The Efficacy of Peer Feedback
in Turkish EFL Students’ Writing Performance

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The overarching aim of this study is to find out the effects of peer feedback on Turkish EFL learners at pre-intermediate level. More specifically, the researcher sought to probe the strategies most suitable to these students by motivating them to scrutinize each other’s writings and develop their own perceptions of the advantages of becoming more critical of their writing. By addressing these aims and objectives, the researcher hoped to discover the advantages and effects of peer feedback in improving the writing skills of these students. A mixture of both quantitative and qualitative methods was considered appropriate to meet the needs of research. A questionnaire on attitudes and writing tests were used to collect primary data for the study in order to gain information about the needs of the students and the suitable strategies required for peer reading, examining, and giving feedback. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted to examine the students’ perceptions of peer feedback. Results of this study revealed that the peer feedback process helped learners in improving their writing performance as a result of which the students had a positive attitude towards using peer feedback in EFL classrooms. Based on the findings, implications for foreign language (FL) writing classes and suggestions for future studies are presented.

Keywords: peer feedback, writing skill, English as a foreign language

Introduction

Over the last three decades, ESL/EFL (English as a Second/Foreign Language) writing instruction has gradually developed from the traditional product-oriented approach to the process writing approach. Changes in writing methodology have transformed feedback practices from using teacher written comments often supplemented with also peer feedback comments. So peer feedback is a crucial component in multi-drafts process oriented in the writing instructions. A crucial question that might be asked is what the peer feedback process means. There are a number of terms that are referred to peer feedback, such as peer assessment, peer evaluation, peer response, or peer review, but all of them share the same idea that commonly used in higher education and professional improvements. To illustrate, peer feedback is generally defined as the application of standards to read and respond on the work of peers whether oral or written. LIU and Hansen (2002) defined peer feedback as:

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A source of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other’s drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing. (LIU & Hansen, 2002, p. 75)

Similarly, Farrah (2012) considered peer feedback as a way of engaging students in the process of sharing their ideas and receiving as well as offering constructive comments and suggestions for developing a piece of writing.

The use of peer feedback in the ESL/EFL writing classrooms has been strongly supported by the theoretical stances, such as collaborative learning theory, process writing, Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development, and interactionist theories of L2 acquisition (Hansen & LIU, 2004). For instance, collaborative learning theory (Bruffee, 1984) encourages students to pool their resources and completes their tasks that they could not achieve on their own. Also, Vygotsky (1978) deemed that interactions with other peers enable learners to achieve their full potential through “Zone of Proximal Development” which emphasized the distance between the learners’ developmental level and the higher level that they can get at through peer interaction. Gas and Selinker (1994) emphasized the role of the social interaction in acquiring second language. Therefore, peer feedback supports the importance role of the social context and interactions.

Although the use of peer feedback in ESL/EFL writing classrooms has been generally encouraged in the literature as potentially valuable tool for its social, cognitive, affective, and methodological benefits (Rollinson, 2005), the use of this methodology with ESL/EFL learners still invites debate about its validity and time consuming. Undoubtedly, peer feedback in the writing classrooms is considered to be a time-consuming activity, however, as Rollinson (2005) stated, “it may not be time wasted” (p. 29). As it cannot be denied that there are many advantages of peer feedback that the students and teachers can identify. First of all, a number of studies reported that the process of providing feedback on peers’ work enhances the chances of sharing new ideas as well as understanding different perspectives on the writing (Tsui & Ng, 2000; LIU & Hansen, 2002). Therefore, replying to peer-corrections and giving suggestions allow students to see similar problems and weaknesses in their own writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). In addition, peer feedback enables students to read different formats of thinking, arguing and provides them with a range variety of behaviours, interaction styles, and reactions.

Despite all the positive views of peer’s feedback, students’ perceptions regarding the effectiveness of peer feedback must be taken into teachers’ consideration because some studies stated that students might not prefer using peer feedback activity in the EFL writing classrooms. As Rollinson (2005) reported, many students may need a great amount of initial persuasion of the peer feedbacks’ validity. In addition, he stated that many students may not easily accept the idea that peers are qualified to be as substitutes for the teacher and critique their writing. Also he claimed that students from certain cultures may feel uncomfortable with certain aspects of the social interaction demanded by peer response. In this study, the researcher aimed to figure out how to teach the skill of writing in terms of peer feedback and to examine whether peer feedback has any effects on students’ writing performance or not. In addition, it is aimed to see the different perceptions that Turkish students hold regarding peer feedback.

