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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

**BLENDING WITH PURPOSE: TEACHING WRITING COURSES WITH ONLINE
AND TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION**

**THESIS BY
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MASTER OF ARTS

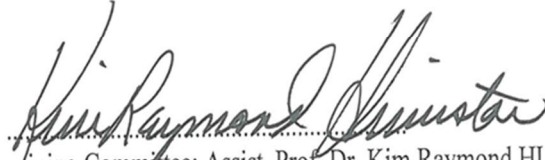
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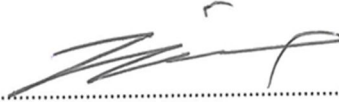
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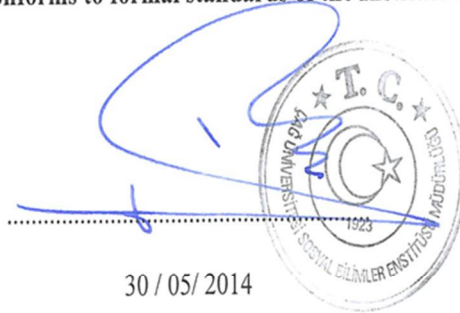


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As a student, I was bored most of the time at school and felt critical of both my teacher and of the school system. As a teacher, I was frustrated with the idea that I must become a part of the system that the students dislike. As a result, I felt satisfied to do search at education and try to find a way that students with different learning styles would feel less bored at schools. During the whole time I was writing my thesis I was content to pick instructional technology area to do my research. I want to thank my advisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Kim Raymond HUMISTON for leading me in this area and assisting me all the time.

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No matter how well I try to write or how long I focus on the grammar and vocabulary in the thesis, my friends, Kate Agnew, KelseyWilkins, and Mal Fraser still make comments such as: “Well, actually we do not say it like that.” Or “It is not wrong but maybe you should use this instead.” Without them, the grammar and vocabulary use would not be as good as it is in the thesis. I want to thank them as well.

30.05.2014

Nazlı AĞGÜN

ÖZET

AMAÇ DOĞRULTUSUNDA HARMANLAMA: YAZMA DERSLERİNİN UZAKTAN VE GENEKSEL SINIFIÇI EĞİTİMLE VERİLMESİ

Nazlı AĞGÜN

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

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Bu araştırmanın amacı ,harmanlanmış öğretimin, geneksel yüz yüze öğretime kıyasla yazma sınavının sonuçlarında bir fark yaratıp yaratmadığını bulmak ve öğrencilerin teknolojinin yazma derslerinde kullanılmasıyla ilgili tutumlarını nitel ve nicel araştırma metodlarıyla araştırmak. Bu çalışma için, Gaziantep Üniversitesi yabancı diller yüksek okulundan bir deney ve bir kontrol gurubu seçilmiştir. Deney gurubundaki 13 öğrenciye harmanlanmış öğrenmeyle yazma dersi öğretilirken , aynı anda kontrol gurubundaki başka 13 öğrenciye geneksel yüz-yüze öğretimle yazma dersi verilmiştir. Her iki gurubtaki öğrencilerin ders programı, yaşları, İngilizce seviyeleri ve sınıf olanakları aynı. SPSS ile analiz edilen sonuçlar, deney gurubunun yazma sınavındaki notları kontrol gurununa göre daha yüksek çıktı. Deney gurubundaki öğrencilerin görüşlerini öğrenmek için, deneyden sonra yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme uygulandı. Sonuçlar, öğrencilerin derslerde mevcut kullanılan teknolojiden hoşnut olmadıklarını ama öte yandan harmanlanmış öğrenmeden hoşnut olduklarını gösterdi. Ayrıca, öğrenciler teknolojinin sınıf içinde ve dışında nasıl kullanılabileceğine dair bazı önerilerde bulundu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Harmanlanmış öğrenme, akademik başarı, öğrencilerin görüşleri, teknolojinin kullanılması, yabancıdiller yüksek okulu, yazma dersi

BLENDING WITH PURPOSE: TEACHING WRITING COURSES WITH ONLINE AND TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Nazlı AĞGÜN

M.A. Thesis, Department of English Language Teaching

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Kim Raymond HUMISTON

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The aims of this study are to find whether blended learning would make a difference at the writing scores of students compared to traditional face-to-face education and to establish the students' perspective on the usage of technology at writing courses with quantitative and qualitative research methods. For the purpose of the study, one experimental and control groups were chosen from the School of Foreign Languages, Gaziantep University. The 13 students in the experimental groups are taught writing with blended learning while 13 students are taught writing with traditional face-to-face education during one month. The students at both groups have the same schedule, age, English level and classroom facilities. The results of analysis done by SPSS show that the writing scores of the experimental group are higher than the writing scored of the control group. To learn the students' perspectives at the experimental group, semi-structured interviews have been done after the experience. The results show that the students are not satisfied the usage of current technology at writing courses. On the other hand, they reported they were satisfied with blended learning. The students also gave some suggestions about the implications of technology in and outside of the classes.

Key Words: Blended learning, academic achievement, students' perspectives, usage of technology, school of foreign languages, writing course

ABBREVIATIONS

BL	: Blended Learning
CALL	: Computer-Assisted Language Learning
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ESL	: English Second Language
GU	: Gaziantep University
GPA	: Grade Point Average
L2	: A Second Language
LMU	: Ludwig MaximiliansUniversitat
MOODLE	: Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UDEEC	: Universidad de Concepcion

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

In some developed countries, teachers and academics have moved past the initial excitement about the potential applications of technology in education toward a discussion of how effectively to use technology in courses. The quality of face-to-face education, online schooling, and home schooling has all improved due to the increased use of technological facilities such as the virtual classroom, social media, videoconferencing, and learning management systems. The best use of these technological tools in education is being discussed. Western universities in Europe and the United States have started programs in instructional technology or educational technologies with Master or PhD options that will stimulate further developments and research in the areas of planning, implementing, and evaluating technology-based instruction.

In the last decade, the usage of technology in addition to traditional face-to-face teaching has appeared in many studies, and scholars are attempting to evaluate this new blend. A recent study has reviewed the literature to investigate whether blended education is proven to be a better way to teach (Pregot, 2013). The results concluded that student outcomes were not lowered by blended education, and there was even a rise in student outcomes if the blended teaching was well-planned. However, blended education does not seem to be equally successful for every student; this approach to teaching did not suit some students as it did to others. Stracke (2007) interviewed a group of students for his study, and he found that a significant number of the students left the blended course due to lack of support, print materials and connection. Neumeier (2005) suggests that more qualitative studies could be done to find out what the right blends are for students.

This study aims to explain a blended writing course at Gaziantep University over the summer with details and observations comparing it to traditional face-to-face education. The students in the course were interviewed to find out what their perceptions and opinions were about this course and their preferences about the usage of technology in writing courses. The results of the study illustrate an example of a blended writing course, helping Turkish educators to implement blended courses with some features that suit the students' needs and preferences.

1.1. The Setting of the Current Study

English is the most popular foreign language in Turkey. It is taught in primary, high schools and universities. The number of private and public universities that offer their education in English is increasing. The majority of universities require their students to have at least intermediate level before they start their departments. The students who can get a high average at the exemption exam in the beginning of year have to register the School of Foreign Language to study English for a year. Here they have intensive English preparatory lessons during the academic year.

The setting of the current study is at the School of Foreign languages at the University of Gaziantep, the Higher School of Foreign Languages. The educational language of engineering departments in the University of Gaziantep is English. The engineering students have to know a certain degree of English to be able to start their program. For this purpose, the students have to take an exemption exam at the beginning of the year. If they fail the exam, they are placed in a course according to their level in Higher School of Foreign Languages. During the year, the students learn English through Reading, Speaking, Writing and Main courses. They are taught to write standard English and develop formal writing skills such as academic essay writing classes for three hours a week. Accordingly, they are asked to

write paragraphs or essays in the exams. If the students are not successful in the final exam and cannot pass the preparatory school, they have the right to participate in summer school and try to pass another final exam at the end of summer school. If they are still unable to achieve the intermediate pass grade, they must repeat the exams at the Higher School of Foreign Languages.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Although the school provides each lecturer with a laptop and sets up a new smart board in every class, the school has still not purchased any VLEs (virtual learning environments) such as Blackboard or Moodle. The school does not have a formal written policy on integrating technology into the curriculum and there are no schemes of work which follow agreed best practice. Some lecturers voluntarily use Facebook or Gmail outside face-to-face instruction hours with their students to stay in touch or send material related to their course or announce things about the following course.

While students in the Higher School of Foreign Languages complain about the difficulty of writing a paragraph or an essay, the instructors complained about not having enough time to cover the syllabus or to give individual feedback to the students. The reason for struggling in writing skill could be due to the need for an excellent understanding of grammar, punctuation rules and vocabulary knowledge, and to a lack of focused feedback for students. On the other hand, some studies have showed that blended learning could help writing skill more in language learning compared to traditional face-to-face learning. One recent study done in Iowa (Larsen, 2012) in particular has investigated writing skill in blended learning. It found out teachers could better help the students individually, follow the students' progress and study more materials in the blending writing course. Moreover, the students in the study indicated that they preferred blended learning over conventional methods.

Most of the studies done on blended learning have similarly proved that blended learning can improve the academic achievement of the students in foreign language classes and the students are pleased with this new instruction method. Based on the findings, it could be concluded that traditional learning should be replaced by blended learning because it has been demonstrated to be a better instruction method than traditional face-to-face learning. However, some investigators (Grgurović, 2010; Goertler, 2012) have criticized these studies in literature for not explaining blended learning in details, defining theoretical framework and linking blended learning to SLA theories.

Blended learning does not have a static definition. Although it is considered to be a combination of online and face-to-face learning, some researchers (Picciano, 2009; Neumeier, 2005) suggest each education program should decide for the best portion of online-face-to-face modes, experiment and modify it accordingly for the next time. It could be concluded that the recipe for the best blend could change regionally.

While the number of blended learning is increasing very fast in some part of the world and discussion is taking place, Turkey has been behind these discussions. Although learning a foreign language especially English is becoming more and more popular and there have been considerable amount of studies on CALL in Turkey, research studies on blended language learning are very few. There are a few studies on the skill of speaking ((Bitlis, 2011; Kırkgöz, 2011) or overall achievement (Bilgin, 2013) but there is no study on writing skills and blended learning. More studies should be carried out to see if blended learning is suitable for Turkey in language learning and if so, what kind of blend is the most successful.

This study aims to assist in the discussion of blended learning and find out if blending online and face-to-face methods would improve the writing exam scores. In addition to quantitative analysis of the exams, qualitative method has been used by comparing the exams

results and interviewing the students for their ideas about blended learning and their suggestions for improving this new instruction methodology in the setting of the Higher School of Foreign Languages.

1.3. Research Questions

The current study aims to find answers to the following questions:

- 1) Does blending traditional face-to-face instruction with online instruction in writing courses increase academic achievement?
- 2) What is the student experience with Facebook group usage as an extension of traditional, face-to-face, summer school writing education courses compared to their general opinion of writing courses?

1.4. Implication

Overwhelmingly, educators in Turkey think that quality of education depends on good teachers with many face-to-face hours. Although there are many studies that show the effectiveness of hybrid education all over the world, there have been fewer applications with combination of traditional face-to-face and online instruction in Turkey. This study aims to be a model for Turkish educators to apply blended education in a cheap and easy way by using social media such as Facebook. Recent studies have showed that blended education is more effective than traditional education. However, most of them have not given a detailed description of blended education in the experimental groups and what the students think of usage of blended education in their courses. Another aim of this study is to enrich the literature with detailed explanations of what is actually going on in a blended course and to make suggestions to adapt it for Turkish classrooms.

