THE EFFECT OF PEER FEEDBACK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
TURKISH EFL STUDENTS' WRITING PROFICIENCY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF HUMANITIES AND LETTERS
OF BILKENT UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BY
SABAH MISTIK
AUGUST 1994

THE EFFECT OF PEER FEEDBACK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF

TURKISH EFL STUDENTS' WRITING PROFICIENCY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF LETTERS
AND THE INSTITUTE OF HUMANITIES AND LETTERS
OF BILKENT UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
INTHE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BY

SABAH MISTIK

AUGUST   1994

,

To my mother

ABSTRACT

Title: The effect of peer feedback on the development of
         Turkish EFL students' writing proficiency
Author: Sabah Mıstık
Thesis Chairperson: Ms. Patricia J. Brenner
Thesis Committee Members: Dr. Arlene Clachar, Dr.
                            Phyllis L. Lim, Bilkent
                            University, MA TEFL Program

The goal of this study was to determine the effect of peer feedback on the development of Turkish EFL students' writing proficiency and to elicit their reactions to peer feedback. To test the hypothesis, 40 upper-intermediate Turkish EFL students at Çukurova University Preparatory School were randomly selected and assigned to an experimental and a control group. A writing pretest was administered to the groups in order to ascertain that both groups were equivalent at the outset of the experiment.

The experimental group received peer feedback and the control group teacher feedback. After training the subjects in the experimental group on how to respond to and comment on one another's writing during peer feedback sessions, the experiment began. The subjects in both groups wrote two compositions during the experiment and 2 class hours were spent to evaluate each draft of each composition during the peer feedback sessions. At the end of the experiment a posttest was administered to the subjects in both groups to assess their writing proficiency with respect to content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. A t-test was used to find out if there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. It was

found that the experimental group made significant gains in content, organization, language use, and mechanics. The experimental group, however, did not outperform the control group with respect to vocabulary. Students' reactions to peer feedback was also very positive. 84% of the subjects in the experimental group stated that as a result of peer feedback, there was more active involvement in the lesson, more tolerance of peers' criticisms, as well as language improvement.

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF HUMANITIES AND LETTERS

MA THESIS EXAMINATION RESULT FORM

August 31, 1992

The examining committee oppointed by the
Institute of Humanities and Letters for the
thesis examination of the MA TEFL student

Sabah Mıstık

has read the thesis of the student.
The committee has decided that the thesis
of the student is satisfactory.

Thesis Title   : The effect of peer feedback on the
                     development of Turkish EFL students'
                     writing proficiency

Thesis Advisor   : Dr. Arlene Clachar
                     Bilkent University, MA TEFL
                     Program

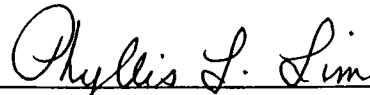Committee Members : Dr. Phyllis L. Lim
                     Bilkent University, MA TEFL
                     Program

                     Ms. Patricia J. Brenner
                     Bilkent University, MA TEFL
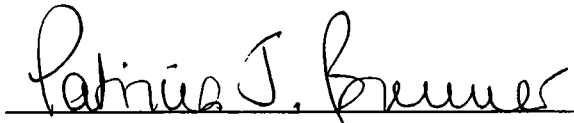   Program

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Arlene Clachar
(Advisor)

Phyllis L. Lim
(Committee Member)

Patricia J. Brenner
(Committee Member)

Approved for the
Institute of Humanities and Letters

Ali Karaosmanoğlu
Director
Institute of Humanities and Letters

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

During the twentieth century, the methodology in language teaching was characterized by a shift from the traditional audiolingual method to the innovative communicatively based and notional-functional methods (Alvarado, 1986; Bowen, Madsen, & Hilferty, 1985; Finocchiaro, 1982; Maurice, 1987). Briefly stated, the traditional methods restricted students' creativity, minimized student-teacher interaction, and discouraged independent thinking on the part of the students (Bowen et al., 1985). The audiolingual approach, for example, stressed teacher-centeredness as the teacher's primary role was to have students memorize lists of words, sentences, and dialogues as well as master grammatical rules through mechanical drills (Alvarado, 1986; Deckert, 1987).

The movement away from old-fashioned techniques, such as mechanical drills and grammar explanation, to an understanding of the learner's active role in acquiring the language has led advocates of innovative methods to focus on the learner and the learner-centered classroom (Finocchiaro, 1982). By placing more responsibility on the student, the communicative approach shifts the emphasis to creative rather than mechanical activities. The approach aims to provide communicative task practice, increase motivation, and create a real-life situation that supports learning (Maurice, 1987). Such a real-life

atmosphere encourages a great deal of interaction among learners in the second- and foreign- language classrooms.

According to Enright (1991), interaction is inspired when students work on tasks in pairs or in small groups. The value of peer activities in language learning has been extensively documented (Kerr, 1985; Maurice, 1987; Rubin, 1987). First, peer activities in the classroom environment support and increase student motivation. Secondly, peer work encourages full participation among students. Thirdly, a friendly climate is created in the classroom where students feel comfortable, so, the desire to learn is stimulated. Fourthly, by establishing real communication among students, learning becomes more active, enjoyable and meaningful.

The shift from teacher-centered approaches to learner-centered approaches has an impact on writing instruction as the focus has shifted from written product to writing as a process (Herrman, 1989; Qiyi, 1993). Emphasis on learner-centered activities led to peer feedback in the writing process. Keh (1990) states that during the writing process students can provide feedback to their peers in the form of peer response, peer evaluation, peer critiquing, and peer editing. Each term denotes the specific focus of the feedback. For example, peer response comes after the first draft and focuses on organization of ideas, and peer editing comes after the second, third or final draft with the focus on grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Freedman (1987) found that peer response groups helped to improve students' evaluative skills, which develop when peers were responding to one another's writing. Herrman (1989) agrees with Freedman, in that cooperation in groups provides student writers with an opportunity to sometimes read their drafts aloud and discuss them face to face with a peer audience while the written product is developing. Both researchers concur that working in small groups can aid shy or poor writers to become more fluent in expressing ideas, thoughts, and perceptions. Hvitfeldt (1988) states that peer feedback allows students to develop the capacity to analyze the strengths and weaknesses in the writing of their peers, and highlights the use of peer critique in English as a Second Language (ESL) composition courses, particularly in the areas of content and organization. She claims that when students respond to their classmates' compositions, they learn how to interact through writing and how to look at their own writing more critically and are, therefore, better able to revise the finished product. The teacher is also freed from the task of reading every composition written by every student and can, therefore, assign more writing activities and assist more students (Karegianes, Pascarella, & Pflaum, 1980).

Despite the above mentioned advantages, peer feedback has been shown to have certain shortcomings. One of the disadvantages is teachers' concern about the possession of classroom power that peer response groups

generally entail (Dipardo & Freedman, 1988). That is,
peer group activities may decrease rather than increase
their value by encouraging students to role-play the
teacher instead of interacting as peers. Also, Pica
(1986) notes that foreign language learners always need
experienced writers to guide them in revising their work.
Lacking native-speaker intuitions as to what constitutes
appropriate expressions in writing, non-native speakers
run the risk of not getting adequate and enriched input
in order to develop proficiency in writing. The mixed
findings on the effectiveness of peer feedback in
developing writing skills motivates the need for further
investigation.

