003) examined L1 and L2 use in the composing process and the writing strategies of three lower-level Japanese students. The study's findings support the idea that L1 strategies transfer to the L2 composing process. Akyel and Kamisli (1996) went further to say that the process of transfer is bi-directional and interactive, because what students gained in L2 writing strategies was also transferred back to their L1 writing strategies.

Another group of studies investigated L1 use in L2 writing planning as a prewriting activity. They claim that L1 use in L2 writing planning affects students' writing positively. Lay (1982) investigated the writing process and compositions of six Chinese ESL students. She found that when more native language switches occurred, students wrote better texts in terms of ideas, organization, and details. Lay (1982 cited in Yanqun, 2009) observed that L2 writers use L1 to "get a strong impression and association of ideas for essays and produce essays of better quality in terms of ideas, organization, and details" (p. 3). Moreover, Cumming (1989) investigated L1 and L2 use in planning content and generating ideas by looking at 23 adult expert and inexperienced writers. The findings indicated that L1 use in planning writing is an effective strategy. Cumming concluded that L1 expertise has a great influence on the quality of L2 writing. In one study conducted in an EFL context, Akyel (1994) investigated the effects of planning in English and Turkish before writing in English on students' writing scores and writing performance. The participants were seventy-eight Turkish university intermediate and advanced levels students, who were assigned to write three compositions on three different topics: a Turkish culture-specific topic, a topic related to American/British culture, and a more general topic. The findings showed that on the three assigned topics the advanced students' planning quality was not significantly different using both L1 and L2, while the language used for the plan by intermediate students had obvious influence on the plans written by them, especially on the Turkish and American/British culture-specific topics.

In another study, Akyel and Kamisli (1996) investigated the effects of L2 writing instruction on L1 and L2 writing processes of eight Turkish EFL freshman student writers. The study also investigated whether L2 writing instruction affects students' attitudes towards writing in English and in Turkish. Findings indicated that there were more similarities than differences between the students' L1 and L2 writing processes. In addition, the researchers discovered that the kind of writing instruction that students were exposed to helped them to improve their English and Turkish writing strategies. From students' responses, the researchers discovered that students had positive attitudes towards writing instruction in English, and also all students had positive attitudes toward writing both in English and Turkish after this writing instruction.

Although they had some different aims, several studies (Wang and Wen, 2002; Weijen et al., 2008; Li, 2008; Stapa and Abdul Majid, 2009) attempted to investigate L1 use in different activities before writing, including L1 use in process-controlling, idea-generating, and idea organization activities. Wang and Wen (2002) conducted a study with 16 EFL Chinese students in order to know how much L1 is used in the L2 writing process, how L1 use varies with the students' L2 proficiency, the interaction between writing tasks and the students' level of proficiency, and to what extent L1 use varies with the writing task. The findings showed that L1 involvement was more prevalent in process-controlling, idea-generating, and idea-organizing activities rather than in text-generating activities. They also found that L1 use varied among different tasks, for instance, L1 is used more in narrative writing tasks than in argumentative tasks. Unsurprisingly, Wang and Wen found that students with high levels of proficiency

tended to depend less on the L1 than the lower-level students did. Recently van Weijen et al (2008) focused their study on planning, generating ideas, and formulating. They examined whether the quality of written texts changes when a writer writes in L2 instead of in L1. Participants wrote four argumentative essays in L1 (Dutch) and four in L2 (English). The prewriting activities included reading the assignment, planning, generating ideas, and formulating ideas. Their findings showed that the relations between the activities and the quality of texts varied far less between tasks in L2 than in L1.

Moreover, in another study conducted to see the effects of L1 use in L2 writing, Li (2008) examined the relationship between L1 use and L2 proficiency of six non-English major students from Linyi Normal University who studied English for nine years each. The findings showed that the higher proficiency students employed longer utterances in Chinese than the lower proficiency group. In addition, the study's results indicated that students used L1 in the process of L2 writing because of the restraints of inadequate L2 proficiency, their experience with L1 thinking, and lack of L2 writing practice. Li, unlike previous studies, suggested that "the amount of L1 use was not reduced when the participants' L2 proficiency developed" (p. 27). In other research that focused on L1 use in generating and developing ideas, Stapa and Abdul Majid (2009) recently conducted an experimental study to investigate the effectiveness of L1 use in generating and developing ideas for L2 writing among low proficiency ESL learners. In an experimental group students generated ideas in Bahasa Melayu (their first language) prior to writing in English. A control group generated ideas in English (L2) preceding

writing in English. The results indicate that students from the experimental group who used their first language in generating ideas before writing in English (L2) generated qualitatively better ideas as opposed to the students from the control group. The findings also suggested that the use of L1 in generating ideas among lower-level students helped them generate more ideas, and also produce better quality essays in terms of overall score, content, language use, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Another group of studies (Woodall, 2002 and Wang, 2003) investigated L1 and L2 switching during writing in L2. Woodall (2002) observed how the amount of L1 use while writing in the L2 is affected by students' L2 proficiency, the difficulty of the task, and the language groups to which the languages belong. The participants were 28 adults (9 L2 Japanese, 11 L2 English, and 8 L2 Spanish). The findings showed that less proficient L2 learners tended more often to switch to their L1 than advanced students. Interestingly, Wang's (2003) findings do not support Woodall's findings that lower-level learners try more to switch to their L1 during L2 writing. Wang (2003) examined how switching between languages is related to L2 proficiency and how switching to the L1 helps students with different L2 proficiency levels in the process of writing. The findings revealed that the frequency of language-switching was common to high- and low-proficient student writers. In addition, Wang discovered that the high-proficient participants switched to their L1 more frequently than the low-proficient participants did while composing the two writing tasks.

In a recently conducted study van Weijen et al. (2009) explored the amount of L1 use during L2 writing and its relation to writing proficiency, and L2 proficiency. van

Weijen et al. (2009) in their study examined to what extent student writers used L1 while writing in L2. In addition, they examined the effects of L1 use on text quality and the extent to which this was influenced by the learner's general writing proficiency and L2 proficiency. The participants were twenty Dutch students, who were assigned to write four short argumentative essays in their L1 and four in their L2 (English). They found that L2 proficiency has a direct affect on L2 text quality, and general writing proficiency reduces L1 use during second language writing and also positively affects the use of L2 during second language writing.

Attempts have also been made to compare the effects of L1 with L2 in prewriting discussions. Lally (2000) conducted a study with 12 undergraduate native English speaking French majors at the University of Nebraska. Participants were divided into two groups, with each group provided with the same photograph. As a prewriting activity, one group of participants was asked to collectively and orally brainstorm for their writing – based on the given photograph – in English (their L1). The other group was assigned to do the same but in French (their L2). The participants had 30 minutes to discuss the photographs in a group so as to generate ideas for their composition and they were given the final 20 minutes of the class period to begin their writing. They had three additional days to complete the final one-page typed compositions at home. Students did the same task ten times. The findings revealed that students' compositions were not notably different in terms of vocabulary. Notable differences did occur, however, in organization and global impression scores between L1 and L2 use in prewriting activities. The average score was 4.08 for organization and 4.12 for global impression

after L1 prewriting activities, and the average score was 3.28 for organization and 3.5 for global impression after L2 prewriting activities. Lally (2000) maintained that L1 use during prewriting activities helped students retrieve background information, and supported Friedlander's idea that prewriting discussions in L1 "[serve] to assist and benefit information retrieval" (Friedlander, 1990, p. 118) by freeing students from linguistic constraints and allowing them to generate more detailed ideas and plans. It should be noted however, that the study results could have been affected by individual differences, as just six students discussed and wrote in French, and another six students discussed and wrote in English. Moreover, the writing tasks were not done in one time slot and students were allowed to take their papers and complete them at home. These factors may have led to the failure to find any statistically significant differences.

In a recent study, Xianwei (2009) investigated how prewriting discussions in different languages affects the language quality of argumentative compositions among English language majors in China. Twenty four students were divided into four groups (prewriting discussion in English, prewriting discussion in Chinese, prewriting discussion in English and Chinese, and brainstorming individually before starting to write). The findings indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between any two of the four participant groups, but students who discussed in English performed somewhat better than students from the other groups, especially in making fewer errors in their compositions. Xianwei concluded that the language use did not obviously influence students' writing.

Most of the studies reviewed above claim that L1 use in the L2 composing process has positive effects on L2 writing, although they centered their attention on different activities and strategies in the writing process. On the other hand, some studies, particularly earlier ones (Chelela, 1982; Gaskill, 1987; Hall, 1990 cited in Akyel and Kmisili, 1996, p.3) found contradictory results, and rejected L1 use in L2 writing process. In general, the question of language use in the prewriting discussions clearly has not been fully settled.

Student Attitude toward Prewriting Discussions in general and the Use of L1 and L2 in Prewriting Discussions

While the problems of student writers are often mentioned, it is also important to note that for students, a lack of successful experiences in writing may result in negative attitudes, and these negative attitudes of students, according to LaRoche (1993) can be connected to the writing instruction and the process used.

