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THE EFFECT OF PEER FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS' OVERALL WRITING PERFORMANCE AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD PEER FEEDBACK

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We **certify** that this thesis under the title of "**THE EFFECT OF PEER FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS' OVERALL WRITING PERFORMANCE AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD PEER FEEDBACK**" is satisfactory for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts** in the Department of **English Language Teaching.**

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DEDICATION

To my mother.

ÖZET

AKRAN GERİDÖNÜTÜNÜN ÖĞRENCİLERİN GENEL YAZMA PERFORMANSI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ VE ONLARIN AKRAN GERİDÖNÜTÜNE KARŞI TUTUMLARI

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Bu çalışma akran geridönütünün öğrencilerin genel yazma performansına olumlu bir etkide bulunup bulunmayacağını ve onların akran geridönütüne karşı tutumlarını araştırmayı amaçlar. Bu çalışma Zirve Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu D kurunda öğrenim gören 32 öğrenci ile yürütülmüştür. Hem deney hem de control grubunda 16 öğrenci bulunmaktaydı. Çalışma 7 hafta sürdü. Bilgi toplamak için bir ön test, bir son test ve açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan bir anket kullanıldı. Ön test ve son test sonuçları SPSS programında karşılaştırıldı ve anket de içerik analizi yöntemiyle incelendi. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına gore deney grubundaki öğrencilerin ön test ve son test sonuçları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık ortaya çıktı. Anket sonuçları da öğrencilerin akran geridönütüne karşı olumlu bir tutum sergilediklerini gösterdi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Geridönüt, Akran Geridönütü, Yazma Performansı, Akran Geridönütüne Karşı Tutumlar

ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF PEER FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS' OVERALL WRITING PERFORMANCE AND THEIR ATTITIDES TOWARD PEER FEEDBACK

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This study aims to investigate if peer feedback has a positive effect on students overall writing performance and their attitudes toward peer feedback. This study was carried out with 32 students studying in level D at the School of Foreign Languages of Zirve University. There were 16 students in both the experiment and control groups. It lasted for 7 weeks. A pre-test, a post-test, and a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions were used to collect data. The pre-test and post-test results were compared using SPSS, and questionnaire was analyzed using content analysis method. According to the results of the study, there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the experiment group. The results of the questionnaire also showed that students had a positive attitude toward peer feedback.

Keywords: Feedback, Peer feedback, Writing Performance, Attitudes Toward Peer Feedback

ABBREVIATIONS

L1	First Language
L2	Second Language / Target Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Writing can be described in many ways. Actually, writing is an ability to use the language the students learn by putting words on paper. However, it cannot be described as a simple matter of relaying language using written symbols because it is actually a thinking process (White & Arndt, 1991). A wider definition is given by Mckay (1979: 73) "writing includes recurring phrases such as thinking process, stylistic choice, grammatical correctness, rhetorical arrangement, and creativity". This means that in addition to the topic, arrangement, and style, students are expected to organize their own ideas while writing.

Writing can be understood better only through the perspective of other people, rather than a single individual. Therefore, receiving comments and suggestions and getting the opinions of others writing are of great necessity. Likewise, Hirvela (1999:10) states that writing does not occur "in a vacuum"; rather it is shaped by the "expectations and demands of its intended community of readers". Therefore, it can be said that the writer composes while taking the reader into consideration, and the readers can greatly affect the outcome of a composition. That is to say, writing can be defined as an interactive activity. It can indicate the importance of the reader since "the writer creates a picture of the reader, who thus becomes an ideal reader, attributes to this reader certain experience, knowledge, opinions and beliefs on the basis of which the writer builds his message" (Porto, 2001:39). Given its interactive nature, writing is one of the most crucial skills to be work on in L1 and L2.

To know how to express oneself through writing is very advantageous in everything from academic life to daily life to work life. Because of this, foreign language teachers and learners concentrate on developing writing skills. It is an essential skill for academic success, writing tasks, and many other individual needs in a target language. Consequently, the skill of writing has gained great importance in foreign language education with the help of different researches in this field and the newly developed writing approaches (Kroll, 1990).

One of the newest trends in teaching writing is the 'Process Approach'. It shows the idea that "writing is a process" and that "the writing process is a recursive

activity involving certain universal stages (prewriting, writing, revising)" (Cooper, 1986:364). Process writing refers to the change from the product to process as well.

Process approach emerged as a response to the 'traditional' styles of teaching writing. In traditional writing, students are given the rules of what makes a good piece of writing, and are expected to write according to those rules. The emphasis is on the finished products of students, not on how the students create their product. The teacher grades the composition with the intention of correcting linguistic errors. In traditional teaching writing, as Roebuck (2001) states, there is no place for teaching on how the content of an essay should be created and developed. However, process approach wants the writers to produce and exchange their ideas. In this case, the most important responsibility of writing instructors is to encourage students to promote skills needed to create ideas, explore ways of stating them, examine and clarify their writing (Caulk, 1994). This refers to prewriting, drafting, analyzing, and revising. To conclude, revision has been widely accepted as an essential element of the writing process.

In the revising stage, students need comments from outsiders. Those comments given by a reader to a writer to improve their written work can be defined as "feedback" (Elbow, 1981:238). The significance of feedback is emphasized by Elbow (1981) as follows:

No matter how productively you managed to get words down on paper or how carefully you have revised, no matter how shrewdly you figured your audience and purpose and suited your words to them, there comes the time when you need feedback. Perhaps you need it for the sake of revising: you have a very important piece of writing and you need to find out which parts work and which parts don't, so you can rewrite it carefully before giving it to the real audience. Or perhaps you have already given an important piece to the real audience- it's too late for any revising- but nevertheless you need to learn how your words worked on the reader. Or perhaps you've simply decided that you must start learning in general about the effectiveness of writing. (p. 237)

According to the process approach, there are different types of feedback for revision. They can be separated into many different categories depending on who

provides the feedback (teacher or peer), what the focus of the feedback is (content or grammar), and how the feedback is provided (face to face or the Internet).

Nowadays, the common trend in writing is the practice of students' providing feedback to their classmates. Students read, respond, and comment on their classmates' drafts in pairs or in groups. Hence, peer feedback has turned out to be a fashionable trend in L2 classes where the process approach is adopted. However, it does not mean that teachers don't play any role in class except from organizing the class because it is certain that teachers are more well-informed and knowledgeable than students and more familiar with the English language - linguistically and rhetorically. It is widely accepted that teacher feedback is preferred over student feedback by both the students and teachers, but it doesn't improve students' cognitive and writing skills. Students simply rewrite their essays according to the comments of teachers. This makes learning a form of imitation rather than a discovery (Hyland, 2000).

Peer feedback is considered as a way of making students more autonomous students because students can make decisions on the usefulness of their peers' comments. It rejects the passive reliance on teachers. The literature itself asserts many positive comments on the effects of peer feedback. Tsui & Ng (2000) argue that peer feedback has a few advantages, such as:

1) Peer feedback is more appropriate for the level, interest, and development of a learner, and so more informative than teacher feedback.
2) Peer feedback creates audience awareness.
3) Students can learn more about writing by reading other students' writings critically.

In addition to positive comments about peer feedback, there are some criticisms about peer feedback. For instance, Leki (1990) stated some problems about peer feedback: students tend to respond to superficial errors instead of semantic or textual ones; they generally give advice that does not aid the editing process; and they also have a hard time figuring out the helpfulness of their peers' comments. Another problem can be that the students from certain cultures view the teacher as the only valid source of knowledge and do not see their peers as having any worthwhile information.

These problems may occur because of inadequate preparation. Since giving feedback is not an innate talent, it is not logical to expect students to give effective feedback. To give effective feedback, students should have the chance to learn how to give feedback to their peers. Students should be taught about the steps of the writing process in addition to how to give and receive criticism. In short, with the proper training, students can be effective peer reviewers and better writers.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Writing classes especially at universities are really difficult courses both for teachers and for the students. There are several elements that make it challenging. Maybe the most important one is the fact that students have difficulty writing coherent, concise, organized, and grammatically accurate essays. However, this problem presents an opportunity for students to improve their writing performance. Especially since the process approach offers us a better understanding of the writing process and new ways to improve students' writing performance.

