

## WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF WRITTEN PEER FEEDBACK TRAINING ON TURKISH ELT STUDENTS' ABILITY TO COMMENT ON PEER WRITING?

Gonca Subaşı, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Teacher Education,  
ELT Department,  
Faculty of Education,  
Anadolu University,  
Turkey.

Accepted 3 December 2014

### ABSTRACT

In this study, the idea of training before peer feedback sessions was taken as a base. The purpose of the study was to investigate whether training before the feedback procedure helps students to provide effective written comments or not. 36 first year students from the ELT Department of Faculty of Education at Anadolu University were chosen as the study subjects to form the control and experimental groups. During the study, the experimental group was exposed to training through numerous activities devoted to practicing strategies for effective written feedback on peer writing, whereas students in the control group received no systematic training for written peer feedback. All the subjects were asked to provide written comments on each other's writings and to revise their compositions after having given written feedback. The written comments on the first drafts were collected and analyzed by three scorers by using the Coding Scheme for Students' Written Comments and the Rating Scale for Students' Written Comments. The outcomes of this study yielded that training students for written peer feedback had a significant impact on both the quantity and quality of feedback that students provided on peer writing. According to the findings, the experimental group provided significantly more qualified feedback, and significantly more specific and relevant feedback on global features of writing compared to the control group.

**Keywords:** peer feedback, peer feedback training, written comments, Turkish ELT students.

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Background to the Problem

Writing has been defined in a variety of ways. Some researchers define writing as "a skill in which students try to use the language they have learned through putting words on paper" (Hanna, 1999:1). Others define writing as "it is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own right" (White & Arndt, 1991:3). A broader definition is given by Mckay (1997:73) "writing includes recurring phrases such as thinking process, stylistic choice, grammatical correctness, rhetorical arrangement, and creativity". That is, besides taking into account the classical rhetorical concerns of invention (topic), arrangement (organization), and style (grammatical correctness and stylistic effectiveness), students are expected to "invent and organize their own ideas" while producing a piece of writing (Raimes, 1976:188).

According to Faigley (1986), human language, including writing, can be understood only from the perspective of a society rather than a single individual. Thus, taking a social view of writing requires a great deal more than simply paying more attention to the context surrounding a discourse. He rejects the assumption that writing is "the act of a private

consciousness" and that everything else; readers, subjects, and texts; is "out there" in the world (Faigley, 1986:535). Similarly, Hirvela (1999:10) points out that writing does not occur "in a vacuum"; rather, it is shaped by the "expectations and demands of its intended community of readers". Hence, while the writer may compose without thinking the reader in the actual writing of a text, a social dimension is present that can influence the production of that text. So it is possible to define writing as an interactive activity (Widdowson, 1984), which highlights the importance of the reader since "the writer creates a picture of the reader, who thus becomes an ideal reader, attributes to this reader certain experience, knowledge, opinions and beliefs on the basis of which the writer builds his message" (Porto, 2001:39).

As seen from the diversity of definitions, writing has been one of the most essential skills to be developed both in L1 and L2 settings. However, writing did not obtain its real place in language teaching in the past and was regarded as the "forgotten skill" (Bowen & Marks, 1994:143). Until 1960s, writing received the least attention due to the fact that it was at the bottom of the list of both teachers' and students priorities (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The main reason for this situation derives from seeing writing as "the handmaid of the other skills" (Silva as cited in Kroll, 1990:13). The writer was simply a manipulator of previously learned language

**Corresponding Author:** Gonca Subasi, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Teacher Education, ELT Department, Faculty of Education, Anadolu University, Turkey.

Email address: goncas@anadolu.edu.tr

structures; and the teacher was merely interested in the linguistic accuracy, but not concerned with the quality of ideas and organization. Moreover, writing seemed both "traditional" and "irrelevant to learners' immediate needs" with its associations of homework, written exercises and examinations (Bowen & Marks, 1994:143).

The teaching of writing has long been a central element in all educational systems, and there are many, often conflicting, views of the best ways of going about it (Tribble, 1997; Liu & Carless, 2006). Therefore, the literature on teaching writing in English provides us with numerous approaches. We might identify four key approaches: focus on accuracy, focus on fluency, focus on text and focus on purpose (Byrne, 1988). Apart from those approaches, there are also two other approaches which have had a widespread influence on the teaching of writing throughout the English speaking world: the product approach and the process approach (White & Arndt, 1991).

The process approach originated in the L1 classroom was developed in reaction to traditional types of writing teaching. Students were presented with rules of traditional writing about what constituted good writing, and were expected to produce texts that observed those rules (Mangelsdorf, 1992). The focus of the class was on the model and on the students' finished text, or product which would be graded by teachers with a focus on correcting linguistic errors rather than responding on students' ideas (Shih, 1999). As Roebuck (2001) states, there was no teaching on how the content of an essay was to be created and developed. The process approach, on the other hand, argues that writers create and change their ideas as they write, so the most important task of writing instructors is helping students develop the skills needed to come up with ideas, explore ways of expressing them, and examine and refine their writing (Caulk, 1994). In practice, this means working on prewriting, drafting, analyzing and revising (Miller, 2001). As a result, revision has been widely acknowledged as a crucial component in the writing process (Tsui & Ng, 2000).

The importance of feedback and revision is stressed by Elbow (1981) as follows:

*"No matter how productively you managed to get words down on paper or how carefully you have revised, no matter how shrewdly you figured your audience and purpose and suited your words to them, there comes the time when you need feedback. Perhaps you need it for the sake of revising: you have a very important piece of writing and you need to find out which parts work and which parts don't so you can rewrite it carefully before giving it to the real audience. Or perhaps you have already given an important piece to the real audience- it's too late for any revising- but nevertheless you need to learn how your words worked on the reader. Or perhaps you've simply decided that you must start learning in general about the effectiveness of writing" (Elbow, 1981:237).*

The importance of feedback has also been pointed out by Swain and Lapkin (as cited in Porto, 2001:40), who posit

"relevant feedback could play a crucial role in advancing the learners' second language learning". Relevant feedback informs the writing process by "permeating, shaping and molding it" (Tsui & Ng, 2000:148) and it also raises the writer's awareness of the informational, rhetorical, and linguistic expectations of the intended reader (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994). This leads to a "modified output", which, in turn, enhances learning (Porto, 2001:40).

All this is not to say that teachers of writing have no role to play beyond that of a classroom organizer (Muncie, 2000). The fact that the teacher is more knowledgeable than the learners about the linguistic and rhetorical features of English text gives him or her "unique role" to play in facilitating the improvement of the learners' writing ability (Muncie, 2000:51). Teacher feedback on learners' drafts is preferred both by the students and by the teachers themselves and necessary (Tribble, 1997:122). Unfortunately, students do not develop either cognitive or writing skills through their writing; they only rewrite essays based on their teachers' comments. In these circumstances, learning becomes "a more of a matter of imitation or parody than a matter of invention or discovery" (Hyland, 2000:35).

The above issues on peer feedback, however, have not gone unchallenged and writing researchers voiced criticisms of its use in both EFL/ ESL writing pedagogy. To illustrate, Leki (1990) and Rollinson (2005) identified several problems with peer comments: students tend to respond to surface errors instead of semantic or textual ones; they tend to give advice that does not facilitate revision; and they also have difficulties deciding whether their peers' comments are valid. Similarly, Nelson and Murphy (1993) and Liu and Carless (2006) state students from cultures that see the teacher as the only source of authority may consider their peers not knowledgeable enough to make sensible comments and ultimately not incorporate the comments into their writing.