1.5. Position of the Researcher

In this study, I have been the researcher, the instructor, and observer. I am aware that since I want the experiment to be successful, my interpretation of the experiment may influence the results. For this reason, I have tried to be as descriptive as possible with my observations on the experiment and leave it to the reader to see its transferability as Grgurović (2010) suggested in her study. Also, instructors from the department and who are not in the study have prepared both pre-tests and post-tests and graded the writing papers which included only the initials and number of the students to prevent any personal interference. For comparison of the blended education and traditional face-to-face education, quantitative methodology has been employed. To provide a bigger picture of the experiment, semi-structured interviews have been done with the students.

1.6. Theoretical Framework for the Current Study

According to the Newton theory, traditional education assumes a cause-effect relationship; good education plans result in better student learning. However, chaos theory rejects this and claims nothing can be so linear. The theory states that a small event can change a complex system whereby everything is related. Especially with approaching new technology and the digital generation, it has become difficult to establish a static learning environment that would suit everybody equally at the same time, place and speed. With the advent of modern technologies and new ideas about the future of teaching and learning, there is a growing debate about the role of education in the future. In short, can we maximize learners' opportunities for learning? Different perspectives argue that widening the boundaries of 'education' and trying new things, mixing approaches and including new domains may help get a clearer picture of a new, more relevant kind of teaching. Perhaps one method, an eclectic multiple intelligence theory method using multidimensional approaches would work to blend

traditional education with distance education using new technology, multimedia, and utilizing underused principles from psychology, art, and philosophy.

The present research project on blended education is an alternative way to traditional face-to-face instruction for several reasons. One reason is that blended learning allows the learner to be a more active participant in their own educational development, but still with professional support to ease the transition. A second reason is the increasing number of technology-literate users who may be more receptive to new ways of learning than previous generations. For example, Webinar connects people overseas by making use of pictures, slates, videos, mailing, videoconferencing and other smartphone innovations. A third and final reason is that it enlarges the boundaries of learning because it gives a learner the chance of working and studying with people all over the world. When you have done that, you get the opportunity to know about other people, places and lives. I believe blended learning will make the flow of information from the experienced one to the less experienced easier and more practical all around the world.

Blended education may be a new way of teaching but many studies done on blended education have yet to explain how it functions in the classroom or the theoretical framework of their studies for blended education (Miyazoe and Anderson, 2011; Adas and Bakir , 2013; Biggs,2006). While I was planning my blended course and doing my study on it, I was influenced by Neumeier's (2005) six parameters to design a blended learning environment because she defines the most important elements to make a blended instruction successful and her parameters are suitable for the setting of this study. Neumeier (2005) defines blended education as a combination of face-to-face and computer assisted learning in a single teaching environment for language teaching and learning and learning environment in her study. She adds to the definition that the most important aim of a Blended Learning design is to find the

most effective and efficient combination of the two modes of learning for the individual learning subjects, in what contexts and identifying the main objectives.

According to her study, there are six parameters to do that; mode, model of integration, distribution of learning contents and objectives and assignment of purpose, distribution of learning subjects, teaching methods and location. Mode is how it is done via online or face-to-face. The dominant mode is called the lead mode. The lead mode can be chosen or distributed in way that suits the aim of the course. The second parameter is the model of integration. Each mode could be delivered in isolation, parallel or overlap in a purposeful order and the materials and communication on the modes could be obligatory or optional. The third parameter is the distribution of learning contents and objectives and assignment of purpose. Incorporating learning contents and objectives could be in parallel or isolated. For example, the introduction to a new topic could be presented online and then practiced in a face-to-face role play which would be in parallel or a certain skill could only be delivered with one of the modes.

The fourth parameter is language teaching methods. In the content of teaching language through blended education, learning and teaching methods are tremendously important and shape the blended courses. Communicative Language Learning, Grammar Translation Method, Community Language learning, Task-based learning, Silent Way and Total Physical Response are some of the methods could be chosen to meet the students 'needs. The fifth parameter is involvement of learning subjects. Interaction could be through computers with students to students, students to a group of students, students to tutors, tutors to teacher. Also, interaction could be between students to teacher, computer to students or student to computer. The final interaction type would be at computers between students and students in collaboration or students and teacher in collaboration at the computer. Furthermore, synchronous or asynchronous computer mediated interaction has made

communicating of learner and teacher possible in several ways. The last parameter is location which could be the classroom equipped with technology or no technology, outdoors, students' residence, or bus stop.

Neumeier (2005) summarizes her study saying that the many possibilities of combining individual learning elements in Blended learning could, on one hand, provide an amazing variety of strategies. On the other hand it could be very complex. Blended learning can only be successful as long as it is organized on the basis of an analysis of the participants' needs and abilities. She has explained the six parameters based on her experience in a Blended course called Jobline LMU and hoped it to be a model for the process of designing other Blended Learning environments.

1.7. Organization of the Study

The study includes five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the study and it explains the background of the study, problem of statements, research questions and implication of the study. Chapter 2 reviews some studies done on blended learning. Chapter 3 is the methodology of the study. It gives detailed description of the experiment, the methodology used, participants, tools and steps taken in the study. In Chapter 4 the main findings of the two questions and discussion are presented. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, including limitations and suggestions for educators.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERAURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The most relevant literature will be reviewed in this chapter. Firstly, different definitions and models of blended learning by several authors, blended studies on language learning and blended language learning in Turkey will be discussed in detail. Then, writing skill assisted with technology and blended studies on writing will be presented. Next, using Facebook in education will be revealed. Lastly, digital learners will be explained.

2.1. Defining Blended Learning

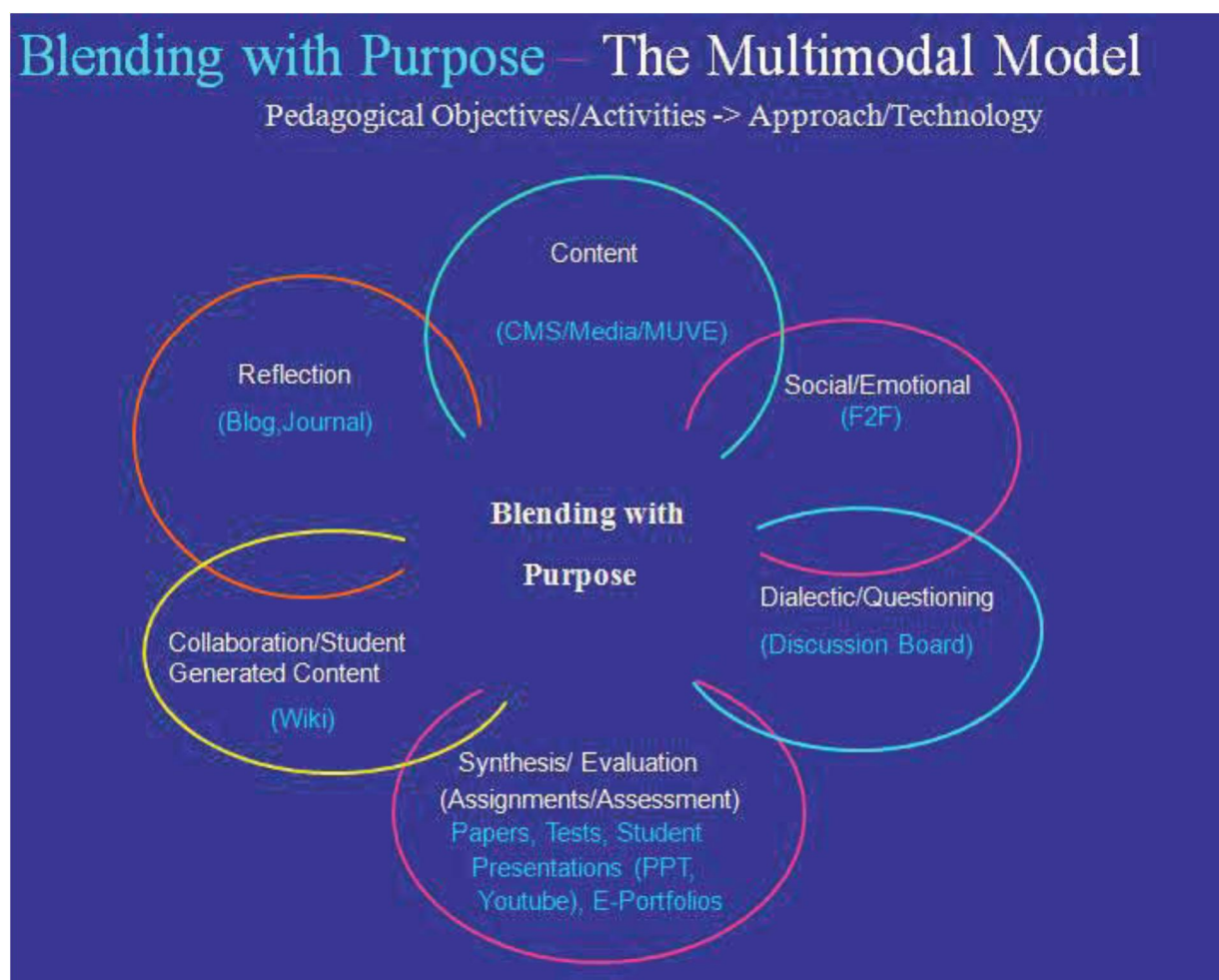
Using technology in education is not a recent development and there have been many studies showing the efficacy of technology on education. Now researchers have turned their interest on how to use technology and how to integrate it in the course in the best way for learners. Blended instruction is one of the topics that have come from the result of these studies. Blended learning sometimes appears as hybrid or mixed-mode in the literature. Basically, blended instruction is defined as blending of face-to-face instruction and online instruction. However, this definition is not enough to enlighten educators responsible for planning blended courses. For instance, this definition does not provide researchers with how much online study is recommended in blended instruction or what the new roles of the instructors actually are. Several studies have attempted to conceptualize blended learning in greater depth. Although these researchers have come up with different frameworks, they may shed light on some elements of blended learning and how they work in a course. A few of them have been discussed here in detail since these are the most relevant studies that could be adapted for language learning and are related to the current study.

Picciano (2009) has conducted research about the increasing numbers of Net generation and different learning styles in the colleges. He concludes that teachers and administrators should address these students from wide spectrum both face-to-face and online by using multiple approaches. In the study, he suggests blending with purpose multimodal conceptual model for designing and developing blended learning courses and programs. The six pedagogical objectives in his model as follows;

- content
- reflection
- collaboration/ student generated content
- dialectic/questions
- social /emotions
- Synthesis/evaluation/Assignments/assessment

He proposes that these elements should be blended together according to the needs of the academic programs and the students. As a result, each program or course may need a different blend of these pedagogical components so that administrators and teachers can achieve the most suitable blend.

Figure 2.1 Blending with Purpose: The Multimodal Model (Picciano, 2009)



Goerthler (2012) points out that blended learning and online learning do not have a foundation in second language acquisition. He proposes that CALL should conduct research Second Language Acquisition (SLA) on theories and prepares the materials and courses accordingly. His study gives examples from some blended learning studies to show SLA theories used in them. For example, a computer program with skill-based exercises that provides feedback based on a pre-programmed answer key uses Universal Grammar Theory. On the other hand, a computer medium, which allows for communication between the teachers and the students at the same time via text, audio or video, uses Interactionist Perspectives.

Goerther (2012) also has some recommendations for blended instruction. He claims that the learning environment should be rich as much as possible. The media should be used in a way that fits different learning styles. Furthermore, blended learning should give the students and teachers chances for communication with audio, video, text-based and face-to-face; asynchronous and synchronous, simulated or real ways. On the other hand, teachers and students should have their roles in both modes consistently. Furthermore, learning should be evaluated through qualitative and quantitative data to see the accomplishments of the goals.