What led me to this study is the type of feedback applied in writing classes. From past to present, teacher feedback has been the primary form of feedback implemented in writing classes. As a complementary to teacher feedback, implementing peer feedback sounds favorable because it would provide a less stressful classroom environment for students. Also, if the students are in a more student-centered environment, it may be much more effective. For peer feedback to be effective, students should be taught certain skills.

Teaching students how to give and receive feedback to their peers seems appropriate because it increases students' overall writing performance. I hope this study will contribute not only to improve writing performance but also to the learning process of students.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to see whether peer feedback will be effective on students' overall writing performance. I will also have the opportunity to compare the performance of those students who receive peer feedback and teacher feedback to those who receive only teacher feedback.

1.4. Justification for the Study

In my writing classes, I use teacher feedback. In the beginning, it is very useful. However, I have realized that teacher feedback becomes counterproductive in time. For this reason, I wanted to change the way I implemented feedback. I tried another approach: peer feedback. This study deals with the effects of peer feedback on students' overall writing performance. The study may be beneficial for:

1- students to have quality writing,
2- teachers to think about an other method of giving feedback,
3- teachers to decrease their heavy work of grading/assessing papers.

1.5. Statement of the Research Questions

In the view of the information given above, this study aims at revealing whether peer feedback will be effective and finding out whether there will be a significant difference between the experiment group who receives peer feedback and teacher feedback and control group who receives only teacher feedback. The following questions were posed to give direction to the study:

1- Does peer feedback have a positive effect on students' overall writing performance?
2- What are the attitudes of students toward the peer feedback method?

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Approaches to Teaching Writing

Teaching writing is central in all educational systems, and there many ways used to teach it best. Therefore, the literature presents us several approaches to teaching writing. There are two prominent approaches related to teaching writing. They are *Product Approach* and *Process Approach*.

2.1.1. General View of Product Approach

A clear definition of product approach was given by Gabrielatos (2002: 5). He considers product approach as "a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage". For instance, in a product approach adopted classroom, students are provided with a sample writing text, and they are expected to write their own texts accordingly.

It is clear that people or students create a text for a purpose, and the concern of the product approach is the final outcome. The teachers following the product approach are primarily interested in the finished product which is "the end result of students' labors and has about it an air of finality and completeness" (Brookes & Grundy, 1990: 22). In the product approach, what teachers do is to mark students' papers by making some comments on the paper and catching grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. What teachers expect is excellence and high standards, so students especially pay attention to linguistic accuracy: grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

In the product approach, the role of the teacher is to correct papers, especially the grammar mistakes. This leads the students to write easier sentences, use simple expressions, and causes their writings to be of poor quality. It makes the students be obsessed with avoiding errors and writing carefully in a limited area. As Badger and White (2000) state, the product-based approach sees writing as mainly concerned with knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development as mainly an outcome of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher.

These arguments make it necessary to find a new way to teach writing and required a change. This change was characterized as the shift from students' writing to the student writers, preferring the process-oriented approach (Hedge, 1988: 19).

2.1.2. General View of Process Approach

Kroll (2001) defines the process approach as following:

> The "process approach" serves today as an umbrella term for many types of writing courses .... What the term captures is the fact that student writers engage in their writing tasks through a cyclical approach rather than a single-shot approach. They are not expected to produce and submit complete and polished responses to their writing assignments without going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback on their drafts, be it from peers and/or from the teacher, followed by revision of their evolving texts. (p. 220-221)

Compared to product approach, process approach stands for a change in emphasis, from the finished product to the process of creating a product. As the name suggests, process approach requires a duration that has a few stages. There are several views on these stages, but a typical model includes four stages: prewriting, composing/drafting, revising, and editing (Tribble, 1997). These stages are not linear but cyclical. This means that writer can go backward and forward. Figure 1 also shows that writing is a recursive event not linear.
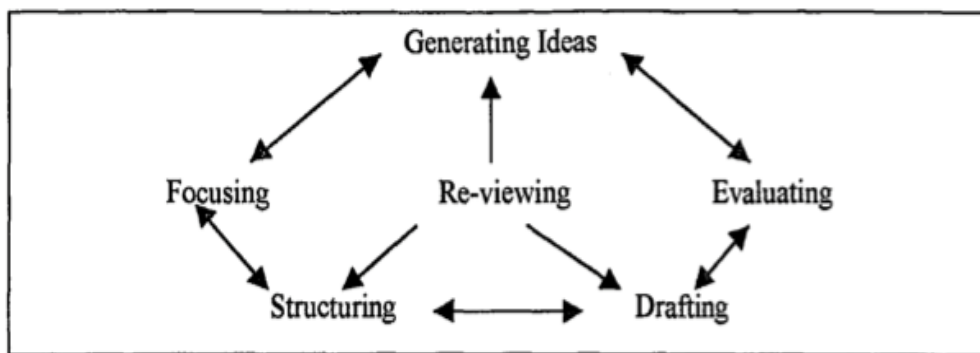
Figure 1. Diagram of Process Writing (White and Arndt, 1991: 4)

This figure shows that writing has a complex structure. With the help of this cyclical process, students can review their organization, content, grammar again and again. From these, it is clearly seen that if these stages are well addressed, the product automatically takes care of itself. Regarding this, Rivers (1981: 89) states that in the process approach what we look for is how to generate ideas, how to organize them, how to express them, and how to draft them.

In short, process writing states that writing is a complex and recursive event. Writing skill can be improved if the writer moves from "writer-based texts" (writing about everything without taking the reader into consideration or without considering what the reader expects to see) to "reader-based texts" (always keeping the reader in mind) (Furneux, 2000).

2.2. Social Constructivism

Social constructivism has been the interest of many educational psychologists, who are dealing with its implications for teaching and learning. This idea promotes the perspective that emphasizes the need for collaboration among learners (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It contains reciprocal learning and teaching in which students have mutual benefits, peer collaboration, other methods that include learning with others. Its principles state that learning occurs with the help of other individual learners' views or collective view of the whole class.

A classroom based on the social constructivist approach has several advantages. Such classrooms give students the chance to transfer their knowledge, to have collaborative skills, to have reasoning skills, and to discuss their ideas persuasively.

A constructivist teacher creates an atmosphere in which students are engaged in activities that foster learning. He or she guides the students to explore and discover. The teacher encourages them to work with peers or in groups to overcome problems or challenges.

2.3. Feedback in Writing

Giving feedback is a significant activity that is supposed to be done for a performance. It is especially used to facilitate the process of teaching and learning. Ur (1996: 242) defined feedback in the field of teaching as information given to a learner about his/her performance with the aim of improving his/her performance. Also, Keh (1990) states that feedback is a basic element in process approach. She explains feedback in the field of writing as an input that provides information from a reader to a writer for revision.

To help students gain the ability to write successfully, feedback is one of the most significant tasks. Furthermore, to explain the importance of giving feedback in language teaching, Richards and Lockhart (1994) state the following:

Providing feedback to learners on their performance is an important aspect of teaching. Feedback may serve not only to let learners know how well they have performed but also to increase motivation and build a supportive classroom climate. (p. 188)

Feedback has been considered essential not only for its benefits in learning but also in motivating the students. As a part of the writing process, there is a change in how feedback is viewed and approached. This change replaces summative feedback (feedback that focuses on final product) with formative feedback (feedback that shows the students' future writing and his/her development in the writing process).

2.3.1. Giving Feedback in Process Approach

The process approach has come out as an alternative to the product approach in recent years. It puts an end to the cycle of giving students assignments, marking and giving the papers back because the knowledge acquired in this way is possibly forgotten easily. With the process approach, the emphasis is on the process of writing itself. Emphasis is on generating ideas (prewriting, writing a first draft with an emphasis on content), on discovering meaning / author's ideas to revise ideas and the communication of those ideas (Muncie, 2000). For the drafts to be written again and again, feedback is very essential. In other words, comments, questions, advice, and suggestions that are given by a reader to a writer are very important.