The issue of student and/or teacher attitudes has been investigated in the research of linguistics, language teaching/learning and second language acquisition. However, research on student attitudes towards prewriting discussions and L1 use in comparison to L2 use in second language writing process are limited. Research studies that have investigated students' attitudes towards prewriting discussion are even more limited. In the last few decades some studies investigated students' attitudes towards prewriting discussion (Sweigart, 1991), prewriting activities (LaRoche, 1993), and L1 versus L2 use in planning for writing (Akyel, 1994). Sweigart (1991) explored students' attitudes towards prewriting discussion. Students' responses revealed that they preferred

prewriting discussions prior to writing rather than no discussion, because talking before writing allowed them to express ideas while developing their understanding of complex ideas. Another study, Akyel (1994), investigated students' attitudes towards prewriting planning in students' L1 and L2. Akyel found that most higher-proficiency students believed that planning in L2 (English) was more helpful than planning in L1 (Turkish), while the tendency for planning in English among some lower proficiency students' was not very strong.

However, since most of the previous studies have not been conducted in EFL contexts, it cannot be assumed that results in first or second language contexts can be extended to EFL learners.

In conclusion, the research suggests that there are important advantages for providing support for students as they engage in the process of writing, since when students are simply given a topic and assigned to write a composition, they often get confused. In order to handle this problem, teachers can give students a topic and give them time to think about it, ask students some questions, and have them discuss the topic with classmates before starting to write.

The following chapter will present the basic methodology of the current study, including the participants, the instruments used, and the data collection and analysis procedures.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study investigated the effects of prewriting class discussions in L1 (Kurdish) in comparison to prewriting class discussions in L2 (English) before writing in L2 (English). In addition, this study explored students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general and using L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions in particular. This was both a quantitative and a qualitative study. In the study, participants wrote four short argumentative essays under two different conditions (prewriting discussion in L1 and prewriting discussion in L2) before they wrote in L2. The current study is a further investigation of various previous studies (Lally, 2000; Shi, 1998; Xianwei, 2009). Shi (1998) examined the role of prewriting discussion in comparison to no discussion, and Lally (2000) investigated the influences of L1 in L2 composition considering the effects of prewriting discussion and planning. The present study is perhaps most closely based on Xianwei's (2009) study, which investigated the effects of prewriting discussion in different languages in comparison to no prewriting discussion on the language quality of students' argumentative writing. This study had a slightly different focus, namely, investigating the role of prewriting discussion using L1 in comparison to L2 before writing in the L2, and exploring the participants' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general and the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions in particular.

Participants and Setting

The participants in this study were 30 Kurdish native speaker sophomore students (12 males and 18 females) in the English Language Department of Koya University. Before entering university, the participants had already studied English for almost eight years, for an average of six or more hours of class per week. After taking the national university entrance exam, they were allowed to enter the English department because they had received scores of between 75 to 80% in all the lectures they had already taken in high school. In addition, the participants had been studying composition for more than one and a half years when they participated in this study. The study took place during their 4th semester at university, when all the participants were enrolled in a single composition class.

Instruments

Instruments in the study were the participants' written essays, a short questionnaire (see Appendix A), and interviews with four chosen students. The interviews included some questions about the participants' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in L1 and L2. The interviews were in Kurdish language, and they were tape-recorded, transcribed, and then translated into English. The interviews with students were conducted to allow them to elaborate on their opinions about L1 and L2 use in prewriting discussions.

Procedures

In this study, the students were asked to write four short argumentative essays, following the conditions of either having prewriting discussions in L1 or prewriting discussions in L2. The study was carried out over four weeks in January and February 2010. The pattern of the procedure was as follows: the students in the first week wrote an essay after having a prewriting discussion in their L1 (Kurdish), in the second week they were assigned to write their essay after having a prewriting discussion in L2 (English). For the third week they again did as they did in the second week (L2 discussion), and the last week was the same as the first week (L1 discussion). Details of the pattern of the procedure are provided below in Table 1:

Table 1- The pattern of the procedure

Week	Language of Prewriting Discussion
Week 1	Prewriting discussion in L1
Week 2	Prewriting discussion in L2
Week 3	Prewriting discussion in L2
Week 4	Prewriting discussion in L1

I chose this pattern over the four consecutive weeks in order to prevent having the results skewed by a practice effect. If the first two weeks had followed, for example, L1 discussions, and the second two weeks L2 discussions, a significant improvement in writing after L2 discussions might have been the effect not of the language but of just better writing in weeks 3 and 4.

Regarding the topics that students were given to write about, I chose some general topics of probable interest to the students and sent them to my supervisor. She reworded some of them and identified the most appropriate ones from which to choose. After that I gave the topics to the writing teacher and together we selected the best four that were current and reflected the students' lives. Even though we could not control for differences among the topics, by choosing those which were related to the students' personal lives, as opposed to; for example, academic topics, we tried to minimize any possible effect of topics on the resulting written texts produced. The topics can be seen in Appendix B.

The total time that could be devoted to essay writing in a single class was 60 minutes. This time slot is the regular time period for classes in the English Language Department at Koya University, and it is the time period that normally students are given in essay writing. In addition, previous studies (Bossio, 1993; Shi, 1998) used the same time slot because it was also the normal class time at the universities where they conducted their studies. Moreover, according to Shi (1998), by using the same time period in all the writing tasks ensures the validity of comparisons among them as well as among different study results.

In each session (prewriting class discussion in L1 and L2) the participants had 15 to 20 minutes to discuss the topic in the class with the teacher and classmates. While discussing the topic, students expressed their ideas and talked about each others' ideas. At the same time the teacher facilitated their argument and made a list of the generated ideas on the whiteboard so that students could remember what they had discussed. The

teacher's notes on the board were made in the language being used for that particular discussion, either Kurdish or English. The participants wrote their essay in 40 to 45 minutes. The participants' written texts were rated by two different raters: the classroom teacher and the researcher. In order to check the inter-rater reliability and ensure the validity of the rating, a third rater was assigned without having detailed information on whether the texts were written following prewriting discussions in L1 or L2. A comparison of the three raters' scores was made, and they were found to not be statistically different.

I created a simple questionnaire for all the students to complete at the end of the four week period, in order to learn their feelings about prewriting discussions using L1 and L2 prior to writing in L2. I wrote the entire questions in my words. The questions were written in English. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants on March 4th. Then the participants completed the questionnaire and returned the papers the same day.

After rating the participants' written texts and averaging their scores, I chose four students (the two with the highest scores and the two with the lowest scores) to be interviewed for further information about how they felt about prewriting discussions in L1 and L2. Even though the students were in fact at the same proficiency level, the idea of choosing two students with the highest scores and two with the lowest scores was to get the greatest diversity among their perceptions. Details about the interviewees are provided below in Table 2.

Table 2 - Information about the interviewees

High scorers	Low scorers
Karzan – male – 22	Shallow – male – 20
Arkan – male – 19	Kani – female – 19

The four chosen participants were interviewed by the researcher in their first language in order to explore further their attitudes towards prewriting discussions in L1 and L2. The aim was to get at their deeper thoughts and attitudes about prewriting discussions in L1 and L2.

Data Analysis Procedure

After collecting the first set of data, which are students' written texts after being exposed to prewriting discussions using L1 or L2, I looked at the overall quality, namely organization, content, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics of the four essays written over four weeks. To grade the students' essays, Cohen's (1994) analytic scoring scale (see Appendix C) was used. Three raters (the researcher himself, a teacher from the English Department at Koya University, and a teacher from the English Department at Sulaimani University), graded the students' papers. Although the researcher and the participant teacher knew which essays were done after L1 prewriting discussions and which were done after L2 prewriting discussions, the third rater did this grading without having information on the process. The raters were instructed on how to grade students' papers.

Using Cohen's rubric they then graded the essays independently. To test inter-rater reliability, the first thing I needed to do was to make sure that raters gave more or less similar scores to the students on the students' essays. I ran a correlation on the grades given for each of the four texts to see whether there was a significant relationship between scores given by the three raters in order to calculate inter-rater reliability. I selected the variable corresponding to the text from week 1 for raters 1, 2 and 3, and ran the correlation. Then I did the same for the texts from weeks 2, 3, and 4. I ended up with four correlation scores (i.e. one for each week's text). For all of these tests the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 were used. All of the correlation tests revealed that the three raters' scores were significantly correlated (details of this are reported in chapter 4).

After running the correlation for reliability analysis, the three grades given by the three raters for each essay of each week were averaged, resulting in four mean scores for the four texts. In SPSS, these new variables were labeled as follows, the first new variable was a combined score for text 1, and was labeled "L1 (1)", the second new variable was a combined score for text 2, and was labeled "L2 (1)", the third for text 3 was labeled "L2 (2)", and the fourth for text 4 was labeled "L1 (2)". In other words, the coding reflects the language of the prewriting discussion that preceded the text writing, and also the order – whether it was first or second. The reason behind this order (L1, L2, L2, L1) was to avoid a possible 'practice effect'; meaning that with every week, the students were just getting better at writing texts, and that it had nothing to do with L1/L2 pre-writing discussions. To check whether there was such a 'practice effect', I compared

students' scores on the first L1 text with their scores on the second L1 text, and then I did the same and compared their scores on the first L2 text with the second one. These comparisons were made by running paired-samples t-tests on the sets of scores L1 (1) with L1 (2), and L2 (1) with L2 (2).