Banados (2006) defines blended learning as a combination of technology and classroom instruction in a flexible approach to learning that recognizes benefits of delivering some training and assessment online but also uses other models to make up a complete training program which can improve learning outcomes and/or save costs (pg. 534) . In the study he attempts to make a blended –learning pedagogical model for teaching and learning EFL successfully through an online interactive multimedia environment in his university in Chile. His model consists of (a) learners’ independent work on a dedicated platform with the UdeC English Online software, (b) face-to-face EFL classes led by teachers who are also students’ online tutors, (c) online monitoring carried out by these teachers, and (d) weekly conversation classes with native speakers of English. The model was prepared based on the students’ needs, interests, personal motivation, free-time activities, or study abroad plans. Another thing, computers are considered to be a means to get Chilean students and other English speakers in touch in a communicative and authentic way, rather than an end in itself. In this study, it can be seen that Banados is aware of the students’ needs and according to the needs of the students and the facilities of the school; he tries to prepare a framework that fosters student- centered, authentic and communicative learning in this environment.

Researchers who studied blended learning have tried to define blended learning, conceptualize it and give the educators a framework they can benefit from while doing their

studies. One common point of the studies is the emphasis they put on defining the best blend. They argue that there is not a universal recipe for the best blend for a specific learning topic or for learning environments. Educators should think about the course objectives, students and environments to decide the best form of blended learning that would work for them. Having read these studies, as an educator, I am motivated and encouraged to use my study to experiment with blended instruction in foreign language schools in Turkey and come up with the suggestion about the best blend for this specific learning environment.

2.3. Blended Studies on Language Learning

Generally speaking, blended studies on language learning have been made by instructors or educators in an academic or teaching setting (Bliuc, Goodyear, and Ellis, 2007). As a result most of these studies have been case studies or comparison studies using exam results, surveys and observations. There are few studies that have used interviewing to search students' opinions. Most studies have confirmed that blended learning increase academic achievement, improve language skills and that digital learners are satisfied with the usage of technology in the language courses. However, there are a few studies that have shown that blended language learning may be affected by several factors and it is not always successful.

Chenoweth et al. (2006) researched the effects of hybrid online language courses by comparing them with their counterpart conventional courses .The students in hybrid education met a hour face-to-face each week and were supposed to meet their instructors for 20 minutes. Additionally, the students had to join a weekly online chat session at a time suitable for the schedule of the students. The whole materials and quiz, self-check exercise, chats and bulletin board were up- and down- loaded online. In contrast, the students in conventional courses were required to attend classes at least 3 days a week, and to buy a textbook. The result showed that both groups of students equally improved. This implies that a judicious

usage of technology in the language course can replace, either partly or perhaps fully, face-to-face hours in the classroom.

Banados (2006) wanted to develop a blended-learning pedagogical model for teaching and learning EFL successfully through an online, interactive multimedia environment. The core concepts in the model are multimodal L2 input exposure, enhanced input, learner-fit content delivery, interaction through computer. His analysis of the students' progress by the end of the interactive online course showed that the students improved in listening, vocabulary, integrated skills, reading, grammar, pronunciation and speaking. Furthermore, the result of the satisfaction survey completed by 37 students showed that the students liked this model in general.

Grgurović (2011) did a case study using Neumeier's 6 parameters to investigate the efficiency of blended learning in an ESL learning environment. She chose to focus on integrating face-to-face classroom learning with computer-assisted tasks. The results of the study revealed that the modes were integrated successfully because the teachers connected the modes, monitored the students' progress and assisted the students in the labs. Surveys also showed that both the students and students agreed that blended learning could help leaning pronunciation and speaking skill.

Contrary to the previous studies, Barr et al. (2005) compared instruction with collaborative and individual learning by help of CALL programs and online activities and traditional teaching. The analysis of pre-and post-test for two groups have showed that the students in the traditional classroom who were not supported by technology got higher scores. The result of the study implies that CALL may not be a universal solution and there is a need to reconsider the assumptions underpinning the pedagogy used in the courses assisted by technology.

One highly relevant study (Kobayashi & Little, 2011) using 5-likert survey aimed at ascertaining how 141 Japanese first and second- year university students perceive blended learning in EFL programs. The result showed not all students benefitted from online components of the course in the same way or to the same degree. The study discovered that in online courses there are other significant variables that affect the improvement of EFL such as proficiency level of the students, the length of time they have been using the program, the learners' computer literacy or the limitations of the program interface itself.

Another study (Chenoweth et al., 2008) on learners and teachers perspective language on blended learning used interview, focus groups and did deeper analysis. The results showed that whilst some of the students enjoyed the reduced class time because it suited their schedule, other students were not happy with the reduced class contact time because they felt that the amount of time assigned to learn a foreign language was not enough. Similarly, Stracke (2007) has attempted to analyze the reasons for non- completion of blended learning courses so he interviewed three students who had left their blended learning course. The data analysis revealed that the students had left the course due to lack-of printed material and their rejection of computers as the main medium of language learning.

Some studies have showed that blended learning can foster language learning and that students have a positive attitude towards it. However, there is not a single definition of blended learning and no clear conclusions about how it should be implemented in the courses. The factors that impact on blended learning in language classes appear to change depending on the syllabus, the students' background and the setting and focus of the programs. Some other studied have also showed that blended learning could fail and data gathered from the students showed it could be due lack of printing, refusing to get information form a computer or tension computer problems would create. More blended studies should be done to predict what kinds of flaws may arise in a specific blended learning course, what disadvantages there

may be compared to fully face-to-face learning courses and how to address these issues in language classes. As Neumeier (2005) suggests learners' attitudes are one of the six parameters that determine the success of blended learning. For this reason, studies should be done focusing on the learners' attitudes towards blended learning and what kind of blend they find useful for their own study. Finally, when considering that the majority of learners today are digital- literate, it could be wise to investigate students' preferences on the usage of technology in blended learning by interviews or other means.

2.4. Blended Language Learning in Turkey

There is a significant amount of research on blended learning in Turkey in the recent years. Although there are a number of studies on blended language learning, only four research studies appear in literature for blended language learning and are very relevant to the current study in term of the setting and methodology. They have been discussed in detail below.

The most recent study (Bilgin, 2013) has been done in the school of foreign languages at Istanbul Technical University with students who have to take a one-year preparatory English program in their first year in the university . The study aims to investigate the effect of blended learning on the overall academic achievement of the students. Another study (Bitlis, 2011) has been done in a similar setting which is the school of foreign languages in Bilkent University. This study aims to find whether blended learning enhances autonomous learning with Turkish students. The third study (Kirkgoz, 2011) takes place in Cukurova with English major students to experiment on the blended learning effect on speaking skill. Similarly, the last study (Ozkan, 2011) takes place in Cukurova University to research speaking skill, but this time with students who are non- English majors and have a less intensive program compared to the other participants. Three of the blended language learning

courses take place in universities with intensive English learning programs. The reason for that would be the heavily-loaded syllabus that language programs have to cover in a short time and that there is a need for an alternative learning environment. Another point worth mentioning is that the settings of the researches are mostly in the east and middle part of Turkey where the social economic is higher than the east of Turkey. It could be concluded that the settings are not representative of all Turkey, so it is difficult to generalize the results for all of Turkey.

The studies have been done by English teachers who are experienced in the settings of the research studies. The studies have used mixed-research methods. They have used the results from exams, surveys, observation, logs and interviews. All of the studies have put a special emphasis on students' perspectives and opinions of blending language learning by doing semi-structured interviews. This has arguably increased the validity of the findings and provided in depth data from the student. All of the studies have showed that there has been an increase in the academic achievement of the students and the students are thinking positively about blended learning. The results have confirmed the idea that blended learning could enhance learning English and the new generation in universities is welcoming usage of technology in the courses.

The literature on blended learning has showed that there are different definitions of blended learning and there have been attempts to conceptualize or design a model for it. One common thing the studies share is that they have defined blended learning. However, the studies have not clarified which blended learning framework they have used in their study and what blended learning means for them. One of the studies (Kirkgöz, 2011) has compared face-to-face and blended learning. Nevertheless, it has not been able to explain what actually occurs in the face-to-face learning. We cannot be sure whether face-to-face means traditional

teaching without technology usage or a traditional, uncommunicative teacher-centered language learning atmosphere.

Most of the blended language learning studies in Turkey have focused on English language learning by English teachers. The results of the study have showed that blended learning can improve speaking skills, autonomous learning, and overall academic achievement. The study also showed that the students have enjoyed the blended learning. The literature review shows that these studies are scarce and that there is a need to test writing skills in blended learning. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature in Turkey by using blended instruction in English writing skills at the University.

2.5. Writing Skill Assisted with Technology

Nik et al. (2010) states that writing helps students with the three goals of practicing grammatical structures, idiom and vocabulary, while it gives students opportunities to go beyond their language level to improve language in term of fluency, accuracy and appropriateness. The study defines writing as a difficult skill at which to be proficient. Learners need to spend lots of time working very hard on thinking, drafting, revising and editing. Students and teachers should work together to write with a satisfactory level.

Technology has been demonstrated to be a tool that eases this difficult skill in ESL classes. Some of the advantages that technology could bring into writing skill are specified by Butler-Pascoe, 1994 (as cited in Wiburg, 2003), as follows:

1. Students' estimates of their own writing ability improved significantly.
2. Word processors allowed students to easily revise and edit their compositions, thereby avoiding tedious recopying and increasing students' enjoyment of writing.

3. Students' enthusiasm for writing with word processors resulted in their spending additional time on revisions outside of class time (pg.150).

Wiburg (2003) states writing is a process that requires prewriting activities, writing, evaluating, developing skills, editing and publishing stages. While going in this process, students have their own individual skill development to follow. They may use brainstorming, outlining, thesaurus, spelling and grammar programs and word processor. When they are ready, they can exhibit the final draft on desktop or websites. In addition to individual learning, technology can be used in the writing skill for collaborative group learning. The students can make lists, prepare web-writing projects, make suggestions in peers, or use panel programs.

These studies have been conducted under the name of usage of technology in writing courses. However, these activities could also be applied in blended language learning environment with careful planning. For instance the grammar, spell checkers and word processing could be followed by an online segment of the course while individual teacher-student conferencing could be face-to-face. In fact, there have been a few studies that have experienced writing skill in blended learning with the assistance of technology.

2.6. Blended Studies on Writing

Blended studies have been done for writing skills in classroom as well. Adas et al. (2013) have demonstrated that writing is a complex skill and not easy for Arab learners. Their study aims to create an atmosphere where the students are active and autonomous by integrating writing activities as a part of blended learning. For this purpose, they had an experimental and control group. The experimental group studied writing with both face-to-face and online time. The students received all the materials on MOODLE and the students were required to do activities such as posting their paragraphs, commenting on each other,

doing error analysis, watching videos, looking at pictures related to the topic they would write or doing vocabulary exercises. The result of the study showed that the experimental group who took the blended learning course outperformed the group who studied with traditional learning in terms of using a topic sentence, spelling, grammar, punctuation marks and capitalization.

Miyazoe et al. (2011) aimed to observe learning results of students who use pseudonyms in discussion forums and blog writings in Japan. One of the results of the study is that the students preferred to use gender-free names online and that female students tend to use more male names compared to male students. The students reported that they liked the opportunity to hide their name because it helped them lessen their worries about making too many mistakes in their writing and decreased the risk of being aggressive with their classmates when doing peer correction. The result of the study is important in term of showing the flexibility students have in blended learning.

Another study that added to the positive results of blended learning was done by Shih (2011). The students in the study posted their writings on Facebook, comments on each other's work, discussions, and interactions. The results showed that integrating Facebook in English writing courses can increase the writing scores. Furthermore, the students stated that they were highly positive about the implementation of Facebook in the course on the questionnaires and during the in-depth-interview they reported that this was due to the instructors' teaching techniques, and their sense of humor which showed on Facebook. However, they also pointed out sometimes Facebook could distract them from studying; letters and characters on Facebook tended to be limiting; additionally, their friends sometimes misled them in correction.