Youngs and Green (2001) state that feedback can assist the writing process, and the students can highly benefit from the perspective of a second person because the writer, in this way, can see where he/she has misdirected or confused the reader by not giving enough information, not developing ideas in an organized way, or not making appropriate choice of words or tenses.

2.3.2. Sources of Feedback in Process Approach

Feedback is widely considered a significant element of encouragement during the learning process. According to the process approach, there are different types of feedback for revision including peer feedback and teacher feedback. Wanchid (2010) states that feedback can be divided into several categories depending on, for example, who gives the feedback (teacher or peer), what the feedback focuses on (content or grammar), and how feedback is provided (face to face or on the Internet). However,

writing scholars are of the same opinion that feedback to students comes from three main sources: the teacher, the student writer, and the peers (Harmer, 1991; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Jordan, 1997).

2.3.2.1. Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback on the writings of students is the most common and dominant type of feedback. Research shows that students are more inclined toward teacher feedback because they think it is reliable, and they see the teachers as the only source of information. The study of Zhang (1995) clearly shows that the students who prefer teacher feedback outweigh the ones who prefer peer feedback. On the other hand, Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 358) assert that teacher feedback is considered more traditional and classical. They also state that until process approach came out, much of the feedback on students' writings appeared as a final grade on a paper, including marks by a red pencil. Moreover, Berkow (2002: 195) criticizes that in a conventional form of teaching the students give their writings to the teacher, and what the teacher does is to put red marks on the papers and hand them back to students, and at then nobody reads their papers again. The students do not develop a sense of audience or readership necessary for quality writing.

Also, the teachers are not fully sure about whether their feedback is understood or even read, and cannot know that their feedback works and produces the expected results as well. Dheram (1995) asserts that teachers should not evaluate students' first drafts as if they were the final outcomes. Instead, they should act as a consultant who assists students while creating a text step by step. Therefore, teachers should approach the students like a reader who cares about their work and should not behave like a strict grammar teacher or grader.

Due to some disadvantages of teacher feedback, There have been calls for change and descent from the traditions of the past. Now, many teachers know that the traditional way of taking work in, marking it, and handing it back to student has some drawbacks. Hedge (2000) states that new methods that include active and immediate participation of students are highly beneficial. To sum up, if teachers want their students to show an improvement in writing skill, they need to develop or adopt new effective methods.

2.3.2.2. Self Feedback

Today, there is an argument made about self feedback. The argument is about whether the writer himself/herself can provide feedback to improve his/her writing skill. With self-evaluation, the students review their own work and improve their writing skills. Hyland and Hyland (2006: 92) state that it is wrong to ignore the writers as critical readers or reviewers of their own writings.

Self feedback is also called self assessment or self evaluation in literature. Self assessment happens when students assess their own works, either the finished product or work in progress. Through self assessment, students can improve their writing, editing, revising, and critical thinking skills. Students need to be aware of the strenghts and weaknesses when it comes to their writings. They also have to be aware of what writing habits work best for them and give them the outcomes necessary to produce quality work. In other words, students need to go beyond considering themselves as graders and put themselves in the place of readers. For example, Makino (1993) argues that:

In the process of language learning, learners sometimes notice some of their errors by themselves, through the strategy of monitoring, and they can also correct some of their errors when other people such as teachers or peers, give them cues or hints about them. (p. 338)

What is emphasized in this kind of feedback is that the comments or suggestions from others should promote self-correction. This can make the students more autonomous learners.

To sum up, what is highlighted here are the kinds of feedback given to student writers. If teachers want to encourage students to self-correct, giving feedback is of great importance whatever the source of it is (from the writer, teachers, and/or other students).

2.3.2.3. Peer Feedback

The other kind of feedback on the writings of students is the kind of feedback given by other students. There are other terms that refer to peer feedback, such as peer response, peer revision, peer evaluation, peer correction. However, each one of these is actually a part of peer feedback. Hansen and Liu (2002: 1) define peer feedback as

the use of other learners as the source of information for each other in a way to criticize their drafts and to comment on their drafts in written and oral formats during the process of writing.

A lot of scholars in the field of writing are of the opinion that peer feedback should be used in writing classes (Ur 1996; Keh 1990; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Berkow 2002). For example, Richards and Lockhart (1994: 165) stated that in a writing class, when the students complete their first drafts, they can work in pairs to read each other's writings and provide possible suggestions to improve their writings. This feedback can be related to clarity of language, content, organization, and grammar. This feedback also includes any information that is useful to revise the composition. To justify the use of peer feedback, Tudor (1996) states the following:

> The rationale for peer evaluation is that by reflecting critically on the abilities of other learners with respect to a shared goal, learners are involved in the assessment of those linguistic or communicative parameters which are relevant to their own performance. Peer evaluation is, thus, a practical form of learner training which develops learners' understanding of language usage and the type of difficulties which they are likely to experience in their own language production, which can then be used to inform their self- assessment skills. (p. 182)

From the statement above, it is understood that peer feedback serves many purposes. The writer finds the comments given to him/her by the reader to be useful, while also having the opportunity to get an outer perspective on his/her writing. At the same time, the reader has an opportunity to read others' writings and improve his/her ability to write due to exposure to other compositions.

In the process approach, peer feedback plays an important role, especially before the final outcome during the drafting and redrafting stages. In justifying this, Mangelsdorf (1992) said that in a classroom that has process-based curriculum, there are peer review sessions in which students read each others' writings and provide suggestions for improvement and revision.

To sum up, peer feedback is an essential element in the process writing approach, so it can be said that peer feedback is one aspect of process writing. However, why should peer feedback be preferred? What are the advantages of peer

feedback? Are there any disadvantages of peer feedback? In the upcoming sections, answers to these questions will be provided.

2.3.2.3.1. Advantages of Peer Feedback

Peer feedback has an important role in process writing. The literature has also highlighted that the use of peer feedback is increasingly seen as an assistive and attractive method in teaching writing (Cartney 2010; Nicol 2010; Zhu 2001). Experts generally classify the benefits of peer feedback into three categories: cognitive, linguistic, and social. To explain the cognitive benefit of it, Mittan (1989) stated that the peer feedback method in L2 writing classes can force students to exercise their thinking rather than having a passive reliance on the information given by the teacher. Peer feedback also presents an opportunity for students to negotiate meaning, to extend their reasoning and critical thinking skills because they have their own control of the learning process by interacting with their peers. To justify linguistic benefits, Zeng (2006) stated that students have the chance to work in collaborative groups that improves their reading and writing skills as peer feedback enables them to benefit from the strengths of their peers while they are improving their knowledge in L2 writing. For the social benefit of peer feedback, Mendonca and Johnson (1994) stated that the communication power of students can be improved by motivating them to express what they think. Peer feedback helps them gain confidence and decrease their anxiety by letting them see the strenghts and weaknesses of their peers. Peer feedback can also help students to develop an awareness of audience which leads them to improve their writing by being able to articulate their ideas in a more effective manner. With its high potential of interaction, peer feedback helps students gain a sense of confidence through a friendly atmosphere in which feedback is provided mutually.

Scholars also maintain there are other benefits to peer feedback. For example, Bartels (2003) pointed out that peer feedback creates an atmosphere in which there is an interested audience and the opportunity for communicative writing. Peer feedback provides an opportunity of getting instant feedback and an ability to negotiate. While providing feedback, students can ask and answer questions, ask their peers to clarify unclear points. This, again, helps their language learning process.

Peer feedback can also be considered beneficial not only for students but also for the teachers. Normally, it is the responsibility of teachers to give feedback or to comment on the drafts of students, but reading a lot of students' papers, commenting

on them requires a great deal of time and effort for teachers. Peer feedback gives students the kind of assistance they require, with the guidance of teachers. To justify this, Liu and Hansen (2002) stated that in peer feedback interactions, students have the roles and responsibilities that are normally performed by teachers to comment on or criticize their peers' drafts in oral and written forms.