In the Turkish educational system, teachers are the
authoritarian figures and are expected to give
instructional guidance to the students (Adalı, 1991).
This dependence on the teacher is also found in
institutions of higher education where students do not
feel free to express their thoughts, ideas, opinions and
perceptions with respect to academic performance since
all feedback comes from the authoritative source--the
teacher (İpşiroğlu, 1991). Furthermore, Bear (1985)
pointed out that the educational system is strongly
affected by social, cultural, and historical factors,
which, in general, emphasize rote learning and
memorization, that is, mechanical learning. Because the
educational system in Turkey is still, in many ways, tied
to some of tenets of the behaviouristic approach and

because of the lack of opportunity for Turkish students to express their opinions, thoughts, perceptions openly, a study of the effect of peer feedback on the development of Turkish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' writing proficiency has great appeal.

Statement of Purpose

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of peer feedback on the development of writing skills of Turkish EFL students as well as to examine the reactions of students toward peer feedback. The researcher investigated whether peer feedback as opposed to teacher feedback helped to improve Turkish EFL students' writing skills with respect to content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Students' reactions toward peer feedback are also likely to provide foreign language teachers with a better understanding of the dynamics of student interaction that lead to students' success in writing. Two questions guided the research: 1) Does peer feedback improve Turkish EFL students' writing proficiency with respect to content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics? and, 2) Do Turkish EFL students show positive reactions toward peer feedback?

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Feedback

As the focus of writing pedagogy shifts from the written product to writing as a process, feedback has become an essential element of writing instruction in second and foreign language classrooms (Herrman, 1989; Keh, 1990). Feedback is defined as the input from a reader to a writer with the aim of giving information to the writer for revision. Feedback can provide information on illogical organization, incomplete development of ideas, erroneous or inappropriate use of word-choice, and tense (Keh, 1990). According to Chaudron (1988), feedback informs ESL and EFL learners about the accuracy as well as the deficiencies in target language production with the hope of improving writing proficiency. Research on feedback in the writing process has focused on two possible sources of feedback to students--one is teacher feedback and the other is student or peer feedback.

Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback is an important step in the writing process since careful attention and comments provide students with useful information that can help them overcome deficiencies in their writing. Conferences and written comments are two of the most frequently given forms of teacher feedback to student writers. Conferences are the oral form of feedback that provide an interaction between the teacher and the student so as to

encourage students to self-evaluate, to make decisions, and to take control of what he or she writes by making use of the teacher's comments (Keh, 1990; Newkirk, 1989). The opening of a conference usually begins with direction. That is, on entering a dialogue with the student, the teacher has the opportunity to directly question him or her about what the intended message is. This is important because teachers frequently have difficulty interpreting the intended message by reading students' written work (Beach, 1989; Kroll, 1991). Moreover, responding in a dialogue, teachers are able to ask for clarification from students and to check the comprehensibility of oral comments they give to students. In addition, throughout conferences, students take full responsibility for solving the problems they have in writing (Keh, 1990).

Written comments on student writing are the most widely used form of teacher feedback, yet they are not easily understood by students (Sommers, 1984). The lack of efficiency and effectiveness of the comments cause confusion and disappointment on the part of the students because of misreading or misunderstanding. Based on the results of a study, Keh (1990) found that students attached importance to conferences because they resulted in students' confidence in oral work and because of their beneficial effects on writing. When compared to conferences, written comments are considered to be useful with respect to pointing out the specific problems and

making suggestions for them.

Hyland (1990) suggests two techniques for providing productive feedback: minimal marking and taped commentaries. The main purpose of minimal marking is to provide less information to students about their mistakes by decreasing the amount of marking on their papers. The focus is on surface errors which are shown by putting a cross in the margin. Then, the students are expected to find the errors in the lines by checking the crosses. Unlike minimal marking, taped commentaries are natural and detailed responses to the student. In this type of feedback, detailed, natural, and informative remarks are recorded on a tape. As the teacher reads through the paper, he or she talks about the strengths as well as the weaknesses. The technique is more effective if the teacher responds to the points as he or she comes to them rather than reading all the paper before recording comments. The former, minimal marking, is helpful for the writer as he or she can see the responses and comments on drafts as they develop. Hyland believes that both techniques are effective since the students are led not only to think critically about what they have written but also to improve the ideational coherence in their work.

Despite the effectiveness of the techniques discussed so far, research shows that teachers should not be the only source of feedback (Bishop, 1987; Herrman, 1989; Huntley, 1992). Hendrickson (1980) notes that

although teacher feedback is helpful to many students, it may not necessarily be an effective instructional strategy for every student.

Peer Feedback

The time spent grading written compositions and conferencing with students about their evolving writing prevents teachers from contributing more to writing instruction. To avoid teacher domination and authority in language classrooms, an alternative approach to teacher feedback in the writing process is peer feedback. Peer feedback has been variously described as peer response, peer editing, peer critiquing, and peer evaluation depending on the focus of the feedback. In the former, the emphasis is on content and organization of ideas, while in the latter the focus is on grammar and punctuation (Keh, 1990). There are numerous advantages to using peer feedback in whatever form it may take. These will be examined under two sub-headings: teacher gains and learner gains.

Teacher Gains

Using peer feedback in EFL and ESL writing classes provides teachers with higher gains than when they follow the traditional teacher feedback approaches. Conclusions drawn from a dissertation (Lagana, 1972) support the fact that peer evaluation of compositions is as effective as teacher correction and was found to greatly reduce the need for out-of-class teacher time expended on evaluating written work. According to the findings of another study

by Karegianes, Pascarella, and Pflaum (1980), peer editing was found to free the teacher from the task of reading every essay written by the subjects so that the teacher had more time to assign more writing activities. It was also found that peer groups assisted teachers who were generally overworked by providing response to students' ideas throughout the writing process (Dipardo & Freedman, 1988). In the study, it was also underscored that peers in interaction with one another need not be seen as decreasing the teacher's power to plan, monitor, and participate in the learning process; rather, both teachers and students have the chance to productively share power in writing classrooms.

Keh (1990) states that peer feedback can allow teachers to become more involved in the teaching of writing by giving them more time to focus on and prepare methods, techniques, and materials they will need in their particular teaching situations. Thus, the teachers can contribute to the teaching-learning process by serving as a facilitator rather than an authoritarian, and by being more aware of the students' particular needs in the writing class.

Learner Gains

Peer feedback provides more benefits to the learner than to the teacher because the center of attention is the learner and the focus is on how he or she improves during the process and on the steps he or she follows to obtain higher gains from the writing task.

Witbeck (1976) studied four peer-correction procedures with intermediate and advanced ESL classes in an attempt to provide them with an alternative to conventional teacher-feedback techniques. These procedures were peer correction, immediate feedback and rewriting, problem solving, and correction of modified and duplicated essays. In the first procedure, the subjects were expected to follow the teacher as he or she put the sample of a student's essay on either the board or the overhead projector in order to make it easy to write in corrections. In such a whole-class correction procedure, the students were allowed to pinpoint, discuss, and correct the errors in the essay. In the second procedure, immediate feedback and rewriting, the teacher collected student papers and gave them to other students working in pairs so that they could provide feedback. After the papers were corrected, they were returned to the authors to be rewritten. The third procedure was problem solving, in which the subjects, working in small groups, were asked to find the particular errors like the ones that a student writer would most benefit from when corrected. In the fourth procedure, correction of modified and duplicated essays, subjects worked individually at first and then, in peer groups on a different set of compositions that had been typed and corrected. Witbeck concluded that although these procedures had disadvantages as well as advantages, using them resulted in increasingly more accurate and

responsible written work from most students. He found
that when peer correction was used extensively, student-
student oral communication developed. Learners stand to
gain a great deal from peer feedback with respect to an
improvement in classroom atmosphere, teamwork,
personality growth, and language development.