Review of Literature

Peer feedback has been studied by several researchers from different perspectives such as role of anxiety (Kurt & Atay, 2007; Rassaei, 2014), learner perceptions (Saito & Lyster, 2012; Sato, 2013), and teacher
perceptions (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005). In addition, a number of foreign language and second language studies have been addressed to explore the validity of using peer feedback in writing classes. This research focused more on EFL studies. These studies were classified into two groups according to their research focuses: (a) studies on the efficacy of peer feedback in improving writing skill and (b) studies about the EFL students’ perceptions towards using peer feedback.

Kamimura (2006) conducted a study to explore the effectiveness of peer feedback in Japanese EFL writing classrooms. To achieve his study, 12 high and 12 low proficient Japanese EFL students participated in the study. They exchanged comments with peers after receiving training in peer feedback process. Then the two groups were compared by means of pre-post-tests results, original drafts, peer comments, and response to the comments. The findings proved that peer feedback had a great positive impact on both high and low level students with different patterns in the relationship between the comments and revisions that characterized the both groups.

Al-Jamal (2009) conducted a study to investigate the effects of peer feedback on improving writing skill in English lessons and also to build positive attitude towards writing at school in Jordan. To achieve his study, 55 students at the ninth grade participated in the study and were divided into two experimental groups (28 males & 27 females). Both groups were trained for six weeks with one scheduled hour per week to write descriptive, narrative, and comparison essays and practice peer feedback process. A writing test, peer response sheet, pre-post training questionnaires, and teacher observation were used to collect the data. The findings indicated that both groups had benefited from the training on peer response and also the study found out that the peer feedback technique had an impact on the students’ perceptions positively in a way that enhanced the development of their writing skill.

Shokrpour, Shokrpour, Keshavarz, and Jafari (2013) conducted a study to examine the effects of using peer review technique on promoting the EFL students’ writing skill at intermediate level. Fifty female students aged 17-24 years selected from Bahar Language Institute in Shiraz, Iran participated in the study. They were randomly divided into experimental and control group. During three months, the both groups were instructed writing. The control group received the traditional teacher corrections whereas the experimental group at the beginning of the term was provided with an hour of instruction on peer review and then they used peer review process. The data were collected by means of pre and post-tests in terms of proficiency and writing skills, background questionnaire, peer response sheet, writing criteria, and guidline sheet, and a topic list sheet. The results showed that the participants’ writing performance in the experimental group improved more than those in the control group because peer review increased students’ motivation for writing and enabled them to receive different views on their writing.

Ghanbadi, Karampourcharangi, and Shamsaddini (2015) conducted a study to find out whether peer feedback has any effects on Iranian EFL learners’ writing performance or not and also they tried to investigate the effects of time pressure on writing tests. In order to achieve their research project, 69 EFL learners participated in the study and they were divided randomly into three groups of 20. In order to check the level of proficiency and homogeneity of the three groups, the researcher asked the participants to take the Oxford Placement Test. Then they were asked to write about the same topic, but the participants in the first group had timed exam without peer feedback for 40 minutes while the second group had timed exam with peer feedback for 40 minutes, and the last group had untimed exam with peer feedback. The study proved that peer feedback had a significant effect while
time pressure did not have any effect on writing performance because the results of two-way ANOVA (Analysis of variance) indicated that the best performance was related to the group who received peer feedback under time pressure, next, the group who received peer feedback without any time pressure, and the last group who wrote without peer feedback under time pressure.

The second group of studies focused on EFL students’ perceptions toward peer feedback. In this category, findings vary from one study to another. Some studies proved that EFL learners appreciated peer feedback as a useful approach to increase their writing abilities (Wakabayashi, 2008; LIN & Chien, 2009; LIN & YANG, 2011; Farrah, 2012). Those studies recommended that English language teachers may utilize the guiding principles in their own planning and students need training for more effective writing lessons. Other studies, however, indicated that EFL students preferred teacher feedback to peer feedback (Nelson & Carson, 1998; Tsui & Ng, 2000; HONG, 2006; Yang, Badger, & YU, 2006; Srichanyachon, 2012). They suggested training students to do peer response as a pre-requisite for the success of peer feedback process.