2.3.2.3.2. Limitations of Peer Feedback

Although peer feedback is strongly supported by the literature, like any technique, it is faced with some criticism. For example, Leki (1990) stated that students have a tendency to give advice that does not help revision, and the student may not find their peers' comments valid. Similarly, Nelson and Murphy (1993) pointed out that the students may not trust their peers' comments as they are not native speakers. Moreover, if the students come from a culture that considers teachers as the only source of information, they may not consider their peers sophisticated enough to comment on their writings and may not use their comments while revising them.

These problems stem from a traditional way of seeing the teacher as the only knowledgeable person. As peer feedback is a newly applied technique, it is normal for students to be doubtful about whether it is beneficial or not because if the students are asked to make a selection between teacher feedback and peer feedback, students can be misled as these two kinds of feedback do not have to be mutually exclusive (Hyland and Hyland 2006). They take place in conjunction with each other. Another negative outcome of peer feedback can be related to the quality of training students receive in order to provide proper peer feedback. In justifying this, Celce-Murcia (1991) stated that if the philosophy of how to apply peer feedback in L2 classes is not understood well, results can be disappointing.

2.4. Researches on Peer Feedback
2.4.1. Experimental Studies on Effectiveness of Peer Feedback

It can be said that peer feedback has been the subject of many research projects if the theoretical support and the claims about it are taken into account. The research looked at different issues regarding peer feedback in both first and second/foreign language classes. Recent research has pointed out the necessity of moving to a process approach that teaches students both editing and developing strategies like generating ideas, writing multiple drafts, and revising the drafts. Therefore, peer feedback has

taken part in feedback sessions and in the writing process, and research has started to show the effectiveness of peer feedback.

In their peer feedback study, Hedgcock and Leftkowitz (1992) conducted their study on 30 students, and students were asked to write two essays and 3 separate drafts. In the experiment group, participants reviewed their peers' papers in small groups, read them aloud to each other and received oral feedback. In the control group, students received written teacher feedback. When their final drafts were compared, the results showed that the control group improved their grammar significantly but performed worse in vocabulary, organization, and content. On the other hand, the experiment group showed an improvement in vocabulary, organization, and content but a weak performance in grammar.

In another study, researchers Nelson and Murphy (1993) discovered that whether the writers incorporated the suggestions of their peers into their drafts or not depended on the interaction between them. They found that the more cooperative the writer was, the more likely he/she used his/her peer's suggestions in his/her draft. On the contrary, when the peers had no interaction at all, the writer was not likely to benefit from the peer's suggestions.

Similarly, Mendonça and Johnson (1994) conducted research about peer revision and how it affected the revision stage. They conducted their study on twelve advanced level students in a writing course. Participants worked in pairs. They gave oral feedback to each other first, and then noted down some comments on their papers. What they did was asking questions, giving suggestions, explaining unclear points, and correcting grammar. The results of the study showed that the participants used their peers' comments or feedbacks, but they used them selectively. When the feedback was suitable for their revisions, they used it. All the participants stated that peer feedback was beneficial because comments from their peers allowed them the opportunity to see clear or unclear points, along with the parts that needed to be revised.

In another related study, Tsui and Ng (2000) dealt with the roles of teacher feedback and peer feedback. The study was conducted among secondary L2 learners in Hong Kong. The results of the study showed that some students benefited highly from both teacher and peer feedback; some benefited more from teacher feedback than from peer feedback; others benefited less from peer feedback. This study revealed that peer feedback had some benefits like creating a sense of audience, creating an awareness of

the strengths and weaknesses of the writer and reader, encouraging cooperative learning, and fostering ownership of the text. According to the researchers of this study (Tsui and Ng, 2000), implementing peer feedback in writing is a learning process that raises their awareness of what makes a writing good or poor, helps them to find out their own strengths and weaknesses in writing, and makes their texts more friendly for the reader".

In their research study, Villamil and De Guerrero (1996) tried to find out the revision activities of students in peer feedback sessions, the strategies they used in the revision process, and the important elements of social behavior in peer revision. The participants were 54 ESL university students. The participants studied in pairs. In each pair, there was a 'writer' whose paper was revised and a 'reader' who revised his/her peer's paper, but these roles were not given explicitly. These pairs' interactions were recorded. Analysis of the records showed several kinds of activities, strategies, and behaviors. The activities were reading, assessing, writing comments, discussing, and coping with problems. The strategies implemented were the use of symbols, using L1, scaffolding. The behaviors noticed were management of authorial control, collaboration, and taking role in being a writer/reader. The findings of the study showed that peer feedback was a complicated process and emphasized the benefits of collaborative writing in L2 class. In a peer feedback activity, students had the opportunity to defend, explain, and clarify their ideas.

A different study investigated the effects of training for peer feedback. Zhu (1995) conducted a study on 169 students and four instructors. Each instructor taught classes that were experiment groups and other classes that were the control groups. Students in the experiment groups received systematic training sessions, but students in the control groups did not. In these sessions, the instructor and the students discussed the strong and weak parts of the essays, and they provided suggestions to revise them. The instructor especially wanted the students to critique each others' papers, to give specific feedback and wanted them to consider purpose, audience, organization, and the development of ideas. The researcher used data from several sources: first drafts, recordings of peer feedback sessions, holistic scores of assignments that were written before the study and essays that were revised after peer feedback sessions, students' responses to pre-test and post-test attitude questionnaires. Quantitative data of the students' feedback showed that the experiment groups made significantly better comments on their peer's writing. Qualitative data showed that

experiment group gave more and better feedback as they engaged in peer feedback more actively. Accordingly, the responses of the students to the questionnaire showed that attitudes of students toward peer feedback were very positive.

2.4.2. Experimental Studies on Ineffectiveness of Peer Feedback

There are many studies that prove that peer feedback is a beneficial technique. However, there are others that reveal some ineffective results. The following are some reasons why peer feedback has failed: some students considered their teachers as the only source of feedback, and some students had doubts about the feedback provided to them by other students because of the cultural differences (Zhang, 1995). Some students were not eager to find problems with their peers' writings because they did not want to comment on their peers' writing, and some students focused more on accuracy of language than organization of ideas (Carson and Nelson, 1998); and some students could not study cooperatively (Amores, 1997).

In a study, Sengupta (1998) tried to learn the perceptions of an ESL class consisting of girls in a secondary school in Hong Kong about peer feedback. The native language of the participants was Chinese. The study was based on two research questions. The first one was asking whether the students make corrections with the help of their peer's evaluation or not, and the second one was asking whether peer feedback created an awareness of being a real reader or not. In the study, the researcher gave self and peer evaluation sheets to participants in feedback sessions. These evaluation sheets were examined in order to identify peer suggestions because peer suggestions were different from the ones that the writer made. After that, revised drafts were examined to learn whether the students had used the suggestions of their peers or not. Essays of six pairs were chosen for analysis, and six students were chosen to be interviewed about their perception of peer feedback.

This study revealed that both self and peer evaluation of the same essay were almost the same. Moreover, no students benefited from peer suggestion if they had not found the same problem in self evaluation. The results of the interview also revealed that no students believed that peer evaluation created an awareness of being a real reader. They all had the belief that the real reader was their teacher because of teacher's language expertise. Sengupta (1998: 25) summarized that peer evaluation failed because it did not manage to "bring a real reader's perspective". This failure

might be because the students did not have enough linguistic knowledge, and they were not cognitively mature enough to provide feedback and evaluate papers.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effects of peer feedback on students' overall writing performance. This chapter includes detailed information about the context of the study, research design, participants of the study, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

3.1. Context of the Study

This study was implemented at the School of Foreign Languages at Zirve University in Gaziantep, Turkey. The School of Foreign Languages has a system that includes four levels from A to D. Level A, B, C, and D are elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and upper-intermediate respectively. In each level, students have 5 hours of writing class. There are at least 16 or more students in each class. The students are supposed to write paragraphs or essays, the requirements of which according to their levels. In a typical writing class, students write their first drafts, get teacher feedback, and write their second or final drafts considering the feedback they get. If necessary, they get more feedback from the teacher. When the case is considered from the perspective of teachers, it makes up a heavy workload for teachers and creates too much dependence on teachers.