Classroom atmosphere and motivation. During peer
feedback students are expected to feel comfortable
because of a friendly atmosphere which leads to increased
motivation. Beaven (1977) felt that a climate for
sharing should be established in the classroom before
implementing peer feedback. She stated that if such a
climate did not exist, dissatisfaction among students
could frustrate this learning process. At the same time,
focusing on the constructive atmosphere in the classroom
could produce a growing trust and support in peer groups.

Motivation is a part of all learning. Peer feedback
provides motivation in the writing process, in that
students enjoy writing for each other. It motivates
students to be willing to learn a foreign language
because they see their classmates using it correctly and,
therefore, they are eager and ready for comments from
their peers. As a result of this eagerness, students
want to do more writing and extend the length of their
compositions (Beaven, 1977; Walz,1982).

Teamwork. Hawkins (1976) argues that when students
work in small autonomous groups to provide peer feedback,
an exciting and meaningful interaction among learners

ensues. He states that peer feedback has the following advantages: students have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning in the classroom, active participation of all students is encouraged, and the teacher has the opportunity to facilitate learning. In addition, as cooperation among peers increases, students develop a sense of audience, become aware of their own potential, and use this potential to stimulate other students. Concurring with Hawkins, Gaudiani (1981) states that "editing texts together is a mutually supportive and instructive activity. All benefit. All contribute.... A spirit of teamwork grows from the high degree of class participation and peer group work" (p.10).

Another study which examined peer group writing evaluation in the ESL classroom was conducted by Ziv (1983) in order to understand how these groups functioned in peer group interaction. The subjects were freshmen in expository writing classes at New York University and Seton Hall University. The subjects were trained to respond to essays at the beginning of the semester. Subjects were first taught to respond to the content of the essays. After giving peer feedback on this level, subjects were instructed to help their peers with vocabulary and language use. Her findings indicated that during peer feedback sessions, subjects' comments were primarily positive at the beginning with little criticisms of content and form. However, with practice,

advice from peers became more constructive because they were more involved in the evolving writing of their peers.

Herrman (1989) notes that when students work together through the editing process, they have the chance to offer and react to the feedback among themselves as they write. Moreover, when abilities, experiences, and interests of every student are used both for his or her benefit and for the benefit of his or her peers, a sense of community, which refers to the interaction among learners, is developed in the classroom (Enright, 1991; Hawkins, 1976). What peer feedback provides students with is more active, more accepted, and more beneficial classroom input as they work cooperatively in small groups. As a result of a collaborative classroom, students become more comfortable and, therefore, more involved in the writing class (Reid & Powers, 1993).

Personality growth. When peers share their writing by taking part in evaluation procedures, they develop a sense of audience as well as cooperation (Beaven, 1977). Emphasizing the development of interpersonal skills, which is one of the major advantages of peer evaluation, Beaven (1977) states that "peer evaluation strengthens the interpersonal skills needed for collaboration and cooperation as students identify strong and weak passages and revise ineffective ones, as they set goals for each other, and as they encourage risk-taking behaviors in

writing" (p.151). While analyzing his or her peer's writing, a student develops a critical eye toward what he reads and becomes a better judge of his or her own writing (Beaven, 1977; Hawkins, 1976; Hvitfeldt, 1988).

Gaudiani (1981) put forward a text-editing approach to composition in the foreign-language classroom. The goal of the approach was to strengthen general student literacy while building composition skills in the foreign language. The subjects were 15 fourth- or fifth-semester foreign language students. In a fifteen-week composition course, which met three times each week, students prepared a weekly composition that they would revise after an in-class text-editing session. During the in-class editing of the compositions, in small peer groups and via whole-class discussions, all subjects were active contributors. Gaudiani reported a noticable increase in the development of subjects' critical-thinking ability and self-confidence.

Based on the results of a questionaire given to her students about peer feedback, Keh (1990) reports that a conscious awareness is acquired by the students, that is, they become aware that they are writing for readers other than the teacher. The results also show that peer feedback is helpful for students because by trying to find others' mistakes, the student has the chance to avoid and even to correct such mistakes in his own writing.

Insufficient student preparation for group work is a

major cause of unsuccessful peer-feedback sessions.
Students need to be prepared thoroughly for group work in
order to improve the quality of peer interactions (Gere,
1987; Webb, 1982). In her study, Stanley (1992) examined
the types of peer-group interactions that were effective
in the ESL writing class. The aim was to find to what
extent subjects' peer group discussions motivated them to
rework their writing. The participants in the study were
ESL students in a freshman composition course at the
University of Hawaii. For one group, she used a coaching
procedure which consisted of role playing and evaluation
sessions during which drafts were revised in response to
peer evaluator's advice. The other group of subjects was
not as thoroughly prepared for group work; that is, the
uncoached subjects simply watched a sample peer-
evaluation session and, then, discussed it. Stanley
concluded that the coached subjects looked at each
other's piece of writing with a more critical eye and
gave their peers clearer guidelines for revision than did
the subjects who received no coaching on peer feedback.
In sum, the subjects trained in peer feedback were found
to provide them with more productive communication about
evaluation of writing than those who received no peer
feedback.

By establishing peer editing groups, the teacher
encourages students to follow the "learn by doing" method
in which students feel free to discuss and exchange ideas
with their peers in a cooperative classroom environment

(Reid & Powers, 1993; Witbeck, 1976). Assinder (1991) agrees that student autonomy plays a pivotal role in the peer-teaching-peer-learning process because it enhances self-esteem as well as self-confidence. The focus of her study was to find out whether peer feedback developed ESL students' autonomy, responsibility for their own learning, ability to organize content, and individualization. The subjects were 12 students studying in an "English for further studies" course. They were from various countries such as Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, and Korea, and their levels ranged from lower- to upper-intermediate. In the experiment, students working in groups, prepared video materials to present in the classroom. Each group was given a different video item to work on. The subjects in each group were expected to prepare a worksheet to be administered to the other group members in the lesson they were going to teach. The worksheet consisted of some vocabulary items, comprehension questions, and a cloze exercise that were all prepared based on the content of the video item. While presenting their video materials, the subjects in most stages were seen to use techniques similar to the teacher's. Assinder reported the effects observed during the study and concluded that responsibility, participation, and accuracy in producing written worksheets increased.

Language development. Peer feedback not only provides student writers with a wide range of benefits,

such as enhancing teamwork, motivation, and personal growth, but it has been shown to aid in the development of students' writing skills, for example, organization of ideas, ideational coherence, and appropriate word usage. In that sense, language development can be considered as one of the major learner gains. Ford (1973) studied the effects of peer editing on the grammar-usage and theme-writing ability of 50 ESL students enrolled in freshman level English composition courses in a large state university in the United States. The subjects in the experimental and control groups wrote seven themes during the 18-week experiment. The differences between the pretest and posttest scores on grammar usage and theme-writing ability increased considerably for the experimental group, which received peer editing sessions. Thus, the findings of the study indicated that freshman subjects who edited and graded each other's themes in the English composition courses made significantly greater gains in their grammar-usage ability and in their theme-composition ability than subjects whose scripts were edited and graded by the teacher.