According to Berg (1999b), such problems do appear since the students are asked to participate in the complex of peer feedback session without adequate preparation. Responding to writing is not a skill with which most students have had enough experience (McGroarty & Zhu, 1997). It is therefore unrealistic to assume that they will be able to effectively respond to their peer's draft and successfully revise their drafts based on the given comments. If students are to be expected to skillfully participate in peer feedback and perform appropriate revisions of their texts, it appears reasonable to believe that they need to be given the opportunity to learn how to give and receive feedback and to revise their papers (Berg, 1999a). This point is also highlighted by Gere (as cited in Stanley, 1992:219) who sees inadequate student preparation for peer feedback as a major cause of unsuccessful peer feedback sessions: "When I meet teachers who say 'Oh, I tried peer evaluation groups and they didn't work,' I begin by asking about preparation". Nystrand (1989) agrees with Gere, in that peer feedback takes careful planning on the teachers' part, and that students must be shown how to respond to writing during the peer feedback session. Similarly, Huff and Kline (1987) and Min (2006) point out the importance of providing students with appropriate peer feedback skills, such as giving and receiving criticism,

commenting on negative and positive qualities of writing, and recognizing different stages of the drafting process. In short, with training, students can become productive peer reviewers and better writers (Stanley, 1992; Youngs & Green, 2001; Lam, 2010; Çiftci & Çöker, 2011).

Writing teachers interested in using peer feedback as a learning tool in their classrooms may find it difficult to locate information on how to train students, especially the information that is based on empirical research that outlines exactly how students can be appropriately prepared (Berg, 1999a; Morra & Romano, 2009). Therefore, studies that investigate the role of training students on peer feedback are indeed urgently needed (Paulus, 1999; Min, 2006). Such tested and detailed information is important not because it provides a formula for peer feedback training in all EFL/ESL settings, but it can eliminate students' lack of knowledge and skills needed for peer feedback (Zhu, 1995; Berg, 1999a; Hansen & Liu, 2005; Peng, 2010).

To fill the gap in knowledge about the effects of peer feedback training on writing and the role that instruction plays in determining such effects, this study investigated the effects of trained written peer feedback on the quality and quantity of written comments. It did so by comparing two groups, one trained on how to give written feedback in a peer response activity and the other not trained in this method. Specifically, written comments given by students in the trained versus untrained group and level of improvement in trained versus untrained students' first and second drafts were compared. The reasons for such training are threefold. Firstly, the students did not receive oral feedback through teacher-input student conferences, for their final drafts, but they received written teacher feedback since the beginning of the study; therefore, students in both groups were required to give written comments on their peers' drafts. Secondly, studies along this line of research have mostly examined oral feedback generated during peer response, often with a particular interest in peer talk during the peer response process (Zhu, 2001), whereas identifying the type of written peer feedback that is most appropriate and effective remains a key research question (Paulus, 1999). Investigations of the role of feedback of L2 writers have included studies which have examined the focus of teacher feedback, including teacher written feedback and teacher-student conferences; and the focus of peer feedback looking especially at peer discussion during feedback session (Hyland, 1998). Thirdly, the risk of forgetting some comments is eliminated in this way owing to the fact that students complain about forgetting oral feedback given by their peers or teachers in some studies. Huff and Kline (1987) also noted that oral feedback in peer response activity can be problematic. They suggested that students' verbal feedback can be "blatantly useless, uninformed, and often thoroughly unconstructive" (Huff & Kline, 1987:150) because verbal responses do not allow students to contemplate their reactions and word them appropriately.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

The university level foreign language composition class is a challenging course to teach for many instructors. Required in

some form for almost all major and minor language programs, there are many factors that contribute to making it a difficult course for both instructors and learners. One of the greatest obstacles, for both the instructor and learner, is the difficulty that most students have when trying to write coherent and concise compositions in foreign language.

It is because of its problematic nature, however, that the composition class offers learners a valuable opportunity to develop their linguistic and written competencies, while challenging the instructor to create pedagogical situations and activities that enhance the students' development. 'The process approach' in particular provides us with a theoretical framework for a better understanding of the learning process and for creating activities that help students work in and move the stages of writing, in this case, as it is highly related to the development of their foreign language writing competence (Roebuck, 2001; Hansen & Liu, 2005). Peer feedback sessions are one of the most important activities in the composition process since the writer will read useful comments about the content and structure of his composition. Thus, it is the instructor's task to provide the students with peer feedback sessions which facilitate the students' revising.

The impetus for this research study originates from the way peer feedback sessions is implemented in writing classes. The students are often asked to participate in the complex peer feedback sessions without adequate preparation. That is with little or no practice, they are expected to read and respond to someone else's writing, constructively react to peer feedback on their own writing, and revise their writing based on the feedback. As a result of such lack of preparation, the peer feedback activity is often on unsatisfactory experience for students and a frustrating one for teachers. To help make it a positive and worthwhile experience, the students need to be taught certain skills.

Training students to offer and receive constructive feedback seemed to us to be suitable enough to solve the problems that we experience in the implementation of peer feedback. We set out for this research hoping that preparing EFL students for peer feedback could not only lead to better writing skills but it could also be considered as a valuable and successful experience which promotes the whole language learning process. Therefore, the current study will show an attempt to answer this basic question: What are the effects of written peer feedback training on the quality and quantity of students' written comments?

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1. An Overview of the Process Approach

Process writing represents a shift in emphasis in teaching writing from the product of writing activities, that is the finished text, to studies of 'how you do it' of writers' composing processes (Dyson, 1981). As Vincent (1990) points out, this shift was driven by a desire to know how writers went about their task and what mental processes were going on as people wrote.

This major paradigm shift has entered L2 teaching under the influence of exponents such as Raimes, Spack and Zamel, from L1 teaching and research in America since 1960s (Furneau, 2000). The investigations have brought about the notion that writing is a process of discovering and making meaning. Through the act of writing itself, ideas are explored, clarified and reformulated and as this process continues, new ideas suggest themselves and become assimilated into the developing pattern of thought (Zamel, 1983).

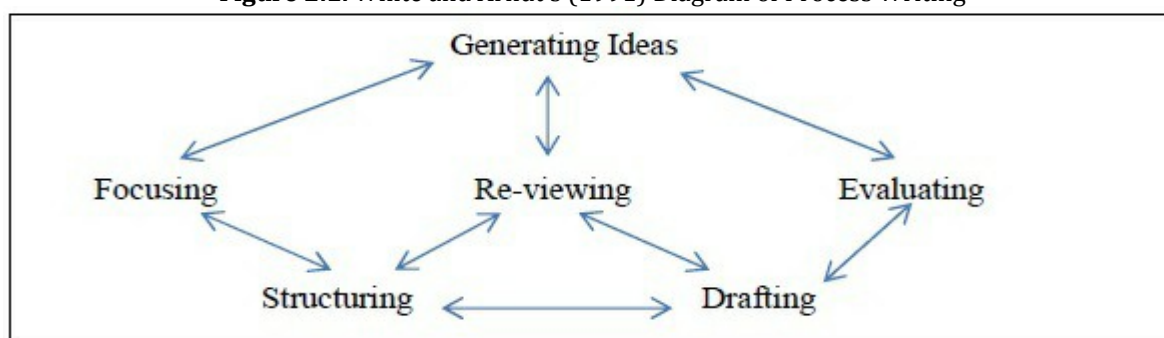
There are views on the stages that writers go through in producing a piece of writing, but a typical model identifies four stages: prewriting, composing / drafting, revising and editing (Tribble, 1997). The whole process is not a fixed sequence but a dynamic and unpredictable process. In other words, the process of writing is a cyclical process in which

writers may return to prewriting activities, for example, after doing some editing or revising (Badger & White, 2000). This feature of the process approach has also been described by Raimes as follows:

*"Contrary to what many textbooks advise, writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, organizing, writing and revising. For while a writer's product - the finished essay, story or novel- is presented in lines, the process that produces it is not linear at all. Instead, it is recursive...."* (Raimes, 1985:229)

White and Arndt's diagram and table showing the phases of process writing (1991:4 see Figure 2.1 and: 7 see Figure 2.2 below) offers teachers a framework which tries to capture the recursive, not linear, nature of writing:

**Figure 2.1.** White and Arndt's (1991) Diagram of Process Writing



**Figure 2.2.** White and Arndt's (1991) Table of a Typical Sequence of Activities in Process Writing

(Discussion class, small group, pair)
Brainstorming / making notes / asking questions
Fast writing / selecting ideas / establishing a viewpoint
Rough Draft
Preliminary self-evaluation
Arranging information / structuring the text
First Draft
Group / peer evaluation and responding
Conference
Second Draft
Self-evaluation / editing / proof-reading
Finished Draft
Final responding to draft

White and Arndt's diagram (1991:4) displays the complex and recursive nature of writing. Activities to generate ideas (e.g. brainstorming) help writers tap their long-term memory and answer the question "What can I say on this topic?". Focusing (e.g. fast writing) deals with "What is my overall purpose in writing this?". Structuring is organizing and reorganizing text to answer the question: "How can I present these ideas in a way that is acceptable to my reader?" (Furneau, 2000:2). Drafting is the transition from the writer-based thought into reader based text. Multiple drafts are produced from rough to polished, each influenced by feedback from teacher and peers. Feedback focuses initially on content and organization. When these are satisfactory, comment on language is given on penultimate drafts for final correcting (Neman, 1995). Reviewing is standing back from the text and looking at it with

fresh eyes, asking "Is it right?" (Furneau, 2000:2). A lot of reshaping and reconstructing of existing draft is essential for an efficient revision. Students find polishing of rough drafts necessary since their intention in their early writing sessions can be different from those in later drafts (Richards, 1990).