3.2. Research Design

This is an experimental study. In this study, the mixed method research design was used. The mixed method is called "multitrait/multimethod research" (Campbell & Fiske, 1959), which combines two forms of data: qualitative and quantitative; "combined research" (Creswell, 1994), which involves both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. This study has two research questions, and each of them requires the use of a different method. For the first research question, the quantitative research method was used. For the second research question, the qualitative research method was used. Therefore, the mixed method research design was preferred in the study.

3.3. Participants

The total number of the participants in this study was 32, but this study had an experiment group and a control group. Each group had 16 students. In each group, there were 10 male and 6 female students. Eight of the students in the experiment group were non-Turks. Three of the students in control group were non-Turks. All the students were level D (intermediate) students. These two classes were chosen purposefully to participate in this study because these students were considered the highest performing students at the School of Foreign Languages, Zirve University. The students in the control group had regular teacher feedback, and the students in the experiment group had regular teacher and peer feedback.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

For this study, qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were used. To collect quantitative data, a pre-test and a post-test were used. To collect qualitative data, a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions was administered. To grade the pre-test and post-test papers of the students, a writing rubric was used.

3.4.1. Pre-test

Before the training and treatment began for the experiment group, the students in both groups were given a pre-test to learn their overall writing performance. The topic of the pre-test was the following:

Some people think that family is the most important influence on young adults. Other people think that friends are the most important influence on young adults. Which view do you agree with? Use examples to support your opinion.

3.4.2. Post-test

After the training and treatment for the experiment group, the students in both groups were given a post-test to learn their overall writing performance again. The topic of the post-test was as follows:

Today's world is increasingly globalized, and this means that many of the students are interacting across cultures in a way they never did before. In such a world, the importance of learning a second language becomes clear.

Should students be required to learn a second language? Why or why not? Use examples to support your opinion.

The results of the post-test were recorded and compared to pre-test scores to see if there was a significant difference between the overall writing performance of students in both groups.

3.4.3. Writing Rubric

To grade the pre-test and post-test papers of the students, a writing rubric prepared by the Testing Office and the coordinators of the School of Foreign Languages, Zirve University was used. This rubric has six categories which are vocabulary, grammar, punctuation & spelling, content, connectors & transitions, and organization with the following levels of success: needs improvement, fair, good, and excellent. The papers were graded out of 100 with the help of this rubric (see Appendix 1).

3.4.4. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to the students in the experiment group to learn their attitudes toward peer feedback. This questionnaire was adapted from a thesis by Chibsa (2008). The questionnaire included nine items (nine open-ended questions) (see Appendix 2).

3.5. Procedure

This study was implemented in two different level D classes at the English Preparatory School in the School of Foreign Languages at Zirve University. It lasted for seven weeks. In the first week, students in the experiment group received training sessions about how to give and receive feedback. In the following six weeks, students in the experiment group implemented what they learnt about peer feedback in their writings.

3.5.1. Training Sessions

Before the students in the experiment group start implementing peer feedback, the instructor explained the benefits and strenghts of peer feedback. The researcher (also the instructor) presented guidelines to help students understand peer feedback

better. They were encouraged to use it effectively in collaboration with the others in the class.

At the very beginning of this study, before training sessions, one writing assignment that functioned as pre-test was given to students in both groups. After that, the researcher had a small talk with each student in the experiment group about the writing class to learn what kind of feedback they received, in what areas of writing they had difficulties or problems, and if peer feedback was familiar to them. After this step, training for the students in the experiment group started. The researcher used PowerPoint presentations to train them on the principles of peer feedback and to inform the students about peer feedback, how it is given (oral or written), the importance of collaborative learning so that they would not encounter any problems while giving and receiving comments. The researcher also provided the students with the writing papers of the students from previous years to help them implement correct writing standards. In the beginning, students carried out the peer feedback activity under the control and guidance of the researcher, but later they started to carry it out in a more independent environment. When a pair finished sharing feedback, they changed their peers so that a paper received feedback from more than four to five different peers.

The researcher provided the students in both the control and experiment groups with the same rubric. This way, students in both groups knew the grading criteria that would be used for their midterm and final exams, and the students in the experiment group also knew the criteria to consider while providing peer feedback. With the help of this rubric, the students in the experiment group could understand the areas they could give feedback on, such as grammar, content, organization, vocabulary and so on. The students in the experiment group were also provided an error correction code list that was prepared by the writing teachers of the English Preparatory School of the institution (see Appendix 3), but they were free to use it or not to use it.

3.5.2. Implementation

After one week of training sessions for the experiment group, the implementation of peer feedback began and lasted six weeks. The students in both groups wrote three-paragraph short compositions that included an introduction, a body, and a concluding paragraph in class each week. In the last two lessons of the

writing class each week, students in the experiment group gave and received feedback from different friends and after their peers checked their papers, they received teacher feedback. However, the students in the control group received only teacher feedback in the last two lessons. Each student in the experiment group provided feedback and made suggestions for the partner, but when the feedback was received, it was the student's responsibility to edit his/her writing or not. After they revised their papers, they had their papers checked by the researcher.

In conclusion, all the variables - including how the lesson was taught, all the materials used, all the writing topics, the rubric used - were the same for the both experiment and control groups. The only difference between these groups was that the experiment group participated in a peer feedback activity and received teacher feedback, but the control group only received teacher feedback.

3.6. Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to find out the effects of peer feedback on students' overall writing performance and to see if there was a significant difference between the two groups, and to learn the attitudes of students in the experiment group toward peer feedback. The results of this study were based on the comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores of the two groups and the questionnaire administered to students in the experiment groups.

For the first part of the study, the quantitative data were processed through SPSS, Statistical Package for Social Sciences, in terms of the t-test, p value, standard deviation, and mean scores. For the second part of the study, qualitative data (nine open-ended questions) were interpreted through content analysis technique. As Patton (2002) stated, the data collected in the form of sentences were transformed into findings by identifying, coding, and categorizing.

CHAPTER 4

4. FINDINGS

4.1. The Effect of Peer Feedback on Students' Overall Writing Performance

The first research question of the study aims to find out whether peer feedback has a positive effect on the students' overall writing performance. In order to answer this question, first the inter-rater reliability between the two graders who graded the pre-tests and post-tests of the experiment group and the control group was determined by using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) on SPSS 20. Second, the pre-test scores of the experiment and control groups were compared through independent samples t-test. Third, paired samples t-test was applied to find out whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experiment group. Finally, the post-test scores of experiment and control groups were analyzed by using independent samples t-test.

Table 1. Pearson correlations for the graders of the pre-test scores of the experiment group

	Experiment Group Pre-test	Grader 1	Grader 2
Grader 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.920*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	16	16
Grader 2	Pearson Correlation	0.920*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	16	16

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows that there is a positive correlation between the two graders of the pre-test scores of the experiment group. Pearson r results for the graders are r=.920 and (p<.01), which shows that the two graders are consistent with each other.

Table 2. Pearson correlations for the graders of the pre-test scores of the control group

	Control Group Pre-test	Grader 1	Grader 2
Grader 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.939*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	16	16
Grader 2	Pearson Correlation	0.939*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	16	16

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 2, Pearson r results for the graders are r=.939, and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. This shows that there is a positive correlation between the two graders of the pre-test scores of the control group.

Table 3. Pearson correlations for the graders of the post-test scores of the experiment group

	Experiment Group Post-test	Grader 1	Grader 2
Grader 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.945*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	16	16
Grader 2	Pearson Correlation	0.945*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	16	16

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As Table 3 indicates, the two graders of the post-test scores of the experiment group have a positive correlation with each other. As seen in Table 3, Pearson r results for the graders are r=.945, and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 4. Pearson correlations for the graders of the post-test scores of the control group

	Control Group Post-test	Grader 1	Grader 2
Grader 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.913*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	16	16
Grader 2	Pearson Correlation	0.913*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	16	16

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For Table 4, Pearson r results for the graders are r=.913 and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level for the two graders. This means that there is a positive correlation between the graders. The results of the inter-rater reliability show that the grades scored fairly.