Weeks and White (1982), in their study, aimed to determine if there was a significant difference in the quality of written composition among subjects exposed to peer editing as opposed to teacher editing. The researchers examined capitalization and punctuation errors, spelling errors, language usage errors, the number of communication units per sentence, and

improvement in overall quality of composition. The
subjects were 18 fourth-grade subjects from Butler Avenue
School in Clinton, North Carolina, and 20 sixth-grade
students from Sunnyside School in Fayetteville, North
Carolina. At the onset of the study, a pretest was given
to tally the errors made in capitalization, punctuation,
language use, and spelling as well as the number of
communication units per sentence. Holistic assessment
was used to rate the overall quality of the compositions.
At the end of the study, a posttest was administered to
determine improvement in the subjects' writing skills.
The results of the study showed an improvement in the
quality of written compositions among subjects exposed to
peer editing as opposed to teacher editing. The
experimental group also showed greater progress than the
control group in the mechanics and the overall fluency of
writing.

In another study, Mangelsdorf (1992) investigated
the reactions of 40 advanced ESL writing students toward
the peer review process. The subjects in the study were
enrolled in the first semester freshman ESL composition
course at the University of Arizona. Their teachers used
peer reviews similarly in their own classes throughout
the semester; after the teachers read the draft of a
composition and wrote suggestions for revision, the
subjects discussed them with their peers. Towards the
end of the semester, the subjects were asked to answer
these questions in writing: Do you find it useful to

have your classmates read your papers and give
suggestions for revision?; what kinds of suggestions do
you often receive from your classmates?; what kinds of
suggestions are most helpful to you?; and in general, do
you find the peer review process valuable? The data
collected revealed that most of the subjects found peer
reviews to be a useful technique that helped them revise
their papers. The subjects also emphasized content and
organization as the two main areas that improved as a
result of peer reviews. They stated that receiving
different ideas from their peers about their topics
helped them to develop and clarify these ideas.

Controversy and Drawbacks

Although there are numerous studies which report
that peer feedback can increase the quality of writing,
there are others which document no difference between
peer and teacher feedback groups (Pierson, 1967). A
study by Pierson (1967) compared the effects of the
conventional method of correction, whereby teachers give
written comments to students, with the effects of
correction by peers. The subjects were 153 suburban
ninth-grade students that were taught writing in three
experimental and three control classes. The subjects in
the experimental group were trained to evaluate one
another's writing during class time in small groups,
whereas the writing of the control group subjects was
evaluated by the teacher after the class. The subjects
in both the experimental and control groups took the same

writing test before and after treatments. There was no significant difference found between the groups with respect to the mean score gains in the test. Thus, it was concluded that no significant difference existed between the peer and the teacher methods of correcting writing.

Teachers are warned that peer feedback can cause competition among class members if students grade their peers' writing (Gaudiani, 1981; Stevick, 1980). In that sense, the teacher must be careful to avoid calling on the same small group all the time because others may think the teacher is favoring that group.

The major drawback of peer feedback is the lack of sophistication of ESL learners (Beaven, 1977). Most students think that they are not experts and should not evaluate one another's writing. Moreover, while evaluating their peers' paper, they may misperceive the message and make erroneous recommendations or even correct the correct forms. Likewise, many teachers do not trust peer-group work for the same reason. Pica (1986) also contends that a lack of input from native speakers or more experienced writers such as teachers may put non-native student writers at a disadvantage since they may be deprived of native speaker intuitions as to what is appropriate.

Because of the mixed results concerning the effectiveness of peer feedback, this researcher will investigate whether peer feedback improves students'

writing proficiency with respect to content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Because there is little attention given to peer feedback in the writing classroom in Turkey and students in the Turkish educational system have not been given ample opportunity to develop a sense of audience, to share ideas, opinions, and perceptions in peer-group activities due to a traditional teacher-oriented classroom (Adalı, 1991), an investigation of the effect of peer feedback on the development of Turkish EFL students' writing skills is warranted. This study purports to answer the following questions: 1) Does peer feedback improve Turkish EFL students' writing proficiency with respect to content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics? 2) Do Turkish EFL students show positive reactions toward peer feedback?

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study seeks to find the effect of peer feedback on the development of writing proficiency of Turkish EFL students and their reactions toward peer feedback. This chapter contains three sections. The first section discusses the characteristics of the subjects. The second gives a detailed description of the procedure followed, particularly the training of the experimental group to provide peer feedback. The third section focuses on how the data were arranged and analyzed.

Subjects

The 40 subjects who participated in this study were upper-intermediate Turkish EFL students at Çukurova University Preparatory School, Turkey. They were between the ages of 17 and 20. There were 13 females and 27 males. The subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group. There were 20 subjects in the experimental group and 20 in the control group.

The subjects in both groups were given a pretest which consisted of free writing on a personal topic in order to determine the equivalence of the two groups at the beginning of the experiment. The writing samples were evaluated by using the list of criteria recommended by Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Hughey (1981). The means and the standard deviations for the pretest appear in Table 1.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for the Experimental and

Control Groups on Pretest

Subjects	$\underline{M}$	$\underline{SD}$
Experimental (n = 20)	64.45	9.21
Control (n = 20)	64.1	12.06

An application of $\underline{t}$-test revealed no significant

difference between experimental and control groups on the

pretest. Consequently, both groups were found to be

equivalent ($\underline{t}$ = 0.10; $\underline{df}$ = 38; $\underline{p}$< .91).

Procedure

The experiment lasted 6 weeks, 2 hours each week.

The control group received teacher feedback and the

experimental group peer feedback. Subjects in both the

control and the experimental groups wrote two

compositions, one personal and one non-personal and the

compositions were written at home in order to save time.

Subjects in the control group gave each draft of the

first composition on an assigned topic to their teacher

to be corrected. The teacher's comments on the first

draft focused on content and organization. The drafts

were returned to the students, and they were told to

rewrite the compositions following the comments and

suggestions given by the teacher. Vocabulary and

language use were the focus of the second draft and the

subjects rewrote it, incorporating the recommendations.

The third draft was checked for mechanics, such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The same procedure was followed for each draft of the second composition.

The subjects in the experimental group received peer feedback on their two compositions. The group was trained by the researcher on how to evaluate, comment on, and respond to their peers' compositions (based on recommendations by Stanley, 1992). For the training session, the researcher gave each subject a copy of the Jacobs et al.'s (1981) ESL Composition Profile (see Appendix B) and, as a sample, the writing of a student from the previous semester. As the researcher went through the Profile on the overhead projector (OHP), the subjects were shown how to look critically at the piece of writing. Thus, subjects were invited to think aloud and to make comments on the sample writing following the researcher. Subjects were not expected to supply meaning to the parts of the text that were not clear, but to identify them. Following the Profile on the OHP, they were given specific information about the types of issues that would be appropriate to raise at each stage of writing, namely, the content and organization stages, the vocabulary stage, language use stage, and mechanics stage. Some of these issues were logical flow of ideas (for organization), appropriate word choice and usage, and accuracy in verb-tense and subject-verb agreement (for language use). The first stage of the training

session lasted for a period of 2 hours.