Briefly, the theory of process writing suggests that "writing is a highly complex, goal-oriented and recursive activity" (Furneau, 2000:2). It develops over time as writers move from the production of egocentric, "writer-based texts" (typically, writing everything they know on a topic without thinking of what the reader wants or needs to know) to "reader-based texts", which are written with the reader in mind (Furneau, 2000:2).

### 2.1.1. Feedbacking in the Process Approach

In recent years the process approach to writing has become the mainstream orthodoxy both in ESL and EFL classes. This approach seeks to shift emphasis from an endless stream of compositions assigned by the teacher, handed back to the learners and promptly forgotten by them as they start on the assignment. Instead, the emphasis is on the process of writing itself; generating ideas (prewriting, writing a first draft with an emphasis on content) to discover meaning / author's ideas, second and third (possibly more) drafts to revise ideas and the communication of those ideas (Muncie, 2000). Feedback is seen as essential to the multiple-draft process, as it is "what pushes the writer through the various drafts on to the eventual end-product" (Keh, 1990:294). According to Flower

(1979:19), feedback can be defined as "input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision". In other words, it is the comments, questions, and suggestions that a reader gives a writer to produce 'reader-based prose'.

Youngs and Green (2001) note that feedback can enhance learning and the student can benefit from a second opinion, due to the fact that the writer learns where he or she has misled or confused the reader by not supplying enough information, illogical organization, lack of development of ideas or inappropriate word choice or tense.

Various types of feedback are possible, including feedback, conferencing, and written teacher-feedback, as well as more

**Figure 2.3.** Implementation of Feedback



'Input' on the continuum on Figure 2.3 means anything which helps students to get ideas for writing. This includes invention strategies such as brainstorming, fast writing, clustering and interviewing. This may also include readings for models of good writing (for a particular type of assignment such as compare/contrast) or readings related to a particular topic. Once students have received input for writing, they write their first draft (D1). They are made aware that D1 is only a draft. After D1 is written, students receive their first form of feedback from peers (Keh, 1990:295).

## 2.2. Review of Empirical Studies on Peer Feedback

### 2.2.1. Empirical Studies on Effectiveness of Peer Feedback

The enthusiasm for peer feedback is not difficult to understand, considering the strong theoretical support for and claims made about it. To date, writing research has examined various issues related to peer response in first as well as second / foreign language classrooms. One strand of research has focused on the impact of peer feedback on students' revision and quality of writing (Hedgcock & Leftowitz, 1992; Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Mendonça & Johnson, 1994; Paulus, 1999; Ting & Quian, 2010; Çiftci & Çöker, 2011; Yang & Meng, 2013).

A major line of research has also investigated peer feedback process, focusing on student interaction and negotiation

(Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Peng, 2010; Jahin, 2012; Wan & Han, 2013; Wakabayashi, 2013). Another line of research, perhaps spurred by mixed results on peer response, has examined the effects of training students for peer response tasks (Stanley, 1992; Zhu, 1995; Berg, 1999b; Min, 2006; Lam, 2010; Esmaeli *et al.*, 2014).

### 2.2.1.1. Empirical Studies on Students' Revision and Quality of Writing

Researchers in recent years have stressed the need for ESL/EFL writing instruction to move to a process approach that would teach students not only how to edit but also to develop strategies to generate ideas, compose multiple drafts, deal with feedback and revise their written work on all levels (Paulus, 1999). Therefore, peer feedback is now commonplace as one part of the feedback and revision process of ESL/EFL writing classes. Research has begun to address the effectiveness of peer feedback for ESL/EFL writing instruction specifically on the quality of written products (Hedgcock & Leftowitz 1992; Nelson & Murphy 1993; Mendonça & Johnson, 1994; Paulus 1999; Rollinson, 2005; Lam, 2010; Ting & Qian, 2010).

### 2.2.1.2. Empirical Studies on Oral and Written Comments on Peer Feedback Process

Peer feedback involves students working together and interacting with one another. Given this, it is not surprising that a major line of research has investigated interaction and negotiation during peer feedback, addressing issues concerning language functions of peer utterances, aspects of writing attended to by students, reader stances and group dynamics. Studies along this line of research have also examined oral and written feedback generated during peer feedback, often with a particular interest in peer talk during the peer feedback process.

Mangelsdorf and Schlumberger (1992) carried out a study concerning how advanced ESL students actually respond to each other during feedback sessions and what these responses suggest about their assumptions concerning peer reviews and composition. Participants were sixty freshmen ESL composition students. All were enrolled in the study by responding to an essay written by another ESL student in the previous semester. The researchers analyzed the stances the students took toward the text and the student writer as they made suggestions for revision. Three stances were defined at the end of their analysis in the students' reviews: an interpretive stance (students impose their own ideas about the topic onto the text), a prescriptive stance (students expected the text to follow a prescribed form) and collaborative stance (students tried to see the text through author's eyes). The researchers classified the reviews according to the dominant stance the student writers took toward the student text. The results of the study revealed that a majority of the students took a prescriptive stance because they believed that correct form was more important than the communication of meaning.

Villamil and De Guerrero (1996) conducted a research study which sought to investigate the kind of revision activities students engaged in while working in pairs, the strategies peers employ in order to facilitate the revision process, and significant aspects of social behavior in dyadic peer revision. The analysis of the data yielded seven types of social-cognitive activities in which the students engaged: reading, assessing, dealing with trouble sources, composing, writing comments, copying and discussing task procedures; five different mediating strategies used to facilitate the revision process: employing symbols and external resources, using the L1, providing scaffolding, resorting to inter-language knowledge, and vocalizing private speech; and four significant aspects of social behavior: management of authorial control, affectivity, collaboration and adopting reader/writer roles.

The bulk of the studies conducted on the effectiveness of teacher comments and peer comments have been done with tertiary L2 learners, but Tsui and Ng (2000) carried out a study on the roles of teacher and peer comments in revisions in writing among secondary L2 learners in Hong Kong. Students were asked to read their peers' writing and provide written comments. Then, they provided oral responses to their peers' writings in groups of three or four. All peer response group discussions on the first draft were audio taped.

The findings of the study showed that some learners incorporated high percentages of both teacher and peer comments, some incorporated higher percentages of teacher comments than peer comments, and others incorporated very low percentages of peer comments. Those who incorporated a low percentage of peer comments saw the teacher as a figure of authority that guaranteed quality and did not have confidence in their peers who were non-native speakers of English. However, those students who incorporated a high percentage of peer comments saw the value of getting feedback from their peers since they felt that peer comments did help them to revise and improve their writings. According to the researchers (Tsui & Ng, 2000:168), the teacher should highlight the fact that responding to peers' writing is a learning process that will raise "their awareness of what constitutes good and poor writing, help them to identify their own strengths and weaknesses in writing, and make their texts more reader friendly".