Table 5. The independent samples t-test result of the pre-test scores of the experiment and control groups

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Experiment Group	75.1250	8.07362	.291	.773*
Control Group	74.1250	11.14077		

*p<0.05

As it is understood from Table 5, the mean scores of both groups are very close to each other. Also, the difference between the scores of the two groups is not significant at the level 0.05 (p>0.05). Therefore, this shows that there is not a statistical difference between the two groups.

Table 6. The paired samples t-test result of the pre-test and post-test scores of the experiment group

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Pre-test	75.1250	8.07362	-3.176	.006*
Post-test	85.6875	11.15179		

*p<0.05

Table 6 shows that the mean score of the post-test (M=85.6875) in the experiment group is higher than the mean score of the pre-test (M=75.1250). There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group (p<0.05). Therefore, peer feedback may have had a positive effect on the students' overall writing performance.

Table 7. The independent samples t-test result of the post-test scores of the experiment and control groups

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Experiment Group	85.6875	11.15179	2.405	.023*
Control Group	76.9375	9.34857		

*p<0.05

According to Table 7, the mean score of the control group (M=76.9375) is lower than that of the experiment group (M=85.6875). The difference between the scores of the two groups is significant at the level 0.05 (p<0.05). Therefore, this shows that peer feedback may have helped the students in the experimental group improve their overall writing performance.

4.2. The Attitudes of the Students toward Peer Feedback

A questionnaire with nine open-ended questions was carried out with the students in the experiment group. Students' responses to the questions were content analyzed. The analysis of each question was separated under a category.

4.2.1. The Feelings of the Students toward Peer Feedback

Sixteen students in the experiment group mentioned that they liked using the peer feedback activity in their writing classes. Most of the students claimed that when they gave feedback to and received feedback from their classmates, they learned more. It is because anybody in the class could make mistakes while writing, so they needed to check their classmates' writings, give feedback to them, control their own writings according to their classmates' comments, and correct their mistakes accordingly. The following statements of the students support this assumption.

Participant 3: *Yes, I liked because I got benifit [benefit] from my mstakes [mistakes] and my friends mstakes and I learn more when more than one person cheak [check] my writing paper.*

Participant 4: *Yes I liked it, Because my friend could find my mistakes.*

Participant 8: *Yes I liked it. Because it was so beneficial. When we are checking our friends' writings, we are learning much more details thanks to this activity.*

In addition to learning from each other, the students also improved their self-assessment and self-awareness skills. When they got feedback from their classmates, they checked their writings and corrected them accordingly. As a result, they tried not to make the same mistakes again in their writings. To illustrate:

Participant 6: *Yes, I liked it actually because in this way I can know if I am mistaking in my writing.*

Participant 9: *Yes, I liked because it was very helpful. I learnt my mistakes and I understand me them.*

Besides these answers, the students defined giving and receiving feedback activity as useful, beneficial, helpful, enjoyable, and wonderful. Here are some examples:

Participant 1: *It was very useful to my English more than I could learn from the teacher.*

Participant 9: *Yes, I liked because it was very helpful.*

Participant 10: *I liked it because it was very enjoyable activity.*

Participant 16: *Its [It's] wonderful I learned so much from my friends in class.*

4.2.2. The Beliefs of the Students Regarding Whether Exchanging Feedback Improves Their Writing

The students in the experiment group believed that peer feedback contributed to the improvement of their writing. Most of them believed that exchanging and sharing feedback enabled them to remember the mistakes they made, not to make the same mistakes again, and to make fewer mistakes. The following answers support this assumption.

Participant 2: *I believe that exchanging feedback improves our writing. When our friends check our papers, we can remember our mistakes better.*

Participant 3: *Yes I believe exchanging feedback improves our writing like I said we can remember better when more than one person cheak [check] our paper.*

Participant 7: *I believe that sharing feedback improved my writing. I am not doing the same mistakes I was doing before.*

Participant 11: *Yes I think exchanging feedback improves my writing. Now I don't do the same mistakes I did before.*

The students also believed that using other sources helped them improve their writings. To illustrate:

Participant 1: *Of course if you only team up with someone who you see as better than you in English and learn from them.*

Participant 15: *Yes it does, because you can learn how to organize the ideas of the paragraph that you are writing when you read the paragraphs that your friends did.*

4.2.3. The Thoughts of the Students about the Advantages of Exchanging Feedback

The students all agreed on the idea that exchanging feedback had many advantages. When they gave or received feedback, they stated that they were free to use their mother tongue, which made them feel relaxed and comfortable. Because they were free to use their mother tongue, they had the opportunity to ask whatever they wanted. The responses from students that support these assumptions are as follows:

Participant 1: *It feels more relaxed and free to ask your friend rather than your teacher which you use your own language rather than English.*

Participant 3: *I think it is a good idea because students can ask more comfortably from their friends.*

Participant 15: *It is free to ask ideas of your friends and learn from them.*

Apart from these advantages, students stated that exchanging feedback enhanced teamwork or group work, so it can be said that exchanging feedback contributes to collaborative learning. To illustrate:

Participant 6 : *It can increase the team work.*

Participant 7: *In writing class we are partners and this helps us to understand our mistakes. It is better to be small group.*

Participant 14: *It has a lot of advantages. For example, we can be group when we are at the writing activites.*

In addition to these advantages, students also asserted that giving and receiving feedback saved time. Therefore, it can be supposed that exchanging feedback is practical and easy to apply. For example:

Participant 8: *If everybody ask teacher questions, it is hard for the teacher to answer all questions because lesson is very short. If I ask my friends, it is easier because we save time.*

Participant 16: *It felt more free to ask because I will not be wasting the class time by asking the teacher. I will be teaching my friend and be taught by my friend.*

4.2.4. The Thoughts of the Students about the Disadvantages of Exchanging Feedback

As stated earlier (see 4.2.3.), all the students said that exchanging feedback is very advantageous. In the light of this information, the majority of the students didn't state any disadvantage of exchanging feedback, so it can be deduced that exchanging feedback is very beneficial. The following answers confirm this assumption:

Participant 2: *I think there are no disadvantages. It is very beneficial.*

Participant 3: *I don't think it has disadvantages.*

Participant 4: *There are no disadvantages.*

Participant 5: *I didn't see any disadvantages.*

Even though almost all of the students stated that exchanging feedback had no disadvantages, there are some students who said teacher feedback is also necessary in addition to peer feedback. Some students think that they cannot learn everything from their classmates. In addition, they say that their classmates do not accept their

mistakes, or they ignore some mistakes. This shows that students still need the guidance of an authority figure or reliance on an authority figure who is teacher during the writing process. To explain:

> Participant 1: *I guess there are one or couple and that would be, not everything can be learned from friends but luckily in this way you still can ask the teacher.*

> Participant 11: *I think there are just some disadvantages like sometimes, students don't accept their mistakes when their classmates find them and ask the teacher. They think they are better.*

> Participant 12: *There is a disadvantage. Some times may you friend ignore your mistake so in that case you can not improve yourself.*

> Participant 14: *I think the advantages are so less. These are not understanding about the papers because we are not teacher.*

4.2.5. The Areas of Writing that Students Believed They Improved through the Help of Their Friends' Feedback

Students who participated in this study mentioned that they all had the opportunity to improve their writing in at least one area like grammar, vocabulary, organization, punctuation and so on. The majority of the students stated that the main area they improved in their writings was grammar. Punctuation, vocabulary, and organization come second. Some students said they could improve in more than two or three areas, and some others said they could improve in especially one area. The following are examples:

> Participant 1: *I learned a lot about vocab and grammar same as content and organization and yes it's more fun to learn from a friend.*

> Participant 4: *Grammar was the area that I have improved my writing by sharing with my friend.*