The result of studies on blended learning shows that blended learning has increased the writing score of the students and that students were satisfied with the blending. The reasons for this have been reported as technological tools. The flexibility of both modes and the teachers' techniques could be considered as the main factors for these positive results. Based on the results of the study, it could be concluded that the students welcome blended learning in English writing courses. Although the studies have taken place in different parts of the world, such as in Palestine, Japan and Taiwan, these new experiences of integrating technology have been welcomed by the young generation in these colleges and my research has found no evidence that technology-assisted blended learning cannot succeed in Turkish education.

2.7. Using Facebook in Education

Facebook is an online social network that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. It enables users to create profiles with photos, list of personal interest, contact information. Users have the chance to chat synchronously and asynchronously through private or public messages. They can also use features such as likes, pokes, shares, notes, voice calls and video calling. Facebook started in 2004 and has become more and more popular through the years. Now it has almost 900 million users world-wide and Turkey is the fourth number with 29951960 in term of using Facebook. According to the Facebook website, in 20 minutes 1,000,000 links are shared and 2,716,000 photos are uploaded all over the world. Also, 48% of 18 to 34 year olds check Facebook as soon as they wake up.

Facebook has attracted the interest of educators due to its popularity among the young and various features that can be used for education purposes. One study (Pempek et al., 2009) researched how often, why and how college students accessed Facebook. It found that college

students spend nearly 30 minutes on Facebook every day to communicate mostly with people with whom they have pre-established relationships and that they spent most of this time observing content on Facebook. Another study conducted by Shih (2011) in Taiwan shows with students who are freshman and has English majors. The study concludes that students learned English writing and become more attentive and willing to express their own ideas in writing and more willing to interact with other people as a result of a blended approach combining peer assessment on Facebook with face-to-face instruction. Similarly, another study (Alias et al., 2012) comes up with the conclusion that Facebook Notes could be used as a Language Learning Strategy training tool. Students at this study were enthusiastic with this training tool and started to use the indirect Language Learning Strategies more while learning.

The results of some studies would not seem to support using Facebook for educational purposes. One study (Hew, 2011) of Facebook with high school students found that students who use Facebook reported having lower GPAs and spent fewer hours studying per week than non-Facebook users; students see Facebook as a fun pastime and not something serious and tend to share their personal information. Consequently they may see teachers as a threat to their privacy. Another study (Dixon, 2011) aims to find out whether Facebook has an impact on the writing of native and non-native English speakers and found out that although the majority of the students are on Facebook and spend approximately 30 minutes on it, there is no important relationship between Facebook and writing success for native or non-native English speakers.

Facebook is currently used widely among students. It is a cheap, easy and popular way of communication. Facebook use appears to show increased interaction among students during learning and arguably makes them more enthusiastic. Educators are trying to take advantage of this social network and some studies have showed that it could be used educationally to train students. However, students may want to keep this social website for

fun, but not to add their teachers for school work. It is important to acknowledge that both perspectives of Facebook usage are valid if we want to plan an educational environment that is accepted by the students.

2.8. Digital Learners

When I was a student, our teacher would say the same comments about us. “Your generation is so different than ours. I do not understand your behavior. We would never do such a thing in the classroom back in my time.” Similarly, I have observed that my generation who has become teachers now keeps commenting in the same way, ‘What is wrong with this generation? We would never do such a thing back in our time.’ It is obvious that each generation is different than the previous one and behaves differently. Technology may have created a bigger gap between the instructors and learners due its resources and its speed. The influence and growth of technology have attracted the interest of researchers and they have tried to find the characteristics of the new generation, and adapted traditional education to this change.

There have been several studies that define computer users. One study classifies people who were born after 1982 as the digital learners (Tapscott, 2009). Another study names people who grow up with technology as the net generation (Howe et al., 2009). Furthermore, people who have learned to use computers later in their lives are referred as immigrant learners and people who grow up with technological innovation are referred as native digital learners. A study (Myllylä et al., 2010) was done in Tampere University to research digital learners’ characteristics. They found out that they are collaborators, thinking globally, tolerant of diversity, having freedom of choice.

As a result of the changing characteristics of learners due to technology, the accommodation of this growing population into traditional education has been one of the main

foci of some researchers. Skiba et al. (2006) suggest that the Net Generation or Millennial do not have the same learning expectations, styles, and needs as previous learners had. This new generation of students is challenging the traditional method of teaching in the universities. The article gives teaching strategies in light of their preferences for digital literacy, experiential learning, interactivity, and immediacy.

Although the expectation is high for the net generation and ways of adapting education to them have been an issue of concern for educators, there are a few studies that suggest net generation learners may not be as big user of computer as was expected. The Office of Information Technology in the University of Minnesota (2011) held a survey to understand the technology use, ownership, preferences about and perceptions of educational technology. The results showed that although the majority of students are experienced with technology they are not sophisticated users. Also, the students tend to be consumers rather than producers on the internet and the majority of the students preferred face-to-face followed by blended learning while a minority preferred online education. Bullen et al. (2011) criticize some researchers who make very broad claims about the Net Generation. Their study, held with focus group interviews and surveys on 438 students in higher education, showed that there are no meaningful differences in how learners use computers for information and communication. Another result was that post-secondary students in the study benefit from information and communication technology in a limited way.

Similarly, a very recent study (Margaryan et al., 2011) challenges the idea that digital learners have developed radical learning styles. The study confirmed that digital native students from technical departments used technological tools more often compared to digital immigrant and non-technical departments. However, another result showed that technology adoption is impacted by complex interdependences and no matter what the age of the students, the academic discipline they are studying, or the attitudes they have they are

significantly affected by their instructors' approach. Oblinger, D. G., & Oblinger, J. L. (2005) suggest in the book *Educating the Net Generation* that although the Net generation spends a lot of time on the computer, they still like face to face time. On the other hand, the students could be critical of too much PowerPoint in the courses. The students that were interviewed noted that they want their professors to be inspiring, astonishing and use technology to present the key concepts in the classroom (pg. 3.3).

There is a new generation with new learning styles and it is important to adapt education to the way they prefer. However, it should not be assumed that this generation is expert on the usage of computers and they want everything they learn to be done on computers. As some of the studies showed, this generation does not enjoy being lectured to, either by a computer or a human. They want the technology to be used in a communicative and inspiring way in courses.

2.9. Summary

There are increasing numbers of blended studies recently showing blended learning is improving language learning such as writing skill. Moreover, the study suggested that digital learners prefer technology to be used in an interactive way and they welcome blended learning. Some of the researchers have tried to design a model for blended learning and conceptualize blended learning suggesting that educators could adapt them according to their purpose. Literature reviews on blended learning in Turkey showed that there are few studies on language learning. More studies should be done to experiment with this new instruction method to see its potential usefulness in Turkey. For this reason, this study aims to fill in the gap in this area by both analyzing writing exam results and interviewing the students for their perspective on blended learning.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter reveals the methodology for the research questions. The first section gives detailed description of blended instruction and traditional face-to-face instruction. The next section explains the design, participants, the instruments and collection of data for the first question. The following section in a similar way explains the participants, and collection of data for the second questions. Lastly, ways of keeping filed notes during the entire experiment is described.

3.2. Procedure for the Courses

Recent studies have compared blended education with face-to-face education and all of them have found that blended education students have done better than face-to-face education students. However, the researchers have not informed us about how they have implemented blended education in the classroom; how blended education function differently than traditional face-to-face education; or what they mean by traditional face-to-face instruction. This chapter includes detailed description of blended education and an hour-lesson plan of traditional of face-to face instruction.

3.2.1. Blended Instruction

Blended instruction in this course has been planned carefully regarding Neumeier's (2005) six parameters; mode, model of integration, distribution of learning content and objectives and assignment of purpose, language teaching methods and involvement of learning subjects. The leading mode in this context was face-to-face. The first reason for this decision was that the instructor does not have any control over the syllabus, and preference for the mode. The

administration requires both the students and instructor to meet in the classroom two hours a week for the writing course. The online mode of had been planned by the investigator voluntarily for the purpose of the current study. Another reason for the leading face-to-face instruction was that students have never had blended education before and they are not used to a leading mode with online instruction.

Lecturing and discussion that took face-to-face instruction influenced the material, the exercises and homework that were uploaded online. In this sense, face-to-face instruction was chosen to explain the importance of cause–effect essays, to check the students’ understanding, needs, worries and weakness and online communication was chosen to satisfy these needs and to carry the process of learning to a more advanced level. However, there is not a clear cut distinction between face-to-face and online instructions because the students would submit an essay, take feedback or do exercises either online or face-to-face. For instance, if the students wrote an essay in the classroom, the feedback would be online. In this sense, the way that information was delivered on both modes was parallel.

Interaction was possible through computer online mode. For instance, the students would submit their homework to the instructor, take feedback, ask questions, hear about an announcement or sometimes chat with asynchronous sessions. On the other hand, due to the flexibility that online modes provide, interaction was made through the students and computer if the instructor made extra work and resources available to study or exercises with answer keys. The interaction between students and their classmates has been limited or not motivated in this context although the students have had the opportunity to read others’ work, read the feedback, like or comment on the Facebook wall. The students were autonomous in the online mode because either it was not obligatory for them or no extra credit for spending time on this mode was given. The teacher acted as an instructor in the classroom while she acted as a facilitator, resource and partner online mode. Face-to-face location was the classroom in the

Higher School of Foreign Languages and online mode could be the campus, home or a cafe. Unfortunately, the students have not been asked to report their preferred location for online mode.

The whole activities both online and face-to-face modes have been noted down in four week time period. The time assigned for face-to-face has been two hours a week. The time spent online by each student is unknown because the students were not asked to note the track of the time they spent online. Arguably, it would change from one student to another due to different learning styles and speeds. See appendices, page 66 for more details of the writing course with online and face-to-face modes.

3.2.2. Traditional Face-to-face Instruction

An informal interview was done with the instructor of the control group before the experiment started. She noted that she did not plan to use technology or any social network to assist her course. She didn't intend to apply any resources other than the summer school writing book or to provide any extra teaching hours with the students. She aimed to cover the writing syllabus for summer school. During the experiment she was asked to submit a lesson plan to check if she had a traditional face-to-face approach in the control group. This would help to explain what it was meant by saying 'traditional face-to-face instruction'. See appendices, page 67 for the lesson plan of the instructor.

3.2.3. Similarities and Differences between Two Methods of Instruction

These two courses had students with the same level of English, age, and departments, the same classroom facilities, schedule, writing hours, and summative writing exam. Moreover, these two courses are similar to each other in a way that technology has not been used during the face-to-face course hours. Using the board, lecturing, introducing the topic and giving homework at the end of the course are the common points that the two courses share.

Moreover, neither of the classes are obliged to study or to participate in online learning other than face-to-face teaching hours. The main difference is the usage of another mode to assist the face-to-face education. Students in the experiment course could ask questions to their instructor on the Facebook discussion board, submit their homework and get feedback which makes a big difference between the two classes until the next face-to-face writing course hours. Another difference between the two courses is that students with blended education have got more than one resource such as the example essays of their classmates and instructor, essays on word documents, slides, videos, websites of other School of Foreign Languages and useful links such as dictionaries and punctuation websites. This gives the advantage of studying writing on their space in a different and richer context compared to only hardcopy.

3.2.4. The Instructors

Both instructors of the control group and experimental groups were born in 1986 and are graduated from ELT departments in Turkey. They have 4 years' experience in English language teaching and have had teacher training. Both teachers had experience of teaching cause-effect essays in the Higher School of Foreign Languages previously.

3.3. Procedure for the First Research Question

This part of my study aims to answer the first question of the study: Does using a Facebook group as an extension of traditional face-to-face writing education help students do better at the writing exam compared to those students who study writing with traditional face-to-face education. In other words, the first research question asks whether blended instruction increases the academic achievements of the students in the writing exams. In this study, scores of essays which are calculated in terms of content, vocabulary, organization, use of English, and punctuation & spelling & mechanics have been used for academic achievement

(See appendices for the student's evaluation form, pg. 74). The students at the blended and traditional classes had writing exams before and after the study. The results of the exams were analyzed by SPSS to ascertain if there was a meaningful difference.