During the next stage of the training session, which took place in the class meeting for a period of 1 hour on the same day, the subjects, working in small groups, were trained to model a peer-group feedback session in order to familiarize themselves with the demands of critiquing and responding to their peers' written drafts. In each group, one subject read the draft of another written sample aloud while peers were listening critically. As the same person read the text the second time, the peers were told that they could stop him or her and ask for clarification. Then, each peer evaluator in the group read the draft and discussed the strengths as well as the weaknesses of it with respect to the focus of the draft. For example, if the focus was on organization, they were asked to check how the ideas were organized, whether the ideas were put in chronological order, and whether the subject writer used cohesive devices appropriately. Finally, each group was expected to report the strengths and weaknesses of the sample piece of writing to the entire class. While reporting what they got from the evaluation in the form of comments and responses, the subjects were also asked to explain how they would convey their thoughts to the writer. During this discussion, the researcher noted that confirmation checks and requests for clarification not only helped commenters to be better understood by the writer, but also made evaluation easier and more explicit.

After the training, the peer feedback session began.
Each subject wrote the first draft of the first
composition (which was also assigned to the control
group), at home and brought it to class. In class, the
subjects were put in groups of threes. In each group,
each subject read his or her first draft aloud while the
peers listened for the first time. During the second
reading, the peers could stop the writer and ask for
clarification. Then, both peer evaluators read the paper
and discussed the strengths and weaknesses in the first
draft focusing on content and organization; they checked
whether the ideas were relevant to the topic assigned and
whether there was fluent expression of ideas with
logical sequencing. Next, the peer evaluators reported
the comments and suggestions orally and in writing. This
evaluation procedure was followed for each group member's
first draft. Finally, subjects rewrote their drafts at
home incorporating the necessary changes.

For the second and third drafts, the same evaluation
procedure was followed except for the focus in each
draft. The focus of evaluation for the second draft was
vocabulary and language use. This time appropriate and
effective word choice and usage, correct use of complex
structures, and correct use of articles, pronouns, and
prepositions were looked for. For the third draft,
mechanics, which included spelling, punctuation, and
capitalization, was the focus. Each draft was again
rewritten, with subjects paying careful attention to the

recommendations. The second composition was again written at home and drafts were evaluated by the subjects working in peer groups in class. Two class hours were needed for the evaluation of each draft. Thus, each class meeting with the experimental group lasted 2 hours and the entire peer feedback sessions for each composition lasted 6 hours.

At the end of the experiment, the subjects in the control and the experimental groups were given a posttest to determine improvement in their writing skills. The posttest was the replication of the pretest. Two experienced English teachers served as raters for the pretest and posttest compositions. Before the tests were graded, the researcher held a training session to introduce the ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs et al., 1981). Later on, each rater graded each test separately and independently. Interrater reliability was established for the pre- and posttests (r = .91 and .97).

After the posttest, a questionaire which consisted of 10 open-ended questions was distributed to the subjects in the experimental group in order to elicit their reactions toward peer feedback (see Appendix C).

Analytical Procedure

The scores for content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics were calculated for the posttests taken by the control and experimental groups and a t-test of independent samples was used in order to determine whether there was a significant difference

between the two groups (range of possible scores for each category: content 13-30 points, organization 7-20 points, vocabulary 7-20 points, language use 5-25 points, mechanics 2-5 points). In the analysis of the questionaire, which consisted of 10 open-ended questions, the items were designed to elicit subjects' reactions toward peer feedback with respect to their perceptions of language improvement, students' role in the lesson, interest in the lesson, attitudes toward criticisms, autonomous learning, and systematic evaluation (see Appendix C). Each subject's response corresponded to one of three categories: if only positive comments were made, the rating was positive; if the subject did not have a clear opinion, then, the response was considered mixed; and if only negative comments were made, the rating was considered negative. The percentages of the responses with respect to positive, negative, and mixed comments on language improvement, students' role and interest in the lesson, and attitudes toward criticisms were also calculated.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study, which examined the effectiveness of peer feedback on writing proficiency. The first research question sought to find an answer to whether peer feedback improves Turkish EFL students' writing proficiency with respect to the following areas: (a) content --knowledgeable, substantive, good development of thesis; (b) organization --well-organized and logical flow of ideas, cohesiveness; (c) vocabulary --appropriate choice of words, appropriate register; (d) language use --correct use of complex constructions, subject-verb agreement, word order, prepositions; (e) mechanics --accuracy in spelling, punctuation, capitalization (Jacobs's et al., 1981, ESL Composition Profile; see Appendix B). The second research question aimed at finding out the students' reactions toward peer feedback with respect to language improvement, student role in the lesson, interest in the lesson, and attitudes toward criticisms from peers.

Findings

The Posttest

As explained above, the subjects in the experimental group received peer feedback and the subjects in the control group received teacher feedback on all three drafts of the two compositions which they wrote during the experiment. Since the results of the pretest showed no significant difference between the experimental and

control groups, the subjects in both groups were considered equal at the beginning of the experiment (t = 0.10; df = 38; p< .91). For the posttest results, given at the end of the experiment, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between the control and experimental groups with respect to content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics; in other words, the writing proficiency of the experimental group, which received peer feedback on their compositions, was expected to improve in the above-mentioned areas as opposed to the control group, which received no peer feedback, only teacher feedback.

The means and the standard deviations for the experimental and control groups on the posttest with respect to content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics appear in Table 2.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Experimental and Control Groups on the Posttest

Variables	Experimental			Control		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Content	20	21.6	3.83	17	17.5	2.93
Organization	20	15.62	1.89	17	12.97	2.61
Vocabulary	20	14.35	2.55	17	13.67	2.31
Language Use	20	17.3	3.83	17	14.61	3.41
Mechanics	20	3.97	0.89	17	3.14	0.91

When means of the control and the experimental

groups were compared, peer feedback seemed to have been effective with respect to the experimental group's writing quality in the areas of content, organization, and language use, however, with respect to vocabulary and mechanics, feedback was not found to be effective. The t-test was used to test the significance of the difference between the experimental and control groups. It was found that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the areas of content, organization, language use, and mechanics as can be seen in Table 3. However, peer feedback did not seem to be effective in improving vocabulary. In other words, there was no significant difference between the two groups with respect to vocabulary.

Table 3

T-test Results for the Experimental Group in the Posttest

Variables	df	t
Content	35	3.55**
Organization	35	3.56**
Vocabulary	35	0.83
Language Use	35	2.82*
Mechanics	35	2.77**

*p< .05   **p< .01

In sum, the findings indicated that the subjects in experimental group benefited from peer feedback and their

writing quality improved in the areas of content, organization, language use, and mechanics.

The Questionaire

The answer for the second research question focused on students' reactions toward peer feedback. This entailed analyzing the experimental group's responses to the 10 open-ended questions given at the end of the experiment (see Appendix C). There were only 16 of the 20 subjects in the experimental group who participated in the study at the time the questionaire was given because 4 were absent.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit the experimental group's reactions to peer feedback with respect to language improvement, role of student in the lesson, interest in the lesson, attitudes toward criticisms from peers, systematic evaluation, and autonomous learning. Each subject's response was rated as positive if only _positive_ comments were given, _negative_ if only negative comments were given, and _mixed_ if the subject did not have a clear-cut opinion. Table 4 shows the percentages of the responses to peer feedback with respect to language improvement.

Table 4

Responses to Peer Feedback with Respect to Language
Improvement

Items	n	Positive	Negative	Mixed
		%	%	%
4	16	100	—	—
8	16	100	—	—

The findings indicated that 100% of the responses
were positive toward peer feedback indicating that it
helped to improve their language skills (Item 4).
Subjects stated that peer feedback also helped them to
understand their mistakes better and not to repeat the
same mistakes. They also noted that peer feedback was an
effective technique in helping them develop, clarify, and
organize their ideas. When the subjects were asked
whether they understood their weaknesses as well as
strengths better as they conversed face-to-face with
peers (Item 8), again, 100% of the responses were
positive. The subjects stated that they remembered
details better as a result of the face-to-face
discussions with peers. They also claimed that their
peers' suggestions and comments on the organization of
the composition helped a great deal during the rewriting
of their drafts. Table 5 presents the reactions to peer
feedback with respect to role of student in the lesson.