As for the Turkish context, Çiftci and Çöker (2011) conducted an empirical study to investigate the effect of peer feedback training program on students' written products. To reach their aim, the researchers developed a two-hour peer feedback training program for two months. 75 students participated in the study. The pre-test/post-test control grouped experimental design was used. Moreover, group interviews and one-to-one interviews were done to get the participants' impressions about the training procedure. The results show that for most students, as their ability as responders improves, their ability to revise their own compositions improves at the same time due to the fact that they have a better sense of how to approach the task. The findings also yield that students are happy with the application of a peer feedback training program. Another interesting outcome of the study was the comparison of the number of peer comments given by the students in the experimental group and control group. There were more than 700 comments in the experimental group papers whereas there were about 400 in the control group papers. That's to say, the experimental group surpassed the control group in terms of number of comments and quality. All in all, it can be said that training students on peer feedback has a positive effect on students' writing achievement.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Selection of Subjects

The study was conducted at the ELT Department of Faculty of Education at Anadolu University. All subjects were monolingual speakers of Turkish between the ages 17 and 19. They were first year students. 36 subjects participated in the study. 6 of the subjects were male and the other 30 subjects were female.

The researcher's two sections were chosen as the population. There were a total of 59 students in two sections, but the students who were coming from other departments, repeating the writing course for the second time or got extremely high or low scores in the pre-test, were not chosen as the study subjects. Before the actual study, a pre-test was given to select the subjects. In the pre-test the students in both



classes were asked to write at least three paragraphs on a given topic. Their writing proficiency levels were determined on the basis of the writing exam scores graded holistically using the ESL Composition Profile (Hughey, 1983). Based on the scores of the writing exam, two groups from both sections were formed.

Since the primary aim of this study was to investigate the effects of training on written peer feedback, 18 students were trained to practice strategies for effective written feedback on peer writing (experimental group) and the other 18 students (control group) were not trained.

These students attended a writing course which consisted of three contact hours per week over a 15-week term. All of them were taking the same process approach implemented writing course, which was carried out by the researcher. They were taught to produce coherent essays of different patterns of development such as; a Process Analysis essay, a Comparison and Contrast essay, and a Cause and Effect Analysis essay.

### 3.2. Instruments and Materials

Two instruments were used in this study: a) the Coding Scheme for Students' Written Comments and b) the Rating Scale for Students' Written Comments.

#### 3.2.1. The Coding Scheme for Students' Written Comments

The coding scheme consisted of adaptations of Elbow's (1981) catalogue of criterion based on the feedback of peer writing. The adapted scheme categorized student feedback as global, local or evaluative (Zhu, 1995:521) (see Figure 3.1). Global feedback addressed concerns such as development of ideas, audience and purpose, and organization of writing. Local feedback addressed concerns such as wording, grammar and punctuation. Evaluative feedback expressed students' overall evaluation of peer writing. In this study, only the comments on global features of writing were taken into consideration and the comments on local features of writing and evaluative comments were not analyzed in terms of quality since language use and mechanics can be evaluated in the final drafts. Figure 3.1 below shows the original form of the model.

**Figure 3.1.** Coding Scheme for Students' Written Comments

*Comments on global features of writing:* Generally, comments on the global features of writing deal with the larger concerns of writing, such as content, organization, and communicative effectiveness. A comment will be included in this category if it deals with any of the following:

1. The presence or absence of a basic (controlling) idea.
2. The relevance of the main points to the controlling idea.
3. The effectiveness of the thesis statement.
4. Development of ideas; clarification and expansion of ideas.
5. Concerns of purpose and audience of writing.
6. Support for statements / arguments.
7. Consistency in point of view.
8. Concerns of genre.
9. Definition of key terms.
10. Appropriateness of topic.
11. Logical arrangement of ideas.
12. Paragraph and essay structure.

*Comments on local features of writing:* Generally, comments in this category deal with language use at the sentence level. A comment will be included in this category if it deals with any of the following:

1. Grammar.
2. Diction.(Vocabulary)
3. Punctuation.
4. Spelling.
5. Clarity of sentences / phrases; rephrasing.

*Evaluative comments:* Comments in this category reflect an overall assessment of peer writing.

#### 3.2.2. The Rating Scale for Students' Written Comments

The rating scale for students' written comments was used to evaluate student feedback on peer writing (Zhu, 1995:522) (see Figure 3.2). Analyzing students' written comments involved quantifying (counting and ranking) essentially qualitative data (Zhu, 1995). All written comments were rated

on a 3-point scale in the study because this scale is a commonly used criterion in quantifying qualitative information.

**Figure 3.2.** Rating Scale for Students' Written Comments

A "3" comment or suggestion is relevant and specific. It (a) correctly identifies the strengths and / or weaknesses in a piece of writing in concrete terms, (b) raises a relevant question about a particular area of writing, or (c) provides correct and clear direction for revision.

A "2" comment or suggestion is relevant but general; it may correctly identify the strengths and weaknesses in a piece of writing, but fails to address them in concrete, specific terms. It may also raise a relevant but general question about the writing. Furthermore, it may provide correct but nonspecific direction for revision.

A "1" comment is inaccurate or irrelevant.

All peer feedback was rated on a 3-point scale, where 3 = comment specific and relevant; 2 = comment relevant but general; and 1 = comment irrelevant or inaccurate. Relevancy of peer feedback was established in the context of the drafts on which the feedback was provided.

### 3.3. Data Collection Procedures

The study lasted 15 weeks. Before the actual study, an initial study was conducted to select the subjects among 59 students. In the initial study, the pre-study composition was given, and in this pre-test the students both in the experimental and

control group were asked to write at least three paragraphs on a specific topic. The essays were scored holistically using the ESL Composition Profile by the researcher and another writing instructor. The results assisted the researcher in determining the study subjects. After gathering all the data from essays, 36 students who scored between 70 and 85 were chosen as the subjects of the study. 18 students formed the control group and the other 18 students formed the experimental group.

Table 3.1 shows the comparison of pre-test results of the control and experimental groups.

**Table 3.1.** The Results of t -test Showing the Difference between the Control and Experimental Groups when they are not Exposed to Peer Feedback Sessions

	N	X	s.d	S.E	d.f	t	p
Control Group	18	77.83					
		4.58	1.284	34	0.363 < 2.042		0.96
Experimental Group	18	78.38					

The pre-test results show that the control group had the mean value of  $x = 77,83$  and experimental group had the mean value of  $x = 78,38$ . The standard deviation was calculated as  $s.d = 4,58$  and standard error was  $S.E = 1,284$ . With the 34 degrees of freedom, the t-value between the control group and experimental group was calculated as  $t = 0,363$ . As the observed value of  $t = 0,363$  is smaller than the value of  $t = 2,042$ , there is not a significant difference between the pre-study composition (example essay) total scores of the control group and the experimental group when they are not exposed to peer feedback sessions.

#### 3.3.1. Data Collection Procedures for the Experimental Group

The experimental group was introduced to the process approach at the beginning of the academic term, and the purpose and the advantages of this approach were discussed during the course. The researcher highlighted the significance of peer feedback session in the process cycle discussing two articles with the students: Furneaux's (2000) and Berg's (1999a) articles. The students were also introduced through a series of drafts written on the same topic by previous students of the course. The experimental group students read from rough first draft to polished third. In this way, the

researcher informed students that each writing assignment for the course would involve several drafts, and these drafts would be read by the teacher and their classmates.

The researcher utilized the coaching procedures of Stanley's (1992) and Berg's (1999b) to prepare the students for peer revision (approximately 8 hours, during three weeks of a 15-week semester). As the instructor of the course, the researcher conducted the coaching (training) sessions. Coaching focused on two important aspects of peer evaluation sessions: familiarizing students with the genre of the student essay and introducing students to the task of producing effective written responses to each other.

The genre of the student essay was introduced through a series of drafts written by previous students of this course. (The writers' names were masked). Students followed several student writers through successive stages of writing from rough first draft to polished third. With every draft, students were asked to comment on, not to bridge, cohesive gaps. They were asked not to supply meaning where the writer had been inexplicit, but to pinpoint vague or unclear sections of the text. They were urged to judge the writer's claims and assumptions against their own knowledge and to report their own judgment. By looking at succession of drafts,



they saw each essay as a work in progress. As they read later drafts, they searched for evidence of reworking and repairs. In short, they were required to read student essays with an uncommonly close eye.