The review covered various research studies which were carried out in the previous years and due to the limited number of the studies that conducted in Turkey about the impact of using peer feedback on improving Turkish EFL students’ writing performance, at the same time it investigated their attitude towards peer feedback process. In response to this gap, this study aimed to find out what effects peer feedback has on Turkish EFL students’ writing and examine their perceptions. Therefore, it is hoped that the present study will be an indispensable guide of the major issues and instructions in teaching EFL writing skill for Turkish learners.

Hypotheses

In comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test scores of the students, the null and alternative hypotheses were formulated as follows:

\[ H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 \]

And

\[ H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \]

Where \( \mu_1 \) stands for the mean obtained from the pre-test scores of the students, and \( \mu_2 \) stands for the mean obtained from the post-test scores of the students. The null hypothesis (H0) states that there is no statistically significant difference between the means obtained from the pre and post test scores of the students. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis (H1) states that there is a statistically significant difference between population means in these two different approaches. In the present research, level of significance (\( p = .05 \)) was considered to be sufficient according to the covered literature.

In this context, the following of research questions were addressed:

1. Is there a statistically significant difference between the means of the students’ pre-test and post-test in terms of their L2 writing performance through peer feedback technique?

2. What are the perceptions of Turkish EFL students regarding the effectiveness of peer feedback process in writing skill?
Methodology

Research Design
The study was designed as a mixed method research in which both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used. The research was conducted at public vocational school in the pre-intermediate level class which was formed according to the results of the Placement Test at the beginning of the semester. The treatment lasted for five weeks and the class was taught by the teacher who was also the researcher. In this context, two variables were involved. The two dependent variables were the students’ writing performances and their perceptions about the effectiveness of peer feedback for improving EFL writing. The independent variable was improving EFL writing performance whether through peer feedback process or not.

Setting & Participants
This research was carried out in one of reputable public Vocational School of Higher Education located in Istanbul, Turkey during the fall semester of 2017-2018 Academic Years. The study group consisted of 12 students (3 females and 9 males) and they were in their first year of the Engineering department credit program. The participating students were all native speakers of Turkish and their ages ranged from 18 to 22. All of the students were placed into the class based on the scores that they earned from the Placement Test. This was the first semester in which the course was taught by EFL teacher and they had three-hour compulsory Basic English one lesson per week. Due to mandatory nature of the course, many students were seemingly much more motivated by desire to attain credit and continue with their other studies than to reach a high level of English proficiency. All of the students were asked to give informed consent before participating in the study.

Data Collection Instruments
Data were collected in this study by means of writing tests, the attitude questionnaire which was adopted from Farrah (2012), and semi-structured interviews.

Writing tests were used to assess the pre-intermediate level participants’ writing performance in terms of content, vocabulary range, writing flow, and conventions (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling). Each test contained two questions which were based on writing short descriptive essays. Each student’s answer was graded in detail by the teacher according to a rubric which was prepared by the school. Those writing tests were used as pre- and post-tests to see if there was any significant difference after the peer feedback process.

The second instrument was an attitudinal questionnaire towards using peer feedback. The questionnaire was adopted from Farrah (2012). It was given to the participants at the end of the treatment to investigate how they felt about peer feedback. It contained 20 items. The Likert five-rating scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = uncertain (neither agree nor disagree), 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) was administered to see whether the peer feedback activity was beneficial or not. The reliability estimate was (r = 0.85) for the questionnaire and it was also justified to have the content validity (Farrah, 2012).

In-depth qualitative interviews were used as the method of data collection. All the interviews were designed to be open-ended questions and semi-structured. All interviews were audio taped and subsequently transcribed. Interviews were conducted with three of the students whose writing performance changed significantly after the treatment. The interviews were 10 to 15 minutes in length and the researcher started with self introduction and additional questions were asked to elicit more details regarding their opinions about peer feedback process.
Procedure