Furthermore, to see whether there was a significant difference between the scores for texts written after prewriting discussions in L1 and those written after prewriting discussions in L2, I again used the combined new variables – L1 (1), L2 (1), L2 (2), and L1 (2). I combined the mean scores of L1 (1) and L1 (2), and compared them to the combined mean scores of L2 (1) and L2 (2) through a paired-samples t-test.

The second set of data was collected through a questionnaire, which was analyzed quantitatively. This set of data sought information about students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions and language use in EFL writing through certain questionnaire items, which were divided into three sections. For analysis purposes, the questionnaire items were again separated into three main sections. The first section of items includes nine questions, which focused on students' positive feelings about and attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general. The second section focuses on three questions that investigate students' negative feelings about and attitudes towards some aspects of prewriting discussions. The third and final section of items includes L1 and L2 use-related statements, and looks at eight questions that investigate students' feelings about and attitudes towards prewriting discussions in L1 and L2 by comparing the two languages used in the study. The data from the questionnaire items were entered into SPSS version 11.5. After entering the data, the percentages, means, and standard deviations of the participants' responses for each item were calculated.

The third set of data was collected through semi-structured interviews with four of the participants. These data were analyzed qualitatively. This set of data aimed to see in-depth information about students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in L1 and L2. In selecting the four interviewees, the mean score of students on the written texts were calculated and the two students with the highest scores and the two with the lowest scores were selected. The interviews were conducted in the students' L1 (Kurdish). I audio-recorded the interviews, transcribed them, and translated them into English (see Appendices D and E for samples of transcripts in both Kurdish and English). I then analyzed the interview transcripts qualitatively by looking at the common ideas that the interviewees said about prewriting discussions in general and prewriting discussions in the L1 and L2 in particular. The purpose of the interviews was to provide further information about the participants' responses to the questionnaire items.

Conclusion

This chapter presented information about the setting where the study was conducted and the participants of the study. In addition, the procedures of data collection, the instruments used in this study, and a brief summary of the data analysis procedures were given. The next chapter is devoted to reporting on the analysis of the collected data, namely the participants' written essays, the questionnaire, and the semi-structured interviews with the four chosen students.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to examine the effect of using L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions on EFL students' writing and their attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general and language use in particular, through testing them, and asking them questions through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. This study explored two research questions. The first question aims to see the possible effect of using L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions on students' writing, and the second question investigates students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general and the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was based on the participants' written essays, the questionnaire, and the transcripts of semi-structured interviews with four participants. For statistical analysis of the students' essays and the questionnaire I used SPSS 11.5. The results of the students' essays were compared by running paired sample dependent t-tests, in order to see whether there were significant differences in the quality of writing after either L1 or L2 prewriting discussions.

The questionnaire was evaluated by using Likert scale, with answers ranging from (1-- totally agree to 5-- totally disagree). To collect data in more detail from students about their attitudes towards prewriting discussions using L1 and L2, I chose four students (the two with the highest scores and the two with the lowest scores), and

interviewed them. The interviews were in the students' L1. I audio-recorded the interviews, transcribed them, and translated them into English. In addition, I analyzed the interview transcripts qualitatively by looking at the interviewees' common ideas about prewriting discussions in general and the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions in particular, in order to acquire more information about the participants' responses to the questionnaire items.

Results of the Study

Writing Tests Results

The effects of L1 and L2 use on the students' writing scores

To obtain the results, statistical analysis was conducted. To prepare the data for this analysis, firstly, I had to see whether the raters' scores for the essays could be averaged and considered as single scores. The relation between the grades that raters gave was investigated by running a correlation to check for inter-rater reliability. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3- Correlations among the raters' grades for all four essays

	Essay1 Reader1	Essay1 Reader2	Essay1 Reader3
Essay1 Reader1			
Pearson Correlation	1	.561(**)	.679(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.000
Essay1 Reader2			
Pearson Correlation	.561(**)	1	.474(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.008
Essay1 Reader3			
Pearson Correlation	.679(**)	.474(**)	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.
	Essay2 Reader1	Essay2 Reader2	Essay2 Reader3

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Essay2 Reader1			
Pearson Correlation	1	.740(**)	.668(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
Essay2 Reader2			
Pearson Correlation	.740(**)	1	.596(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.001
Essay2 Reader3			
Pearson Correlation	.668(**)	.596(**)	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.
<hr/>			
	Essay3 Reader1	Essay3 Reader2	Essay3 Reader3
<hr/>			
Essay3 Reader1			
Pearson Correlation	1	.584(**)	.680(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.000
Essay3 Reader2			
Pearson Correlation	.584(**)	1	.706(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.000
Essay3 Reader3			
Pearson Correlation	.680(**)	.706(**)	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
<hr/>			
	Essay4 Reader1	Essay4 Reader2	Essay4 Reader3
<hr/>			
Essay4 Reader1			
Pearson Correlation	1	.615(**)	.746(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
Essay4 Reader2			
Pearson Correlation	.615(**)	1	.549(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.002
Essay4 Reader3			
Pearson Correlation	.746(**)	.549(**)	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.
<hr/>			

Note: Number of essays was 30 for all

In brief, the correlations among all the grades given by the three raters were statistically significant and therefore we can say that the grades given by the three raters were similar enough that we can count them together.

In the second step, to check for a practice effect, I compared students' scores on the first L1 text with their scores on the second L1 text, and then compared their scores on the first L2 text with the second one. T-tests were run to see whether the differences between them were significant. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4- The means and Standard Deviation for L1 (1 and 2) and L2 (1 and 2)

		Mean	N	SD	Std. Error
Pair 1	Essay 1 (L1)	13.33	30	2.78	.508
	Essay 4 (L1)	14.52	30	2.87	.525
Pair 2	Essay 2 (L2)	13.80	30	2.53	.463
	Essay 3 (L2)	14.42	30	2.78	.507

Note: N= Number of essays

On average, Table 4 shows that for the essays written after prewriting discussions in L1, the participants received slightly higher scores on the fourth week essays than on the first week essays. In addition, Table 4 reveals that on average, the essays written after prewriting discussions in L2, participants received slightly higher scores on the third week essays than on the second week ones. In fact, Table 4 also shows that the means of the students' grades went up slightly every week, regardless of the languages used in prewriting discussion. In other words, the scores got better with practice. This is a normal and expected improvement, and we would hope to see that the students were improving overall. However, this is also why I arranged the procedure of the study in this manner (L1-L2/L2-L1), rather than L1-L1/L2-L2 (or vice versa). In this way, if the results show a significant difference between the scores of essays written after discussions in one language over the other, I can attribute it to the language of discussions not to the practice effect.

Having done all those preliminary tests to make sure the data could be tested, I checked the effectiveness of using L1 and L2 on the students' writing score and writing quality and I compared the students' scores on the combined L1 scores with their

combined L2 scores. A paired samples t-test was run to see whether the differences between them were significant. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5- Differences between texts written after L1 and L2 prewriting discussions

	Mean	N	SD	Std. Error
Combined L1 (Kurdish) scores	13.92	30	2.55	.465
Combined L2 (English) scores	14.11	30	2.49	.455

Note: N= Number of essays

On average, the participants obtained slightly higher scores on texts written after L2 discussions ($M= 14.11$, $SE= .45572$), than on those written after L1 discussions ($M=13.92$, $SE= .46573$, $t(29) = -.724$, $p < .05$, $r = .849$). The difference between students' mean scores according to the two languages used in prewriting discussions does not appear too large, but was found to be statistically significant at the .05 level. Thus, according to the students' performance on the written texts, we can say that the use of L2 (English) in prewriting discussions is better than prewriting discussions in L1 (Kurdish). The exact reasons for this finding cannot be determined by just looking at these statistical results. It may be because the students have sufficient second language ability to conduct such discussions in English and therefore benefited from them more, or it may mean that they simply prefer using the second language (English) to using the first language (Kurdish). To explore the second idea in particular, the results from the questionnaire may be considered.

Questionnaire and Interviews Results

Students' attitudes towards positive statements of prewriting discussions

This part of the questionnaire includes nine items that refer to the students' positive attitudes towards prewriting discussions. Positive statements about prewriting discussions are presented in Table 6.

Table 6- Descriptive statistics on positive statements about prewriting discussions

		TA	A	N	D	TD	M	SD
	Positive statements	%	%	%	%	%		
Q.1	Prewriting discussions help me get ideas prior to writing	33.3	63.3	-	3.3	-	1.73	.63
Q.3	Prewriting discussions help me improve my writing ability	50.0	33.3	6.7	6.7	3.3	1.80	1.06
Q.4	Prewriting discussions help me organize ideas coherently	46.7	33.3	13.3	3.3	3.3	1.83	1.01
Q.5	Prewriting discussions help me improve the content of my writing	43.3	46.7	6.7	-	3.3	1.73	.86
Q.6	Prewriting discussions help me enrich my vocabulary	40.0	30.0	23.3	3.3	3.3	2.00	1.05
Q.7	Prewriting discussions help me improve my speaking ability	20.0	50.0	16.7	10.0	3.3	2.26	1.01
Q.8	Prewriting discussions help me feel less nervous about writing	46.7	30.0	6.7	13.3	3.3	1.96	1.18
Q.9	Prewriting discussions help me to focus on the writing topic	46.7	43.3	6.7	-	3.3	1.70	.87
Q.18	Prewriting discussions let me know where to begin and how to begin my writing	50.0	36.7	3.3	6.7	3.3	1.76	1.04

Note: TA=Totally Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, TD=Totally Disagree; M=mean, SD=Standard Deviation; %=Percentage

Table 6 reveals that most of the students reported that in general they agree with the practice of having prewriting discussions. The means of the students' responses to the positive statements of prewriting discussions were between 1.70 and 2.26, which shows that the students to a great extent agreed with the prewriting discussion technique. In addition, participants have positive attitudes towards prewriting discussion, as this

technique can help them get ideas before starting writing, organize ideas coherently, improve their writing quality and ability, and improve their speaking ability as well.