The ultimate success of peer feedback session lies not in how carefully students read each other's drafts, but in how well they give written feedback to the writer. Students were asked to do a two-step evaluation of each sample essay written by the previous students. First, they reported what they had noticed as the strengths and the shortcomings of the essay by filling in the peer review checklist. Second, they described how they might best give written feedback to the writer.

The students worked with each draft individually. In the initial sessions, the researcher offered them specific advice about the types of issues that would be appropriate to raise at each stage of writing. That is, the first draft was seen as a starting point which concerns issues of content, later drafts, issues of structure and so on. Individual responses were elicited from the students, and a whole-class discussion of the draft followed. After the essay's problems and strengths had been set forth, students were asked to give written feedback to the student writer. This process was repeated with 6 sample essays at different stages of development.

Throughout the semester this training continued. Students were required to write coherent essays on three different genres and before the feedback session they received further training which consisted of two parts. In the first part, the students were given sample essays belonging to the same genre and they were asked to write down their comments using the checklist. In the second part, the instructor and the students discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the essay concerning the genre and provided suggestions for revision. The students read their written comments and their comments were also evaluated by the instructor and the other students in the same way it is suggested in Berg's (1999a) article.

After distributing the sample essays of the same genre, the instructor asked students to provide written comments. These written comments were read by the students and written separately on the board by the instructor. Next, students were asked to reread the responses on the board to determine whether inappropriate language was used. If so, students were asked to revise the comments in a more helpful, non-threatening way, using clear and constructive, yet considerate, words and expressions. The importance of offering helpful, not rude or disrespectful, comments was stressed by the instructor. This exercise was beneficial in that students became more sensitive to the emotional effects that their response could have on a classmate. Moreover, they came to appreciate the importance of not overreacting to insensitive comments by experiencing the complex task of thinking about how to communicate ideas effectively while expressing them appropriately and correctly. This exercise also helped students give specific recommendations to the writer, such as reorganizing paragraphs and sentences, deleting or adding ideas, and modifying thesis statements and topic sentences. Below are sample student revisions of inappropriate written comments:

**Original:** *You gave your example in vain! That's to say, there is no need!*

**Revised:** *I think you'd better omit the example which you gave in the second paragraph.*

**Original:** *Your style is not understandable for the introduction paragraph. What's your technique?*

**Revised:** *The introductory technique which you used in the first paragraph is not so clear. Could you use dramatic entrance to make your paragraph more inviting?*

**Original:** *Write a specific thesis statement.*

**Revised:** *You have written a thesis statement, it is good, but you should improve it. Your thesis statement lacks a strong central idea. You can add your own opinion about the process-a difficult one or an easy one!*

The instructor almost always let the students express their own opinions first, often opening the discussion with the question 'So what do you think?'. In this part, the instructor focused on assisting students to respond critically to peer writing and to provide specific feedback. The instructor made it clear that when critiquing peer writing, peer should focus on global concern such as development of ideas, audience, purpose and organization. Often, the instructor explicitly asked students to comment on the first aspects related to the content and organization of the essay under discussion. When some students failed to do this and instead first commented on more local features such as grammar, language usage and word choice, the instructor would briefly discuss students' feedback but would then guide students' attention back to the global concerns, using directives such as 'Grammar is important, but let's look at the big picture first'.

The instructor often asked students to clarify and specify their comments and suggestions since the primary goal was to help students to generate specific feedback. The instructor asked some questions that directed students' attention to those aspects of writing students needed to focus on during peer feedback (e.g. 'What is the main point here?' and 'Does everything in the paper relate to the main point?'). Because peer responders failed to see what the problem really was, the instructor gave the group some instructions on paragraph development. Also, the instructor provided the relevant instruction on the purpose of peer feedback. Some students, especially during the early rounds of training, did not feel comfortable commenting on peer writing and frankly admitted that they did not want to hurt the feelings of peers. When this occurred, the instructor would reiterate that the purpose of peer feedback was to help, rather than to criticize the writer.

For the peer feedback session, the students were told not to write their names explicitly on their first drafts in order to prevent the impact of negative and positive feelings that they felt for their classmates. They were requested to write their school numbers. The researcher put special codes on the drafts based on those numbers and gave the drafts to different

students. In this way, the students could not figure out their feedback giver.

The students were asked to respond in composition according to the given topics, for example they produced their process analysis essays on the following topics: how to make new friends or how to get through registration at the university. This way was preferred in order to avoid plagiarism. Moreover, the researcher took into consideration the complaints of the students. The students reported that they had spent a lot of time in order to find a suitable topic for their example essay. They said that if they had been given some topics, they would have produced better essays. This situation is also stressed by Jones (cited in Kennedy, 1994:2) "Students might perform better when provided with a few, rather than with many options".

After writing their essays on a specific topic, the experimental group students dealt with the peer feedback session held during the class hours. Students were given their classmates' drafts and were asked to indicate which areas of the essay they found confusing or felt could be developed by providing written comments. In this way, students had an opportunity to make specific suggestions for improvement. Following the peer feedback session, students were asked to write a second draft of their essays. The second drafts of the students' essays were collected one week after the peer feedback session.

Following the peer feedback session, the experimental group students had one week to revise their writing and submit their revised drafts for teacher written feedback. Next, they were asked to write their third drafts based on the teacher's feedback. These drafts were collected one week later.

### 3.3.2. Data Collection Procedures for the Control Group

The control group students were introduced to the process approach exactly in the same way as the experimental group students were. They also read Furneaux's (2000) and Berg's (1999a) articles and examined the guidelines which showed what to do during the feedback session. The researcher pointed out the importance of peer feedback session in the process cycle discussing two articles and guidelines with the students. Moreover, the researcher brought a series of drafts on the same topic written by the previous students of the writing course to class to show students that each writing assignment for the course would consist of several drafts. Students were required to read from rough first draft to polished third. In this way, they were expected to recognize the shifts made for the development of the essay. The purpose and potential benefits of receiving feedback from other students in the class and teachers were also discussed, as was the importance of focusing on the content and the form of writing.

Students in the experimental group were specifically trained for peer feedback, but students in the control group received no further training beyond the articles, sample student essays and discussion. They had regular classes with the instructor. They were also given the same sample student essays for each text type as it was done in the experimental group; however, the students and the instructor did not discuss the sample

essays in the class. As with the experimental group, no teacher feedback was available on students' evolving drafts before peer feedback.

The peer feedback was held during the class hours of the control group. During peer feedback sessions, students gave written feedback to their peers' drafts. They were asked to bring copies of their drafts for their peers and were given this instruction: providing on another with specific comments and suggestions. In each feedback session, students first read the draft and then responded to the draft; they were required to give written comments to their peers' drafts, including making necessary connections. They had one week to revise their first drafts and they were asked to give their second drafts to their teachers in order to have teacher written feedback.

The control group students were asked to write their essays according to the given topics in order to avoid plagiarism. Their topics were exactly the same topics given to the experimental group students. They were also told to write their school numbers, not their names, on the first drafts. This was done on purpose: to prevent the effect of negative and positive feelings that they felt for their classmates. The instructor put special codes on the drafts based on their school numbers and gave drafts to different students. In this way, the students could not guess who their feedback giver was.

Following the peer feedback session, students were requested to revise their writing in one week and submit their revised drafts for written teacher feedback. The students were then asked to write a third draft based on the teacher's feedback. The third drafts of the essays were collected one week later.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis on students' written comments on the first drafts of three genres for each group was made. The results were given in numbers and percentages in order to clarify the amount and quality of feedback in this analysis.

In the present study, the analysis of coding and rating procedures of students' written comments on the first drafts was as follows. The researcher and an experienced writing instructor independently coded all of the students' written comments (N = 1022) (N is used to indicate the number of written comments) and the same two raters rated 1022 comments to assess quality of feedback. Rater agreement procedures resulted in 92 % of the comment coded and rated (N = 941). The third rater, who was also an experienced writing instructor, coded and rated 8 % of the comments (N = 81) since the two raters could not reach consensus on some of written comments. An average was then calculated based on the third reader's score, thus consistent rater agreement was achieved.