Before the beginning of the treatment, the students were allotted 30 minutes to write two short descriptive essays in order to be used as a pre-test to ensure that all the students had the same level in terms of writing skill. The test was graded by using the rubric which was prepared by the school. Based on the rubric, the overall score of the test was 32 points and each essay was rated four points in terms of content, four points in terms of vocabulary range, four points for writing flow, and four points for conventions regarding punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. The total score was recorded. Then students were encouraged to write descriptive essays weekly and then they were asked to comment and give feedback on each other’s work. Based on the comments that they gave to each other, they revised and edited their essays before submitting it to the teacher. During the process, the teacher trained the students on how to give constructive feedback and illustrated that on some sample essays which were adopted from their syllabus. The students were introduced to all descriptive essays which were deemed appropriate for the pre-intermediate level. In the fifth week, the students were allowed 30 minutes to write about two another descriptive essays to be used as post-test with the aim of comparing their scores to the previous ones’ to see what impact the treatment had on the improvements of their writing skill. Furthermore, in order to learn what students thought about using peer feedback process, the participants were asked to answer the questionnaire after the post-test. The students were informed that it was not a test and their answers would not affect their grades. Following the questionnaire to triangulate the results, the semi-structured interviews were held with the three students (one female and two male) whose writing performance changed significantly after the treatment. All of the students were informed about the audio-recording at the very beginning of the interview and asked to give informed consent before taking part in the interviews. The interviews, 10 to 15 minutes in length, were conducted with each participant in prearranged times in the presence of both the researcher and students and were arranged in comfortable setting—the schools’ café. That promoted a more relaxing interaction between the investigator and the informants to get more details regarding their perceptions about peer feedback process.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by means of a combination of qualitative and quantitative strategies. Lynch (1996) called this combination a mixed study design and claimed that it provided the most appropriate information as the data are valid by means of triangulation. The data resulted firstly were examined in terms of the normality test and no outliers or detectors were found. Grounded on this, the results of the quantitative data were analysed by descriptive and inferential statistics by Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. An analysis was done for mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and a paired sample T-test for the results of the writing tests, whereas a percent distribution for the questionnaire was computed in order to know how the students were answered each item of the questionnaire. On the other hand, the interviews were analyzed by means of pattern coding, as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994). In this study, pattern coding was done to reduce the “large amounts of data into a smaller number of analytic units” (p. 69). The results were used to answer the research questions.
Findings

Research Question 1: Does the use of peer feedback help Turkish EFL students in promoting their writing performance at pre-intermediate level?

Descriptive Statistics

The findings of the study included the presentation of descriptive statistics of the students’ pre-test and post-test of their writing performance. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics including the median, mode, and range values of the students’ scores in order to have a better understanding of the students’ results.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location Statistics of the Pre- and Post-Test Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
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<td>Post-test</td>
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</table>

The Table 1 showed that the location statistics of the pre-test results of the participants were centred around mode of 23, whereas for the post-test results, the mode were around 30. That means most of the students’ scores were improved after using the peer feedback technique. However, the range values of the both tests’ results were quiet large especially for the pre-test results since it was around 13.

Major Findings

In order to answer the research question and figure out whether there was a statically significant difference between the mean of the pre-test and post-test of the students, the paired sample T-test scores of the students were compared and analyzed by means of SPSS Program. As indicated in Table 2, the differences between pre- and post-tests were statistically significant for students’ writing performance ($p < .05$; Cohen’s $d = 1.45$) variable. These findings showed that the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and there was a statistically significant difference between the means of the pre- and post-tests. The obtained Cohen’s d (1.45) indicated that the treatment had a huge effect on students’ writing performance according to Cohen’s criteria.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results of the Pre- and Post-Tests of the Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
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<td>Post-test</td>
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</table>

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of Turkish pre-intermediate level EFL students regarding the effectiveness of peer feedback process in writing skill?