Although the students' mean scores showed them agreeing with all positively-worded statements, two statements received slightly less favorable reports. For question six, which asked whether prewriting discussions help enrich vocabulary, again quite a large number of participants agreed. However, nearly a quarter (23.3%) of them selected 'neutral' and are thus less sure whether enriching vocabulary is something that can be done through prewriting discussions or not.

Similar to the question on vocabulary enrichment, when students were asked whether prewriting discussions assisted them in improving their speaking skills in question 7, 16.7% of the students reported that they are neutral and 13.3% of them disagreed. In other words, while the students generally believe prewriting discussions help them improve both writing and speaking skills, they feel that the possibility of improving the former through prewriting discussions is more than the latter. This might be because prewriting discussions give them ideas to be written down but they may not have enough opportunity to talk about the topic in the short 15 or 20 minutes that was allocated for prewriting discussions. This short discussion time may not be enough to make some of them feel that they are actually making improvement in their speaking ability as well.

The results of questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9, which are related to the positive effects of prewriting discussions on students' writing quality and ability, are supported by detailed information from the interviewees' responses. Regarding students' feelings

about the positive effects of prewriting discussions, the interviewees were asked a question (*Do prewriting discussions affect your writing?*). The extracts below show how the four interviewees reflected on prewriting discussion in general and its effects on their writing quality and writing ability:

I think prewriting discussion is a useful technique not just for students but for someone else who wants to write an article, a column in a newspaper. As you discuss a topic with someone else, you may think about the topic in all aspects and there may be some ideas generated in the discussion that fully match the writing topic. Furthermore, as you discuss the topic you generate some ideas, and then list them, which automatically gives you a kind of organization. While without prewriting discussions you may need to write two or three drafts until have a good essay. In other words, I think prewriting discussion is as effective as writing two or three drafts of an essay. (Karzan)

I think when you start writing on a topic that have already discussed, you will have some generated ideas on paper, which leads you to have ideas in the right places and organize them in a proper way. In other words, in prewriting discussions most of the aspects of a topic are talked about, which helps you to mention all the aspects of the topic on paper. In addition, Prewriting discussion also helps develop your ideas and have a good content because you have many generated ideas during prewriting discussions. (I prefer having many ideas than a single or a few ones). Moreover, prewriting discussions help enrich your vocabulary, especially when someone uses a word and someone else uses its synonym, or uses it in a phrase. Prewriting discussions improve your grammar as well. I think prewriting discussions also influence coherence, unity, and cohesion of writing. (Arkan)

I think prewriting discussions are useful for students because when the teacher asks us to discuss a class topic, students give their opinion and generate many ideas that help them start writing with lots of ideas and information. In addition, hmmm, prewriting discussions help improve the overall quality of writing. I mean, with prewriting discussions I get more ideas and I can organize them properly, which helps me have a good content as well. Thus, prewriting discussions improve my writing quality. (Kani)

Discussing a topic prior to writing is useful for all students; because there is a saying “two ideas are better than one”. For example, when a topic is discussed, some people are more familiar with the topic and have better

ideas on it, as a result you can get ideas from them, which helps you think better and write better. Prewriting discussions help generate new ideas, which help improve your writing by having more and better ideas. Prewriting discussions also help to organize ideas; help students have good content, and even grammar and vocabulary. I think prewriting discussions improve students writing and speaking ability as well. (Shallow)

As can be seen in the extracts above, the interviewees all believe that prewriting discussions help them improve their writing quality and writing ability. The interviewees all, regardless of score differences, have the same attitudes to a great extent. In particular, they emphasize the importance of prewriting discussions for generating many ideas, developing ideas, organizing ideas properly, and improving writing quality.

Furthermore, it can be seen that the students' responses to the questionnaire items are similar to their responses to the interview questions. This shows that most of the students accept prewriting discussion as an effective technique and they have positive attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general.

On the questionnaire, most of the students reported agreement with a statement that they feel less nervous about writing when they first have prewriting discussions (Q8). The interviewees were also asked a question about whether prewriting discussions help them feel less scared, in order to provide in-depth information about their attitudes towards this issue. The detailed information about the interviewees' attitudes is provided in the extracts below:

The fear of writing is due to students not knowing how to put their ideas on paper. With prewriting discussions you can have many related ideas,

whereas, without prewriting discussions students may not have enough ideas and they may write poor essays (Karzan).

Surely it helps. In prewriting discussions each student talks about an aspect of the given topic and they generate several ideas, which helps them understand the topic better and makes them not afraid of writing (Arkan).

Of course it helps, because students have several ideas about the given topic, which helps them to have more information, as a result you start writing without feeling scared (Kani).

Prewriting discussions make me feel less nervous about writing and to better understand the topic; understanding the topic helps you concentrate on it, which makes you feel less scared. In addition, if you discuss a topic prior to writing and express your ideas in the discussions, you will write on it better (Shallow).

The responses above clearly show that all four of the interviewees appear to be agreeing with the idea that prewriting discussions make students feel less nervous. The interview findings therefore support the questionnaire findings for question eight.

To sum up, according to the results of the statements referring to positive feelings about prewriting discussions, students have positive attitudes towards prewriting discussions, and almost all of them agree with the practice of using prewriting discussion techniques in EFL writing classes.

Students' attitudes towards negative statements of prewriting discussions

The second part of the questionnaire includes three items exploring the students' attitudes towards some negative points related to prewriting discussions. The negative statements about prewriting discussion are presented in Table 7.

Table 7- Descriptive statistics on negative statements about prewriting discussions

		TA	A	N	D	TD	M	SD
	Negative statements	%	%	%	%	%		
Q.2	I prefer to write my own ideas without talking about them first	3.3	-	16.7	53.3	26.7	4.00	.87
Q.10	Prewriting discussions do not help me	3.3	-	-	13.3	83.3	4.73	.78
Q.19	Prewriting discussions take up too much time	10.0	26.7	16.7	33.3	13.3	3.13	1.25

Note: TA=Totally Agree A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, TD=Totally Disagree; M=mean, SD=Standard Deviation; %=Percentage

As can be observed in Table 7, most of the students disagreed with questions two and ten. The mean of the students' responses to question two, which asked students whether they prefer writing their own ideas without prewriting discussion, was 4.00. Furthermore, the mean of the students' responses to the question that asked them whether prewriting discussions do not help them, was 4.73, which shows that students strongly agree with the idea that prewriting discussions actually do help them. Thus, the overall findings for questions two and ten basically show that participants disagreed with these negatively worded statements, which is consistent with their overwhelmingly positive statements on the positively-worded statements.

On question 19, which asked whether prewriting discussions waste too much time, however, the participants showed somewhat more mixed feelings. The mean of the responses to this question, 3.13 reveals that participants were on average neutral. This shows that the participants were more undecided on whether prewriting discussions take a lot of time (presumably excessive time) or take a reasonable amount of time in writing classes. In order to provide further information about students' attitudes towards the time

period of prewriting discussions, some data obtained from the interviews can be seen below.

The interviewees were asked whether they felt that *prewriting discussions wasted their time*, in order to know their in-depth feelings about time allocation for prewriting discussions. The interviewees' answers showed similarity to a great extent, despite coming from both the students who got the highest and those who got the lowest scores on the four texts they wrote. The following excerpts show how the students with the highest score approached this issue:

I do not think prewriting discussions waste students' time, because if you start writing without prewriting discussions you should spend three times more than the time you spend in prewriting discussions just to learn what and how to write. In other words, spending 15 to 20 minutes in prewriting discussions helps students write an essay in just half an hour, on the contrary, without prewriting discussions students may spend more than one hour to write an essay. (Karzan)

I think prewriting discussions help save your time rather than wasting time. If you have prewriting discussions, you get more ideas on the topic and you can arrange ideas and draw a good outline. On the contrary, without prewriting discussions, you may not write a good essay and waste your time thinking of generating ideas and organizing them. (Arkan)

When we look at the transcripts of the two low score participants, we see they have the same opinion about the time issue as the students with the high score. The extracts below illustrate their opinion about the issue:-

I think prewriting discussions do not waste time if it took 10 to 15 minutes. On the contrary, prewriting discussions help students to write better essays in a short time. Prewriting discussions may waste the time of students who write slowly. (Kani)

I think 15 to 20 minutes in a normal class time is not wasting time. In contrast, this amount of time helps getting more information on the given topic. (Shallow)

The data presented above concerning students' attitudes towards the issue of time in prewriting discussions suggest that the interviewees think that prewriting discussions help them to write better essays in a short period of time rather than wasting their time. In fact, the first low score student expressed some slightly different feelings from the high score students and the second low scorer. To illustrate, Kani is clear in saying that prewriting discussions are not a waste of time, however, she specifies that discussions prior to writing are not a waste if they take 10 to 15 minutes. This probably implies that prewriting discussions might be a waste if they stretch beyond that time. Kani also admitted that prewriting discussions might be a waste of time for those students who write slowly. In addition to that, the first low scorer (Kani)'s response to some extent match the neutral scoring on the questionnaire item number nineteen, because participants might have been thinking about what she noted in her interview in relation to the time spent in prewriting discussions. The second low scorer (Shallow), however, felt positively about the allocated time for prewriting discussions and he reported that 15 or more minutes in an ordinary class time for prewriting discussions is not a waste of time as it helps students to have more ideas on the topic.