As a result, the Coding Scheme for Students' Written Comments and the Rating Scale for Students' Written Comments were used to measure the quality of students' written feedback. The sample comments in three coding and rating categories are presented below:

**Global (3):** *As the audience is important, you should inform them about the registration process. For example, make a list of necessary documents and warn people to provide all the documents without exception, etc.*

**Global (3):** *First dev. paragraph is detailed enough to explain the reasons you give. But there are some scientific terms like "biochemical and neurological adaptation". The reader may not understand what they mean and how the drugs cause these things. You had better give some explanations about them.*

**Global (2):** *Instead of this sentence, there can be more attractive and logical sentence.*

**Global (2):** *You should give more examples. Add some ideas.*

**Global (1):** *Make the essay colorful.*

**Global (1):** *You don't have coherence in your paragraph.*

**Local:** *It is a grammatical mistake. The subject of your sentence is "High amount" so you should use "is".*

**Local:** *In this paragraph you made a grammatical mistake instead of using the phrase "giving your decision" you should use "making your decision".*

**Evaluative:** *It is a well-developed paragraph.*

**Evaluative:** *You give examples about research studies. It makes your essay informative.*

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Comparison of the Type and Quality of Written Comments in the First Drafts

The entire corpus of the students' written comments were coded, categorized and rated. For the identification of students' written comments, the categories developed by Zhu (1995) (see Figure 3.1) were used. Table 4.1 summarizes the distribution of the comment types across the three text types.

**Table 4.1.** Summary of the Numbers and Percentages of the Written Peer Feedback Type for each Text on Students' Revisions

Type Of Feedback	Control Group						Experimental Group					
	Process Analysis Essay		Comparison and Contrast Essay		Cause and Effect Analysis Essay		Process Analysis Essay		Comparison and Contrast Essay		Cause and Effect Analysis Essay	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Amount of Feedback on Global Features</b>	59	40	44	32	57	39	129	69	136	69	114	56
<b>Amount of Feedback on Local Features</b>	56	38	67	49	47	32	28	15	26	13	40	20
<b>Amount of Feedback on Evaluative Features</b>	34	23	25	18	44	30	29	16	36	18	51	24
<b>Total</b>	149	34	136	31	148	34	186	32	198	34	205	35

As shown in Table 4.1, the students in the control group provided a total of 149 written comments for the process analysis essay. The students in the experimental group provided more feedback for the same text type, a total of 186 comments. While the control group students provided more feedback on local features,  $N = 56$  (38 %) and evaluative features,  $N = 34$  (23 %), they did not necessarily provide more global comments  $N = 59$  (40 %). Compared to the students in the control group, the students in experimental group provided more global remarks on peer writing,  $N = 129$  (69 %). As a group, the experimental group students provided less evaluative remarks,  $N = 29$  (16 %), and local comments,  $N = 28$  (15 %).

When we look at the Comparison and Contrast essay, it will be seen that the students in the experimental group gave more written comments  $N = 198$  than the students in the control group did,  $N = 136$ . 67 of the 136 comments made by the control group students were local (49 %) and 25 were

evaluative (18 %). The experimental group students provided the same amount of evaluative feedback,  $N = 36$  (18 %), as the control group students, but the number of local comments given by the experimental group decreased to a great extent,  $N = 26$  (13 %). As for global comments, a sharp increase can be seen since 44 comments were made by the control group students (32 %) and 136 comments were made by the students in experimental group (69 %).

In the Cause and Effect Analysis essay, while the students in the experimental group provided a total of 205 written comments, the control group students provided 148 comments in total. 44 of the 148 comments made by the control group students were evaluative (30 %) and 47 were local (32 %). On the other hand; the students in the experimental group provided less evaluative feedback,  $N = 51$  (24 %) and local feedback,  $N = 40$  (20 %). As can be seen in the Table 4.1, the control group provided less feedback in terms of the number global comments  $N = 57$  (39 %), whereas

the experimental group gave twice as many as the control group, N = 114 (56 %).

As shown in Table 4.1, there are sharp increases between the number of global comments made by the students in the

experimental and control groups. These increases stem from the differences in specific feedback given by the students in both groups. Table 4.2 shows the amount of specific feedback given by the control group for each text type.

**Table 4.2.** Summary of the Numbers and Percentages of the Specific Feedback for each Text on Students' Revisions

	Amount of Specific Feedback					
	Process Analysis Essay		Comparison and Contrast Essay		Cause and Effect Analysis Essay	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Control Group</b>	36	24	24	18	34	23
<b>Total</b>	149		136		148	
<b>Experimental Group</b>	102	55	115	58	98	48
<b>Total</b>	186		198		205	

As shown in Table 4.2, the students in the control group provided 36 specific comments and the amount was low (24 %) in the Process Analysis essay. Compared to the students in the control group, the students in the experimental group gave 102 specific comments (55 %). In the Comparison and Contrast essay while the students in the experimental group provided 115 specific comments (58 %), the others could only provide 24 specific comments (18 %). When we look at the Cause and Effect Analysis essay, it will be seen that the students in the experimental group gave more specific

comments N = 98 (48 %) than the students in the control group did, N = 34 (23 %).

In order to examine the quality and the type of the peer written comments from a general point of view without considering text types, we also formed Table 4.3 which summarizes the number of global, local and evaluative comments provided by the control and experimental groups.

**Table 4.3.** Amount of Feedback Type for both the Control and Experimental Groups

Type of Feedback	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Amount of Feedback on Global Features</b>	160	37	379	64
<b>Amount of Feedback on Local Features</b>	170	39	94	16
<b>Amount of Feedback on Evaluative Features</b>	103	24	116	20
<b>Total</b>	433	42	589	58

As displayed in Table 4.3, there are significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the amount of feedback, the amount of global feedback, the amount of local and evaluative feedback. The students assigned to the trained group provided more feedback, N = 589 (58 %) than those assigned to the control group, N = 433 (42 %) Similarly, the experimental group provided significantly more feedback on global features of writing, N = 379 (64 %), than the control

group on global comments, N = 160 (37 %). As for local and evaluative comments, this time the control group surpassed the experimental group owing to the fact that the amount of feedback on local features, N = 170 (39 %) and evaluative features, N = 103 (24 %) of the control group were higher than the amount of feedback on local features, N = 94 (16 %) and on evaluative features, N = 116 (20 %) of the experimental group.

**Table 4.4** Summary of the Numbers and Percentages of the Quality of Feedback on Global Features

Quality of feedback on global features	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	N	%	N	%
<i>Score 1</i>	78	48.7	56	14.7
<i>Score 2</i>	42	26.2	144	37.9
<i>Score 3</i>	40	25	179	47.2
<i>Total</i>	160		379	

As displayed in Table 4.4, there are sharp differences between the experimental and control groups on the quality of feedback given for the global features. The students in the control group provided 78 (48.7%) comments deserving score 1, but the students in the experimental group gave 56 (14.7%) comments. With regard to score 2, the students in the experimental group provided more comments 144 (37.9%) than the students in the control group 42 (26.2%). As for score 3, again the control group provided less feedback 40 (25%), whereas the experimental group gave 179 (47.2%) specific comments.

#### 4.2. Discussion

Although peer feedback has been widely acknowledged as a crucial component in the writing process in both ESL and EFL settings, an aspect of peer feedback to writing and its implementation in the classroom has been largely ignored. This important, yet largely ignored, aspect is the role of training, which means the preparation of students for participation in the peer feedback activity. To fill the gap in knowledge about the effects of training on writing, we investigated the influences of trained written peer feedback on feedback types.