The results from attitude questionnaire, which was used to assess students’ perceptions toward peer feedback, revealed that students had positive attitude toward using peer feedback process as illustrated clearly in Table 2. Among the 20 items, students agreed that peer feedback enhanced their writing performance and most students supported using peer feedback process in EFL writing sessions. To illustrate, in the first item, most of the students (about 58% of them) agreed that peer review was very useful tool, whereas about 33% of students were unsure about it. Similarly, in the second and third items, majority of students (about 50% and 58% of the students)
agreed with the ideas that indicated “they were learning most from giving feedback and receiving feedback from their peers”. Whereas more than 30% of the students were uncertain about it. In the fourth item, when students were asked if they thought that their peers did a good job in providing them with critical feedback on their work, around 58% of students were uncertain about it and 25% of them did not agree about that item. In the Item 5, most of students (66.67%) agreed with the statements that stated “their writing skill improved because of the peer feedback”. Similar results were given to the Items: 6 and 7 and around 58.33% of students agreed with that peer feedback improved their assignments as well as that peer process was helpful. In the Item 8, 50% of students were uncertain about whether peer feedback process should be introduced in every writing class or not while 50% agreed on introducing it in every class. In the Item 9, most of students (66.67%) did not agree with the idea that indicated “peer feedback is a waste of time”. In the Item 10, around 58% of students were uncertain about if they felt more relaxed to read their classmate’s feedback, but around 58% of students preferred peer feedback to teacher feedback as indicated in the Item 11. Also in Items 12, 13, and 14, more than half of students agreed with that “peer feedback made them learn more in a relaxed way; let them more comfortable by exchanging ideas, and providing them with social interaction”. In the Items 15 and 16, around 58.33% of students agreed with saying that the peer feedback increased their motivation as well as their critical thinking. Whereas in Item 17, just 33.33% of students agreed with the idea that indicated “peer feedback enhanced their creativity” and around 41% of students were uncertain about it. In Items 18, 19, and 20, more than half of students (around 58%) agreed with the items that indicated “the peer feedback activities improved their writing skill as they liked to be revised by their classmates and felt confident when asked to make suggestions about peer’s work as well” (see Table 3).

Table 3

The Analysis of the Attitude Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SD (%)</th>
<th>D (%)</th>
<th>UN (%)</th>
<th>A (%)</th>
<th>SA (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. As a learning tool, peer review was very useful.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I learnt most from writing feedback to others.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I learnt most from receiving feedback.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My peers provide me with critical feedback.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I improved my written work as a result of the peer reviews.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The reviews helped me improve my assignments.</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The peer review process was very helpful.</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Peer feedback process should be introduced in every writing class.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The idea of peer feedback is a waste of time.</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel more relaxed to read my classmate’s feedback.</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I prefer peer feedback to teacher’s feedback.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Peer feedback makes me learn more in a relaxed way.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Through exchanging ideas, I feel much more comfortable in the writing class.</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The peer feedback process provided me with the opportunity of social interaction.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The peer feedback increased my motivation to write.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The peer feedback enhanced my critical thinking.</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The peer feedback process enhanced my creativity.</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The peer feedback activity improved my writing.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I like my writing to be revised by my classmates.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I feel confident when asked to make suggestions about peer’s work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to ensure about students’ perceptions, four open-ended questions were asked in the interviews which were conducted with just three of the students whose writing performance were enhanced after using peer feedback to elicit detailed information about their opinions toward peer feedback. The analysis of the interviews indicated that most of the participants supported using peer feedback activity in EFL classes. So based on the analysis of semi-structured interviews, the followings were explored: participants’ familiarity with peer feedback, their opinions towards the role of peer feedback in classroom, and their feelings towards correcting peers and being corrected by peers.

**Familiarity With Peer Feedback**

The first interview question aimed to figure out what the participants know about peer feedback. The analysis of this question revealed that all of the participants were familiar with the term “peer feedback”. All generally defined peer feedback as a classroom practice in which their work is evaluated by their peers as illustrated in the following statement:

> I guess it is an activity which we as students correct each other papers before submitting our task to the teacher. (Student 3, December 10, 2017)

**The Role of Peer Feedback in Classroom**

As for the following question, the participants were asked about their opinions towards peer feedback. All of the participants indicated that peer feedback was an important classroom practice. However, the importance of integrating the peer feedback process into writing class varied from one student to another. The answers regarding the importance of the use of peer feedback can be seen as follows:

> I believe it is important because I like it when we share the things we know with each other can easily stick to our mind and I never make the same mistakes that my friends corrected me once. (Student 1, December 10, 2017)

> Actually, I like peer feedback activities because the moment my friends correct my work I realize my mistakes, so I think peer feedback is necessary because it helped us to get a good piece of writing before submitting the task to our teacher. (Student 2, December 10, 2017)

**Feelings Towards Correcting Peers**

In the third question, the participants were asked about how they felt when they corrected their friends; they all confirmed that peer feedback contributed to their learning. Two out of three participants indicated that they perceived peer feedback as a motivating classroom practice. They expressed their feelings towards peer feedback as follows:

> It is a nice feeling to correct others papers because I like help my friends in giving my ideas and it is really motivated me to read other student’ work. (Student 1, December 10, 2017)