Overall, when looking at the percentages and means of positive and negative statements about students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions, we can say that students are generally in disagreement with the negative statements, which is consistent

with their general agreement with the positive ones, and indicates overall favorable impressions of prewriting discussions.

Students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in L1 and L2

This part in the questionnaire was devoted to investigating the students' attitudes towards the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions through comparing the L1-related items and the L2-related items in relation to prewriting discussions. The statements about using the L1 and the L2 in prewriting discussions are shown in Table 6.

Table 8- Descriptive statistics on L1 and L2 use in prewriting discussions

		TA	A	N	D	TD	M	SD
	L1 and L2 use statements	%	%	%	%	%		
Q.11	I feel more confident discussing topics in English than I do in Kurdish	20.0	43.3	20.0	13.3	3.3	2.36	1.06
Q.13	I feel more confident discussing topics in Kurdish than I do in English	6.7	13.3	36.7	33.3	10.0	3.26	1.04
Q.12	I can generate a lot of ideas when we have discussions in Kurdish	13.3	43.3	26.7	13.3	3.3	2.50	1.00
Q.14	I can generate a lot of ideas when we have discussions in English	13.3	40.0	33.3	13.3	-	2.46	.89
Q.15a	Through prewriting discussions in Kurdish; I become aware of how to generate ideas for writing	20.0	56.7	13.3	6.7	3.3	2.16	.94
Q.15b	Through prewriting discussions in Kurdish; I become aware of how to organize my ideas	10.0	50.0	26.7	10.0	3.3	2.46	.93
Q.15c	Through prewriting discussions in Kurdish; I learn what to write about the topic on my paper	26.7	53.3	16.7	-	3.3	2.00	.87
Q.16a	Through prewriting discussions in English; I become aware of how to generate ideas for writing	33.3	63.3	3.3	-	-	1.70	.53
Q.16b	Through prewriting	26.7	50.0	23.3	-	-	1.96	.71

	discussions in English; I become aware of how to organize my ideas							
Q.16c	Through prewriting discussions in English; I learn what to write about the topic on my paper	46.7	50.0	3.3	-	-	1.56	.56
Q.17	Prewriting discussions in English are much more difficult than in Kurdish	6.7	40.0	6.7	43.3	3.3	2.96	1.12
Q.20	Prewriting discussions in Kurdish help me to understand the topic better than I do in English	6.7	30.0	26.7	23.3	13.3	3.6	1.17

Note: TA=Totally Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, TD=Totally Disagree; M=mean, SD=Standard Deviation; %=Percentage

As can be observed in Table 8, when we consider the issue of student confidence and language of prewriting discussion, a majority of students agreed (20.0% TA and 43.3% A) that they felt more confident having their discussions in English than in Kurdish (Q11). These results were to some extent mirrored in question 13, which asked whether students feel more confident discussing topics in Kurdish than in English. For question 13 only a fairly small number of students showed their agreement (6.7% TA and 13.3% A), nearly twice as many disagreed (33.3% D and 10.0% TD), and the largest single group remained undecided (36.7% N). By looking at the mean of students' responses to question 13 ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.04$), we can see that students range between undecided and disagreement on this item. From the results of these two items, we can understand that, students generally agreed more with English (L2) as a language that they feel more confident discussing topics in.

The level of agreement, disagreement, and neutrality for questions 12, which asked whether students can generate a lot of ideas when they have discussions in Kurdish (L1), and 14, which asked whether students can generate a lot of ideas when

they have discussions in English (L2), is almost the same. More than half the students agreed (approximately 56%), a quarter were undecided (26%), and a fairly small percentage disagreed (16%) with question 12 ($M = 2.50$, $SD 1.00$); yet more than half also agreed (53%), a third were undecided (33.3%), and a few disagreed (13.3%) with question 14 ($M = 2.46$, $SD .89$). We can understand that students have basically the same feelings about using L1 (Kurdish) and L2 (English) in prewriting discussions to generate ideas. The same mean for the responses to questions 12 and 14 might mean that students feel they can equally generate a lot of ideas with both L1 and L2 use in prewriting discussions, or basically, the students do not see a strong connection between the language of the prewriting discussion and their ability to generate ideas.

Question 15 includes three sub-questions about students' attitudes towards L1 use in prewriting discussions. Over three quarters of the students agreed (76%) with the first item in question fifteen that asked whether, by using the L1 in prewriting discussions, students can be aware of how to generate ideas, which shows that a great number of students agreed with the idea that Kurdish language helps them to generate ideas for writing. Over half of the students also agreed with the idea that prewriting discussions in Kurdish helped them organize ideas – though over a quarter (26.7%) were undecided. For the third part in the question fifteen (*Q15.c. through prewriting discussions in Kurdish; I learn what to write about the topic on my paper*) a large majority agreed (approximately 80%). We can understand that students felt that prewriting discussions in Kurdish help them learn what to write about the topic.

Interestingly, the results for the sub-questions in question 16 are similar. With respect to generating ideas after prewriting discussions in English, almost all of the students agreed (33.3% TA and 63.3% A, $M = 1.70$, $SD .53$). In comparison with question 15a, a greater number of students were in favor of prewriting discussions in English helping them generate ideas. For the next item that related to organizing ideas after using English in prewriting discussions, a large majority of the students reported that they agree (26.7% TA and 50.0% A, $M = 1.96$, $SD .56$), which shows that students also feel that English prewriting discussions help them organize their writing. Again this is a bit higher than the parallel question regarding prewriting discussions in the L1. The level of agreement for the final statement (Q 16c) that asked whether prewriting discussions in English help students learn what to write about the topic on their papers, was very high (46.7% TA and 50.0% A) with only 3.3% of the students remaining undecided. This clearly shows that, almost all of the students believe that using the L2 in prewriting discussions helps them learn more about the given topic and helps them know what to write down about the given topic. While the parallel question for L1 prewriting discussions was also very high, again, there was more agreement on this question for English prewriting discussions. Overall these results support the students' general positive attitudes towards prewriting discussions, and give some preference to prewriting discussions in the L2 over the L1.

Turning from benefits to possible challenges of prewriting discussions in the L2, it can be said that the students were very much mixed in their responses to question number 17 (*Q17. Prewriting discussions in English are much more difficult than in*

Kurdish). In other words, the level of agreement (46.7%) was similar to the level of disagreement (46.6%). When we look at the mean of the responses ($M = 2.96$, $SD 1.12$), we can understand that the students appear to be uncertain about which language – Kurdish (L1) or English (L2) – is easier than the other, which indicates they are undecided. This might be because they do not know how they feel. Rather, they seem to be torn – obviously Kurdish is easier for them to speak and to express their ideas, but maybe they genuinely see benefit from having the discussion in English for enriching their vocabulary and improving their speaking ability because they are English language students. Therefore, their responses were mixed, which reflects those mixed feelings.

Like the responses to question number 17, the students responded to question number 20 in a similarly mixed way. Over a third agreed (6.7% TA and 30.0% A) with this question, which asked whether prewriting discussions in Kurdish help students understand the topic better English prewriting discussions, while approximately the same percent disagreed (23.3% D and 13.3% TD), and an almost equal number remained undecided (26.7). By looking at the mean of responses ($M = 3.06$, $SD 1.17$), we can see that the results indicate that students are neutral. This might be because they can understand the given topic in both languages, and they see both languages as the same in terms of understanding the discussion.

As can be observed from the percentages and the means of the questions in this section overall, students seem to feel both languages can be used in prewriting discussions, and they do not give a remarkable priority to one of them – though for

organization, generating ideas, and learning about the topic, English has a small advantage.