Participant 10: *I believe feedback is increasing our grammar when we are doing feedback activity. It can teach some things about grammar rules.*

Participant 12: *Yes your friend may be better than you and he help you about which vocabulary is good to use in your writing or may fix your mistake sometimes your friend be your teacher.*

Participant 14: *I helped my friends about grammar and organization. They could do well when I started to discuss their papers. They began doing well.*

Participant 16: *I improved all of them but especially grammar which is originally my own fault. I am weak in grammar or more like my grammar isn't perfect.*

4.2.6. Students' Preferences Regarding How to Use Feedback

All the students who participated in this study used the comments of their peers in some way. The majority of the students mentioned that they used the comments selectively. Only a small part of the students said they used all the comments of their peers. Students who used the comments selectively had some reasons for not using all the comments. Some of them indicated that they knew what they needed and acted accordingly, so it can be assumed that exchanging feedback created self-awareness among students. To illustrate:

Participant 1: *No, not all of them since I knew some that I didn't take and the those that I didn't know was much useful to me.*

Participant 2: *I used them selectively. I noticed I am bad at organization. So I used my friend' suggestions about organization.*

In addition to self-awareness, students who used the comments selectively asserted that they didn't trust every comment or suggestion their classmates made, so they used them selectively. It may be because the students still need the guidance of their teacher or need suggestions from a more reliable source. The following answers may support this assumption:

Participant 7: *I used them selectively because I couldn't trust everything that my friends said and everybody.*

Participant 8: *I used them selectively. Because my friends may make mistakes, too. I tried to understand the meaning or mistakes that they say. If I don't still find mistake, I ask teacher.*

Participant 12: *I use them selectively because sometimes I think my friend's comments are not true in all time.*

Participant 14: *I selected the correct ones for myself. Because some comments are wrongly. They don't know the answer. It was especially grammar.*

Participant 15: *I used them selectively, because some of them exaggerate when comment about the paragraph that I wrote.*

4.2.7. The Feelings of the Students about the Class Atmosphere during Peer Feedback Sessions

All the students in this study stated that exchanging feedback changed the atmosphere of the class in a positive way. They also added it was interesting and enjoyable. Most of the students agreed on the idea that giving and receiving feedback makes their class more active, so it can be deduced that peer feedback is helpful in creating a classroom full of interaction and collaboration. For example:

Participant 3: *Yes, it make the class more active and make us work together and help each other.*

Participant 5: *Everyone was active during this activity. Classroom was like scientists' lab.*

Participant 12: *Yes I like such atmosphere and it also create an active class because all students are busy with checking papers.*

Participant 14: *Yes. Because it was the team work. We were so active. We discussed each other's all papers. It connected us to each other.*

The students also said that the peer feedback activity made their class more enjoyable. They had fun during feedback sessions. To explain:

Participant 1: *Yes, because most of the time we are so tired and sleepy from a tight schedule. We must skip a class or two but for me when I knew we had such activity in the next class, I couldn't skip . I loved it so much because it was enjoyable.*

Participant 6: *Yes it is more exciting from other classes and lessons because it doesn't make the class boring.*

Participant 11: *Yes, peer feedback activity create an enjoyable and funny atmosphere in class. Students like now working together and they have fun.*

4.2.8. The Thoughts of the Students about the Use of Classmates in Developing Writing Skills

All the students in this study found the use of their classmates in exchanging feedback to be very useful and beneficial. They all had positive attitudes toward the use of their classmates during the writing process. Most of them stated that it created a friendly atmosphere, so they felt comfortable during this study. Therefore, it can be assumed that allowing students to work with those who they are familiar with is preferred by the students. To illustrate:

Participant 2: *I think it is the best way of writing activity. Because we can learn from friends who we know well. It is more motivating.*

Participant 10: *We can learn something from another students. If I don't know something, they can teach me, or I they don't know something, I can teach them. Because we know each other's mistakes that we always make.*

Participant 16: *It's great you get started the activity with friends you know well. It is know each others mistakes before you hand your paper to the teacher which is awesome because no one likes it when teacher say you have these wrong.*

Some students indicated that using other classmates during the writing process was very beneficial because they had a chance to have their papers checked more than twice or three times, so it can be deduced that students feel safer when their papers are checked multiple times. For example:

Participant 3: *It is a good use because it gives more than one chance to check your mistake when more than one classmate check the paper. In this way you feel you writing is perfect.*

Participant 7: *The use of classmates in writing activity is very beneficial, because many students could control our writing mistakes and this makes us sure about our papers which we wrote.*

4.2.9. Evaluation of the Whole Process by Students

In the last item of the questionnaire, students evaluated the whole process of exchanging feedback. All of them wrote positive comments indicating it is a good, useful, beneficial, perfect, and helpful method. Considering the comments they made about exchanging feedback, it can be concluded that the students really appreciated this method, and they have positive attitudes toward it. For example:

Participant 1: *I really have nothing to add more than saying I loved it. In the end I learned much from it.*

Participant 6: *I loved feedback from friends very much. I appreciate this process.*

Participant 10: *I think, there is no additional thing to it, but we should use it more in the class. It is helpful to improve our writing skills.*

Participant 11: *Exchanging feedback is something that students need to improve themselves in writing.*

Participant 14: *I want to add one thing. It is a very intelligent idea about learning English. All teachers should try it. If they try, students will be successful.*

Participant 16: *It is great idea because I never tried it before. It was a new thing for me. I really loved it.*

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSIONS

Peer feedback has recently captured the attention of many writing teachers in second language settings. Even though there are lots of publications like articles, journals, and theses, writing teachers still want to know to what extent the writing process and feedback will help students become independent writers. Moreover, they look for experimental evidence to understand whether peer feedback contributes to writing process positively. If the research in this field determines the benefits of peer feedback in a context where process approach is adopted, this can influence the writing teachers to incorporate it in their writing classes.

5.1. Summary

This part presents the highlights of the whole study by touching upon the purpose, the methodology, and the findings. What initiated this study was the weaknesses that the students showed while learning writing and the dominant way of giving feedback, teacher feedback. That is to say, it was the assumption that peer feedback could contribute to the improvement of the writing skills of students.

This study investigated the effects of peer feedback on students' overall writing performance. It aimed to find out if there was a significant difference in the writing performance of the experiment group that underwent a peer feedback process along with teacher feedback and the control group that only underwent teacher feedback process. Additionally, the attitudes of students in the experiment group toward peer feedback were also assessed.

The participants of the study were 32 students at School of Foreign Languages, Zirve University. The study had an experiment group and a control group. Each group had 16 Level D (highest level) students. The instruments used were pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire. Pre-test and Post-test scores of both groups were compared to find out whether there was a significant difference between these groups. The data acquired from the questionnaire were content analyzed.

During the study, the experiment group received training sessions from the instructor in which several activities were explained on how to give effective feedback and strategies on how to implement feedback. Students then were given opportunities to give their classmates feedback and receive feedback from their

classmates, in addition to receiving teacher feedback for 6 weeks. The control group was not treated in the study. They only received teacher feedback.

In the first stage, pre-test and post scores of both groups were compared on SPSS to find out whether there is a significant difference between the two groups. In the second stage, the pre-test and post-test scores of the experiment group were compared to find out whether there is a significant difference. In the last stage, the qualitative datathat was obtained from questionnaire which was administered to students in the experiment group were interpreted using content analysis technique.

5.2. Conclusions Based on the Analysis of the Results

The major findings of the study are the following:

1) Pre-test mean scores of the control and experiment groups were close to each other, so there was no significant difference between the control group and experiment group.
2) The post-test mean score of the experiment group was higher than the post-test mean score of control group, so there was a significant difference between the control group and the experiment group.
3) The post-test mean score of the experiment group was higher than the pre-test mean score of the experiment group, so there was a significant difference.
4) Apart from the effect of peer feedback on overall writing performance of the students in the experiment group, the students were found to have positive attitudes toward peer feedback.