Table 5

Responses to Peer Feedback with Respect to Role of

Student in the Lesson

Items	n	Positive	Negative	Mixed
		%	%	%
2	16	75	19	6
6	16	81	—	19
7	16	69	—	31

According to the findings, 81% of the subjects
showed a positive disposition to group work (Item 6).
That is, subjects thought group work during peer feedback
helped them as they exchanged ideas, expressed opinions,
gave and received suggestions. Moreover, they stated
that they played a very active role in the lesson as 75%
of the responses given to Item 2 were positive. Despite
a few subjects who said that they did not really see
themselves as active participants in the lesson because
they did not like working in groups, most subjects felt
that they had the opportunity to participate fully in the
lesson and that their concentration did not decrease
during group work. For Item 7, there were 31% mixed
responses in which the subjects said they were not sure
about how much they were free to openly express their
ideas. However, 69% of the responses were positive which
indicated that the majority of the subjects agreed that

peer feedback gave them the opportunity to express themselves freely in a very supportive learning environment provided by the dynamics of the group. Table 6 shows the percentages of the responses to peer feedback with respect to students' interest in the lesson.

Table 6

Responses to Peer Feedback with Respect to Students' Interest in the Lesson

Items	n	Positive %	Negative %	Mixed %
1	16	81	6	13
3	16	75	6	19
10	16	100	—	—

All 16 subjects (100%) preferred peer feedback to teacher feedback because they said that the former is an effective and useful approach to the teaching of writing (Item 10). One other reason the subjects gave for their preference was that peer feedback allowed them to receive direct comments from peers which they claimed helped them to remember facts about paragraph development and organization. They pointed out that when they received teacher feedback, in the form of underlined mistakes, written comments or corrections, they neither could understand the comments nor interpret the corrections made on the paper. But with peer feedback the lesson

became not only enjoyable, but also provided a friendly atmosphere. This reaction was reinforced by the fact that 81 per cent of the responses to Item 1 were positive. When the subjects were asked to compare the lessons in which they received peer feedback with the ones in which they received teacher feedback (Item 3), 75% of the subjects responded positively to peer feedback. They stated that they had to follow the teacher's directions without any comment in the previous writing lessons, but with peer feedback they had the opportunity to make comments on a piece of writing, such as suggesting ideas to their peers for the content of the paper. The subjects who had mixed views (19%) stated that the time given for peer feedback was not sufficient for them to grasp the reasons why they had made certain errors. Table 7 presents the percentages of the responses to peer feedback with respect to attitudes toward criticisms from peers.

Table 7

Responses to Peer Feedback with Respect to the Attitudes toward Criticisms from Peers

Items	n	Positive %	Negative %	Mixed %
5	16	88	—	12
9	16	63	—	37

The findings for the attitudes toward criticisms from peers indicate that 88% of the responses were positive to Item 5. The item asked if subjects' sense of audience got stronger when doing their own writing and when evaluating their peers' writing as a result of the criticisms they had received from peers. The subjects said that they were more careful when rewriting their compositions and also when commenting on their peers' writing. 63% of the responses indicated that the subjects had positive reactions toward their friends' criticisms (Item 9). This item elicited such positive responses as peer feedback allowed them to get suggestions from more than one person and criticisms from peers did not make them feel intimidated because they were all at the same level of learning. On the other hand, 37% of the responses were mixed. These subjects were uncertain about the effectiveness of their friends' comments. That is, they said that they were not sure about the accuracy of the comments they received from peers.

The overall percentages of the responses to peer feedback based on language, role of student in the lesson, interest in the lesson, and attitudes toward criticisms from peers appear in Table 8.

Table 8

Overall Percentages of the Responses to Categories in
Questionaire

Categories	Positive %	Negative %	Mixed %
Language Improvement	100	—	—
Interest in Lesson	85	4	11
Criticisms	76	—	24
Student Role	75	6	19

Language received the highest positive responses
with 100%, with no negative or mixed comments. That is,
not only the t-test results showed that peer feedback
helps to improve writing proficiency but also the
subjects' comments were completely positive toward the
effectiveness of peer feedback with respect to language
improvement. Regarding the role of subject in the
lesson, 75% of the responses were positive as subjects
felt that they played an active role during the lesson.
However, there were some subjects who gave mixed as well
as negative responses to these items because they were
not sure as to what their roles were supposed to be. The
interest in the lesson received 85% positive responses;
subjects indicated that they felt as though they were
active participants working in a friendly and supportive
atmosphere. Attitudes toward criticisms from peers

received the highest rate of mixed responses, with 19% of the subjects stating that they did not trust the accuracy of their peers' comments.

There were other positive aspects of peer feedback which students mentioned: autonomous learning, systematic evaluation, and a better understanding of their own strengths as well as weaknesses. Table 9 summarizes students' reactions toward peer feedback by giving the overall percentages for positive, negative, and mixed responses to all items.

Table 9

Overall Percentages of Responses to All Items

Positive	Negative	Mixed
%	%	%
84	3	13

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study investigated whether peer feedback is effective in developing Turkish EFL university students' writing proficiency. Two hypothèses were tested. The first stated that peer feedback would improve the subjects' writing proficiency, and the second stated that subjects would show positive reactions toward peer feedback. The study was carried out with an experimental group which received peer feedback and with a control group which received teacher feedback. The writing proficiency of both groups were then compared at the end of the experiment.

The findings indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group with respect to content, organization, language use, and mechanics. However, with respect to vocabulary, peer feedback did not seem to be effective. The results of the questionaire which elicited subjects' reactions to peer feedback indicated that subjects have positive reactions toward peer feedback, with 84% of the comments on all items being positive. This chapter will discuss the findings of both the posttest and the questionaire in more detail.

Discussion of Findings

The Posttest

Results of the study show an improvement in the quality of written compositions in the experimental group which was exposed to peer feedback. In the areas

examined, the experimental group outperformed the control group in content, organization, language use, and mechanics. The progress on the part of the experimental group in the mentioned areas may be due to the fact that peer feedback allowed subjects tò interact in face-to-face conversations with their peers. This interaction allowed them to discuss different ideas, listen to different suggestions, and at the same time clarify ideas. As they did this, they were able to listen to their evolving writing. An increase in the length of each draft of the compositions was also observed as the experiment progressed. The subjects became better evaluators of higher order concerns, such as content, paragraph organization, main ideas, supporting ideas, generalizations, and exemplifications. The group discussions on feedback also led to a better sense of audience and an ease in moving from writer-based prose to prose that conveys messages to the reader, that is, reader-based prose.

Language use, such as complete and well-formed sentences, appropriate use of conjunctions, adverbials, relative pronouns, articles, prepositions, and mechanics were two areas in which the experimental group outperformed the control group. One reason can be based on the effectiveness of peer feedback in helping subjects develop a more critical eye to what is correct and what is incorrect while evaluating their peers' papers. In addition, the subjects may have the chance to practice

what they learned in class, such as grammatical rules,
spelling, punctuation, capitalization rules by
interacting with one another in peer groups. The role of
peers' interlanguages may also have been influential.
The explanations from a peer in his or her interlanguage,
which would naturally have been at the same level of his
or her other peers' interlanguages, may have provided
more comprehensible input than explanations coming from
teachers. Thus, natural speech accommodation in peers'
interlanguage may have allowed input to become intake
(Krashen, 1985).