In order to provide more detailed information on students' attitudes towards using L1 or L2 in prewriting discussions, the interviewees were asked a general question: *Which one is more effective and useful to be used in prewriting discussions, L1 or L2?* The interview data are presented in the excerpts below:-

As a student in the English Language Department, I prefer to use (L2) English rather than (L1) Kurdish. In fact, we should not just think of ourselves but think of other students as well, because students have different levels of language proficiency. In my opinion, there is no problem if L1 is used firstly then second language can be used, because students need to be treated equally. Using L1 may help expressing ideas clearly and easily, but if students want to learn L2 they should speak in their L2. Moreover, I think discussions in L2 are more beneficial, especially for speaking ability. To me, the choice of which language to use in prewriting discussions depends on the students' level of language proficiency. (Karzan)

I think it is better to allow lower level students to use their L1 in prewriting discussions. We (second year students) can also use L1 because prewriting discussions are new for us and we do not have enough ability to completely express our ideas in L2. Whereas, students from the third and fourth stages in the English department should use English in all discussions. In other words, lower level students have little information about (L2) English; they cannot use their L2 as well as English native speakers and we cannot easily talk about the given topic. In other words, using language in discussions and class activities depends on the level of language proficiency. (Arkan)

In my opinion both of them (L1 and L2) should be used, but L1 should be used less than L2 because if you discuss in L1 you have to translate the words and ideas into L2, while in L2 you already have words and ideas in the L2, and this saves your time. Furthermore, we are now second stage students and to some extent our English is good but not perfect, therefore, L1 can be used to some extent. In other words, the language that is used in prewriting discussions depends on students' language proficiency levels. In terms of translation, if the discussions are in English the generated ideas can be immediately used, while in L1

translation may occur most of the time. To me, if 20 minutes are allocated to prewriting discussions in normal class time, it is better to have 5 minutes in L1 and the rest of the time in L2. (Kani)

As we are in the English department, it is better to have discussions in L2 (English), but some students in class do not have the ability to speak English in a perfect way, because sometimes some students forget an English word when they talk about the topic, as a result they cannot continue expressing ideas and discussing the topic in a good way. However, if the discussions are in L1, students may become more familiar with the topic and you can generate many ideas and organize them in a better way. Therefore, students, especially lower levels should be allowed to use L1 alongside L2 in discussions, because they may not have enough L2 ability and they are able to express ideas in their L1. (Shallow)

Concerning the results above, the interviewees have some similarities and some differences in their opinion. In terms of similarity, they prefer to use L2 in prewriting discussions because they think that English language students should speak in English more than Kurdish (L1). However, they also are quite unanimous in believing that prewriting discussions can be done in L1 for lower proficiency students who do not yet have enough ability to use the L2 in class while speaking. Both the interviewees who got the highest and the lowest scores believe that prewriting discussions in students' L1 helps particularly lower proficiency students to express more ideas and understand the topic better. Although they agree on some points they also raised different points; for example, one of the interviewees who got a low score reported that using L1 in prewriting discussions may cause a translation of words and ideas. The same person suggested that writing teachers might allow students to have 20 minutes discussion, and during these 20 minutes should have students start talking about the topic in L1 and then use L2 for the rest of the time.

Ultimately, when we look at the interview's results, we can say that the interviewees are undecided to some extent, as the students all had fairly mixed responses to the questions related to L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions, and they see possible benefits for both. Most concretely, we can say that the students believe that choosing whether to use L1 or L2 in prewriting discussions should mostly relate to students' level of language proficiency.

Conclusion

In this chapter the findings obtained from the analysis of the data from 'the participants' essays scores, a questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews were presented.

A t-test carried out on the essay scores revealed that students got slightly higher scores when they used the L2 than the L1. In addition, according to their responses on the questionnaire items, they have positive attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general, and have mixed feelings about some points relating to the use of the different languages in prewriting discussions. In general, they have positive attitudes towards the use of L2 more than the use of L1 in prewriting discussions, especially for high proficiency students – though they also reported that the use of L1 might be useful for low second language proficiency students. This suggests that English language students with high proficiency should use more L2 than L1, while students with lower proficiency level can use L1 alongside L2.

The next chapter discusses the findings of the study, presents the pedagogical implications of the study and further research suggestions, and states the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate, firstly, the effects of L1 and L2 use in prewriting discussions on the quality and overall score of EFL students' essays, and secondly, to see the students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general and using L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions in particular. In the study, the participants' essays, a questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. In other words, to explore the effect of the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions on students' writing quality, paired-samples dependent t-tests of the students' essay scores were used, and then to investigate students' attitudes towards the L1 and L2 use in prewriting discussions a questionnaire was conducted, and semi-structured interviews were done with four students. The participants of this study were sophomore English major students from the English Department at Koya University.

The following sections of this chapter will include the discussion of the findings of the study. The findings will be shown in two main headings: the comparative effects of prewriting discussions in L1 versus L2 on the students' writing quality and scores, and the students' attitudes towards the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions. The next section in this chapter will be the pedagogical implications section. Then, the limitations of the study will be discussed, and finally, suggestions for further research will be presented.

Discussion of Findings

The study findings that were collected and analyzed in the data analysis in chapter four are discussed in two sections. The first section discusses the findings related to the study's first research question: "What are the differences in the students' writing after being exposed to the conditions of prewriting discussions in the L1 and in the L2?" The next section presents the results of the participants' responses to the questionnaire items and the semi-instructed interview questions, which were intended to answer the study's second question: "What are students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general and towards prewriting discussions in L1/L2 in particular?"

The Differences between the Students' Writings after Prewriting Discussions in L1 and in L2

According to the results related to the study's first question, which asked whether using L1 or L2 in prewriting discussions affects students' writing quality, the participants' essays that were written after prewriting discussions in L2 were found to be more successful than the essays written after prewriting discussions in L1. The results of the present study therefore seem to be consistent with the findings of Xianwei's (2009) study. Xianwei found that an English-only prewriting discussion group outperformed the other three groups: the Chinese-only group, the combined Chinese/English group, and the individually brainstorming group in terms of the language quality of argumentative essays. This reveals that using L2 in prewriting discussions is more effective than L1 use in terms of helping to improve students' writing quality.

However, the results of the students' essay scores were also inconsistent with some previous studies, which said that prewriting activities in the L1 are more effective than those in the L2. For example, Li (2008) revealed that L1 use facilitates students' writing processes, and maintained that the use of L1 assists the L2 writing process. Lally (2000) also found that the use of L1 in prewriting discussions and other activities helps students to produce well-organized essays. Moreover, the results were inconsistent with Stapa & Abdul Majid's (2009) study, which revealed that the participants' writing performance improved when they generated ideas in their L1 before starting to write in the L2.

One factor that has been introduced as a possible contributing factor to whether L1 or L2 prewriting activities are more effective is that of the students' proficiency level. For example, Cumming (1989) assessed twenty-three young adults' L2 writing performance in proportion to their writing expertise and L2 proficiency. He found that L2 proficiency is an "additive factor" that improves students' writing quality. Akyel (1994) also investigated the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting planning. She concluded that language has no significant effect, but rather that students' level of proficiency affects the quality of plans and writing. In addition, Stapa & Abdul Majid (2009) found that students with low English language proficiency generated more ideas and produced qualitatively better essays when they used their L1 than their L2. My interviewees believe that the proficiency level can help to determine the language of choice in prewriting discussions, and they reported that lower level students should use L1 in prewriting discussions more than L2. Here we can say their belief is generally in agreement with Akyel's opinion. Therefore, writing teachers should take students' level

of proficiency into consideration in speaking activities, especially in prewriting discussions, because when students with low second language proficiency are not able to express their ideas, or are afraid of making grammatical mistakes, this could make them unable to give their opinions and participate fully in class discussions, unlike the high proficiency L2 students who can participate nearly as easily in L2 speaking activities as they do in their L1.

Students' Attitudes towards Prewriting Discussions in general and towards the Use of L1 and L2 in Prewriting Discussions

This section discusses the findings surrounding the English Language Department students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general and the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions in particular. This section includes two subsections, which presents the results of the participants' responses to the questionnaire items and the interview questions. The subsections are: students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general, and students' attitudes towards the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions.

Students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions

The first part of the questionnaire was aimed at investigating the participants' attitudes towards prewriting discussions in general. The results showed that the students agreed with all the statements that referred to the students' positive feelings about prewriting discussions, and stated that prewriting discussions help them in generating ideas, organizing essays coherently, having better writing content, and helping to enrich

their vocabulary. They also reported that prewriting discussions help them concentrate more on the given topic, and to do so while feeling more comfortable and less nervous. In addition, the participants see the prewriting discussion technique as a useful tool to improve their writing ability as well as their speaking ability. In general, the means of the responses to the positive items show that students agreed with the idea of having prewriting discussions, and believe that this technique can improve their writing quality. The interview findings relating to prewriting discussions also showed that the four students reported that prewriting discussions positively affect their writing performance and their speaking ability, and even contribute to improving their grammar and enriching their vocabulary.

Looking at the same issue from the other side, when it comes to students' feelings about the negative statements of prewriting discussions, the students generally responded in an expected manner, in other words, they disagreed with the negative statements. Almost all the participants disagreed with the first two items referring to the students' negative feelings about prewriting discussions. However, they were undecided about the time allocated to prewriting discussions and they were uncertain whether prewriting discussions in some way might waste their writing class time or save it. In general, from the students' responses, we can understand that they perceive prewriting discussions as a useful technique that has more positive sides than negative ones. While the issue of time had more mixed results on the questionnaire, the students' responses to the interview questions, especially the question that related to the issue of time allocated to prewriting discussions, showed that at least the interviewees felt that prewriting

discussions help student writers save time rather than waste it, and they suggested that 15 minutes is a good amount of time for prewriting discussions. In brief, the findings clearly show that the students have positive feelings about the use of this technique in writing classes.