3.3.1. Design

The students of School of Foreign Languages took the final test and the final writing exam at the end of the academic year which was in the first week of June. The students who failed at this exam enrolled into summer school and were placed in classrooms randomly in the second week of June. In order to compare traditional face-to-face education with blended education, one experiment and one control group were chosen among these summer classes. The experiment group received online support via Facebook. However the control group did not receive any such support. Both groups studied the same writing schedule for one month and then took another writing exam at the end of the month. This writing exam was used as a post-test and the final writing exam which had taken place before the summer school was used as a pre-test.

The design of the current study is quasi-experimental with non-equivalent and control group pre-tests and post-tests. Teaching writing with blended instruction suggested for this study versus traditional face-to-face instruction is the independent variable and improvement in writing scores of the experimental and control groups measured with pre and post-test experiments is the dependent variables. The table below shows the current study design.

Table 3.1 Study design for the research

Research Groups	Before the Experiment	Independent Variables	After the Experiment	Dependent Variables
<i>Experimental Groups</i>	<i>Test 1</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Test 2</i>	<i>improvement in writing scores</i>
<i>Control Groups</i>	<i>Test 1</i>		<i>Test 2</i>	<i>improvement in writing scores</i>

3.3.2. Samples and Participants

Participants in both the experimental and control groups are students of civil, mechanical, and food engineering who are required to study a one-year English course at the Higher School of Foreign Languages. Their ages range from 18 to 23 years old. The students in both groups studied the main course: reading, speaking, listening and writing skills at the Higher School of Foreign Languages for a year. They all reached the same English level at the end of the year which was intermediate. However, they still did not have the necessary average with their final grade at the end of the year to start their freshman year in the engineering department. After they registered for the summer school, they were placed in summer school classes randomly. The students in both groups had the same classroom facilities, schedule and goals. The number of female students in the experimental groups is four and the number of males is nine. The number of the female students in the control group is two and the number of the male students is eleven.

3.3.3. The Instrument and Collection of Data

The instruments of the first research question are the final writing exam before the experiment started and another similar writing exam after the experiment finished. The pre-test and post-test writing exams were prepared by the Testing and Evaluation Office at the Higher School of Foreign Languages for all of the preparatory students. The students took both exams during actual face-to-face time and were watched by observers. The students were not allowed to use any dictionaries or any technological aids whilst they wrote an essay with introductory, supporting and conclusion paragraphs. Both exams were graded by experienced instructors from Gaziantep University, the Higher School of Foreign Languages. For objectivity, the students only wrote their names' initials and student numbers on the writing exam paper. For validity, both exams were graded by two checkers and the median average of two grades was calculated from the result. To see the difference between the experimental and control group at writing exams, SPSS 15 program has been used.

3.4. Procedure for the Second Research Question

The second question concerns the students' experience with the usage of a Facebook group as an extension of traditional face-to-face writing education at summer school and their opinions on writing courses in general. The students in the experimental groups were interviewed on Skype, three months after the study had ended.

3.5. Participants and Collection of the Data

Neumeier (2005) suggests that involvement of learning subjects such as students, tutors and teachers, is one of the parameters for blended learning. However, most studies in blended education do not focus on students apart from the survey prepared by the researchers. No matter how well- adapted a learning environment may be suited to the needs of its students, there remains a significant possibility that students may still not achieve their full potential.

For this reason, thirteen (4 female and 9 male) students from the experimental group have been interviewed for their opinions on blended instruction at summer school and other writing courses in Gaziantep University. The result of the interviews should provide the school and educators with valuable information as to whether a blended instruction approach should be employed in the Higher School of Foreign Languages; and should help find the strengths and weakness of blended education in this context.

The semi-structured interviews with the students in the experimental group took place three months after the experiment had finished. At that time, the researcher who was also the interviewer was not their instructors anymore. Hence, she didn't have any power over the participants which helped them feel confident while answering the questions related to the experiment. In addition, by that time, the students were taking a new writing course which had been the fourth writing course they took in Gaziantep University. Since each instructor would have a different approach toward using technology in the course (or not using it at all) students should hopefully be enriched by their extra experience in these writing courses. They would compare their experiences and have a clearer idea about what they wanted in a writing course during the interview.

Table 3.2. The students' writing experience at Gaziantep University

2012-2013 academic year /9 months at School of Foreign Languages	2013 summer school / 13 june-13 July at School of Foreign Languages	2013 summer school/ 13 July-8 August at School of Foreign Languages	2012-2014 academic year/15 September-30 September at Engineering department
The participant studied writing at least with one instructor.	The participant studied writing with blended education in the first half of summer school.	The participant studied writing with a different instructor in the second half of the summer school.	The participant studied academic writing with a different instructor

The interviews were conducted in the first week of October 2013 on Skype due to physical distance between the participants and the researchers. Kimbler et al. have suggested that Skype can be used for qualitative research. Skype has been successfully used in a few studies for interviewing (Hoffmann, 2011; Lindahl, 2013)

The interviews were recorded for future transcription. Questions were prepared in advance and were then put to the students. The transcriptions were checked several times for analysis. The questions related to reasons to like blended education have been analyzed using recurring theme. Questions about students' reasons for preferring blended learning were analyzed using recurring themes. Students' suggestions about improving the blended learning course have been included in the result section of this dissertation as evidence.

3.6. Field Notes

Richard Thorpe in a dictionary, called Sage, defines field notes as “contemporaneous notes of observations or conversation taken during the conduct of qualitative research.” The researcher of the current study decided to use field notes during the experiment to shed light on what happened during the experiment that writing exams and interview would not provide. The researcher took track of what was going in the classroom daily so that the researcher would not forget, had a clear and reliably observation. She noted what she happened in the classroom that day, how she decided to change the schedule, what worked or did not work with blended instruction. At the end of the experiment, she also wrote a general reflection on the blended instruction in the shoes of an instructor.

CHAPTER 4

4. RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews and analyses the results of the studies. The first section shows the results for the first research questions with pre-and post-tests of the control and experimental groups. The second section shows the results of the second questions. It explains the results of the interviews that ask for the opinions of students about blended instruction and writing courses in general. The observations done during the experiment by the researcher are in the filed notes.

4.2. Results for the First Research Question

The first research question aims to find out whether blended instruction could improve writing scores more than traditional face-to-face instruction. For this purpose one pre- test and one post-test were applied to experimental and control group. The results were analyzed by the SPSS program.

4.2.1. Pre-test Results

At the end of academic year, the students took a final test exam and a writing exam at school of foreign languages. The students who failed to achieve a high average at these exams had to register for the summer school that starts one week later. The administration put the students in the classes randomly in summer school. The researcher is attached to one of these summer classes to teach writing. After getting approval from the administration, the instructors could teach the schedule with blended learning method. This class that was studying with blended learning is named the experimental group. To understand whether or not this new approach at school of foreign languages would lead higher writing scores,

another class that would study with traditional face-to-face learning was chosen as a control group. The final writing exam result which took place one week before the experiment started has been used as a pre-test for both the experimental and control groups.

Table 4.1. Pre-test mean scores, standard deviation, degrees of freedom, t and p values for the experimental and the control group.

<i>Groups</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Experimental Group	13	9,3269	3,14475	12	,199	,846
Control Group	13	9,4808	1,57275			

The writing scores of both groups are analyzed and presented above. A one-sample test shows that the value for $p = .846$ for two groups is not statistically significant when the p value were set at 0.05 level of significant. The reason for that would be that students at both experimental group and control groups had a low average at the final writing exams and were placed randomly in the summer school classes. The result of the analysis shows the experimental and control group could be used for the study to measure the difference blended learning would make at writing exams.

4.2.2. Post-test Results

After choosing a control group that was suitably similar in terms of final writing grades, the researcher did an informal interview with the writing instructors of the control classroom to learn whether or not technology was used voluntarily in or outside of the classroom. The instructor explained that she would not use any technological means in the

summer school because she thought it was a short time and they had a very busy schedule. The instructor was also asked to write a description of a lesson plan she would teach in the control group. Speaking with the instructor and reading her lesson plan showed that she had a traditional face-to-face approach toward writing course she would teach in the control group. Meanwhile, the investigator started the Facebook group to teach some of the course online to supplement the traditional face-to-face hours. Participation in the experiment was voluntary for the students in the experiment group. Both group had exact the same schedule to cover in four weeks. Four weeks later the experimental and control group were given a writing exam which was parallel to the final writing exam which was used as a pre-test in this study. The students were supposed to write an essay of 4-5 paragraphs. Each group had an observer to prevent any cheating or using technological devices during the exam. The result of the exam is below:

Table 4.2. Post-test mean scores, standard deviation, degrees of freedom, t and p values for the experimental and the control group.

<i>Groups</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Experimental Group	13	12,3654	2,17135	12	-4,510	00.1
Control Group	13	7,7538	1,82465			

The writing scores of both groups are analyzed and presented above. A one-sample test shows that the value for p= 00.1 for two groups is statistically significant when the p value were set at 0.05 level of significant. The reason for such a meaningful difference would

be the treatment the experimental group took. Blended learning would appear to have made a meaningful difference at writing scores.

4.3. Results for the Second Research Question

The second research question aims to find out the students' experience with blended instruction, get suggestions from them and learn about their ideal writing course. All of the participants in the experimental groups were interviewed three months after the experiment on Skype. The students answered semi-structured questions that were prepared in advance. Each Skype videoconferencing was recorded and transcribed. Two of the participants did not have the facility to use Skype, so the interviews were done by using Facebook instant messaging and Gmail. After several readings, common themes for liking blended instruction were found. All of the suggestions to improve blended instruction and the students' ideal writing courses were included in the results section.

4.3.1. Experience of the Students in General

The analysis of the interview showed that all of the students were glad that they had studied writing with blended learning. All of them would like to study similar courses in the future. They said that it had benefited their essays in term of organization, grammar and vocabulary. More reasons for liking blended learning are in below.

4.3.2. Time

Time was a word that showed almost in every student's answer. The students mentioned that with the traditional method they never had the time to cover the writing subject in detail, think about what they would write, and hand it to their instructor at the writing course. Sometimes the instructors would give them it as homework when they could not finish the essay and then the instructors would ask them to bring it back the following

course day. Most of the time, the students did not mind the idea of continuing the second half of the essay later. One reason they liked this was the implication that the instructor would not be in a rush to cover the schedule and could therefore spend more time communicating with the students. The students would take their time to write the essay on their own space and get a more detailed feedback:

We are 20 students in the course. If the instructor wanted to spend time with each of us for 2 minutes, this would kill the entire course time. However, not everybody is talented enough to write a good essay in a short time. Online learning gives the room for us to write with less tension.

4.3.3. Studying at Home

‘Home’ was a word that showed up in most of the students’ answers. The students spent lots of time at home and not doing much relevant work. They also spent lots of time on the computer. They mentioned that other times they wanted to study at home but they just could not start. However with the Facebook group, they had the chance to look at what had been covered in the course that week, what resources the instructor had uploaded to the group, write an essay, send it to their instructor, ask for and receive feedback or ask a question. As a result, they could carry on their studies at home as well and produce more work that they could on their own without the assistance of the Facebook group.

The time that we spend at school is very limited. Let’s say 5 hours. Other than that, we spend time at home with whatever we are able to do. We are on our own...Online learning focused our time and channeled our energy towards more studying.

4.3.4. Individual Study

The analysis showed that the students are keen for individual attention, especially with writing. Most of the students observed that writing instructors could not answer questions from 20 students in 50 minutes with personal, close attention. Some students confessed that they were even scared to ask a question that would seem too easy for others in the classroom and just didn't want to take class time for that. They appreciated that they had an online system at summer school that enabled them to ask the questions that were troubling them to their instructor. Another point is that they were happy to write on their own and then submit it to their instructors to learn about feedback.