The major finding of the present study indicates that the experimental group significantly exceeded the control group in the amount of feedback (N = 589, 58 %); the amount of feedback on global features (N = 379, 64 %) since the control group provided fewer written comments in terms of the amount of feedback (N = 433, 42%); the amount of feedback on global features (N = 160, 37 %). On the other hand, the control group outperformed the experimental group in the amount of feedback on local (N = 170, 39 %) and evaluative (N = 103, 24%) features because the experimental group provided less feedback on local (N = 94, 16 %) and evaluative (N = 116, 20 %) features (see Table 4.3). The progress on the part of the experimental group in the mentioned areas may be due to the fact that training allowed subjects to provide more effective feedback on one another's writing. The emphasis on global concerns of writing and on specific feedback during training enhanced the success of peer written feedback. Thus, there seemed to be a positive relationship between the treatment and the quality of feedback. This result is in line with the outcomes of other empirical studies

(Rollinson, 2005; Lam, 2010; Yang & Meng, 2013; Esmaeeli et al. 2014).

Moreover, the significant difference between the total numbers and percentages of written comment types between the trained and untrained groups suggests that training, in fact, made the difference. That is, trained students provided more feedback on global and specific features than untrained students. Consequently, the results of increased number of global and specific comments and improved writing among trained students imply that appropriate training can lead to more successful revisions, which in turn may result in better quality in the revised draft. This finding corroborates the results of the other studies (Min, 2006; Peng; 2010; Çiftci & Çöker, 2011; Yurdabakan, 2012; Wang & Han, 2013; Wakabayashi, 2013).

These increases seem to be very appropriate in the light of the results of the present study, which indicate that training students in how to give written feedback has positive effects on comment types and writing outcomes. According to Kellogg (2008) advanced writing skills require systematic training due to the fact that through deliberate practice (writing several drafts) and cognitive apprenticeship (feedback taking and giving process), students can successfully deal with various writing tasks. The importance of peer reviewing is also pinpointed by Jahin (2012). The researcher stated that multiple draft process combined by meaningful peer feedback would result in better essays, which in turn, should become an integral part of the writing instruction. As another researcher Min (2005) focused on the fruitful consequences of peer feedback by indicating that students would obviously become better peer reviewers if they were taught how to do so via proper training and individual assistance over a period of time.

The results of the current study should also reassure those who were discouraged by Nelson and Carson's (1998) and Liu and Carless's (2006) claims that students do not find their classmates' advice particularly useful. There could be potential drawbacks of peer feedback such as low reliability and insignificant effect on the quality of learners' revisions, but as a matter of fact, these handicaps could be resolved through systematic training before the peer feedback sessions since student writers would become both better peer reviewers and editors of their own work specifically on the

fluency and accuracy of the written discourse. (Lam, 2010; Ting & Qian, 2010). Finally, there appears to be much to be gained from peer feedback sessions and its systematic training and at the same time, written feedback might help students to cope with the revision and review processes in an organized and thorough way (Morra & Romano, 2009).

## 5. Conclusions and Implications for FL Teaching

During the last two decades, peer feedback sessions where students critique and provide written and / or oral comments on one another's writing in small groups have captured the attention of many writing teachers and researchers in both first and second / foreign language settings. Although there are numerous journal publications as well as conference colloquiums and presentations devoted to the topic, it is well known that writing teachers continue to wonder to what degree the process of writing, provision of feedback, and revision are actually helping students as they become independent writers. In addition, they seek empirical evidence that peer feedback can contribute positively to this process. If research in this area can determine the effectiveness of peer feedback in the context of a multiple-draft classroom, it can influence the way that writing teachers incorporate it in their classes.

One way of increasing the efficacy of peer feedback on students' revision and quality of writing is training students for peer feedback sessions. But, unfortunately quite rare empirical studies have been done on the area of training students for peer feedback. As it is stated in the literature there is a need for more research. In this study, the idea of training before peer feedback sessions was taken as a base. The purpose of the study was to investigate whether training before feedback help students to provide effective written comments or not, which in turn, enhance them to write coherent and good compositions.

The results of this study indicate that training students for written peer feedback also had a significant impact on both the quantity and quality of feedback that students provided on peer writing. According to our findings, the experimental group provided significantly more feedback, significantly more feedback on global features of writing, and significantly more specific and relevant feedback compared to the control group. According to the results of the study it is obvious that written peer feedback training had a salient effect on students' written comments.

### 5.1. Pedagogical Implications

Despite the limitations in terms of the small sample size, the study has certain implications for teaching of L2 writing. Writing instructors who would like to use peer feedback as part of a process-oriented approach to writing can take into account the following issues. Firstly, training seems essential for a fruitful peer feedback section. The difference in results between the trained and untrained groups in the present study shows that the training procedure results in more and qualified peer feedback with regard to the comment types. Thus, there appears to be the need to provide all students with guidance and instruction about peer revision so that they can give effective comments. As Vygotsky states, (as cited in Villamil & De Guerrero, 1998:508), "with assistance, every child can do

more than he can by himself - though only within the limits set by the state of his development". Hence, as an indispensable component of learner-training, the teacher should assist students to expand the repertoire of feedback strategies and instruct them to clarify their intentions and elicit feedback from their peers (Rollinson, 2005; Morra & Romano, 2009).

Secondly, the instructor, from the beginning, must define clearly the roles of the students during the peer feedback process. Students should be informed of the purpose of peer feedback and come to think of it as only one aspect of the larger process of composing and communicating a message. Therefore, the teacher should highlight the fact that responding to peers' writings is a learning process that will help them to develop a better sense of how to read their own texts from the perspective of an audience, what questions to ask, and "how to systematically examine their text with the purpose of improving it" (Berg, 1999b: 232). Without this crucial understanding, students, perhaps particularly novice writers in foreign language classrooms, like study subjects in this research, may not be able to interpret the feedback or act it in a sound way. In addition, students need to respect to the authority of the author and take great care not to compromise ownership of the text under "the guise of constructive criticism" (Amores, 1997:520).

The third pedagogical implication implies that through peer feedback the students were involved in the process of acquiring strategic competence in revising and evaluating a text. They can easily analyze textual problems, internalize the demands of different rhetorical modes, acquire a sense of audience, and in general become sensitive to the genre of the student essay. Moreover, in this way students become not only "better peer reviewers, but also conscientious writers who take responsibility for editing their own work" (Lam, 2010: 124).

An issue deserves attention is that of the control group students' positive comments on the evaluation of peer feedback session. Although they received no systematic training to develop and practice strategies for peer response, they reported positive experiences with peer feedback commenting on its general benefits.

### 5.2. Suggestions for Further Research

Results of this study indicate a number of areas that need further investigation. Most urgently, more research studies can be conducted to explore other methods of training for peer feedback and investigate the effects of those methods on students' writings as well as their comment types.

Another suggestion for future research is to compare and contrast written peer and teacher feedback. This comparative research will show the effectiveness of peer and teacher comments in facilitating revision.

Moreover, as this research was limited to three writing assignments in a short term, we do not know how training affects peer feedback and revision at a longer period. Thus,



long-term effects of trained peer feedback need investigation.

Also students were trained to give written feedback in this study. Thus, another study can be designed in order to investigate the effect of trained oral and written peer feedback on students' revising their first drafts. Research in this area will shed more light on the roles of oral and written peer feedback in student writing development.

A final suggestion for future research is to investigate the classroom contexts and various other factors on training and on peer feedback. Research in this area will provide insightful information on the kinds of classroom contexts conducive to peer feedback and thus will have important classroom implications.