Although earlier studies haven't looked at students' attitudes towards prewriting discussions, these findings are consistent with the research in literature that has looked at the effectiveness of prewriting discussions. For example, Meyers (1980) investigated the difference between prewriting discussion and no prewriting discussion, and found that the experimental group who used prewriting discussion produced better writing texts. Bossio (1993 cited in Shi, 1998) in an ESL study investigated the effects of talking on writing. He pointed out that prewriting discussions help students produce better written texts. Also, Sweigart (1991) in his study compared small group and class discussions prior to writing. He found that prewriting discussion in small groups was more helpful in improving students' knowledge before they start writing. In general, Sweigart's study participants preferred prewriting discussions as a helpful technique, especially in developing their understanding. The findings were also consistent with Shi's (1998) study. Shi concluded that prewriting discussions led to students' producing better essays and using more vocabulary in them. Furthermore, Kennedy (1983) investigated the effects of prewriting discussions on writing quality. The results of his study are clear evidence to support the effectiveness of prewriting discussions on generating and developing ideas, and generally improving students' writing performance.

To conclude, the findings of these studies and the present study's result reveal that prewriting discussions help to improve students' writing ability and affect students' writing quality positively.

Students' attitudes towards the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions

The study also examined the participants' attitudes towards using L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions. The findings suggest that most of the time the participants had mixed feelings about the language related issues in prewriting discussions. For example, the participants had the same opinion about idea generation in L1 and L2, which means that they feel they can generate lots of ideas when they discuss a writing topic either in their native language or their second one. The participants also expressed almost the same attitudes towards the idea that the use of both the L1 and the L2 in prewriting discussions helps students become aware of ways of generating ideas and organizing them, and also helps them learn what to write better about the assigned topic.

Furthermore, the participants' responses to the item that asked whether prewriting discussions in English or in Kurdish were much more difficult for EFL students, also indicated that they think *neither* L1 nor L2 is difficult for prewriting discussions or, at least, that they are equally difficult to be used in prewriting discussions. The participants were also undecided about item twenty, which asked them whether prewriting discussions in L1 help them understand the topic better. This might mean that the participants think that both languages help them to understand the given topic. Despite being undecided about most of the L1 and L2 use related items, the

participants reported they feel more confident discussing topics in English than doing it in their native language (Kurdish). This point seems to match with their writing scores, as they wrote better essays after having prewriting discussions in English than in Kurdish. In general, the participants slightly tended to accept the use of L2 in prewriting discussions as a somewhat more effective factor than the use of L1.

The interview data analysis from the two students with the highest and two the lowest scores showed that these students, regardless of their scores, had almost similar attitudes towards language of choice in prewriting discussions (i.e. L1/L2 use) in particular. The interviewees believed that the use of L2 is very useful for English majors and L1 use may be useful for lower level students who are not yet able to express their ideas properly. This is similar to Lally's (2000) findings, which indicate that using L1 in L2 writing is useful for low second language proficiency students, especially in planning and organizing ideas. Li (2008) also supports Lally's belief as she concludes that the use of L1 facilitates students' writing process. Stapa & Abdul Majid's (2009) also pointed out that the use of L1 for generating ideas helped students to improve their writing performance. They found that lower English language proficiency students in particular generated more ideas and wrote qualitatively better essays as they used their native language in generating ideas.

In brief, the participants had mixed feelings when they responded to some items asking about the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions. However, the results of the language-related items revealed that participants in general are more in agreement with the use of L2 in prewriting discussions than using L1.

Pedagogical Recommendations

The findings suggest that prewriting discussions can and should be a part of writing classes in the English department at Koya University. The writing teachers can allocate about 15 minutes prior to writing to discuss the topic in small groups or with the whole class. It may take some preparation to familiarize students with this technique so that it improves their writing and speaking abilities – and for them to perceive it as effective. The positive findings towards the prewriting discussion technique suggest that teachers should also investigate the possibility that other writing process techniques, such as drafting, giving feedback, and revision, might also be used in order to help students to improve their writing performance. According to the data gathered and analyzed, the students believe that prewriting discussions technique helps in all aspects to improve their writing ability and writing quality. These results are supported by the results of other researchers, such as Meyers, 1980; Kennedy, 1983; McGlann and McGlann, 1990; Sweigart, 1991; and Shi, 1998.

In addition, curriculum developers and writing teachers should consider which languages should be allowed in prewriting discussions. This decision can perhaps best be made by considering the students' level of second language proficiency. For instance, the use of L1 should be allowed among lower level second language students, especially first year and second year students for the first term, because they may not have sufficient second language speaking ability and they cannot express their ideas in class activities. The first language of students therefore should be used in prewriting discussions among EFL students with a lower level of second language proficiency.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the present study was that it included only a small number of participants, and these were all within the same group and almost at the same proficiency level. In other words, this study was done with sophomore English Language students at Koya University, meaning both that the findings could not truly reflect the issue of language proficiency as a possible factor, and that the data cannot be generalized beyond the students at this institution. Therefore, future research might investigate the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions with EFL students at different levels, and at other universities.

This study did not include the writing teachers themselves as participants of the study either. If the writing teachers at Koya University were included in the present study, especially if they were interviewed about the issue of language use in prewriting discussions, they could explain the pros and cons of the prewriting discussions technique and the choice of language of prewriting discussions. Therefore, data from writing teachers through questionnaires and interviews could be collected to discover their feelings about and attitudes toward the use of L1 and L2 in prewriting discussions in EFL writing classes.

Finally, it must be noted as a limitation the possibility that the students' positive perceptions of using prewriting discussion technique in writing classes were partly due to the novelty effect. It is a common truth that when students are introduced for the first time to new things (e.g. prewriting discussions), they are more likely to react to it positively. To some extent this may have happened in this study, and thus the positive

reactions reported by the students to prewriting discussions must be considered in light of this possibility.

Suggestions for Further Research

Future researchers could carry out the same study but with some different procedures and in another setting with different participants. For example, it could be carried out in a quasi-experimental format with more participants from three different groups. In such a design, one group could, during the experimental period, prepare a series of essays after prewriting discussions in the L1, another group could do the same after discussions using L2, and still a third could use the experimental period to write the essays without any prewriting discussions. Rather than only compare the students' performance on the individual essays written, a pre and post-testing methodology could be prepared, and it could be explored whether there were long-term benefits of prewriting discussions overall, and whether the language of those discussions affected, for example, the students' vocabulary knowledge at the end of the period.

Furthermore, writing teachers could be included as participants of the study, especially to explore their attitudes towards L1 and L2 use through questionnaires and interviews. Not only because of their role in the classroom, but also because teachers may work as curriculum designers and program developers, therefore, their opinions and attitudes can also be taken into consideration in order to decide whether to use the technique in writing classes or not, and which language (L1 or L2) the technique should be used with.

For further research, other new procedures could also be carried out. Studies could be conducted to see whether students' level of second language proficiency is actually related to the effectiveness of one or the other language (L1 or L2) use in prewriting discussions in the L2 writing process.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study revealed that the participants generally agree that prewriting discussion is an effective technique in the second language writing process. The findings also showed that the participants produced qualitatively better texts after discussing the topics in the L2 than in the L1. While the students responded positively to prewriting discussions in general, they had some mixed feelings about some points relating to the language choice in prewriting discussions. For instance, some of the participants believed that the second language is more useful because they need to learn it better and these discussions allow them practice time. Other participants believed that the use of L1 or L2 should be determined by consideration of students' second language ability. In brief, the findings of the study imply that the use of L2 in prewriting discussions is to some extent more effective than the use of L1, although this may not be correct among lower-proficiency students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire Items

Dear participants,

I am a student at Bilkent University, in the MA TEFL program. This study will be done for a Master's degree thesis. The study will be looking at students' attitudes towards and practices when writing in a second language. I would like you to assist me by answering the following questionnaire items. Your answers to the questionnaire will be kept completely confidential. I really appreciate your sincere consideration. Thank you for your cooperation.

Researcher: Hemn A. Karim

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1) Age: _____

2) Gender: Male Female

3) Stage: _____

Directions: Check the boxes next to each question that most closely corresponds to your feelings.

	Totally agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally disagree
1. Prewriting discussions help me get ideas prior to writing.					
2. I prefer to write my own ideas down without talking about them first.					
3. Prewriting discussions help me improve my writing ability.					
4. Prewriting discussions help me organize ideas coherently.					
5. Prewriting discussions help me improve the content of my writing.					

6. Prewriting discussions help me enrich my vocabulary.					
7. Prewriting discussions help me improve my speaking skills.					
8. Prewriting discussions help me feel less nervous about writing.					
9. Prewriting discussions help me to focus on the writing topic.					
10. Prewriting discussions do not help me.					
11. I feel more confident discussing topics in English than I do in Kurdish.					
12. I can generate a lot of ideas when we have discussions in Kurdish.					
13. I feel more confident discussing topics in Kurdish than I do in English.					
14. I can generate a lot of ideas when we have discussions in English.					
15. Through prewriting discussions in Kurdish:					
✚ I become aware of how to generate ideas for writing.					
✚ I become aware of how to organize my ideas.					
✚ I learn what to write about the topic on my paper.					
16. Through prewriting discussions in English:					
✚ I become aware of how to generate ideas for writing.					
✚ I become aware of how to organize my ideas.					
✚ I learn what to write about the topic on my paper.					
17. Prewriting discussions in English are much more difficult than in Kurdish.					