I hate writing in the classroom. I get bored. When I am on my own, I think better. I explain myself better. Then, afterwards, I like to take feedback from my instructor.

4.3.5. Resources

The students said that they liked to have more resources than their course books. They liked reading different kinds of essays, and reading on other writing websites. Moreover, it was easier for them to access them with one click instead of many hardcopies. Lastly, the students said they enjoyed reading their friends' essays on the Facebook wall. They could see how their classmates write and learn from the feedback the instructor gave them. They would be less likely to repeat the same mistake in their writing.

The opportunity to read my classmates' essays was good. I learn from them. I started to use some conjunctions and vocabulary. My essays were better.

The best thing I liked about the Facebook group is the fact that I would see what my friends wrote. I also wonder about the essays by the entire school. I wonder what the students in other foreign language schools are able to write. I wonder...I wonder about other countries' as well.

4.3.6. Communication

What the students enjoyed mostly with the blended learning was the luxury they had to communicate with their instructors or classmates without having to wait too long. They liked that they had another chance to get in touch with their instructor. They would ask a question to their instructor and would get the answer the same day. The students said that they would write an essay and send it in a minute. Then, she would write feedback and send it back in a day. Then, they would correct the mistakes and submit again. They said they liked improving their essays in a simple and practical way.

Generally if I need to ask a question to my instructor, I would have to go her or his office, and yet they might not be in the office. This is too much work for me. I am not a hardworking student to do that. I like the fact that I had the chance to ask an easy question with the Facebook group.

One day I did not come to the school. I asked my friend to keep notes for me. He took pictures of the board with his smart phones and uploaded them on the Facebook wall. Thanks to this type of instruction, we were able to reach each other very easily.

4.3.7. Computers

Some of the students simply stated that they like computers. They liked spending most of time on it. It delivers information they need, help them communicate with their instructors and classmate and make learning more fun and faster. They gave word processing as an example. It would correct their some of their mistake and help them focus on the content.

This is a time of technology. We should make use of every opportunity that computers can offer.

It was nice and practical to study on the computer.

4.3.8. Students' Suggestions for Improvement

The students gave suggestions for assisting traditional face-to face hours with online learning the next time. The researcher has paraphrased what the students advised as follows:

1. The school would buy a learning management system from a reputable and appropriate company. This would help store and organize the information better.
2. There should not be too much material on the webpage. Only the most important and relevant material should be uploaded. Too much material confuses the students and is not necessary.
3. Other instructors would contribute to the online learning as well and the entire school would share one page for the writing course. As a result, the students would reach the most valuable and enriching material from all writing instructors.
4. A scheduled time to upload the materials would be better so the students could plan their time to check the internet and they would not be disappointed when they did not see any new materials.

5. Online office hours would be very beneficial. The students would not have to go to the instructor's office for a simple question. Also, the students could get instant answers to their questions.
6. The instructors would meet the students online at a certain time that is suitable for everybody and the instructor would check absentees. Learning still can take place online.
7. Videoconferencing with online hours would be much better. It may even give the chance to speak with a native writer. They could be a guest online.
8. Writing skill would be taught with other skills such as speaking and reading online. It would improve the students' English level in general.

4.3.9. Dreamers

The last interview question asks for the students' dreams about writing courses in 10 or 20 years. Most of the answers were very creative. Some of what they said was things that are happening around the world now while the others are beyond our time. The dreams they have for the future as follows:

1. Each student would have a tablet. When the instructor writes something on the board, it would automatically appear on their tablet so they will not have to write the things on their notebook.
2. The students would have their computer in the class. When the instructor asks a question, the students will not have to go to board to write the answer. He will write the answers on their own computer and the sentence will appear on the smart board. The students will be able to discuss the sentence on the board sitting at their seat. They would add and rewrite a sentence on the board.

3. The students may not have to go to school in future for writing course. There would be an online system and the student would study at home. It would be like school. The students would have to attend the online course.
4. The students would not have to go to classroom physically. Rather they will have glasses that would take them to virtual class. Of course they would have to have headphones to be able to hear the instructor.
5. There would be a camera in the classroom that records the whole course. After the students had gone home, they would be able to revise the course on the video. If they did not come to the course that day for any reason, they would not have to ask their friends about the course. They just would watch the course on their computer and not miss the course.
6. When the instructor speaks, the board would reflect what he/she would say with subtitles. English is pronounced and spelt differently so this system would make writing easier. The student would have the chance to follow the instructor both verbally and audibly. As a result, they would remember better what they learn this day.
7. A tablet could grade the essays by students, correct it and grade it like an instructor does. The student would work with that tablet until they are ready for the exam.

4.3.10. Present Technology

The analysis of interviews revealed that the students are not satisfied with the current usage of technology in their writing courses. They complained that technology isn't included in the syllabus, materials, during the course or after the course. They feel that they still are studying with the traditional face-to-face education not supported with the latest technology that they have and can use. They think Gaziantep University should start using technology to

make teaching more practical. They added that it is up to their instructors to use the technology in the course. Some of the answers of the students about this issue as follows:

One of our instructors is still writing the questions on the board. Afterward, he asks us to note it on our notebook. It takes forever... Then we don't have time for anything else.

One day one of our instructors tried to use the smart board in the class. It didn't work. He asked for help from somebody. They worked on it but still didn't work. He didn't use smart board again.

On the other hand some of the students indicated that they have writing instructors who use technology in the classroom. They said they were happy with these instructors and benefited from the course better.

I liked one of my instructors because he is very practical. He photocopies all the materials he needs in the course and reflects it on the projection.

He shows us some videos and pictures. He covers the subject in a short time. Then as a class, we start to discuss what we learnt.

4.4. Field Notes

Teaching cause & effect essays online with face-to-face education at summer school took place for one month. At the end of the course, the schedule of the writing course was covered at a comfortable pace, with individual feedback and open communication as it had been planned at the beginning of the course. I was able to add materials, do extra activities or exchange more information that I had planned due to the space and time online education provided us with. After the informal interviews we did at the beginning of the year, I tailored

the way I taught and the design of the course according to the students' needs. I would sometimes post pictures, cartoons or comments on the wall related to what we did in the classroom. I was able to edit the work of the students, emphasize their strengths and weaknesses, highlight areas using color, refer to example essays we studied using copy and paste techniques on their virtual paper, or suggest some links for them to study.

Although the participation to online teaching wasn't obligatory, the entire class of students joined the Facebook group, sent the essays online, viewed every post their friends or I uploaded and did the assigned activities. Another thing was that except for one student, all of the students uploaded their essays on the Facebook wall instead of sending the article in private. Lastly, the physical participation in face-to-face education was very high which may have been a result of their engagement in the writing course.

One thing that made the Facebook group work as I mentioned earlier would be my effort and motivation to make blended education work. This was my motivation for spending lots of time on the internet to find interesting, relevant and authentic material at their level. For example, in order to post a link to other Schools of Foreign Languages, I would search as many websites as much as possible and choose the best one that suited my students. This would take perhaps two hours of my time. I would log in to Facebook at least two times a day to check the posting, answer any questions or comment on a posting. I spent lots of hours as resource coordinator, organizer, controller, observer, assessor, tutor, participant or prompter in an online mode. Expecting other instructors at School of Foreign languages to perform the same task without getting paid for working for so long outside of the face-to-face hours would not be realistic. This is an important aspect while planning blended education.

In addition the writing instructor after me was added to the Facebook group. The Facebook group provided her a rich data about the previous lectures and the students' work.

The instructor and the students could go back if they wanted to revise an activity, a comment or announcement. However, Facebook isn't designed to function as a learning management system like Blackboard, or Moodle. Students can delete the things they have uploaded or can't get into Facebook accounts as a result of forbidden network pages, or mightn't trust others to share their essays due to the Facebook privacy setting. Furthermore, it isn't easy to see announcements, discussion board, links or students and teacher's uploads on Facebook because they are not organized logically on the Facebook wall. For these reasons, using Facebook for blended education may lead to confusion. For example, seeing or storing the data that could be used again would require a great deal of effort.

4.5. Discussion

In this section, the results of writing exams and interview are summarized. Based on the results, suggestions and implication have been discussed.

4.5.1. Academic Achievement

The first research question of the current study aims to find whether blended instruction can increase the writing grades. For this purpose, experiment and control groups were chosen. The experimental groups studied writing with blended instruction while the control group studied it with traditional face-to-face instruction. A pre-test that applied one week before the experiment showed that there was no meaningful difference between the experiment and control group. Four weeks after the experiment, a post test revealed that students who studied with blended instruction outperformed the students who studied with traditional face-to-face instruction. This means blended instruction has improved academic achievement of the students in the writing course. This result is consistent with other studies done on blended instruction (Adas, 2013; Shih, 2011). Consequently, it could be suggested that educators in Turkey should consider innovating writing courses by including blended

instruction since it has proved itself to a better mean of instruction than traditional face-to-face instruction.

4.5.2. Satisfaction with Blended Instruction

Another aim of the study is to learn whether the students in the experiment group were satisfied with the new mean of instruction in general. Three months after the end of the course, the students were interviewed about it. The analysis of the interview revealed that all of the students were satisfied with blended instruction and they would like to study another writing course similarly. This result is in accordance with results found in the studies of Kirkgöz (2011), Miyazoe (2010) and Ozkan (2011). These studies have also found that the students liked blended instruction and they believed in its effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that the students welcomed usage of online instruction with traditional ones and they are ready for this new mode of instruction.

4.5.3. Reasons to Prefer Blended Instruction

The students were also asked for their reasons to like blended instruction. They reported that they liked it because blended instruction enabled them;

1. To study writing in a broader period of time with more focus
2. To study at home with guidance
3. To get individual attention from the instructor
4. To share more resources with and from their instructors and their classmates
5. To communicate better with their instructor due to an “open door” online policy
6. To study with computers with which they are already very comfortable

These reasons suggest students enjoy flexibility and practical usage blended instruction provide. They do not like having to finish an essay in the classroom or go to the office of the instructor to ask questions all the time. They liked having another opportunity to study writing courses. It is worth mentioning that the students liked having lots of time to write an essay. Conversely, they expected immediate feedback from their instructor. Moreover, the students felt they got more attention with blended instruction compared to traditional face-to-to instruction where they may feel time is limited for them to communicate comfortably with their instructor.

A study (Limniou et al., 2010) has showed that students preferred interactive teaching and individual feedback with a virtual learning environment. Similarly, in the current study students appreciated the opportunity to interact with their instructor and to collaborate with their classmates by reading their essays. It could be said that although the students enjoyed using computers as one of the main reasons to like blended instruction, they also appreciated the interaction computer provided. Blended instruction would probably not be as successful if elements such as individual feedback or communication were not core features of the curriculum.

These results show that blended learning is approved by the students of foreign school of languages in the writing course. Blended instruction is a better mean of teaching for writing skill compared to traditional face-to-face instruction because it provides the students with more opportunities to study. Students with different learning styles and speed can do better with blended instruction because blended instruction has a richer learning environment using the technology which is an important part of students' lives.

4.5.4. Students' Suggestions to Improve Blended Learning Environment

Although the students liked blended instruction in general, they still provided suggestion as how to improve the instruction. When all of the suggestions are considered, the main theme is dealing with the implications of blended learning courses in a more serious and organized manner. For instance, they preferred a language learning management system where the most important and relevant information would be delivered in a more structured fashion. Another suggestion is to have regular “online” office hours.

Facebook was used as an extension of traditional Face-to-face hours because it is popular among the students and free. However, the results implied that the students did not consider Facebook to be an efficient or serious method for the course. In this respect, the finding is similar to other studies in literature that suggest Facebook is seen as “too fun” by students (Hew, 2011).

Although having more material was a source of satisfaction for most of students, a few students suggested uploading less material online because it could confuse them to have lots of sources to study. It could be concluded some students were not fond of the huge work- load and felt it caused stress (Brew, 2008). On the other hand, the idea of having online office hours come from most students. The most important and relevant material should be uploaded online with more interaction with the students. Students are not fond of a wall full of information. Rather, they prefer full contact with their instructor and classmates.