There was no statistically significant difference
between the experimental and control groups with respect
to vocabulary. This may be attributed to several
factors. First of all, because of the limited time in
which subjects had to write two compositions, it was
difficult to do outside reading on the topics in order to
contribute to vocabulary growth. Second, because peer
feedback lends itself to a great deal of face-to-face
conversation, it seems logical to assume that issues of
content and ideational coherence would be easier to
discuss than nuances of words and their meanings. Third,
as intermediate EFL students, they would not have
acquired a sophisticated lexical repertoire to critique
their peers' use of words.

The Questionaire

The questionaire was designed to elicit subjects'
reactions toward peer feedback with respect to language

improvement, role of the learner, interest in the lesson, and tolerance for criticisms from peers. Findings showed that 84% of subjects' responses were positive toward these aspects of peer feedback.

All subjects found peer feedback helpful for language learning (100%). Language, including both the higher order and the lower order concerns, was found to improve as a result of peer feedback. For example, one subject said: "I learnt many from my friends. They gave me knowledge about organizing ideas in my composition". Another said: "I do not repeat my friend's mistakes in my composition". This shows how effective peer feedback is in providing corrective reinforcement. In other words, subjects tended to learn from one another's mistakes.

When subjects were asked to evaluate their roles in the lesson, 75% of the responses were positive, and the primary focus was on the effectiveness of group work. Working in small groups, allowed subjects to feel more comfortable and more involved in the writing class. There was no authoritative figure such as the teacher telling them what to do so they were compelled to take responsibility for their own learning. One respondent stated: "I had the concentration to the final". Another said: "I was active to the end". These comments clearly indicate that peer feedback helps subjects keep their concentration on the lesson for they are forced to be constantly active during the class time. It is obvious

that full participation and concentration in group work provide subjects with increased responsibility which helps to develop self-confidence and self-esteem.

Another favorable outcome of the study was the increased interest toward writing. 85% of the responses were positive toward peer feedback with respect to the interest in the lesson. They expressed a desire to write as well as to give feedback to their peers' work. Most of the responses pointed out the friendly, enjoyable, and interesting lesson that peer feedback provided them with as well as the fact that they were allowed to converse with their peers, the readers of their writing. This shows that through peer feedback, an awareness of audience to be affected by the written product tends to develop. This is certainly a pedagogical advantage of peer feedback sessions because Keh (1990) states that one problem with unskilled writers is that they find it difficult to move from <u>writer-based prose</u> to <u>reader-based prose</u>, prose which speaks to the reader.

Based on positive responses (76%), the subjects seemed to be tolerant of criticisms from peers during peer feedback. The subjects stated that they learned what to look at and how to look at composition drafts. They thought that this helped them not only in criticizing others' work but also in producing their own compositions as well. One subject stated: "I was open to ideas because we are equal. I can understand them". This response emphasizes how important it is for a

subject to receive comprehensible and clear comments.
Another subject said "I think myself a critic. I was
free in discussing. Because they did not say anything to
my ideas". One possible reason for this tolerance of
criticisms is that subjects do not feel threatened.
There is no authoritative figure such as the teacher
whose knowledge may intimidate them; all subjects are at
the same level. Therefore, criticisms are not seen as an
attack on what they write and, thus, an attack on their
self-esteem, but rather as an attempt to share
suggestions.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

Despite the high percentages of positive responses
toward peer feedback, there were also mixed and even
negative responses with respect to the role of the
learner, interest in the lesson, and tolerance to
criticisms from peers. 19% mixed and 6% negative
responses were given to the items related to the role of
the learner in the lesson. The main cause of concern was
that subjects did not know how much freedom they had to
openly express their ideas while commenting on their
peers' papers and whether their ideas would be resented.
The reason might be based on the fact that the subjects
were not accustomed to express and support their ideas
openly in clasrooms. There were 11% mixed and 4%
negative responses to the interest in the lesson. Such
responses primarily focused on the short duration of the
study because the subjects said that if they had more

time and more practice in giving feedback to one another, they might have shown more interest in the lesson. A few subjects felt as if they were forced to participate in peer group work which, according to them, was the main reason for the loss of interest. It is important to remember that when subjects entered the classes, many of them had never participated in group work. Another reason for the subjects feeling as if they were forced to participate in peer feedback could be the subjects' learning styles. They may be individualistic and do not like working in groups.

There were mixed feelings with respect to items which elicited attitudes toward criticisms from peers. They again expressed their lack of trust in the effectiveness of their peers' comments; in other words, they did not trust the accuracy of their peers' comments because they thought that as their peers were at the same level with them they would not be able to identify the inaccurate parts in the paper, whereas the teacher could.

Thus, in the light of the mixed responses toward peer feedback, there are suggestions for future research. One of them is to increase the duration of the study so as to provide subjects with more time and practice for peer feedback. In addition, an increase in the sample size may contribute to the generalizability of the findings. Another suggestion is to use peer feedback with different class levels, for example, comparing the intermediate levels with advanced levels in order to see

at what level peer feedback works more effectively.

Thus, based on the statistically significant results favoring peer feedback with respect to the improvement in content, organization, language use, and mechanics and to the positive reactions that subjects showed toward it, the researcher believes that the study can contribute to EFL writing instruction in Turkey. Furthermore, at every level of the educational system, from primary schools to universities, the study may lead to a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered classrooms, in which the students could be given the opportunity to contribute to their own learning.

References

Adalı, O. (1991). Anadili eğitimi. In Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği (Ed.), <u>Yazma Uğraşı</u> (pp. 31-41). Istanbul: Cem.

Alvarado, C. (1986). Successful ESL classes in a traditional learning environment. <u>English Teaching Forum</u>, <u>24</u>(1), 16-18.

Assinder, W. (1991). Peer teaching, peer learning. <u>ELT Journal</u>, <u>45</u>, 218-229.

Beach, R. (1989). Showing students how to assess: Demonstrating techniques for response in the writing conference. In C.M. Anson (Ed.), <u>Writing and Response</u> (pp. 127-149). USA: National Council of Teachers of English.

Bear, J. M. (1985). Historical factors influencing attitudes toward foreign language learning in Turkey. <u>Journal of Human Sciences</u>, <u>4</u>(1), 27-36.

Beaven, H. M. (1977). Individualized goal setting, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation. In C. R. Cooper & L. Odell (Eds.), <u>Evaluating Writing</u> (pp. 83-95). Buffalo, NY: National Council of Teachers of English.

Bishop, W. (1987). <u>Revising the technical writing class: Peer critiques, self-evaluation and portfolio grading</u>. (Report No. CS210 752). Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Pen State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 285 178)

Bowen, J. D., Madsen, H., & Hilferty, A. (1985). <u>TESOL techniques and procedures</u>. Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.

Chaudron, C. (1988). <u>Second language classrooms: Research on teaching and learning</u>. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Deckert, G. D. (1987). The communicative approach: Helping students adjust. <u>English Teaching Forum</u>, <u>25</u>(3), 17-20.

Dipardo, A. & Freedman, S. W. (1988). Peer response groups in the writing classroom: Theoretic foundations and new directions. <u>Review of Educational Research</u>, <u>58</u>, 119-149.