This study was conducted to find out whether peer feedback has an effect on students' overall writing performance and to learn their attitudes toward peer feedback. The following conclusions can be drawn based on the findings above:

1) There is a relationship between peer feedback and the writing performance of students. That is, peer feedback enhances students' overall writing performance.
2) Peer feedback enhances collaboration and interaction among students by creating an active classroom environment.

3) Peer feedback can be considered a process approach exercise because it gives students the opportunity to write and rewrite their writing before producing the final draft.

4) Peer feedback helps improve certain areas in writing like grammar, vocabulary, organization, and so on.

5) It was found out that students used peer comments selectively. Students didn't show a passive reliance on their classmates.

According to the results of the study, it is clear that peer feedback had a salient effect on students' overall writing performance, and the students had positive attitudes toward peer feedback.

5.3. Pedagogical Implications

Despite the limitations brought on by the use of a small sample size, this study revealed some certain implications when teaching writing. Firstly, writing teachers can incorporate peer feedback into their classes because peer feedback can be effective in increasing the performance of the students and can be used by the students to revise their writings. Therefore, it would be a good idea for teachers to make peer feedback an indispensable element of their writing classes.

Secondly, if teachers want peer feedback to be successful, training the students is very crucial. If the students are familiar with what they need to do and how to do it, it will result in more success. As Vygotsky states, (as cited in Villamil and De Guerrero, 1998: 508), "with assistance, every child can do more than he can by himself – though only within the limits set by the state of his development". Therefore, the assistance of teachers for feedback strategies is very essential.

Another implication is to define the roles of the students. Students should know the purpose of peer feedback, and they should think of it as one aspect of the whole writing process. Therefore, the teachers should indicate that commenting on classmates' writing is actually a learning process that helps them develop a better sense of being a reader who can see from the perspective of an audience.

Another significant implication is that students who exchanged feedback took part in a process of being competent in revising and evaluating a writing text. This experience may help them in their future professional and academic life because they had the chance to acquire a sense of audience. In other words, they partly had the role

of a teacher because they developed a critical eye regarding their peers' writing by analyzing the compositions (Berg, 1999b).

One more implication this study revealed is that using only teacher feedback may not be adequate in improving writing performance. If teacher feedback is used along with peer feedback, it may contribute more to the performance of the students because peer feedback can be considered as complementary to teacher feedback. In this way, instead of asking "Which type of feedback is better?", we should ask "How can peer feedback and teacher feedback be combined to contribute to the students' writing performance?".

To conclude, writing teachers should be encouraged to use peer feedback in their classrooms because writing lessons are no longer under the absolute control of teachers. Instead, writing classes are "positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environments within which students can work through their composing processes" (Tsui and Ng, 2000:168).

5.4. Limitations of the Study

As this study took place in a classroom setting, the size of the sample was small. The fact that the number of students was low and the students were all studying at Zirve University may not allow us to apply the results of the study on a wider scale. In addition, while applying this study, students were supposed to develop other skills like listening, speaking, and reading. Therefore, besides writing, students were also exposed to other types of input.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

The results of this study may open the doors for further research, perhaps on a wider scale and with more students. Since this study was limited to analyzing the effects of peer feedback on the overall writing performance, another study can be carried out to investigate the effects of peer feedback on certain areas of writing like content, organization, grammar, and so on.

Since this study was limited to seven weeks and six writing assignments, we do not know how peer feedback affects writing performance for a longer period of time. Therefore, the long-term effects of peer feedback can be investigated in another study. A final suggestion for further research is to compare and contrast peer feedback

and teacher feedback. This comparative study can show the effectiveness of teacher and peer feedback during the revision part of the writing process.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix 1: Writing Rubric Used to Grade Pre-test and Post-test

	VOCABULARY	GRAMMAR	PUNCTUATION / SPELLING	CONTENT	CONNECTORS& TRANSITIONS (and, but, so, because, therefore, thus- when-after-after that-however.)	ORGANIZATION
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	0-1 Vocabulary is not used properly in very simple sentences.	0-4 Numerous Errors in sentence structure	0 Almost no correct punctuation and spelling	0-1 there is nothing written in terms of content and coherence.	0 No use of connectors or unnecessary usage	0-1 There is nothing organized
FAIR	2-3 Limited use of vocabulary they learned/some errors in the meaning	5-9 Several Errors in sentence structure	1-2 Several errors in punctuation and spelling	2-5 content has some problems. Ideas are not coherent.	1-2 Little use of connectors, many problems with the meaning	2-4 has so many problems with the paragraph format
GOOD	4-6 Covers most of the vocabulary they learned	10-14 A few errors in sentence structure and a good variety of sentence structures.	3-4 A few errors in punctuation and spelling	6-9 content is mostly appropriate to the topic. Ideas are coherent and sufficient.	3-4 Appropriate use of connectors, few problems with the meaning	5-7 has slight problems with the paragraph format
EXCELLENT	7 Uses high level vocabulary	15 Almost no errors in sentence structure. Wide variety of sentence structures.	5 Almost no errors in punctuation and spelling.	10 content is totally appropriate to the topic. Ideas are coherent and rich with information.	5 Very good and sufficient use of connectors. Connectors are in appropriate place.	8 has everything included in the paragraph format

7.2. Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Dear Student:

The questions below are all about to learn your perception/attitude of the practice of giving and receiving feedback to your friends and from your friends. Think about the process, comments you have given and you have received during the Peer Feedback hours for the last 7 weeks and answer the questions.

I kindly request you to be genuine in your responses.

1- As you know, you have been taking part in writing activities by giving and receiving feedback. Have you liked it or not? Why?

2- Do you believe that exchanging feedback improves your writing? If so, how?

3- What can you say about the advantages of exchanging feedback specifically?

4- What can you say about the disadvantages of exchanging feedback specifically?

5- What areas of writing (vocabulary, grammar, content, organization, punctuation etc.) do you think you have improved by the help of your friends' feedback?

6- How did you use the comments of your friends? I mean, did you use all of them, or did you use them selectively?

7- Did peer feedback activity create an active, comfortable, and motivating atmosphere in class? If so, how?

8- What can you say about the use of classmates in the process of writing?

9- Add any other comments you wish about exchanging feedback. Evaluate the whole process.

THANK YOU!

7.3. Appendix 3: Error Correction Code List

	mistake		
		‑r	
WO	Word order	I like <u>very much</u> music w.o.	I like music very much.
Gr	Grammar	You're <u>gooder</u> than me at maths. gr She talked to <u>he</u> in the pub. gr	You're better than me at maths. She talked to him in the pub.
A	Article (a/the)	I like <u>the</u> cheese A	I like cheese.
Prep	Preposition	Don't laugh <u>of</u> me Prep	Don't laugh at me.
LW	Linking word	There was no bus, <u>although</u> she walked home. LW	There was no bus, so she walked home.
WF	Word form	She works <u>slow</u> WF The exercise is <u>bored</u> WF	She works slowly. The exercise is boring.
Voc	Wrong word (lexical mistake)	Don't <u>worry</u> me. I'm <u>making</u> the voc voc homework	Don't disturb me. I'm doing the homewok.
Tns	Verb tense	Last week I'<u>ve been</u> to Madrid. Tns	
Agr	Agreement	He never <u>get</u> angry agr I need <u>that books</u> over there. agr	He never gets angry. I need those books over there.
▽	Missing word	After she kissed him, ▽ took a shower and left for work	After she kissed him, she took a shower and left for work.
( )	Word not needed. Delete	I'm going (to) shopping	I'm going shopping.
‖	Punctuation	She said‖yes‖thank you.	She said: "yes, thank you".
︵︿︵	Rewrite everything (unclear meaning, syntactic error)	I <u>very often trying new</u> <u>Music likes me</u>	I often try new things. I like music.
!!!	Very serious mistake	I <u>is</u> angry !!!. I <u>have</u> 21 years old. !!!	I am angry. I'm 21 years old.
?		I don't understand meaning or handwriting	
[s] s		Sentence is too long. Split it up	
{ ── }	Alternative word or expression	I go { home / to my house } after school	Both sentences are correct.