## References

- Amores, M. J. (1997). A new perspective on peer editing. *Foreign Language Annals*, 30 (4), 513-523.
- Badger, R., & White, G. (2000). A process genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal*, 54 (2), 153-160.
- Berg, E. C. (1999a). Preparing ESL students for peer response. *TESOL Journal*, 8, 20-25.
- Berg, E. C. (1999b). The effects of trained peer response on ESL students' revision types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8 (3), 215- 241.
- Bowen, T., & Marks, J. (1994). *Inside Teaching*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Byrne, D. (1988). *Teaching Writing Skills*. London: Longman.
- Caulk, N. (1994). Comparing teacher and student responses to written work. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 181-188.
- Çiftci, A., & Çöker, B. (2011). The effect of peer feedback training program on the development of writing skills. *Buca Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 30, 175-191.
- Dyson, A. H. (1981). Oral language: the rooting system for learning to write. *Language Arts*, 58, 776-784.
- Elbow, P. (1981). *Writing with Power*. London: Oxford University Press O.U.P.
- Esmaeeli, H., Abasi, M., & Soori, A. (2014). Is peer review training effective in Iranian EFL students' revision? *Advances in Language and Literacy Studies*, 5 (4), 151-154.
- Faigley, L. (1986). Competing theories of process: a critique and a proposal. *College English*, 48 (6), 527-542.
- Flower, L. (1979). Writer-based prose: a cognitive basis for problems in writing. *College English*, 41(1), 19-37.
- Furieux, C. (2000). Process Writing. Retrieved April 25, 2010 from [www.rdg.ac.uk/Acdept/cl/slas/process.htm](http://www.rdg.ac.uk/Acdept/cl/slas/process.htm)
- Hanna, M. S. (1999). Why early writing? Retrieved 30 May, 2008 from [www.JLEP-II/MDI](http://www.JLEP-II/MDI)
- Hansen, J.G., & Liu, J. (2005). Guiding principles for effective peer response. *ELT Journal*, 59 (1), 31-38.
- Hedgcock, J., & Leftkowitz, N. (1992). Collaborative oral/aural revision in foreign language writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1(3), 255-276.
- Hedgcock, J., & Leftkowitz, N. (1994). Feedback on feedback: assessing learner receptivity to teacher response in L2 composing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 3(2), 141-163.
- Hirvela, A. (1999). Collaborative writing instruction and communities of readers and writers. *TESOL Journal*, 8 (2), 7-12.
- Huff, R., & Kline, C.R. (1987). *The Contemporary Writing Curriculum: Rehearsing, Composing, and Valuing*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hughey, J. B. (1983). *Teaching ESL Composition: Principles and Techniques*. USA: American Book Company.
- Hyland, F. (1998). The impact of teacher written feedback on individual writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 7 (3), 287-306.
- Hyland, F. (2000). ESL writers and feedback: giving more autonomy to students. *Language Teaching Research*, 4 (1), 33-54.
- Jahin, J. H. (2012). The effect of peer reviewing on writing apprehension and essay writing ability of prospective EFL teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 37 (11), 60-84.
- Keh, C.L. (1990). Feedback in the writing process: a model and methods for implementation. *ELT Journal*, 44 (4), 294-304.
- Kellogg, R.T., (2008). Training writing skills: A cognitive developmental perspective. *Journal of Writing Research*, 1(1), 1-26
- Kennedy, B. L. (1994). The role of topic and the reading, writing composition. *TESL-EJ*, 1(1), 1-20.
- Kroll, B. (Ed.). (1990). *Second Language Writing*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- Lam, R. (2010). A peer review training workshop: coaching students to give and evaluate peer feedback. *TESL Canada Journal*, 27 (2), 114-127.
- Leki, I. (1990). Potential problems with peer responding in ESL writing classes. *CATESOL Journal*, 3, 5-17.
- Liu, N.F., & Carless, D. (2006). Peer feedback: the learning element of peer assessment. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11(3), 279-290.
- Mangelsdorf, K. (1992). Peer reviews in the ESL composition classroom: what do the students think? *ELT Journal*, 46 (3), 274-284.
- Mangelsdorf, K. & Schlumberger, A. (1992). ESL student response stances in peer review task. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1, 235-254.
- McGroarty, M. E., & Zhu W. (1997). Triangulation in classroom research. *Language Learning*, 47(1), 1-43.
- McKay, S. (1997). Communicative writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 13(1), 73-80.

36. Mendonça, C. O., & Johnson, K. E. (1994). Peer review negotiations: review activities in ESL writing instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 745-768.
37. Miller, L. (2001). A writing lesson. *MET*, 10 (1), 34-38.
38. Min, H.T. (2006). The effects of trained peer review on EFL students' revision types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15, 118-141.
39. Min, H.T. (2005). Training students to become successful peer reviewers. *System*, 33, 293-308.
40. Morra, A. M. & Romano, M.E. (2009). University students' reactions to guided peer feedback of EAP compositions. *Journal of College Literacy & Learning*, 35, 19-30.
41. Muncie, J. (2000). Using written teacher feedback in EFL composition classes. *ELT Journal*, 54 (1), 47-53.
42. Nelson, G., & Carson, J. G. (1998). ESL students' perceptions of effectiveness in peer response groups. *Second Language Journal of Writing*, 7 (2), 113-131.
43. Nelson, G. L., & Murphy, J. (1993). Peer response groups: do L2 writers use peer comments in revising their drafts? *TESOL Quarterly*, 27, 135-142.
44. Neman, B.S. (1995). *Teach students to write*. New York: O.U.P.
45. Nystrand, M. (1989). A social-interactive model of writing. *Written Communication*, 6, 66-85.
46. Paulus, T. M. (1999). The effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8, 265-289.
47. Peng, J. (2010). Peer assessment in an EFL context: attitudes and correlations. Selected Proceedings of the 2008 *Second Language Research Forum*, ed. Matthew T. Prior et al., 89 -107. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
48. Porto, M. (2001). Cooperative writing response groups and self-evaluation. *ELT Journal*, 55 (1), 38-46.
49. Raimes, A. (1976). Composition: controlled by the teacher, free for the student. *TESOL Quarterly*, 10(1), 188-196.
50. Raimes, A. (1985). What unskilled ESL writers do as they write: a classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(2), 229-258.
51. Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. S. (1986). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
52. Richards, J. C. (1990). *The Language Teaching Matrix*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
53. Roebuck, R. F. (2001). Teaching composition in the college level foreign language class: insights and activities from sociocultural theory. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34(3), 206-215.
54. Rollinson, P. (2005). Using peer feedback in the ESL writing class. *ELT Journal*, 59 (1), 23-30.
55. Shih, M. (1999). More than practising language: communicative reading and writing for Asian settings. *TESOL Journal*, 8(4), 20-25.
56. Stanley, J. (1992). Coaching student writers to be effective peer evaluators. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1 (3), 217-233.
57. Ting, M. & Qian, Y. (2010). A case study of peer feedback in a Chinese EFL writing classroom. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 33 (4), 87-98.
58. Tribble, C. (1997). *Writing*. New York: O.U.P.
59. Tsui, A. B. M., & Ng, M. (2000). Do secondary L2 writers benefit from peer comments? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 9 (2), 147-170.
60. Villamil, O., & De Guerrero, M. (1996). Peer revision in the L2 classroom: social-cognitive activities, mediating strategies, and aspects of social behaviour. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 5, 51-75.
61. Villamil, O., & De Guerrero, M. (1998). Assessing the impact of peer revision on L2 writing. *Applied Linguistics*, 19 (4), 491-514.
62. Vincent, S. (1990). Motivating the advanced learner in developing writing skills: a project. *ELT Journal*, 44(4), 272-278.
63. Wakabayashi, R. (2013). The effects of peer feedback process on reviewers' own writing. *English Language Teaching*, 6 (9), 177-192.
64. Wang, k., & Han, C. (2013). Accomplishment in the multitude of counselors: peer feedback in translation training. *Translation & Interpreting*, 5 (2), 62-75.
65. Widdowson, H. G. (1984). *Explorations in Applied Linguistics 2*. Oxford: O.U.P.
66. White, R., & Arndt, V. (1991). *Process Writing*. Harlow: Longman.
67. Yang, Y.F. & Meng, W. T. (2013). The effect of online feedback training on students' text revision. *Language Learning & Technology*, 17 (2), 220-238.
68. Youngs, B.L., & Green, A. (2001). A successful peer writing assistant program. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34(6), 550-558.
69. Yurdabakan, İ. (2012). The effect of co- and peer assessment training on self-assessment skills of teacher trainees. *Education and Science*, 37 (163), 190- 202.
70. Zamel, V. (1983). The composing processes of advanced ESL students: six case studies. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17(2), 165-187.
71. Zhu, W. (1995). Effects of training for peer response on students' comments and interaction. *Written Communication*, 12 (4), 492-528.
72. Zhu, W. (2001). Interaction and feedback in mixed peer response groups. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10, 251-276.