4.5.5. Students' Suggestions for the Future

The students were also asked for their ideal course ten or twenty years later. Some of the suggestions were things that are possible right now such as videoing courses for later use, or usage of tables that are connected to the smart board. Nevertheless, some of the suggestions

exceed the facility today such as usage of glasses and headphones for a virtual class or a computer that corrects their mistakes like an instructor.

Interestingly, all of the students mentioned about usage of computers although the question just asked about their ideal writing course: If you were asked to design a writing course for Gaziantep University for 10 or 20 years later, how would that course be? This can be attributed to the development of technology in recent years. The students may relate technology with future improvements because “the future” connotes to more technological development. Another reason would be that they are digitally-literate individuals who have never known a life with no technology.

4.5.6. Present Usage of Technology

The students noted that they are not happy with the present usage of technology in writing courses in their University. They complained about instructors who still used old-fashioned ways of writing things on the board that takes a long time and did not leave room for discussion in face-to-face hours. The answer showed that most of the instructors did not use technology and hardly any one used technology outside of the course. Especially, with this question, the word “instructors” showed up lots of time in the answers. This shows how instructors are considered to be important factors when discussing the educative usage of technology. Banados (2006) suggests that blended learning could be more successful if teachers are given more support. Regarding the availability of technology in our daily lives and campus, a clear implication is that the instructors should take training and use this preferred means of delivering information to their students.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter includes three sections. The first section summarizes the whole study including the setting, literature review, the design of the study, results and implication. The next section includes the limitations of the study and suggestions for further studies based on that. The last section consists of suggestions the educators and administration.

5.2. Summary

The current study took place in a Higher School of Foreign Languages in Turkey. This school teaches English to engineering students who have one-year compulsory English preparation. The school has an intense language program with an emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking skills. The students are required to pass the final test and writing exam at the end of the academic year. If they fail the exams, they register for the summer school. This study took place during the first half of summer school which was four weeks.

A large number of students struggle with English during the summer school and fail. Although there are Smart-boards in every class with internet connection, technology has not been included in courses, syllabus and materials. This study aims to find out if blended instruction would improve the language learning environment. The literature review has showed a large number of studies (Grgurović, 2011; Banados, 2006; Chenoweth et al., 2006) have proved that blended instruction would ease language learning and the students like it. Several other studies (Picciano, 2009; Goertler, 2012; Neumeier, 2005) have defined blended instruction and suggested that educators try to find the best blend for their own particular

setting. Yet, there are few studies in Turkey that argue for the practicality of, or the necessity for blended instruction in writing courses.

The first research question of the study is whether blending traditional face-to-face learning with online learning would increase the writing scores of the students. For this purpose, a control and an experimental group were chosen. The students in the both group had the same English level, classroom facilities, face-to-face hours, age, and department. The scores of final writings which took one week before the study have been used as a pre-test. The test showed that there is not meaningful difference between the control group and experimental group in term of scores. While the control group studied the cause-effect essays with only traditional face-to-face, the experimental group studied with both traditional face-to-face learning and online learning. At the end of the one month, both groups took a post-test at the same time with observers watching them during the exam. The students were asked to write a cause-effect essay which was similar to the final writing exam. At both pre-test and post-test , the students wrote their students numbers and the initial of their name. By this means, the instructors could be objective while grading the essays. The essays were graded by two experienced instructors from the school of foreign languages who were not involved in the research study and did not observe the exam. The medium of the grades were calculated for the results.

The result of the post-test showed that the experimental group had higher writing scores than the control group. The reason for that the meaningful difference between both group would be due to blending traditional face-to-face hours with online learning in the experimental group.

Three months after the experiment took place, the students in the experimental group were contacted for interview for about their perspectives of the summer school experience,

their opinions of the current technology at the writing courses they have taken so far and their suggestions how to move the blended learning further. The interviews have been done on Skype and Facebook due to physical distance between the researcher and participants. Two of the students did not have a Skype account or facilitation to answer the questions orally so they have been interviewed by Facebook instant chat or Gmail email. The rest of the students, 11 students, have been recorded on Skype and the interviews have been transcribed. After reading the interviews several times, the data has been analyzed.

The result of the interview has showed that the students are not impressed by how technology has been largely ignored as an educative tool in contemporary Turkish higher education. Almost no technology has been used during the course or outside of the courses. They are not satisfied with the time they spent during the writing course and want more technology to be used in the syllabus and materials. All of the students were satisfied with the blended learning experience. They wrote more essays at home compared to their usual courses, found learning on their computer more practical and efficient in terms of time. They were also glad that they could communicate with their instructors and express themselves better. The students also suggested blended learning to be part of the whole GU system and to be taken more seriously. Finally, they shared their dreams about the next 10-20 years and focused on the advancement of educational technology in the school.

In conclusion, this study suggests blended instruction can increase academic achievement in writing courses more than traditional face-to-face instruction would do in the Higher School of Foreign Languages. Also, students are satisfied with blended instruction and would like to study other writing courses similarly. The students reported that they liked blended instruction because they thought it give them more flexibility and more effective ways to communicate. The students suggested incorporating a more serious and organized implication of blended instruction with learning management system, regular online office

hours and more relevant and important resources. Concerning these results, it could be concluded that blended instruction is suitable and efficient, and perhaps, essential for improving writing courses in the Higher School of Foreign Languages.

5.3. Limitation and Further Studies

The current study has a few limitations that should be considered while evaluating the results. The limitations are related to the methodology and the implications of the experiment.

The first limitation is the duration of the study, small number of samplings and non-proportional number of females and male students. The experiment in this study takes four weeks with thirteen students in the experimental group. This limits generalization of the results to other populations in other settings. Only four of the students are female while nine of them are males. There could be differences between gender in terms of using computer or attitudes to computer which would change the results of the study. Future studies on gender difference might enlighten this issue for this particular setting.

Another limitation is that this study has been done for writing skill so it cannot be generalized for other skills since each skill may require a different process or implication. Other studies should be done to understand the efficiency of blended instruction with reading, speaking or listening.

There are two different instructors in the experimental and control group. The researcher of the current study has been the instructor in the experimental group. The way these two instructors teach would have influenced the results of the study. The field notes showed that the researcher spent long hours answering the students' questions, or uploading relevant materials online. The researcher who was also the instructor in the experiment was motivated to work long hours without getting paid. More studies should be done on what kind

of instructor could make blended instruction successful, how much effort it takes for an instructor to teach the online part, and how much this instructor should be paid.

The study attempts to explain a blended instruction method according to Neumeier's (2005) six parameters. While some of the parameters have been recorded in detail, some of the parameters have not been recorded at all. For instance, the study has not investigated how much time the students spend in online mode, although face-to-face instruction time was exactly reported. More research could be done trying to explain all of the six parameters equally

Another thing, the students' Facebook behaviors have not been reported on the study. The study does not provide information on the frequency of the students who log in Facebook, share an essay, and make a comment on an essay or like it. This would have provided information for the online part and how the students preferred to use Facebook. As a result, we would be one step closer to explaining how Facebook works in blended instruction. Correlations between the physical attendance and online attendance would be a search topic for another study.

Lastly, although qualitative and quantitative methodology approaches have been employed, more ways of data collection could be used for a holistic approach. Both students in the experimental and control groups could be videotaped during the course, or students could be asked to keep a journal about their learning process. Consequently, more reliable data would be provided for the efficiency of blended instruction.

5.4. Suggestions

It is obvious from the results of the study that the students enjoy taking advantage of computers in education and its possible usage in the writing courses. They love the practicality and resource that computers can provide them. On the other hand, they are not

happy with current traditional face-to-face learning and want more than that. Universities are increasingly challenged by the up- coming rise of native digital students (Orhan, 2008) and current education should be adapted to the latest technology.

The Higher Schools of Foreign Languages should include technology in their mission to teach languages. They can do that buying a learning management system such as Blackboard or Moodle. It also should hire technicians who are available all the time to help the instructors and students with learning management systems, fixing any problems may come up and be available for any help. Moreover, the instructors at the Higher Schools of Foreign Languages should be trained in how to use this technology, and how to adapt it for language learning. The instructors are reluctant to use technology in their course because they don't know how to use it. They don't want to feel ashamed in front of their students who may be better than them. Several studies have showed that teacher and students need technical support for an effective blended instruction (Chenoweth et al., 2006; Grgurović, 2010; Derntl et al., 2005)

University of Minnesota has stated in a student's technology survey (2011-2012) that "education technology is one of their top strategic priority and...in order to engage our students with technology; we must first understand their current attitudes and experiences (pg.6)." In a similar way, the Higher Schools of Foreign Languages should do more both qualitative and quantitative research to learn what its students feel about the courses they take and how they want to see the implication of the technology in courses. For instance, one study (Eren, 2013) using both qualitative and quantitative data has showed the students of the Higher School of Foreign Languages in GU were satisfied with Facebook, and blogs as a mean of teaching vocabulary. Conversely, the current study which took place in GU as well, found that the students didn't see Facebook as useful when it comes to writing skill. They prefer a learning management system which is more organized. These studies give an idea

about the students' preferences for usage of technology in the Higher Schools of Foreign Languages.

Digital- literate students may provide the Higher Schools of Foreign Languages with valuable information about the usage of technology in the course. Also, during the innovation implication, knows what to include, exclude, or improve. Lastly, it is important for the universities to know the students' habits, skills and usage of technology. If the students don't have a computer for their own, extensive use of computer could demotivate them.

Based on the researcher's field notes, it could be said that online mode of the blended instruction could be a nice reflection of what has gone in the course because everything is written and saved here. Other instructors, students, or administrators could be added into the system as a cooperator or viewer. For instance, when the blended instruction experiment ended in the summer school, another instructor continued to teach compare-contrast essays with the same classroom. This instructor was added into the Facebook group and she could view what had been taught so far. In addition, she had the chance to read each student's essay and have an idea about the classroom before she started teaching compare-contrast essays.

In summary, this study that took place in a small class would be the first step for a more extensive project. The study has showed that students in blended courses are more successful compared to students in traditional face-to-face courses. All of the students in the experimental enjoyed learning with blended education. Universities should start using online education to support traditional-face-to-face hours to increase the quality of education.

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7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX: 7.1. Official Permission for the Research

21.6.2013

GAZİANTEP ÜNİVERSİTESİ YABANCI DİLLER MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

Çağ üniversitesi sosyal bilimler enstitüsü İngilizce Dil Eğitimi yüksek lisans tez çalışması kapsamında uzaktan eğitimle sosyal medya (Facebook,blog,skype,gmail) kullanarak 103 şubesindeki öğrencilere haziran-temmuz 2013 tarihlerinde yazma dersi vermek istiyorum.

Bilgilerinize ve onayınıza arz ederim.

Okt. Nazlı Ağgün



Uygundur.



Okt. Emrah ÇINKARA
Müdür V.