> The other remaining student indicated that he sometimes hesitated to correct his friends’ mistakes because such an act did not take part in all the classes as illustrated in the following statement:

> I like the idea of how we help each other, but I sometimes felt that it was difficult to tell my friends that he or she had a lot of mistakes. (Student 3, December 10, 2017)
Feelings Towards Being Corrected by Peers

When it comes to know how the participants feel when they are corrected by their peers, all of the participants indicated that they appreciated for being corrected by their peers as stated clearly in the following statements:

I really like my friends to correct my mistakes because it is beneficial for us to improve our English. It shows me that I need to work hard in order to write better. (Students 2, December 10, 2017)

Even I sometimes feel hesitate to correct my friends papers, but I never feel humiliated or useless when to be corrected. It shows me that I need a lot to learn. (Student 3, December 10, 2017)

In conclusion, the results from the Writing Tests showed that using peer feedback into the writing course resulted in a great difference in students’ scores regarding their writing performance, as can be seen clearly from the T-tests results. Also, the findings received from the questionnaire revealed that students had a positive attitude towards using peer feedback process. The majority of the students (around 58% of them) among the 20 items preferred peer feedback to teacher feedback and they considered peer feedback was a helpful tool and they stated that they learnt most from using peer feedback process. This indicated that using peer feedback helped students in improving their writing performance as the participants in the interviews illustrated that the peer feedback was an important classroom practice, and also they perceived peer feedback as a motivating classroom practice. Therefore, the results of the questionnaire and interviews complemented each other as both of them indicated the positive attitudes of the students toward using the peer feedback in writing skill as their writing performance improved as well.

Discussion & Conclusion

The present study aimed to find out the effects of peer feedback on the Turkish EFL students’ writing performance and investigate their perceptions towards peer feedback process. The results of this study indicated that the Turkish EFL students had positive attitude towards using peer feedback process in EFL writing classrooms and also peer feedback process increased students’ motivation and improved their writing performance as well. These findings supported the findings obtained by Kamimura (2006), Al-Jamal (2009), and Shokrpour et al. (2013) who reported that peer feedback had a great impact on developing students’ writing performance and as a result of the improvements, students had a positive attitude towards peer feedback.

As aforementioned, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) also suggested peer feedback can be used to enable students to read different formats of thinking, arguing and provide them with a range variety of behaviours, interaction styles, and reactions which increased their writing. The findings of the present study seem to confirm these suggestions. The participants indicated that exchanging ideas with each other enables them to read different styles of writing and as a result their writing performance was increased.

The interviews with some participants also revealed that they benefited from peer feedback process as their friends’ correction “sticked to their minds and they never do the same mistakes”, gave them “motivation to read different written works”, and “helped them in improving their writing”. In addition, they indicated that they enjoyed participating in peer feedback activities as they can share ideas and learn from each other. Moreover, they indicated that they like to correct their friend’s papers as well as being corrected by their peers.
Based on the findings of the present study, the study has a number of recommendations; students should give intensive training sessions including receiving and giving feedback. Then, future research can examine the effects of intensive training sessions of peer feedback on students’ achievement and attitude.

The study had its limitations, too. Firstly, it was difficult to get strong generalization due to the limited number of participants. Further research with great number of EFL students in various contexts is needed to find out the probable effects of peer feedback on students’ writing performance. Also, the researchers can also investigate the effects of peer feedback on advanced learners since the current study was conducted on pre-intermediate level. Also, the current study was only focused on training students on just writing descriptive essays. Further research is needed to be conducted by training students to write different types of essays and the researchers can also investigate the effects of peer feedback process on it.

To conclude, this study was beneficial in understanding the effects the peer feedback has on Turkish EFL students’ writing performance and investigating the perceptions of students about using peer feedback process in foreign language classrooms. As aforementioned, the research has claimed that peer feedback process was an effective teaching technique that developed students’ writing performance and as a result of the improvements in writing skill; the students had positive attitudes toward using the peer feedback in the EFL classrooms. These findings imply that peer feedback process should be an integral part of every foreign language classroom instructions and students should be aware of benefits obtained by using peer feedback in writing sessions. Therefore, English foreign language teachers should integrate peer feedback activity into writing classes. Then, students can have more positive attitudes towards it and more awareness about it. Thus, having such an activity was proved as a worthwhile endeavour to undertake in education settings.

References