18. Prewriting discussions let me know where to begin and how to begin my writing.					
19. Prewriting discussions take up too much time.					
20. Prewriting discussions in Kurdish help me to understand the topic better than I do in English.					

Thank you very much for your participation and contribution

Appendix B: The Writing Topics

1. Nowadays mobile phones are becoming more and more popular in our lives. Some people think they bring us much convenience while others argue they make more trouble. Which view do you agree with? Use your ideas, knowledge or experience to generate ideas and support for your argument. (L1 use).
2. Should smoking be allowed in public areas? Why or why not? Provide supporting evidence for your choice. (L2 use).
3. Some people claim that private universities are better than state universities in terms of level of education, job opportunity, getting experience, etc. while others argue that private universities are bad because they make differences between social classes. Discuss (L2 use).
4. Which do you think is better for students, living in a dorm or living at home? Be sure to provide supporting evidence for your choice. (L1 use).

Appendix C: Features of the Analytic Grading Scale – Cohen (1994)

Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Grammar	Mechanics
5 points: ideas stated clearly and accurately	5 points: well organized	5 points: very effective choice of words	5 points: no errors	5 points: mastery of spelling and punctuation
4 points: ideas stated fairly clearly and accurately	4 points: fairly well organized	4 points: effective choice of words	4 points: almost no errors	4 points: few errors in spelling and punctuations
3 points: ideas somewhat unclear or inaccurate	3 points: loosely organized	3 points: adequate choice of words	3 points: some errors	3 points: fair number of spelling and punctuation errors
2 points: ideas not clear or accurate	2 points: ideas disconnected	2 points: limited range of words	2 points: many errors	2 points: frequent errors in spelling and punctuation
1 point: ideas not at all clear or accurate	1 point: no organization	1 point: very limited range of words	1 point: dominated by errors	1 point: no control over spelling and punctuation

Appendix D: A Sample of the Interview-Kurdish Transcript

تویژەر: کاریگه‌ری گفتوگۆی پیش‌نوسین چیه بۆ سه‌ر نوسین؟

کارزان: بروام وایه گفتوگۆی پیش‌نوسین ته‌کنیکیکی به‌سوده نه‌ک ته‌نها بۆ خویندکاران به‌لکو بۆ که‌سی تریش که ئه‌یه‌وئ ئار تیکلێک یان ستونیک له رۆژنامه‌یه‌کدا بنوسیت. کاتیک که بابته‌یک له‌گه‌ل که‌سی‌کدا گفتوگۆ ده‌که‌ی ره‌نگه له هه‌موو لایه‌کی بابته‌که بیر بکه‌پته‌وه که ره‌نگه هه‌ندیک ئایدیات ده‌ست بکه‌وئیت که به ته‌واوی په‌یوه‌سته به بابته‌ی نوسینه‌که‌وه. له‌گه‌ل ئه‌وه‌شدا که گفتوگۆی بابته‌که ده‌که‌یت و ئایدیات ده‌ست ده‌که‌وئ لیستیشیان ئه‌که‌یت که ریک‌خستنیک ئۆتوماتیک ئایدیاکانیش پێ ده‌دا. به پێچه‌وانه‌وه، به بئ گفتوگۆی پیش‌نوسین ره‌نگه پێویستت به‌وه بێت که دوو تا سئ ئیسه‌ی بنوسیت تاوه‌کو ئیسه‌یه‌کی باشت هه‌بێت.

تویژەر: ئایا گفتوگۆی پیش‌نوسین یارمه‌تیت ده‌دا له نوسین نه ترسیت؟

کارزان: ئه‌و ترسه‌ی له نوسیندا هه‌یه ده‌گه‌ر ئه‌وه بۆ ئه‌وه‌ی که خویندکار نازانیت چۆن ئایدیاکانی دا‌بر‌ئ‌زیت له‌سه‌ر په‌ره. له‌گه‌ل هه‌بوونی گفتوگۆی پیش‌نوسین ئه‌وانیت که زۆر ئایدیای په‌یوه‌ست به بابته‌که‌ت هه‌بێت، که‌چی له‌گه‌ل نه‌بوونی ئه‌م ته‌کنیکه ره‌نگه خویندکار ئایدیای ته‌واوی ده‌ست نه‌که‌وئیت و ئیسه‌یه‌کی لاواز بنوسیت.

تویژەر: کامیان کاریگه‌رتر و به‌هێزتره تاوه‌کو به‌کار به‌ئینریت له گفتوگۆی پیش‌نوسیندا، زمانی دایک (کوردی) یان زمانی دووهم (ئینگلیزی)؟

کارزان: وه‌کو خویندکارێک له به‌شی زمانی ئینگلیزی، زمانی ئینگلیزیم به‌لاوه په‌سه‌ندتره تاوه‌کو زمانی کوردی. له راستیشدا ئیمه نابیت به ته‌نها بیر له خۆمان بکه‌پنه‌وه به‌لکو بیر له خویندکارانی تریش بکه‌پنه‌وه، چونکه خویندکاره‌کان ئاستی زمانیان جیاوازه. به‌رای من هێچ کێشه‌یه‌ک نیه ئه‌گه‌ر زمانی دایک یه‌که‌م جار به‌کار به‌ئینریت دواتر زمانی دووهم، چونکه ئه‌بیت خویندکاران وه‌کو یه‌ک سه‌یر بکری‌ن... به‌کاره‌ینانی زمانی دایک ره‌نگه یارمه‌تی خویندکار بدات به ئاسانی و پرونی ئایدیاکان تی بگات، به‌لام خویندکاران گه‌ر بیانه‌وئیت فیری زمانی دووهم ببن ئه‌وه ئه‌بیت زمانی دووهمیش به‌کار به‌ئین، چونکه سوودی زۆری هه‌یه به‌تایبه‌تی بۆ

به هیزبوونی توانای قسه کردن... به رای من به کار هینانی زمان لا گفتوگوی پیش نویسنده پشت
 نه بستیت به ناستی زمانی دووه می خوندکار هه.

تویژه: آیا گفتوگوی پیش نویسنده کاتی وانهی نویسنده کوژی؟

کارزان: من بروا ناکه که گفتوگوی پیش نویسنده کاتی خوندکار بکوژی، چونکه نه گهر
 دهست به نویسنده بکهی به بی گفتوگوی پیش نویسنده هوا نه بیت سی نه وندهی کاتی گفتوگو که
 ترخان بکهی تنها بو فیربوونی نهوهی که چی بنوسیت و چون بنوسیت. بو نمونه به سه بر دنی
 15 بو 20 خولهک له گفتوگوی پیش نویسنده یارمندی خوندکار نهدا نیسهیهک له ماوهی نیو
 کاتر میردا بنوسیت، به پیچه وانهوه، به بی نه تهکنیکه خوندکار پی دهچیت کاتر میریک زیاتر
 به سه بیات بو نویسنده نیسهیهک.

Appendix E: A Sample of the Interview-English Transcript

Interviewer: do prewriting discussions affect your writing?

Interviewee (Karzan): I think prewriting discussion is a useful technique not just for students but it for someone else who wants to write an article, a column in a newspaper. As you discuss a topic with someone else, you may think about the topic in all aspects and there may be some generated ideas in the discussion that fully match the writing topic. Furthermore, as you discuss the topic, you generate some ideas, and then list them, which give you a kind of organization automatically. While without prewriting discussions you may need to write two or three drafts until have a good essay. In other words, I think prewriting discussion is as effective as writing two or three drafts of an essay.

Interviewer: do prewriting discussions help you feel less scared of writing?

Interviewee (Karzan): the fear of writing is due to students not knowing how to put their ideas on paper. With prewriting discussions you can have many related ideas. Whereas, without prewriting discussions students may not have enough ideas and they may write poor essays.

Interviewer: which one is more effective and useful to be used in prewriting discussions, L1 (Kurdish) or L2 (English)?

Interviewee (Karzan): as a student in English Language Department, I prefer to use (L2) English rather than (L1) Kurdish. In fact, we should not just think of ourselves but think

of other students as well, because students have different levels of language proficiency. In my opinion, there is no problem if L1 is used firstly then second language can be used, because students need to be treated equally. Using L1 may help expressing ideas clearly and easily, but if students want to learn L2 (English) they should speak in their L2. Moreover, I think in L2 is more beneficial, especially for speaking ability. To me using language in prewriting discussions depends on the students' level of language proficiency.

Interviewer: do prewriting discussions waste your time?

Interviewee (Karzan): I do not think prewriting discussions waste students' time, because if you start writing without prewriting discussions you should spend three times more than the time you spend in prewriting discussions just to learn what and how to write. In other words, spending 15 to 20 minutes in prewriting discussions help students write an essay during half an hour, on the contrary, without prewriting discussions students may spend more than one hour to write an essay.