APPENDIX: 7.2. Blended Learning in the Experiment

Time & place	Online mode	Time & place	Face-to-Face mode
1.week Time and place not limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Starting the Facebook group and adding the students -Posting a slide that summarizes the aims of Facebook group and roles of the instructor and the students on Facebook writing group -Posting an example essay with the steps of writing, pre-writing and re-writing -Students post their homework and the teacher post them back with feedback notes on the wall -Posting some funny cartoons and pictures 	Thursday classes for two hours in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Doing informal interview about the students' perspectives on writing skill, their own writing and their weakness at writing -Teaching the process of writing(pre-writing, writing, re-rewriting) -Introduction to Facebook group -giving homework; write a cause essay with 4 paragraph.
2.week Time and place not limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -posting the common grammar and vocabulary mistakes the students make at their essays; the students are supposed to correct them -Posting videos that explain cause & effect essays -Post three different diagrams that show the organization of cause & effect essays -Share links of useful websites for cause-effect essays; the writing websites of other School of foreign languages, a few online dictionaries, an online punctuation website 	Thursday classes for two hours in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teaching cause essay - study thesis statements, introduction , supporting and conclusion paragraphs for cause & effect essays -Writing example paragraphs on the board -homework
3.week Time and place and place not limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -posting an activity; the students are supposed to write headlines for a few essays posted on the wall -Posting an activity; the students are supposed to complete an essay with the missing supporting paragraph - Posting some TOEFL writing topics that are similar to the School of Foreign Languages 	Thursday classes for two hours in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reading and analyzing example essays - write an essay with 5-paragraphs
4.week Time and place not limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -posting the most useful links words for cause & effect essays -posting worksheet within sentences for useful links -posting example essays; strategies used have been emphasized with different colors -posting the same example essays; this time the useful links are shown in different colors 	Thursday classes for two hours in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Giving the hardcopy back and face-to-face feedback on them. - studying on some strategies to improve an essays such as giving example, explanation, using facts, quotes , details etc.

APPENDIX: 7.3. The Traditional Face-to-face Instruction

Topic: Writing an essay (specifically an introduction paragraph)

Duration: 50 minutes

Warm Up (5 minutes)

First of all, I talk about what an essay is in general terms, ask some questions to the students or I try to make some connections between essays in English and the essays in Turkish which they wrote in their literature classes at high school.

Presentation (40 minutes)

In this part of the lesson, I try to explain an essay as a whole by explaining its main components. For example, I tell my students that an essay should have three main parts : introduction, body and conclusion. To explain this better I draw a chart on the board and I put different parts of the essay into different categories.

Then, I tell them that the introduction part may be the most important part of the essay ,because it is the part that readers pay attention a lot. It must be clear, attract the reader's attention and well prepared. After mentioning the introduction paragraph roughly, I start giving some details about it.

In order to write an introduction paragraph, we use several methods, but we generally prefer three of them. For example, we can move from general to specific, we can ask some questions or we can start writing with a quotation. I explain them in detail and give examples by using the same topic. While doing this, I also ask my students to find three main ideas about the topic that they will write about. After giving some examples for the beginning I teach them how to write a thesis statement which is one of the most important parts of the essay. I give them some examples about how to write a clear thesis statement. I want my students to mention their three main ideas in thesis statement because it will help them write the body paragraphs.

After explaining the introduction paragraph and giving some examples, I talk about three body paragraphs that we should write by making use of the ideas we mentioned in our thesis statement. I teach my students some patterns such as “first of all, at first glance, my second main idea is that, secondly, another point worth mentioning, finally, not last but least etc.” in order to use in the beginning of the body paragraphs. I also indicate that they should start the body paragraph and write their topic sentence by using their main ideas. I make sure that my students write the details about the topic and give examples for the idea they have for each body paragraph.

Then, I give some general information about how to write a conclusion paragraph. I tell my students that they should involve all the main ideas in conclusion and indicate that they may give an advice or talk about their opinion to finish the essay.

Of course, I spend more time to teach the introduction paragraph and just give a short summary for the other paragraphs because it is really important for them to understand how to write an introduction at first. After summarizing the introduction and body paragraphs I also give them some homework.

Overall (5 minutes)

Before finishing the class, I summarize all the class from beginning to the end by asking questions to my students and try to understand if they understood the topic or not. I also give them some homework. For example, they may analyze the sample essays in their book. Finally I finish the class after talking about their homework.

APPENDIX: 7.4. Interview Questions

1. What do you think of the summer school course which you partly studied on Facebook?

2. What benefits did you get from the online learning part of the course?

What did you like about it in particular?

3. What could be changed or improved in the course for future courses?

4. Would you like to use online education as part of your education in the future? How?

5. 4. What do you think about the length and quality of face-to-face writing time in the classroom?

6. What do you think of the usage of technology in the current writing course?

a) How could it be better?

7. If you were asked to visualize a writing course for Gaziantep University in 10-20 years' time, what would that course be like?

APPENDIX: 7.5. An Example of Interview

sonraki hafta writing dersinde alıyorduk...ama ben o zamana kadar ne yazdığımı unutuyordum...ama internet üzerinden olunca ben bunu gerçekten söylüyorum bu şekilde facebookla uygulaması yapınca daha fazla yazı yazabiliyoruz ve kendimizi geliştiriyoruz...biz mesala word ile yazdığımız zaman kelimeler otomatikmen düzeltiyor eğer kelime bir hatta varsa...program gösteriyor..bizde böylece spelling hatalarından çok grammaire yoğunlaşıyoruz...hem böylece yapacağımız şeyden geri kalmıyoruz,daha hızlı öğrenmiş oluyoruz...

3) Gelecek sefer için böyle bir uygulamada ne değiştirilebilir ya da ne geliştirilebilir?

Benceüzerinden görüntülü görüşme olabilirdi..sizde karşımızda olabilirdiniz..yada başka bir arkadaşımızda olabilirdi..bunu kullananan başka arkadaşlarla karşılıklı görüşebilirdik..hatta bu speakingde geliştirdi..farklı insanlarla konuşmak insana bir şeyler katıyor.sadece yazmak ,ya da dinlemek yetmez..writingle beraber speaking de geliştirilebilirdi...bunun dışında tek kendi gurubumuzla kalmamalı..bu sadece kendi sınıfımızla da sınırlı kalmamalı..başka sınıflarla da hatta okullarlada paylaşma girebiliriz...onlarında yazdıklarını öğrenmiş oluruz...bilgi alış verişi olabilir...birbirimizi düzelterekte ilerleyebiliriz..kesinlikle başka üniversitedekileride merak ediyorum..örneğin onlar nasıl yazıyor,nasıl düşünüyor...belki onlar farklı yapılar kullanıyor..onlardan bu yapıları öğrenebiliriz...hepimiz türkiyede türkçe düşünüyoruz..başka ülkeleride merak ediyorum..başka ülkelerinde nasıl yazdığını merak ediyorum...

4)ilerde benzer şekilde dersin bir parçası olarak uzaktan eğitimle ders yapmak ister misin?

Evet isterim..kesinlikle..

Bu yabancı bir dil için nasıl olabilir?

Sınıf ya da okul dediğimiz zaman çok kısıtlı bir zaman..5 saat örneğin..onun dışında biz tek başımıza ne yaparsak yaparız...ama bu uzaktan eğitim altında desteklenince internet üzerinden o eğitim tamamen desteklenmiş oluyor...evde tek başımıza oturduğumuzda onunla beraber çalışabilir..ama bu olmasa tek başımıza çalışmak zor olur...ama uzaktan eğitim bizi derse bağlayabilir..hem dil öğrenme sürekli olmalı.sürekli hayatımızda olmalı ki öğrenbilir..işte bu şekilde de internet üzerinden geliştirebilir..hem okuldaki saati artıramayacaklar..öğrenci ve öğretmen sayısından kaynaklı...ama uzaktan eğitimle bunu mümkün hale getirebiliriz...

Bence teknolojiyle çalışmanın bir avantajı var..şu yüzyılda elektronik aletler cihazı bağımlısı olduk..bunlarıda böyle bir şekilde kullanırsak zamanımızı iyi bir şekilde değerlendirmiş oluruz...en azından uzaktan eğitimle bunu doğru yönde kanalize ederiz..amam tamamen uzaktan eğitim yüz yüze eğitimin tadını verir mi..bilmiyorum..bu kişiden kişiye değişebilir..çünkü öğretmen dediğiniz canlı karşınızda..bir şey sorunca cevabını hemen alabilirsiniz..ama interneten bizimkendimiz arayıp bakmamız lazım...ama dediğimiz gibi internetin ve bilgisayarın en güzel tarafı bol bol bilgi bulabileceğimiz mükemmel bir

ortam..bizim bilmeyipte başkalarının bildiđi bilgileri çok kısa sürede yakalayabiliriz...devir artık bilgisayar devri...teknolojiyi sonuna kadar kullanmalıyız...

APPENDIX: 7.6. Writing Exam

Name and Surname's Initials:

Students Number:

GAZIANTEP UNIVERSITY FOREIGN LANGUAGES WRITING EXAM

Choose one of the following topics and write a well-developed 5 or 4 -paragraph cause-effect essay(15 points).

1. What are the reasons for arguments with roommates? Why don't some roommates get along well?
2. What are the effects of many exams on students? What happens when students have many exams to study?

DURATION: 60 minutes

APPENDIX: 7.7. A Shot from Facebook Page

NAZÖZSUMMER x

https://www.facebook.com/groups/471438099607136/

Apps Google Facebook'a Hoş Gel... onlinejob turkish About Yasemin : yo... Learn and Teach Tur... Yabancılar için Turk... Turkish Campus Onl... açköğretim Tureng.com - İngiliz...

NAZÖZSUMMER

Home Nazlı

Hasan Ozkan shared Arastirma Cocuk Merkezi's photo.

Nazire Güven likes Fatma Sağdıç Gündüz's photo.

Adnan Kültekin shared je t'aime malgré tout's photo.

Mal Fraser

Celli Yasın Taşp

Berfin Onay

Abdullah Agn

Terane Tüter

Mert Yücecepe

Mehmet Gültekin

Hasan Ozkan

Hallı Yıldız

Cuma Köyğülü

Hüseyin Kartal

Yakup Ağgün

MORE FRIENDS (0)

Turn on chat to see who's available.

Search

2:20 PM
1/6/2014

NAZÖZSUMMER

Nazlı Ağgün

In the previous years, in the midterm or final exams they asked these topics :

- effects of smoking
- effects of watching too much tv
- effects of living in a new place
- reasons for mothers' working

COULD YOU MATCH THESE TITLES AND ESSAYS ABOVE?

Like · Comment · Stop Notifications · July 9, 2013 at 12:24am

Seen by everyone

Write a comment...

Nazlı Ağgün uploaded a file.

HOMEWORK: Write an essay about REASONS FOR CHOOSING A DEPARTMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY.

Here is an example for you:

homework.docx

Preview · Download · Upload Revision

Like · Comment · Stop Notifications · July 8, 2013 at 4:19pm

Seen by everyone

View 1 more comment

Halil Yıldız i think you said to me 😊

July 8, 2013 at 4:36pm · Like

Nazlı Ağgün 😊

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You won't believe what happens next on The Fosters on Monday, January 13 at 9/8c!

Like · Jade Green likes The Fosters.

Galaxy Tab 3 just \$49.99

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Repair Your PC Before It Gets Worse. Follow These 3 Steps Immediately!

Meet Single Guys, 30+

match.com

Ready to date again? Meet single guys over 30 in your area. It's free to look!

APPENDIX: 7.8. Student's Evaluation Form

GAZIANTEP UNIVERSITY (2009-2010)

STUDENT'S EVALUATION FORM

STUDENT'S INITIALS:.....

STUDENT'S NUMBER:.....

(TC) ID CARD NUMBER: _____

I. CONTENT (4 pts.)		First checker's evaluation
Excellent to very good	4	
Good to average	3	
Fair to poor	2	
Very poor	1	
II.VOCABULARY(3 pts.)		
Excellent to very good	3	
Good to average	2	
Fair to poor	1	
Very poor	0,5	
III.ORGANIZATION(3pts.)		
Excellent to very good	3	
Good to average	2	
Fair to poor	1	
Very poor	0,5	
IV.USE OF ENGLISH(3pts.)		
Excellent to very good	3	
Good to average	2	
Fair to poor	1	
Very poor (7pts.- 1pt.)	0,5	
V.PUNCTUATION&SPELLING&MECHANICS(2pts.)		
Excellent to very good	2	
Good to average	1,5	
Fair to poor	1	
Very poor	0,5	
FIRST CHECKER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE :		
FIRST CHECKER'S TOTAL GRADE (15 PTS.) :		

P.S. Please use the new criterion while evaluating the paragraphs/essays.