Enright, D. S. (1991). Supporting children's English language development in grade-level and language classrooms. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), <u>Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language</u> (394-396). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Finocchiaro, M. (1982). Reflections on the past, the present, and the future. <u>English Teaching Forum</u>, <u>20</u>(3), 2-13.

Ford, B. W. (1973). The effects of peer editing/grading on the grammar usage and theme-composition ability of college freshmen (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1973). <u>Dissertation Abstracts International</u>, <u>33</u>, 6687-A.

Freedman, S. W. (1987). <u>Response to student writing</u>. Urbana, Ill: National Council of Teachers of English.

Gaudiani, C. (1981). <u>Teaching writing in the foreign language curriculum</u>. (Report No. FL 012 689). Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics/ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 209 961)

Gere, A. R. (1987). <u>Writing groups: History, theory, and implications</u>. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University.

Hawkins, T. (1976). <u>Group inquiry techniques for teaching writing</u>. Berkeley, CA: National Council of Teachers of English.

Hendrickson, J. M. (1980). Error correction in foreign language teaching. In K. Croft (Ed.), <u>Readings on English as a Second Language</u> (pp.166-167). Boston: Little Brown and Company.

Herrman, A. (1989). <u>Teaching writing with peer response groups</u>. (Report No. CS 211 743). Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 307 616)

Huntley, H. S. (1992). <u>Feedback strategies in intermediate and advanced second language composition. A discussion of the effects of error correction, peer review, and student-teacher conferences on student writing and performance</u>. (Report No. FL 021 074). Athens, OH: Opinion Papers. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 355 809)

Hvitfeldt, C. (1988). Guided peer critique in ESL writing at the college level. <u>English Teaching Forum</u>, <u>26</u>(4), 37-39.

Hyland, K. (1990). Providing productive feedback. ELT Journal, 44, 279-285.

İpşiroğlu, Z. (1991). Yazma eylemi. In Çağdaş Yaşamì Destekleme Derneği (Ed.), Yazma Uğraşì (pp. 21-29). Istanbul: Cem.

Jacobs, H. L., Zingraf, S. A., Wormuth, D. R., Hortfield, V. F., & Hughey, J. B. (1981). Testing ESL composition: A practical approach. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Karegianes, M., Pascarella, E. T., & Pflaum, S. W. (1980). The effects of peer editing on the writing proficiency of low-achieving tenth-grade students. The Journal of Educational Research, 73, 203-207.

Keh, C. L. (1990). Feedback in the writing process: A model and method for implementation. ELT Journal, 44, 294-304.

Kerr, L. (1985). Pair work - some practical hints. English Teaching Forum, 23(4), 22-24.

Krashen, S. D. (1985). The input hypothesis: Issues and Implications. London: Longman.

Kroll, B. (1991). Teaching writing in the ESL context. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (pp. 245-264). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Lagana, J. R. (1972). The development, implementation, and evaluation of a model for teaching composition which utilizes individualized learning and peer grouping (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1972). Dissertation Abstracts International, 33, 4063-A.

Mangelsdorf, K. (1992). Peer reviews in the ESL composition classroom: What do the students think? ELT Journal, 46, 274-283.

Maurice, K. (1987). The communicative approach and EST: Methodological Problems and potential. English Teaching Forum, 25(2), 7-12.

Newkirk, T. (1989). The first five minutes: Setting the agenda in a writing conference. In C. M. Anson (Ed.), Writing and Response. Urbana, Ill: National Council of Teachers of English.

Pica, T. (1986). An interactional approach to the teaching of writing. English Teaching Forum, 24(3), 6-11.

Pierson, H. (1967). Peer and teacher correction: A comparison of the effects of two methods of teaching composition in grade-nine English classes (Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1967). Dissertation Abstracts, 28, 1350-A.

Qiyi, L. (1993). Peer editing in my writing class. English Teaching Forum, 31(3), 30-31.

Reid, J. & Powers, J. (1993). Extending the benefits of small-group collaboration to the ESL writer. TESOL Journal, 2, 25-32.

Rubin, B. (1987). Advanced-level reading comprehension: A group-work approach. English Teaching Forum, 25(2), 46-47.

Sommers, N. (1984). Responding to student writing. In S. McKay (Ed.), Composing in a Second Language (pp. 160-169). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Stanley, J. (1992). Coaching student writers to be effective peer evaluators. Journal of Second Language Writing, 1, 217-233.

Stevick, E. W. (1980). Teaching Languages: A way and ways. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Walz, J. (1982). Error correction techniques for the foreign language classroom. language in education: Theory and practice. Washington, D. C.: The Center for Applied Linguistics & Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Webb, N. M. (1982). Student interaction and learning in small groups. Review of Educational Research, 52, 421-445.

Weeks, J. & White, M. B. (1982). Peer editing vs teacher editing: Does it make a difference? (Report No. CS 207 213). Charlotte, NC: Paper presented at the Meeting of the North Carolina Council of the International Reading Association. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 224 014)

Witbeck, M. C. (1976). Peer correction procedures for intermediate and advanced ESL composition lessons. TESOL Quarterly, 10, 321-326.

Ziv, N. D. (1983). Peer groups in the composition classroom: A case study. (Report No. CS 207 600). Detroit, MI: Paper presented at the 34th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 229 799)

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

I agree to participate in a research study of education. I am aware that there is no risk involved in my participation. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I will take part in an anonymous experiment as a part of this study. It has also been made clear by the researcher that my name will not be used in the reports.

Name   :   ....

Signature: ....

Date   :   ....

If there are any questions about the study, you may contact either the researcher:

    Sabah Mıstık
    MA TEFL Program
    Bilkent University

or the study advisor:

    Dr. Arlene Clachar
    MA TEFL Program
    Bilkent University

Appendix B

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE

STUDENT   DATE   TOPIC

	SCORE LEVEL	CRITERIA	COMMENTS
CONTENT	30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic	
	26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail	
	21-17	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic	
	16-13	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate	
ORGANIZATION	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/ supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive	
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing	
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development	
	9-7	VERY POOR: does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate	
VOCABULARY	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range • effective word/idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register	
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured	
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • meaning confused or obscured	
	9-7	VERY POOR: essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate	
LANGUAGE USE	25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	
	21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured	
	17-11	FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • meaning confused or obscured	
	10-5	VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate	
MECHANICS	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing	
	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured	
	3	FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • meaning confused or obscured	
	2	VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate	

TOTAL SCORE   READER   COMMENTS

Jacobs, H.L., Zingraf, S.A., Wormuth, D.R., Hartfiel, V.F., & Hughey, J.B. (1981). *Testing ESL composition: A practical approach*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Appendix C

PLEASE GIVE FULL ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1- Did you enjoy this kind of lesson? Why/Why not?

2- How did you find your role in the lesson?

3- Did you find yourself more interested in the writing class than before? Why/Why not?

4- Did you think you learned a lot from peer feedback? If yes, in what way(s) did you find it helpful? If no, in what way(s) did you find it unhelpful?

5- Do you think you have got a stronger critical awareness in your own writing as well as in evaluating your peers' compositions? Why/Why not?

6- How did you feel during small group work?(That is, talking to each other, exchanging ideas, expressing and supporting your own opinion, giving or receiving suggestions, etc.)

7- Do you think that peer feedback gives you the opportunity to openly express ideas?

8- Do you understand your strengths as well as weaknesses better when you discuss them face-to-face with your peers? Why/Why not?

9- What do you think about your friends' comments on what you wrote?

10- Which do you prefer, comments from teacher or comments from peer discussions? Why?